

Anti-Snow Plan Ditched

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In the latest sign that City Hall is abandoning former Mayor Yury Luzhkov's policies, First Deputy Mayor Pyotr Biryukov said Tuesday that no experiments will be conducted to blast snow clouds from the skies.

Luzhkov regularly deployed planes to spray clouds with agents to prevent rainfall ahead of important holidays like the Victory Day parade on Red Square on May 9, and he drew considerable mockery in September 2009 when he proposed that the technology be extended to snow clouds.

Biryukov conceded Tuesday that Luzhkov's proposals were actually never put to work and that City Hall had just carried out consultations with scientists.

"And this year we won't blast any," he said of the snow clouds, Interfax reported.

Weather forecasters say there is a good chance that Moscow will see its first snowfall of the season Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a city court has accepted the case of an elderly couple who are suing Luzhkov over

last summer's smog.

The Basmanny District Court has held a first hearing, and a second is scheduled for Oct. 27, plaintiff Viktor Shelepin told Interfax.

Shelepin and his wife want 700,000 rubles (\$23,230) in damages for the effects of the choking smoke that filled the capital for days in August. Luzhkov faced criticism for not immediately cutting short an Austrian vacation to deal with the problem.

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