MAANPUOLUSTUSKORKEAKOULU STRATEGIAN LAITOS
JULKAISUSARJA 4: TYÖPAPEREITA No 43

NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC AND DEFENCE STUDIES
SERIES 4: WORKING PAPERS No 43

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Strategian laitos
HELSINKI 2012

Daivis Petraitis: Reorganisation of the Russian armed forces
Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, Strategian laitos
Julkaisusarja 4: työpapereita No 43
National Defence University, Department of Strategic and Defence Studies
Series 4: Working Papers No 43

Most recent publications in pdf-format:
http://www.mpkk.fi/

Cover design: Janne Kopu

ISSN 1236-4983
Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu – National Defence University
Strategian laitos – Department of Strategic and Defence Studies

Juvenes Print Oy
Tampere 2012

REORGANISATION OF THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES (2005–2015)

Daivis Petraitis

Russia's military forces are undergoing their most radical reform since the breakup of the Soviet Union. The previous military reforms of the late nineties, which saw a number of reorganizations take place within the Russian Army and which were aimed at streamlining the existing military organization merely by reducing numbers, have failed across the board. The current reform, however, is different. Its primary aim is to change the essence of Russia's armed forces.

Despite the official statement that the current reform was launched in 2008, it is clear to see that all of the steps that former President Medvedev and Defence Minister Serdiukov were implementing, in fact, planned years ago, during the days of President Putin and Defence Minister Ivanov. I would argue that today's actions are merely the results of theoretical work carried out in 2003 and trials conducted during and after 2005. The reform process was started many years earlier than was officially declared. In this paper, I will present my arguments to support this assumption.

The current reform is well thought through. When Putin came to power, one of his first acts as President was to initiate efforts to halt the continuous disintegration of Russia's armed forces. He and his team understood that, contrary to the former changes which gave no results, the military was in need of a fundamental transformation. To initiate this change, a new military doctrine was developed[1]. This became a cornerstone document for determining the new shape of the military. Orders were issued, stopping the military leadership from carrying out cosmetic changes and tasking it with preparing a well-evaluated, rational military reform. In line with the new military doctrine, in October 2003, Defence Minister Ivanov presented his 'Concrete tasks to develop the military forces of the Russian Federation',[2] a document later unofficially named the 'Doctrine of Ivanov'. The document provided the basic political-military requirements for the new Russian military forces. Following this document's guidance, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) developed a vision and relevant plans for transforming the existing military into one that is able to fulfil the tasks of the 'Doctrine of Ivanov'. In the following paper, I will present my views on when and how these plans and recommendations were developed.

In addition, I argue that due to the size of the forces to be reformed, the difficulty of the changes to be implemented, and, possibly, also to a tradition of secrecy, it was decided to execute the reform in stages. Starting the reform officially in 2008, after almost all ideas and plans had already been completed on paper, meant that the massive reorganization of the troops in practice could be immediately started in earnest. Today, we are near the midpoint of the reorganization. Based on available documents, in addition to

[1] The doctrine was approved by Presidential Decree No. 706, on 21 April 2000.

[2] The document was approved on 2 October 2003.

statements by political and military leadership, it can be assumed that all structural changes in the military will end by around the year 2015. After this the new army will be rearmed. This is contrary to comments currently in the media regarding a Russian rearmament programme for 2010–2020. A section of this paper is also devoted to this aspect.

By the time the programme finally reaches completion in around 2020, the Russian military will have an entirely new shape. It will be smaller but more capable. It will be organized into operational and institutional forces. It will have a new peacetime organization, wartime organization and procedures for peacetime to wartime transition. Most importantly, though, maintaining the effectiveness and readiness of Russia's military forces will become more affordable for the country. Forecasting how and where Russia might use its forces is not the task of this paper. Recent events in the Caucasus have shown the context in which Russia might deploy its armed forces.

This study is based solely on open sources, the majority being from Russia. Sources that provide only raw data, numbers, direct statements and quotations from documents have been used exclusively. No other experts' analyses were used. This was done intentionally to provide an independent forecast of the final, post-reform shape of the Russian armed forces.

A new concept for the future Russian military

Over a period of some few years since a new Russian military doctrine was signed, the MOD developed a new concept for the Russian military leading to its radical structural transformation. At the start of the process, findings were presented for internal discussion. In September 2005, Defence Minister Ivanov chaired a meeting of the board of the MOD. At the meeting, the Chief of General Staff, Army General Balujevskij, presented ways to improve the combat readiness of the armed forces. He proposed a concept of armed forces that could meet the requirements of the 'Ivanov doctrine'[3] and presented ideas on how to create such a force. The concept was based on replacing Russia's existing huge, mobilization-based armed forces with a new type of military consisting of operational forces represented by permanent readiness units and supporting forces represented by different military institutions. According to the concept, besides the Ministry of Defence, other state institutions (Ministry of the Interior, state security structures, etc.) that have armed formations would also be reorganized. The key task was to create a force that is 'capable in peacetime and in times of emergency of maintaining the potential for strategic deterrence and of continuing to fulfil the tasks of combat readiness, of successfully and simultaneously engaging in two military conflicts of any type and participating in one peacekeeping type operation independently or jointly with an international force, by using only *forces of permanent combat readiness without mobilization and preparation measures.*'[4]

To achieve this, the General Staff (hereafter GS) proposed the development of a new approach for the use of the armed

[3] Виктор Мясников, Сергей Иванов обкатывает свою доктрину, *Независимая Газета*, 19 May 2005.

[4] Statement from the 'Ivanov doctrine'. Author's translation. Italics are used to emphasize the key statement.

forces in peacetime and in war. Secondly, it proposed reshaping the armed forces by creating peacetime and wartime military structures. Thirdly, it proposed making the command and control (C2) system more effective. Fourthly, it recommended changing the ratio of officers-NCOs-soldiers in the military. And finally, the GS proposed the creation of a new system for logistics, support and maintenance of the armed forces and changing the approach to military education and ways of arming. We shall now explore these proposals in further detail.

Under the Soviet system, the military was intended to be used only in war; and after preparation and mobilization. In contrast, the new Russian forces will be capable of engaging immediately and simultaneously in three separate conflicts[5] in peacetime, relying only on existing reserves and without preparation.[6] For this purpose, only an operational force will be used and the use of nuclear weapons is not foreseen. At the same time, the military will maintain the capability to engage in global combat operations after certain preparations (mobilization) by expanding its operational forces to wartime levels and by drawing on its nuclear weapons capability.

To achieve this, it was proposed to divide the existing military force into operational and institutional parts. The operational forces (the majority of peacetime forces) would consist of combat-ready land, air, naval and other units (mostly brigade or equivalent size) and be able to act immediately with minimal preparation. An institutional military force (a minor proportion of the military), led by a reduced MOD, would have land, naval, air and other headquarters merged into the GS and institutions for military training, mobilization, armament, etc. This institutional force would support the operational forces in peacetime and would be responsible for wartime preparations (mobilization), including military administration, strategic planning, military training, arming and so forth. This division would also remain operational during wartime. After mobilization, however, only the operational forces would be increased.

More efficient C2 would be achieved by reducing levels of command. The former chain of command comprising five (General Staff–Military–District–Army–Corps–Division) and sometimes even more levels would be reduced to just three levels. The strategic level would be represented by joint strategic commands (JSCs). These would be responsible for all military actions in certain territories or directions assigned to them, have conventional (non-nuclear) land, naval and air forces under their direct command, and be able to operate in peacetime or wartime without transformation. They would substitute military districts (hereafter MD) which perform primarily administrative functions and in case of war must be transformed into wartime structures (fronts). At the operational level, a number of operational commands (OCs) would be created. These would plan and execute tasks or operations. To do so, they would use forces (brigades) permanently assigned to them and forces received from the JSC. The OCs would substitute the former army and corps levels. Like JSCs, OCs would be ready to

[5] Three different conflicts refer to two military conflicts (local or regional wars) and crisis type mission.

[6] Виктор Литовкин, ”Сердюков пересматривает стратегию”, *Независимая Газета,* 23 December 2008.

act without transformation. New brigades (built according to a new design) would represent the tactical level. In the future, this approach will be applied to redesigning not only land, air and naval forces, but also nuclear forces and airborne and space troops.[7]

The Russian armed forces have inherited from the past an unbalanced ratio of officers, warrant officers and soldiers. The system created a surplus of officers without soldiers. The officers served in numerous HQs or units which were intended to receive soldiers only after mobilization. Many of these officers served in institutions in which their military rank was surplus to requirements. The GS proposed changing the ratio by reducing the number of officer and NCO positions and increasing the number of sergeants and privates within the military.

Finally, the new concept proposed changes in logistics, support and maintenance of armed forces as well as in the approach to military education and ways of arming. The former exterritorial principle of troop supply and the old system of armament maintenance and troop equipment would be changed to territorial. All procedures would be modified to guarantee the fastest supply and maintenance within the units. And, last of all, the arms procurement and military education systems would be modified to ensure provision of the right quantity and quality of arms and personnel.

[7] Александр Бабакин, ”Надвигается существенная реорганизация вооруженных сил”, *Независимая Газета,* 9 December 2005.

