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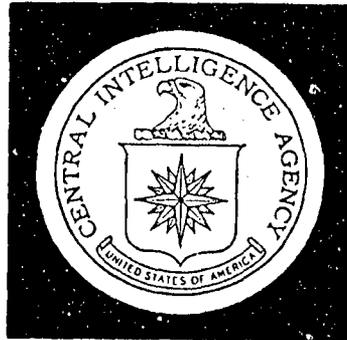
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Intelligence Report

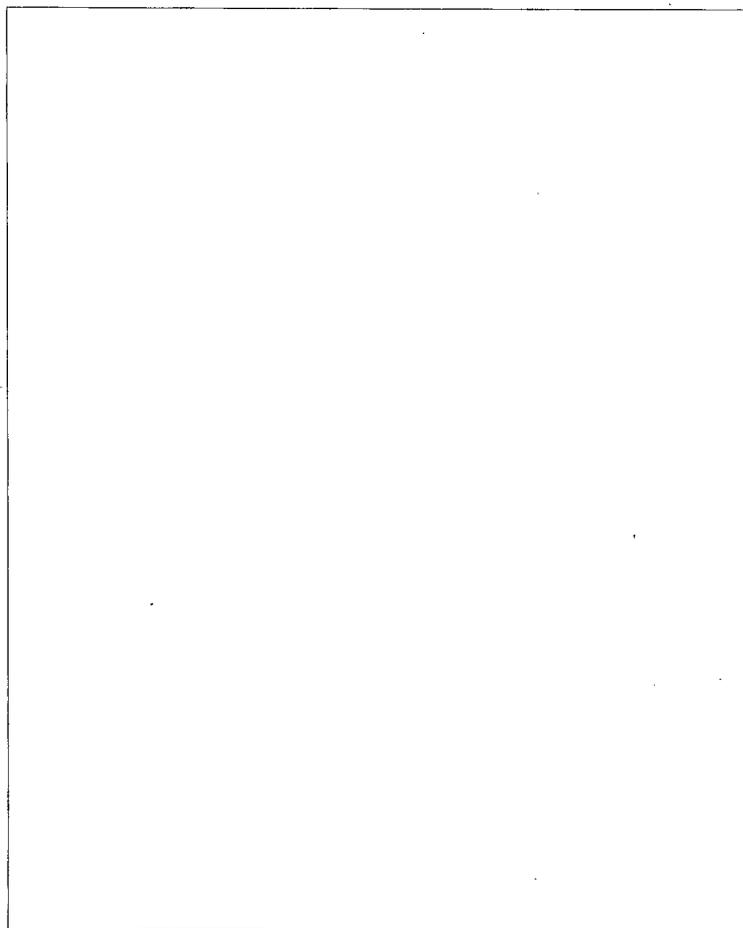
*The 1967 Soviet Regulations on
Compulsory Service in the Armed Forces*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
January 1972

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

The 1967 Soviet Regulations on
Compulsory Service in the Armed Forces

Introduction

The new Soviet military service law adopted in October 1967 introduced major changes in the regulations governing compulsory service. The law superseded a much-amended 1939 statute. Principal among the changes were a reduction in the terms of active service, the institution of compulsory premilitary training, and the establishment of semiannual callups and demobilizations. Public statements by Soviet officials maintained that these changes would have no adverse effect on combat effectiveness. Evidence has since developed that belies these assurances.

This report examines the rationale behind the changes in the regulations governing compulsory service in the USSR, the weaknesses underlying the premilitary training program, the misgivings of the professional military over the effects of the new regulations on training programs and the quality of conscript noncommissioned officers, and the impact of the new regulations on the role of political officers and party organizations in the armed forces.

A summary begins on page 27.

Note: This report was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research and coordinated within CIA.

