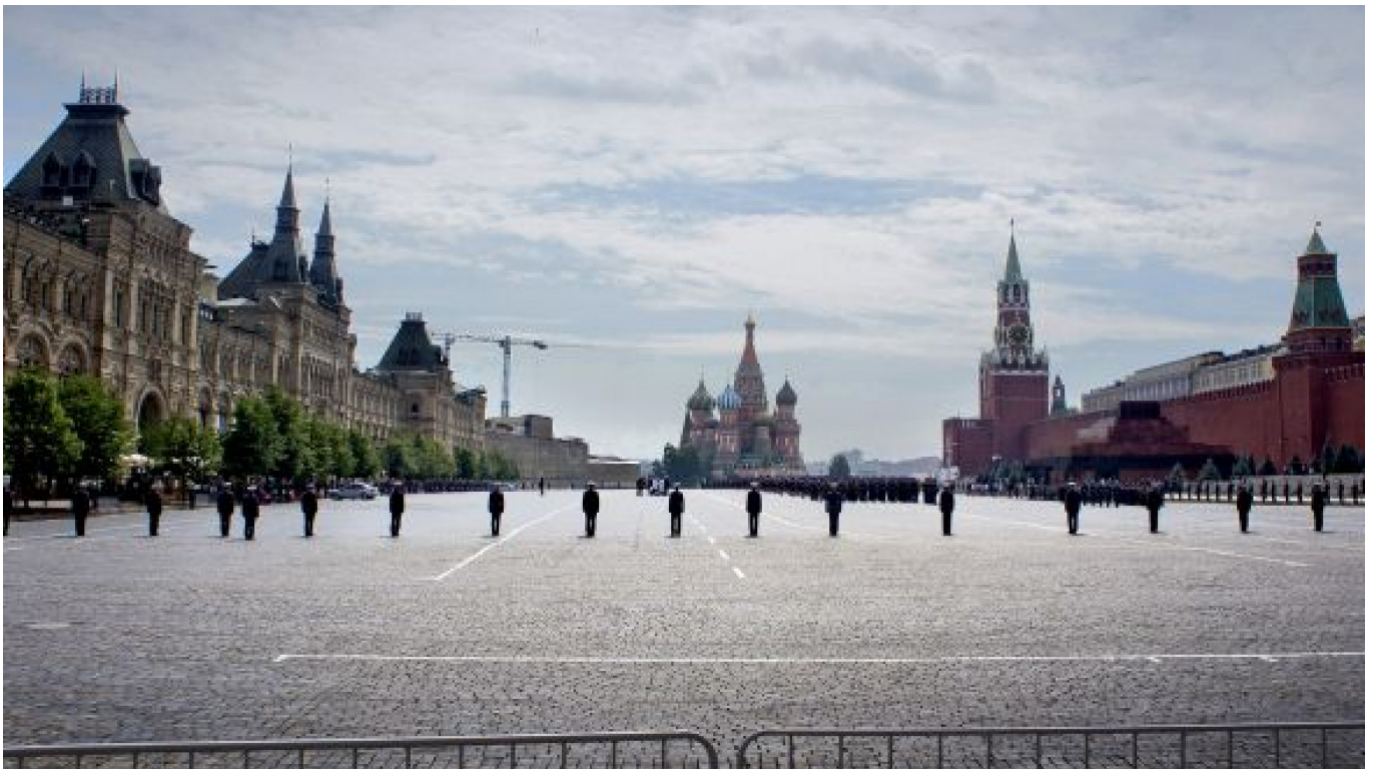


In a First, Graduating Police Cadets March on Red Square

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Police cadets rehearsing on Thursday for their graduation on Red Square. **Vladimir Filonov**

Recently appointed Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev has turned the graduation ceremony of police cadets into a paradelike event on Red Square in an apparent attempt to boost morale.

About 1,500 cadets dressed in new uniforms marched with pomp and circumstance Saturday in a ceremony that resembled a military parade.

“Your duty begins during a time of serious changes,” Kolokoltsev said in his address to the cadets as several thousand of their relatives watched from the stands. “There is a need to raise the prestige of law enforcement officials.”

Kolokoltsev, who worked as a police investigator in the Orlov region before becoming Moscow city police chief and then as a federal minister in May, oversees a force that is undergoing an

overhaul meant to improve its effectiveness and reduce rampant corruption.

He is widely liked by fellow police officers and the public but faces an uphill battle to change the system, analysts said.

Saturday's ceremony of the Moscow Interior Ministry University, which was guarded by Kremlin security staff, marked the first time that a police graduation has been held on Red Square, police officials said. Parade rehearsals in the days before the event were met with curiosity by members of the public, who were blocked from the square.

But much of the populace would prefer to avoid the police, with only one in every five Russians trusting the police, according to a recent survey by The Associated Press and GFK research group.

A senior police officer who attended the ceremony expressed hope that times would change.

"Maybe those guys will be able to change the situation," he said of the graduates.

"The best people left the police force in the 1990s, and there is a lack of professionals."

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