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Medvedev Fires 3rd Governor After Lackluster Vote Results

By Alexander Bratersky

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President Dmitry Medvedev on Tuesday fired Volgograd's unpopular governor just two years after he appointed him to the post, marking the third time he has dismissed a governor after last month's State Duma elections.

Anatoly Brovko, 56, voluntarily resigned, the Kremlin said in a statement. But opponents said he was ousted over United Russia's poor showing in the elections.

The ruling party — whose trust rating was the lowest among Volgograd voters, according to a survey by the FOM pollster last fall — won about 35 percent of the vote in the region. United Russia won about 50 percent nationwide.

Brovko's ouster brings an end to a turbulent chapter in the region under an unpopular governor whose team was accused of closing its eyes to corruption and conflicts between the local elite.

“For us this is a moment of glory,” Galina Boldyreva, head of the local branch of the Yabloko party, said by telephone. “This man lived only for himself, his team and the prime minister and president.”

Medvedev also dismissed the governors of Arkhangelsk and Vologda in recent weeks.

Brovko’s ratings were among the lowest in the country’s 83 regions, according to an annual survey of governors conducted by St. Petersburg Politics, a think tank.

“He was a problematic governor who ruled a problematic territory,” said Alexander Kynev, an analyst for regional politics with the Foundation for Information Policy Development, a think tank.

Brovko’s departure might open the door to his deputy Oleg Matveychev, a former presidential administration official who once wrote on his LiveJournal blog that opposition rallies should be dispersed with tanks. “Usually a new governor brings his own team,” Kynev said.

Medvedev nominated Astrakhan Mayor Sergei Bozhenov to serve as acting governor. Bozhenov is known to have close ties to Vyacheslav Volodin, the former United Russia senior heavyweight who now is first deputy chief of staff of the presidential administration, Kynev said.

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