

## 《普京下令俄空军撤离叙利亚》

MOSCOW -- The Russian air forces deployed in Syria would start withdrawal from March 15, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday.

Putin said the decision was discussed and coordinated with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during a phone conversation earlier in the day, adding that "the fundamental tasks set for the Russian armed forces in Syria were resolved."

"It was agreed to withdraw main body of the Russian air forces. At the same time Russia would preserve an air flight control center in Syrian territory to monitor the ceasefire regime," according to an online Kremlin press release.

According to Putin, Russia's naval base in Syria's coastal city of Tartus, as well as the Hmeimim airbase southeast of Syria's Latakia city, would continue operation in a routine mode.

"A part of our military group has been traditionally deployed in Syria for many years and now it will be tasked to fulfill a very important job of monitoring the ceasefire regime and creating conditions for peace process," Putin added.

"I hope today's decision (of withdrawal) will be a good signal for all conflicting parties. I hope it will considerably increase trust of all participants in the process," Putin said during a meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

Putin also ordered the foreign ministry to intensify efforts to push forward the Syrian peace process, while praising the Russian air forces in Syria for the efficient work that "created conditions for the start of a peace process."

Both Putin and Assad hoped the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, which starts Monday under the UN auspices, could bring concrete results, while the latter stressed his readiness to start political process in Syria as soon as possible.

Assad also expressed gratitude to Russia for the substantial help in the fight against terrorism and the humanitarian aid delivery to Syrian civilians.