



Shoygu's Fifth Year Report Card

OE Watch Commentary: In November 2017, Sergey Shoygu celebrated his fifth anniversary as Russia's Defense Minister, and as the brief excerpt from a long, detailed article in the governmental newspaper, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, points out, his record of achievements in this post has been impressive. To review these successes, "Shoygu presented an unprecedented open briefing [in late December] on the state of the domestic Armed Forces at the Ministry of Defense Expanded Collegium session." To highlight Shoygu's accomplishments, the excerpt claims that "during the last five years, our Armed Forces have literally been transformed, having conducted a qualitative leap both based upon the combat training level and also based upon the mastery of the latest combat equipment."

Carefully avoiding any mention of Crimea or SE Ukraine, Defense Minister Shoygu began his review by listing the many military successes in Syria. Besides giving "more than 48,000 servicemen... truly invaluable combat experience," the Syrian mission has allowed for a striking display of Russian firepower. All totaled, "215 types of weapons" were employed; everything from long-range precision-guided missiles to the latest air defense systems. And while a number of "deficiencies and defects were identified, 99 percent [of them] were eliminated already during the course of combat operations." Besides liberating more than 1,000 populated areas, Russian forces "killed 60,318 guerrillas, of them 819 leaders of bandit formations," and destroyed "396 illegal oil drilling locations and their processing plants... and also 4,100 tanker trucks."

Defense Minister Shoygu went on to review the other major military accomplishments during his tenure (e.g. new weapon systems, more realistic exercises, improved logistic systems, a higher percentage of contract soldiers, improved military housing, etc...). It is a long and notable list, facilitated by the new "Russian Federation National Defense Command and Control Center." According to Minister Shoygu, this center is a "5th-generation command and control system," allowing for "the integration into a single inter-branch coordination system of 158 federal and regional authorities, and 1,320 defense industrial complex state corporations and enterprises."

While reviewing the many indicators of renewed military prowess, Shoygu pointed out, "We are not rattling sabers and we don't intend to fight with anyone," adding that, "in the process, we are not advising anyone to test our defense capability for strength." The article concludes on a positive note, insisting that after listening to "Shoygu's briefing, one can arrive at only one conclusion: The Russian Armed Forces are strong as never before, have combat experience, and are prepared to defend the Fatherland on land, at sea, in the sky, and even in space." **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

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Source: Sergey Ptichkin, "Шойгу: Армия получила бесценный боевой опыт и готова к защите Отечества (Shoygu: The Army Has Received Invaluable Combat Experience and is Prepared to Defend the Fatherland)," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online*, 22 December 2017. <https://www.rg.ru/2017/12/22/shojgu-armiia-poluchila-bescennyj-boevoj-opyt-i-gotova-k-zashchite-otechestva.html>

RF Defense Minister General of the Army S.K. Shoygu presented an unprecedented open briefing on the state of the domestic Armed Forces at the Ministry of Defense Expanded Collegium session. From it, it follows that during 2017, and if more precisely – during the last five years, our Armed Forces have literally been transformed, having conducted a qualitative leap both based upon the combat training level and also based upon the mastery of the latest combat equipment.

The Minister began his report for the first time with an analysis of the Russian Army's participation in actual combat operations on Syria's territory. He pointed out that more than 48,000 servicemen obtained truly invaluable combat experience in Syria.... Every missile destroyed the assigned target. Special Operations Forces accomplished the missions for the destruction of the bandit formations' leaders and terrorists' facilities in the deep rear...

...It is no secret that the majority of the models of our military equipment were tested in the Syrian Operation. The Minister cited the precise figure. These are 215 types of weapons. During their combat employment, 702 deficiencies and defects were identified, 99 percent of which were eliminated already during the course of combat operations.... The Russian troop contingent destroyed 8,000 armored vehicles and pickups with heavy machineguns, and 718 plants and workshops for the manufacture of weapons and munitions during the course of the engagements with the bandit formations on Syrian territory. It killed 60,318 guerrillas, of them 819 leaders of bandit formations.... As a result of the VKS aircraft operations, 396 illegal oil drilling locations and their processing plants were destroyed, and also 4,100 tanker trucks. During the support of the Russian Aerospace Forces to the Syrian government troops and volunteer militia, 1,024 populated areas, including the most significant cities...were liberated....

...On the whole, the events, which were stipulated by the State Defense Order 2017, were fulfilled. Approximately 15,000 various troop training events were conducted in the Armed Forces, which is 20 percent more than in 2016.... Sergey Shoygu did not limit himself to the briefing for last year. He summed up the results of the last five years. And they are also impressive....Today the Russian Army is state-of-the-art, mobile, compact, and combat-capable.

"We are not rattling sabers and we don't intend to fight with anyone," Shoygu pointed out, having added that, in the process, we are not advising anyone to test our defense capability for strength.

The Minister had to comment on the Russian Federation National Defense Command and Control Center that was created with his direct participation. In Shoygu's words, with its deployment, we have emerged at a 5th-generation command and control system. The National Center's information platform has permitted the integration into a single inter-branch coordination system of 158 federal and regional authorities, and 1,320 defense industrial complex state corporations and enterprises.... From Sergey Shoygu's briefing, one can arrive at only one conclusion: The Russian Armed Forces are strong as never before, have combat experience, and are prepared to defend the Fatherland on land, at sea, in the sky, and even in space.