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**Military Service in Russia -  
No New Model Army**

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## **Key Points**

- \* Pay and conditions for Russian servicemen, especially those on contract service, have seen substantial recent improvements.
- \* Continuing high-profile reporting of rights abuses and violence masks initiatives taken to improve rights and welfare.
- \* The move to one-year conscript service will disrupt the system of *dedovshchina*; but it is unlikely to uproot this kind of bullying altogether as it is not a purely military phenomenon in Russia.
- \* The Russian Armed Forces are not adapting fast enough to the challenges of recruiting professional servicemen.

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# Military Service in Russia – No New Model Army

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## Reversal of Fortune

Russia is spending more and more on its Armed Forces. Defence spending is consistently increasing by a minimum of one-third year on year,<sup>1</sup> leading to overall defence expenditure almost quadrupling over the past six years. By some estimates (and depending on widely varying assessments of China), overall Russian defence expenditure is now at the second highest level in the world after the USA; and according to Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin, this rate of increase is to be sustained through 2010.<sup>3</sup>

This enormous injection of funds is having dramatic, although inconsistent, effects on investment and procurement, which have been well documented elsewhere<sup>4</sup>: it appears that a large proportion of funds continues to trickle away into the sand. Nevertheless, at least some of this sudden largesse will directly benefit individual servicemen, not least by finding its way into their wage packets. In the list of “major improvements” which Sergey Ivanov presented to the Second All-Army Conference in April 2006, he highlighted the doubling of salaries over recent years and further planned pay rises adding up to an aggregate 70 per cent by the beginning of 2008. Although the headline figures relate to the *oklad* (base salary figure) rather than total earnings, and the practical result of the raise for individual servicemen will therefore vary widely - and despite the fact that the starting point for servicemen’s salaries was abysmally low - earnings can at least now be compared with those from other employers.<sup>5</sup>

But although this is perhaps the most visible indicator of a new approach to servicemen’s wellbeing, it is certainly not the only innovation since 2005. This paper aims to review what other recent measures may have a practical effect on the welfare of individual Russian soldiers and junior officers, and to what extent received wisdom on the conditions experienced by ordinary Russian conscripts may be out of date.

## Image and Perception

In line with official pronouncements by Putin and others on raising the prestige of the Armed Forces, public perceptions of the problems affecting them seem to be shifting.

A poll in February 2006 suggested that 50 per cent of Russians believe bullying in the form of *dedovshchina* is a problem in the majority of units, and 32 per cent believe it is ubiquitous in the Armed Forces. The same poll asked for reasons why respondents would not want their relatives “to end up in the Armed Forces”: the responses showed that the combined factors of *dedovshchina*, “lawlessness and humiliation of servicemen” and “criminalisation of the Armed Forces” was a much

more powerful deterrent to serving in the Armed Forces (named by a total of 83 per cent of those polled) than any possibility of death in conflict (only 32 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, other polls showed an increasing proportion of Russians who could not envisage any military threat to Russia: over half at the last count,<sup>7</sup> rendering more remote the vestigial motivation to observe the “sacred duty” of serving in the Armed Forces.

But one year on, poll responses showed a significant shift in attitudes: in February 2007, 31 per cent of respondents said they thought the situation in the Armed Forces was improving, as against 20 per cent the year before.<sup>8</sup> And the proportion of those citing *dedovshchina*, lawlessness and humiliation as a reason their relatives should not serve had fallen sharply to 59 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Is the public perception that things are getting better accurate?

Chief Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinskiy presents figures which support this view. In January 2007 he reported for the first time a reduction in crime rates in the forces after years of steady increases. He ascribed this overall fall to a reduction in the size of the army, but the figures also included dramatic falls in serious crime in 2006 compared to 2005, out of all proportion to force contraction. Murders were down nearly 20 per cent, grievous bodily harm by over a quarter, and deaths as a result of bullying fell by half, although it was unstated where exactly the dividing line was drawn between this and murder.<sup>10</sup>

Figures from the Defence Ministry also indicated a dramatic improvement, with the official number of fatalities among servicemen halving in 2006 compared to 2005, at just over 1,200. Yet a breakdown of the figures shows clearly that there is still a long way to go: of these fatalities, 29 per cent were officially reported as suicides and 19 per cent were murders.<sup>11</sup> This gives a suicide rate of approximately 30 per 100,000 strength: for comparison, the corresponding figure in the British Army was 20 per 100,000 in 1995-1997 and just 10 per 100,000 in 2001-2003.<sup>12</sup>

Crime without lethal outcomes also appears to be falling: a sharp reduction in reported criminal activity in 2006 was also claimed by the Siberian Military District, which said that thefts were down two-thirds and crime overall down one-third on the previous year.<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to establish a clear picture of what conditions are like in a Russian military unit without actually being in it: some of the most vocal depicors of Russian military life provide a necessarily skewed picture, as with organisations like the Soldiers’ Mothers’ Committee; they report cases of obvious abuse, as indeed they should, but devote little or no comment to the conditions experienced by the broad mass of the Russian soldiery. So much has been written about *dedovshchina* and its more appalling extremes that there is no need to define or describe it here; instead we should look at new steps by the Russian authorities whose primary aim is to improve welfare of servicemen, but which may well have the secondary achievement of improving the effectiveness of the Armed Forces as a whole.

The well-publicised case of the maimed conscript Pte Andrey Sychev in early 2006 served as a catalyst to provoke a sudden wave of “revelations” of similar incidents within the Armed Forces;<sup>14</sup> the ensuing fuss served to obscure rather than highlight welfare initiatives already taken by then Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov. Yet these initiatives seem already to be having a palpable effect on life and accepted practices in the Armed Forces, and it is this aspect which we will examine here.

## Old Problems

### Abuse of Office: Personnel

At the end of the last century the hiring out of Russian soldier labour for commercial purposes was, if not officially acceptable, then certainly by no means unexpected. Almost absolute authority over a large pool of unskilled labour was one of the few means of improving some officers' material condition during the extended period when salaries were clearly insufficient, and in addition irregularly paid, to the extent that the concept of actually living on a junior officer's salary became an obvious nonsense.

Looking at some accounts of soldier rental in the 1990s, it is clear that in the shifting and uncertain moral climate of the time this was viewed within the broader context of use of military facilities for commercial enterprises, with tacit approval or disregard from higher ranks; in a way, it was no more than an extension of the programme of "*konversiya*" to human as well as production resources.

Soldier rental covered a huge range of different degrees and experiences, from industrial-scale manpower supply to commercial enterprises, down to conscripts engaged as unpaid personal servants for officers or their families. While in many cases it may have had a fairly benign nature (some unofficial workplaces are clearly far preferable to life in barracks),<sup>15</sup> other forms of extra-curricular assignment were distinctly unsafe or unsavoury.<sup>16</sup>

The practice is now explicitly banned at all levels. In October 2005, Sergey Ivanov issued Order No 428 promising tough penalties for "commanders of all levels who send soldiers to work outside the unit". "From today, any commander who allows this will be sacked from the army and will face criminal charges," Ivanov promised.<sup>17</sup>

It quickly became clear that far from existing on paper only, this order was in fact being implemented at its word. A series of prosecutions of officers of varying degrees of seniority followed,<sup>18</sup> up to and including Maj-Gen Igor Sventitskiy, military commissar of Maritime Territory, who failed to desist from ordering his soldiers to decorate his flat "even after the issue of Order No. 428".<sup>19</sup>

While Ivanov's promise of sacking guilty officers does not appear to have been followed through universally, sentences imposed are still much harsher than could previously have been expected. Prosecutors asked for three years behind bars for Col Vladimir Kontonistov, of the Glukhovo Guards Division of the Strategic Missile Forces, found guilty of hiring out both his soldiers and military equipment: he was fined R60,000 and banned from occupying command positions for three years.<sup>20</sup>

### Abuse of Office: Materiel

This new moral stand extends also to use of military property for entrepreneurial as well as downright dishonest purposes. A clear halt was called by President Putin when addressing senior commanders in November 2005: "We must completely eliminate the use of the Armed Forces' material base for any commercial objectives not connected to the activities of the Armed Forces and not in accordance with the objectives that the Russian nation has set for them."<sup>21</sup>

Again, the spectrum of illicit behaviours is enormous in breadth, ranging from a *ded*<sup>22</sup> taking all the food on his section's table up to thieving on a grand scale, which if not officially tolerated did also appear at times to be an almost universally expected practice – with the exception of particularly spectacular examples such as exporting aircraft as scrap metal or selling anti-air missiles from Navy stores in St Petersburg.

But the point on this spectrum at which officers can expect serious consequences appears to have shifted. Prosecutions of senior officers for offences which have long been seen as peccadilloes barely worth mentioning are being regularly reported: Deputy Commander of the Siberian Military District Maj-Gen Vladimir Katanov, for instance, received a two-year suspended sentence for “borrowing” a military vehicle for his family's use.<sup>23</sup> Prosecutions of junior officers are also reported for the routine thieving of soldiers' meals for selling over the side, which might possibly be the first indication of a concerted effort to eliminate the practice – an effort which might, if an optimistic view is taken, eventually lead to an improvement in the quality and quantity of other ranks' food.<sup>24</sup> And officers who falsify travel warrants have begun to receive jail sentences, to their presumably considerable dismay: as the wife of one officer put it, “everybody trades in travel warrants, why should only he go to jail?”<sup>25</sup>

Clear-cut financial abuses on a grander scale in logistics organisations are also being targeted. There has been a marked increase in the incidence of prosecution of thieves and embezzlers of general rank, like Maj-Gen Pavel Khveshchuk, sentenced to three years for diverting payments for medical supplies,<sup>26</sup> and Lt-Gen Anatoliy Petrichenko, given 18 months for buying cigarettes at an inflated price.<sup>27</sup>

Although the extent of abuse is highlighted in regular figures released from the Audit Chamber, there should be little doubt that the overall impact of continuing theft and fraud is much greater than that which is actually detected. Despite apparent increased attempts at detection, conditions remain “nearly ideal for misappropriation and embezzlement: absolute secrecy, absence of civil control, an archaic system of accounting, lack of accountability”.<sup>28</sup> Even Chief Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinskiy complained in March 2007 that there was “no systematic work in the Armed Forces to prevent embezzlement”.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, it would appear that the new spirit of reporting crime has not penetrated to all corners of the Armed Forces, and old habits of concealment persist. The Black Sea Fleet reported that during the whole of 2006, and in the first two months of 2007, there were not only “no deliberate murders”, but also “no weapons or ammunition theft”. This would seem too out of character to be entirely consistent with plausibility: but if it is in fact true, it represents a major step forward.<sup>30</sup>

