

# Cathedrals and Conscripts

## Taking Advantage of Russia's Intra-Military Elitism

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## Taking Advantage of Russia's Intra-Military Elitism

*Russia's creation of ethnically based military units and the establishment of a military church is dividing its army along ethno-religious lines. This division will lead to the development of an elite, better equipped in-group composed of professional Russian Orthodox soldiers and an ill-equipped out-group of ethnically and religiously diverse conscripts. These developments have two implications. First, the moderately sized homogenous in-group will provide Moscow with troops able to conduct sophisticated limited conventional operations, hybrid warfare, and internal security. Second, the ideological isolation and limited resources of the conscript-based outgroup will increase dissent within these military units, heighten ethnic tensions within Russia, and limit the combat effectiveness of a large portion of the Russian army. United States defense policy should recognize the dangers and divisiveness of Russia's military in-group, while seeking to capitalize on the technologically inferior out-group.*

### **Introduction**

Since assuming the presidency, Vladimir Putin has reinstated the Tsarist and early Soviet practice of ethnically and religiously homogenous units and has revived the Russian Orthodox Church as the spiritual foundation of the Russian military.<sup>1</sup> A stagnant economy also has deprived the military of the funds needed for modernization.<sup>2</sup> Taken together, these trends will likely divide the Russian military along ethno-religious lines.

Separating units based on ethnicity breeds tensions within the military, while the emphasis on Orthodox Christianity isolates religious minorities and erodes their loyalty to the state. While budget cuts affect all levels of the armed forces, professional, elite, and specialized units comprised of ethnic Russians do not face cuts as severe as those faced by conscript-based conventional forces on the periphery of the country.

The division of Russia's military along ethno-religious lines poses new threats to and opens opportunities for the United States and its allies. Russia's professional elite in-group is highly motivated and better equipped, posing a significant hybrid threat, and they have the ability to conduct limited high-intensity operations. At the same time, Russia's elite forces are comparatively small in number and needed for internal security. Moscow's non-elite conscript forces suffer under ethnic tensions and from poor training and equipment. U.S. defense policy should capitalize on the growing divisions in the Russian military, recognizing the limitations of the military in-group, while encouraging dissent in the out-group.

## Critical Trends in the Russian Military

Three factors contribute to the ethno-religious divide developing in the Russian military: (1) the formation of ethnically based operational units, (2) the announcement of the Main Cathedral of the Armed Forces and accompanying Christian religious rhetoric from prominent government and military officials, and (3) budget limitations necessitating selective modernization.<sup>3</sup> Together, these trends are creating an in-group and out-group within the Russian military.

### *Ethnically Based Military Units*

Military units intentionally composed largely of ethnic minorities increase divisions within the Russian military.<sup>4</sup> Using ethnicity as a screening factor, the Russian military is able to maintain a mostly Slavic upper rank, while relegating ethnic minorities to lesser positions. This discrimination breeds apathy or outright disloyalty in non-ethnic Russian servicemembers.

- *Russian Nationalism.* President Putin has declared it his duty to protect ethnic Russians and uses biased rhetoric to stoke inter-ethnic fears and tensions. This orientation is evident in Russian military doctrine and ethos.<sup>5</sup> Putin's policies increasingly segregate the military along religious and ethnic lines.<sup>6</sup> A key policy contributing to Russia's growing military divides is allowing conscripts to serve near their homes. The military promotes this policy as a means of making conscription more appealing by allowing soldiers to serve in their native regions. However, this segregation also turns "multi-ethnic and integrative institutions into mono-ethnic and potentially divisive ones", especially as these non-ethnically Russian units receive fewer resources, less training, and have poorer equipment.<sup>7</sup>
- *Recruiting and Demographics.* At the end of 2016, the approximate size of Russia's armed forces stood at slightly below its goal of one million servicemembers.<sup>8</sup> The numbers of new recruits and the total number of soldiers have since declined. Projections for personnel recruitment and retention predict a falling number of personnel each year up to 2022. In 2016, the Russian army had 348,000 contracted soldiers and sergeants, 225,000 officers, and 270,000 conscripts.<sup>9</sup> In 2018, the total number of conscripts recruited was 260,500.<sup>10</sup> To reach its target, 250,000 draftees must be conscripted every draft cycle, which occurs biannually. However, in recent years, no single draft cycle has produced more than half the number of the desired personnel.<sup>11</sup>

Russia is approximately ten percent Muslim, and the population is growing rapidly. If this demographic trend continues, Muslims may comprise between one third and one half of the Russian population by 2050.<sup>12</sup> Today, Muslims represent 15 percent of the Russian army's manpower. The proportion of young Muslim males as a portion of the population is rising in comparison with ethnic Russian or Slavic males, making their conscription even more likely.<sup>13</sup> However, Muslim soldiers are marginalized in the Russian military and heavily underrepresented in the senior ranks. Ninety percent of senior officers in the Army are either ethnic Russians or Ukrainians.<sup>14</sup> Given Moscow's Russian ethnic orientation and demographic trends, divisions within the Russian military will likely grow and ethnic Russians will continue to comprise the bulk of elite units, while Muslims and other minorities will remain relegated to serving in the regular Army.

- *Resources and Training.* There is a growing divide between professional soldiers who are well trained and better equipped and conscripted soldiers who receive minimal training.<sup>15</sup> The lack of training stems in part from the short duration of conscription and the Kremlin's relative lack of investment in conscript units.<sup>16</sup> This difference in funding also mirrors the ethnic divide in the military, with Russian-dominated elite units receiving better training and equipment than conscript-dominated non-elite units stationed in peripheral regions.

