

Russia Eyes New Army Engineering Corps to Add Brains to Military Brawn

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has ordered ministers to consider the creation of a new military engineering corps, according to a document posted on the government's website Wednesday.

The initiative comes as Russia moves to bring young talent into the country's military amid an ongoing rearmament program worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

According to the document, Medvedev asked the Defense, and Trade and Industry ministers at a cabinet meeting last week to look at creating special scientific, engineering and industrial corps to leverage the skills of highly educated graduates to manage high-tech and sophisticated military hardware — in particular, advanced naval equipment.

The order also said the new industrial units would be responsible for conducting maintenance and repair work on site at industrial enterprises, such as shipyards.

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Modern militaries have historically operated engineering corps, using them to construct defenses or use complicated or dangerous equipment. The Soviet Red Army made effective use of them in World War II, and in the United States the Army Corps of Engineers and specialized naval engineering units are widely used for military-related construction efforts.

The new corps is not the only innovation aimed at injecting expertise into Russian defense. Ministers are also considering changes to the law on military service to allow skilled workers to receive draft deferments for working in defense industrial enterprises, as well as raising defense industry wages for qualified university graduates to above the national average and suppling them with attractive subsidized housing.

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