## **Society**

A recurring theme in the military's response to criticism over interpersonal relations is that the forces simply reflect the society they are drawn from. “Many don't understand that the Armed Forces can be neither better nor worse than the society that mans and forms them,” according to former Black Sea Fleet commander Adm Eduard Baltin.<sup>31</sup> Chief Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinskiy, the man most directly concerned with dealing with the consequences, agrees: “The army is not some isolated part of society that exists all by itself. Young people are drafted into the army from society, and they carry on behaving the way they are used to.”<sup>32</sup>



Sergey Ivanov repeatedly countered suggestions that the army is rife with criminality with statistics suggesting that the army behaves relatively well compared with Russian society at large. Addressing the State Duma in February 2006, Ivanov reeled off statistics to show that “the Armed Forces are at this time one of the most law-abiding institutions in our society” – and, in fact, already by this stage getting better not worse.<sup>33</sup> In particular, Ivanov focussed on the large proportion of crimes, including serious crimes, committed in civil society by minors. “These are the people who will soon be conscripted into the Armed Forces,” Ivanov pointed out: “that’s the kind of society we have”.<sup>34</sup>

In an English-speaking context it might be expected that the Armed Forces would take the social material they are provided with and improve it: but some of the Russian comments betray the attitude that although military service is supposed to be a formative experience, its effect is only supposed to be that you become a “real man” rather than a better one. Rear Adm Yuriy Nuzhdin:

“It is difficult to educate a citizen to high moral standards just by means of the Armed Forces. Both soldiers and officers arrive in the army as already formed personalities. Their attitude to service and to their fellow servicemen is a direct reflection of modern reality and unfortunate socio-economic circumstances. Both moral and material stimuli are needed.”<sup>35</sup>

To some extent this applies to officers as well. In a speech praising the qualities of Russian officers before decorating them, President Putin could only go so far as to say that through Russian history officer traditions had “*at times* served as a moral standard for the whole of society” (my emphasis).<sup>36</sup>

This is one of the reasons why it is largely pointless to attempt to measure the treatment of Russian conscripts by their superiors and each other by 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Western European values: the reality in which the Russian Armed Forces is grounded is entirely different. It has been pointed out that one of the paradoxes of Russia emerging from the Soviet period is that the USSR preserved and ossified a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century approach to military service and the role and expectations of individual soldiers in a mass army, while elsewhere this has been long superseded.<sup>37</sup> When looking at the master-servant relationship between *dedy* (senior conscripts in their last six months) and *dukhi* (new conscript entrants, the lowest form of Russian military life), or at officers hiring out their men by the hour or day, it is indeed tempting to listen for echoes of serfdom – officially abolished in Russia in the mid-1800s, but preserved in all but name in Soviet institutions like collective farms.

Other particularly Russian influences on military service are a generally higher tolerance of casualties and fatalities, and an extremely well-developed culture of suffering – a deep conviction, supported strongly by the moral teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church, that there is a virtue in suffering for its own sake as opposed to for a specific purpose. This finds an expression in the application of the military maxim “*tyazhelo v uchenii, legko v boyu*”, for which my own preferred translation is “train hard, fight easy” – with the concept being so stretched that a virtue is seen in the whole of military service being deeply and unnecessarily unpleasant, instead of specific training tasks being taxing. Another telling phrase is “teach you to love your Motherland”, “*uchit’ Rodinu lyubit*” – in older popular consciousness one of the purposes of military service, but a phrase which has entered the language at large as a reliable indicator that what follows will involve significant levels of entirely gratuitous pain and unpleasantness.

In this environment, conscripts also suffer unnecessarily through simple neglect even before any deliberate violence is directed towards them. Many arrangements for conscripts are made on the assumption that they can endure conditions which human beings cannot: witness, for example, the prohibition of train journeys of more than a certain duration in *obshchiy vagon*, the hardest of hard classes – unless, naturally, you are a soldier, in which case it is perfectly all right.<sup>38</sup> Often, of course, this assumption is entirely correct, but in other cases it leads to corrective action being taken, but only following high-profile cases including mass illness or death; for example the incident in 2004 where a contingent of conscripts bound for the Far East caught pneumonia en masse while deplaned for a refuelling stop at Novosibirsk's Tolmachevo airport. Conscripts are now being provided with uniforms before despatch to their receiving unit, and Tolmachevo now boasts a “comfortable” indoor transit and feeding area for servicemen.<sup>39</sup> But it seems safe to assume that without the media attention arising from sick or dead conscripts, under-clothed servicemen would still be standing around on the apron in the Siberian mid-winter; and in fact Pacific Fleet commander Adm Viktor Fedorov said that of the 2,400 conscripts received in the Spring 2006 draft, 1,670 were immediately found to have either a cold or pneumonia contracted during their journey to the Fleet.<sup>40</sup>

In this context it has also to be remembered that in terms relative to what is considered acceptable behaviour elsewhere, the depths of wickedness plumbed by *dedy* and officers are not so very much more abysmal than those frequented as a matter of routine by anybody else in Soviet, and subsequently Russian, society who was gifted with direct power over others. As military officials from Sergey Ivanov down regularly pointed out, *dedovshchina* is simply a more formalised (and not always more brutal) version of the stratified relations that exist in all sorts of Russian institutions and specific social groups, from kindergartens, to prisons, to the everyday street transactions of common or garden *gopniki* and *otmorozki*, two of the brutal and unenlightened substrata of the Russian underclass. In this respect Nuzhdin, Ivanov and others would appear entirely correct when they say that crime and violence in general, and *dedovshchina* in particular, cannot be eliminated entirely from the Armed Forces, since it is an integral feature of the society from which those forces are drawn.

### **Extortion and Bullying**

Bullying of junior conscripts is accompanied as a matter of course by demands for money. While extortion among junior soldiers may not always be a direct component of the *dedovshchina* system, the system certainly gives it ground rules and structure: as with for example the *stodnevka*, where in the last 100 days before discharge, a *dembel*<sup>41</sup> exacts daily tribute from junior conscripts in the form of cigarettes or money.

It is the pressure for money to satisfy extortion demands that tends to bring the practice to light and thereby to an end, as when conscripts beg parents or relatives for additional funds, or are forced out of their units and into criminal activity of one kind or another. Occasional cases receive a high profile in the media, tending to obscure the low-level background noise of persistent distinctly nasty practices. For example, the February 2007 scandal over junior soldiers being hired out as rent boys in St Petersburg received widespread attention both in Russia and abroad,<sup>42</sup> giving the impression that the situation is unique, despite numerous earlier instances across Russia. Similarly, while the case of conscript Roman Rudakov, apparently beaten and then left without medical care until his condition became so

serious he required an ileectomy, reaches the national headlines,<sup>43</sup> plenty of similar cases slip by almost unremarked.<sup>44</sup>

Even so, prosecutions for the less extreme instances of bullying and extortion are not as common as might be expected: the reluctance of witnesses to speak out and expose themselves to reprisals means prosecution is not easy, except perhaps when the perpetrators have conveniently filmed themselves in action.<sup>45</sup>

Although the classic picture of demanding money with menaces is between junior ranks, senior officers are also being called to account: just as with other forms of abuse of their position, generals are being prosecuted for extortion. A striking number of them held posts in the Far East Military District, as in the case of Maj-Gen Ilya Cherechukhin, Far East Military District commander of engineering troops, or Lt-Gen Oleg Raikhman, Far East Military District deputy commander for armaments,<sup>46</sup> or Lt-Gen Yevgeniy Feoktistov, military commissar for Khabarovsk Territory.<sup>47</sup>

Despite numerous reports from rights organisations indicating that officers are complicit in maintaining the *dedovshchina* system as the recognised means of keeping order, in units where abuse of junior soldiers apparently does not occur, this is attributed directly to the permanent presence of officers.<sup>48</sup> These seem to be the exceptions that prove the rule of a general lack of supervision in military units. A Northern Fleet sailor growing cannabis on the window-sill of his barrack block was said to harvest leaves only when the plants grew one metre tall: his activities only raised alarm when he started selling his produce to the crew of the strategic nuclear submarine Dmitriy Donskoy.<sup>49</sup>

There are mixed views on how the rule of the *dedy* will be affected by the combined influences of contractisation and the move to a 12-month conscription term. Since the system is founded on the six-monthly cycle of conscription intakes, optimism would suggest that the most severe manifestations of *dedovshchina* would die a natural death with the departure in March 2009 of the last batches of conscripts serving more than 12 months. The pessimistic view, predictably enough espoused by the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, is that following a period of disruption, a new and compressed form of *dedovshchina* will emerge, much as it is said to have done following the reduction from three years of army service to two in 1967.<sup>50</sup>

## Violence and Death

Openness over the true level of deaths in service took a major step forward when casualty and fatality figures began to be published with great fanfare in the media and reasonable prominence on the Ministry of Defence website, before quietly disappearing again during a website makeover in May 2006. Yet even these could not be taken as a reliable indicator, given differing methods of calculating the number of non-combat deaths.