### *The Christianization of the Russian Military*

In 2018, the Kremlin announced that the military would sponsor the building of a military church.<sup>17</sup> This announcement highlights the increasing “Christianization” of the Russian military. The goal of “uniting all of the Orthodox service members of Russia” is evidence of the leadership’s preference for Christian Orthodox members and likely points to the isolation religious minorities face when serving, or when forced to serve, in the Russian army.<sup>18</sup>

- *Russian Orthodoxy and the Military.* After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moscow sought a new ideology to guide and motivate the military. This search led to a revival of the Russian Orthodox Church as the “mantle of spiritual leadership of the Russian armed forces”.<sup>19</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense commissioned the construction of a military church near Moscow, with projected completion in 2020. A Russian Defense Ministry press release highlights the significance of the project in the statement, “the new church follows the traditions and aims at ‘uniting all the Orthodox servicemen of Russia’”.<sup>20</sup> All of the funding for the Main Cathedral of the Armed Forces, whose grand opening is set for May 9, 2020 in Patriot Park, 70 kilometers outside of Moscow, will come from donations from the public, although no estimate of the total cost has yet been released.<sup>21</sup> Both the state and the Russian Orthodox Church publicly expressed their support for the project. This cathedral also will be tasked with training military priests. Sergei Chapnin, a vocal opponent of Christian Orthodox-oriented government policies, states that “the design of the church fully corresponds to the understanding of the Orthodox Church that has taken shape today among government and military officials”.<sup>22</sup> There is a shared ideology between the two organizations, and they have a long-standing, symbiotic relationship in terms of public policy and relations.
- *Growing Disenfranchisement Among Non-Orthodox Servicemembers.* Today, many non-Orthodox servicemembers feel less incentive to fight for a state that promotes an explicitly religious ideology that is not their own.<sup>23</sup> The division has not gone unnoticed in Moscow, as Robert Mathers comments that “there currently exists a dialogue between the Russian Defense Ministry and the Muslim representative leadership of the country.” However, “these discussions are just that – talk. From the Balkans to the Bering Sea, only Orthodox beliefs are carried out and accepted in practice by the military. Muslim soldiers are at best ignored, at worst subjected to religious humiliation.”<sup>24</sup> With more non-Orthodox draftees entering Russian military service, Pavel Luzin observed in the *Moscow Times* that “there is a threat that the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of the country, coupled with the mixed and voluntary systems for staffing the army, could result in an uncivilized,

or barbaric, Armed Forces”.<sup>25</sup> This statement reflects the discrimination against and negative attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities in the Russian military.

### *Selective Military Modernization*

Russia has the fourth largest military budget in the world, but its defense spending lags far behind that of China and the United States.<sup>26</sup> While Russian government officials and media highlight new military technology, little spending goes toward improving the whole fighting force.<sup>27</sup>

- *A Stagnant Economy and Budget Cuts.* Military spending is a high priority for the Russian Federation, but a stagnant economy has led to budget cuts since 2016.<sup>28</sup> Operational and manpower budget projections out to 2022 show a consistent decline from 2015 until 2020, when they are predicted to plateau.<sup>29</sup> The Russian military budget in constant U.S. dollars for 2018 is \$45.6 billion, compared with \$60.5 in 2015. In percentage of GDP, total military expenditure is expected to drop from 3.8 percent in 2015 to 2.7 percent in 2022.<sup>30</sup> Although actual military spending is higher than the official budget, Russia’s military spending is still in decline.<sup>31</sup>
- *Modest Modernization Goals.* Russia’s modernization goals for 2020 were replaced in 2018 by the State Armament Programme (GPV) 2018–2027.<sup>32</sup> The GPV 2018-2027 is less financially ambitious than its predecessor, indicating an acknowledgement by Moscow that defense spending will likely decline in the future.
- *Reduced Total Force Spending.* Recent economic troubles linked to the collapse of oil prices in 2014, U.S. sanctions and capital flight, projected inflation, threats of additional sanctions, and a tax increase in 2019 have required a general reduction in state spending.<sup>33</sup> Despite budget cuts, the Kremlin has announced its intention to procure a series of advanced weapons that will likely take funds away from training and equipping the total force. Moreover, in 2015, the number of professional contracted soldiers exceeded conscripts for the first time, representing another drain on the military budget.<sup>34</sup> With the addition of Moscow’s costly involvement in the Ukraine and Syria, available military funds for equipping the total force are becoming scarce, increasing the likelihood that spending will be focused on elite forces.<sup>35</sup>

## **Emerging In-Group and Out-Group**

Russia has made a big show of new technologically advanced weaponry. However, behind the publicity, there lies a military confronted with significant organizational, financial, and strategic obstacles. Russia has effectively “created two militaries; a professional elite force capable of conducting rapid, complex operations with generally modern equipment; and the rest of the military, which still relies upon conscription, mass mobilization,” and older equipment.<sup>36</sup>

*Professional Russian Orthodox In-Group*

The government excludes ethnic minorities from high-skilled elite units that have better training and advanced weapons. Ethnicity plays a role in the screening process for promotion in the Russian military and the Russian Orthodox foundation of the military alienates non-Orthodox soldiers.<sup>37</sup>

This emerging military in-group will be overwhelmingly Russian in background and increasingly indoctrinated with Orthodox Christian messages. This force will have the most modern weapons and best available training. It will be capable of hybrid warfare and limited high-intensity operations (see Table 1).

*Conscript and Minority Out-Group*

Largely reliant on conscription and contracted soldiers, the out-group contains the majority of ethnic and religious minorities serving in the Russian military.<sup>38</sup> This out-group primarily serves in peripheral regions where ethnic and religious diversity is high. They are not fully modernized and possess limited conventional capabilities. The training afforded this group is minimal, and their greatest asset in combat is the ability to outnumber potential opponents.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Russian Military In-Group and Out-Group

	IN-GROUP	OUT-GROUP
<i>Terms of service</i>	Mostly contracted	Mostly conscripted/mixed contracted
<i>Training</i>	Extensive	Minimal
<i>Ethnic and religious composition</i>	Mostly ethnic Russian and Russian Orthodox	Non-ethnic Russian and non-Orthodox units and mixed units
<i>Geography</i>	Stationed in the interior and near important urban/economic centers (e.g., Moscow and St. Petersburg)	Stationed on the periphery/borders of the country
<i>Capability</i>	Hybrid warfare, cyber/information warfare, high-intensity limited conventional operations, internal security	Border defense, low-intensity operations, conventional warfare

## The Implications of a Divided Military for Russia

*“Any country’s army is a direct product of its socio-economic and political system... Russia’s Armed Forces are no exception. They are part and parcel of the current corrupt, quasi-feudal system,”*

– Pavel Luzin<sup>39</sup>

Russia is currently engaged in military operations in Ukraine and Syria.<sup>40</sup> Moscow uses these conflicts to test elite units and advanced technologies.<sup>41</sup> However, Russia likely cannot deploy large combat forces comparable to peer, or near-peer, adversaries because of the in-group, out-group division of its armed forces and the significant number of conscript soldiers.<sup>42</sup> Russia’s professional military in-group allows Moscow to engage in limited high-intensity operations. These elite forces, however, are constrained by size and also are needed for internal security. Russia’s military out-group is large, but poorly trained and vulnerable to ethnic unrest and is of limited use against a capable opponent.