Reorganization of the Russian armed forces

Preparation for reform, experiments, elimination of opposition (2005–2008)

During 2004–2005, the GS, led by general Balujevskij, prepared a concept of strategic command. The detailed structures of the future Russian military and a plan for implementing the reform were planned and drawn up throughout 2006. All of the GS’s results appear to have been approved. Before embarking on the reform, the theoretical work needed to be tested in practice and any opposition within the military removed.[8] The first signs of opposition appeared in 2004 immediately after the initial proposals were presented,[9] but the first major conflict occurred at the beginning of 2006 in Moscow. Here, during discussions on the reform, a sizeable part of the MOD leadership refused to accept it. In an attempt to allay fears, Defence Minister Ivanov called the reform an ‘experiment’, but at the same time announced a measure to decrease the number of generals by around 300. Due either to fear of being included in the 300, or to the understanding that by the time the reform is completed (around 2015) the majority of them would already be retired, the opponents gave up their cause.

In May 2006, Ivanov conducted an official visit to the eastern military districts. There he presented the reform and announced the beginning of the ‘experiment’. Selecting key people to be tasked with testing and running the reform was a vital

[8] На пути к новым Вооруженным Силам, *Красная звезда,* 25 January 2007.

[9] Игорь Плугатарев, ”Военачальники бунтуют”, *Независимая Газета,* 5 November 2004.

strategy for the success of the reform. A decision appears to have been made to offer the reform to mid-level generals. If testing proved successful, these would be offered to run the reform and to receive leading posts in the future. To control the process, it was decided to concentrate all personnel issues, including military appointments, to retired Army General Pankov, who by decree of the Russian President, was appointed as State Secretary of the MOD in September 2005.

A key feature of this period was the process of seeking, hand-picking and testing of reliable generals, which was characterised by highly spurious appointment practices. Trusted generals were appointed to leading positions by presidential decree. Generals requiring monitoring were appointed by order of the Defence Minister. This practice was maintained until the official beginning of the reform in 2008. Since the official start of the reform, all commanders have been appointed by presidential decree only. For example: in September 2006, General Colonel Bulgakov was appointed Commander of the Far East MD by presidential decree. Under his direct command, the 'Baikal 2006' exercise was then conducted. In this exercise, the strategic command (SC) concept was tested for the first time. In April 2007, the President appointed General Colonel Postnikov as Commander of the Siberian MD. Then, in the following September, the President appointed General Colonel Tkachiov to establish and lead a new, experimental strategic command. This command continued testing the concept during the exercises 'Vostok 2007' and 'Vostok 2008'. In the same year, the President also made the following appointments: General Colonel Zelin as Chief of Air Force, Vice Admiral Kleckov as Black Sea Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Maksimov as Northern Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Sidenko as Pacific Fleet Commander, and Vice Admiral Mardusin as Baltic Fleet Commander. All of the generals were relatively young, being able to serve 8–10 years or more, yet highly experienced supporters of the reform. It is interesting to note that the majority of them have performed well, are still serving today, and have even received promotions. By July 2008, the experiment was reaching its end. The President promoted one of the 'founding fathers' of the reform, Army General J. Balujevskij, who received an appointment to the State Security Council to continue coordinating the reform at the state (not MOD) level. There are other examples: the Minister of Defence appointed Admiral Visockij as Navy Commander. Immediately after his appointment, Visockij was informed of the decision to move the naval HQ from Moscow to St. Petersburg. In December 2007, the minister appointed General Colonel Gerasimov as Commander of the Leningrad MD. The General performed well, and was thus given a new appointment as Commander of the Moscow MD, signed by the President in February 2009, after the reform officially started. The Defence Minister also appointed a new Chief of the General Staff, General Colonel Makarov, and Commander of the Land Forces, General Colonel Boldyrev. Today, Boldyrev is already retired and a new Land Forces Commander, General Colonel Postnikov, has been appointed by presidential decree.

Besides Army General Balujevskij's promotion, other interesting changes also took place during this period. In February 2007, Ivanov left the post of Defence Minister and returned to the government

as a deputy to the Prime Minister responsible for military affairs. The appointment of Serdiukov as Minister of Defence meant that, as an outsider, he could run the reform better. Contrary to Ivanov, Serdiukov came from a purely civilian background and therefore had no 'bureaucratic loyalties' to the military. Once all experiments reached completion at the end of 2008, just before the official announcement of the start of the reform, the experimental strategic command headed by General Tkachyov was disbanded.

On 15 October 2008, the Defence Minister announced the decision of the Supreme Commander to change the existing organizational structure of the Russian military and to move towards a new, three-level command control system. The new system would consist of joint strategic commands (JSC), operational commands (OC) and separate units (brigades). This was the official start of the reform. Immediately after this announcement the minister proceeded to announce further changes. This was the first time that details of an institutional division of the military had been announced. The Defence Minister announced major reductions in military ranks and throughout the military as a whole. According to the minister, of the previous 21,813 military posts within the central military apparatus, only 8,500 would remain by 2012. The number of officers would decrease from 355,000 to 150,000. Of the previous number of 1,107 generals, only 877 would remain after the reform.[10] There would be more lieutenants and fewer senior officers. The reductions would be introduced in steps. The responsibilities of the GS were to change slightly and it would become smaller. The GS would lose about 1,000 posts. The biggest cuts would fall on the operational directorate of the GS, where only 200 of the existing 500 positions would remain. Cuts would also fall on other directorates, including the intelligence directorate (GRU). The logic is simple. The old GS was previously responsible for all planning. After the reform, it would be responsible only for strategic planning. Operational planning and other planning in strategic directions and assigned areas would be drawn up and executed by JSC and OC.

Phase I: Reorganization at the tactical level: a new brigade (2008–2009)

With the announcement of its official launch in 2008 and of the decision to reduce levels of command to three, the reform entered its first implementation phase. The emphasis at this stage was on reorganization at the tactical level. A result of this phase was the total reorganization of the former divisions and regiments and the creation of a pool of new tactical units; brigades. Compared to their predecessors, the new brigades have a different organizational structure and scope of responsibility. While designing the new brigades, Russia maintained the view that future military conflicts, even global ones, will not be fought on solid fronts. Future combat operations will be based on independent actions by separate, mobile, autonomous and strong military units. The former divisions are badly suited to this role – they are too big and too slow. A brigade is the optimal size of formation. In most cases, brigades would fight independently, without 'neighbours to the left or right'. Three types of infantry brigade are being planned: light, medium

[10] Наиль Гафутулин, "Мобильность, боеготовность, престиж", *Красная звезда*, 15 February 2008.

and heavy. The indications are that the light brigades will be created on the basis of airborne or special forces units. To enable rapid air deployment these brigades will have no heavy armaments, although they will be provided with anti-tank, air defence and some artillery fire support capabilities. The majority of brigades will consist of medium and heavy motorized infantry. These will be the front-line troops. The medium brigades will be equipped with tanks and wheeled transporters (BTR type) and the heavy brigades with tracked infantry fighting vehicles (BMP type) instead of BTRs.

In designing the reform, the Russian experts drew on the experiences of the US. However, contrary to Russia, the US has a strong global positioning system (GPS) in place which allows the use of precision-guided munitions (PGM). The US air force also has the capability to provide brigades with worldwide fire support. The Russian GPS, 'GLONASS', lags far behind its US counterpart, enabling only limited use of PGM. The Russian air force still lacks the ability to provide close air support anywhere, any time. All this taken into consideration, both (medium and heavy) brigades will have their own, powerful fire support component. Precision will be compensated by the number of shells and missiles fired by the brigade itself. Instead of the former one or two artillery units (battalions, regiments), the new brigades will have four artillery units: two self-propelled artillery battalions, an anti-tank artillery battalion, and a 'Grad' multiple rocket launching system battalion. Motor-rifle battalions will also have fire support capabilities. The brigade fire support will be almost equal to the former divisional fire support. To protect from air attack, brigades will have a strong air defence capability – two anti-aircraft defence battalions.

Medium and heavy brigades will have three motorized infantry battalions and a tank battalion as well as reconnaissance, combat engineer, communication and logistic battalions, headquarters, NBC protection, EW and medical companies.[11] The brigades will be highly mobile due to their fully self-sufficient transport capability. Each brigade would comprise approximately four to five thousand solders, 41 tanks, around 120 IFV or armed transporters, 36 self-propelled artillery and 18 MRLS systems, and an adequate number of anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems. To test and finally improve the new design of the medium and heavy brigades, two pilot exercises have been carried out with the 23rd Separate Motor-Rifle Brigade and the 21st Separate Rifle Brigade. One potential improvement is the inclusion of a sniper company (up to 60 snipers) into the brigade structure[12]. A possible organizational structure of the new brigade design is presented in Figure 1.

[11] Another option is a brigade with four motorized infantry battalions, with tank companies in battalions.

[12] Андрей Бондаренко, "Один в поле воин", *Красная звезда*, 25 April 2010.