The Mother's Right Foundation, relatively speaking fairly restrained in its condemnation of conditions of service, says that the real figures for deaths in service are much higher than those released by the Defence Ministry, on the basis that these do not include deaths in other militarised agencies such as the Interior Ministry or the Federal Security Service; and that in cases of murder where the body is not found, the victim will automatically be listed as a deserter. What may be a more significant omission is the soldiers who die from diseases or injuries

sustained in the Armed Forces but who have already been “transferred to the reserve” by the time of death. On this basis, and taking into account the number of applications from families of dead servicemen it claims to have received, the Mother’s Right Foundation estimates the number of annual non-combat deaths at 3,000.<sup>51</sup>

Yet all sources appear to agree on a recent improvement in the number of lives lost as a direct result of *dedovshchina*, with reported fatalities halving in the first half of 2006 compared to 2005, an improvement attributed to more action by the Military Prosecutor’s Office and better cooperation with the Ministry of Defence<sup>52</sup> following an apparent falling out after the high-profile case of Andrey Sychev in early 2006.<sup>53</sup>

The position of junior officers at present is unenviable, given the new uncertainty over where exactly the dividing line lies between hard training, “acceptable” chastisement in the absence of any other available form of punishment or encouragement, and gratuitous and punishable abuse. This is particularly the case in those units where supervision is made even more difficult by many junior officer posts remaining empty.<sup>54</sup> It is easy to go wrong: the 390<sup>th</sup> Marine Infantry Regiment saw a sentence of five years with loss of rank for Sen Lt Pavel Balyberdin for clear abuse, but other officers in the same unit suffered as a result of the prosecutors’ desire to make an example:<sup>55</sup> witness the suspended sentence of two years for Sen Lt Pavel Golovin for cracking a ruler over the top of a soldier’s helmet, apparently an isolated incident in exasperation at the soldier’s dangerously slow wits during live firing.<sup>56</sup>

This is not the only danger for officers. If any further illustration was needed of the fraught state of relations within the 390<sup>th</sup> Regiment while the trial was continuing, it was provided when another soldier from the unit broke into his platoon commander’s home to rape and murder his wife, characterised as an “act of revenge”.<sup>57</sup>

The occasional absence of even the most rudimentary form of social contract in the Armed Forces is evidenced by the regularity of acts of violence being directed not only against the most junior conscript soldiers as is commonly perceived, but also against junior NCOs and even officers. A list of essential qualities for a company commander in a Guards motor-rifle division included “sufficient physical development” for self-defence from subordinates.<sup>58</sup> At least this seems to be considered preferable to the alternative of shooting them.<sup>59</sup>

One happy exception that proves the rule is the sharp reduction in the numbers of conscripts who when placed on guard duty with loaded weapons take the opportunity to run berserk, killing a number of their colleagues and then either running or committing suicide. Previously a regular occurrence, the most recent incident of this kind, in February 2007, was described as “the first in several years”.<sup>60</sup>

## **New Challenges**

### **Ethnic Divisions**

Demographic change within Russia has both long-term and immediate consequences for the Armed Forces. The proportion of ethnic Russian to non-Russian conscripts is shifting rapidly, and this has disrupted the previous unofficial but careful apportioning of specific nationalities between units – recognition of the

fact that “more than three soldiers from the Caucasus could disrupt an entire company”.<sup>61</sup> With Caucasian numbers rising as rapidly as Russians are falling, the unofficial quota has reportedly gone out of the window: the result is that the disruption caused by ethnic Caucasians has reached a new level, much more threatening to the capability of entire units. Whereas previously individual Caucasians would be the terror of junior soldiers (and anecdotally renowned for relying on the Koran to justify their avoidance of any physical or menial work, while at the same time violently resisting any attempt to curb their alcohol consumption), now mass postings of Caucasians have led to the subversion of whole sub-units and at least one serious mutiny.<sup>62</sup>

A specific feature of domination of a unit by Caucasian nationals appears to be that rank is no obstacle to being in physical danger: unlike the standard scenario where *dedovshchina* and extortion are administered by the senior conscripts, Caucasian conscripts in particular, thanks to their extensive support network, are able to operate outside the established hierarchy and can subjugate NCOs and even junior officers.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile the Dagestani Soldiers’ Mothers Committee says that the fact that of 7,000 Dagestanis conscripted in 2006, 800 are already in disciplinary battalions, is simply evidence of violation of their rights.<sup>64</sup>

A less immediate challenge thrown into focus by this demographic shift is the potential change in attitude to conscription of Russia’s republics. According to the results of Russia’s 2002 census, Tatar nationals now make up slightly over 4 per cent of Russian citizens. This lends additional significance to efforts by Tatarstan to influence the conditions, and in some cases the location, of service by Tatars in the Russian Armed Forces: for example the intervention by President Mintimer Shaymiyev following the death by suicide of a Tatar conscript in December 2006.<sup>65</sup> If a significant source of manpower such as Tatarstan seeks to place caveats on its participation in the Federal Armed Forces, this will only exacerbate Russia’s looming manpower crisis, particularly as the demographic age profile of older ethnic Russians and younger other nationalities means this shift will only accelerate; not to mention the knock-on effect on those nationalities that feel a greater or lesser degree of ethnic kinship with the Tatars, or at any rate tend to be lumped together with them (for example the Chuvash) by those seeking “non-Russians” to victimise. A similar situation may soon arise in Chechnya, prompted by moves once again to send Chechens to serve in other parts of Russia.<sup>66</sup>

### **NCOs - *Serzhanty***

Moves towards introducing fully trained and experienced NCOs into the Armed Forces have been a long time coming, yet at the time of writing, little practical progress appears to have been made. Despite much noise being made about the importance of sergeants being contract servicemen instead of conscripts, it was only in 2005 that the Ground Forces proposed that “when making assignments to sergeants’ posts, it is necessary to have a rigid selection and competition process, rather than under pressure and as a random selection process” – because NCOs selected at random are “unreliable and ineffective, and they cannot and will not work without the immediate oversight and presence of officers”.<sup>67</sup>

Lack of appropriate training for potential NCOs is a major issue. It is still the case that a conscript can be selected for the parallel rudimentary basic training of “sergeant school” almost immediately he enters the Armed Forces, emerging after six months with rank badges but with no experience whatsoever of life in a line unit. A feature in a recent Military District newspaper was intended to highlight the

additional training given to NCOs, but its title gave the game away slightly: “A Sergeant’s Experience is Born through Tough Mistakes” – as opposed to training having anything to do with it.<sup>68</sup> Once again, the Russian forces are lagging behind those of Belarus, which have had a specialist NCO and technician training centre since 2001, with a corresponding much broader range of duties that can be delegated by officers to NCOs:<sup>69</sup> although as became clear from the startled reaction of a group of visiting Belarusian training officers to the UK’s Joint Services Warrant Officers Course in March 2007, there is still some way to go before even the Belarusians consider that anybody without a commission is endowed with the power of independent thought.

The need for a professional NCO class seems beyond dispute, with most discussion in the military press now focussing on how best to accelerate and finance its creation.<sup>70</sup> This applies not only to contract units: “the Ministry of Defence advocates establishing the institution of professional NCOs not only in permanent readiness units, but also in training sub-units and in so-called line units, where conscripted servicemen serve in rank and file positions”, Sergey Ivanov told senior commanders in November 2005.<sup>71</sup>

According to Col Nikolay Shutov of the Ground Troops Combat Training Directorate, the overhaul of training for professional NCOs is in fact under way, including plans to promote senior sergeants to warrant officer (*praporshchik*) level and do away with the atrophied status of *praporshchiki* as an administrative and technical caste outside the normal path of promotion.<sup>72</sup> But even if this training really is already in hand, a target has been set for the demise of the conscript sergeant which is surely over-ambitious. According to figures given by Ivanov to the State Duma in February 2006, there were 109,877 NCO posts in the Russian Armed Forces, and over half of them, 59,730, were occupied by conscripts. Ivanov promised that these posts would be filled by professional NCOs by 2008.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time one of the measures intended to prepare for the transition to a one-year term of conscription has been increasing the length of time a serviceman must serve in each rank before promotion, which has the effect of capping a conscript’s promotion prospects at *yefreytor* – or according to other sources, junior sergeant.<sup>74</sup> With the increase in the minimum time between promotions of junior ranks from three months to one year, the result should be that even junior NCOs will be greatly more experienced than they are at present: but once again it remains unclear how this measure will find practical implementation if there are simply not sufficient contract servicemen to go round.<sup>75</sup>

## **Junior Officers**

The Russian Armed Forces have for many years been reporting a state of chronic deficit of junior officers, connected in large part with a tendency to sign up to military higher education establishments for easy access to higher education, then resign from the military at the earliest opportunity. In addition, there has been concern that the low prestige and genuine poverty of an officer prevented many of the brightest and best from applying, meaning the quality of those junior officers who did stay in the forces left much to be desired. But there now seems to be a general feeling that things are looking up:

“Just a few years ago unit commanders were sounding the alarm not only about the young conscript replacements, but about those who chose service to the Motherland as their profession and arrived at units after

passing out from military educational establishments... Now the situation has changed completely. Over the last four or five years the quality of the young lieutenants has improved sharply.”<sup>76</sup>

There are mixed views, however, on the role of the “two-year lieutenants” serving their time after completion of civilian higher education in a kind of Russian short service limited commission. Immediately after Nikolay Pankov promised in April 2006 that there would be a sharp reduction in the numbers of two-year lieutenants as part of the overhaul of military education,<sup>77</sup> there was both delight at their promised demise and concern over the yawning gap that would be left when the supply of 7,500 civilian graduates a year dried up. With continuing severe shortages of junior officers, figures quoted at the time suggested that 32 per cent of company commanders and 80 per cent of platoon commanders had in fact graduated from civilian educational establishments, as opposed to being “proper” officers (*kadry*).<sup>78</sup>

Certainly many of the two-year lieutenants will not be missed. In many quarters the attitude towards them is something approaching contempt. Maj-Gen Sergey Skokov, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army, is a regular and outspoken critic:

“The training level of the overwhelming majority of officers remains extremely low... Of course, among the ‘two-year draftees’ one does find lieutenants who in the course of their service conscientiously perform their assigned duties. But this is the exception that proves the general rule – officers at the company level who have passed out from military institutes must do their own work and that of another youngster, thereby supporting the ‘two-year draftees’.

[Two-year lieutenants] spend the first 18 months trying to understand what they are doing in the army. During this time their professional skills and knowledge are very poor. Any second-year soldier knows more and can do more than this category of commanders. Later they master their job-related duties, but at this time a critical moment is reached: most of them... begin preparing for their discharge.”<sup>79</sup>

Skokov’s view of the general uselessness of the two-year lieutenants as anything more than placeholders is borne out by anecdotal evidence from the lieutenants themselves.<sup>80</sup> But the fact remains that even placeholders have a use in conditions of a continuing shortage of junior officers, even if not as severe as in the 1990s: in early 2006, Nikolay Pankov reported a shortfall of 6,700 junior officers, as part of a total 39,000 vacant officer posts, a fall from 10,500 and 45,000 five years earlier.<sup>81</sup>

One key effect of this shortage is to exacerbate the lack of supervision of conscripts in barracks, which only facilitates the worst excesses of *dedovshchina* as discussed above. Drastic interim action has been taken aimed at raising the prestige and authority of those directly responsible for morale and welfare: in February 2006 Ivanov announced that company commanders, and deputy company commanders *po vospitatel’noy rabote* (responsible for training and welfare), the successors to the *zampolity* (political officers), would be promoted en masse, from Captain to Major and from Senior Lieutenant to Captain respectively.<sup>82</sup> This mass leg-up, which according to one estimate affected about 30 per cent of all officers or over 100,000 people, was explicitly intended to combat bullying:<sup>83</sup> but a side-effect of the stipulation that the officers must have served in the unit for two years will be to make even clearer the distinction between regular officers and the two-year lieutenants.

