

United Russia Pitches Shoigu, Local Officials for Moscow Region Governor Post

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Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu **Maxim Stulov**

The ruling United Russia party has decided to nominate three candidates to replace Boris Gromov as governor of the Moscow region: Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu, deputy Moscow region administration head Igor Parkhomenko, and the head of the Moscow region town of Reutov, Alexander Khodyrev.

Top party official and former State Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov made the announcement to journalists on Friday, RIA-Novosti reported. The party will relay its recommendation to President Dmitry Medvedev, who can choose one of the three United Russia nominees or go with someone else.

Gromov, the long-serving governor of the region that surrounds the Russian capital, announced last week that he would step aside when his term ends in May.

Opposition leader Sergei Mitrokhin said the governor should be elected, as a political reform bill passed by the Duma last week stipulates.

“This is the fundamental issue: the governor should be chosen by region residents, not by top United Russia officials,” said the Yabloko party head.

A government source told Interfax on Thursday that if Shoigu is advanced as a candidate by United Russia, he will be chosen for governor. Vedomosti reported Thursday that Shoigu could be named by Medvedev on April 5.

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