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Restructuring and Reform in Russia's MVD: Good Idea, Bad Timing?

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From 1995 to March of 1998, then Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD) Anatoliy Kulikov cautiously but steadily built up the combat power and personnel of the Internal Troops of the MVD. His focus appeared to be oriented more on preparing the Internal Troops for potential combat in the North Caucasus than on fighting crime and keeping order in the cities. His preoccupation with the Internal Troops reportedly was a major factor in President Yeltsin's decision to relieve him of his duties in March. Kulikov's replacement, Sergei Stepashin, has focused his efforts on the fight against crime while giving the North Caucasus region less attention. He has dramatically reduced the size and strength of the Internal Troops. In September, a new organizational structure of the MVD was released that reflected this change, including reduction of the number of MVD military districts from seven to four. Stepashin is overseeing perhaps the most dramatic restructuring of the MVD in the past 20 years, concentrating on the fight against crime. The current tensions in the North Caucasus suggest, however, that Stepashin may have had a good idea but that his timing was less than perfect. The Internal Troops, if called upon to maintain order in and around Chechnya, may have more trouble doing so after his emasculation of the force.

During 1998, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) underwent significant changes, perhaps the greatest overall shake-up in a one-year period in the ministry's history. First, a new minister was appointed. Sergei Stepashin replaced Anatoly Kulikov, former Deputy Prime Minister, commander of all forces in Chechnya and Minister of the MVD since July of 1995. Second, there was a significant reorganization of MVD headquarters that included the creation of an independent directorate for dealing with the North Caucasus region. Finally, in mid-September, the number of troops and military districts was reduced, some police units were transferred to

regional authorities, and new mobile elements were formed. What was the rationale behind these changes, and what is their significance?

RATIONALE FOR THE REORGANIZATION AND REFORM IN 1997-98

The primary reasons for the shake-up appear to lie in several areas: the requirements of a new minister with different priorities; the ministry's performance (or perceived lack thereof) in 1997 and the first quarter of 1998; the developing internal situation in Russia; and the requirement to realign the ministry with the requirements of military reform. These areas are transforming the appearance of the MVD and shattering the power structure that Kulikov built over the past two years.

For much of 1996 and 1997, former Minister of Internal Affairs and General of the Army Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov served as a lightning rod for criticism from politicians and other power ministries. He was charged, on several occasions, with attempting to create his own personal army by increasing the size of the ministry in both personnel and equipment. This was especially considered true among the Internal Troops which he formerly commanded. Kulikov argued that the problems associated with internal unrest were the primary threat to the unity of Russia and demanded such increases. In addition, he appeared to disagree fundamentally with President Yeltsin in two areas: the government's policy in the North Caucasus, which Kulikov viewed as too soft; and the government's policy toward military reform, which Kulikov viewed as impossible to execute without an increase in the armed forces' budget. As a result, reform efforts in the MVD were proceeding too slowly for the Yeltsin administration. Additionally, Kulikov had the unpleasant task of investigating those closely associated with the President's family (Boris Beresovskiy, etc.) for charges ranging from bribery and corruption to murder. Beresovskiy was also closely associated with the development of President Yeltsin's Caucasus policy and the advancement of Ivan Rybkin, neither of which were appealing to Kulikov.

After Kulikov's dismissal in March of 1998, new Minister of Internal Affairs Stepashin quickly stated that there would be some significant changes at the ministry. He associated Kulikov with the 'power component: the troops, the Special Rapid- Deployment Squad, the special police, the uniform, tough demeanor, tough troops, tough approaches...' and characterized himself as 'the intellectual component ... emphasis on the criminal investigation department, criminal research, the police detective, the police scientist, the crime-detection specialist, the investigator, the expert, the criminal investigation officer, and the divisional inspector to some extent'.¹

