

Putin's Absence at MAKS Deemed to Show Lack of Interest in Aviation

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Putin won't be taking in the sights on offer at the MAKS airshow this year. **Igor Tabakov**

President Vladimir Putin will not attend the opening of the MAKS 2013 air show for the first time since 1999, perhaps signaling a lack of interest in the aviation industry among the country's political leaders, Vedomosti reported Tuesday, citing two executives of United Aircraft Corporation subsidiaries and a government source.

The air show in the city of Zhukovsky outside Moscow has been held biannually since 1993. Since Putin came to power in 1999, he has attended every show's opening regardless of the post he held at the time.

A source at United Aircraft Corporation confirmed that Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev would be opening the show this year, adding that due to Putin's absence demonstration flights of the new T-50 fighter jet might be canceled.

A presidential spokesman refused to comment on Putin's work schedule.

Industry experts do not expect any significant military aviation contracts to be signed at the MAKS show this year, and most participants consider the event more of an exhibition than a trade show.

In 2009, \$10 billion in contracts were signed, including an Air Force agreement for 64 fighter jets.

Meanwhile, technology expert Konstantin Makiyenko said Putin's refusal to attend the show may represent the head of state's shifting political priorities, which no longer include the development of the aircraft industry. He pointed out that, while shunning MAKS, the president had recently found time to attend other public events like the World Athletics Championships.

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