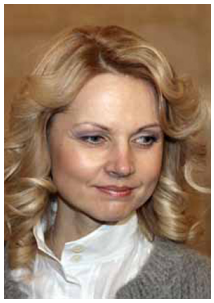
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Duma Makes Nominations For Audit Chamber Chief

By Guennadi Moukine

July 01, 2013

The State Duma has approved the nominations of Sergei Stepashin, Tatyana Golikova and Andrei Makarov as candidates to head the Audit Chamber, leaving it up to President Vladimir Putin to choose one of them or award the position to somebody else by October 1, 2013, news reports said Monday.



Igor Tabakov / MT

Presidential

aide Tatyana
Golikova

Stepashin, who is the current head of the spending oversight body, was renominated by all political parties in the Duma. Golikova, a presidential aide, was nominated by the Liberal Democratic Party and the ruling United Russia party. Andrei Makarov, head of the State Duma committee on budget and taxes, was also nominated by United Russia, though every other political group voiced concerns about him, Prime reported.

This comes only two weeks after Izvestia newspaper, referring to an unnamed source in the United Russia party, said former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin was the third name on the list, rather than Makarov.

Monday's reports, however, have no mention of Kudrin other than in relation to Tatyana Golikova, who used to work with him as his deputy finance minister until 2007.


Igor Tabakov / MT
Chamber head
Sergei
Stepashin

Sergei Stepashin has headed the Audit Chamber since 1999. Earlier this year, he made headlines when he announced plans to probe Aeroflot's pricing and Gazprom's spending, which had not been scrutinized for five years, and said Russia had lost 2 billion rubles in misappropriated state funds last year.

His bold actions won respect from all political parties. "He is professional, experienced and a brave person," Ivan Melnikov, a senior Communist Party official said. "And we, being responsible as we are ... think that he must continue that work."

Oksana Dmitriyeva from A Just Russia agreed with the Communists. "This is a rare occasion when a person has proved his professionalism and, in the midst of difficult circumstances and widespread corruption, improved the work of the chamber as financial controller."


Igor Tabakov / MT
Duma member

Andrei
Makarov

Golikova, currently a presidential aide and a former Health and Social Development Minister, was tipped to replace Stepashin as soon as a new law prescribing the re-election of all members of the Audit Chamber went into effect in April 2013.

She worked with Kudrin as deputy finance minister between 2002-2007 and was often referred to as "queen of the budget," because of her understanding of state finances, Lenta.ru reported.

Golikova's proximity to the president is significant, Institute of Applied Politics head Olga Kryshtanovskaya told Izvestia.

"Golikova is in the president's team, which is of political importance," she said. "She is an excellent finance person, highly regarded by all professionals."

Makarov's candidacy came as a surprise. According to an expert survey conducted by Prime, he wasn't even in the top 20 likely candidates.

Igor Rudensky, chairman of the economic committee in the State Duma and United Russia member told Izvestia that Makarov has a great potential because of his legal background. He is loyal to those in power and able to hold an independent view, he said.

The role of the Audit Chamber is to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of budget spending, state-funded infrastructure development programs, and fight corruption.

Contact the author at g.moukine@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/07/01/duma-makes-nominations-for-audit-chamber-chief-a25436