Stepashin leveled charges at Kulikov as well, stating that he had allowed too much corruption in the service and had relied on doctored figures indicating progress in the fight against crime. Stepashin has been quoted on several occasions as calling for an end to 'deception' over crime statistics. Igor Kozhevnikov, chief of the Russian MVD Investigation Committee, noted that 'until crime statistics begin to be received through Federal Security Service (FSB) and Defense Ministry (MOD) channels, we will be unable to make even an approximate assessment of the scale of crime in Russia'.² Ivan Khrapov, chief of the MVD Criminal Investigation Main Administration, noted that 'when we talk about percentages Westerners look at us as if we were crazy, but the pursuit of statistics has given rise to a whole generation of detectives who when they arrive at the scene of crime think about how to conceal a crime rather than how to clear it

up'.³ As a result, some analysts think the MVD regards 'percentage mania' as a top priority.⁴ In September Stepashin warned the Federation Council to expect a new crime wave in the near future due to the recent economic shock waves that passed through the country. He added that from January to July crime rose by 4 per cent.⁵

Fighting crime is apparently not only at the top of Stepashin's list but of those of others as well. The MVD was the first ministry visited by new Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, who stressed at a meeting of the MVD's collegium that success in creating a market economy depends largely on how successful the MVD is in its fight with the shadow economy. Measures Primakov recommended included consolidating the banking system, stabilizing the ruble, and imposing a state monopoly on alcohol. This monopoly may eventually extend to tobacco imports and regional tobacco products. There must also be a crackdown on attempts by some regional authorities to tighten their links with organized crime figures, Primakov added.⁶ He placed much of the blame for the current situation on the law-enforcement structures, noting that their work is ill-coordinated and that many law-enforcement officials are corrupt. At the same time Primakov pointed out that rivalry among different law-enforcement agencies, and among elements of the MVD (especially among the Internal Troops and other agencies of the MVD) had to stop.⁷

Stepashin is particularly concerned with three types of crime that are occurring in the North Caucasus area. These are economic crime, murders and kidnappings, the last of these having become a sort of national sport. Inter-ethnic and regional problems associated with the poverty and destroyed infrastructure produced by the Chechen war have exacerbated these problems. Stepashin noted that the situation in the North Caucasus is having a 'dominant influence' upon the situation in the country.⁸ In May the former Commander of Internal Troops, Leonid Shevtsov, was appointed deputy minister for the Caucasus. His place at the Interior Troops' command was taken by Colonel-General Pavel Maslov. Shevtsov's special directorate is designed to combat terrorism and hostage-taking, and is headquartered in Stavropol. All power structures in the North Caucasus are under his command (army, border guards, etc.). Shevtsov has noted that in regard to hostage taking and exchanges of fire 'the gunmen's sorties will not go unpunished'.⁹

To emphasize this point, the armed forces conducted a command-staff exercise in the North Caucasus on 27 July. All power ministries participated, and were under Shevtsov's operational control. Approximately 15,000 men took part in the exercise, with the official scenario portraying efforts by the operational command to intercept illegal shipments on Russian territory, to prevent terrorist acts, and to react to natural or manmade disasters. Also included, however, was the fight against bandit formations and sabotage groups. Of course, the perimeter of the commandstaff exercise followed the border of Chechnya, which underscored the area of focus.¹⁰ Chechen Interior Forces were invited to participate but declined.

MVD reform, however, is the area in which Stepashin appears to have made the quickest strides. First, he removed from the main organization many of the generals who were put there by Kulikov. Second, in April he recommended the following changes: changing the status and tasks of the Motor Vehicle Inspectorate, transferring the Main administration for the Enforcement of Punishments to the Justice Ministry, entrusting the protection of public order to the municipal authorities (conducted only in a few regions as an experiment), reducing and transforming the

Internal Troops into mobile groups (and cut from 257,000 to 140,000 in two years), and subordinating firefighters to the Ministry of Emergency Situations.^{[11](#)}