One initiative aimed at facilitating the arrival of more junior officers in the forces is the creation on a limited basis of intensive junior officer training courses lasting 10 months. The courses are only for trainee officers who already have a complete or incomplete higher education and prior military experience, but they still meet opposition from those who believe that all regular officers should undergo a four or five year higher education course.<sup>84</sup>

## Proposed Solutions

### Priests and Policemen

Much debate has been devoted to the role of chaplains within the services, as an antidote to social ills. Although there is still no formal institution of military chaplains, some priests are attached to military units: one source puts the number of these priests at 1,500,<sup>85</sup> or half as many again as there are generals. In particular, Rear Adm Yuriy Nuzhdin, deputy Head of the Main Directorate for Morale and Welfare and an outspoken advocate of initiatives supporting serviceman's rights, thinks that the Church is an essential element of any plan to improve relations between servicemen.<sup>86</sup>

Proposals for a formal institution of chaplains have been widely misunderstood. Russia's Council of Muftis opposed them on the grounds that promoting the Russian Orthodox Church would be divisive in a multi-cultural society and army, apparently not realising that the proposals included imams for the forces:<sup>87</sup> although the head of the department of the Moscow Patriarchate responsible for working with the Armed Forces, Father Dmitriy Smirnov, probably did not advance the cause of multiculturalism by saying that no army rabbis would be required because "there are no Jews in the Russian army".<sup>88</sup>

But as Smirnov earlier put it,

"The clergy will not automatically solve the problem, that's plain. But there again, our police forces cannot resolve the crime problem. Should we disband them then? Of course, there will be some improvement [with chaplains], but sadly, human sin cannot be totally exterminated."<sup>89</sup>

Crucially, the role of chaplains under consideration appears strictly limited to ministering to servicemen's religious needs: nobody appears to be suggesting that they can provide even an informal alternative to the chain of command for soldiers wishing to air grievances.

In the wake of the Sychev case, there were also renewed calls for the establishment of a military police force. It was unfortunate that the term chosen to describe the service was "*politsiya*", a word with strong negative connotations for an older generation of Russians: this, and widespread incomprehension of the function and role of military police, made informed debate difficult.

Sergey Ivanov appeared to have been proposing the establishment of a military police agency similar to how we would understand it in a British context, as a component part of the military but with its own chain of command, and with a role in carrying out investigations as well as in visible maintenance of order. This point was missed entirely by, among others, Chair of the Union of Soldiers' Mothers Committees Valentina Melnikova, who said that military police would do no more



than “interfere in the work of the military prosecutor’s office... An investigation must take place, not an army in-service enquiry, which does no more than cover the traces – ‘he beat himself up’, ‘he tied himself up’, ‘he raped himself’. Crime in the army is hidden because the commanders and officers at various levels keep quiet about what has happened.”<sup>90</sup>

Perhaps less surprisingly, this objection to military police on the grounds that they would simply get in the way of the military prosecutors was echoed by former Chief Military Prosecutor Aleksandr Savenkov.<sup>91</sup> And very senior officers were also opposed to the introduction of a military police service on the grounds that it would duplicate existing structures, and be difficult to fund, man and equip.<sup>92</sup>

But other commentators argued that a military police service would provide a much-needed framework within which the existing structures could work:

“What should be done with the existing controlling, fiscal and punitive structures in the Armed Forces, commandant's office,<sup>93</sup> guardhouses, disciplinary battalions, patrols, investigators in garrisons, and finally military counter-intelligence? We should admit that together these structures are likely to resemble a palm with the fingers spread wide. Every one of these services has its own rather narrow sector. The gaps between these sectors should be filled by military police, armed in the legal, technical, and personnel sense.”<sup>94</sup>

As with many other innovations in military organisation, this is not the first time that a military police service has been proposed for the Russian army:<sup>95</sup> but the calls for a new service of this kind died down with the re-introduction of the much more familiar approach to maintaining order, guardhouse arrest.<sup>96</sup>

## **Incident Reporting**

Ivanov moved to dismantle some of the powerful disincentives for unit commanders to report any criminal activity or wrongdoing in their commands. In a directive dated 18 February 2006, he instructed that:

“Instances of commanders or leaders being subject to disciplinary procedures for crimes, incidents and the actions of their subordinates which were not a direct result of their [commanders’] actions or failure to act to prevent them should be eliminated. The personal disciplinary responsibility of commanders or leaders and the condition of the military or labour discipline of their subordinate personnel should be clearly demarcated.”

The directive went on to state that “the indiscriminate subjection of commanders or leaders and personnel to disciplinary measures when instances of crimes or incidents are detected should be eliminated,” and that commanders’ performance should be assessed “not by the number of crimes in their military unit or sub-unit, but by their precise observation of law and military regulations and their full use of their disciplinary authority”. Finally, as if there could be any doubt left as to Ivanov’s intention, the directive concluded that “timely and frank reports on crimes, incidents and misdemeanours must not be used as a basis for bringing disciplinary action against the reporting officials.”<sup>97</sup>

The Baltic Fleet was keen to point out that it already had rules to this effect in place: “The stance of the military council of the Baltic Fleet is unambiguous. Any attempt to hide a violation, or what is more a crime, will have far more lamentable consequences for commanders than an honest and timely report... More than 20 officers trying to hide gross violations have been punished.” The same spokesman also said that in the Baltic Fleet body checks of soldiers and sailors, with investigations of unexplained bruises, were routinely conducted after PT instead of being the exception as in the majority of units.<sup>98</sup>

Ground Troops C-in-C Col-Gen Aleksey Maslov was also strongly in favour of the reform: “No-one holds a factory director responsible for the number of criminal cases brought against his workers... In developed countries, the work of a commander is not assessed according to the number of crimes detected and solved – his work is assessed according to the general state of discipline and combat proficiency.”<sup>99</sup>

As always, a measure of this kind will only be effective if it is observed and implemented at all levels. But there is a positive precedent in the form of Belarus, which made this transition to punishing commanders for concealing incidents rather than for reporting them in 2002: according to the Belarusian Ministry of Defence, “as a result the number of crimes in the Belarusian army halved between 2001 and 2005 and the number of abuse cases fell by 40 per cent last year [2005] in comparison with the previous year.”<sup>100</sup>

Instead, both Ivanov and Putin have repeatedly insisted that it is attempts to conceal incidents which must be punished. Addressing the Prosecutor-General’s Office, Putin explicitly linked eliminating cover-ups to raising both the social standing and the combat-readiness of the Armed Forces.<sup>101</sup>

But once again, this measure has to overcome the deeply ingrained habit of concealing bad news instead of addressing its causes,<sup>102</sup> not to mention of castigating those officers in whose units crimes are committed: public naming and shaming of officers in whose units “the educational process has not eliminated incidents and crimes” is still not a thing of the past.<sup>103</sup>

## **Crime and Punishment**

Despite improvements in overall crime figures, the Main Military Prosecutor’s Office still deals with an astonishing amount of criminal activity: reporting on 2006, Col-Gen Sergey Fridinskiy said his 3,000-strong department had detected over 120,000 crimes and “restored the rights of” nearly 290,000 servicemen – over a quarter of the Armed Forces.<sup>104</sup>

The period from 2005 onwards has seen a remarkable increase in the number of officers charged with offences. It is not completely clear whether this is because of a sudden burgeoning of criminal instinct among officers as a whole, or whether it is simply the result of the sharply reduced tolerance of previously accepted practices as described above.<sup>105</sup> The latter was certainly the explanation favoured by Deputy Defence Minister Nikolay Pankov.<sup>106</sup>

By far the most significant innovation so far in 2007 is the re-introduction of guardhouse detention, apparently universally welcomed as a much-missed means of maintaining order in units since its abolition in 2002.<sup>107</sup> Under new service regulations, commanding officers can order summary punishment of up to five

days' detention, which is not counted towards a serviceman's overall time in service;<sup>108</sup> although despite what the regulation says, there seems to be continuing confusion in some areas about whether this needs to be confirmed by a court order.<sup>109</sup>

In any case, construction and re-construction of appropriate facilities is reported to have been undertaken across Russia; even though a cynic would say that the chances of all guardhouse detention facilities being as clean and comfortable as the "show cells" in Alabino are tolerably remote.<sup>110</sup>

Another symptom of the Armed Forces' willingness to embrace new concepts of disciplinary measures is the move to abolish the last five disciplinary battalions, which in March 2007 held 1,231 servicemen. Under the plan, servicemen who would previously have been sent to a disciplinary battalion will now serve sentences in civilian prisons: opponents point out that since the nature of disciplinary battalions ensures that their inmates never transgress again, they should be retained in their current form since civilian jails are a much less effective deterrent.<sup>111</sup> True to the pattern of pre-empting Russia in military reform, the Belarusian Ministry of Defence has already said its remaining disciplinary battalion has outlived its purpose.<sup>112</sup>

The outsourcing of incarceration may be aligned with a gradual programme for moving jurisdiction over courts martial out of the Armed Forces and subordinating it to the civilian judiciary, starting with the Military Board of the Supreme Court in 2007 and working down to District and garrison court structures "not before 2011".<sup>113</sup> One other legislative initiative which may in the long term have an effect is the long-overdue revised Law "On the Status of Servicemen", which passed its first reading in the State Duma in April 2006.<sup>114</sup> A key provision of the law is that the rights of servicemen should not be restricted other than by the exigencies of the service: it will be a long time, however, before the application of this law is tested in court.<sup>115</sup>

## **Education and Training**

The overhaul (or put more simply, mass closure) of military education departments at higher education institutions has been amply reported elsewhere. But it should be noted that for such a radical change to the way officers are trained, there is a key element missing: all statements and reports have been on closing down "surplus" military faculties, but there seems to have been next to no comment on overhauling the content of training at the remaining military educational establishments.