### *Elite In-group and Internal Security*

Russia’s professional military in-group is well trained and highly mobile. Largely stationed near Moscow and other major cities, it provides the Kremlin with internal security forces similar to those seen in coup-proofed regimes.<sup>43</sup> One of the hallmarks of coup-proofing is the strengthening of an elite military force that is comprised of the same social group as the state’s leadership to protect the state from internal threats.<sup>44</sup>

- *Mission.* Russia has a number of competing agencies that ensure the regime’s internal security.<sup>45</sup> The Kremlin tasks these multiple security agencies with monitoring each other and the population. While the internal security services are not counted as members of the in-group, because they are not military, their existence indicates that the government feels it is necessary to employ multiple organizations to watch a number of groups within its borders.

President Putin recently created a new security agency in 2016—the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia).<sup>46</sup> This group falls into the category of elite in-group forces, numbering 180,000.<sup>47</sup> The National Guard is tasked with preventing “civil unrest in 50 cities and 180 military installations.”<sup>48</sup> This new organization was created partially in response to tensions between ethnic Russians and people of the Caucasus region and is used for internal security, which may exacerbate instead of diffuse racially motivated violence.<sup>49</sup>

- *Deployment.* Approximately elite 150,000 troops are stationed in the Moscow area.<sup>50</sup> These troops are tasked with maintaining public order in the event of an emergency and are deployed elsewhere as rapid response units. Some of these units are controlled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Vityaz), particularly the Separate Operational Purpose Division (Dzerzhinsky units) comprised of 10,000 troops, in addition to other smaller units.<sup>51</sup>



The use of elite security forces and military units to suppress unrest is a hallmark trait of coup-proofing. Moscow’s ethnically Russian, Christian Orthodox military in-group is well-equipped, highly trained, mobile, and stationed near important population centers. These qualities provide the regime with robust internal security forces capable of suppressing domestic unrest, especially by members of Russia’s increasingly large minority populations.

While coup-proofing increases a regimes’ ability to suppress internal unrest, it also limits the ability of the most highly trained and loyal units to engage in military operations abroad for an extended period of time.<sup>52</sup> The needs of internal security, combined with the limited size of the elite forces and reduced overall budgets, will likely dissuade Moscow from engaging in a high-intensity military conflict opposite NATO forces. However, these forces remain useful in hybrid and limited short duration operations against NATO allies and non-peer adversaries.

### *Elite In-group and External Security*

Russia’s elite military units are motivated by Russian and religious nationalism and are better trained and equipped. These shock troops are capable of conducting hybrid warfare and limited high-intensity combat operations.<sup>53</sup> However, although Russia boasts almost one million active duty servicemembers, only about 30,000—mostly found in elite units—are “capable of meeting today’s military goals”.<sup>54</sup>

- *Mission.* Elite units of the Russian military have a high level of operational effectiveness.<sup>55</sup> One example of an elite unit is the VDV (Vozdushno-Desantnye Voyska), Russia’s Airborne force.<sup>56</sup> The VDV and similar elite units receive priority for the most up-to-date weaponry and equipment.<sup>57</sup> The VDV is known as a “rapid response unit”, conducting operations in foreign conflicts under the direct command of the president. It was the unit responsible for the initial invasion of Crimea in 2014.<sup>58</sup> There are approximately 45,000 VDV troops who are chosen from other units of the military based on “strength, intelligence, and psychological endurance”.<sup>59</sup> Another key screening factor for VDV soldiers is loyalty; there is a strong likelihood that race, ethnicity, and religion—essentially “Russian-ness”—determine the composition of this force.<sup>60</sup>
- *Capabilities.* Russian military modernization is not a total overhaul of the total force but a deliberate transformation of specific conventional units and its strategic forces.<sup>61</sup> The in-group has the capacity to combat peer and near-peer adversaries in the domains of A2/AD, limited combined arms warfare, and cyber and electronic operations.<sup>62</sup> These capabilities are provided by an in-group of highly-trained specialists comprised almost entirely of ethnically Russian Orthodox servicemembers.

The elite in-group units constitute the most capable element of the Russian armed forces. However, mounting large-scale land invasions would put Russia at a disadvantage against a technologically superior and/or near-peer adversary. Moscow will likely use its elite forces for hybrid and limited high-intensity operations, especially against non-peer adversaries, such as Ukraine or the Republic of Georgia. While better trained and equipped, elite forces are limited in numbers, meaning that

these forces will be stressed if tasked with operations that involve intensive combat for an extended period of time; such as operations against NATO forces.

### *Marginalized Out-group and Internal Security*

Russia's military out-group is poorly trained and equipped and primarily comprised of conscripts of non-Russian ethnicity.<sup>63</sup> This out-group is stationed along Russia's periphery and used for local internal security. It also is a potential source of instability in the country and may harbor divided loyalties.<sup>64</sup>

- *Mission.* In terms of conventional capabilities, ground soldiers are organized into formations for “low- and medium-level conflicts.”<sup>65</sup> The training, equipment, and deployment of Russia's military out-group makes it useful as a first line of defense and for maintaining day-to-day order in the peripheral regions.<sup>66</sup> In addition to a lack of military modernization, training in the regular army also has suffered because of budgetary restrictions, short-duration conscription, and the Kremlin's fear of providing advanced weapons and training to forces that it perceives as being of questionable loyalty. This group poses an internal security threat to the Kremlin and is thus tasked with protecting the peripheral regions of the country and providing the state with an overwhelming ground force.
- *Deployment.* Russia is the world's largest country in terms of land mass, and its borders are difficult to defend because of size and terrain.<sup>67</sup> In order to maintain control, “Russia has exploited existing regional conflicts and cleavages, and created new ones” to thwart the unification of pre-existing social, ethnic, and religious groups in the region.<sup>68</sup>

Due to Putin's “serve near your home” policies, a significant number of troops along the border and in areas of increased tension are ethnic and religious minorities from peripheral regions. While these troops are more familiar with their local region, they also have been affected by the politics of their region and are aware of their differential treatment by Moscow.

The out-group of conscripts and ethnic minorities found in the regular army pose a significant threat to internal security.<sup>69</sup> The Kremlin is particularly concerned with the potential for inter-ethnic military conflicts in the region and with providing those who may have divided loyalties or who feel isolated from the central government with expertise.<sup>70</sup> Moscow's strategy for managing this perceived threat is to relegate the out-group to the lowest ranks of service and to less well-resourced units.

### *Marginalized Out-group and External Security*

The primary advantage of Russia's military outgroup for external security operations is in numbers. Less well-equipped and trained, the largely conscript-based forces are unable to match the armed forces of peer and near-peer adversaries.