In effect Stepashin has totally decimated all that Kulikov built up over the past two years. The reform decree signed by President Yeltsin will cut the Interior Troops by 54,000 by 1 January 1999. Their foundation will be three mobile groups of four or five divisions (as apposed to the 19 or so under Kulikov). These groups will be manned by contract soldiers. In addition, only officers will serve in the independent operational division known as the Dzerzhinskiy Division (an 'officer's *spetsnaz*'). Convoy functions (escort and security) will be handed over to the Justice Ministry, and the Internal Troop districts will be cut from seven to four, with only the Central, Volga Basin (Privolzhskiy), Siberian and North Caucasus remaining.^{[12](#)} The reform plan can also be viewed in the reorganization that is ongoing in the MVD main building itself.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY

It is not known at what point in time the MVD developed the new organization, but it was probably after Kulikov's dismissal. It is also unknown which of the new directorates took the greatest manpower hits over the past year in an attempt to meet President Yeltsin's military-reform mandate. Most likely it was the Internal Troops, who were bloated by western standards.

Over the years there have been very few English-language analyses of the internal organization of the MVD. One of the most recent and detailed renderings was produced by British analyst (and professor at Keele University) Dr Mark Galeotti. His September 1997 schematic differs somewhat from the new organization and highlights the recent changes.^{[13](#)}

According to the new organization,^{[14](#)} all Main Directorates are subordinate to the Central Apparat, and several subdivisions of specific Main Directorates are also subordinated to the Central Apparat (the initials CA after a directorate or subdivision indicate that it is a part of the central apparat). The organizational changes appear to have started with those organizations directly subordinate to the minister. The current organization lists only the Apparat of the Minister, the Directorate of Security (probably the Minister's personal security), and the Directorate of Control - Inspection. Dr Galeotti's organization was more complex, in that it listed the Ministers's office, the Collegium, the Central and Regulation Directorate, the Internal Security Directorate, and the Directorate for Information and Foreign Contacts. The Collegium has most likely moved to the inner circles of the Apparat of the Minister, and it is here that Primakov met with the members of the Collegium to discuss the crime situation.

According to Galeotti's chart, there were nine deputy ministers, and three of these were designated first deputy ministers. One was the head of the General Staff of the MVD, one was in charge of economic crime and investigations, and one was in charge of organized crime. The current organization also has nine deputy ministers and three first deputies but either their name or function has changed. The first deputy minister in charge of the General Staff from Dr Galeotti's chart has been redesignated the Main Organizational -Inspectorate Directorate. It has ten subdirectorates to the old General Staff's nine, and some of these have changed name or function. Those sub-elements of the Main Organizational-Inspectorate that are holdovers from the old General Staff include the Organization Planning Directorate (CA), the Information

Analysis Directorate (CA), the Inspectorate (CA), the Duty Service Directorate (CA), the Emergency Situation Directorate (CA), the Mobilization Preparation Directorate (CA- formerly the Organization Mobilization Directorate), and the Main Information Center (formerly the Communications and Information Directorate). New additions are the Directorate for Guarding MVD Objects, the Organizational-TOE Planning and Development System of the MVD (CA), and the VNII (which most likely stands for 'All-Russian Scientific Research Institutes'). Missing from the old General Staff organization are the Legal Directorate and the International Co-operation Directorate, which have been put under a different first deputy minister.

The first deputy minister in charge of Criminal Investigations, Economic Crime, Illegal Drug Trade, and Interpol under Dr Galeotti's organization chart has been renamed the Main Directorate for Criminal Investigations, and includes the Directorate for Combating Illegal Narcotics Transactions (CA), an Operational-Search Directorate, and a Directorate for Operational Technical Measures.

The third and final position of first deputy minister under Dr Galeotti's organization was the first deputy minister in charge of the Main Directorate for Organized Crime. This Directorate has been downgraded to a deputy minister position. It has subordinate to it the Main Directorate for Fighting Organized Crime, the Main Directorate for the Fight with Economic Crime (CA), the Directorate for Security of Information Technology, and the NtsB (acronym unknown) of Interpol. There is also a Bureau for Co-ordinating the Fight with Organized Crime and Other Dangerous Types of Crime on the Territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States under this deputy minister.