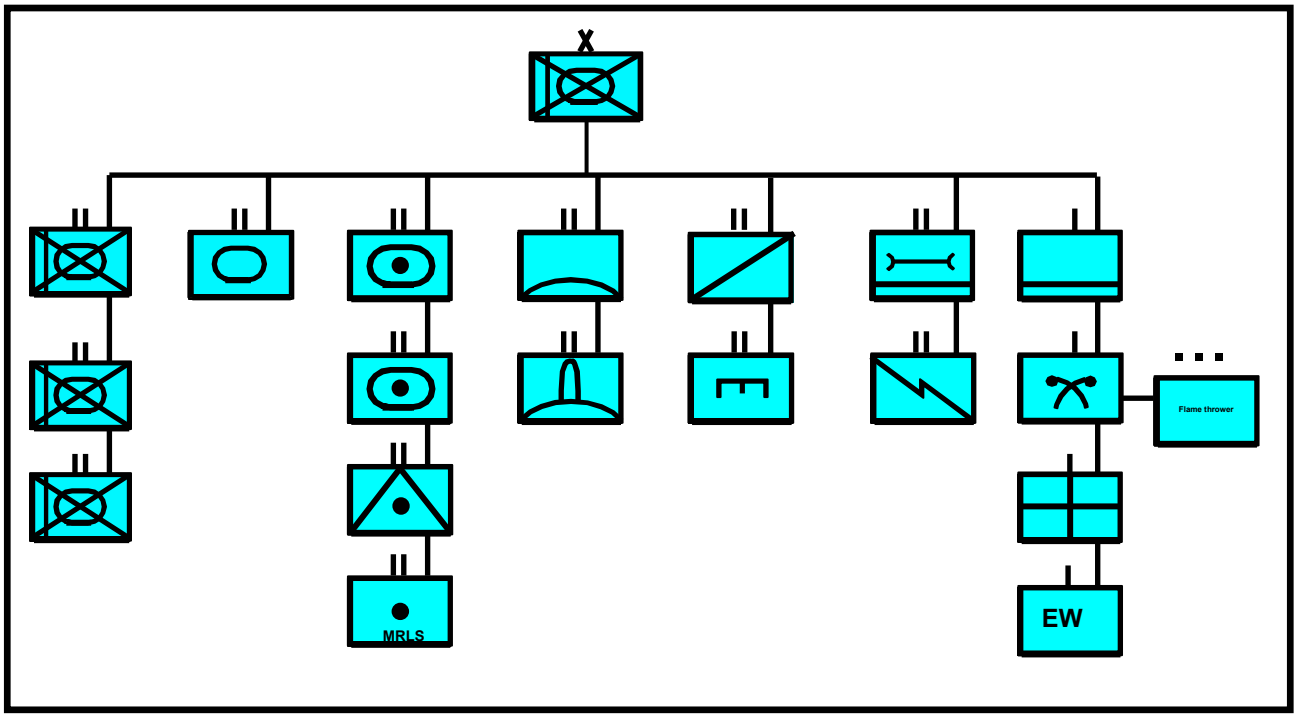

Figure 1: Possible organizational structure of the new medium and heavy brigades.

Besides light, medium and heavy motorized infantry brigades, the Russian army will also have new separate tank, artillery, missile, logistic and other brigades. For each of these, the ability to cover long distances independently will be among the highest requirements. All armament systems (tanks, IFV, artillery guns) will be self-propelled or have transport vehicles. There will be sufficient trucks and vehicles to move all brigade equipment and troops. The Russian military views mainland operations as the main arena for future brigade operations.[13] For this reason, besides the brigades' independent transport capability, railways are considered as a strategic means of transport. Numerous exercises have already proven that brigades can be moved using both means: either thousands of kilometres by rail, or hundreds of kilometres by their own means.[14] A special method of rapid long-distance brigade deployment has also been proposed. The method is likely intended for rapid troop reinforcements in Siberia and the Far East. According to the proposal, a number of reserve brigades and new mobilization units, named as armament and equipment storages would be established in these regions. This approach ensures that the necessary arms and equipment are in place, minus the personnel. The required troops would then be drawn as needed from any permanent readiness brigade, including those in the west of the country. These would be flown to the new sites where they would rapidly arm themselves and be ready to engage. The method has been proven by one of new brigades from the Ural-Volga MD, which used the method to successfully

[13] Сергей Скоков, начальник главного штаба сухопутных войск РФ, *Эхо Москвы,* 10 October 2009.

[14] Виктор Литовкин , "Гремя огнем, сверкая блеском стали", *Независимая газета,* 2 October 2009.

deploy a battalion-sized task force during the 'Vostok 2010' exercise.[15]

As previously mentioned, the decision was taken to implement the reform in stages.[16] Coincidentally, or not, the first phase of the reform was thus scheduled for completion on 1 December 2009 and, consequently, became effectively hidden to the outside world. The reason for this was that immediately prior to announcing the official start of the reform Russia announced a moratorium on the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* (CFE). This blocked other countries from performing CFE inspections in Russia. Russia also stopped providing data about its military forces to the CFE.

During the first phase, all former military units (divisions and armament units) were disbanded and a number of new brigades were created. It is difficult to ascertain why this phase was split into two parts: the first lasting until 1 July 2009, the second until 1 December 2009. Based on the findings that by March 2009 already five new brigades had been formed[17] and that the first brigade-level field exercise had been conducted with the Siberian MD,[18] one might conclude that the focus of the first part of the first phase was to carry out final testing of the proposed new brigade design. After this was done, the creation of the new brigades started in earnest. Publicly, it was announced that 46 new brigades were to be established by 1 July 2009 and 40 more new brigades were to follow by the end of the phase.[19] In order to verify the implementation of these new brigades in accordance with the public statements, a number of articles, statements and messages from open sources were screened as a part of this study. The data showed that by the 1st of July 2009, 145 different motorized infantry, tank, artillery, missile, special force, communications, engineer and other brigades existed in the land force. Of these 145 brigades, 56 were new brigades formed since the beginning of the reform. The number of new brigades clearly exceeded the officially declared figure. The majority of the new brigades (30) were motorized infantry. The Leningrad MD had four new brigades, including two motorized infantry brigades. The Moscow MD had five new brigades (three motorized infantry and two tank brigades) and the North Caucasus MD had 11 new brigades (including nine motorized infantry brigades). The number of new brigades established beyond the Urals was even bigger. The Volga-Ural MD had 10 new brigades (including three motorized infantry, one tank and two missile brigades); the Siberian MD had 13 brigades (including three motorized infantry, one tank and two artillery brigades), and the Far East MD had 13 new brigades (including 10 motorized infantry brigades). This shows that the reform, just like the experiments, was conducted in the eastern part of Russia first.

After 1 July 2009, brigade creation continued. By December 2009, the

[15] Андрей Бондаренко, "Оперативный резерв для островного гарнизона", *Красная звезда*, 22 May 2010.
[16] Николай Поросков, "Товарищи потенциальные противники", *Время новостей*, 11 November 2008.
[17] Николай Поросков, "В российской армии созданы пять общевойсковых бригад", *Время новостей,*19 March 2009.
[18] Геннадий Миранович, Александр Тихонов, Виктор Худолеев, Александр Земляниченко, "Бригада набирает силу", *Красная звезда,* 17 February 2010.
[19] Александр ТИХОНОВ, "Ночная проверка боем", *Красная звезда,* 18 June 2009.

number of brigades in Russia's land forces had increased to 171. This meant that 26 more new brigades had appeared since 1 July 2009. The total number of newly established brigades had reached 82. It is also fairly safe to assume that the existing brigades were also undergoing reorganization at this time. During this period, the majority of new brigades were, once again, established in Siberia and the Far East. A new statement given during this phase stated that around 30 new brigades would be established in new locations.[20]

The number of brigades found in an independent screening of different open sources almost matches the officially declared numbers: 172 brigades after the reform[21] and 80[22], 82[23] and 85[24] newly created brigades. However, no full information is available. Brigades might be in the establishment stage or scheduled for establishment in the near future. This leads to the conclusion that the number of brigades might be more than two hundred.

Almost every newly formed brigade has taken part in an exercise. For example, during the exercise "Kavkaz 2009", seven new brigades were exercised[25]. Brigades also exercised in training grounds beyond the Urals and in the Moscow MD (Mulino training ground) under the umbrella of exercises 'Osen-2009': 'Ladoga-2009' and 'Zapad-2009'. A brigade exercise is the final requirement for a brigade to become a unit of permanent readiness. It was publicly announced that every permanent readiness brigade is kept at 95–100% personnel capacity and is ready to respond within one hour of receiving an alarm. The total number of such permanent readiness brigades should be in the region of 76 to 90.[26] The remaining brigades will probably have a lower percentage of ready personnel and will consist of reserve brigades or brigades which have just received new conscripts and are in the process of acquiring permanent readiness status. All new brigades have mixed conscripted and contracted personnel, but the ratio of conscript to contract soldiers may vary depending on the type of brigade. As an example, a motorized infantry brigade might have up to 80% conscripts and 20% contract soldiers,[27] whereas an air defence brigade might have the opposite ratio.