- *Mission.* The primary focus for the regular Army, comprised largely of conscripts, is to buttress the conventional capabilities of Russia, defend against “local armed conflicts, mass incursions by insurgents, the implosion of a neighboring state, and as deterrence against a large-scale war”.<sup>71</sup> In the unlikely event of a large conventional attack on Russian territory, the Kremlin may be forced to rely on this military out-group.<sup>72</sup> A strategic advantage of the out-group is their “favorable balance-of-forces” on the border, meaning that Moscow will rely on large numbers of troops to overwhelm an opponent rather than relying on the combat quality of those troops.<sup>73</sup> Overall, the primary advantage of this group is its vast size, not its technological or tactical capabilities.
- *Capabilities.* The Russian army has not fully modernized, and it still relies heavily on Soviet-era equipment. There have been a few upgrades but no major overhaul of equipment or technologies for the vast majority of the regular Russian army.<sup>74</sup> While general equipment appears to be equally distributed, the Caucasus region has shifted from a high to a low priority for modernization. It has not received any new tanks, missiles, drones, air defense systems, or aircraft during the recent rounds of upgrades.<sup>75</sup> As of 2013, Russia is reported to have approximately 15,000 tanks, 27,000 armored vehicles, and 6,000 units of self-propelled artillery guns.<sup>76</sup> President Putin has established the goal of modernizing the conventional army to 70 percent completion by 2020.<sup>77</sup> However, given budgetary constraints, this goal seems optimistic.

In addition to older equipment, training for one-year conscripts is “very limited”.<sup>78</sup> Both conscripts and low-ranking contracted soldiers receive little to no professional development, and military service does not prepare them for professional civilian careers.<sup>79</sup> Up to one third of Russian conscripts are released from service due to poor health every year. This high turnover negatively impacts combat readiness and effectiveness.<sup>80</sup> Once enlisted, conscripts face *dedovshchina*, or violent hazing, which often includes dehumanizing treatment and physical and psychological abuse.<sup>81</sup> In addition to abuse, living conditions are squalid, further reducing combat effectiveness. Poor treatment fosters resentment amongst conscripts towards the Russian military at large.<sup>82</sup>

Since 2014, there has been a buildup of Russian forces in the Western District, which borders the Balkans and several NATO allies. The amount of conventional Russian firepower in this region outstrips NATO allies by a factor of almost six to one.<sup>83</sup> However, this numerical outmatch is the out-group’s only advantage against superior NATO technology and training. In a future conflict, Moscow would primarily rely on its military elite to conduct rapid high-intensity asymmetric operations against key targets, while relying on the less well-equipped and trained out-group’s numbers only in the event of mass conventional conflict against a NATO-allied state, overwhelming numerically inferior peace-time NATO forces.<sup>84</sup>

## Russian's Military Divide: An Opportunity for the United States

The Russian military is not a monolith and, as the divide between its military in-group and out-group grows, the United States should recognize the limitations of Russia's conventional forces, while taking advantage of the disenfranchised out-group for intelligence collection and increasing internal pressure on the regime.

- *Russia's conventional limitations.* Russia's military is divided between a professional and highly capable elite in-group and conscript-based out-group with poor training, equipment, and of increasingly questionable loyalty. Moscow's elite troops are capable of hybrid operations, cyber warfare, and limited duration high-intensity operations, but they are constrained by size and the dual mission of maintaining internal security. Russia's out-group, including units of mixed and of non-Russian ethnicity, will likely feel progressively marginalized in an increasingly Christian- and Russian-dominated military and state, and it has older equipment and poor training. Its advantage in combat is in numbers, but little else. This force would likely have limited success in high-intensity combat against capable adversaries. The out-group is useful for mass exercises and low-intensity combat operations, but it is also a potential source of internal instability in Russia as its diversity increases.

U.S. defense policy should capitalize on these limitations when planning for future combat. Washington should confront the Russian military with increasingly complex and varied threats to further limit the utility of Russia's military out-group. Simultaneously, policy should also recognize the capabilities and human and budgetary resources of the elite in-group.<sup>85</sup> Given the likely need of the in-group to conduct rapid operations and mitigate internal security concerns, the United States should focus on military technologies and strategies that will slow down the speed of Russian operations and increase attrition. Moscow is unlikely to engage in aggression that has the possibility of drawing its shock troops into costly and long-duration combat with highly capable NATO forces.

- *Disaffected out-group as a source of intelligence and leverage.* Russia's military out-group provides the United States with several opportunities. By using disgruntled members of the out-group as sources of intelligence, the United States will have access to information not only about military movements and operations, but also about the potential for internal conflict and the Kremlin's methods to suppress and deter it.

The United States also could stoke dissatisfaction among individuals who already have been abused by the Russian conscription system or feel as though they are fighting for a country that does not represent them and their identity. A potential avenue for collecting intelligence on the internal attitudes between the ethnicities and their treatment by the Kremlin is to capitalize on poor operational security of conscripts and ethnic and religious minorities in the Russian military. This could be accomplished by observing their uses of and posts on social media.<sup>86</sup> Monitoring personal social media accounts to identify potential sources of information. These sources could be used to further inflame ethno-religious tensions, and contact could be achieved through either direct contact or targeted media campaigns. By doing so, the Russian military may begin to fracture along ethno-

religious fault lines, forcing the Kremlin turn its attention inward to quell domestic military and social unrest and away from international operations.

## **Conclusion**

U.S officials tend to view the Russian military as resurgent and focus on a select significant capabilities. They, however, pay little attention to the likelihood of a growing division within the Russian military. The use of ethnically homogenous units, the establishment of a Russian military church, and differential spending due to budget cuts all create an atmosphere ripe for ethnic and religious tension. This growing division will increasingly limit the effectiveness of a large portion of the Russian military. It also will add to the stress on Russia's elite forces as they must increasingly divide their duties between external and internal security.

The United States should capitalize on the growing divide in the Russian military by presenting Russian troops with increasingly complex battlefield threats, further marginalizing the utility of Russia's military out-group. The U.S. should also address the capabilities, manpower, and budgetary resources of Russia's limited military in-group. At the same time, Washington should use disenfranchised members of the military out-group as a source of intelligence, which could exacerbate existing ethnic and religion tensions among the ranks of the Russian military. This factionalizing would further hinder the combat effectiveness of the military out-group and increase the internal security threat to the regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

<sup>2</sup> Dickson, Daniel. "Russian Military Spending Falls, Could Affect Operations: Think-tank." *Reuters*, May 1, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-military-spending/russian-military-spending-falls-could-affect-operations-think-tank-idUSKBN1I24H8>.

