

Russian Navy Removes Pacific Fleet Commander

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Admiral Sergei Avakyants. **Yuri Smityuk / TASS**

The commander of the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet has been removed from his post, President Vladimir Putin's envoy to the Russian Far East [said](#) Thursday.

The reshuffle was announced a week after the Pacific Fleet was ordered to stage [surprise combat drills](#) to repel a theoretical enemy landing.

Presidential envoy Yury Trutnev said Admiral Sergei Avakyants, 66, who has commanded the Pacific Fleet since 2012, will now head a new organization that oversees military training and patriotic education.

"Avakyants, who until recently commanded the Pacific Fleet, will be in charge of the the headquarters," Trutnev said.

Russia's Pacific Fleet, which is based in the port of Vladivostok, has not commented on the reshuffle.

There is no public information about Avakyants' replacement.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu put the Pacific Fleet on high alert Friday for snap exercises in the southern part of the Sea of Okhotsk to repulse rocket and aviation attacks on Sakhalin Island and the southern Kuril islands.

The southern Kuril islands are at the heart of a decades-long dispute between Moscow and Tokyo that has kept the countries from signing a formal peace treaty to end World War II.

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