



## Back to School at the Russian General Staff

**OE Watch Commentary:** Like many other countries, Russians value the importance of a good education, and this same status is reflected in their military education system. A recent article in the military weekly, *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye (NVO)*, describes the opening ceremony within the military's most advanced institution of higher education, the Military Academy of the General Staff (Военная академия Генерального штаба) (VAGS), where, according to its website (<https://vagsh.mil.ru/>) the "main task is to prepare officers with the highest military operational-strategic training and specialists in the field of defense and national security of the Russian Federation." A few of the observations from the *NVO* article merit closer attention.

The author begins by quoting Defense Minister S. Shoigu, who recently stated that "the success of solving the tasks facing the Armed Forces depends on the broad outlook, comprehensive education and military skill of the command staff." It then points out that "the academy has created 16 military-scientific schools in the current areas of development of military science and military art." The article asserts that those who teach in the academy are "highly qualified [where] more than 60 percent ...have combat experience."

The academy has also developed special courses for foreign officers, and quoting the Chief of the General Staff, V. Gerasimov, "more than 4 thousand representatives of foreign countries have been trained,... [and where] today, officers and generals from 35 states will start their studies at the special faculty, which is almost twice as much as last year." The article goes on to quote the head of the academy, who asserts that "unlike NATO military educational standards, which are limited to the tactical level, the academy provides students with the highest level of operational and strategic training." The academy does not merely confine itself to purely military theory, but has formed a "partnership with the civilian sector," to include "representatives of executive authorities, heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation and heads of the military-industrial complex." **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

***"...The success of solving the tasks facing the Armed Forces depends on the broad outlook, comprehensive education and military skill of the command staff..."***



*Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia.*

Source: [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/person/more.htm?id=12041696@egNews\\_CCA.4.0.Intl](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/person/more.htm?id=12041696@egNews_CCA.4.0.Intl)

**Source:** Irina Dronina, "В Военной академии Генерального штаба начался новый учебный год," [A new academic year has begun at the Military Academy of the General Staff] *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, 1 September 2020. [https://nvo.ng.ru/nvoevents/2020-09-01/100\\_nvo01092020.html](https://nvo.ng.ru/nvoevents/2020-09-01/100_nvo01092020.html)

*The new academic year has begun not only for schoolchildren and students; combatants and honored students of the Military Academy of the General Staff (VAGS) of the RF Armed Forces sat down at their desks. The Russian army is one of the most powerful in the world, and the knowledge, professionalism and talent of the leadership contribute to this in many respects. "The success of solving the tasks facing the Armed Forces depends on the broad outlook, comprehensive education and military skill of the command staff," Defense Minister General of the Army Sergei Shoigu said at a board meeting at the National Defense Management Center of the Russian Federation on the eve of the new academic year.*

*Sergei Shoigu noted that the VAGS has extensive experience in the training of management personnel. For the development and professional growth of senior command personnel, the academy has created 16 military-scientific schools in the current areas of development of military science and military art, which contribute to the high-quality training of specialists in the field of managing the military organization of the state....*

*Classes are taught by highly qualified teachers and scientists, more than 60 percent of whom have combat experience...Students are trained at three faculties: national security and state defense, retraining and advanced training, a special faculty.*

*...The course of study under the program "National Security and Defense of the State" covers a two-year period, under the program "Military Security of the State" with an interpreter, it is possible to prepare for three, five or ten months.*

*...Valery Gerasimov also noted at the initiation ceremony that the Academy is in demand at the international level. "Within these walls, more than 4 thousand representatives of foreign countries have been trained, and many of them have been appointed in their countries to senior government and military positions. Today, officers and generals from 35 states will start their studies at the special faculty, which is almost twice as much as last year," said the Chief of the General Staff.*

*...According to the head of the VAGS, Colonel-General Vladimir Zarudnitsky, unlike NATO military educational standards, which are limited to the tactical level, the academy provides students with the highest level of operational and strategic training....*

*...VAGS is the only higher military educational institution that trains specialists at the strategic level of management, and not only for the Armed Forces. To ensure military security, partnership with the civilian sector is important, in connection with which representatives of executive authorities, heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation and heads of the military-industrial complex undergo training and advanced training. At present, the strategic management of the development of enterprises belonging to the defense industry complex is one of the most important areas of strengthening Russia's defense capability.*