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Military Woos Young Computer Programmers

By The Moscow Times

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The Defense Ministry is starting a wide-ranging "head hunt" for young computer programmers to develop new software for the armed forces, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Thursday.

Young people will be recruited straight after college into "scientific research units" in the Russian Armed Forces to develop "a software product that the army will need within the next five years," Shoigu said at a meeting with college rectors. He did not say what the software would be designed to do.

The new units should help bring about "a new generation of people who will advance military science," Shoigu said.

Shoigu first aired the idea of scientific research units in March, proposing as a first step that undergraduate students be involved in defense R&D projects, which would count toward their

mandatory one-year military service.

In February, President Vladimir Putin personally instructed the Federal Security Service to set up a unified system to detect and counter computer-hacking attacks on Russia's IT resources.

Putin made his appeal just a week after computer security company Kaspersky Lab announced that it had detected highly sophisticated malware, dubbed Red October, that targeted "diplomatic, governmental and scientific research institutions" in Eastern Europe and former Soviet republics.

Russia's armed forces are in the midst of a major program of reform, including a gradual transition to an all-volunteer makeup, organizational changes and equipment upgrades.

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