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Meet Russia's Telepathic Duma Candidate

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Starting tomorrow, Russia's parliamentary campaigns come to a halt, as the country observes a "Day of Silence" ahead of voting on Sunday. In honor of another political race nearing its end, the Meduza news website has awarded its prize for "most unexpected turn in 20 seconds" to Vasily Dmitrienko, who's running for a seat in the Duma as the regional head of the Yabloko opposition party in the Khabarovsk Krai.

In a campaign video released earlier this month, Dmitrienko begins ordinarily enough, calling on voters to unite around his candidacy to raise living standards. Then, quite suddenly, he announces a special ability: "The fundamental difference between me and the other candidates is that I'm a specialist in providing telepathic video communications between all life on Earth and a higher intelligence."

Party officials at Yabloko say they don't see any harm in Dmitrienko's claim, calling it a publicity stunt. "Generally speaking, other than the phrase about telepathy, he's absolutely fit

for the job and is always welcome at Yabloko," one of his colleagues told the AmurMedia news website.

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