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Russian Army to Expand Nuclear Missile Forces

By The Moscow Times

August 19, 2014



Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, or RVSN, the branch of the military that manages Russia's vast nuclear arsenal, will grow by 8,500 troops in line with the Kremlin's massive defense rearmament program, a military spokesman said Tuesday, ITAR-Tass reported.

"In connection with the rearmament of the RVSN with new missile systems, new positions [of troops] will be introduced to the RVSN for the second year in a row. By 2020, the number of troops will be increased by 8,500," RVSN spokesman Dmitry Andreyev said.

The RVSN's staff numbers are expected to reach 18,000 this year, according to earlier media reports.

The missile forces, like the navy and the army, is in the process of being overhauled through a 23 trillion ruble ($650 billion) military modernization and rearmament program through 2020. The RVSN itself will see 98 percent of its equipment — much of which is comprised

of aging Soviet-era ICBMs — replaced with newer models.

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