So in addition to the problem of the two-year lieutenants, there is also the issue of those officers who are supposed to have been "properly" trained joining the forces with inadequate or inappropriate knowledge. There is a belief that the funding chaos and reform attempts of the 1990s have left a training gap, where a decade's-worth of officers are lacking not only experience of commanding formations in action due to the lack of major exercises, but even basic military skills due to changes in the military syllabus in the immediate post-Soviet period.<sup>116</sup>

This is not to say that there does not appear to be any movement on training at all: one area where progress has been made is the belated recognition that a new approach to training is required for officers who will be dealing with contract servicemen, of which more below.<sup>117</sup> Another apparent innovation is the active

policy of exchanging officers to bring those with combat experience into direct training roles, a process particularly visible in the Airborne Assault Troops.<sup>118</sup>

Conscript training faces a much more immediate problem than that of officers. As Sergey Ivanov pointed out well before the term of conscript service was cut, “with the reduction in the duration of conscript service to 12 months, it will be practically impossible in this time to train a military specialist capable of competently operating the new-generation arms and equipment that the troops are acquiring.”<sup>119</sup> This concern is echoed across a range of units where advanced technical skills are required,<sup>120</sup> and it poses obvious difficulties for Russia’s programme of re-equipping with more complex and advanced weapons systems – especially as some areas of service are already thought beyond the capabilities of conscripts even with a two-year term of service, as for example serving on board the Caspian Flotilla’s new flagship, the Astrakhan.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile Airborne Assault Troops commander Col-Gen Aleksandr Kolmakov says that the new BMD-4 airborne infantry fighting vehicle will only be allocated to units manned by contract servicemen – not because there will not be enough of them to go around, but because they will be too difficult for one-year conscripts to get to grips with.<sup>122</sup>

The recognition that conscripts called up for one year will not be able to master complex equipment is the reason stated for the Navy’s plans to move to all-contract service, the deadline for which is now the end of 2008.<sup>123</sup> The Emergencies Ministry plans to do the same by the beginning of 2009.<sup>124</sup> Former Air Force commander Army Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov’s complaints at the poor quality and “mental instability” of each successive draft of conscripts became a ritual part of the conscription year, ammunition for those who argue that Russia needs an all-contract army because of the dangers posed by “sophisticated military hardware including ICBMs” in unstable hands.<sup>125</sup>

Proposed solutions include a rethink of where and for how long initial conscript training takes place. The Siberian Military District reported positive results from replacing the standard “Young Soldier’s Course” (*Kurs molodogo boytsa*) with a six-month training programme, not only in training standards but also in improving discipline and reducing crime rates.<sup>126</sup> And in addition to the re-introduction of basic military training in schools, sharp increases are planned in levels of pre-conscription training using the ROSTO (formerly DOSAAF) structure, to make up for the lack of training time while actually in service: Sergey Ivanov said programmes would be expanded to include training in over 40 trades before call-up.<sup>127</sup>

## **Welfare and Oversight**

Steps have been taken, apparently effectively, towards the opening up of military units to public view. The Ministry of Defence has encouraged the institution of voluntary parents’ committees, which have the notional right to visit military units and familiarise themselves with conditions of service,<sup>128</sup> and appear in some areas at least to be exercising it.<sup>129</sup>

The year 2006 also saw the introduction of rights ombudsmen who can respond to appeals from servicemen or investigate on their own initiative, and instructions issued on providing information to servicemen on their rights and entitlements.<sup>130</sup> This goes hand in hand with a programme to improve access to such information by providing internet access in all units, whose progress is naturally difficult to confirm independently; and the regular publication of helplines, hotlines, and

guidelines, which is far more visible to the outside world.<sup>131</sup> These measures together should go a long way towards changing the almost monastic isolation (both by means of rules and of geography) which a significant proportion of Russian conscripts continue to endure, while also rendering the internal proceedings of barrack blocks more visible to the outside world.

At the highest level, the section of Russia's Public Chamber charged with oversight of servicemen's rights appears to be pursuing its remit with vigour: there are indications that the Public Chamber is in fact exercising its right to carry out snap inspections of units, in company with Orthodox and Muslim chaplains.<sup>132</sup>

We may well be seeing the beginning of a trend of the military at all levels recognising the benefits of greater engagement with rights organisations.<sup>133</sup> An early indication of how things may progress comes with the opening up of conscription commissions, stemming from the official recognition that every conscription campaign involves illegal activity by recruitment offices in both directions – both accepting bribes to leave young men off the list, and “pressing” those who have a legitimate right to avoid service.<sup>134</sup>

## **Service Options**

### **Conscription**

The result of the moves to professionalism in technical arms described above is likely to be that an even larger proportion of conscripts will be sent to the Ground Troops than at present:<sup>135</sup> but without severe contraction of the Army they will not avoid the impending collision between the desire to raise the bar for entry as a conscript, and the rapidly reducing demographic resources available.

Greater transparency in the conscription process ought in theory to result from the broader composition of the draft commissions, including representative parents.<sup>136</sup> A clear symptom of this movement comes in information on conscription arrangements for Spring 2007 provided by the Siberian Military District: not only are recruitment offices now permitted to work directly with the media instead of passing all communications through the District public relations office, but the contact number for the local prosecutor's office (where complaints about the initial conscription process would have to be made) is listed alongside those of the local recruitment offices.<sup>137</sup>

The standards set for conscripts, and the quality of selection methods, are supposed to have been raised, and not before time. Figures released in mid-2006 pointed to the continuing inadequacy of the mental or psychological screening of potential conscripts, with “psychological disturbances” accounting for 23.8 per cent of all conscripts discharged in their first three months of conscript service.<sup>138</sup> More positively, there is a consistent claim that as a result of screening and prevention measures, “there are no HIV positive conscript servicemen now”.<sup>139</sup>

Despite this progress, a lack of clarity appears to persist over what exactly a conscript is for if his term of service is insufficient for him to be trained as a useful soldier.<sup>140</sup> This was illustrated by the “experiment” held during 2006 of trade training for conscripts leading to professional qualifications:<sup>141</sup> the hostile reaction made it abundantly clear that the notion of gaining a useful qualification during

army service ran directly counter to received notions of what army service was all about.

### **Alternative Civilian Service**

In 2004, the first year when an Alternative Civilian Service (AGS) option was available, “about 1,500” applications for alternative service were submitted, of which 1,005 were granted in principle.<sup>142</sup> Since then, the numbers applying have fallen sharply, and the numbers accepted even more so,<sup>143</sup> to the extent that some Military Districts are now able to count their alternative servicemen on their fingers.<sup>144</sup>

The application procedure for alternative service, and the conditions attached to undergoing it, provided plenty of explanations for its lack of exponents. For one thing, candidates needed to convince their local conscription office of their eligibility, which it can be imagined was not always a simple task. The standard term of alternative service is almost double that of military service, and so until 2007 stood at 42 months, three and a half years. Pay and working conditions for alternative servicemen reflected the grim material situation of conscripts, but with none of the benefits of being fed, watered and housed by the army.

All of these factors are now subject to change. The new composition of the draft commissions should facilitate the initial application, and the tight criteria for eligibility have been loosened. The term of service is falling in line with the term of conscription, and so will eventually be just 21 months. Options are appearing of paid work in defence institutions, which removes the financial disincentive; and, at the time of writing, there is a move to divorce alternative service from the extra-territorial principle of conscription – which would remove one more serious practical obstacle.<sup>145</sup> With all of these points considered, it would be surprising if alternative service did not see a resurgence in interest in 2008.

### **Contract Service**

Many writers who have observed difficulties with implementing the contract manning programme blame the low salaries on offer. Yet Commander of the Moscow Military District Col-Gen Vladimir Bakin noted, quite possibly in good faith, that “about 50 per cent” of contract servicemen consider the contract pay to be good, with many of them sending two-thirds of their salaries to their families.<sup>146</sup>

The widely differing attitudes to the level of contract pay are not only a result of the huge variations in pay scales in different trades and different parts of the country, or of the generous bonuses paid to any soldier or officer serving in a unit which is officially contract-manned. There is also the baseline with which this pay is compared: the salary expectations of a contract serviceman from an economically depressed rural area will be impossibly remote from those of a young urbanite from St Petersburg, for example, as will of course their attitude to the living conditions they face on arrival at their unit.<sup>147</sup> But even if the pay is considered adequate, failure to provide the additional facilities and benefits promised for contract servicemen leads to a far more rapid turnover than planned. As observers began to point out at an early stage in the contract programme, “it does not take long after arrival at a unit for them to start to wonder ‘Where am I? What am I doing here? Where are the promised benefits?’”<sup>148</sup> And indeed, many contract servicemen do not see out their contracted term of service, despite the introduction of financial

penalties for ending the contract early,<sup>149</sup> and the generous incentives for renewing a contract, such as the housing accounts intended to provide sufficient for a deposit on a provincial city flat (a hopelessly inadequate amount for anything in Moscow) after three years of service, with strings attached intended to ensure that the serviceman remains in the forces for a great deal longer.<sup>150</sup>

The great majority of those breaking their contracts early cite the failure to provide the promised accommodation and facilities as their main reason. This is symptomatic of an institutional failure to understand that volunteer soldiers cannot be treated in the same way as conscripts, and in particular, promises have to be delivered or the volunteers are likely to walk away – because they can. Moreover it is frequently overlooked that older servicemen may well have families, and that it follows that the new accommodation provided should include married quarters. As one officer dealing with contract servicemen put it, “permanent readiness can demand a lot, but not a vow of celibacy”.<sup>151</sup>

In addition, contract servicemen continue to experience difficulty accessing all the payments and bonuses they are entitled to.<sup>152</sup> Even the Airborne Forces, whose 76<sup>th</sup> Pskov Airborne Assault Division pioneered the contract “experiment”, is seeing a rapid outflow of professional soldiers for precisely these reasons, with a crisis predicted in 2007-8 when the majority of three-year contracts expire.<sup>153</sup>

Another key problem undoubtedly lies in the short duration of the contracts. Setting contract engagement at just three years allows volunteers, in the words of First Deputy Defence Minister Army Gen Aleksandr Belousov, to “choose contract service not as their vocation and lifelong profession, but as a chance for temporary income. This breeds the psychology of the temp worker – they come, they earn, they leave.”<sup>154</sup>

Now that the difficulties of contract service are becoming well publicised, some areas are experiencing evident difficulty in finding anybody willing to sign up for contract service,<sup>155</sup> accompanied by persistent and widespread reports that at least some of those transferring from conscript to contract service were forced to sign against their will.<sup>156</sup>

The impact of this shortage of willing contract servicemen is likely to become more pronounced as manpower requirements become more sophisticated and specialised as Russia’s military modernisation programme continues. It bodes ill, for example, for plans for recruiting 3,000 contract servicemen with specific skills to man the two new Caucasus mountain infantry brigades, even following the huge investment in new infrastructure in Botlikh and Zelenchukskaya. Recruiting is planned to commence in May 2007, but it remains unclear where sufficient suitable and willing servicemen are to be found:<sup>157</sup> this was perhaps recognised with the announcement that 400-500 Internal Troops servicemen are to be transferred in to the new brigades.<sup>158</sup>

