

# Russian Troop Morale Reaches 17-Year High

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Russian military morale is at a post-Soviet high, according to Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

"The results of sociological studies show that in 2014, the level of troop morale has reached its highest point in the past 17 years," Shoigu was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti.

The military's burgeoning popularity is not limited to its own forces. State-owned pollster VTsIOM found that Russians have generally warmed to the army, whose reputation was previously mired in scandal in the 1990s over allegations of hazing, mismanagement and general incompetence.

A poll conducted in late April — the month following the annexation of Crimea — revealed that 24 percent of Russians view the military in a favorable light, an eight percent boost from February 2013.

Russian patriotic zeal has been reflected in public opinion polls as well in recent months.

President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings have reached an all-time high of over 80 percent, and nearly two-thirds of Russians feel that their nation has regained its superpower status — a 16 percent increase since 2011, the Levada center reported in late-March.

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