Under the new organization the third first deputy minister is called the State Secretary. This individual is in charge of two Main Directorates (CAs), one for Legal Work and External Communications (both were under Dr Galeotti's General Staff), and one for Resource Support. Under the Main Directorate for Legal Work and External Communications is the Legal Directorate; the Directorate for Co-operation with Federal Organs; the Directorate for International Co-operation; the Directorate for Information; Protocol Service; and the Federal State Institution 'Joint Editorship of the MVD of Russia.' The Main Directorate for Instituting Punishment (prison system) was also under this Directorate, but was moved to the Justice Ministry this year.

The Main Directorate of Resources (CA) (Support) includes the Directorate for Material-Technical Support and Logistics; the Directorate for Technical Policy, Planning and Analysis; the Directorate of Construction; and the Directorate of Special Transport. The Main Financial Economic Directorate (CA), the Medical Directorate (CA), and the Economics Directorate (CA) are also important sub-elements. Other elements associated with the Resource Directorate are the Directorate for Resource and Normative Support, the Government Institute of Scientific Production (hardware) 'Teknika', and State Institutions for Production.

In addition to the three first deputy ministers, there are six other deputy ministers in the current MVD central apparat. There were also six deputy ministers under the 1997 organization of Dr Galeotti, but as with the First Deputy Minister positions the names have changed. The deputy minister who handles organized crime has already been mentioned. The other deputy ministers

are as follows: the deputy minister who is the Chief of the Investigative Committee of the MVD of Russia; the deputy minister in charge of the Main Directorate for Upholding Public Order; the deputy minister in charge of the Main Directorate for Cadres and Cadre Policy; the Deputy Minister and Commander of the Internal Forces of Russia; and the deputy minister in charge of the Directorate for the North Caucasus (interestingly, the latter is not a part of the Central Apparat).

The Investigative Committee of the MVD of Russia (CA) includes within it an Organizational Directorate, an Information-Analytic Directorate, and a Control- Methods Directorate (potential accounting oversight directorate for investigations). Also attached to the Investigative Committee is an Investigative Unit and an Expert- Criminal Center. The Main Directorate for the Maintenance of Public Order (CA) has attached to it a Main Directorate of Government Inspection for the Safety of Road Traffic (GAI)(CA), which includes a Scientific-Research Center, a GAI Battalion of Special Designation, and an Interregional Office for the Investigation of Auto- Transport. There is also a Passport-Visa Directorate (CA) (with a Center for Passport-Visa Information and Statistics attached), a Main Directorate of Internal Forces for Transport (CA) (with an Operational-Investigative Directorate attached), and a Directorate for High Security Objects (CA) (probably the old 8th Directorate, with a Directorate for Guarding and Escorting Cargo attached). Other elements attached to this deputy minister are yet another Passport-Visa Office, and a Main Directorate for Outside Agency Protection.

The Main Directorate for Cadres and Cadre Policy (CA) includes a Directorate for Manning and Tracking Service, a Directorate for Work with Personnel, and a Directorate for Professional Education. There is also a Directorate for Regional and Public Communications (CA), a Main Directorate of State Fire Fighting Service (CA), a Methodological Center for Professional Education and Co-ordination of Scientific Research, a Central Museum, a Cultural Center, and an All-Russian Scientific Research Institute for Fire Fighting Defense.

Finally, there are two deputy minister positions which exceed some of the first deputy ministers in importance. These two deputies are the Commander of the North Caucasus region and the Commander of Internal Forces. In the case of the new North Caucasus directorate the commander, Colonel-General Leonid Shevtsov, served as the Chief of Staff to former Minister of Internal Affairs Kulikov during the fighting in Chechnya, and as the first chief of all Russian forces under SHAPE (under the command of General George Joulwan). Based in Stavropol, Shevtsov has been very active in organizing and conducting joint operational exercises in the Caucasus region to test the combat readiness of his forces.

