



## Military District Reform Rumored

**OE Watch Commentary:** The accompanying excerpted article from *Svobodnaya Pressa* discusses recent rumors that the Russian Federation is considering creating more military districts. The original intent of combining military districts after the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the 2008 New Look reforms was to reduce the size of the Russian military bureaucracy. Any creation of new military districts would obviously require a large staff increase. Russia's most recent addition to the military district system was the creation of the Northern Joint Strategic Command (OSK) in 2014. Even in this case, Russia did not choose to set up a fully manned military district headquarters to provide command and control, but instead simply chose to augment the Northern Fleet for this purpose. If new military districts are added in the future, the borders of these new districts would likely align with the borders of the eight National Guard regions, as currently the National Guard and military district borders do not overlap. These spatial relationships are almost certainly maintained to facilitate command and control during times of crisis; National Guard formations and units would be subordinated to the Ministry of Defense during large-scale warfare, while Ministry of Defense formations and units would be subordinated to the National Guard during domestic insurgencies (like the Chechen conflict). **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**



*Military districts of Russia since 2016.*

Source: By AlexWelens - Министерство обороны Российской Федерации Военные округа, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=50166964>.

*“Rumors have circulated throughout the country about the latest change of the model of the military-administrative division of Russia’s territory...”*

**Source:** Sergey Ishchenko, “Тень Сердюкова: Хождение по военному округу (Serdyukov’s Shadow: Wandering Through a Military District),” *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 9 February 2019. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/224083/>

*Rumors have circulated throughout the country about the latest change of the model of the military-administrative division of Russia’s territory...As far as one can judge from the information, which has already been made public by the mass media, the marked aggravation of the military-political situation along the entire perimeter of our borders simply compels Moscow to return to the already Soviet military district structure...It was thought that no serious invasion whatsoever threatens precisely Russia from any strategic axis in the foreseeable future. We, even if we were not embracing NATO and the US by that time, but we had still found a common language on the main global security issues. Exercises, if they were conducted, then under the guise of armed combat only with international terrorists. And isn’t it true that the fronts, into which the military districts had to be restructured with the initiation of a war, are not needed to repel terrorists?*

*But Shoygu will not resolve the matter with the simple signing of the latest directive. Because now simply mind-boggling expenditures are required for the recreation of at least some of the long since destroyed military districts. Really each new military administrative unit of the Armed Forces of that type requires not only a headquarters with hundreds of experienced and trained officers-managers. From where do we also need to take dozens of additional formations and military units of a military district set – engineer, signals, command and control, radiological, chemical, and biological defense, missile, air defense missile, and others. And therefore – much will have to be reformed from the ground up and some will have to be redeployed hundreds and thousands of versts from other cities and villages...*

*Already this year, they claim that a “retrograde” reorganization awaits three of the four military districts that have remained in Russia. They will obviously once again divide Western Military District into Leningrad and Moscow military districts. They will exclude nearly everything, which is located beyond the Urals, from the composition of Central Military District – and precisely – from Omsk Oblast to Baykal. It has not yet been determined what they will call what is being formed in the enormous space in this variant. But, logically, - “the ill-forgotten” Siberian Military District that was disbanded under Serdyukov.*

*If that is so, only Southern Military District, the most combat capable today, which stands against furious Ukraine and the NATO Bloc, which is emerging behind its back, will greet 2020 intact...*