Air force units are also being reformed, whereas naval forces are still pending reform.[28] Today, all former air force regiments and divisions are being turned into air bases. An air force base is equivalent to a land force brigade. The bases are to host different air squadrons (rotary, fighters, bombers etc.) and will be

[20] Дмитрий Литовкин, Генерал армии, главком Сухопутных войск Владимир Болдырев: "Сухопутные войска должны стать компактными и мобильными", *Известия*, 25 June 2009.
[21] Ольга Божьева, "Незаконное вооруженное реформирование", *Московский Комсомолец,* 12 November 2008.
[22] Interview with Deputy Chief of Staff of Land Forces, General Lieutenant Antonov, *Moscow Echo,* 17 July 2009.
[23] "23 дивизии Сухопутных войск России расформируют за три года", *Интерфакс-АВН*, 11 November 2009.
[24] "Российские Сухопутные войска готовы отразить нападение противника на любом стратегическом направлении", *Интерфакс-АВН,* 27 September 2009.
[25] Виталий Денисов, "Новая армия новой России", *Красная звезда,* 16 Jul 2009.
[26] Виктор Литовкин, "Сержанты командуют генералами", *Независимая Газета,* 19 June 2009.
[27] Виктор Васенин, "Обойма Макарова", *Российская газета*, 23 March 2010.
[28] Юрий Гаврилов, "Наступление на штаты", *Российская газета*, 12 May 2009.

divided into three categories.[29] The first category bases would have five to ten squadrons and would be capable of providing support to all forces. The lower category bases would be capable of performing a limited range of missions or be devoted to supporting only naval or land forces. The majority of bases will be under land JSCs command, and the number of bases under direct air force command will be reduced to eight.[30] Some bases will be assigned to a newly established air and space defence command, while others may remain under direct naval or land force command.[31] Based on different sources, the author has identified a total of 69 new air bases. This is somewhat more than the officially announced 55 new bases.[32] Some sources mentioned only the new base locations without figures.

Despite no official confirmation being made, there is sufficient open source evidence to indicate that a new Russian air and space defence OC has been already created.[33] The OC has 24 air bases and 13 new air and space defence brigades under its command. The bases and brigades are distributed throughout Russia. The space defence brigades are armed with S-300 and S-400 SAM systems.

It is interesting to note the policy of issuing all new units with new combat flags. The director of the company that produces these flags reported that they have already produced around 200 new flags and an order for a further 90 new flags for 2009 had been made.[34] Since the flags are issued not only to brigades but also to OCs, JSCs and other new military institutions, this finding enables the total number of new units at the end of the reform to be estimated at around 300.

Phase II: Reorganization at the operational and strategic levels: establishment of an operational command[35] (OC) and a joint strategic command (JSC) (2010–2012)

The second phase of the reform is devoted to establishing structures at the operational and strategic levels. The phase was started at the end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010 and is likely to last until 2012. During the phase, all remaining tactical units and units at the operational and strategic levels are to be created. At the operational level, 15–20 different OCs and at least four JSCs have already been created within the land, air and naval forces. Little information is available about the OCs themselves. The OCs are positioned between JSCs and tactical units. The number of new OCs has not been declared, but one can estimate the total at around 20–30 different land, air, naval and other OCs. The majority of OCs are being created on the basis of former land or air forces or on naval fleets or flotillas. A total of ten land OCs[36] by the

[29] Юрий Гаврилов, ”В ожидании времени "Ч”, *РГ (Неделя)*, 8 October 2009.
[30] Александр Садчиков, ”Уйдут на базу”, *Известия,* 9 June 2010.
[31] For example, no information had been released about air base No. 2512 located near to Moscow until forest fires almost destroyed it. This is a new base under direct naval HQ command. No mention of the base’s existence had previously been made.
[32] Виктор Литовкин, ”Минобороны приоткрывает карты”, *Независимая газета,* 14 November 2008.
[33] *Интерфакс-АВН*, 21 November 2008.
[34] Сергей Князьков, ”прикосновение к святыне”, *Красная звезда*, 29 July 2009.
[35] An Operational command is supposed to be an Army level structure.
[36] Олег Владыкин, ”И в поле хочется комфорта”, *Независимая газета*, 2 July 2010.

end of 2010 has been planned. Before September 2010, seven OCs already existed in the place of former armies. The remaining three OCs were established soon after:[37] one (No. 6) in the JSC 'West' (operational since 1 September 2010) in St. Petersburg, one in the JSC 'Centre' in Chita, and one in the JSC 'South' in Maikop (both operational since 1 October 2010[38]). Each of these will have two to six permanent readiness motorized infantry brigades, some combat support (artillery) and combat service support (reconnaissance, communications, anti-aircraft defence, etc.) brigades and other smaller units (battalions). The main task of each OC will be to plan and conduct operations or missions assigned to it.

Seven OCs have already been created within the air force. Four of these can be considered as general purpose OCs (Air and Air Defence Forces Command), and the remaining three as specialized OCs (Operational Strategic Command for Air-Space Defence, Long Range Aviation Command and Military Transport Aviation Command). The primary task of the general purpose air OCs (OCs 1–4) is to support land forces. One air OC is assigned to one land JSC. The specialized air OCs (transport aviation, long range or strategic aviation and air-space defence) are responsible for specialized tasks and missions. For example, in a number of open sources it has been stated that the long range or strategic aviation OC might be responsible for strategic bombar patrol and air reconnaissance, and the transport aviation OC might be responsible for strategic lifting, military air transport and supporting other (e.g. airborne) troops, while the air-space defence OC might be responsible for the organization of state air and space defence.

As mentioned previously, the Russian navy has kept a low profile in announcing the results of its reform. However, it appears that it is set to follow the same path. It, too, will have general purpose and specialized OCs. A statement has already been given regarding the creation of at least one specialized (submarine) OC within the navy,[39] and a number of statements regarding the creation of other naval OCs instead of existing fleets and flotillas have been made. For example, the idea of transforming the Caspian Flotilla into an OC or merging it with the Black Sea Fleet has been mentioned.[40] It is worth noting that the Black Sea Fleet was itself placed under North Caucasus MD command by presidential order on 1 September 2009.[41] In military terms, this means a reduction in status for the fleet and could be seen as a first step towards its transformation into a naval OC. We are also witnessing the first cases of new tactical naval units being created. Immediately following the formation of the submarine OC on 10 February 2010, a new unit called the 'North Fleet Submarine Force' was established. The unit comprises all nuclear submarines of the Northern Fleet.[42]

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[37] Юрий Гаврилов, "Восток прикроют с запада", *Российская газета*, 24 August 2010.

[38] Виктор Литовкин, Владимир Мухин "Дан приказ: кому – на запад, кому – в другую сторону", *Независимая газета*, 3 September 2010.

[39] "В ВМФ России создано командование подводных сил", *Интерфакс-АВН,* 12 December 2009.

[40] По материалам информационных агентств, "Каспий соединили с Черным морем", *Независимая газета,* 17 July 2009.

[41] Виктор Литовкин, "Со стратегическим размахом", *Независимая газета,* 11 September 2009.

[42] "На Северном флоте завершилось формирование нового объединения –

To date, there have been no official statements regarding the creation of OCs in the other Russian forces (space, strategic missile or airborne). However, there are indications that new, specialized OCs may soon be established within the airborne or strategic missile forces.

The creation of JSCs was planned in advance. The JSC concept, as we know, was tested and approved far in advance of the official start of the reform. In strict keeping with the traditions of Soviet military secrecy, no advance statements were given regarding the creation of JSCs. The top military chiefs, who certainly knew of the plans, avoided discussing the issue up until the last minute, insisting instead that the military districts would remain. The first official and reliable confirmations that JSCs would be established came out only at the end of 2009. The Commander of the Land Forces, summarizing results of the 'Ladoga 2009' exercise, said that a presidential decree creating JSCs would be signed by the end of year.[43] This did not, in fact, happen that year, but later, when summarizing results of the 'Vostok 2010' exercise, the Chief of the GS, General Makarov, confirmed that on 6 July 2010 the President had signed a decree ordering the creation of four JSCs in place of the six MDs[44].

The JSC is the highest regional or functional level of command and control.[45] Despite the lack of statements on the issue, it can be assumed that the process will not end with the creation of only four JSCs. These are general purpose JSCs. They have a large force under their command and function as genuine joint commands. JSCs command a number of land, air and naval OCs, complete with their brigades. A number of separate permanent readiness brigades and battalions, such as special force, air assault, electronic warfare (EW), railway,[46] NBC protection, territorial communication, logistic maintenance and others may also be directly subordinate to them. Besides these, other forces, such as interior troops, state security service troops, and border troops located in the area of responsibility (AOR) of the JSC, will also be under its command. The JSCs will be responsible for the planning and execution of all military activities, not only in their AOR but also in their area of interest (AOI), which extends beyond the territory of Russia. JSC HQs will be smaller than MD HQs, even though they cover up to two MDs, and may have personnel of just 300.[47]

JSC 'West' became operational at the beginning of September 2010. It combines the former Leningrad and Moscow MDs and the Baltic Sea and Northern fleets. It has two land and two naval OCs and one air OC (No. 1). The land OCs include the new OC (6th Army) freshly established in St. Petersburg and the former 20th Army, which was transformed to an OC and moved from its former location in Voronez to Nizhnyj Novgorod. A number of new brigades are also under formation. For example, the indications are that a new brigade is currently being formed in

подводные силы", *Интерфакс-АВН*, 10 February 2010.

[43] Юрий Гаврилов, "В ожидании времени "Ч", *РГ (Неделя)*, 8 October 2009.

[44] Леонид Хайремдинов, "Ориентиры, подтвержденные «востоком»", *Красная звезда,* 15 July 2010.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Олег Владыкин "И в поле хочется комфорта", *Независимая газета*, 2 July 2010.

[47] Виктор Литовкин, "Зачистка по-сердюковски", *Независимая газета,*11 March 2010.

Figure 2: Russia's military district organization after December 1, 2010. The number of MD's decreased from six to four and at the same time they became strategic joint commands.

the city of Sovetsk in the Kaliningrad region.[48] The HQ of JSC 'West' is located in St. Petersburg.

