

A 'NEW LOOK' AT THE RUSSIAN MILITARY: WHAT THE 2008 RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR EXPLAINED  
ABOUT ONGOING MANPOWER REFORMS IN THE RUSSIAN MILITARY

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By

Artem S. Agoulnik, B.A.

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Artem S. Agoulnik, B.A.

Thesis Advisors: Thane Gustafson, Ph.D., Thomas M. Nichols, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The military of the Russian Federation celebrates twenty years of existence in 2012, much of which it has spent struggling with the challenges of adapting to a post-Soviet world. The latest round of reforms was initiated in 2008 under the leadership of the country's first civilian Minister of Defense and in the midst of the country's first deployment of combat troops outside of its borders since 1979. The Russian military's performance in the August 2008 Five-Day War against Georgia gave the world a glimpse of what the past twenty years of reforms – mostly conducted behind the closed doors of the Kremlin – had, and had not yet, been accomplished. This paper analyzes just one aspect of Russia's multi-faceted military reform, namely its manpower reform. By drawing from its performance in the war of August 2008, I show that the Russian military has yet to develop a comprehensive manpower solution to meet its needs. Russia will not transition to a wholly-contracted professional army in the near future but has taken steps to ensure that the small percentage of its contracted personnel are utilized effectively in the right billets and receive the appropriate training. In these features the manpower reform illustrates the complex issues faced by the Russian military in the overall reform effort.

To Karin and B.A.

Drs. Gustafson and Nichols, I am forever in your debt for your guidance.

Artem S. Agoulnik

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*“In all the world we only have two trustworthy allies – our army and our navy. Everyone else, at their earliest opportunity, will conspire against us.”<sup>1</sup>*

*– Alexander the Peacemaker (Alexander III Romanov)*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about more than just a collapse of an ideology. It also brought about an identity crisis for one of the world’s most powerful militaries – a crisis which is just now beginning to become resolved. Once faced with a clearly identifiable enemy embodied by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a clearly identifiable mission of service to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the newly-formed Armed Forces of the Russian Federation entered uncharted territory in 1992.

The military of the Russian Federation celebrates twenty years of existence in 2012, much of which it has spent struggling with the challenges of adapting to a post-Soviet world. Attempts at reforming the structure and mission of the Soviet/Russian Armed Forces began as early as 1989 (upon its withdrawal from a decade-long war in Afghanistan), when the country was still under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. All three Russian presidents since Gorbachev have continued to reform their country’s military with the latest – and arguably most significant – attempt beginning in late 2008.

During the summer of that year, the Russian Armed Forces squared off against neighboring Georgia. Although Russia had been in near-continuous combat since 1992 – in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Caucasus, and Georgian breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia – this was the first deployment of troops to conduct combat operations

outside of its national borders and against an organized and trained enemy army since Soviet Union's 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.

Although it is likely that the war began on Georgia's terms and timeline, Russia and Georgia had both been preparing for this conflict. Russian troops had remained in the Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as peace-keeping forces following the collapse of the Soviet Union under the auspices of the newly-formed Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS.) During this time, Moscow began issuing Abkhazians and South Ossetians Russian citizenship, used its forces to repair and upgrade Abkhazian railroad links to Russia, and openly trained and equipped the South Ossetian militia. This activity only intensified in 2004 after the election of Georgia's current President Mikheil Saakashvili during what became known as the Rose Revolution in Georgia.

Aiming to fulfill his campaign promises upon taking office, President Saakashvili attempted to reclaim the break-away republics of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adzharia and put them back under Tbilisi's control. None of the three republics submitted. In fact, armed skirmishes continued between Georgian forces and the republican militias – heavily assisted by the Russian peace-keepers – until the war with Russia began in August 2008. In addition to providing support to the break-away republics, the Russian Air Force carried out several bombing sorties on Georgian territory from 2000-2008, the last, and most notable one in April 2008 when a Russian fighter jet was videotaped taking down a Georgian reconnaissance drone. A large-scale Russian military exercise, held just months later on the border between North and South Ossetia, also proved that Russia was preparing for the inevitable conflict. Soldiers carrying out the exercise received reference cards which read "Soldier, Know Your Probable Enemy" on one side, and

listed the strengths and weaknesses of the Georgian military on the other. Furthermore, some of the units that participated in the exercise never returned to their home stations after the exercise and remained in place until the eventual war began.<sup>2</sup>

Combat operations of August 2008 lasted only five days. Russia was, by all accounts, successful in executing its mission of driving Georgian forces from South Ossetia and Abkhazia. But the war of 2008 was significant in another way as well. It was the first time that the outside world was able to witness what two decades of reform began by Gorbachev were able to produce. During this time Russian military reform had been conducted largely by the military leadership, without much political or civilian involvement, and primarily behind closed doors. The war of 2008 put the Russian Armed Forces of the 21st century on display.

But what became known as the Five-Day War highlighted significant shortcomings in the ongoing reform. For example, the war demonstrated that the restructured command and control hierarchy of the military was still in its developmental stage and that delineation of duties was not yet properly understood at the tactical level. Additionally, the degradation of existing Ground Forces' hardware and the lack of modern technology were evident throughout the war as was the mediocre state of the Russian Air Force. Finally, the war exposed the drastically diverse training and morale of its manpower, highlighting the challenges of Russia's struggle to abandon mandatory military service in favor of an all-professional force.

At the same time, however, some aspects of Russian military's performance were a sign that much had been accomplished during two decades of reform. The exemplary performance of Russian airborne infantry forces (*Vozdushno-Desantnye Voiska*<sup>3</sup> or

VDV), and the logistical effort to transport thousands of personnel and equipment over a long distance in a short period of time demonstrated that the Kremlin might also have a working solution – and possibly an end state – to what its military reform is aiming to accomplish.

It is outside of the realm of this paper to analyze in detail the failures and successes of the many aspects of the ongoing military reform in Russia and, thus, make a comprehensive assessment of the status of the overall reform. Ongoing Russian military reform touches all aspects of the Russian Armed Forces: manpower, training, equipment, technology, communication, task organization, not to mention the complex nature of the military industrial complex and its relationship with the Russian government. Ultimately, training plans can be rewritten, revised, and updated, and equipment can be bought, sold, and upgraded. All of it is, however, useless without a competent, motivated, and professional fighting force that is trained, willing, and able to make effective use of what it is given to accomplish assigned tasks. It is the author's intent, therefore, to focus on the people – or manpower – aspect of the ongoing military reform in Russia.

The predecessors of today's Russian military – the tsarist and Soviet armies – were built on the principle of mass mobilization of conscript soldiers in the event of total war. In the two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has been active in various degrees in moving toward creating a professional fighting force. The main question this paper seeks to answer is: *what does the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 explain about the status of Russian military's manpower reform?*

The first chapter of this paper focuses on Russia's prosecution of the war and highlights the current state of its armed forces as revealed by the events. This discussion

demonstrates that there are units in Russia effectively trained and equipped to handle the mission the country's civilian leadership wants its armed forces to accomplish. But these units are subject to the same manpower pressures as the rest of the force and much remains to be done to apply the model of those units military-wide. The second chapter discusses manpower training pipelines. Here, I show that the Russian military has accepted the inevitability of the mixed-manning system and has shifted its focus to develop the best possible system to sustain and train that force. Finally, the last chapter briefly discusses what implications the Russian military's manpower reforms might have for the United States.

*“The Russian Armed Forces, while conducting operations to force peace on Georgia, executed its missions with honor. Our troops exhibited high morale, as well as high combat readiness. As a result of our troops’ actions, tens of thousands of lives were saved.”*<sup>4</sup>

*- Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, 2008*

## **CHAPTER ONE: RUSSIAN MILITARY IN SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA**

By all official Russian government accounts its war against Georgia in August of 2008 was a successful military operation. At the conclusion of combat operations, as a commander-in-chief should, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev praised the performance of his troops and congratulated them on their decisive victory. A more careful analysis of the events of 8-12 August 2008, however, paints a slightly less decisive picture of an army stretched thin by shortages of qualified personnel, modern equipment and logistical networks. In the weeks and months following the war, Russian and western military analysts began compiling their assessments of the war. In light of the already ongoing military reform, the outcome of the war, as well as the performance of the Russian military, could be viewed as a key turning point, “the beginning of the end of the post-Soviet transition” of the Russian military.

The following section depicts the major milestones of the Russo-Georgian war. It is not meant to be seen as an indictment of which side started the war, which side violated international law, or which side was victorious.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this account is to discuss the strengths and weaknesses exhibited by the Russian forces during the war and explain what they show about the current status of Russian military’s manpower.

### *What Happened in August 2008?*

In the early hours of 8 August 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was awakened by Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdiukov. The situation on the border of the self-proclaimed autonomous republic of South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia had escalated to an unprecedented point. Casualties on both sides were mounting and Serdiukov believed Russia had to act. Both the Georgian army and the South Ossetian militia, reinforced by Russian peacekeepers, had been exchanging intense fire over the course of the previous couple of days. Russian peacekeeping units, along with independent observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN), had begun reporting a heavy buildup of Georgian forces during the previous evening. Up to that point, small arms, mortar, and even artillery fire, had been exchanged between the Georgian forces and the South Ossetian militia. But according to the observers, the Georgian build up on the night of 7 August was no training exercise and evacuations of civilian personnel began on both sides.

Following a brief conversation with Serdiukov, President Medvedev authorized the commencement of Russian combat operations in Georgia. Although, according to some sources, limited operations had already been under way as Prime Minister Vladimir Putin had flown into Vladikavkaz – the headquarters of the 58th Army – the previous day following his visit to the 2008 Olympics.<sup>6</sup> At that point in time, it had been almost 30 years since Russia had officially intervened militarily in another sovereign country, and the world watched in anticipation to see what would happen.

