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Investigators Warn Against Careless Talk in Oboronservis Case

By The Moscow Times

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The Investigative Committee on Tuesday warned the police against making statements that contain "unverified information" about a corruption case linked to the ouster of Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov.

In a statement, investigators outlined the police's role in the Oboronservis inquiry and stressed that police were simply conducting legal procedures as part of the investigation, adding that only the Investigative Committee's main military investigative department is authorized to provide information on the case.

"The Investigative Committee warns against distributing information that has not been agreed upon with investigators," the statement said.

In a shakeup of the country's law enforcement agencies, police are expected to soon lose their own investigative department, and sole responsibility for conducting investigations will likely

pass to the already powerful Investigative Committee.

But President Vladimir Putin warned last week that the committee's expanded investigative department shouldn't be "overloaded" with cases.

In late October, the Investigative Committee's military investigative department opened five criminal cases on charges of fraud and abuse of office following the discovery of a scam involving the fraudulent sale of real estate, land plots and shares belonging to Oboronservis, a company that manages state military suppliers.

Investigators believe the scam to sell lucrative Oboronservis properties below their market value could have cost the Defense Ministry more than 3 billion rubles ($95 million).

On Nov. 6, Putin fired Serdyukov as defense minister, citing the need to “create the conditions for an objective investigation” of the Oboronservis case.

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