



Uniform Changes in Russia's Military

OE Watch Commentary: Over the past eight years, Defense Minister, Sergei Shoigu has done much to increase the combat readiness, status, and image of the Russian armed forces. By mandating numerous uniform changes, Shoigu has worked to improve the general appearance of those associated with the Ministry of Defense. However, not all these uniform directives have been warmly welcomed. In the brief excerpt from an article in the relatively independent, *Svobodnaya Pressa*, the author describes what he regards as excessive uniform changes implemented under Defense Minister Shoigu.

The author begins by criticizing the new duty uniform, claiming that it “resembles the soldiers of (Soviet) student construction brigades.” Nor does he care for the new dress uniform, asserting that it reminds him of “the actors in a provincial performance with homemade decorations about the Imperial Guard.” The author goes on to suggest that when Shoigu first started, he was offended when he saw civil servants working in the Defense Ministry in civilian clothes. Therefore, “a year later, in 2013, Shoigu ordered all civil servants subordinate to him to put shoulder straps on their shoulders in accordance with the official ‘table of ranks.’” Today, everyone working in the Defense Ministry wears a uniform.



Russian military personnel in Tajikistan in summer uniforms, May 2020.

Source: <http://mil.ru/et/news/more.htm?id=12292762@egNews> CCA 4.0 Intl

The excerpt goes on to describe how Shoigu even suggested “introducing a unified standard of clothing for defense workers within industry,” but this proposal was not supported by “the chiefs of the major firms in the Russian military-industrial complex, [which are] subordinate to completely different departments.” The author concludes by discussing that uniforms worn during the annual Victory Day parade “present to the amazed people more and more new models of the military uniform just developed for the next solemn occasion.” He wonders “how much did it cost the budget?” suggesting that “maybe it’s time to stop... the endless improvement of the military uniform of the Russian army.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“... But one thing is certain - under Sergei Kuzhugetovich [Shoigu], the military constantly changes her appearance.”

Source: Sergey Ischenko, “Форменное безобразие от Сергея Шойгу,” [Uniform disgrace from Sergei Shoigu] *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 10 August 2020. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/273042/>

You can argue as much as you like about whether our army became stronger under the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu or not? But one thing is certain - under Sergei Kuzhugetovich, the military constantly changes her appearance. Like a chameleon in the jungle. In any case, the appearance of the military, which is determined mainly by the military uniform.

For eight years in the ministerial office, Shoigu proved to everyone that in this area he is simply inexhaustible for inventions. And I am not at all inclined to pay any attention to such trifles as more and more billions of dollars in expenditures since the budget item “Clothing allowance.” As a result, today Russian officers in everyday life in T-shirts, chewed caps and in baggy winter jackets with hoods, nicknamed by the owners themselves “blankets,” strongly resemble the soldiers of student construction brigades of the Soviet shock five-year plans. And in the ceremonial formation - for the actors of the provincial performance with homemade decorations about the Imperial Guard....

... it turned out that any civilian clothes seemed to the new minister in the corridors of the military department as simply disgusting. Whether male or female. Therefore, a year later, in 2013, Shoigu ordered all civil servants subordinate to him to put shoulder straps on their shoulders in accordance with the official “table of ranks.”

...The first to appear in public in August 2013 in a new dress were the civilian deputy defense ministers Tatyana Shevtsova and Anatoly Antonov (the current Russian ambassador to the United States)....

...In 2016, during one of the summer meetings via videoconference, Shoigu was upset at the sight of the frivolous suits of some of the leaders of the defense industry. Some of them were in T-shirts. On that hot day, Sergei Kuzhugetovich had the idea to develop a special paramilitary uniform for them.

The question of introducing a unified standard of clothing “for defense workers” was brought up to the board of the Ministry of Defense. Collegium - how amazing, right? - unanimously spoke in favor. But again, as one might suppose, below came the dull murmur of the chiefs of the flagships of the Russian military-industrial complex, subordinate to completely different departments. In any case, not one of them in uniform has been seen yet....

Against this background, no one, in my opinion, should be surprised that almost every new Victory Parade presents to the amazed people more and more new models of the military uniform just developed for the next solemn occasion.... The ceremonial crews of the battalions lined up on Red Square were also dressed up in the same costumes as those of the minister. Don’t even try to imagine: how much did it cost the budget? ...

...How else? If you frolic so non-stop for years in the field of the endless improvement of the military uniform of the Russian army, there will definitely not be enough money for the army. Maybe it’s time to stop?