Right before dawn on 8 August, the 693rd Regiment, based out of Vladikavkaz, Russia (only 100 miles from Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, Georgia), and 135th

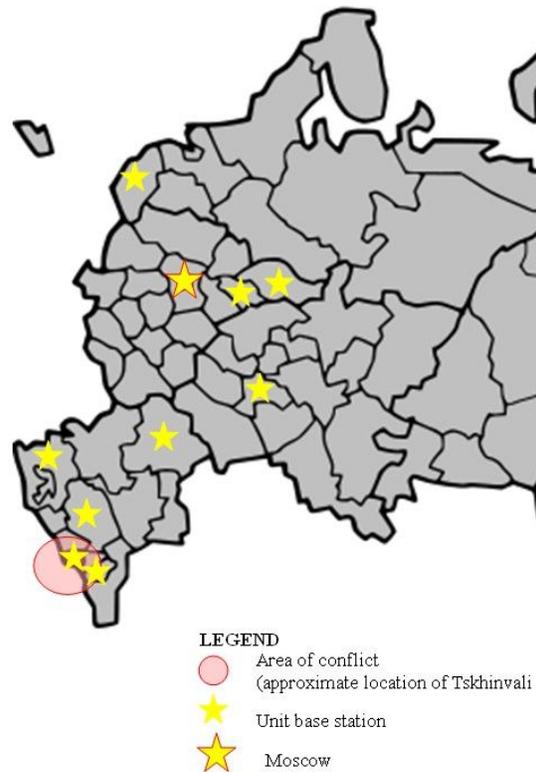
Regiment of the 19th Motorized Rifle Division, based out of nearby Prokhladnyi, Russia, were the first two Ground Forces units activated to reinforce the Russian peacekeepers and the South Ossetian militia.<sup>7</sup> Other units from within the Russian North Caucasus Military District (NCMD) and the Moscow region were also alerted into readiness that morning. One of the alerted units outside the NCMD was the famed 76th VDV Division based near Russia's border with Estonia in Pskov, some 1250 miles from Tskhinvali. The activation was likely not a surprise to the unit. It had just returned to base after participating in a month-long training exercise, "Kavkaz-2008,"<sup>8</sup> in North Ossetia during which its soldiers had practiced fighting a fictional enemy with capabilities similar to those of the Georgians.<sup>9</sup>

Over the next several days Russia amassed a force of nearly 12,000 Ground Forces personnel in the vicinity of Georgia's border with South Ossetia as well as 15,000 on the western front in Abkhazia, not counting Naval Forces personnel of the Black Sea Fleet or the Air Force personnel involved in the air sorties.<sup>10</sup> Personnel and units were gathered from all across the country: the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division based in Chechnia; the 98th VDV Division based in Ivanovo; the 20th Motorized Rifle Division based in Volgograd; the 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade out of Budennovsk; the 331st Parachute Regiment out of Kostroma; elements of the 45th Special Purpose Regiment based out of Moscow;<sup>11</sup> the 7th VDV Division (Mountain), based out of Novorossiisk; the 34th Rifle Mountain Brigade, out of Karachai-Cherkessia, and; the 31st Separate Assault Brigade, out of Ulianovsk (approximately 1,200 miles from Abkhazia where it was deployed).<sup>12</sup> Table 1 lists the major units which participated in the Five-Day War

along with an approximate location of their home station on the map and the distance that unit had to travel to get to the fight.

**Table 1: Home Station and Distance to Zone of Conflict of Major Ground and VDV Forces Units Participating in 2008 Russo-Georgian War**

UNIT NAME	HOMESTATION	DISTANCE TO TSKHINVALI (MILES)
58th Army HQ	Vladikavkaz	100
693rd Regiment	Vladikavkaz	100
135th Regiment	Prokhladnyi	134
42nd Division	Chechnia	190
20th Division	Volgo grad	620
205th Brigade	Budennovsk	250
429th Regiment	Vladikavkaz	100
71st Regiment	Khankala	190
331st Regiment	Kostroma	1300
76th VDV Division	Pskov	1250
98th VDV Division	Ivanovo	1250
31st VDV Brigade	Ul'ianovsk	1300
45th Special Regiment (VDV)	Moscow	1200
34th Mountain Brigade	Karachai-Cherkessia	230



By most accounts, the Russian military placed nearly 30,000-40,000 personnel, 1200 pieces of heavy artillery, 200 planes and 40 helicopters into battle with Georgia over the course of the first hours of the war.<sup>13</sup> Heavy fighting began almost immediately.

The first casualty of the war was a Russian soldier who died in the early hours of 8 August from a Georgian T-72 tank round fired into a post of the Russian peacekeeping base he was manning on the outskirts of Tskhinvali. The tank's second round hit a Russian armored personnel carrier guarding the base gate, killing its entire crew of five.

By mid-day most of the armored vehicles and carriers in the Russian peacekeeping base were destroyed by Georgian direct and indirect fire, and remaining base personnel had taken shelter in the base's cellars. Evacuation of wounded and killed base personnel did not occur from their point of injury until late into that evening, and only after OSCE was able to escort the Russian peacekeepers into Russia proper.<sup>14</sup> Russian response was relatively slow on the ground that morning. As Ground Forces units traveled and staged on the border of South Ossetia, the Kremlin was also activating its western front in Abkhazia. To this end the 7th VDV Division was split into three separate task forces and deployed by air and sea into Poti, an Abkhaz coastal village on the Black Sea.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Russian troops on the ground in South Ossetia on 8 August were ineffective in providing any meaningful resistance to the Georgian forces as they pushed towards Tskhinvali.

By late afternoon of 8 August, elements of the 76th VDV Division began arriving and staging on the South Ossetian border.<sup>16</sup> Throughout the evening, as additional Russian Ground Forces arrived and regrouped on the border, the Russian Air Force and the Black Sea Fleet shelled Georgian targets in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, respectively.

The following day, 9 August, was by most accounts the busiest of the war for the Russian military on its eastern front in South Ossetia. Within the early hours of the morning, Georgian anti-air defenses shot down two Russian aircraft. The first was a Tu-22M3 long-range bomber, operated by a crew out of Shaikovki Air Base in Kaluzhnaia Oblast, just southwest of Moscow. Two of the four crew members died in the crash. The head of the air crew ejected and to this day remains missing in action. Shortly thereafter, Georgian forces used a hand-held anti-aircraft gun to shoot down another long range bomber Su-24M, this time operated by flight instructors from the Aktiubinsk fighter pilot

school. Though both pilots ejected, one died on landing and the other one was taken as prisoner of war by the Georgian military.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of its heavy losses on the morning of 9 August, the Russian Air Force grounded all of its aircraft in South Ossetia until a preliminary investigation into the matter was conducted. The Georgians did not wait long to seize the opportunity presented to them by the clear skies and began staging to take control of Tskhinvali. In order to prevent the Georgians from doing this, Moscow immediately deployed the 76th VDV, along with other elements, into South Ossetia. The Russian 58th Army staged to follow in trace of the VDV. Thus the Russian assault to hold Tskhinvali began without much warning or coordination – and, most importantly, without air support or reconnaissance assets.

The lack of planning or coordination for this assault was evident from the beginning. Speaking to reporters after the assault, the commanding officer of the 104th Regiment of the 76th VDV Division recounted his intelligence brief prior to the battle for Tskhinvali,

“The exact situation in Tskhinvali was unknown to us. We knew that there was heavy fighting which was taking place by our peacekeepers – that was all the information we had...the details were absent. We didn’t know what lay ahead. We had no Russian elements ahead of us. No reconnaissance units. We were the first unit.”<sup>18</sup>

Despite the intelligence shortfalls, within hours the 76th VDV forces, accompanied by several hundred GRU (*Glavnoe Razvedyvatel’noe Upravlenie*, Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff) personnel, took positions on the outskirts of Tskhinvali with over 1,500 personnel and 100 vehicles without any resistance.<sup>19</sup> The

Ground Forces' 58th Army, however, was not so lucky. At roughly 1500 on 9 August, the unit's lead elements encountered two Georgian light infantry battalions, which were advancing into the city from the opposite direction, and initiated a frontal assault. The battle which ensued was described by on-scene reporters as a "World War II style" battle.<sup>20</sup> Russian and Georgian tanks and armored vehicles fired at each other within minimum arming range of the rounds and both sides took heavy casualties. Several Russian soldiers were posthumously awarded medals for bravery exhibited during this battle. Additionally, Lieutenant General Anatolii Khrulev, the commanding officer of the 58th Army, was severely wounded.<sup>21</sup>

More reinforcements arrived the next day, partially in the form of the 42nd Motorized Infantry Division, travelling close to 200 miles from Chechnia, and a helicopter squadron out of Budennovsk. The overwhelming influx of Russian forces into South Ossetia on 10 August all but assured Russian control over the territory. The arrival of the air assets also enabled Moscow to set up field medical facilities to provide more immediate medical treatment of its personnel.<sup>22</sup> The Russian tactic of flooding the battle field with its forces worked. At 1825 that day, the Georgian Foreign Ministry announced to the Russian ambassador to Georgia that it was withdrawing all of its troops from South Ossetia.<sup>23</sup> By the evening's end, Russian Air Force had delivered another four VDV battalions from the 31st VDV Division out of Ulianovsk, and the main element of the 7th VDV Division arrived by railroad to the war's western front in Abkhazia.<sup>24</sup>

The Russian Air Force spent the early morning hours of 11 August taking out strategic Georgian military targets, such as radars, grounded aircraft and anti-air defense systems. By afternoon Russian forces had established a 15-kilometer buffer zone outside

of South Ossetian territory into Georgia proper. This operation, encountering minimal Georgian resistance, resulted in a number of friendly-fire casualties for the Russian military, highlighting the inoperability of its air and ground troops and the inexperience of its fighter pilots. A column of armored vehicles taking its position on the buffer zone perimeter was attacked by an Su-25 fighter jet believing it to be an enemy formation. The soldiers returned fire onto the jet and almost brought it down. As the Georgian forces retreated further towards the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, Russia continued to amass its forces in South Ossetia. By day's end on August 11, there were 14,000 Russian personnel, over 100 tanks, as many artillery cannons, and over 500 armored personnel carriers inside South Ossetia.<sup>25</sup>

By 12 August, Russian forces were operating without any Georgian resistance inside Georgia. They were occupying abandoned checkpoints and gathering left-behind weaponry. At 1300 Russian President Medvedev announced that combat operations to “force peace upon Georgia” had ended and urged the Georgian surrender.<sup>26</sup>

### *After the Dust Settled*

Armed hostilities have been ongoing between Georgia and Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In fact, a detailed account of the war in 2008 argues that it was essentially a major battle within a protracted war rather than an isolated incident.<sup>27</sup> The extreme escalation of hostilities during the early August days of 2008 did not resolve the longstanding territorial or geopolitical issues, and Russian troops remain to this day in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are still internationally-recognized Georgian republics. So what, then, are some overarching conclusions that can be made about the current state of the Russian military from its performance in the 2008 Russo-Georgian

war? And, more precisely, what do those conclusions say about the ongoing manpower reform of the Russian military?

