



More Effective Military Training for College Students

OE Watch Commentary: The current Kremlin leadership has worked diligently over the past several years to raise the level of patriotism within Russia. As the accompanying excerpt from the official Russian news site, *RIA Novosti*, points out, today 92 percent of the population consider themselves to be Russian patriots. As the Kremlin-sponsored media constantly repeats, an important aspect of patriotism is the willingness of young Russian men to defend their country by completing mandatory military service. The excerpt from the pro-Kremlin source, *Izvestiya*, describes proposed changes which will allow for greater numbers of college students to satisfy their military service requirement while studying, while at the same time improving the overall quality of their military training.

Currently, a young Russian (male) college student can satisfy his mandatory military service requirement by enrolling in a supplemental course of instruction, in what the excerpt describes as a “military faculty.” Depending on his course and length of enrollment in this military training, upon graduation, he will receive a reserve assignment either as an officer or enlisted. He might also join the military as a contract soldier. As the *Izvestiya* excerpt points out, these military faculties are only available in 72 Russian universities, where there are approximately 66,000 young Russians enrolled. While all the details have yet to be worked out, the proposed change will remove these military faculties and replace them with consolidated “military teaching centers.”

This change, if implemented, would allow for all students, regardless if their university had a military faculty, to receive military training while enrolled in college, thus satisfying a portion of their mandatory military obligation (they would still have to fulfill their reserve commitment upon graduation). More importantly, by establishing “military teaching centers” the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) will “standardize the system of military training” that students receive and “will make for more effective utilization of the training materials base, equipment, and drill weapons.” Even with patriotic sentiments at record levels, this proposed change indicates that the Russian MoD is still tinkering with how to satisfy the mandatory military service requirement for those enrolled in college, while at the same time creating a well-trained reserve component. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

“According to the February figures that Shoygu read out, there were 66,000 young people in Russia taking military studies without interrupting their VUZ [higher education] programs.”

Source: “Число считающих себя патриотами россиян выросло до 92%, показал опрос (A survey shows that the number of Russians who consider themselves patriots has grown to 92%),” *RIA Novosti*, 9 June 2018. <https://ria.ru/society/20180609/1522401833.html>

The proportion of Russians who call themselves patriots reached a maximum in the last 18 years; today this feeling is characteristic of 92% of our fellow citizens... , the poll of the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VCIOM) on the eve of the Day of Russia.

Source: “Yekaterina Korniyenko, “В одну упряжку; Чем обернется реформа военной подготовки в российских вузах (Harnessed Together: What the Outcome Will Be of the Reform of Military Training in Russia’s VUZes),” *Izvestiya*, 7 June 2018. <https://iz.ru/752640/ekaterina-korinenko/v-odnu-upriazhku>

If a bill devised by the Defense Ministry secures endorsement at all levels, there will no longer be military faculties in Russia’s VUZes [higher educational establishments]. To be exact, they will no longer exist under their conventional title: A standard system of military teaching centers based on them will be created throughout Russia....

A draft law altering the system of military instruction in civilian VUZes was put before the State Duma on Tuesday 5 June. The initiative, authored by the Russian Federation Defense Ministry, was submitted to the lower house of parliament by the government. According to the document, it is planned to replace military faculties with military teaching centers. This will make it possible to give the system a standard denominator, the department thinks.... The thinking behind this document is that concentrating all teaching in military teaching centers will make for more effective utilization of the training materials base, equipment, and drill weapons....

The training given in military faculties and military centers differs in more than just the program. In a specialized faculty students spend one day a week on military training study for a period of eighteen months -- sometimes more, depending on the specialization. At the end of the course they go to musters that last on average around a month. After completing the teaching they are given the rank of reserve officer, NCO, or enlisted man and released from draft service, although they have the opportunity to serve out the time on contract if they wish....

“The military teaching centers will be created within the framework of the existing personnel order and do not entail any increase in the total number of citizens summoned for military training,” the Cabinet announcement emphasizes. “The bill’s objective is to increase the efficiency with which the process of teaching VUZ students in their existing areas of military training is managed.”

.... Four new military faculties were organized in 2013 through-2016, when the total reached 72.

...“You and I have talked a lot about how we need the maximum number of young people to be given the opportunity of undergoing military training and obtaining a military specialism in VUZes. We are carrying on that work,” General of the Army Sergey Shoygu, Defense Minister, stated on 28 May. “We have begun to see comprehensive training centers. These include both military faculties and military institutes.” According to the February figures that Shoygu read out, there were 66,000 young people in Russia taking military studies without interrupting their VUZ programs.