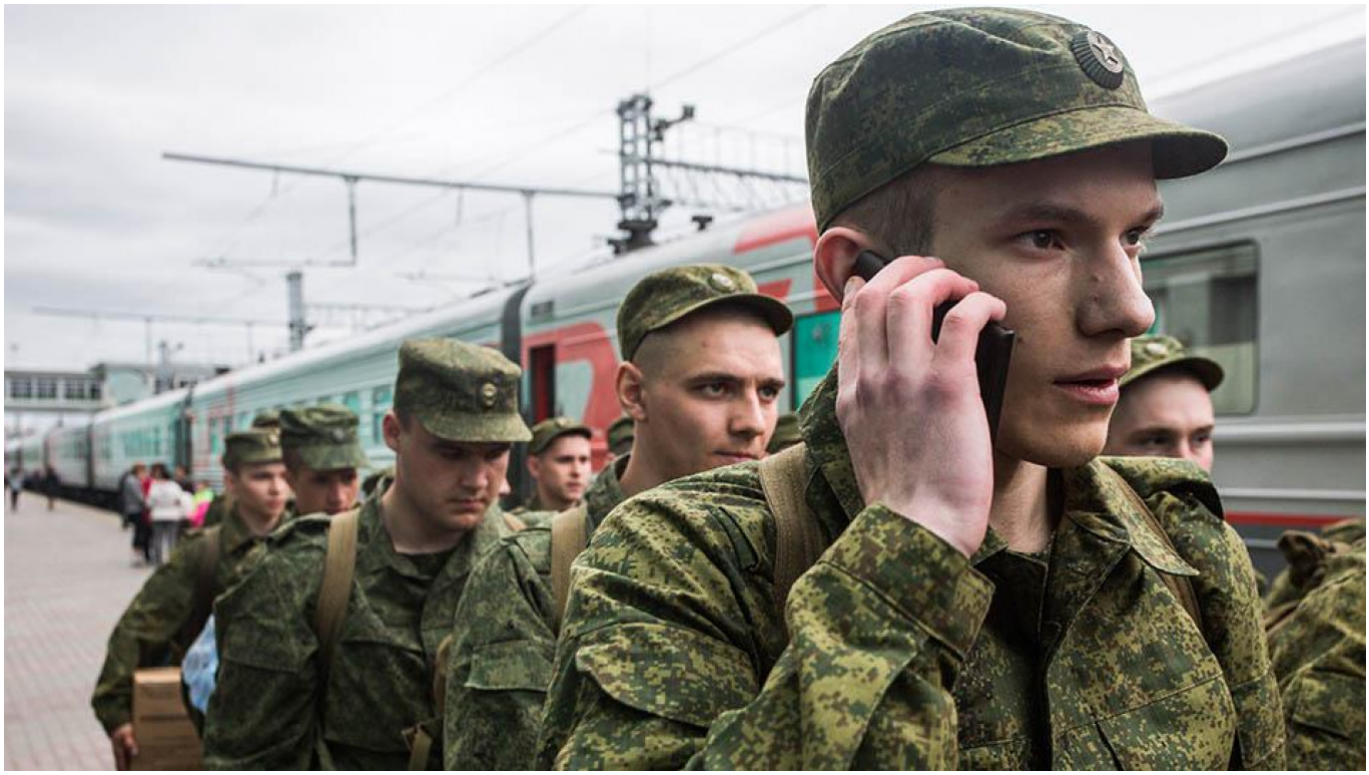
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Military Tests Soldiers' Willingness to Quash Opposition Protests

February 06, 2018



Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS

Russia's Defense Ministry has reportedly polled its soldiers on their political views and willingness to crack down on protesters as the country enters its election campaign season.

Opposition activist Alexei Navalny first reported on the survey, which asked troops about their views of the opposition, on his YouTube channel last week. A scanned file of the poll was shared by a Twitter user who claimed to be a contract soldier but has since deleted his account.

Related article: Russia's National Guard Promises 'Tough Response' to Election Disturbances

The Defense Ministry's political survey was conducted in the North Caucasus regions of Stavropol and Chechnya, the BBC's Russian service reported Tuesday.

The troops were asked if they were willing "to use force against persons calling for a violent change in Russia's constitutional order" according to the 50-point questionnaire obtained by the BBC.

The Russian Defense Ministry also asked the servicemen about whom they planned to vote for in the March 18 presidential elections.

News of the questionnaire emerged as the Defense Ministry announced plans to create an ideological department in the army to monitor domestic political trends and raise soldiers' political unity.

"The role of morale and political unity in the army and society increases exponentially against the backdrop of global informational and psychological confrontations," Interfax cited a defense ministry official as saying Monday.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/02/06/russian-military-tests-soldiers-willingness-quash-opposition-protests-a60404