There are other aspects of the transfer to contract service which appear to have taken military planners by surprise. For example, the classic Soviet / Russian training schedule which appears still to dominate in most units simply will not work in a situation with a constant rotation of personnel, as servicemen arrive at the beginning of their contract and leave at the end, individually and sporadically instead of in large predictable regular batches as with conscripts.<sup>159</sup>

Officer training also appears to need a certain adjustment. Recognition that entirely new skills and qualities are required for commanding professional soldiers seems to

be slow in dawning. In September 2005, *Krasnaya Zvezda* carried a lengthy feature with advice from a group of military psychologists on the novel problem facing junior officers in contract units, of dealing with subordinates who are older and probably more experienced than they. Tact was required, the feature concluded, in terms which made it clear this was a radical new departure from any established way of doing things in the army.<sup>160</sup> Aleksandr Belousov thinks that “it will take 10 years before the officers figure out who they are dealing with”.<sup>161</sup>

## Conclusion

### The View from the Top

As well as the direct measures outlined above, a new campaign to increase the efficiency of defence spending may have the side effect of significantly improving the everyday lives of junior servicemen. New Defence Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov is bringing in specialists from his previous post in the Federal Tax Service to look closely at the finances not only of Ministry of Defence departments, but also of senior individuals, prompting the sudden resignation of a number of top generals.<sup>162</sup> There are early signs that he may be taking a radical new approach to finding out the real state of his domain. The Nakhimov Academy in St Petersburg was the setting for a well-publicised cadet suicide in January 2007.<sup>163</sup> In late March, it received an unannounced visit by Serdyukov via the back gate - which led to the precipitate departure of the Academy’s commander, Rear Adm Aleksandr Bukin, and a public rebuke for Leningrad Military District Commander Army Gen Igor Puzanov over the “disgraceful conditions”.<sup>164</sup> If Serdyukov is indeed unwilling to play by the rules, this should lead either to accelerated change or his own departure in short order.

In this way direct measures to improve welfare at the bottom could go hand in hand with top-level organisational reform. An example is the long-planned organisational overhaul intended to improve supply, including the feeding of conscripts; it has long been the case that an unlucky conscript can arrive at a unit where the feeding is truly abysmal and injurious to health, even before his meal is stolen by senior soldiers. One of the stated aims of contracting out catering is to resolve this issue: it is too late to tell how far-reaching the practical effect may be,<sup>165</sup> but it is unlikely to make things very much worse. Officer housing is another area where a programme of improvements, moribund despite repeated calls for action, has again been suddenly revitalised by substantial injections of cash.

Despite the apparent high level of activity aimed at improving conditions of service, when reviewing edicts and pronouncements issuing from the very top of the Armed Forces it is vital to remember the difficulty of ensuring that initiatives permeate to all the furthest reaches of Russia’s enormous and scattered military. This was illustrated in July 2006, when the 433<sup>rd</sup> Motor-Rifle Regiment of the 27<sup>th</sup> Motor-Rifle Division was suddenly discovered to be supplying itself and nearby villages from its own farm, some time after permanent-readiness units were supposed to have given up such unmilitary activities as farming in favour of centralised supply.<sup>166</sup> If the keeping of cattle and pigs can go unnoticed by higher command, this is not a good omen for addressing much less visible aspects of soldier welfare.

### Recruiting Prospects

There is evidence of a dawning consciousness that if the Armed Forces have a negative image in society, this is not necessarily due to some defect in society itself,



but in fact internal processes within the forces might have some bearing on this image.<sup>167</sup>

This finds expression in a number of ways, from the new engagement with parents and rights organisations, to the shift in emphasis in external publicity aimed at potential recruits: from unsubtle recruitment tools like the Paratrooper Stepanov cartoon, to television features and advertisements produced with much more of an eye to what is likely to motivate modern Russian 18-year-olds. This latter adjustment is further evidenced by a subtle shift in the tone of newspaper invitations (to both men and women) to train with ROSTO or to sign up as specialists: from bald announcements, some of these have turned into something far more akin to a recruiting advertisement,<sup>168</sup> perhaps signalling a new recognition that if Russia is to grow an army substantially based on contract servicemen, new entrants to the services may have to be enticed rather than coerced.

Nonetheless the Russian army appears still to need to decide whether it is at heart still a mass conscript army as throughout its previous history, or whether it can indeed be smaller and include volunteer professionals: it would appear that the same blanket methods cannot be applied to both, or the volunteers vote with their feet. And in the undecided meantime, the impression continues that “there is no real army in Russia, there is just a certain number of people in military uniform”, as Duma deputy Viktor Alksnis has put it.<sup>169</sup>

### **Rapid Reform?**

In the context of social change within a conservative military institution, it may not be too far-fetched here to draw an analogy with the Royal Navy at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: the dramatic increases in seamen’s pay in 1797, followed shortly by the first prohibitions on immediate and arbitrary forms of violent punishment and encouragement (“starting”), and the gradual rolling back of shipboard privileges which to the modern eye look like institutionalised theft of public property, all find parallels in today’s Russian Armed Forces. The point here is that despite these novelties appearing radical at the time, it still took generations before the Royal Navy became a recognisably modern professional force rather than relying in substantial measure on impressment and coercion; and only occasionally could it evolve more swiftly than the society from which it was drawn. So it may prove with the Russian Armed Forces: change is occurring, but it is likely to remain pointless judging Russian soldier welfare by Western standards for many years to come.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> FBIS: *Informatsionno-Analiticheskoye Agentstvo Marketing i Konsalting*, 14 March 2006, “Russia: Assessment, Adm Baltin Interview, Opinion Poll on State of Armed Forces”.

<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 13 February 2007, “*Etot nedeshhevyy asimmetrichnyy otvet*”. The defence budget is reported to have grown from R578bn in 2005 to R667bn in 2006 and R800bn in 2007.

<sup>3</sup> BBC Monitoring: *RIA Novosti*, 21 March 2007, “Defence spending to keep rising, minister says”. The headline figures are of course not the end of the story: for a look at obscurity and fudge in the spending figures presented publicly, see Irina Isakova, “Russian Defense Reform: Current Trends”, November 2006, at

<https://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB740.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Isakova, *op.cit.*; International Herald Tribune, 07 February 2007, “Russia's defense minister lays out ambitious plans for new weapons purchases”; [www.defense-aerospace.com](http://www.defense-aerospace.com), 08 February 2007, “Russia to Spend \$189bn on Weapons by 2015”

<sup>5</sup> Russian Military Review, April 2006, “Reliable Security of the Country is the Principle [sic] Condition of its Stable Development”. It is difficult and often misleading to generalise about Russian military pay, since individual circumstances vary so widely depending on the particular combination of rank pay, trade and qualification pay (the basic *oklady*), and a huge range of multipliers and bonuses that can be applied to one or both of those figures.

<sup>6</sup> FBIS: *Informatsionno-Analiticheskoye Agentstvo Marketing i Konsalting*, 14 March 2006, “Russia: Assessment, Adm Baltin Interview, Opinion Poll on State of Armed Forces”.

<sup>7</sup> Mikhail Moshkin, *Gazeta*, 22 February 2006, “*Bez vraga i oruzhiya*”

<sup>8</sup> *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 19 February 2007, “*Serdyukov poobeshchal idti 'kursom Ivanova'*”

<sup>9</sup> *Rossiia*, 01 March 2007, “*V boy za Rodinu poydem?*”

<sup>10</sup> Yuliya Taratuta, *Kommersant*, 26 January 2007, “*Otlichniki statisticheskoy podgotovki*” and Vitaliy Denisov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 12 January 2007, “*Prioritety voyennoy Femidy*”

<sup>11</sup> Valeriy Panyushkin, *Vedomosti*, 17 January 2007, “*1200. Mirnyy god*”

<sup>12</sup> Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) Statistical Notice 30 March 2007: Suicide and Open Verdict Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces 1984-2006; <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/publications/pdfs/suicide/suicideMar07.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Russian Ministry of Defence website at [www.mil.ru](http://www.mil.ru): 16 February 2007, “*Voyennyi sovet SibVO rassmatrivayet voprosy kontraktnoy sluzhby i voinskoy distsipliny*”

<sup>14</sup> Mikhail Vyugin, *Vremya Novostey*, 03 February 2006, “*Mesyachnik dedovshchiny*”

<sup>15</sup> For an example of an investigation detecting contracted-out soldiers who were entirely satisfied with their “exploitation”, see FBIS, *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 09 March 2006, “*Moscow Military Prosecutor Investigates Charges of Exploitation of Enlisted Men*”

<sup>16</sup> Conversely, for a well-publicised incident of contracting-out with a lethal outcome, see FBIS, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 February 2006, “*Russia: Military Procurator Interviewed on Crimes Committed by Officers*”

<sup>17</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 11 October 2005, “*'Arenda' soldat zapreshchena*”

<sup>18</sup> BBC Monitoring: Interfax, 07 December 2005, “*Russian Military Prosecutor to File Charges against Sochi Commander*”

<sup>19</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 November 2005, “*Pridetsya otvechat*”; *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 02 November 2005, “*S kazhdogo 150 rubley, summa dva goda*” Not discouraged, six months later Sventitskiy received a stiff jail sentence for fraudulently obtaining a second flat: see *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 June 2006.

<sup>20</sup> *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 03 February 2006, “*60 tys. rubley*”. The guidelines still seem a little hazy: prosecutors also asked for three years for Col Nasim Nazarov, tried on a range of charges, but Nazarov got off with a fine and one year suspended, because an injured soldier “had not been forced to work: he was only sent to the private businessman’s premises to keep an eye on a bulldozer which belonged to his unit”. BBC Monitoring: *Mayak* radio, 16 February 2007, “*Russian colonel gets 'amazingly lenient' sentence in alleged army slavery case*”.

<sup>21</sup> FBIS: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 10 November 2005, “*Putin Attacks Chronic Commercialization of Russian Armed Forces*”

<sup>22</sup> Senior soldier, ordinarily in the last six months of conscription.