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Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Rationale Behind the Provisions of the New Law . . .	3
Premilitary Training	7
The Program Evaluated	9
Investigation of DOSAAF	11
Prospects for Improvement	12
The Military's Misgivings	14
Training and Operations	14
Quality of NCOs	16
Impact on Political Officers and Party Organizations	19
Military View of the Political Function . . .	21
Reaction of the Chief Political Directorate. .	22
Military Training of Political Officers . . .	24
Outlook.	25
Summary.	27

Table

Key Changes in Compulsory Service	3
---	---

Photographs

Soviet Youths in Premilitary Training	6
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Rationale Behind the Provisions of the New Law

The new Soviet law adopted in 1967 introduced major changes in the compulsory service system, which had been operating under a much-amended 1939 statute.* The key changes were a reduction in the length of active service, the institution of a lower and uniform draft age, and the establishment of two callups a year (see below).

KEY CHANGES IN COMPULSORY SERVICE

<u>Regulation</u>	<u>From:</u>	<u>To:</u>
CALLUP	<i>18 and 19 year olds called up in November-December (single callup)</i>	<i>18 year olds called up in May-June and November-December (twice yearly callup)</i>
LENGTH OF SERVICE		
Strategic Rocket Forces Ground Forces Air Defense Forces Air Forces Naval air and shore-based units Internal Security Troops Border Guards	<i>Three years</i>	<i>Two years</i>
Naval seagoing and combat support units Seagoing Border Guards	<i>Four years</i>	<i>Three years</i>

The law shortened by one year the active duty tours for enlisted men in all branches of the armed forces.

* The 1967 law affected all aspects of Soviet military service. In addition to revising the compulsory service regulations, which are the subject of this report, the law introduced important changes in the regulations relating to career service. It raised the mandatory retirement ages of junior and middle-grade officers by five to ten years, thereby eliminating the prospect of relatively early retirement at ages 30 to 45. The new law also improved promotion prospects for officers in these grades by setting definite age limits on the length of service of generals and admirals up to and including those of four-star rank.

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To help compensate for the reduction, the law called for a program of compulsory training to provide most youths with basic, and a select few with technical, military skills before induction.

The law also established a lower and uniform draft age at 18, provided for two callups and demobilizations a year, and abolished deferments for students enrolled in part-time departments of higher educational institutions. Previously most youths were inducted at age 19, some at 18, and there was only a single annual call-up and mustering out.

The new law reaffirmed previously established regulations on the length of service for technical specialists with higher educations. These specialists now face a one-year obligation if inducted as enlisted men, and a two- to three-year tour if called up as graduates of reserve officer training programs. Previously these regulations were loosely observed and some of these technical specialists escaped service entirely while others were called up for lengthy, indefinite periods. The law furthermore defined it as the prerogative of the Council of Ministers, and not the Minister of Defense, to set quotas on the number of specialists who could be called up.

The official explanation for revising the compulsory service regulations was the alleged necessity to ensure an equitable distribution of manpower between the civilian economy and the military. To a large extent, however, the changes were disadvantageous to the military and more responsive to the needs of the economy. They appear also to have been dictated in part by socio-political considerations.

With the economy and the military vying for manpower in general, and skilled technicians in particular, the government pretended to make a virtue of necessity by reducing terms of military service. Official commentary on the law maintained that the educational level of the present generation of Soviet youth made it possible to shorten the length of service without adversely affecting combat proficiency.

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In effect, however, the reduction meant there would be less time in which to train conscripts to operate and maintain the increasingly complex hardware being introduced. It also meant that, once conscripts completed training programs, their length of useful service would be shorter.

From the standpoint of the economy, a youth can now enter the labor force with his service behind him at age 20 or 21, instead of 22 or 23, because of the shorter obligations, the lower draft age, and callups every six months. In addition, the Council of Ministers' right to set quotas in callups of technical specialists not only potentially restricts the military's ability to commandeer skilled technicians, but suggests that, if shortages of critical skills arise, occupational deferments could be granted to protect the economy's interests.

One provision that appears to be more in the military's interest is the discontinuation of deferments for youths who work but are enrolled in the evening or correspondence departments of higher educational institutions. Although students in the full-time higher educational institutions continue to receive deferments at least until age 27, the opportunities for entering such an institution are severely restricted. A representative of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences noted in 1970, for example, that only one of every six students completing secondary school can expect to enter a full-time higher educational institution.