For the purposes of this paper, an assessment of the current state of the Russian Air Force, Russian Ground Forces, and the Russian Air Assault (VDV) Forces can be aptly made by taking a cursory look at: 1) what *units* were used to fight the war; 2) what *equipment* they used to fight it; 3) how they were *commanded* and *sustained*. To be sure, this assessment is not meant to be comprehensive in nature but rather to highlight some of the major deficiencies, as well as successes, of the Russian military's manpower reforms. Additionally, making a broad assessment of the state of a military based on one multi-day campaign can, undoubtedly, lead to a misrepresentation of its true capability. In the case of the Russian military's performance in the 2008 Russo-Georgian campaign, however, the following assumptions demonstrate that the Kremlin made a significant effort to showcase its full military might against Georgia, thereby allowing for this type of a broad assessment:

- The Kremlin had been preparing for this war. A lengthy history of armed skirmishes, coupled with a series of diplomatic overtures, between the two countries since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been well documented.<sup>28</sup> Most notably, in July 2008 Russia conducted a month-long training exercise on the North/South Ossetian border – officially labeled a counter-terrorism exercise – during which Russian troops prepared for an invasion by a “fictional” enemy by studying the uniform and equipment of the Georgian Armed Forces.<sup>29</sup> The

argument, therefore, that judging the state of the Russian military based on an isolated and hasty plan does not hold.

- The Kremlin hit a pig with a train. Russian Armed Forces utilized roughly 50,000 troops (including the Black Sea Fleet personnel) and hundreds of tanks, BMPs, aircraft and artillery against a force of 12,000 with less than 10 aircraft and roughly 150 mechanized vehicles (including tanks.)<sup>30</sup> In other words, this was not a campaign which Moscow considered to be unimportant, and Russia used a considerable amount of its military might to ensure that it ended up victorious.

Russia used its air, ground, naval, and air assault forces in the war. The following paragraphs omit the discussion of the Russian Naval Forces because of its limited (though in other respects important) role in the conflict. The state of the air, ground, and air assault forces, on the other hand, based on their performance in the war is described below.

#### Air Force (*Voенно-Vozdushnyie Sily, VVS*)

In 2008, at least on paper, the Russian Air Force was a formidable organization, counting in its reserves over 2800 pieces of aircraft, as well as over 100 S-300 and S-400 anti-air defense systems.<sup>31</sup> Over the past twenty years, however, while all other major militaries were upgrading their air forces and anti-air defenses, the Russian Air Force fell behind in the development of new, as well as the maintenance and upgrade of existing, air technologies. As a result, during the conduct of the Five-Day War, the Russian Air

Force used aircraft, armaments, and technology not only produced during the 1980s in the Soviet Union but in many cases also last upgraded or maintained during that time.<sup>32</sup> Overall, by the start of combat operations in August 2008, the following was true of the Russian Air Force: 1) it had not properly maintained its fleet of aircraft; 2) it lacked inter-service operable positioning and communication equipment; and 3) it was not structured to provide effective reconnaissance, assault, close air, or offensive air support to the Ground Forces.

The general lack of aircraft maintenance became a topic of discussion shortly before the August 2008 war began when two MiG-29 fighter jets crashed during an exercise after their tails fell apart in mid-air due to severe rust.<sup>33</sup> The lack of attention to the maintenance of the aircraft also had a secondary effect of curtailing proper pilot training. According to one commanding officer of an Air Force unit which felt this effect,

“Even during times when enough fuel was available, aircraft crews were not able to achieve the required amount of flight hours. As a rule, in the active air units all crews had to share the few functioning aircraft, which made it physically impossible for all crews to be properly trained by achieving the necessary amount of flight hours. This, in turn, ensured that, not having achieved minimal training standards, pilots were unable to train in difficult situations (night, bad weather, for example).”<sup>34</sup>

The poor performance of the Russian Air Force during the Five-Day War could, thus, have been aptly predicted based on the state of its hardware and the average training of the pilots by the time combat began in August 2008. Post-war analysis showed that the VVS lost six aircraft during five days of combat against an inferior opponent (the Georgian Air Force operated no more than a dozen Su-25 fighter jets<sup>35</sup>), and one aircraft

was downed by friendly forces. This is hardly a statistic that would be attributed to a well-trained and combat-ready air force.

The non-interopability of the air and ground forces, which was on display throughout the war, is the most glaring instance of what the Kremlin has failed to accomplish in two decades of reform. One example of this was the lack of sufficiently trained forward air controllers (FAC) within either the Air or the Ground Forces. This deficiency prevented the Air Force from directing sufficient precision-guided strikes against Georgian targets and ground troops.<sup>36</sup> But even without FACs, this deficiency could generally be remedied by VVS' steady communication with Ground Forces units in the vicinity of the objective. This was not possible, however, because Russian Air and Ground Forces did not use compatible radio systems.<sup>37</sup> Without close air support, ground troops likely sustained higher casualties during the war as they conducted their operations than they would have under proper air cover.<sup>38</sup>

Additionally, neither the ground nor the air forces had in their arsenal any unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). This lack precluded them from being able to conduct reconnaissance flights to confirm enemy positions and target locations.<sup>39</sup> Russian troops were essentially entering enemy territory blind and alone.

Furthermore, the Russian Air Force relied primarily on unguided munitions and air-to-surface missiles during the course of the war, due to cloud cover, lack of properly functioning GLONASS<sup>40</sup>, and effective electronic jamming techniques employed by the Georgian forces. This tactic exposed a much larger number of Russian aircraft to enemy defense and anti-air defense systems, which likely contributed to the loss of pilots and friendly aircraft during the war.<sup>41</sup> And, despite successful Georgian anti-air attacks, all of

the VVS sorties were conducted during day time as the Russian aircraft lacked night-navigation equipment.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, Moscow organized its forces for the conduct of the war in a “task force” structure within the 58th Army and placed under the unified command of the NCMD. This task force, however, did not have organic air assets – an organizational remnant of the Soviet task organization within the military. This meant that ground troops had to coordinate air reconnaissance, assault, close air support, and, most importantly, proper medical air evacuation of dead and wounded up the task force chain of command, which then had to communicate the requirement to the VVS headquarters for action. This inevitably took time not least of all because all air assets during the war were commanded by Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin via unencrypted cell phone from his office in Moscow. Secure communication was not functioning and was not service interoperable throughout the war.<sup>43</sup>

The Russian Air Force was, therefore, successful in the prosecution of this war *in spite* of the combination of these technological and organizational deficiencies. And even this success is relative, as some experts have suggested that “the Russian air component demonstrated a ‘remarkably limited capacity to wage air combat for a country aspiring to be a military great power.’”<sup>44</sup>

Given the lack of modern technological advantages, the poor state of the aircraft, and unavailability of proper training, it is not surprising that the majority of the crew members who flew missions over Georgia came from Russia’s premier flight-test center in Aktiubinsk.<sup>45</sup> Although official Russian statements suggested that test pilots were used because they were the most experienced, a post-war analysis revealed that all other

pilots simply refused to orders to fly those missions given the organizational and technological obstacles with which they were faced.<sup>46</sup>

The Five-Day War did highlight one positive development within Russia's Air Force. Its Military Transport Aviation successfully transported personnel and equipment from as far as Pskov, Moscow and St. Petersburg to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in over 100 sorties in a timely and efficient manner.<sup>47</sup> Some analysts, however, suggested that this responsiveness was due more to the fact that the aircraft had just returned many of the forces from field training exercises and was already prepared to redeploy them to North Ossetia immediately upon landing.<sup>48</sup>

The Russo-Georgian war in 2008 demonstrated that the once formidable Soviet Air Force has over the past two decades suffered dramatic degradation in its combat effectiveness. Much of this degradation, however, has been a result of a lack of maintenance and upgrade of its hardware and not necessarily as a result of deficient manpower. In fact, there has been no reported shortage in the number of applicants to pilot schools. Not having kept up with the latest technological advancements and proper maintenance of its aircraft, the VVS leadership simply did not have the requisite number of aircraft available for all of its pilots to receive and sustain their required training over the past two decades. This, in turn, resulted in a degradation of the pilots' confidence in their aircraft and their own abilities.

Chief of the General Staff, General Nikolai Makarov, summed up the correlation between faulty equipment and insufficient pilot training in the VVS during his July 2009 conference by stating that "in the course of the past 20 years, our lieutenant pilots never

flew again after completing their academy. They simply didn't have anything to fly in. Thus, we have colonel pilots with minimal flight hours."<sup>49</sup>

The 2008 Russo-Georgian war highlighted the poor state of the VVS. Some of the deficiencies, such as lack of maintenance and fuel, can probably be remedied should Ministry of Defense (MOD) leadership divert more funds towards that goal. Other deficiencies, such as lack of communication gear interoperability and GLONASS development, are planning deficiencies which will require longer-term solutions. The effect of these two areas of deficiency on the VVS manpower, however, is much more significant. Several generations of pilots have been raised in a VVS which did not sustain their confidence, improve their skills, or teach them to effectively support the Ground Forces. This deficiency will take much longer to correct. It is difficult to calculate the time required for the VVS to regain its once formidable status, but – at least in 2008 – it appeared to be only marginally combat effective.

#### Ground Forces (*Sukhoputnye Voiska*)

This is not a detailed assessment of Russia's entire arsenal of Ground Forces, but rather a highly-probable generalization of the entire force based on the performance of the few units which were hand-selected by the General Staff to participate in the operation. In fact, a distinction must be made here between the Russian word *armiia* and the American understanding of the word *army*. The Russian term denotes the country's entire armed forces – all of the forces which are controlled by the MOD, not only the regular ground forces as understood by the American word. For the purposes of this section, the term *Ground Forces* denotes all regular infantry units within the Russian military.

The bulk of the ground forces used in the operation came from the 58th Army and the 42nd Division. Other independently-deployed, accessible and staffed units, such as the 20th Motorized Division and the 205th Motorized Brigade, were plucked to participate in the campaign, as well.<sup>50</sup> As previously noted, these forces were technically commanded by the NCMD and the General Staff during the conduct of the operation. The quality of this command, however, became the first sign that the reorganization of the Ground Forces was still a work in progress.