The Main Command of Internal Forces was the part of the ministry that Kulikov built up and supported during his reign. It is under the control of the Commander of Internal Forces, Colonel-General Pavel Maslov. This command has units and subunits as well as institutes directly subordinate to the Commander of the Internal Forces. Reportedly, Yeltsin had earlier approved a plan to cut the number of Interior Ministry troops to about 120,000 by 2006. The troops will be restructured into three rapid deployment groups to deal primarily with massive unrest, the disarmament of large gangs or patrolling areas hit by calamities, according to an MVD spokesman. On 17 September 1998 President Yeltsin signed an edict on Internal Troop Reform entitled 'On Certain Measures for Reform of the Internal Troops of the Russian Federation

Ministry of Internal Affairs.' This edict supplements Federal Law No.27-F3 ('On the Russian Federation Ministry of Internal Troops'). The next section highlights some of the key points of the Federal Law to demonstrate the extent of change in the Interior Troops in the past two years.

On 20 October, speaking at a news conference, Minister Stepashin indicated that more changes are in progress for the MVD. He noted that President Yeltsin had signed a decree promoting Nikolai Kulikov, head of Moscow's Main Directorate of Internal Affairs (GUVD), to the position of deputy interior minister but did not say if this was an entirely new position (bringing the total number of deputies to seven) or if Kulikov was replacing someone else. Kulikov's job will be to fight crime in Moscow as well as the illegal sale of alcohol in the capital. In addition, Stepashin announced that Yeltsin had signed a decree that creates mobile operational units within the Internal Troops. The units are to be modeled on four existing and professional brigades.¹⁵

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION LAW ON INTERNAL TROOPS

Russian Federation Federal Law No.27-173 was signed into law on 6 February 1997. The law is very important because it sets the operational standards for today's Internal Troops. The law is entitled 'On the Russian Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs Internal Troops.'¹⁶ It consists of ten sections and 55 articles. The most important articles are Articles 2 (General Missions of the Internal Troops), Articles 18-23 (Missions of Operational Formations and Military Units, and Special Motorized Formations; Missions of Formations and Units for Guarding Important state Facilities and Special cargoes; Missions of Military Armed Escort Units; Missions of Air Force Military Units; Missions of Navy Military Units; and Missions of Special Purpose Military Units, respectively), Article 6 (Legal Bases of the Activities of the Internal Troops), Article 24 (Rights of Internal Troops), and Articles 25-28 (Conditions and Limits for the Employment of Physical Force, Employment of Physical Force, the Use of Special Means, and the Employment of Weapons, respectively).

Other articles of the federal law have taken on added importance in light of the tense ethnic situation in the North Caucasus and the growing number of strikes across the country. This makes the articles concerning the use of Internal Forces in a military district or in a state of emergency area particularly relevant. Article 37, for example, is very important for ColonelGeneral Shevtsov in that it designates the time period for which personnel of Internal Troop formations can support a state-of-emergency regime (should not exceed three months). When supporting a state-of-emergency regime, Internal Troops are paid salary increases and additional monetary payments according to federal laws and other legal acts approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs. Article 38 grants senior operational commanders the right to call in subunits of special motorized formations and military units outside their deployment areas for a period of up to one month.

Other articles of the federal law, however, demonstrate that it will be some time before the Internal Troops will have the required equipment and living conditions compatible with their importance. For example, Article 45 guarantees that 'telephones are installed at the residence locations of internal troops' officers in a period that does not exceed one year from the day of the submission of the request ...' The Internal Troops are some of the people who need to be notified

first in case of an emergency regarding public order, and by western standards it is unthinkable to have such important figures wait a year for a phone.

The federal law also details the important role that the Ministry of Defense (MOD) plays in the affairs of the MVD's Internal Troops when crises arise. For example, MOD is responsible for providing airliners for supporting Internal Troop activities during emergency situations, and conditions of armed conflicts; carrying out the stockpiling and echelonment of supplies of arms and military equipment, ammunition, fuel and lubricants for the mobilization deployment of the Internal Troops in wartime; and transferring arms and military equipment free of charge to the Internal Troops through support services based on special decisions of the Russian Federation Government, and rendering assistance in the repair and restoration of damaged arms and military equipment.