JSC 'South' receives the entire North Caucasus MD and the western part of the former Volga-Ural MD. It is likely to have two land OCs and one (No. 4) air OC. The Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla will also fall under its command. These might become one or two naval OCs, depending on the final decision whether to merge the flotilla with the Black Sea Fleet. The JSC HQ will remain in Rostov near the city of Don. Officially, JCS 'South' started operations on 4 October 2010.[49]

JSC 'Centre' receives the Siberian MD and the remaining, bigger part of the Ural-Volga MD. It will be the only JSC without a naval component. It is likely to have four land and one (No. 2) air OCs. Its HQ will be located in Yekaterinburg.

Similar to JSC 'West', JSC 'East' will be 'heavy' naval. JSC 'East' receives the entire Pacific Fleet and the Kamchatka flotilla. The forces of the Far East MD will also fall under its command. This means it will have at least two naval OCs, two land OCs and one (No. 3) air OC. Its HQ will be in Khabarovsk.

Immediately following the announcement of the presidential decree on the creation of JSCs, the acting commanders (ACs) of the JSCs were appointed. Four generals were selected. General Colonel Bakhin, Commander of the former Ural-Volga Military District, was appointed AC of JSC 'West'; General Colonel Galkin, former Commander of the North Caucasus Military District, was appointed AC of JSC 'South'; General Colonel Chirkin, former Commander of the Siberian Military District, was appointed AC of JSC 'Centre'; and Admiral Sidenko, Commander of the Pacific Fleet, was

[48] Interview with 4th Tank Brigade Chief of Staff, LTC Kolesnikov, *"Moscow Echo"*, 11 September 2010.
[49] "В России создан Южный военный округ", *НГ-Online,* 4 October 2010.

appointed AC of JSC 'East'.[50] These ACs were later confirmed as the new commanders of the JSCs.

Although no statements have yet been released regarding specialized JSCs, the likelihood of their establishment, particularly in the wake of the emergence of specialized OCs, has by no means been ruled out. Examples of potential specialized JSCs might include: a 'Space' JSC comprising modern space troops and existing air-space defence OCs; a 'Nuclear' JSC comprising existing new submarine and far reach aviation OCs and possible land strategic missile troops OC; or a 'Rapid reaction' JSC with modern airborne troops, naval infantry units and newly created transport aviation OC. As previously mentioned, the timeline for 'general purpose' JSCs began on 1 December 2010.[51] If the end of the phase is predicted at around 2012, ample time still remains to implement these examples.

Phase III: Optimization (2012–2015) and rearmament (2012–2020)

The reorganization and creation of operational forces (JSCs, OCs and units) is clearly not the be-all and end-all of the reform. Many problems and shortcomings remain within the portion of the military that is to be turned into an institutional force. A third phase is therefore set to follow, entailing the final optimization of military structures (operational and institutional) by 2015, followed by rearmament of the entire military by 2020.

The first stage of the third phase is expected to begin with the completion of the reorganization of the MOD itself and to continue with the reform of other state armed institutions. This will possibly be followed by the creation of a wartime military structure and, finally, arming of the new forces with the best available modern arms. Based on some statements, it appears that the timeline for these developments runs until 2015–2016. The final stage of the reform would involve the comprehensive rearmament and re-equipment of the new forces. For this, a rearmament and re-equipment programme running until 2020 and consisting of 27 separate federal programmes is being developed. Of these federal programmes, 16 are already being implemented and 11 more are currently in the preparation phase.[52]

Based on current developments within the military forces overall, one can make an assumption that the existing military services (land, air and navy) and troops (airborne, strategic missile and space) will remain, but will be deeply reorganized. The reform of Russia's military services is coming to an end. Following the same approach of dividing the forces into operational and institutional parts, it has already been announced that the remaining military service HQs and other non-combat units will also be reorganized. The first step has already been completed and the naval HQ will be reduced by almost three times and transformed into a department in the General Staff.[53] Other service HQs are also planned to be

[50] "Министр обороны РФ Анатолий Сердюков подписал приказ о возложении обязанностей временно исполняющих должности командующих войсками новых военных округов", *ИНТЕРФАКС,* 22 July 2010.
[51] RIA Novosti, "Количество военных округов сократят до четырех", *Правда.Ру*, 28 May 2010.
[52] Юрий Гаврилов, "Генералы попали в положение", *Российская газета,* 31 August 2010.
[53] "В военных округах России создаются структуры управления флотами", *ИНТЕРФАКС-АВН,* 6 September 2010.

reduced and turned into General Staff departments.[54] Other, non-combat units within the military services will be reorganized, reduced and become institutional units responsible for training, services and so on.

Despite all statements regarding their preservation, the future for the troop divisions (airborne, strategic missile, space) looks set to follow a similar pattern. The majority (combat units) are already being reorganized. As an example, the airborne divisions have received air defence[55] and anti-tank capabilities[56] but have lost their own aviation. This could be seen as the first step towards their transformation into rapid reaction forces. If adequate OC and new, specialized JSC are created, the airborne forces will follow the path of the military services. The same future may also be in store for the nuclear forces. Statements have been given to the effect that all nuclear forces (aviation, submarines and missiles) are to come under the direct command of the GS[57]. This is highly likely to lead to the establishment of a new JSC. As an end result, the entire military would be divided into operational and institutional parts.

Very little information about wartime structures is available. The indications are, however, that Russia's war capability will be based on increasing the number of operational units. This will be done by activating reserve units, performing mobilization and adding units from other armed state institutions to the forces. It has been announced that the reform of the interior troops is also foreseeable and these might, therefore, also become wartime units. The practice of rotating army officers to serve in the interior forces has been popular for a number of years.

Certain activities carried out during the renewal and building of the new steady-state military infrastructure, such as fortifications and the establishment of defence regions in certain parts of Russia, indicate the formation of new reserve and mobilization units.[58] A proportion of the new brigades might also be changed into reserve units. The appearance of such reserve units in Russia is already evident. More than a dozen infantry and artillery reserve brigades already exist in Siberia and the Far East. There have been statements indicating that such units (in smaller numbers) may also be established in other parts of Russia, although some parts of country, such as the North Caucasus, the former Leningrad MD[59] and the Kaliningrad region[60] will remain free of these units.

The conversion of reserve units to combat readiness will be based on one of two methods. The first is the 'slow build-up' method. This involves the call-up of reservists, either regularly or on demand, for refreshment training in order to provide units that are ready to join an operational force. A second method, 'fast activation', is also being tested. With this

[54] Виктор Литовкин, "Парад реформ не затормозил", *Независимая газета,* 14 May 2010.
[55] Виктор Литовкин, "Единый государственный экзамен по-сердюковски", *Независимая газета*, 26 June 2010.
[56] Сергей Птичкин, "В десант по блату не берут", *Российская газета*, 30 July 2010.
[57] Юрий Гаврилов, "Генералы попали в положение", *Российская газета,* 31 August 2010.
[58] Виктор Литовкин, "Публичный день генерала Макарова", *Независимая газета,*17 December 2008.
[59] "Россия-ленво-реорганизация", *Интерфакс-Северо-запад*, 29 November 2009.
[60] "Россия-балтфлот-реформа", *Интерфакс-Северо-запад*, 21 November 2009.

method, not reservists but soldiers from a permanent readiness unit located in other region far from the reserve unit are flown in by military or civilian aircraft. Immediately upon arrival, the troops are equipped with the reserve unit's armaments and are ready to engage.[61] In addition to the reserve brigades, strategic armament and equipment units will also be established. These units are likely to be organized in a similar manner to the brigades and would serve as bases for wartime units. It is difficult at this stage to determine what other differences there may ultimately be between these units and the reserve brigades. Currently, the only noticeable difference is that the armament and equipment unit personnel is made up of civilians (mostly former military), whereas reserve unit personnel can be mixed and may also include active duty personnel. The activation method may be the same for both armament and equipment units and reserve units. During the recent 'Vostok 2010' exercise, a newly created 247th armament and equipment unit was activated as a brigade.[62]

At the beginning of 2009, the Deputy Chief of the GS, General Colonel Smirnov, mentioned that a new military reserve and mobilization system is to be adopted. According to Smirnov, conscription will remain and the number of conscripts may increase. A reserve force made up of soldiers with experience in specific fields (drivers, specialists, operators etc.) will be created. Special contracts may be signed with reservists to continue serving in the same positions within their reserve unit. They will receive regular refresher training and even pay and pension. Former conscripts would fill the remaining positions in the reserve units, although these would not be counted as reservists. These ideas were indirectly corroborated by the Chief of the GS in saying that there were plans to review a list of contract positions, with the aim of separating specialists from ordinary solders.[63] According to the Chief of the GS, the number of positions filled by contract soldiers will decrease. Only key posts for combat readiness will be filled by contract personnel. This would enable the level of professionalism of contract soldiers to be enhanced and enable them to be paid higher salaries. The number of positions filled by conscripts will increase. As a result, a larger mobilization pool of conscripts with service experience will be created.[64] Today, the relevant documentation is being comprehensively prepared and the system itself should be in force by around 2016. Considering that after the reform the mobilized Russian army would have around 1.7 million soldiers instead the almost 5 million planned under the old mobilization regime, the system stands a relatively good chance of success.[65]

After the optimization, the number of peacetime military personnel will be around one million.[66] Almost the entire force will be ready to fight instantly or at a

