

United Russia Pushes for Military Training in Schools

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A group of United Russia deputies are seeking to reinstate a communist-era program that taught basic military skills to high school students. Above, soldiers marching on Red Square. **Sergei Nikolayev**

A group of United Russia deputies wants to reinstate Soviet-era military training in high schools to promote patriotism and fondness for the armed forces.

During communist times, the program taught teens how to react to a nuclear or chemical attack, render first aid and field-strip an AK-47 assault rifle.

Duma Deputy Alexei Zhuravlyov is leading the proposal to reinstate the training. He is considered the right-hand man of Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the military-industrial complex.

Zhuravlyov told Izvestia on Monday that the program should be implemented at least in the ninth grade to boost patriotism and better prepare young men for their mandatory year of military service.

Formally known as "initial military training," the program was discontinued by President Boris Yeltsin in 1993. It was replaced by personal safety and first aid classes, often taught by the same teachers.

The military training was often seen as a boring propaganda routine. Many classes were taught by retired servicemen.

In 2008, the Military Prosecutor's Office proposed reinstating the training in schools but could not find common ground with the Education and Science Ministry.

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