The desire to expose youth at an earlier age to the regimentation and discipline of military life was at least partially responsible for two of the changes (semiannual callups and lowering the draft age) in the compulsory service regulations. These changes serve to eliminate the period, as much as a year and a half, that most youths spent between graduation and the draft. In the words of one Soviet commentator, these measures would enable the youths to approach "life with a greater sense of responsibility" and leave them "better conditioned to continue their education and choose their profession."

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**Soviet Youths
in Premilitary Training**



The premilitary training program is intended to provide the sort of skills recruits normally acquire during the first four to six weeks of service. Here, youths are introduced to small arms and communications equipment.



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The switchover to semiannual callups was probably intended to facilitate the flow of manpower into and out of both the economy and the armed forces. The timing of the callups, for example, corresponds to completion of spring sowing and fall harvesting. From the military standpoint, the semiannual callups serve to reduce the size of the induction class to more manageable proportions than a single annual callup, but in the process they give rise to certain other difficulties. The Soviet practice is to send most new recruits directly to operational units for on-the-job training. Two callups a year not only subject the routine of operational units to more frequent disruption but may mean that units now find it more difficult to attain the required levels of readiness.

Premilitary Training

To minimize the impact of the reduced terms of service, the new law called for a nationwide program to prepare youths for military service. The program is not intended to compensate fully for the one-year reduction. Its purpose is to eliminate the need to devote the first four to six weeks of service to basic training. The program is intended to facilitate the mastery of technical specialties and operational skills by having a conscript prepared for more intensive levels of instruction earlier in his career.

Overall direction of the premilitary training program is the responsibility of Army General Pavlovskiy, Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces, under whose auspices most recruits undergo initial training. Assisting him within the Ministry of Defense is the Directorate for Civilian Military Training headed by Lieutenant General Odintsov. The paramilitary society DOSAAF (Voluntary Society for Assisting the Army, Air Force, and Navy) has primary responsibility for organizing and implementing the program at the local level.

The basic portion of the program consists of instruction in such disciplines as physical training, drill, and marksmanship. Indoctrination in military regulations, chemical-biological-radiological weapons

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effects, civil defense measures, and patriotic themes is also included. The instruction is carried out in secondary schools beginning with the ninth grade, in training centers established at factories, and in summer camps set up primarily for youths from rural areas. This portion of the program is required of all predraft males, regardless of their eventual eligibility for service, reflecting the regime's long-standing emphasis on the moral and political merits of involving juveniles in military-related activities. It may also serve to enlarge the manpower mobilization base.

A select number of youths are then chosen to receive additional training in radioelectronics, communications, vehicle operations and maintenance, and aviation. DOSAAF and the technical trade school system share the responsibility for this specialized training.

DOSAAF's responsibility goes beyond providing instruction in its own network of sports clubs and training centers. The society is also charged with providing the instructors, manuals, training aids, and some of the military and other hardware wherever the training is given. The law, however, requires heads of local government and enterprise managers to provide premises for training and storage of equipment. Local military commissariats, which are roughly equivalent to US draft boards, are also required to assist, mainly by recruiting instructors, usually reserve officers, and enlisting support from nearby garrisons including the use of their facilities.

DOSAAF inherited its role in the program because of its long involvement in premilitary training and paramilitary sports activities. The society operates an extensive network of clubs which sponsor training and competition in airplane and glider piloting, motorcycle racing, sky and scuba diving, boating, marksmanship, and ham radio operations. It also conducts vocational training in automobile mechanics, truck and tractor driving, and electronics. The new law in effect gave a compulsory aspect to many of the society's programs.

Despite its extensive involvement in the premilitary training program, the financial support DOSAAF receives

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does not appear to be substantial. According to Army General Getman, until recently the head of DOSAAF, lotteries constitute its principal source of income. Getman has indicated that the five lotteries held thus far have netted the society 160 million rubles and that half of this sum has been spent on operating and training expenses. The other half has financed building programs. On an average yearly basis this amounts to 16 million rubles, or the equivalent of about 30 million dollars*--not an especially large sum in terms of construction buying power. Compared with the funding available for DOSAAF construction and other capital investment programs in the early Sixties, however, it apparently represents a considerable increase. In 1968 Getman claimed that capital investment in DOSAAF for 1967 and 1968 far exceeded that of the previous seven years combined.