[61] Андрей Бондаренко, "Оперативный резерв для островного гарнизона", *Красная звезда*, 22 May 2010.
[62] Андрей Бондаренко, «Боевое крещение» базы Волчихина, *Красная звезда*, 2 July 2010.
[63] Виктор Васенин, "Обойма Макарова", *Российская газета*, 23 March 2010.
[64] "В российской армии существенно сократится численность контрактников", *Интерфакс-АВН,* 26 May 2010.
[65] Юрий Гаврилов, "Наступление на штаты", *Российская газета*, 21 May 2009.
[66] Александр Коновалов, "Армия для страны, а не наоборот", *Огонёк,* 8 June 2008.

very short notice.[67] The land forces will have around 270,000 troops[68] and be compact. Instead of the current 1,890 units, the new land forces would comprise just 172 units with approximately 76 to 90 of these in permanent readiness.[69] The remaining units would be reserve units with a prescribed level of readiness.[70] Of the current 340 air force units, only 180 will remain,[71] strategic missile forces will be reduced from twelve to eight units, space forces will have six instead of seven units, and the airborne troops will have five instead of six units.[72] Large numbers of mobilization facilities, educational institutions, logistic bases and other military infrastructure will be closed. Later, other armed, militarized units of different state institutions (such as the Ministry of the Interior) will be reorganized and take their place in the Russian military system. As Defence Minister Serdiukov stated, the changes within these structures have already begun.[73]

All structural changes are being followed by a full renewal of all normative documents required for the combat units. According to statements made by different commanders, the current rate of this process is impressive. For example, in June 2009, General Boldyrev mentioned that a dossier of more than forty documents had been prepared and that these had been tested during the exercises 'Ladoga 2009' and 'Zapad 2009'[74]. In May 2010, the Chief of the GS General Makarov stated that another 148 new documents were being tested during the 'Vostok 2010' exercise and that all necessary military documentation would be ready and approved by 1 January 2011.[75]

At the third stage, combat service support, military education and other systems will also be changed. In addition, the military logistics organisations will also undergo changes. In line with the 'Ivanov doctrine', the military is also abandoning the exterritorial principle of troop supply. Under this former principle, everything needed for troops located in one region had to be transported from storage facilities located in another region. This resulted in resources, time and forces being wasted. Under the new system, a territorial principle will be applied in supplying forces, whereby everything that is needed for a brigade will be stored at its own storage facilities and any additional supplies will be brought in from local armament and equipment units or bases.[76] This will allow the liquidation of 277 military storage facilities and bases and create 34 new table d'hôte unified rear

[67] Ольга Божьева, "Незаконное вооруженное реформирование", *Московский Комсомолец,* 12 November 2008.
[68] Александр Коновалов, "Армия для страны, а не наоборот", *Огонёк,* 8 June 2008.
[69] Виктор Литовкин, "Сержанты командуют генералами", *Независимая Газета,* 19 June 2009.
[70] Игорь Черняк, Юрий Гаврилов "Армия при цели", *Российская газета*, 24 September 2009.
[71] Виктор Литовкин, "Минобороны приоткрывает карты", *Независимая газета,* 24 November 2008.
[72] Юрий Гаврилов "Наступление на штаты", *Российская газета*,12 May 2009.
[73] Юрий Гаврилов, "Наступление на штаты", *Российская газета*, 12 May 2009.
[74] Дмитрий Литовкин, "Генерал армии, главком Сухопутных войск Владимир Болдырев: "Сухопутные войска должны стать компактными и мобильными", *Известия,* 25 June 2009.
[75] Виктор Васенин, "Обойма Макарова", *Российская газета*, 23 March 2010.
[76] "Минобороны в поисках нового облика", *Известия,* 18 November 2009.

logistical and maintenance bases for all forces.[77]

To improve logistics, all old, rear units (mostly regiments), which had only a small number of personnel, will be disbanded. In their place, permanent readiness logistic brigades and separate battalions, with almost all personnel in place, will be created. This process is already underway. The target was to establish a minimum of two logistic brigades in each MD by the end of 2010.[78] This means that each JSC might have two or more logistic brigades. The former nine partially manned automobile brigades have been disbanded, and 20 new, permanent readiness automobile battalions created. Some units will be stationed in new locations. For example, a new separate automobile battalion created on the basis of the former Moscow Automobile Brigade has been stationed in the Northern Caucasus.[79] It is likely that each OC will have one such battalion and each JSC two such battalions.[80] Everyday non-combat services within military units (catering, cleaning, etc.) will be outsourced to civilian structures or private enterprises. Experiments to this effect are currently being conducted in one of the Moscow MD brigades and in three brigades in the Siberian MD.[81]

As mentioned previously, the peacetime size of the Russian armed forces will stand at around one million, and wartime numbers will grow to 1.7 million soldiers.[82] As a result of the optimization measures, not only the numbers but also the composition of the ranks will be changed. The decision has been taken to reduce the number of officers by 200,000 and to eliminate all 140,000 warrant officer (proporshchiky) positions. Initially, around 40,000 vacant warrant officer positions were closed. By 1 December 2009, all warrant officers had been released from duty, with only around 20,000 reassigned to new sergeant positions.[83] As a next step, all officers commissioned after graduating from military departments in civilian universities and called to serve for two years, were released from duty. Around 7,500 such officers were released from duty at the end of 2010[84] in addition to all officers (around 35,800 in total), who reached retirement age by December 2009. Other reductions in the number of military positions are also underway. For example, the abolition of automobile brigades, military storage facilities and bases would allow a reduction of 5,600 officer and NCO positions.[85] All military medical officers will be transferred to civilian posts, without officer status. The air force plans to reduce its number of officers' positions by 50,000. Some measures taken to reduce officer numbers would have once been inconceivable in Russia. For example, fresh graduates from

[77] "Россия-Армия-тыл-реорганизация", *Интерфакс-АВН*, 11 November 2008.
[78] Александр Тихонов, Анна Потехина, Марина Елисеева, "На передовой и в тылу", *Красная звезда,* 25 June 2010.
[79] "Войска Северо-Кавказского военного округа (СКВО) усилены 474-м отдельным автомобильным батальоном", *Интерфакс-АВН*, 26 October 2009.
[80] "Россия-Армия-преобразования", *Интерфакс-АВН,* 21 November 2008.
[81] Виктор Литовкин "СибВО переходит на аутсорсинг", *Независимая газета*, 25 June 2010.
[82] Дмитрий Литовкин, "Минобороны в поисках нового облика", *Известия*, 18 November 2009.
[83] Вадим Соловьев, "Новые декабристы", *Независимая газета*, 21 November 2008.
[84] "Мобильность, боеготовность, престиж", *Красная звезда*, 15 October 2008.
[85] Виктор Литовкин, "Минобороны приоткрывает карты", *Независимая газета,* 24 November 2008.

military institutions have been released from duty en masse or offered to become contract sergeants or even privates. Because new units did not have enough posts for officers, they filled NCO posts with lieutenants keeping ranks preserved and salaries compensated. This has occurred among railway troops and the Northern fleet,[86] and even among the elite of the Russian forces, the airborne troops.[87] According to MOD statements, of 5,400 graduate officers in the year 2009, 4,700 were appointed to serve in sergeant positions.[88] In 2010, as declared by MOD State Secretary Pankov, of a total of almost 10,000 graduates around 2,100 received sergeant positions.[89] The MOD also recanted on its previous announcement that the reductions would be implemented up until 2016, stating that the reductions were to be completed earlier. According the GS, by the end of 2009, of the previous 1,200 generals only 780 remained, the number of colonels had been reduced from 60,000 to 8,000, and other officers reduced from 355,000 to 150,000. All 142,000 former NCOs had been relieved of duty and the rank had been abolished.[90]

As predicted,[91] military education is also being reformed. Russia's former 15 military academies, four military universities, 46 high military schools and institutes and ten major training centres were to be replaced with three military science and research centres, six military academies and one military university. In 2009, military science and research centres were established in Moscow, the Moscow region and St. Petersburg.[92] They are to be responsible for conducting all military research projects and educating officers in special military fields.[93] The number of military schools will be reduced by around a third and the remaining schools affiliated to training centres and academies. Some schools have already been closed, and around twenty more will be closed by 2013. No new cadets have been admitted in 2010. From 1 September 2010, all military schools are tasked with training sergeants instead of officers.[94] Special sergeant training centres were established in 19 military schools.[95] The famous Ryazan Airborne Officers School was among the first to receive such a training centre.[96]

Another key task of the third phase is the rearmament of the Russian armed forces. Today, all units are being currently re-armed and upgraded with new, modern arms sourced and redistributed from existing storage facilities or disbanded units. By 2009, certain new motorized infantry brigades had already been fully and exclusively re-equipped with new T-

[86] Дмитрий Литовкин, "Погонный минимум", *ИЗВЕСТИЯ* , 29 June 2010.
[87] "В ВДВ 170 лейтенантов назначены на сержантские должности", *ИНТЕРФАКС-АВН*, 31 August 2010.
[88] Михаил Виноградов "Кризис перепроизводства", *Профиль, № 31,* 30 August 2010.
[89] "Четверть лейтенантов выпуска 2010 года будут служить сержантами", *РИА Новости,* 2 September 2010.
[90] "Генштаб отчитался о сокращении командиров", "*Известия*", 23 December 2009.
[91] The "Ivanov doctrine" planned reforming the military education system until 2010.
[92] Владимир Иванов*,* "Военная реформа: мнения Минобороны и экспертов", *Независимая газета,* 18 December 2009.
[93] Наиль Гафутулин, "Мобильность, боеготовность, престиж", *Красная звезда*, 15 October 2008.
[94] Дмитрий Литовкин, "Погонный минимум", *Известия*. 29 June 2010.
[95] Юрий Белоусов, "За содействием – к журналистам", *Красная звезда,* 19 May 2010.
[96] Александр Александров, "Миссия выполнима", *Красная звезда,* 16 July 2009.

