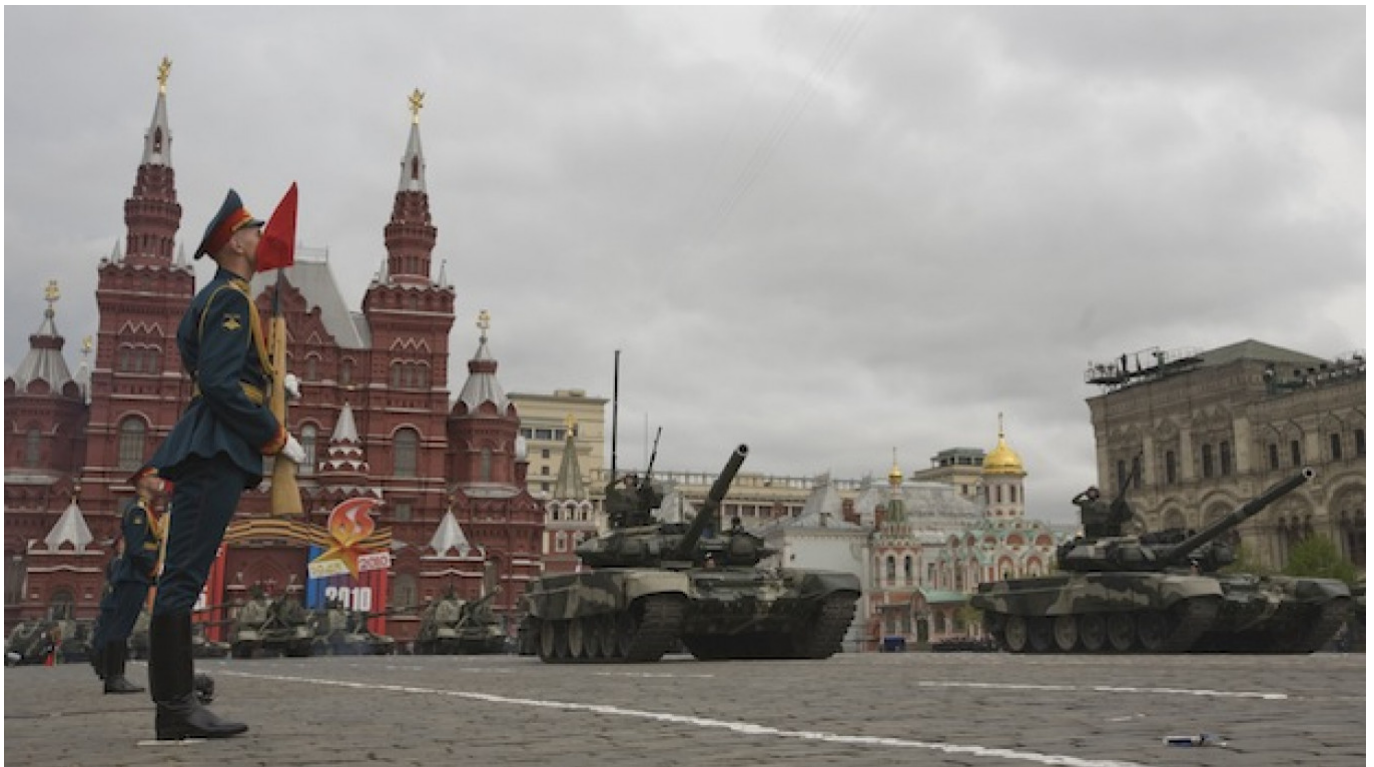


One-Third of Russians Think Russian Military Is World's Best

By [Matthew Bodner](#)

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This year, Russian military spending is expected to hit a post-Soviet high of 3.1 trillion rubles.

Almost one-third of Russians think their nation's military is the most powerful in the world, according to a new poll published by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) on Thursday.

The survey comes two weeks after Russia began air strikes in Syria that have dominated television news coverage — most of which have presented the campaign as a resounding success.

It showed that Russians are more confident about their nation's military power than in the final years of the Soviet Union, when the country was a recognized global superpower.

Thirty-two percent of respondents to the poll published Friday said Russia's military was the strongest in the world, compared to only 5 percent in 1990. Another 49 percent said in

Friday's survey that the Russian armed forces were among the planet's most powerful, compared to 21 percent in 1990.

In 1990, almost half of Russians said the Soviet armed forces either lagged behind the rest of the world or were flat-out weak.

In part, the change in attitudes reflects a massive modernization drive over in recent years. President Vladimir Putin has overseen a 20 trillion ruble (\$326 billion) rearmament program, begun in 2011, that is aimed at reversing nearly two decades of decline in the armed forces.

The program is already yielding results. Russia's air force and navy in Syria has successfully conducted modern combat operations, sometimes using advanced precision weapons. But analysts agree that in most areas the country's military technology significantly lags the U.S., as well as Britain, Germany and France.

This year, Russian military spending is expected to hit a post-Soviet high of 3.1 trillion rubles (\$50.5 billion), or around 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Asked if this was too much to spend on the military, just 35 percent of respondents to Friday's poll said yes, while 52 percent said the government isn't spending enough.

The survey was conducted from Oct. 10-11 and polled 1,800 people across Russia. The margin of error did not exceed 3.5 percent.

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