The lack of a unified command and control of the Russian ground forces was apparent throughout the war. The NCMD task force was in relative disarray from the national level from the start of the war and was practically managed by the General Staff for the duration of the conflict. For instance, several of the key General Officer positions were either vacant or in the midst of transition at the outbreak of the war. General Makarov, for example, took over as the Chairman of the General Staff in early June following a very public and politicized resignation of General Iurii Baluevskii.<sup>51</sup> Chiefs of the Communications and Main Operations Directorates had also resigned along with General Baluevskii, and their replacements had not yet been appointed at the start of the war. In fact, a personal phone call from Prime Minister Putin was the only reason that the Chief of the Main Operations Directorate, General Aleksandr Ruskhin, returned to work to see the war through.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, much of the coordination of the war was being conducted directly by the Chairman of the General Staff and the Minister of Defense, and – given the extensive failures of the encrypted communication systems – via personal, unencrypted cell phones.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, senior MOD officials were unable to reach Defense Minister

Serdiukov for over 10 hours in the early hours of 7 August, and were unsure as to who was to authorize the deployment of the troops, President Medvedev or Prime Minister Putin.<sup>54</sup>

And, according to one reporter, whatever guidance was being communicated from Moscow was not always making its way down to the troops on the ground. While embedded with the “Vostok” battalion during the battle for Tskhinvali, a reporter noted that the soldiers in that particular company panicked upon being ambushed in the middle of the city because they were still under the impression that they were conducting military exercises within Russia.<sup>55</sup>

The ongoing large-scale task reorganization in the midst of fielding a combat task force showcased an even more troubling manpower dilemma facing the Russian Ground Forces. This issue was aptly summarized by General Makarov during a 2009 press interview in which he openly criticized the quality of the majority of his officers in the Ground Forces,

“In order to find a person with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, colonel, or general, who would be able to command troops confidently, we had to hand-pick them within the armed forces, because those regular commanding officers, who sat there and commanded paper regiments and divisions, were simply not in a position to tackle the issues that arose in the course of the Five-Day War. When they were given men and equipment, they simply became flustered, and some even refused to carry out their assignments. Do we need such officers, I wonder?”<sup>56</sup>

The problem was not lost on Russia’s leading military analysts. One such analyst, and a former Soviet General, Makhmut Gareev, attributed the overall performance of the

Russian military in the war to the poor command structure and “absence of a unified command.”<sup>57</sup> Even President Medvedev, when praising the performance of his troops in the war, noted that it was the “professional, *independent* operations of battalions and the initiative displayed by individual, especially airborne, units” which led to the success of the military against Georgia.<sup>58</sup>

While the lack of proper leadership and command structure was a significant factor in the quality of the performance of the units, so also was the manpower staffing of those units. Some of the officers in the units which were sent to Georgia, as noted by General Makarov, had been sent to the units just to command them during the war. Furthermore, despite utilizing a conglomeration of the most trained and experienced forces (what the Russians call a “mixed-manning system”), some 30 percent of the troops deployed into combat were conscripts, serving their year-long mandatory service time.<sup>59</sup> That figure drops to 20 percent if all Ground Forces are considered together.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to their mixed-manning structure – which, though prevalent in all of the services, is especially weighted in favor of conscripts in the Ground Forces – the way in which the Ground Force units were utilized during combat operations suggests that they are not the primary combat forces the Russian government relies on during a ground war. Elements of the 58th Army were staged, and headquartered out of Vladikavkaz, just miles from the South Ossetian border. The lead combat elements on both fronts, however, were the VDV divisions, the 7th VDV Division on the west front, and the 76th and the 98th VDV Division on the east front, which were transported hundreds of miles to the zone of conflict. The Ground Forces units were used in a supporting role during the entire campaign. Although they fought heavily in Tskhinvali sustaining heavy

casualties, this was likely a result of selective targeting of the weaker units by the Georgian forces.

A positive trend in the manpower reform of the Russian Ground Force, which was on display during the Five-Day War, was that the MOD had taken significant steps towards utilizing *kontraktniki* for highly-technical jobs. Although, according to the head of manpower of the General Staff General Vasilii, the vast majority of contract personnel are found in the Naval, Air, and Rocket Forces, where technical expertise and training is most important to the execution of the assigned missions,<sup>61</sup> *kontraktniki* in the Ground Forces, are found primarily in the artillery and tank communities as gunners and vehicle drivers.<sup>62</sup> The rationale behind this is simple: contract personnel – who serve on three-year contracts – must be properly trained to utilize gear before they are placed into combat units. In March 2010, General Makarov further commented on why there is a need to have *kontraktniki* occupy the military's most technical billets,

“We want to take as professionals only those that have completed their army service and only for positions determining the performance capability of the military units involving the operation of intricate and costly equipment. In the Navy practically all positions are such. In the motorized rifle brigades contract servicemen man number no less than 20 percent of the prescribed strength level (drivers of tanks, air-defense missile launchers, and artillery systems, gunners, and some other specialties.”<sup>63</sup>

Given the command and manning structures of the Ground Forces units used in the Five-Day War, it is, therefore, not surprising that MOD leadership relied largely on the VDV during the ground campaign. According to one Russian analyst, VDV's use as

the main ground force suggested that “although (ground forces) infantry were present in large numbers ... they were ineffectual in their combat skills.”<sup>64</sup>

Unlike the Air Force, an assessment of the overall state of the Ground Forces of the Russian military is not so closely linked to the deficiencies of its hardware. Instead, the state of the Ground Forces is better explained by its manning and command structures and task-organization. The Five-Day War exposed early unity of command problems associated with the restructuring of the Ground Forces from the Soviet-style division-based system to a more flexible brigade structure. Communication from top to bottom was not effective. Troops were largely conscripted, poorly trained and sometimes unaware even of the fact they were in war. Officers, meanwhile, were plucked from elsewhere just to command the troops in the war and, thus, likely did not possess intimate knowledge of their units’ true capabilities.

The war also, however, demonstrated that the MOD senior leadership understands that one of the first steps towards creating a professional fighting force is to begin utilizing its *kontraktniki*, however small in number, in proper and key technical positions. Recent comments from General Smirnov and General Makarov hint that an organizational shift is occurring within the MOD regarding the understanding of the term *kontraktnik* (in Russian this term literally means “someone who is on contract.”) In almost all conversations with the press, the Generals compare current reforms in Russia with those taking place in the other militaries such as those of the United States, Israel, Germany, and France. This means that at least a real comparative assessment is likely occurring behind the closed doors during the development of manpower policies. It also, then, means that the Generals are beginning to focus on the other party obligated by the

military contract, namely the Russian government and what that obligation carries with it for the *kontraktnik* in terms of a quality life style, potential career path, etc.

Air Assault Forces (*Vozdushno-Dessantnye Voiska, VDV*)

The use by the Kremlin of the VDV during the Russo-Georgian war as the main ground force highlights an important aspect of the current state of the Russian military: namely, that Russian leadership believes these troops to be the most effective fighting units within the country. Their use as regular ground units is also likely a sign that the MOD, as well as key prosecutors of the war, believed these troops to be the best way to showcase a modern Russian army.

Following the conclusion of combat operations, there was a significant praise heaped upon the VDV forces which participated in the war, not only from government officials but also from independent commentators. President Medvedev noted that the war was “saved” by the initiative of the VDV units<sup>65</sup>; General Makarov noted that 76th VDV Division performance was “exemplary” and would have been even better if it had its own air assets<sup>66</sup>; The prominent independent military publication *Novoe Voennoe Obozrenie* criticized the MOD for utilizing the VDV as the main ground force but noted that “as expected” the VDV performance was “exemplary.”<sup>67</sup>

In order to understand the importance of the use of the VDV in the Five-Day War, as well as the general reaction to its use, it is important to understand the history and role of the VDV within the Russian military.

During Soviet times, the VDV were considered the elite “tip of the spear” forces within the military. Their mission was the protection of the country’s nuclear forces, long-range reconnaissance behind enemy lines, and hostage rescue.<sup>68</sup> These forces have

an illustrious history of fighting and winning its nation's battles and wars. According to one analyst, until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the VDV (along with the Strategic Rocket Forces) were among the most combat-ready and *motivated* forces of the Russian military.<sup>69</sup> They participated in almost every major battle from World War II to the Afghan campaign, both Chechen wars, as well as the 2008 Five-Day War with Georgia. Another analyst summarizes Russia's admiration for the VDV as follows,

“The ‘blue berets’ are portrayed as tough, aggressive, well-trained, and efficient. They have the best equipment, their officers are substantially better paid than those in the regular army, and they are provided with the highest-quality conscripts. The elite VDV is presented as something of a model – certainly when set against the example of the Russian military more generally, which tends to be characterized domestically as beset by waste, corruption, torpor, and general inefficiency.”<sup>70</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, that one of VDV's most famous units, the Pskov 76th VDV Division, was the first unit chosen in 2003 to participate in an experimental program designed to develop one battalion into a fully contracted personnel unit as part of Russia's transition to a professional military.<sup>71</sup> The experiment's results remain unclear to this day. Although the experiment was deemed a success in 2005<sup>72</sup>, in 2010 General Makarov announced that “very many mistakes were made” and that the “professionalization process” in the VDV was a failure.<sup>73</sup> Despite the early setback, VDV has remained the go-to force for implementation of modernizing reforms. In 2006 the MOD published a development plan for the VDV for years 2006-2010 in which it outlined plans to reorganize individual units with their own reconnaissance, sniper and artillery assets. Furthermore, the plan called for an upgrade in all equipment, weapons, vehicles, as well as financing for a plan to increase jump

qualification for all unit personnel. None of these reforms, however, was carried out by the time the August 2008 war with Georgia began.<sup>74</sup>

Despite showing success on the battlefield, VDV units were equipped with outdated hardware (the majority of the vehicles used by the VDV during the war, for example, were the Soviet BMD-1 and BMD-2 models of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>75</sup>) The units also lacked the promised organic reconnaissance assets outlined in the 2006-2010 VDV reform program. Additionally, throughout the entire war not a single VDV soldier made a jump from an aircraft. Instead, VDV units were transported to the eastern front in over 60 aircraft,<sup>76</sup> and flown, rail-transported and shipped directly by the Black Sea Fleet to the western front.<sup>77</sup> So heavy was the use of the VDV during the war that the only existing VDV unit which did not participate in the war was the 106th VDV Division out of Tula because it consisted primarily of conscripts.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, VDV leadership confirmed following the war that internal communication assets were inadequate for the prosecution of a large-scale operation. Commanders of the 7th VDV Division noted that not only were they unable to establish communications with headquarters from ship while being transported to Abkhazia, but their particular communication assets interfered with the Naval Forces' equipment to such a degree as to make communication impossible.<sup>79</sup>

