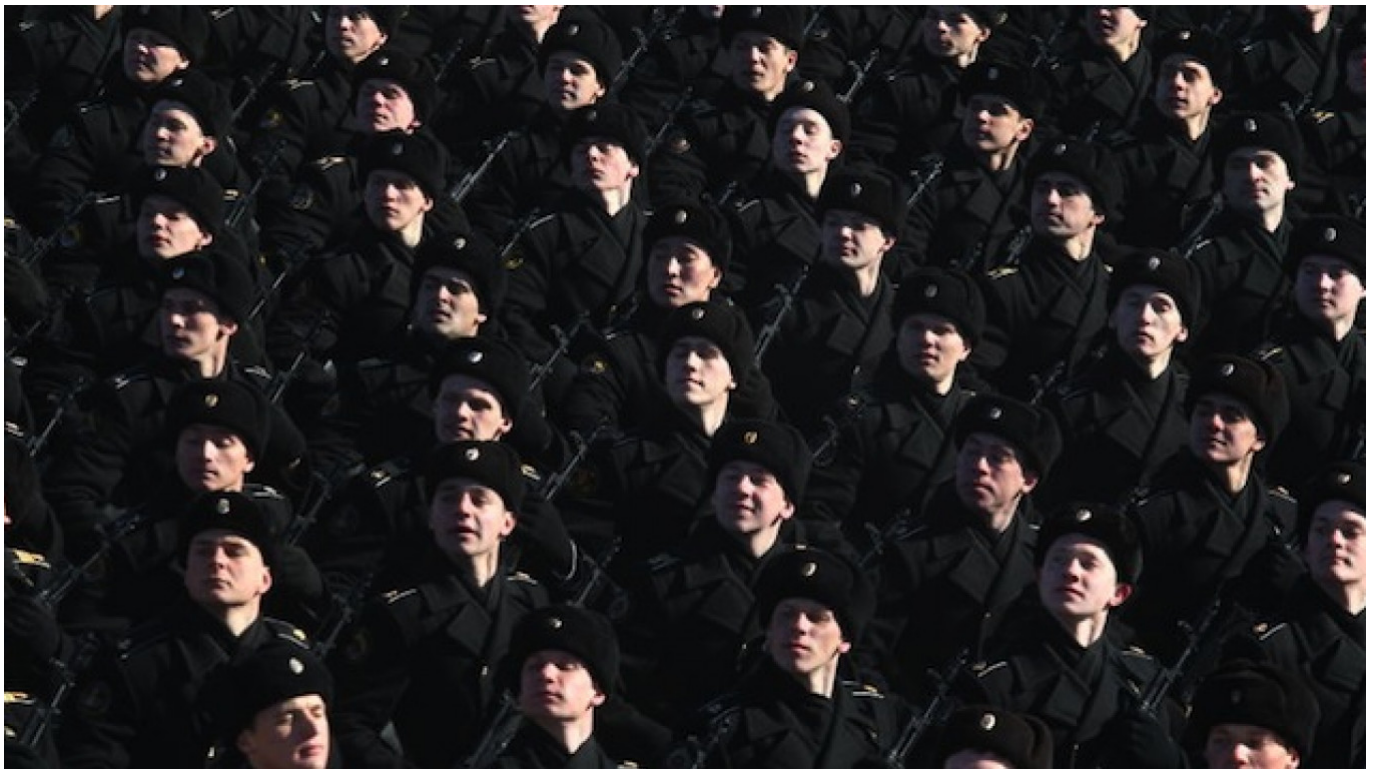


Russia's Military to Replace All Junior Officers With Contract Servicemen

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Defense Ministry will fill all junior officer positions in the Russian military with volunteer servicemen as Moscow continues to modernize and professionalize its military by reducing its dependence on conscripted troops.

“In the future we won't simply [pull] sergeants from the ranks of conscripts, only servicemen on contracts,” Defense Ministry personnel chief Viktor Goremykin was quoted as saying Friday by news agency RIA Novosti reported.

The move marks a major step toward Russia's military modernization. Most militaries today have officer corps staffed by volunteer soldiers on multi-year service contracts, rather than junior officers formed from the ranks of year-long conscripts.

Now, according to Goremykin, Russian soldiers aspiring to become sergeants “will start with an entry-level rank, and then take part in a junior officer training course” after completing basic training — a similar practice to the U.S. military.

Goremykin said that Russia's submarine forces will also be transitioned to volunteer servicemen, and that the surface fleet will follow suit down the line, according to news agency RIA Novosti.

Russia's military is currently staffed by almost 300,000 contract servicemen, and almost 500,000 conscripts.

The Defense Ministry expects to increase the number of volunteers to 352,000 by the end of the year, Goremykin said. By 2020, almost 500,000 Russian soldiers will be contracted, he added, RIA reported.

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