<sup>3</sup> Wesolowsky, Tony. "Giving Tanks at Grand Russian Military Cathedral." *Radio Free Europe*, 27 Dec. 2018, [www.rferl.org/a/giving-tanks-at-grand-russian-military-cathedral/29679918.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/giving-tanks-at-grand-russian-military-cathedral/29679918.html).

<sup>4</sup> *A History of Ethnic Units*. Ethnically-based units are not a new concept in Russia. Since the Red Army, Russians have divided Slavic soldiers and ethnic minority soldiers into different units. Units largely comprised of Muslims and Central Asians were assigned to non-combat and rear details until the 1970s. This segregation is likely to have stemmed from two core rationales: a language barrier and the use of discrimination for political and ideological purposes. Many of the non-Slavic soldiers did not speak Russian and therefore could not execute command, control, and combat operations effectively. This practice may also have been a method of preventing Muslims and ethnic minorities from rising through the ranks and gaining status in the armed forces. Ethnic Russian soldiers filled the elite groups in the military during the Cold War because of the perceived unreliability of Muslims and other ethnic minorities. Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

<sup>5</sup> Hill, Fiona. "Mr. Putin and the Art of the Offensive Defense: Approaches to Foreign Policy (Part Two)." Brookings Institute. March 16, 2014. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/mr-putin-and-the-art-of-the-offensive-defense-approaches-to-foreign-policy-part-two/>.

<sup>6</sup> This is a revival of Tsarist and Stalinist policies implemented during some of the great wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: WWI, the Russian Civil War, and WWII. During these times, there were fears that these units would foster discontent and a desire for independence from Russia. Once the immediate wartime need for these units disappeared, they were dissolved.

Golbe, Paul. "Putin Restores Nationality-Based Units in Russian Military." *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume* 13, no. 163 (October 12, 2016). <https://jamestown.org/program/putin-restores-nationality-based-units-russian-military/>.

<sup>7</sup> Golbe, Paul. "Putin Restores Nationality-Based Units in Russian Military." *Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume* 13, no. 163 (October 12, 2016). <https://jamestown.org/program/putin-restores-nationality-based-units-russian-military/>.

<sup>8</sup> 270,000 conscripts, 384,000 contracted non-commissioned officers and enlisted men, and 225,000 contracted officers.

("Russian Military Personnel." Global Security. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/personnel.htm>)

<sup>9</sup> The projected number of total contracted soldiers was 425,000 in 2017; however, approximately 380,000 were recruited.

"Russian Military Personnel." Global Security.

Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018.

<sup>10</sup> "Russian Military Personnel - Conscript." *Global Security*, [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/personnel-draft.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/personnel-draft.htm).

<sup>11</sup> 128,000 were conscripted in March 2018 by presidential decree, and in September 2018, 132,500 were recruited between October 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.

Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. pg. 81

<sup>12</sup> Karimova, Liliya. "Russia's Muslims Are as Diverse as Their Experiences." Wilson Center. May 25, 2017. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/russias-muslims-are-diverse-their-experiences>.

Russia is facing a declining native population (birthrates falling by more than 10% - Kotkin, Joel. "Death Spiral Demographics: The Countries Shrinking The Fastest." *Forbes*, February 1, 2017.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2017/02/01/death-spiral-demographics-the-countries-shrinking-the-fastest/#7e9c59b83c7c>).

The mortality rate for middle-aged Russian men is exceptionally high. This is most attributable to excessive alcohol consumption, and to a lesser degree, excessive smoking. In the US, the likelihood of a man dying before he is 55 is 1 in 11. In Russia, it is 1 in 4, up from 1 in 3 after alcohol restriction laws were implemented. (Nuwer, Rachel.

"Why Russian Men Don't Live as Long." *New York Times*, February 17, 2014.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/18/science/why-russian-men-dont-live-as-long.html>)

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- <sup>13</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018.
- <sup>14</sup> Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.
- <sup>15</sup> Bender, Jeremy. "Here Are 2 Problems That Could Sink the Russian Military in a War." *Business Insider*. October 21, 2015. <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-russian-military-has-two-major-problems-2015-10>.
- <sup>16</sup> Approximately one quarter of Russian ground forces are fully staffed and properly trained as of 2015 (Bender, Jeremy. "Here Are 2 Problems That Could Sink the Russian Military in a War." *Business Insider*. October 21, 2015. <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-russian-military-has-two-major-problems-2015-10>.)
- <sup>17</sup> "Russian Military to Build 3rd Tallest Orthodox Church in the World near Moscow." *Russia Beyond*, 5 Sept. 2018, [www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329083-russian-military-orthodox-church](http://www.rbth.com/lifestyle/329083-russian-military-orthodox-church).
- <sup>18</sup> Peck, Michael. "Russia's Next Weapon: A Church." *The National Interest*, 11 Nov. 2018, [nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-next-weapon-church-35742](http://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-next-weapon-church-35742).
- <sup>19</sup> Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>. pg. 24
- <sup>20</sup> John, FR. "Russian Military to Build 3rd Tallest Orthodox Church in the World near Moscow." *Journey to Orthodox*. September 7, 2018. <https://journeytoorthodoxy.com/2018/09/10960/>.
- <sup>21</sup> The grand opening for the Main Cathedral of the Armed Forces is set for May 9, 2020 in Patriot Park, 70 kilometers outside of Moscow.
- <sup>22</sup> Wesolowsky, Tony. "Giving Tanks at Grand Russian Military Cathedral." *Radio Free Europe*, 27 Dec. 2018, [www.rferl.org/a/giving-tanks-at-grand-russian-military-cathedral/29679918.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/giving-tanks-at-grand-russian-military-cathedral/29679918.html).
- <sup>23</sup> Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.
- <sup>24</sup> Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>. pg. 29
- <sup>25</sup> Luzin, Pavel. "The Future of Russia's Armed Forces, After Putin (Op-ed)." *The Moscow Times*, August 18, 2017. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-future-of-russias-armed-forces-after-putin-58695>.
- <sup>26</sup> Cebul, Daniel. "US Remains Top Military Spender, SIPRI Reports." *Defense News*, 2 May 2018, [www.defensenews.com/industry/2018/05/02/us-remains-top-military-spender-sipri-reports/](http://www.defensenews.com/industry/2018/05/02/us-remains-top-military-spender-sipri-reports/).
- <sup>27</sup> Stratfor. "Russia's Defense Spending Reveals a Big Problem for Its Plans to Upgrade Its Military." *Business Insider*, 17 Jan. 2019, [www.businessinsider.com/russian-defense-spending-indicate-hurdles-for-military-modernization-2019-1](http://www.businessinsider.com/russian-defense-spending-indicate-hurdles-for-military-modernization-2019-1).
- <sup>28</sup> Defense spending was cut by 3% in 2016, 7% in 2017, and 5% in 2018.
- Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018, pg. 75
- <sup>29</sup> Constant 2018 USD budgets and budget predictions for the Russian military: 2015 – 60.491, 2016 – 56.678, 2017 – 50.911, 2018 – 46.554, 2019 – 46.404, 2020 – 44.687, 2021 – 44.097, 2022 – 47.346
- <sup>30</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018.
- <sup>31</sup> Zhavoronkov, Sergey. "Two Lean Years: Russia's Budget for 2018–2020." *Wilson Center*. December 8, 2017. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/two-lean-years-russias-budget-for-2018-2020>.
- <sup>32</sup> Pifer, Steven. "Pay Attention, America: Russia Is Upgrading Its Military." *Brookings Institute*. February 5, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/pay-attention-america-russia-is-upgrading-its-military/>.
- <sup>33</sup> Ballard, Barclay. "Russia's Stagnating Economy." *World Finance*. July 18, 2018. <https://www.worldfinance.com/markets/russias-stagnating-economy>.
- "Economists: Russia Faces Economic Downturn, Higher Inflation in 2019." *Radio Free Europe*. December 27, 2018. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-faces-economic-downturn-higher-inflation-in-2019-economist-predict/29679409.html>
- <sup>34</sup> The salaries on contracted soldiers are 25% higher than those of conscripts. Lavrov, Anton. "Russian Military Reforms from Georgia to Syria." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. November 2018. [https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181106\\_RussiaSyria\\_WEB\\_v2.pdf?sM\\_hVtQ0qs4\\_TTU9rSTS\\_sDJJvcB.IPg](https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181106_RussiaSyria_WEB_v2.pdf?sM_hVtQ0qs4_TTU9rSTS_sDJJvcB.IPg).
- <sup>35</sup> Brennan, David. "Why Is Russia Cutting Military Spending?" *Newsweek*. May 2, 18. <https://www.newsweek.com/why-russia-cutting-military-spending-908069>.
- <sup>36</sup> Bowen, Andrew S. "Russia's Deceptively Weak Military." *The National Interest*, 7 June 2015, [nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-deceptively-weak-military-13059](http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-deceptively-weak-military-13059).
- <sup>37</sup> This practice dates back to Soviet times before World War II.