The Five-Day War demonstrated that the VDV units are still regarded in Russia as the "tip of the spear" forces that they were during the Soviet era. The overall high level of their motivation, esprit de corps, and unit cohesion during several engagements was noted by outside agents and government officials. But despite their tactical success, several deficiencies of these elite forces were still apparent. Despite the Kremlin's earnest efforts, even the VDV are yet to be completely filled entirely by *kontraktniki*. According to a 2010 interview, head of the VDV General Vladimir Shamanov noted that of the 35,000 VDV personnel today, 11 percent are officers, 20 percent are *kontraktniki*, and a whopping 70

percent are still draftees serving out their year-long mandatory service.<sup>80</sup> In addition, according to VDV commanders, despite official plans to upgrade equipment and task organization, the official fighting vehicle of the VDV remains the Soviet era BMD, modern artillery is still not wide-spread, and reconnaissance assets are still inadequate for combat success.<sup>81</sup>

The overall quality of the VDV's performance in the Georgian war was not so much a result of significantly better equipment but a result of better morale, unit cohesion, and more effective use of contract personnel. The historically-accurate assessment of the VDV as the "tip of the spear" force is still alive today. But, despite the best efforts of its senior leadership, the force has not been immune from the organizational, technological, and especially manpower difficulties over the past two decades. The mixed-manning system has had significant impact on the overall manpower situation of the VDV since the Five-Day War, and the service now suffers from roughly the same *kontraktnik*/conscript ratio as the Ground Forces. Whether this trend reverses to the level first seen in the early 2000s – when some VDV units reported to be filled to 90 percent with *kontraktniki*<sup>82</sup> – relies heavily on how the political leadership in the Kremlin and the MOD changes in 2012 and beyond.

### *Conclusion*

The Five-Day War offered a window into the current state of the Air, Ground, and VDV Forces of the Russian Federation of the 21st century. Though a discussion of these services' current state would be incomplete without touching upon some of the major deficiencies in the hardware and overall organization of the forces, its most important conclusions are drawn from a discussion of the forces' manpower. The performance of the Russian military in the Five-Day War demonstrated that: 1) there is a significant

shortage of qualified and *confident* pilots in the VVS; 2) the Ground Forces rely heavily on conscription but do assign critical billets to the few *kontraktniki*; and, 3) the VDV, though poorly equipped and riddled with the same manpower issues as the Ground Forces, remains Russia's most disciplined and revered force in readiness.

Having established current manpower limitations in the Russian military, I now take a brief but crucial look at the training which this manpower receives. The following chapter examines how, if at all, Russian military's performance in the Five-Day War affected its manpower training pipelines and, thus, the overall manpower reform.

*“The Army is commanded by me and the Sergeants.”*

*- Marshal Georgii Zhukov, second Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union and four-time Hero of the Soviet Union*

## **CHAPTER TWO: POST WAR TRAINING OF THE FORCE**

The most telling of all statistics to come out of the previous chapter is that there are simply not enough *kontraktniki* to fill the ranks of even the most combat ready units, such as those in the VDV. Recent drafting trends indicate that this number is not likely to change in the near term. Since 2009, the MOD has consistently determined that it needs to draft between 350,000-490,000 new conscripts annually. According to statistics released by the General Staff, in 2009 MOD drafted its largest class, consisting of 576,000 new draftees: 305,000 during the spring cycle and 271,000 during the fall cycle.<sup>83</sup> The numbers have dropped slightly since. In 2010 the MOD drafted 489,350 personnel: 270,600 personnel during the spring cycle,<sup>84</sup> and 218,750 personnel during the fall draft cycle.<sup>85</sup> In 2011 the entire draft cycle produced only 354,850 draftees, 219,000 coming in the spring and 135,850, in the fall.<sup>86</sup>

The head of manpower of the General Staff General Vasilii Smirnov stated in January 2012 that this decline in the number of draftees is explained by the gradual transition of the country's forces to a fully-contracted professional force.<sup>87</sup> Realistically, however, the decline of draftees also coincides with an increasing number of draft dodgers in Russia as well as an overall population in decline. During the most recent draft cycle, for example, ending in the fall of 2011, a staggering 236,000 personnel did not report to the recruitment commissariats. During the spring of 2011, the number of

draft dodgers was also estimated at roughly 200,000 personnel.<sup>88</sup> These two factors are more likely the true reason behind the declining draft goals of the MOD. The Kremlin is likely setting lower, but more realistic, draft targets as a purely political move in order to be able to report that drafting missions are met, and not necessarily basing the target on a rise in the number of *kontraktniki*.<sup>89</sup>

The spring 2012 drafting cycle begins on 1 April. President Medvedev has ordered the MOD to draft 155,570 personnel during this round.<sup>90</sup> What these numbers indicate is that by year's end, the entire Russian military will have roughly 270,000 draftees. This is an important statistic because when combined with other recent manpower reports published by General Smirnov's office, it helps paint an overall manpower situation in the Russian military. As of 2012, there are roughly 220,000 officers in the entire armed forces and 186,400 enlisted *kontraktniki*.<sup>91</sup> When the 270,000 draftees are added to this figure, the end strength of the Russian armed forces stands at roughly 676,400. This is a much smaller figure than the million-man military that, in March of 2012, President Medvedev and Defense Minister Serdiukov advertised their military reform to have "practically" achieved.<sup>92</sup> It is apparent from these numbers that Russia is not only far from achieving an all-professional military but it may not even be able to put together a million-man military using its mixed-manning manpower system.

Russian military's performance during the war showcased the negative aspects of the mixed-manning manpower system when applied to the battle field. From degrading unit cohesion even in those units designated as combat-ready to degrading combat power of the mechanized units (as evidenced by the fact that many tanks and BMPs were left without reactive armor as it required a *kontraktnik* or officer present when it was to be

attached to the vehicle<sup>93</sup>), the mixed-manning manpower system is certainly not the preferred end state of the Russian military. Based on the draft cycles and president-elect Vladimir Putin's recent statements, however, the system is here to stay for at least another five years.<sup>94</sup>

### *Society's Influence on the Force*

One positive side effect of having gone through two decades of manpower transition to a professional army has been an increase in the appreciation on behalf of the MOD of the value of creating a safe and honorable environment for its service members. According to recent polling numbers, a staggering 70% of young men interviewed regarding service in the military said they were afraid of serving because of hazing.<sup>95</sup> In fact, hazing (or as it is known in Russian, *dedovschina*) is the most often-cited reason among Russians for avoiding, or draft dodging, military service.

Over the course of the past century, *dedovschina* has become synonymous with military service among Russians, and the MOD is finally taking notice. Normalizing the housing, salary, medical and family services of all military personnel has become a common topic of discussion among top brass at the MOD as well as the Kremlin. Additionally, reporting and prosecuting crimes associated with hazing in all branches of the military has been on the rise. At the forefront of these reforms has been the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia (*Komitet Soldatskikh Materei Rossii*), a non-governmental organization which has been advocating for the rights of service members all over Russia for over 20 years.

The MOD has now publically recognized the problems of social welfare which exist, not only in its manpower structure, but also internally within the MOD regarding hazing and other matters. While plans to increase the number of hospitals, housing units, and even kindergartens for military personnel and their families have been announced, it is too soon to make a qualitative assessment on the actual progress, especially considering the fact that twice already, in 2009 and 2010, housing and salary-level figures fell short of what was promised to service members.<sup>96</sup> The importance of the social aspect of military service was confirmed by a 2010 MOD poll which asked those entering contract service what was their primary motivation behind the decision to sign the contract. According to the results of this poll, an overwhelming majority of those signing the contract were doing so for financial reasons, to receive housing as well as to learn a vocation. A small number, however, still listed patriotic reasons as their primary motivation.<sup>97</sup>

### *Training a 1-year Soldier*

The most challenging obstacle for the Russian military is how to reconcile the fact that it has a force which annually regenerates over half of its total manpower with the fact that it desires to equip this force with sophisticated modern technology while maintaining unit cohesion.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, over the past several years, the Russian military has drafted between 350,000-490,000 new personnel into its ranks to serve an obligated term of one year. Only a fraction have remained over the years on contract. The question becomes what should be done with the draftee in the one year of his service to ensure that he adds value to the overall organization, and possibly even stays on as a

*kontraktnik*. The inability of the typical draftee to bring value to the organization was recognized early in the reform process. VDV General Shamanov, for example, was able to convince MOD officials to retain with the VDV a larger number of contracts. General Shamanov's reasoning demonstrated that he understood the manpower/training dilemma currently facing the Russian forces. He estimated that roughly 40 percent of all billets in the VDV required a longer than one-year training cycle to be manned, and that his force cannot be made up of more than 30 percent draftees.<sup>98</sup> Colonel Anatolii Khromov, Chief of the Ground Forces Combat Training Directorate, for his part, noted that 12-month service resulted in an inadequate amount of time for a draftee to "study the interaction of weapon parts and mechanisms when firing," resulting in an overall degradation of combat effectiveness.<sup>99</sup>

As previously noted, the shortcomings of the training programs highlighted by the draftees' performance in the Five-Day War were not lost on General Shamanov. Prior to his appointment as head of the VDV, General Shamanov served as the head of the Ground Forces Combat Training Directorate, the main body within MOD charged with the planning and development of the training pipelines for the entire military. Shortly following the Five-Day War, General Shamanov noted that training of the force had not kept up with the demands placed on it by the current mission assignments,

"Training programs for services and service arms are being reassessed with due account taken of the specifics of the operation to rebuff the Georgian aggression against South Ossetia, and of the experience gained in Chechnia. We are also bearing in mind the Soviet Army's experience in Afghanistan, the United States' operations in Iraq, and other armed conflicts."<sup>100</sup>

Ideas on how to address this issue were seriously discussed publically for the first time in October 2010 during a round table entitled "Manning the New-Configuration Armed

Forces” held by the National Research University Higher School of Economics and the Defense Policy Council in Moscow.<sup>101</sup> While noting the need to improve training of the draftees, the discussion centered on the ongoing, and dire, need to develop the non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps in the Russian military akin to that which already exists in other modern militaries.