<sup>23</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 30 September 2005, “*Priyekhali...*”

<sup>24</sup> Aleksey Kozachenko, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 04 February 2006, “*Na golodnom payke*”. Another long-accepted practice which seems now to have fallen into disfavour is the hiring out of military equipment for entertainment purposes, like range days for private individuals: see BBC Monitoring, *NTV*, 11 April 2007, “*Organizers of military safari arrested in Urals*”.

<sup>25</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 06 December 2006. The sums involved can be substantial, as with the aptly-named Maj Nikolay Proday, who embezzled R3.5m using this method over 18 months in 2002-3, and was sentenced to four years in March 2007: BBC Monitoring: *ITAR-TASS*, 28 March 2007, “*Former head of military unit's financial agency jailed in Moscow Region*”

<sup>26</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 27 December 2006

<sup>27</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 June 2006, “*Stoimost' sigaret*”

<sup>28</sup> Viktor Myasnikov, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 12 May 2006, “*V armii razbazarili 70 millionov dollarov*”

- <sup>29</sup> FBIS: *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 30 March 2007, “Main Military Prosecutor 29 Mar Statement on Army Corruption Viewed”
- <sup>30</sup> *Flag Rodiny*, 23 January 2007 and 20 March 2007
- <sup>31</sup> FBIS, Adm Baltin Interview, op.cit.
- <sup>32</sup> BBC Monitoring: *ITAR-TASS*, 06 April 2007, “Criminal punishment alone will not end hazing in army – prosecutor”
- <sup>33</sup> FBIS: Russian Ministry of Defence website, 15 February 2006, “Russia: Transcript of Sergey Ivanov’s Duma Speech”
- <sup>34</sup> Mikhail Moshkin, *Gazeta*, 29 March 2006, “*Dovol’no zakonoposlushnyy chelovek s ruzh’yem*”
- <sup>35</sup> Irina Pavlyutkina, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 February 2006, “*Kak zashchitit’ cheloveka s ruzh’yem*”
- <sup>36</sup> BBC Monitoring: Channel One TV, 22 February 2007, “Putin praises Russian officer traditions”
- <sup>37</sup> For a detailed and fascinating exploration of this idea, see Joris van Bladel, “The All-Volunteer Force in the Russian Mirror: Transformation without Change”, University of Groningen, 2004.
- <sup>38</sup> Although even here the rules have been tightened so that soldiers travelling in *obshchiy vagon* have a little more breathing space.
- <sup>39</sup> Taras Rudyk, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 04 February 2006, “*Kholodno li prizyvniku na aerodrome?*”
- <sup>40</sup> Viktor Siryk, *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, 16 August 2006, “*Kak upravlyayem, tak i zhivem*”
- <sup>41</sup> A conscript shortly to be discharged – from *demobilizatsiya*.
- <sup>42</sup> For instance BBC Monitoring: *Ekho Moskvyy*, 12 February 2007, “Rights activists against cover-up of rape, bullying in army”, Natalya Shergina, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 13 February 2007, and BBC News Online, “Russian soldiers ‘used for sex’”, 13 February 2007, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6356707.stm>
- <sup>43</sup> See for example Artem Kostyukovskiy, *Gazeta*, 16 January 2007, “*Bol’nogo soldata prizvali po zakonu*”
- <sup>44</sup> Searching the media for “bullying” (*dedovshchina*) or “suicide” in the same week will bring up no shortage of examples.
- <sup>45</sup> Dmitriy Marakulin, *Kommersant*, 08 February 2007, “*Dembelya sobrali uliki na sebya*”
- <sup>46</sup> Ilya Sergeyev, *Vremya Novostey*, 16 February 2007, “*Otkatnoye oruzhiye*”
- <sup>47</sup> *Novyye Izvestiya*, 18 January 2007, “*Pis’mennyye pokazaniya*”
- <sup>48</sup> *Na boyevom postu*, 17 March 2007, “*Bumerang imeyet svoystvo vozvrashchat’sya*”
- <sup>49</sup> *Trud*, 26 January 2007, “*‘Dur’ pod periskopom*”. Some would say that successfully growing cannabis under natural light in the Arctic is a considerable achievement in itself.
- <sup>50</sup> For examples of this debate, see Igor Plugatarev, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 14 March 2007, “*Dedovshchine ostalos’ nedolgo zhit*” and FBIS: *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, 04 April 2007, “Russia: Mobilization Chief Smirnov Interviewed on Changes to Draft Service”; for the Soldiers’ Mothers’ view, see *Novyye Izvestiya*, 28 March 2007, “*Zavist’ na polgoda*”
- <sup>51</sup> Aleksandr Kolesnichenko, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 29 March 2006, “*Ubitykh obyavlyayut dezertiram*”; Aleksandr Kolesnichenko, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 21 February 2007, “*Diviziya pavshikh*”
- <sup>52</sup> Yuliya Taratuta, *Kommersant*, 24 August 2006, “*Rabota nad oshibkami: glavnaya voyennaya advokatura*” ; see also interview with Sergey Fridinskiy in *Vremya Novostey*, 24 August 2006
- <sup>53</sup> BBC Monitoring editorial, 20 March 2006: “Russian TV highlights rift between army and prosecutors over bullying case”
- <sup>54</sup> Aleksey Chernyshev, *Kommersant*, 27 January 2007, “*Matrosy posadili kapitanov*”
- <sup>55</sup> *Kommersant*, 31 January 2007, “*Morskaya pekhota neset poteri v sude*”
- <sup>56</sup> *Kommersant*, 09 February 2007, “*Morpekha prigovorili za lineyku*”
- <sup>57</sup> Dmitriy Klimov, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 15 February 2007, “*Mest’ za disbata*”
- <sup>58</sup> Aleksandr Khrolenko, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 16 June 2006, “*Ostryye ugly stanovleniya*”. A celebrated official statement by the Russian Ministry of Defence in the mid-1990s of non-combat casualties for the year included a figure for fatalities among officers, “not all of whom were killed by their subordinates” [sic].

- <sup>59</sup> For an example of an officer defending himself with lethal consequences, see *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 06 September 2006, “*Ofitser zastrelil strochnika po doroge v postel*”
- <sup>60</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 07 February 2007
- <sup>61</sup> Natalya Ostrovskaya, *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 20 February 2007, “*Novobrantsy s Kavkaza berut v zalozhniki polki*”
- <sup>62</sup> Viktor Baranets, *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 21 February 2007, “*Pir 'yastrebov*”
- <sup>63</sup> For an example of this see *Trud*, 23 March 2007, “*Serzhant s fingalom*”
- <sup>64</sup> BBC Monitoring: The Caucasus Times, 06 April 2007, “Rights of Dagestani conscripts violated in Russian army – campaigner”. An apparent tendency to blame everything on Dagestanis should be treated with caution given the tendency, in military idiom if not elsewhere, to label all Caucasian ethnicities collectively as *dagestantsy*.
- <sup>65</sup> Ernest Filippovskiy, *Kommersant*, 03 February 2007, Olga Gorbunova, *Gazeta*, 22 December 2006, “*Soldat povesihsya, ne vyderzhav izdevatel'stv*”; *Novaya Gazeta*, 05 March 2007, “*Pora i chast' znat*”.
- <sup>66</sup> Maryam Magomedova, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 06 March 2007, “*Budem otpravlyat', yesli pridet prikaz*”; BBC Monitoring: The Caucasus Times, 07 April 2007, “Chechen men to be called up to Russian army soon”
- <sup>67</sup> FBIS: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 11 October 2006, “Russia; Ground Troops Official Discusses Plans for Revamped Sergeants' Corps”
- <sup>68</sup> *Suvorovskiy Natisk*, 15 March 2007, “*Serzhantskiy opyt, syn trudnykh oshibok*”
- <sup>69</sup> See Dr Steven J Main, “Belarus' 72<sup>nd</sup> Guards Unified Training Centre for NCOs & Junior Specialists”, Conflict Studies Research Centre, August 2004
- <sup>70</sup> For example, the full-page *Krasnaya Zvezda* feature on 22 October 2005, “*Armiya nachinayetsya s serzhanta*”, which reviewed positive foreign role models but was hazy on how to apply them in Russia.
- <sup>71</sup> BBC Monitoring: “Russia: Transcript of Ivanov's Speech at Military Leadership Conference”, 09 November 2005, Russian Ministry of Defence website
- <sup>72</sup> BBC Monitoring: NTVMir TV, 05 March 2006, “*Smotr*”; see also FBIS: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 11 October 2006, “Russia; Ground Troops Official Discusses Plans for Revamped Sergeants' Corps”
- <sup>73</sup> FBIS: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 February 2006, “Many Deputies' Critical of Russian Defense Minister Ivanov Discipline Report”
- <sup>74</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 March 2007, “*Voyennykh razdelili na kostyak i myaso*”. *Yefreytor* is habitually translated as corporal, although senior private might be more apposite. See also FBIS: *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 30 March 2007, “Russia: Officer Corps ‘Extremely Negative’ on Putin Extending Time in Grade”
- <sup>75</sup> Mikhail Falalayev, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 22 March 2007, “*Do novoy zvezdy pridetsya dosluzhit*”
- <sup>76</sup> *Tikhookeanskaya Vakhta*, 15 February 2007, “*Sluzhit' budem tam, gde nuzhno*”
- <sup>77</sup> *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 21 April 2006
- <sup>78</sup> *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 12 May 2006
- <sup>79</sup> Aleksandr Bugay, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 March 2006, “*Armiya sil'na dukhom*”
- <sup>80</sup> See for example <http://schwejk.livejournal.com/22316.html>, a blog by a *pidzhak* who appears to consider himself every bit as much a waste of space in the military as Skokov thinks he is.
- <sup>81</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 14 March 2006, “*Armiya: ot otboya do podyema*”: interview with Deputy Defence Minister Army Gen Nikolay Pankov; Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 24 March 2006, “*Voyennaya reforma nachnetsya s vostoka*”
- <sup>82</sup> Yuliya Taratuta, *Kommersant*, 15 March 2006, “*Minoborony zvezd ne khvatayet*”
- <sup>83</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 14 March 2006, “*Armiya: ot otboya do podyema*”: interview with Deputy Defence Minister Army Gen Nikolay Pankov
- <sup>84</sup> Taras Rudyk, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 16 January 2007, “*Nuzhen li nam takoy vzvodnyy?*”
- <sup>85</sup> Vladimir Semiryaga, *Rossiya*, 02 March 2006, “*Prikaz – verit*”
- <sup>86</sup> BBC Monitoring: *Ekho Moskv*y radio, 14 February 2006, “Russia: Chaplains mooted as cure for army bullying”
- <sup>87</sup> Mikhail Pozdnyayev, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 13 March 2006, “*Musulmane vyshli iz stroya*”
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>89</sup> BBC Monitoring: *Ekho Moskv*y radio, 14 February 2006, “Russia: Chaplains mooted as cure for army bullying”