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Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

<sup>38</sup> The term "contracted" here is referring to their voluntary participation in the Russian armed forces and that they have signed a contract to that effect. It does not refer to mercenary or auxiliary forces that supplement the regular, institutionalized army.

<sup>39</sup> Luzin, Pavel. "The Future of Russia's Armed Forces, After Putin (Op-ed)." *The Moscow Times*, August 18, 2017. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-future-of-russias-armed-forces-after-putin-a58695>.

<sup>40</sup> As of August 2018, Russia has an estimated 63,000 servicemen deployed in Syria (O'Connor, Tom. "How Many Russian Troops in Syria? Military Reveals Full Count as U.S. Told to Leave." *Newsweek*. Accessed August 23, 2018. <https://www.newsweek.com/how-many-russia-troops-syria-military-reveals-full-count-us-told-leave-1088409>), compared with the United States' 2,000, which has remained the consistent deployment throughout 2018 (USA Today, Editors. "How Many U.S. Troops Are in Syria? And What Are They Doing There?" *USA Today*. April 4, 2018. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/04/04/u-s-troops-syria-and-what-they-doing-there/486763002>).

<sup>41</sup> Seligman, Lara. "Russian Jamming Poses a Growing Threat to U.S. Troops in Syria." *Foreign Policy*. July 30, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/30/russian-jamming-poses-a-growing-threat-to-u-s-troops-in-syria/>.

<sup>42</sup> Boulegue, Mathieu. "Russia's Military: More Bark Than Bite." *The National Interest*. May 23, 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-military-more-bark-bite-25941>.

<sup>43</sup> "Coup-proofing is the creation of structures that minimize the possibilities of small groups leveraging the system" to conduct a coup. Structures that constitute coup-proofing include: "the effective exploitation of family, ethnic, or religious loyalties..., the creation of an armed force parallel to the regular military, the development of multiple internal security agencies with overlapping jurisdiction[s]..., the fostering of expertness in the regular army, and the financing of such measures"

Quinlivan, James T. "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East." *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1999, pp. 131–165., [www.jstor.org/stable/2539255?seq=3#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539255?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents). pg. 133

<sup>44</sup> Quinlivan, James T. "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East." *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1999, pp. 131–165., [www.jstor.org/stable/2539255?seq=3#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539255?seq=3#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>45</sup> Internal security services include: the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), military intelligence (GRU), and the Federal Protective Service (FSO). The National Guard maintains 200,000 troops, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, responsible for civil and local law enforcement, maintains 904,800 personnel, the Federal Security Services (FSB) Border Troops maintains 170,000 border troops, and the Federal Protection Service (FSO) employs 20,000 personnel.

"Russia Military Power: Building a Military to Support Great Power Aspirations." Defense Intelligence Agency. 2017. [http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military Power Publications/Russia Military Power Report 2017.pdf](http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Russia%20Military%20Power%20Report%202017.pdf). pg. 18

<sup>46</sup> "Russia's Security Forces Prepare for a Power Grab." *Stratfor Worldview*. February 6, 2018. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russias-security-forces-prepare-power-grab>.

<sup>47</sup> This is roughly the same ratio of internal security forces to regular army as the IIRG has in Iran (Dehghanpisheh, Babak. "Iran's Revolutionary Guards: Custodians of Clerical Rule." Edited by Mark Heinrich and Michael Georgy. *Reuters*, September 22, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-military-attack-guards-factbox/irans-revolutionary-guards-custodians-of-clerical-rule-idUSKCN1M20NA>)

<sup>48</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS ." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. Pg. 113

<sup>49</sup> Shlapentokh, Dmitry. "The Kremlin's Last Resort: Kadyrovtsi in Russia's National Guard." *The Central Asia - Caucasus Analyst*. March 3, 2017. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13430-the-kremlin-last-resort-kadyrovtsi-in-russias-national-guard.html>.

<sup>50</sup> The Ministry of Defence forces in the Moscow area include: the Taman Motorized Rifle Division (12,000 troops deployed near the city of Naro-Fominsk outside of Moscow) and the Kantamir Tank Division (8,000 troops based in Moscow suburbs). There are also more than 10,000 Ministry of Internal Affairs troops stationed in that region. "Moscow Military District." *Global Security*, [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/vo-moscow.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/vo-moscow.htm).