The Program Evaluated

Although the Soviet press has provided periodic insights into its progress, the first publicized comprehensive appraisal of the premilitary training program since its inception took place in December 1970. The occasion was the Sixth All-Union Plenum of the DOSAAF Central Committee. The plenum, held in Moscow, was devoted mainly to a review of DOSAAF's role in the program but touched upon the responsibilities of other organizations for supporting it.

With the exception of two locales--the Ukraine SSR and Rostov Oblast--where some facets of the program were judged commendable, the consensus was that premilitary training is far from satisfactory. Among those who spoke were Army General Getman, former head of DOSAAF, Army General Lashchenko, First Deputy Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces, and the heads of DOSAAF in various union republics as well as the city of Moscow. Neither Army General Pavlovskiy nor Lieutenant General Odintsov, who share responsibility for the program at the Ministry of Defense level, was reported in

* Rubles are converted to 1970 dollars on the basis of the ruble-dollar ratio for construction-- 0.53 ruble to US \$1.

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attendance. Their apparent absence may have been a sign of displeasure with DOSAAF's performance.

Lack of Central Direction. A principal reason for the program's halting progress has been a lack of centralized guidance and direction from above and a diffusion of authority at the local level for implementing it. The picture painted by the numerous shortcomings recounted at the plenum was that of a program haphazardly run. One recurrent criticism was of the shortage of competent instructors. Speakers pointed out that the program lacks a systematic process, or even a set of criteria, for recruiting or training instructors. As a consequence, persons hired are often deficient in either teaching experience, military affairs, or both. Also cited was the need for a program whereby instructors can maintain or improve their skills.

Other criticisms reflecting poor supervision concerned the arbitrary duration and content of the courses given. Speakers also complained of shortages of training materials and cited the lack of uniformity in texts, especially on technical subjects. In this regard, an instructor writing in the Soviet military newspaper *Red Star* a month before the December 1970 plenum, complained that a basic textbook for the program which was to have been published in 1969 had yet to appear.

Although the blame for these shortcomings rests ultimately with generals Pavlovskiy and Odintsov, only DOSAAF was held specifically accountable. Speakers complaining of DOSAAF's generally apathetic approach charged that the society's central committee has been content to turn out useless posters while ignoring the shortage of training manuals. Others cited the central committee for its failure to hold a single meeting for republic and oblast officials responsible for recruiting instructors.

Lack of Support. Another major obstacle confronting the program since its inception has been the widespread failure of local government and industry officials to provide the resources to establish training centers. According to the new service law, these officials are responsible for providing premises and equipment for

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training centers, primarily where DOSAAF facilities are inadequate or nonexistent. Their failure to respond satisfactorily to this requirement has resulted in shortages of equipment, classroom space, small-arms ranges, and drill, physical training, and storage facilities. Criticisms cited in this regard at the plenum echoed others appearing in the press which charged that training centers at some enterprises "exist only on paper," that the equipment provided is obsolete, and that some government and industry officials have interpreted their responsibilities to be limited solely to issuing memoranda.

Heads of enterprises and institutions were also accused of being remiss in ensuring the attendance of youths under their charge. Farm youths were cited as a particular problem because of transportation difficulties and the impracticality of releasing them for training during the spring sowing or fall harvest.

Investigation of DOSAAF

Another reason for the premilitary training program's lack of success within the last three years has been the organizational disarray within DOSAAF itself. In addition to its central committee, which has direct ties to the Ministry of Defense, the society maintains administrative committees and staffs at political subdivisions and at major enterprises and institutions to oversee local clubs and training centers. The findings of a recent investigation of the entire DOSAAF administrative apparatus suggest that the society does a poor job of managing and coordinating the program. They also indicate strongly that some funds earmarked for the program have been misappropriated.