- <sup>90</sup> Margarita Kondratyeva, *Gazeta*, 1 February 2006, “*Na bor’bu s dedovshchinoy brosyat voyennuyu politsiyu*”
- <sup>91</sup> Aleksandr Mikhaylov, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 07 February 2006, “*Neustavnoy sindrom*”
- <sup>92</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 14 March 2006, “*Armiya: ot otboya do podyema*”: interview with Deputy Defence Minister Army Gen Nikolay Pankov
- <sup>93</sup> *Komendantskaya sluzhba*: in some ways an equivalent to the British Army’s Regimental Police as opposed to a distinct police force.
- <sup>94</sup> Nikolay Poroskov, *Vremya Novostey*, 10 March 2006, “*Oprichnina protiv dedovshchiny*”
- <sup>95</sup> Aleksey Nikol’skiy, *Vedomosti*, 07 February 2006, “*Nepobedimaya dedovshchina*”
- <sup>96</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 05 September 2006, “*Voyennykh politseyskikh zamenyat komendantskiye*”
- <sup>97</sup> “*Direktiva o povyshenii obyektivnosti otsenki deyatel’nosti komandirov (nachal’nikov) v Vooruzhennykh Silakh Rossiyskoy Federatsii po ukrepleniyu voynskoy (trudovoy) distsipliny*”, 18 February 2006, <http://www.mil.ru/articles/article12351.shtml> as at 20 March 2006
- <sup>98</sup> Viktor Illarionov, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 07 February 2006, “*Sinyak na uchete*”
- <sup>99</sup> FBIS: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 February 2006, “*Russia: Ground Troops C-in-C Maslov Inspects Far East MD*”
- <sup>100</sup> Aleksey Nikol’skiy, *Vedomosti*, 22 February 2006, “*Dokladyvat’ o dedovshchine*”
- <sup>101</sup> BBC Monitoring: *RIA Novosti*, 03 February 2006
- <sup>102</sup> See for example *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 08 June 2006, “*O gore-komandirakh gorevat’ ne stanem!*” on the difficulty of effecting improvements in soldiers’ welfare without the cooperation of unit commanders.
- <sup>103</sup> *Tikhookeanskaya Vakhta*, 22 March 2007, “*Znat’ kem upravlyat’*”
- <sup>104</sup> *Defense & Security* editorial, February 2007, “*Army and Justice in a New Battle*”
- <sup>105</sup> For the example of officers in Moscow Military District, see BBC Monitoring: *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey*, 16 February 2007, “*Sentences handed down to Russian Army officers on the rise*”, or *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 06 December 2005, “*V osnove sluzhby – zakon i poryadok*”
- <sup>106</sup> FBIS: OSC Analysis, 07 June 2006, “*Russia: Military Leaders Focus on Growing Officer Crime*”
- <sup>107</sup> A poll in May 2006 suggested 80 per cent of junior officers thought guardhouse detention was necessary for “making military collectives cohesive and averting conflict situations among servicemen on the grounds of non-regulation relations”: see FBIS, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 04 May 2006, “*Russia: Officer Survey on Problems Facing Army and Navy*”
- <sup>108</sup> Madina Shavlokhova, *Gazeta*, 16 January 2007, “*Otdavat’ dolg rodine možhno vsyu zhizn’*”
- <sup>109</sup> *Na boyevom postu*, 24 February 2007, “*Vek gauptvakhty ne vidat’?*”; Vladislav Kulikov, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 06 December 2006, “*Na gauptvakhtu s advokatom*”
- <sup>110</sup> FBIS: *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, 30 November 2005, “*Russia: Armed Forces Looking to Introduce Upgraded Guardhouse Detention Facility*”
- <sup>111</sup> Madina Shavlokhova, *Gazeta*, 09 March 2007, “*Disbaty ukhodyat v istoriyu*”; BBC Monitoring: *Ekho Moskvu*, 09 March 2007, “*Russian Armed Forces plan to disband disciplinary battalions*”.
- <sup>112</sup> *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, 17 January 2007
- <sup>113</sup> Anastasiya Kornya, *Vedomosti*, 02 February 2006, “*Sud’i snimut pogony*”
- <sup>114</sup> FBIS: Interfax, 26 April 06, “*Interfax Business Law Review for 18 - 25 Apr 06*”
- <sup>115</sup> Nikolay Bezborodov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 27 September 2005, “*Prava voyennosluzhashchikh*”
- <sup>116</sup> Interview with Russian General Staff Military Academy (VAGSh) lecturers, November 2006
- <sup>117</sup> FBIS: Russian Ministry of Defence website, 15 February 2006, “*Russia: Transcript of Sergey Ivanov’s Duma Speech*”
- <sup>118</sup> Interview with former Siberian Military District Commander Army Gen Nikolay Makarov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 February 2006; FBIS: OSC Analysis, 15 May 2006, “*Russia: Chechnya Commanders Guide Airborne Reform*”
- <sup>119</sup> FBIS: Russian Ministry of Defence website, 15 February 2006, “*Russia: Transcript of Sergey Ivanov’s Duma Speech*”
- <sup>120</sup> See for example FBIS: *Severomorskiye Vesti*, 15 December 2006, on this concern at the Kola Air Defence Formation.

- <sup>121</sup> Aleksandr Persiyanov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 18 July 2006, “*Kaspiyskaya flotiliya: na grebne peremen*”
- <sup>122</sup> Interviews and press conferences by Kolmakov in January 2007
- <sup>123</sup> *RIA Novosti*, 09 February 2007
- <sup>124</sup> *RIA Novosti*, 16 February 2007
- <sup>125</sup> Olga Pavlikova, *Gazeta*, 20 February 2007, “*Kazhdyy tretiy novobranets psikhicheski neustoychiv*”
- <sup>126</sup> Interview with former Siberian Military District Commander Army Gen Nikolay Makarov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 February 2006
- <sup>127</sup> Yuriy Gavrilov, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 20 January 2007, “*Za professiyey – v armiyu*”
- <sup>128</sup> BBC Monitoring: *RIA Novosti*, 28 December 2006, “Servicemen’s parents to get better access to sons’ units – minister”; Channel One TV, 10 February 2007, “Military conscription office in Stavropol recruits mothers’ help”.
- <sup>129</sup> *Na boyevom postu*, 10 February 2007, “*Roditel’skim komitetam – byt!*”
- <sup>130</sup> BBC Monitoring: *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey*, 26 April 2006, “Rights ombudsmen making headway in Russian forces, says welfare admiral”
- <sup>131</sup> For two of many examples, see *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 06 December 2005: “Have your housing rights been violated? Call us! A telephone hotline for housing issues has been opened in the Moscow Military District Military Prosecutor’s Office...”; or the full-page instructions in *Krasnaya Zvezda* of 28 March 2006 on the rights and obligations of servicemen with regard to investigations by military prosecutors.
- <sup>132</sup> BBC Monitoring: Russian Channel One TV, 08 April 2007, “I Serve the Fatherland”
- <sup>133</sup> BBC Monitoring: Center TV International, 04 April 2007, “TV paints rosy picture of conscription campaign in Russian capital”
- <sup>134</sup> FBIS: *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 30 March 2007, “Moscow Prosecutor Reviews Violations of Draft Law by Military Commissariats”
- <sup>135</sup> Of the Autumn 2006 draft of 123,310 men, 99,000 were sent to the Armed Forces and the remainder to “other forces”: see *RIA Novosti*, 15 January 2007
- <sup>136</sup> FBIS: *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*, 04 April 2007, “Russia: Mobilization Chief Smirnov Interviewed on Changes to Draft Service”
- <sup>137</sup> *Na Boyevom Postu*, 14 April 2007, “*V interesakh prizyva na voyennuyu sluzhbu*”; the advice to conscripts given on one of the District’s websites at <http://sibvo.sibcity.ru/> is also interesting.
- <sup>138</sup> *Voyenno-Meditsinskiy Zhurnal*, June 2006, “*Psikhicheskiye rasstroystva u prizyvnikov i voyennosluzhashchikh prokhodyashchikh voyennuyu sluzhbu po prizyvū*”: the absolute numbers were, naturally enough, not mentioned.
- <sup>139</sup> *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 September 2006, “*SPIDa v kazarmakh net*”
- <sup>140</sup> For more detail on this, see Keir Giles, Conflict Studies Research Centre, October 2006, “Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? Russia’s Military Manpower Plans versus Demographic Reality”
- <sup>141</sup> FBIS: *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey*, 24 April 2006, “Russian Armed Forces to start experiment on providing conscripts with professional education”
- <sup>142</sup> FBIS: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 02 October 2004, “Russia: Organization-Mobilization Directorate Chief Smirnov on Military Draft”
- <sup>143</sup> BBC Monitoring: *RIA Novosti*, 20 December 2005, “Russia: Official Says 536 Conscripts Undergoing Alternative Military Service”
- <sup>144</sup> Sergey Knyazkov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 10 February 2004, “*AGS buksuyet*”
- <sup>145</sup> Oleg Yelenskiy, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 16 February 2007, “*Kapitulyatsiya prizyvnoy sistemy*”; Nadezhda Krasilova, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 14 December 2006, “*Khvatit i odnogo protsenta*”
- <sup>146</sup> Sergey Bogdanov, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 March 2006, “*Finansovaya nedostatochnost*”
- <sup>147</sup> For an interesting look at these different attitudes to contract serviceman’s pay, see FBIS, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 April 2006, “Russia: Kamchatka Army Contract Battalion Faces Manning Challenges”
- <sup>148</sup> FBIS: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 November 2005, “Russia: Report on Contract Soldiers’ Discipline Issues”
- <sup>149</sup> For a succinct list of these, see Irina Isakova, “Russian Defense Reform: Current Trends”
- <sup>150</sup> Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 12 February 2007, “*Ofitserov posadili za ipotechnyy kryuchok*”
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- <sup>163</sup> Natalya Vadimova, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 29 January 2007, “Kto tolknul nakhimovtza na samoubiystvo?”
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## **Want to Know More ...?**

See:

Joris van Bladel: “The All-Volunteer Force in the Russian Mirror: Transformation without Change”, University of Groningen, 2004, at <http://irs.ub.rug.nl/ppn/264837398>

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