90 tanks and BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs).[97] In certain MDs, all outdated arms have been completely removed from service. By the beginning of 2010, all Moscow MD forces, for instance, were fully equipped with new, upgraded arms such as T-90s and BMP-3s.[98] Since the majority of disbanded units in Siberia and the Far East were equipped with outdated arms, the newly established brigades needed to be fully rearmed with new or better equipment. This required the mass transfer of arms and equipment from western Russia, which was carried out as a rushed operation with mixed success.[99]

The announced plans aim at 30% new armament across all units by 2012.[100] By 2020 this figure rises to 70–100%.[101] Plans were also announced to deliver around 250 T-90 tanks as well as an unspecified number of new air defence systems including 'Buk-M3s', MRLS systems, 'Smerčs', 'Uragans' and 'Grads' in 2010.[102] In 2011, five brigades were planned to be rearmed with a total of more than three thousand pieces of armament, among them new T-90A tanks, BMP-2M and BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles, 'Chosta' 2C-19 and 'Msta-S' self-propelled artillery systems, BTR-70M and BTR-80 armed transporters, 'Kamaz' trucks.[103] The Russian air force is also getting an arms upgrade. In 2010 it was expected to receive around 30 helicopters and 28 combat aircraft.[104] By 2015 the air force plans to acquire around 400 new Mi-28, Ka-52 and Mi-8M helicopters.[105] Known planned aircraft acquisitions include the following: 32 Su-34 fighter-bombers (delivery by 2013), 48 Su-35 fighters (delivery by 2015), 12 Su-27SM fighters (by 2011), 4 Su-30M2s (also by 2011), 12 Su-25UBM combat trainers, 26 MiG-29 K fighters (by 2015) as well as a contract for at least 80 Su-34s and 24–48 Su-35s.[106]

Communication equipment upgrading is among the highest priorities. According to one official statement, new communication procedures were created and tested during the Kavkaz 2009, Ladoga 2009, Zapad 2009 and Vostok 2010 exercises, but the communication equipment itself is in very poor condition. According to former President Medvedev, around 85% of existing communication equipment was obsolete.[107] Visiting the Moscow MD, the President announced that the situation would be changed. According to Medvedev, a new generation of radio station named as 'Azar' had been created. The current target is to substitute

[97] Юрий Бородин, "Экзамен на профпригодность", *Красная звезда*, 20 November 2009.
[98] "Russia moves forward with modernisation", *Janes's Defence Review*, 12 May 2010.
[99] For example, due to very short schedule, a few hundred tanks failed to be delivered on time and were left abandoned at a railway station for some time. These were later moved to storage facilities and units.
[100] Other sources mention later dates. For example, President Medvedev in his speech on 24 May 2010 mentions 2015 instead of 2012.
[101] Игорь Черняк, Юрий Гаврилов "Армия при цели", *Российская газета*, 24 September 2009.
[102] Виктор ХУДОЛЕЕВ,"Сухопутная мощь отчизны", *Красная звезда,* 26 February 2010.
[103] "Генерал армии, главком Сухопутных войск Владимир Болдырев: "Сухопутные войска должны стать компактными и мобильными", *Известия*, 25 June 2009.
[104] Дмитрий Литовкин, "Генштаб отчитался о сокращении командиров", *Известия,* 23 December 2009.
[105] "В ВВС России к 2015 году поступят 400 новых вертолетов", *Интерфакс-АВН,* 20 May 2009.
[106] Published by Steeljawscribe, "Red Star Tuesday — Overhauling Russia's Air Force", 22 March 2010.
[107] Андрей Гаравский, "Связь решает все", *Красная звезда*, 22 May 2010.

all old analogue radio equipment with new digital equipment by 2012. Priority will be given to tactical units. Medvedev had stated that they would receive new digital radios by the end of 2010.[108]

Russia is also working to modify its own arms production. Then reappointed Deputy Minister Popovkin told in a radio interview that 2009 was a break-though year. Previously, the majority of resources were allocated to partial arms modernization and repair. In the future, more resources would be committed to extensive modernization or the creation of new arms types and the acquisition of only new and extensively modernized weapons.[109] To support this, tank manufacturers followed suit by announcing the completion of an extensive modernization programme for the T-72 tank and claiming that the new T-72 fully meets all MOD requirements and is ready for mass production.[110] In 2010, the armed forces tested the new BTR-82 armed transporters. If approved, the BTR-82 would substitute all other BTR type vehicles.[111] Steps are also being taken and resources ring-fenced for the development of next generation arms production. The tank producer 'Uralvagonzavod' presented its next generation T-95 tank at a closed exhibition in summer 2010.[112] The T-95 project, first started in the late nineties, has been successfully resurrected after being shelved for a period due to lack of financing. Russia has also succeeded in getting more support from the West. A contract with French company 'Thales', for example, allows Russia to produce thermal vision devices for its T-90 tanks in Russia. Another contract allows Russia to buy French-made communication equipment for its T-90s and BMP-3 IFVs.[113]

To secure financing for the development, production and purchase of new arms, and to compensate for inflation over the period 2009-2011, a decision was taken to assign an additional 40 to 70 billion roubles to support recent military orders. A new rearmament programme for 2010-2020 was also approved. The types and quantities of arms and equipment to be acquired under the programme will be openly announced. Programme funding will go directly to producers[114] in order to reduce the potential for corruption. The initial figure announced for the entire programme was 13 trillion roubles. However, the MOD insisted that 36 trillion roubles were needed to achieve the programme's goals.[115] The figures have since been adjusted, and approximately 20 trillion roubles (around two trillion roubles annually) have been preliminarily set aside for the programme. This would give an average of 2000 billion roubles per year over the next ten years from 2011. Bearing in mind that up until 2008 this figure was less than 500 billion roubles per year, thereafter reaching 1,200

[108] TV news, *RTR TV 'Vesti',* 23 May 2010.
[109] Interview with Deputy Minister of Defence Popovkin, *'Moscow Echo',* 20 February 2010.
[110] "Российские танкостроители готовы серийно производить модернизированные Т-72", *Интерфакс-АВН* , 16 July 2010.
[111] Новые бронетранспортеры БТР-82 начнут поступать на войсковые испытания в конце этого года, *Интерфакс-АВН,* 16 July 2010.
[112] Сергей Авдеев, Неопознанный стреляющий "Объект-95", *Областная газета***,** 20 July 2010.
[113] Tom Withington, "Russia France strike licence production deals", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 30 June 2010.
[114] "Госпрограмма по вооружению на 2011-2020 годы будет утверждена президентом РФ в третьем квартале 2010 года*", Итар-ТАСС*, 25 May 2010.
[115] Виктор Литовкин , "Россия в арьергарде гонки вооружений", *Независимая газета,* 4 June 2010.

billion roubles per year within three years, this is a considerable injection of funding.

The rearmament programme is of major strategic importance to Russia. To demonstrate this, former President Medvedev reappointed the retired General Popovkin as First Deputy to the Defence Minister to head the rearmament programme. In addition, a former federal agency responsible for the provision of armaments to the armed forces was brought under the MOD[116] and a new agency chief was appointed. The appointed agency head has a background in the state revenue and tax departments, and is therefore well grounded in anti-corruption methods. All of these changes are aimed at providing additional guarantees that the rearmament programme will succeed.

Besides allocated budget, the MOD has also been given a free hand to seek additional resources. The ministry has been granted permission to sell off its redundant military assets (infrastructure, equipment etc.). These sales have the potential to generate considerable additional finances. For example, the MOD's former military buildings in St. Petersburg have been offered at a starting price of 400 million roubles,[117] its properties close to Moscow at 212 million and its properties in Moscow at 1 billion 5 million roubles.[118] The MOD owns hundreds, if not thousands, of such assets around the country and continues to sell them. Another way for the MOD to increase its cash flows has come through the granting of a licence to organize a lottery. The MOD estimates that the lottery could generate an extra 3 billion roubles worth of revenue over the next few years.[119] As the ministry has full powers to decide on the use of these funds, it is possible that some resources may also be allocated to smaller rearmament projects.

Russia's military after the reform

Since, from the beginning of reform, priority has been given to operational units, it is already possible to make some forecasts regarding the future shape of the Russian operational force. It appears that Russia's operational forces after the reform would consist of a number of general and specialized JSCs, each subordinate to the MOD. Each JSC would have a number of OCs and some specialized brigade or battalion level units under their command. The majority of combat and combat support brigades will be assigned to different OCs. A possible organizational structure of Russia's operational forces at the end of the reform is presented in Figure 3.[120]

[116] *РИА Новости***,** 17 May 2010.
[117] Управление государственного заказа Министерства обороны Российской Федерации сообщает о проведении аукциона по продаже высвобождаемого недвижимого военного имущества *Красная звезда*, 25 May 2010.
[118] "Управление государственного заказа Министерства обороны Российской Федерации сообщает о проведении аукциона по продаже высвобождаемого недвижимого военного имущества", *Красная звезда*, 17 June 2010.
[119] "Министерство обороны РФ предложило провести 16 государственных лотерей,чтобы профинансировать развитие Вооруженных сил*", Интерфакс-АВН*, 24 May 2009.
[120] Scheme drawn up by the author on August 30th 2010 representing the author's independent predictions.