<sup>51</sup> "Moscow Military District." *Global Security*, [www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/vo-moscow.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/vo-moscow.htm).

<sup>52</sup> Quinlivan, "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* (1999), pp. 131-165

<sup>53</sup> Limited warfare in this context is defined as operations which use military tactics but have a singular objective and the conflict does not extend beyond the objective. While military strength is used, the intended result is not total victory or occupation of another sovereign state or entity. Stoker, Donald. "Everything You Think You Know



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About Limited War Is Wrong." War on the Rocks. December 22, 2016.

<https://warontherocks.com/2016/12/everything-you-think-you-know-about-limited-war-is-wrong/>.

Hybrid warfare in this context is defined as warfare that extends beyond traditional, conventional warfare. It includes the use of unconventional tactics, regular and irregular forces, cyber and information operations, or warfare which engages in more than one dimension of combat. "Hybrid War – Does It Even Exist?" *NATO Review Magazine*. <https://www.nato.int/DOCU/review/2015/Also-in-2015/hybrid-modern-future-warfare-russia-ukraine/EN/index.htm>.

<sup>54</sup> Luzin, Pavel. "The Future of Russia's Armed Forces, After Putin (Op-ed)." *The Moscow Times*, August 18, 2017.

<https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-future-of-russias-armed-forces-after-putin-58695>

<sup>55</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. Pg. 123

<sup>56</sup>Elfving, Jörgen. "Russia Flexes Muscles of Airborne Forces." Real Clear Defense. August 07, 2018.

[https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/08/07/russia\\_flexes\\_muscles\\_of\\_airborne\\_forces\\_113691.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/08/07/russia_flexes_muscles_of_airborne_forces_113691.html).

<sup>57</sup> According to Col Gen. Serdyukov, the VDV has received over 42,000 new weapons systems and other equipment over the past five years. These enhancements have increased airborne firepower by 16%, survivability by 20%, and maneuverability by 130%. (Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. Pg. 113).

<sup>58</sup> Bowen, Andrew S. "Russia's Deceptively Weak Military." *The National Interest*, 7 June 2015, [nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-deceptively-weak-military-13059](http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-deceptively-weak-military-13059).

<sup>59</sup> "Airborne Assault Troops [VDV]." Global Security. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/army-vdv.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> "Airborne Assault Troops (VDV)." Global Security. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/army-vdv.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> Majumdar, Dave. "The Russian Military Might Have One Big Advantage Over NATO in a War." *The National Interest*. August 20, 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russian-military-might-have-one-big-advantage-over-nato-war-29307>.

<sup>62</sup> Anti-Access/Area Denial

Majumdar, Dave. "The Russian Military Might Have One Big Advantage Over NATO in a War." *The National Interest*. August 20, 2018. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russian-military-might-have-one-big-advantage-over-nato-war-29307>.

<sup>63</sup> The broader trend of ethnic tensions may play out in two distinct areas. Peripheral areas such as Chechnya and Bashkortostan, as well as internal regions with high ethnic diversity such as Tatarstan, maintain their own ethnic identities. If servicemembers in these regions felt as though the Russian Federation was suppressing their rights or identity, there is the potential for violence or revolt. The other implication of ethnicity screening in the Russian military is the lack of Muslims and ethnic minorities in positions of power in Moscow. This underrepresentation contrasts with the changing demographics of Russia towards a more multi-ethnic state.

Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>. (pg 13)

<sup>64</sup> During World War II, Muslim soldiers defended some major cities loyally, but hundreds of thousands defected to Germany. This desertion created suspicion about the allegiance of ethnic minorities in the Russian military. During the Soviet era, Muslim soldiers facing discrimination looked back towards their preexisting social groups and "the net effect was the gradual fractionalization of many units along ethnic lines." Returning to this intrinsic bond sparked interethnic conflict which precipitated diminished unit cohesion and an overall decline in combat and operational efficacy.

Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

<sup>65</sup> Masters, Jonathan. "The Russian Military." *The Council on Foreign Relations*. September 28, 2015. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/russian-military>.

<sup>66</sup> Recently, there has been a notable build-up of forces along the border with Ukraine, which, due to the ongoing conflict, contains elements of both the in-group and the out-group to maintain security.

"Russia Is Ramping up Forces Near Border, Ukrainian Military Chief Says." *Moscow Times*. December 5, 2018. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/12/05/russia-is-ramping-up-forces-near-border-ukrainian-military-chief-says-a63708>.

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<sup>67</sup>The lack of defensible borders fosters internal ethnic conflict in part due to a high level of illegal immigration. Ethnic Russians and Russian nationals feel economically threatened by the immigrants, fostering racist and nativist attitudes among civilians. Racially dividing the military may also be a convenient avenue for Putin to consolidate power under the guise of ensuring nationalism and loyalty within the ranks of the military. Approximately three million people (out of five million total immigrants) are illegal residents or workers in Russia as of 2013. Rapoza, Kenneth. "Russia To Crack Down on Illegal Immigrants." *Forbes*. April 4, 2013. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2013/04/04/russia-to-crack-down-on-illegal-immigrants/#44a21b271eee>. The majority of the illegal immigrants arrive from Central Asia and Eastern and Southern Europe. Rapoza, Kenneth. "Russia To Crack Down On Illegal Immigrants." *Forbes*. April 4, 2013. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2013/04/04/russia-to-crack-down-on-illegal-immigrants/#44a21b271eee>. Golunov, Sergey. "Ethnic Migration: A Challenge to Russian Border Security?" *PONARS*, no. 432 (March 2007). [http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm\\_0432.pdf](http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm_0432.pdf). "Largest Countries in the World by Area 2019." *World Population Review*. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-in-world-by-area/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ohanian, Anna. "Why Russia Starts so Many Conflicts on Its Own Borders." *Washington Post*. September 12, 2018. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/12/russia-has-a-lot-of-conflicts-along-its-borders-thats-by-design/?utm\\_term=.79b97e257f7f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/12/russia-has-a-lot-of-conflicts-along-its-borders-thats-by-design/?utm_term=.79b97e257f7f).

<sup>69</sup> While they are not technologically advanced, they do have the manpower to rebel against the Kremlin by not following orders, antagonizing superiors, and causing strife along ethnic lines within the ranks. Regions with high ethnic diversity have strong social identities shared among local ethnic and religious groups.

