

Russian high-ranking officials sacked over state defense order

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The Russian government has dismissed a number of military and defense industry officials for their poor performances in implementing the country's ambitious arms procurement program in 2010, the Kremlin said on Tuesday.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on March 10 instructed the government to take adequate measures to improve the situation with the state arms procurement program and punish the officials directly responsible for the disruption of the program.

"Due to undersupplies of weapons and military hardware, a number of officials from the Defense Ministry's procurement bodies have been discharged from military service, including Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces' Main Directorate Maj. Gen. Vaganov, chief of the Directorate for procurement of aircraft Col. Krylov, and Navy Deputy Commander for Armaments Vice Adm. Borisov," the Kremlin said in a statement.

In addition, Vladimir Grodetsky, the general director of Izhmash, and Arkady Khokhlovich, the general director of the Electrical Engineering Research Institute, have been dismissed from their posts.

General director of Information Satellite Systems Nikolai Testoyedov and general director of NPO Mashinostroyenia Alexander Leonov were issued warnings.

The board of directors of Russia's Sevmash shipyard will discuss the future of general director Nikolai Kalistratov in June.

"These and other measures in relation to the defense industry and military officials, who disrupted the implementation of state defense order, are sufficient both for the improvement of discipline and personal responsibility and for preventing future interruptions in arms supplies," the Kremlin said.

Russia's new 2011-2020 arms procurement program stipulates the upgrade of up to 11% of military equipment annually and will allow the country to increase its modern weaponry to 70% by 2020.