The NCO corps constituted the backbone of the imperial Tsarist army as well as Marshal Zhukov’s army during World War II, but it has been neglected over the past two decades within the Russian military. There is no reason to think that this backbone could not be recreated in the Russian military of the 21st century, but second-order effects of the overall manpower reform have inadvertently hindered this ability. As Russian military analyst, Dr. Rod Thornton, notes,

“The conflict with Georgia undermined [the argument that NCOs were not a crucial component of the military] by opening the inadequacies of the army to public scrutiny, and one of the obvious inadequacies was the fact that junior leadership was lacking. And this problem was not helped by the announced cutback in officer numbers and the elimination of the rank of warrant officer. There is thus now a shortage of both to do the NCO tasks.”<sup>102</sup>

In other words, before the training pipelines for draftees and NCOs were fully developed and implemented, the number of individuals who performed NCOs’ duties in their absence was drastically reduced. Officials within the MOD, to their credit, quickly recognized these training deficiencies and implemented corrective actions.

To remedy problems associated with draftees serving only one year, MOD leadership decided to decrease the amount of time that these draftees spend in a schoolhouse-type pipeline. What initially amounted to almost six months of basic training has now been reduced to three weeks with the remainder of training to be completed by the draftee’s home

unit.<sup>103</sup> Presumably, while this reduction would decrease the overall base line in general training, it would likely increase the unit's overall combat effectiveness because the individual draftee would spend more time learning unit-specific operating procedures and focus on training which would actually be required of him during the performance of his duties.

The MOD has also taken additional measures to ensure the combat readiness of its incoming draftees. One such measure has been the reintroduction of a Soviet-era heavily government-subsidized civilian-run military preparation organization named the Voluntary Society of Assistance to the Russian Army, Air Force and the Navy (in Russian, *Dobrovol'noe Obschestvo Sode'stviia Armii, Aviazii i Flotu Rossii*, or DOSAAF) in November of 2009.<sup>104</sup> The organization was tasked with establishing regional centers throughout the country for the purpose of conducting training of its members (eligible for membership starting at age 14) in physical training, map reading, navigation, and other skills which could be useful during military service.<sup>105</sup> Already by July 2010, General Smirnov reported that DOSAAF assisted in the training of 25 percent of all draftees who were selected during the spring 2010 draft. And this number is likely to increase. In 2010 President Medvedev signed the "Concept for a Federal System to Train Civilians for Military Service Until 2020," which promises to equip DOSAAF with modern equipment and MOD-compatible training guides.<sup>106</sup>

Similarly an initial plan to train the NCOs was introduced shortly following the conclusion of the Five-Day War. In February 2009, Defense Minister Serdiukov announced that a total of 600 of the military's newest NCOs would be trained in a ten-month curriculum at six military training centers across the country: the Moscow Higher Combined Arms Command School, the Omsk Tank Engineer Institute, the Riazan'

Military Automobile Institute, the Riazan' Higher Airborne Command School, the Tver Military Academy of Aerospace Defense and the St. Petersburg Military Institute of Physical Culture. The plan, though good in concept, quickly hit a snag.

Following an initial recruitment drive for qualified personnel, the MOD reverted to the planning stage. Not only did the MOD fail to find a qualified number of personnel to attend the academies but over half of those who took the entrance exam did not pass either the physical or the academic portions.<sup>107</sup> Within a year, however, the concept was reworked and the academies consolidated into a unified school for all NCOs located in Riazan' – not surprisingly, the home of the VDV command college and main training center. Some analysts quickly made note of the location of the new NCO training center,

“The airborne forces [VDV] had come out of the Georgian conflict with their reputation actually enhanced, and not diminished as with the ground forces, and so they were chosen to train all of the army's NCOs. It is hoped by Serdiukov that some of the airborne's *esprit de corps* and fighting spirit will rub off on the new NCOs.”<sup>108</sup>

It also does not hurt the moral of the students at the academy that during the course of their studies there, they wear VDV uniform complete with the famous light-blue VDV berets.<sup>109</sup>

The new curriculum at the Riazan' NCO academy was set at 34 months, much longer than the 22 weeks required to achieve the rank of sergeant under a contract and much longer than most of the ground forces officer training in the United States. Furthermore, training at the Riazan' academy is not only military in nature, utilizing modern technology such as instant-feedback simulators, but it also focuses on basic

leadership and administrative skills which these NCOs need to know upon their return to the operating forces.<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, upon successful graduation, each graduate is promised to receive approximately 30,000-35,000 rubles a month, which is roughly 10,000 rubles more than a current colonel's salary. Pay for Riazan' NCO academy students during the course is also adjusted based on their overall performance and standing in the class.<sup>111</sup>

While the academy peaked the interest of a large number of military personnel (over 8000 applied for the inaugural course), only 248 students were admitted.<sup>112</sup> By September 2010 that number had dropped to 202 based on voluntary drops and disciplinary problems.<sup>113</sup> It remains to be seen how many of these students graduate in 2012 and what their long-term impact is going to be on the total force (graduates agree to serve five years upon graduation.)

It appears that for the time being the MOD is more focused on training the trainers – the NCOs and the officers of its units. But at the rate of graduating 200 NCOs a year, this approach may not last too long. If the graduation rates do not increase sharply over the course of the next several years, it is not inconceivable that the mandatory service requirement will increase from 12 months simply to provide units with enough warm bodies to maintain combat effectiveness.

*We must always remember what this country owes its soldiers and officers, who during the difficult 1990s, despite everything, saved the military, and ensured the combat effectiveness of their units. When necessary – they fought. They lost their friends and won. This was the case in the Caucasus, in Tajikistan, and other ‘hot spots.’ These people saved the Soul and Honor of the military. The territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Russia. They defended the safety of our citizens. And they did not allow anyone else to degrade and “write off” our country.<sup>114</sup>*

*- President-elect Vladimir Putin, 2012*

### **CHAPTER THREE: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE UNITED STATES?**

The most important aspect of any organization is the corps of its people. Such is the case of the Russian military and its people. The ongoing military reform in Russia has significant implications for the United States (US) on several different other fronts, but many of these are outside of the scope of this study. A significant amount of work, for example, has been done discussing the reform of the Russian military-industrial sector and the procurement process over the course of the past several years, especially since the conclusion of the Five-Day War, and what implications this has had on the US technological competitive advantage vis-à-vis the Russian Federation.<sup>115</sup> Much has also been written on the reorganization of the ground forces away from the Soviet-style “Army” structure toward a more flexible and responsible “Brigade” structure composed of “heavy,” “medium,” and “light” battalions, and what impact this reorganization might have on US – Russian strategic relations.<sup>116</sup> But in order to understand this reform’s impact on the Russian military and society, as well as with its relations with the US and the West, one must gain a better understanding of what Moscow has done with the *people* of its military. Comprehensive analyses focusing particularly on this topic are scarce,

and some of the highlights were presented in the previous chapter. The question is what important lessons can officials in Washington draw from this discussion of Russian military's manpower reform.

The Five-Day War provided a window into what has been accomplished in terms of manpower reform within the Russian military over the past two decades and demonstrated how much remains to be done. Specific to the manpower reform, the following implications can be drawn for the United States:

1. The MOD wants to train its force. Though the debate over whether the mixed-manning system is an end state or just a means to an all-volunteer force is still active, it has become secondary to the debate over *how to train the current mixed-manning Russian force*. By focusing on improving the lives of the conscripts and giving them the tools to be more successful in their one year of service, Russia is taking a step in the direction of incentivizing military service. With the rise in the quality of the training of its NCO corps, Russia's force will increase its confidence and, as a result, its combat effectiveness – a strength which will likely be exploited by the country's political leadership either now or in years to come.

2. The MOD wants to professionalize its force. The desire to achieve an all-volunteer professional fighting force is sincere at the highest political and military levels in the Russian Federation. While the Kremlin and the MOD work to figure out how to do so effectively and within its means across the entire armed forces, *the fact that Russia will have an all-volunteer force is a question of when not if*. Debates and discussions on the

exact meaning of the word “professional” are occurring more frequently than they ever have before. Already gone is the common understanding that the word *kontraktnik* simply denotes a soldier who signed a piece of paper and is now obligated – under the threat of prison – to continue serving his time. More common now is the understanding on behalf of the leadership in the MOD that it, too, has to honor its obligations of the contract and mold the civilian into a professional, education, civilized soldier during the allotted time of the contract. The Riazan’ NCO academy and its curriculum is a testament to this willingness, as is the MOD’s focus on the soldiers and their families’ welfare, including medical and educational benefits. As the Russian force professionalizes according to Western understanding of the word, so grow the opportunities for combined military and diplomatic cooperation with the West based on that common understanding.

3. With a smaller force, the MOD will favor its nuclear arsenal. The Five-Day War lifted the veil from the true nature and combat capability of the Russian military. Many of its deficiencies, as well as some of its strengths, became clearly visible to the outside world. Furthermore, its hereto private discussions of military reform have become public. In fact, so important to the Russian society was this topic that the Chief of the General Staff felt obligated to make a two and a half hour presentation to reporters – a novelty for the Russian military – regarding its plans for reforms. Unfortunately, with its conventional military capabilities fairly visible for all to assess, the Kremlin will now likely resort to its strategic and conventional nuclear arsenals as a potential option should it become clear that conventional forces would not be up to task.<sup>117</sup>

If the United States wants to maintain its current military competitive advantage over, as well as accurately gauge its nuclear and other relations with, the Russian Federation must also pay specific attention to the ongoing manpower reforms within the Russian military.

*“How do I see myself in the future? As a Sergeant of the future.”<sup>118</sup>*

*– Vadim Gorgun, 21-year old student at the Riazan’ NCO Academy, 2010*

## **CONCLUSION**

Ultimately, the 2008 Russo-Georgian war demonstrated that the Russian military’s manpower reform is far from complete. But it also showed that the Russian military remains a force to be reckoned with, albeit probably a weaker one than many had previously anticipated. Over the past two decades, the formerly glorious Red Army of the Soviet Union has been undergoing gradual, but substantial, reform. The purpose of this paper was not to delve into the details of all the different aspects of the ongoing reform such as equipment modernization, task reorganization, or doctrinal overhaul – all of which are worthy of their own in-depth study and analysis. Rather, the purpose was to focus on its people – or manpower – aspect.

Up until Defense Minister Serdiukov – the first civilian head of the MOD – took over the process, military reform in Russia had been conducted mostly on paper. With the help of like-minded politicians and generals, he has been able to push forward a radical reform agenda which aims to bring the Russian military and its force up to speed with the rest of the world.