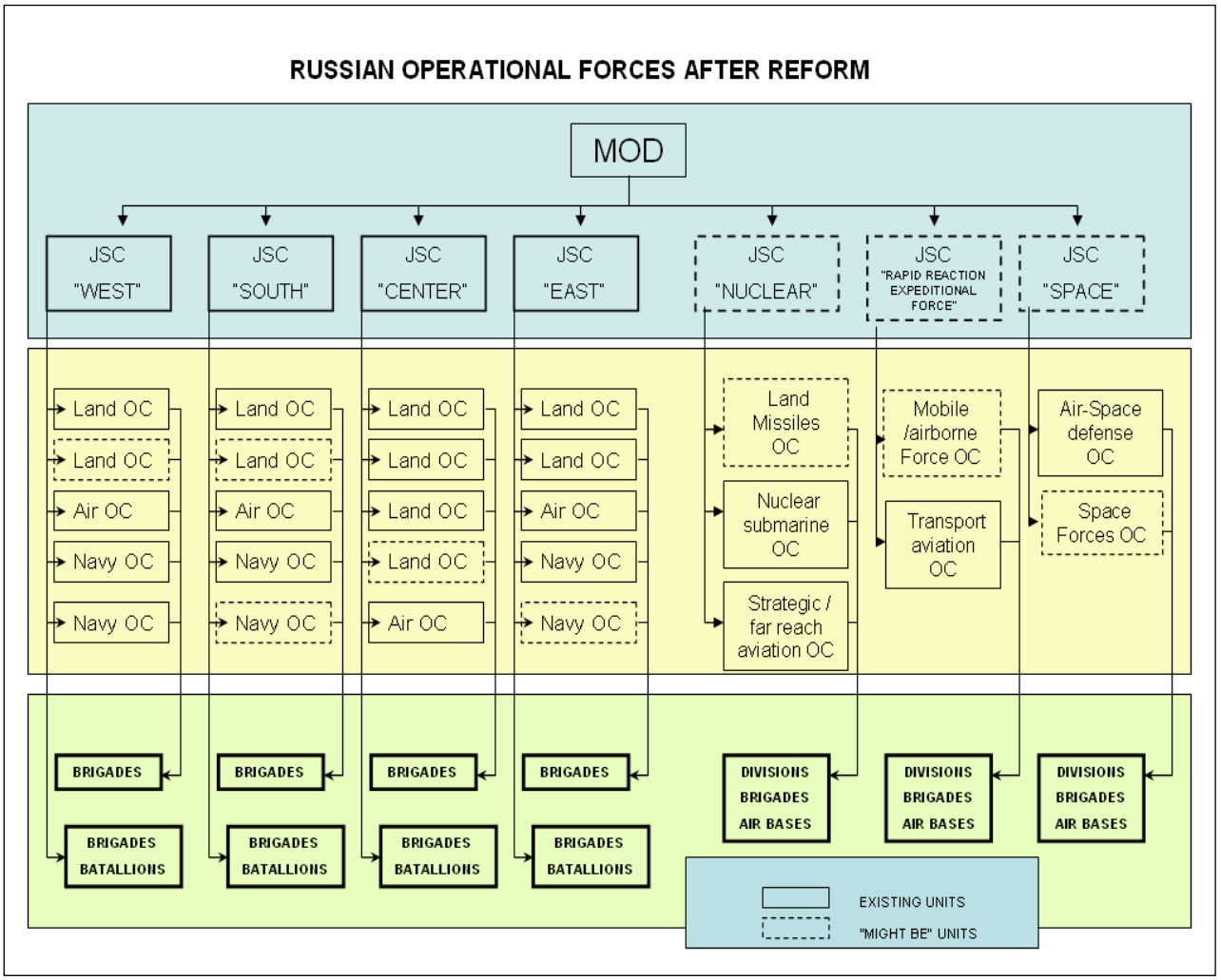

Figure 3: Possible organization of Russian operational forces.

To date, there is insufficient information to present a post-reform forecast for the institutional part of the Russian military. Although some aspects of the institutional military are open to assessment, such as the military education system as discussed in this paper, the overall picture remains unclear.

Conclusions

Contrary to previous attempts, Russia's current military reform is far-reaching and well thought out. Lessons from Western reforms and recent military conflicts have been learned. The guiding principles and requirements for the new military force are defined in the 'Ivanov doctrine'. Russia's military leadership has spent years testing the theories of this doctrine in practice, and the reform is being implemented in line with a structured action plan. Certain miscalculations aside, the overall indications are that the reform has, thus far, been executed with success.

Considering the current developments and what has already been achieved, Russia's military reform has clearly reached a point of no return – the process can neither be halted nor reversed. At the tactical level, the land and air forces have already been fundamentally reshaped. At the operational and strategic levels, the land, air, naval and other forces are currently deep in the process of reform. Now it is the turn of other parts of the MOD and other forces, including the strategic forces, to be reorganized. The recent reappointments of military commanders

indicate that this process, too, has got underway. There appears to be no doubt that the reform will be carried through and that a new Russian military will emerge. After the reform, the Russian military forces will closely resemble the majority of modern Western forces (such as the US), where an operational and institutional forces approach is implemented.

After the reform, the Russian military will be capable of operating in the global arena. Despite the fewer than planned numbers of permanent readiness units, the reformed units will provide Russia with a military force capable of responding rapidly to regional and local conflicts. Already today, re-armed with, maybe not the very latest, but with fairly modern and well-maintained weapons, these troops are capable of successfully conducting key military operations. The importance of being capable of rapidly engaging in local conflicts and then, backed by nuclear capability and using peaceful means, securing the achievements made was a lesson learned by Russia after the Georgian-Russian war. It is important to note that after the reform, Russia will not lose its global military capability. In this arena Russia's strategic forces will play the key role. These forces, backed by a mobilized army of up to 1.7 million solders within the conventional forces, ensure that Russia's strong position is secure.

After the reform is completed, Russia's military logistics, command and control, military personnel management, military education, armament and equipment, as well as a host of other key aspects will be fundamentally changed in essence. The dark days of drunken generals in cozy offices seem, at last, to be a thing of the past. Personnel reform is being taken deadly seriously. Redundant, backward-thinking commanders and officers have been removed, sometimes by drastic means. Huge numbers of military positions are being converted to civilian posts. The rate of these reductions has been dramatic. Changes, initially planned to be phased in by 2016, have been achieved virtually across the board already. A new generation of military officers is being weaned on ideas of a supreme Russia. The majority of new commanders with new brigades are young colonels in their forties. The success of the reform has a direct bearing on their personal future.

It is too early to be able to present a full picture of Russia's post-reform military organisation. It is already apparent, however, that the new military will be smaller and – most importantly – affordable. A force of one million peacetime and 1.7 million wartime soldiers corresponds with what Russia needs and what it can sustain. The majority of the forces will be operational with a comparatively small institutional component, enabling the military to allocate its defence expenditure more effectively. The reduced mobilization burden allows the country to redirect the majority of resources and money to keeping new units at adequate readiness, training them properly, and participating in missions.

Rearmament is considered a core concern. A key criticism of the reform has been that Russia's inability to equip the newly reformed units with new generation arms renders the reform ineffectual. While this is true to a point, this argument must be counterbalanced by two important factors. Firstly, the army needs weapons that can

enable it to successfully engage any opponent in battle, both today and in the near future. For example, Russia has succeeded in creating a tank force of approximately 4,000 T-90, T-80 or modernized T-72 BM tanks by selecting and modernizing the newest and least used from tens of thousands of tanks from the former Soviet tank pool. These are capable of successfully engaging any opponent that is armed with the latest armor. Secondly, no country on earth is armed exclusively with the latest technology. Russia is not alone; many other countries – Western countries included – simply do not have the resources to buy only new arms. In order not to endanger their national security or operations, they modernize the arms they have. Russia has decided to do the same. Modernization programmes are currently being implemented within the Russian military industry. The West is also willing to help Russia to gain certain military technologies. Contrary to the majority of Western countries who are reducing spending on arms and rearmament, Russia has prepared a huge rearmament programme. If the money earmarked for the programme is released and, most importantly, managed properly, we could witness a U-turn where Russian forces are enabled not only to have modernized versions of recent weapons, but also to develop their own new generation arms.

Finally, if, after the reform, Russia continues to stand by its moratorium of the CFE treaty, Europe could be faced with a situation where it has a sizable military force, not limited by any agreements, on its borders. Although these may be smaller in number compared to Soviet times, they are better trained, better armed and at higher readiness. The locations for the new high readiness brigades in the newly created JSCs, especially in JSC ‘West’, are still unknown. Taking into account that the new Russian military doctrine persistently labels NATO as a threat, and there are no indications that Russia is going to review this position, the presence of permanent readiness units close to the borders of Europe could change the balance of power in the region.

About the author

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