CONCLUSIONS

While the rationale and extent of the restructuring and reform in the MVD has been explored above, the jury is still out as to how successful these changes will be. Many worry that while the idea is good, the timing could not be worse. Russia is undergoing a time of extreme tension among workers, complicated by economic uncertainty and regional instability when large numbers of troops may be needed to maintain order. Thus, this may not be the best time to experiment with municipal police forces and a greatly reduced and untested Internal Troop structure. The MVD may have done too much too quickly at the expense of their own internal stability.

On the other hand, it is clear that the once mighty Internal Troops are in the process of having their power greatly diluted. The reforms and restructuring have unraveled most of the infrastructure that was put into place by former Minister Kulikov. The Justice Department has picked up nearly 300,000 people in its new mission of prison control and convoy escort. Yet Stepashin still has many challenges before him. The situation in the North Caucasus and the fight against crime are at the top of his list. It should not surprise anyone if the cuts in the Internal Troops are slowly transformed into an increase in the size of the detective service. Such an increase in the size of this part of the MVD may be necessary to fight economic crime adequately. In the end Stepashin's reform measures may correctly address the problems confronting the country with the proper forces in the proper places. His greatest concern should be that problems may develop before his reform effort is complete. Simultaneous massive worker strikes accompanied by unrest in and around Chechnya during the reform process would be a nightmare beyond belief. Only time will tell if Stepashin's gamble will be successful or not.

NOTES

1. Igor Shevelev, 'Sergey Stepashin's Second Lap', *Obshchaya Gazeta*, 20-26 August 1998, No. 33, p. 8 as translated by FBIS and entered on its web page on 31 August 1998.
2. Vitaliy Romanov, 'MVD Head has Decided to Slaughter Sacred Cow', *Segodnya*, 24 June 1998, p.7, as translated for FBIS and entered on its web page on 29 June 1998.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Seyfali Akhundov, 'Stepashin Knows Where to Look for the Initiators of the Crisis', *Russkily Telegraf*, 5 September 1998, p.2, as translated for FBIS and entered on its web page on 9 September 1998.

6. Mikhail Shevtsov, ITAR-TASS transmission, 1116 GMT 25 September 1998, as translated by FBIS and put on its web page on 25 September 1998.

7. Andrey Isakov, 'Yevgeniy Primakov Pays Visit to Ministry of Internal Affairs', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26 September 1998, p.2, as translated in FBIS and put on its web page on 28 September 1998.

8. Akhundov.

9. Leonid Berres and Valentina Lezvina, 'Sergey Stepashin Ready for War in the North Caucasus', *Kommersant-Daily*, 2 July 1998, p.1, as translated in FBIS and put on its web page on 3 July 1998.

10. Vladimir Yermolin, 'Power Departments are Learning How to Catch Smugglers and Terrorists in the North Caucasus', *Russkiy Telegraf*, 28 July 1998, p.2, as translated in FBIS and put on its web page on 28 July 1998.

11. Aleksandr Igorev, 'Stepashin has Removed all of Kulikov's People', *Kommersant-Daily*, 18 September 1998, p.3, as translated by FBIS and put on the web on 18 September 1998.

12. Moscow NTV, 1800 GMT 17 September 1998, as translated by FBIS and put on the web on 17 September 1998.

13. Dr Mark Galeotti, 'Policing Russia: Problems and Prospects in Turbulent Times', Special Report No.15, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 1997, pp. 10-11.

14. Explanation of the new organization of the MVD was provided to the author by the Public Affairs Office of the MVD on 16 September 1998.

15. The Interior Ministry Plans New Special Units', *Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation, 21 October 1998, Vol.IV, No. 194.

16. All material in this section is taken from the 'Rossiiskaya Federatsiya Federal'ni Zakon o vnutrennikh voiskakh Ministerstva vnutrennikh del Rossiiskoi Federatsii' of 25 December 1996. Law was obtained by the author during a conference in Moscow in March of 1997.