Given their performance in the Five-Day War, the VVS, Ground Forces, and the VDV all demonstrated the shortfalls of the manpower reform. The VVS had a generation of pilots who had not received sufficient flight hours to maintain proficiency, were not adequately trained on modern equipment, and were, thus, not confident in their abilities. The Ground Forces have relied so heavily on recruiting officers and maintaining a majority-conscript force that the NCO ranks have almost disappeared. This has had a

detrimental impact on unit cohesion and the effectiveness of the total force. And even the idolized VDV has been unable to fill its entire force with *kontraktniki*, giving credence to the argument that Russian society is not yet buying into the idea of a professional military.

The services' performance, however, also demonstrated positive trends in the reform. More attention – and money – is being given towards developing the confidence of the VVS pilots through equipment modernization and increased fuel deliveries. More *kontraktniki* in the Ground and VDV forces are being assigned to critically technical billets, meaning they are learning valuable vocational skills and thereby promoting the idea that military service is about something other than *dedovschina*. Non-Commissioned Officers are being recruited and trained to lead and mentor conscripts for however long they have them.

Alas, manpower reform in the Russian military, as any reform within a large and proud institution, faces real obstacles. The entrenched bureaucracy within the MOD has resisted many of the changes over the past two decades. Since 2008 Defense Minister Serdiukov's team has been successful in finding individuals like Generals Makarov and Shamanov, placing them in the right positions of influence, and letting them execute the process. The Five-Day War exposed some of the negative, as well as positive, trends in the manpower reform, and enabled Defense Minister Serdiukov to set his course. The success of the Russian military reform is being debated.<sup>119</sup> President Medvedev even recently noted that the reforms are almost completed. But the reform of the manpower in the Russian military is not over – because it has just begun. It will take another generation before: pilots regain confidence in their aircraft; *kontraktniki* regain

confidence in their equipment; conscripts regain confidence in their NCOs; officers regain confidence in their units; and Russian society regains confidence in its Armed Forces. Once this process – or, manpower reform – is completed, Russia may very well be able to stand up an all-volunteer *armii*a.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> “Во всем свете у нас только два верных союзника, наша армия и флот. Все остальные, при первой возможности, сами ополчатся против нас.” Author’s translation of a widely-recognized quote attributed to Alexander III Romanov. The quote was taken from a recent newspaper article in Novosibirsk, where a monument to Alexander III Romanov is being built in 2012, and confirmed in an article celebrating Navy Day in Russia in 2009. Kiril Makoveev, “Vizit Tsaria v Den’ Goroda.” *News.NGS.ru*. Web. 14 March 2012. <http://news.ngs.ru/more/393697/>. Accessed 1 April 2012, and; “Rossiia Otprazdnovala Den’ VMF.” *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*. Web. 27 July 2009. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/20410663>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Heidi Tagliavini. “Report.” *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*. Web. September 2009. <http://www.ceiig.ch/Report.html>. Accessed 8 April 2012.

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Library of Congress Russian to English Transliteration Guide is used for all transliteration from Russian to English in this document. The guide is available online at <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/russian.pdf>. The spelling of the Georgian republics of “South Ossetia” and “Abkhazia” were left in their commonly-accepted versions.

<sup>4</sup> “Вооружённые Силы России при проведении операции по принуждению Грузии к миру с честью выполнили поставленные задачи. Наши войска показали и высокий моральный дух, и боевую выучку. Можно прямо сказать, что в результате действий наших войск были сохранены десятки тысяч человеческих жизней.” Author’s translation. Dmitry Medvedev. “Vstupitel’noe Slovo na Vstreche s Komanduiuschimi Voennymi Okrugami.” Web. 26 September 2008. <http://kremlin.ru/transcripts/1535>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>5</sup> For one such an assessment, see: Heidi Tagliavini. “Report.”

<sup>6</sup> Ariel Cohen and Robert E. Hamilton. “The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implication.” *Strategic Studies Institute*. Web. 9 June 2011, p. 23. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1069>.

<sup>7</sup> Anton Lavrov. “Hronologia Boevyh De’stvi’ Mezhdru Rossie’ i Gruzie’ v Avguste 2008 goda.” *Tanki Avgusta*. Ed. Mikhail Barabanov, Anton Lavrov, and Viacheslav Tseluiko. Moscow: Tsentr Analiza Strategii i Tehnologii, 2009. Print, p. 54.

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<sup>8</sup> “Pskovskie Desantniki Vernutsia s Ucheni’ <<Kavkaz-2008>> Do Kontsa Nedeli.” *Informatsionni’ Portal Goroda Velikie Ruki*. Web. 1 August 2008. <http://www.vluki.ru/news/2008/08/01/89131.html>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, pp. 19-20.

<sup>10</sup> Pavel Felgenhauer. “After August 7: The Escalation of the Russia-Georgia War.” *The Guns of August 2008: Russia’s War in Georgia*. Ed. Svante Cornell and S. Frederick Starr. London: M.E. Sharpe, 2009. Print, p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> Tagliavini, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup> Lavrov, pp. 55-9.

<sup>13</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, p.11.

<sup>14</sup> Igor Dzhadan. *Piatidnevnaia Vo’na: Rossiia Prinuzhdaet k Miru*. Moscow: Evropa, 2008. Print, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Lavrov, pp. 55-9.

<sup>16</sup> Roger N. McDermott. *The Reform of Russia’s Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*. Washington: Jamestown Foundation, 2011. Print, p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> Aleksandr Rodionov. “Pogibshi’ v Ossetii Letchik Igor’ Rzhavitin Sluzhil v 929-m GLITS VVS.” *RIA Novosti*. Web. 12 August 2008. <http://www.nr2.ru/center/190689.html>. Accessed 1 April 2012. And, “Fate of Russia Pilot Downed Over South Ossetia Unclear for 3 Years.” *ITAR-TASS Daily*. Web. 16 November 2011. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/26256517>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Gennadi’ Vladimirovich Anashkin. “My Shturmovali Gori: Rasskaz Komandira 104-ogo Desantno-Shturmovogo Polka.” *Zavtra*. Web. 8 October 2008. <http://zavtra.ru/cgi//veil//data/zavtra/08/777/32.html>. Accessed 12 March 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Roger N. McDermott. “Russia’s Conventional Armed Forces and the Georgian War.” *Parameters*. Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, Spring 2009, pp. 65-80. Web. <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/Articles/09spring/mcdermott.pdf>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

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<sup>20</sup> Iana Amelina. "Odin' Den' s Batalionom VOSTOK." *Rosbalt.ru*. Web. 15 August 2008. <http://www.rosbalt.ru/main/2008/08/15/514241.html>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Roger N. McDermott. *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> Lavrov, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> "Chasy i Minuty Boevyh De'stvi'." *Kommersant*. No. 140. Web. 11 August 2008. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/18735257>. Accessed 10 April 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Lavrov, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup> Lavrov, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> "Operatsiia Zankonchena." *Sankt-Petersburgskie Vedomosti*. No. 149. Web. 13 August 2008. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/18755643>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>27</sup> See Tagliavini, "Report" for a detailed background on the political and military altercation between the Russian Federation and Georgia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ronald D. Asmus. *A Little War That Shook the World*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2010. Print, p. 165.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Lavrov, p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ivan Konovalov and Ivan Sergeev. "Remontnaia Kampania." *Kommersant*. No. 46. Issue 4101. Web. 17 March 2009. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1139465>. Accessed 10 April 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Lavrov, pp. 57-8. Author's translation.

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<sup>35</sup> Vendil Pallin and Fredrik Westerlund. "Russia's War in Georgia: Lessons and Consequences." *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. Vol. 20, No. 2. London: Routledge, June 2009. Web, p.408. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592310902975539>. Accessed 10 March 2012. Other experts put the number of Su-25 at eight with around 25 helicopters (Cohen and Hamilton, 12.)

<sup>36</sup> Nikita Petrov. "Russian Army's Weaknesses Exposed During War in Georgia." *RIA Novosti*. Web. 9 September 2008. <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20080909/116657490.html>. Accessed 12 March 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Anatoli' D. Tsyganok. "Uroki Piatidnevno' Vo'ny v Zakavkaze." *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*. No. 30. Web. 29 August 2008. [http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2008-08-29/1\\_uroki.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2008-08-29/1_uroki.html). Accessed 5 April 2012. Also Cohen and Hamilton, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Aleksei Nikolskiy. "Voina Meniaet Biudzhet Armii." *Vedomosti*. Web. 14 August 2008. <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article/158071/>. Accessed 5 February 2012.

<sup>40</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 41. GLONASS is the Russian global navigational system. In Russian, ГЛОбальная Навигационная Спутниковая Система.

<sup>41</sup> Pallin and Westerlund, p. 409.

<sup>42</sup> "Russia's Rapid Reaction." *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*. Volume 14. Issue 7. Web. September 2008. <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-14-2008/volume-14-issue-7/russias-rapid-reaction/>. Accessed 10 April 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 42.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>47</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, p. 10. Also see Felix Chang. "Russia Resurgent: An Initial Look at Russian Military Performance in Georgia." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. Web. 13 August 2008. <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200808.chang.russiaresurgentgeorgia.html>. Accessed 4 March 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Cohen and Hamilton, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> "В течении уже почти двадцати лет, лейтенант летчик, заканчивающий училище, имеющий только первоначальные летные навыки вместо того, что бы становиться в частях летчиком второго класса, первого класса снайпером он практически не летал. Ему летать не на чем было, и он доходил до полковника имея минимальное количество летных часов." Author's translation. Nikolai Makarov. Press Conference. Web. 13 July 2009. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1201042>. Accessed 31 January 2012.

<sup>50</sup> Lavrov, pp. 93-5.

<sup>51</sup> Viktor Litovkin. "Podkovernaia Pobeda." *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*. Web. 4 June 2008. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/17541873>. Accessed 3 March 2012.

<sup>52</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 39.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Rod Thornton. "Military Modernization and the Russian Ground Forces." *Strategic Studies Institute*. Web. June 2011, p. 16. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1071>. Accessed 1 April 2012. Also see Viktor Baranets, "Kavkazskie Uroki: God Spustia." *Komsomolskaia Pravda*. No. 116. Web. 6 August 2009. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/20452087>. Accessed 10 April 2012.

<sup>55</sup> Amelina. "Odin' Den' s Batalionom VOSTOK."