<sup>70</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. Pg. 123

Talmadge, Caitlin. "Different Threats, Different Militaries: Explaining Organizational Practices in Authoritarian Armies." *Security Studies* 25, no. 1 (2016): 111-41. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2016.1134192>.

<sup>71</sup> It is unrealistic to expect conscripts without advanced education or training to be capable of handling modern systems in accordance with Moscow's 70% modernization goal for 2020. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/russia-conscription-crisis-looming>

<sup>72</sup> Golunov, Sergey. "Ethnic Migration: A Challenge to Russian Border Security?" *PONARS*, no. 432 (March 2007). [http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm\\_0432.pdf](http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm_0432.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> Rose, Frank A. "As Russia and China Improve Their Conventional Military Capabilities, Should the US Rethink Its Assumptions on Extended Nuclear Deterrence?" *Brookings Institute*. October 23, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/23/as-russia-and-china-improve-their-conventional-military-capabilities-should-the-us-rethink-its-assumptions-on-extended-nuclear-deterrence/>

<sup>74</sup> Notably, the T-72B3 tank has been upgraded with new internal mechanics and firepower improvements. "T-72B3 Main Battle Tank." *Military Today*. <http://www.military-today.com/tanks/t72b3.htm>. Mizokami, Kyle. "This Is What the Russian Army Will Look Like in 2030." *The National Interest*. September 19, 2017. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/what-the-russian-army-will-look-2030-22369>.

<sup>75</sup> Meyers, Nicholas J. "Comparing Russia's Military Modernization by Region-Balanced Efforts Across All Fronts." *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 15, no. 103 (July 11, 2018). <https://jamestown.org/program/comparing-russias-military-modernization-by-region-balanced-efforts-across-all-fronts/>.

<sup>76</sup> Osborn, Kris. "Here's How Russian and NATO Forces in Europe Stack up." *Business Insider*. August 30, 2017. <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-russian-and-nato-forces-in-europe-compare-2017-8>.

<sup>77</sup> By 2020, 70% of Russian conventional forces should be outfitted with modern equipment (Pifer, Steven. "Pay Attention, America: Russia Is Upgrading Its Military." *Brookings Institute*. February 5, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/pay-attention-america-russia-is-upgrading-its-military>)

By 2020, a military transformation, including the formation of permanent battalion tactical groups (BTGs) and a significant restructuring to move from a military designed for long-term conventional conflict to a more condensed and streamlined high-tech military designed for short and intense engagement to execute independent missions and operations should be completed. (Giles, Keir. "Assessing Russia's Reorganized and Rearmed Military." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. May 3, 2017. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/03/assessing-russia-s-reorganized-and-rearmed-military-pub-69853>.)

<sup>78</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. pg. 81

<sup>79</sup> Luzin, Pavel. "The Future of Russia's Armed Forces, After Putin (Op-ed)." *The Moscow Times*, August 18, 2017. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-future-of-russias-armed-forces-after-putin-58695>.

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Russia is slowly moving towards fewer conscripts and more contracted soldiers as part of their military modernization efforts.

Bender, Jeremy. "Here Are 2 Problems That Could Sink the Russian Military in a War." *Business Insider*. October 21, 2015. <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-russian-military-has-two-major-problems-2015-10>.

<sup>80</sup> Draft-dodging is endemic in Russia, and draft-dodgers face severe punishments such as heavy fines, imprisonment, and forced labor if caught. There are approximately 75,000 to 150,000 men illegally avoiding the draft in Russia, facing penalties such as a fine of \$3,200, arrest and imprisonment for two years, or mandatory labor. Conscription still has a reputation for being detrimental to mental and physical health. Reforms in 2008 and 2014 have made conscripts more combat-effective, but many suffer from poor health before entering service. In 2014, 27% of conscripted young men were not fit for service, and in 2008, less than 40% of conscripts were completely fit for service. In the past decade, the minimum qualifications have been legislatively loosened, meaning that there are now more conditions which are acceptable that would have previously precluded individuals from service. Plakhov, Demyan. "Russia's Military Conscription Policies." NATO Association of Canada. November 5, 2016. <http://natoassociation.ca/russias-military-conscription-policies/>.

Svynarenko, Arseniy. "The Russian Demography Problem and the Armed Forces: Trends and Challenges until 2035." Finnish Defense Research Agency. 2016. <https://puolustusvoimat.fi/documents/1948673/2015525/The-Russian-demography-problem-and-the-armed-forces-Trends-and-challenges-until-2035/a2ef95eb-b9ab-4563-ba31-cc1010b3c20c>.

To prevent even higher conscript turnover, men unfit for duty have reportedly been sent to operational units regardless of their poor physical condition.

Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. pg. 79

<sup>81</sup> Further elements of dedovshchina include: seizure of passports and other forms of identification, lack of proper medical care, and occasionally forced labor, rape, and murder.

Plakhov, Demyan. "Russia's Military Conscription Policies." NATO Association of Canada. November 5, 2016. <http://natoassociation.ca/russias-military-conscription-policies/>.

<sup>82</sup> Jane's by IHSMarkit. "Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Russia and the CIS." *Jane's Security: Country Risk Module*, 23 May 2018. Pg. 123

Mathers, Robert S. "Green, Red and White: The Problems of Muslim Soldiers in Today's Russian Army." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 16, no. 4 (2003). doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13518040308430579>.

<sup>83</sup> "Russia's Conventional Forces Outgun NATO near Its Borders." *The Economist*. March 8, 2018.

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/03/08/russias-conventional-forces-outgun-nato-near-its-borders>.

<sup>84</sup> Sokolsky, Richard. "The New NATO-Russia Military Balance: Implications for European Security." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 13, 2017. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/13/new-nato-russia-military-balance-implications-for-european-security-pub-68222>.

<sup>85</sup> The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) recognizes the importance of "high-intensity conflicts and closing near-term capability gaps" when discussing military objectives against Russia (and China).

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<sup>86</sup> In February 2019, Russia banned posting on social media about military service and the use of smartphones and recording devices by soldiers. The state issued this order in the name of security and safety for soldiers so that they would not become targets, but the ban also limits the publication of abuses and crimes perpetrated by and within the Russian military. It remains too soon to tell how this ban is enforced and if there is a high percentage of dissidence in following this order. This ban prohibits Russian soldiers from instantaneous access to the internet, especially in the field. This new law would make Russian soldiers ignorant of crucial world developments published on open sources. But it would also restrict their private contact with family and social media posting and inhibit coordination among possible dissidents. This new law will also make it harder to corroborate stories of abuse and hazing prevalent in the Russian military.

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