<sup>56</sup> Makarov. Press Conference.

<sup>57</sup> Thornton, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19. Italics were added by the author for emphasis.

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<sup>59</sup> Viktor Litovkin. "Opiat' Prizyv, Opiat' Problemy." *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*. Web. 9 April 2010. [http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2010-04-09/1\\_prizyv.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2010-04-09/1_prizyv.html). Accessed 4 April 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Thornton, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Thornton, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 84.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>65</sup> Thornton, p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> McDermott, *Parameters*, p. 66.

<sup>67</sup> Aleksandr Khranchikhin. "Uroki Ratnykh Uspekhov i Neudach." *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*. Web. 22 August 2008. [http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2008-08-22/1\\_uroki.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2008-08-22/1_uroki.html). Accessed 6 April 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Harriet Scott. *The Armed Forces of the USSR*. Boulder: Westview, 1984. Print, p. 158.

<sup>69</sup> Ray Finch. "One Face of the Modern Russian Army: General Vladimir Shamanov." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. Web. 19 August 2011, p. 399. <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Shamanov.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> Rod Thornoton. "Organizational Change in the Russian Airborne Forces." *Strategic Studies Institute*. Web. December 2011, p. 3. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1096>. Accessed 12 April 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, ed. *Novaia Armiia Rossii*. Moscow: Tsentr Analiza Strategii i Tehnologii, 2010. Print, p. 20.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

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<sup>73</sup> Iurii Gavrilov. "Interview with Chief of the General Staff Makarov." *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*. Web. 23 March 2010. <http://www.rg.ru/2010/03/23/makarov.html>. Accessed 6 April 2012. Signs that the program was failing were already present in 2009, when MOD officials announced that the 76th VDV Division was never going to be able to be fully professional (Thornton, 81.)

<sup>74</sup> Konstantin Rashchepkin. "Desant Na Vzlete." *Krasnaia Zvezda*. No. 49. Web. 24 March 2007. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/11732203>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Barabanov, *Novaia Armia Rossii*, p. 41.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>80</sup> Iliia Kramnik. "Vladimir Shamanov: VDV Rossii Gotovy k Resheniiu Boevykh Zadach." *RIA Novosti*. Web. 2 August 2010. <http://ria.ru/interview/20100802/260908344.html>. Accessed 6 April 2012. This number is representative of the entire five divisions of the VDV, although some units are being kept more ready than others and have a much higher kontraktnik/draftee ratio.

<sup>81</sup> Barabanov, *Novaia Armia Rossii*, p. 48

<sup>82</sup> Thornton, "Organizational Change in the Russian Airborne Forces," p. 48.

<sup>83</sup> Vladimir Muhin. "Prizyvbaia 'Palochka-Vyruchalochka.'" *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*. Web. 9 October 2009. [http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2009-10-09/3\\_prizyv.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2009-10-09/3_prizyv.html). Accessed 6 April 2012.

<sup>84</sup> Mikhail Falaleev and Vladimir Bogdanov. "Otchaiannyi Prizyv." *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*. Web. 4 May 2010. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/21814635>. Accessed 8 April 2012;

<sup>85</sup> Dmitrii Litovkin. "Genshtab Sokratil Prizyv." *Izvestiia*. Web. 13 May 2011. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/24758094>. Accessed 8 April 2012.

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<sup>86</sup> Tatiana Vol'tskaia and Evgeniia Nazarets. "Osenni' Prizyv I Ego Zhertvy." *Svobodanews.ru*. Web. 29 December 2011. <http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/article/24436766.html>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Ignat Kalinin. "Prizyv Sokratili Pod Vybory." *Moskovskii Komsomolets*. Web. 27 January 2012. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/26518167>. Accessed 1 February 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Viktor Litovkin. "V Armii: Uklonistov Vse Bol'she – Prizyvnikov Vse Men'she." *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*. Web. 30 January 2012. [http://www.ng.ru/week/2012-01-30/100\\_army.html](http://www.ng.ru/week/2012-01-30/100_army.html). Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>89</sup> In addition to being politically motivated, the drafting goals are also likely financially motivated. As Thornton notes, "Monetary rewards are handed out when an office meets or exceeds its quota. The doctors performing the entry medicals are likewise rewarded. It is thus no surprise if some sharp practice is entered into in order to meet these quotas. Some of this activity amounts to press-ganging. As one analyst points out, 'Cases are known in which a young man has gone off to his place of work or education in the morning and has found himself in a military unit by that evening. Everything is done in a day, so the youth is unable to contest his illegal induction.' It seems that even if the conscript is medically unfit for service, it is not the commissariat's problem. If he is found to be unfit once he gets to his training unit, then he will still have been registered and thus will have helped to fulfil the commissariat's target." Thornton, p. 36.

<sup>90</sup> Office of the President of the Russian Federation. "Ukaz o Prizyve na Voennuiu Sluzhbu." Web. 30 March 2012. <http://kremlin.ru/news/14878>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>91</sup> Kalinin, "Prizyv Sokratili Pod Vybory."

<sup>92</sup> Golts, Alexander. "Military Historians Will Applaud Medvedev." *The Moscow Times*. Web. 26 March 2012. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/military-historians-will-applaud-medvedev/455537.html>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>93</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 43.

<sup>94</sup> "Until 2017, the number of conscripts will remain the same – around 300,000 people and only around 2020 will that number go down to 145,000 (about 75,000 every six months.)" Author's translation. Vladimir Putin. "Byt' Sil'nymi: Garantii Natsional'no' Bezopasnosti dlia Rossii." *Rossi'skaia Gazeta*. Web. 20 February 2012. <http://www.rg.ru/2012/02/20/putin-armiya.html>. Accessed 1 March 2012.

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<sup>95</sup> Dar'ia Fedotova. "Slaby' Prizyv Rodiny." *Moskovskii Komsomolets*. Web. 24 March 2010. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/21581916>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>96</sup> Thornton, p. 32.

<sup>97</sup> Iurii Gavrilov. "Otbornye Voiska." *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*. Web. 14 March 2012. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/26746665>. Accessed 9 April 2012.

<sup>98</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, pp. 88-9.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>100</sup> "Rossiiskikh Voennykh Budut Gotovit' s Uchetom Konfliktov Poslednego Vremeni." *Interfax*. Web. 30 October 2008. <http://interfax.ru/society/news.asp?id=42663>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>101</sup> Aleksandr Sharavin. "Nuzhny i Kontraktniki, i Prizyvniki." *Voenno-Promyshlennyi Kur'er*. Web. 17 November 2010. <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/6940>. Accessed 6 April 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Thornton, p. 40.

<sup>103</sup> Iurii Gavrilov. "Serzhant Pod Zakaz." *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*. Web. 1 February 2011. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/23465818>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>104</sup> Federal Law of the Russian Federation No. 973. "Ob Obscherossiiskoi Obschestvenno-Gosudarstvennoi Organizatsii 'Dobrovol'noe Obschestvo Sode'stviia Armii, Aviazii i Flotu Rossii.'" Web. 28 November 2009. <http://www.rg.ru/2009/12/07/dosaaf-dok.html>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

<sup>105</sup> "V Rossii Vozradili DOSAAF." *Lenta.ru*. Web. 7 December 2009. <http://lenta.ru/news/2009/12/07/dosaaf/>. Accessed 5 April 2012. See also, Thornton, p. 38.

<sup>106</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 104.

<sup>107</sup> Denis Tel'manov. "Serzhant Kursantu ne Tovarisch." *Gazeta*. Web. 26 March 2009. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/19786131>. Accessed 5 April 2012.

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<sup>108</sup> Thornton, p. 41.

<sup>109</sup> Anastasiia Shpil'ko. "Serzhantami ne Rozhdaiutsia." *Ogonek*. No. 36. Web. 13 September 2010. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/22481422>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>110</sup> McDermott, *The Reform of Russia's Conventional Armed Forces: Problems, Challenges, & Policy Implications*, p. 209.

<sup>111</sup> Dmitrii Litovkin. "Serzhant Meniaet Oblik." *Izvestiia*. No. 205. Web. 2 November 2010. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/22756328>. Accessed 5 March 2012.

<sup>112</sup> Viktor Litovkin. "V Rossii Nachalas' Podgotovka Professional'nykh Mladshikh Komandirov s Diplomom o Srednem Spetsial'nom Obrazovanii." *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*. No. 274. Web. 18 December 2009. <http://0-dlib.eastview.com.library.lausys.georgetown.edu/browse/doc/21079484>. Accessed 1 April 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Shpil'ko. "Serzhantami ne Rozhdaiutsia."

<sup>114</sup> "Мы должны всегда помнить, чем обязана страна солдатам и офицерам, которые в тяжелейшие 90-е годы, несмотря ни на что, сохранили Армию, обеспечили в критические моменты боеготовность частей. Если надо было - воевали. Теряли своих товарищей и побеждали. Так было на Северном Кавказе, в Таджикистане и других 'горячих точках.' Эти люди сберегли Дух и Честь Армии. Целостность и суверенитет России. Защитили безопасность наших граждан. Не позволили унижить и 'списать' страну." Author's translation. Putin, "Byt' Sil'nymi: Garantii Natsional'no' Bezopasnosti dlia Rossii."

<sup>115</sup> For an interesting study of this process see Justin Colbert's paper titled "Rubles for Rearmament" turned in on 6 December 2011 to Dr. Thane Gustafson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for GOVT 648 at Georgetown University. Mr. Colbert can be contacted at [jkc42@georgetown.edu](mailto:jkc42@georgetown.edu).

<sup>116</sup> For a discussion of this topic see Cohen and Hamilton, as well as Pallin and Westerlund.

<sup>117</sup> "The relatively small size of this mobilized military is raising some disquiet; particularly in relation to the fact that Russia may not be able to defend itself with conventional means and will therefore have to employ tactical nuclear weapons. As Konstantin Sivkov, retired from the General Staff's Centre for Military-Strategic Studies, argues:

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‘The elimination of cadre units will strike a terrible blow against the country’s defence capabilities. The result is that when a threat escalates from armed conflict to local war, we will have to go over to the use of nuclear weapons.’” (Thornton, 37)

<sup>118</sup> Shpil’ko. “Serzhantami ne Rozhdaiutsia.”

<sup>119</sup> See, for example: Charles K. Bartle. “Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdiukov.” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*. Vol. 24. No. 1. Print. 25 February 2011, pp. 55-80.

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