The investigation was conducted in the latter half of 1970 by the Committee of People's Control of the USSR, a high-level governmental commission whose main function is to guard against misuse of public funds. The investigation was prompted by DOSAAF's failure to respond satisfactorily to a joint party-government directive issued a year earlier instructing the society to improve its management and fiscal practices.

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From an administrative or managerial standpoint, the commission noted that DOSAAF does not have a standardized table of organization. No clear-cut lines of authority exist between senior and subordinate staffs and committees. Nor are responsibilities clearly defined. As a consequence, the commission found that the society has a surfeit of administrative staffs, many in the same jurisdictions and with superfluous or overlapping functions. Moreover, the commission found it a practice common among senior officials to amass as many subordinates as possible to justify higher salaries for themselves.

Fiscally, the commission disclosed that DOSAAF employs no uniform accounting procedures. Moreover, the society's staffs as well as its clubs and training centers, even when housed in the same facility, tend to maintain separate accountants and support facilities. These practices, the commission reported, make it practically impossible to audit the society's finances. They facilitate bookkeeping legerdemain which, in turn, has enabled officials to embezzle or otherwise misappropriate funds. The commission charged that collusion among DOSAAF functionaries to file fraudulent vouchers and to create phoney job titles was widespread. It noted that expenditures frequently exceed approved estimates and that these overexpenditures are often concealed by manipulating accounts. Finally, it cited excessive expenditures for travel and a tendency, primarily on the part of aviation clubs, to hoard equipment and let it stand idle.

Prospects for Improvement

The DOSAAF plenum concluded by adopting a resolution to eliminate some of the identified weaknesses. The resolution proposed the construction of a model training center in each major city during 1971 which would set the standard for others to be built later. The resolution also called for a plan that would ensure an adequate supply of competent instructors for premilitary training.

The resolution holds little promise for improvement in the availability of adequately equipped training

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centers. Like an earlier, apparently futile, directive aimed at expanding DOSAAF facilities, the resolution failed to specify sanctions that would be taken against officials who are either slow, or fail entirely, to comply. A more meaningful resolution, for example, would have spelled out threats of loss of job, fines, or even criminal prosecution. By contrast the worst penalty an official now faces for not supporting the program, as the new service law requires, is to be censured by name in a DOSAAF publication. The pre-military training program, therefore, will probably continue to founder as long as the establishment of training centers depends largely on the initiative of local officials.

Since the plenum, some steps of questionable efficacy have been taken to alleviate the shortage of qualified instructors. In an April 1971 article in *Red Star*, General Odintsov discussed two measures that had been taken to attract competent instructors. He cited a regulation passed recently that would make the post more attractive financially and enhance its status. The regulation enables reserve or retired officers to accept salaried teaching posts without any loss of retirement pay. Odintsov also encouraged instructors who are reserve or retired officers to wear their uniforms and cited allowances that would make it easy for them to purchase new ones. The effectiveness of these measures remains to be seen.

Little has been done to ensure youths' participation in the program--a problem cited at the plenum. More resolute action in this regard will probably be deferred until more training centers become available. One measure that could improve attendance would be the widespread use of a practice adopted at one industrial enterprise and cited in the press. According to an instructor at the factory's training center, the head of the enterprise withholds the bonuses of youths who fail to attend or show a poor attitude. This, however, appears to be an isolated case. There are no indications that the considerable leverage Soviet enterprise directors have over their employees is about to be extended to enforce attendance.

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The Military's Misgivings

Training and Operations

Articles in the Soviet military press relating to training often cite the difficulty of having to master sophisticated military equipment "in less time." They also invariably caution against the pitfalls of condensing technical training programs to fit the new, shorter terms of service. One such account, for example, was published in *Red Star* in January 1971 under the title, "In Less Time? Be Realistic!" The article discussed the training of missile troops, probably for air defense, and noted that the new time constraints had led some instructors to assume too much on the part of their students and to omit important aspects of training. In a similar article in May 1969, the Chief of the Air Defense Radiotechnical Troops (RTV) at the time, Major General Gichko, complained that the compression of training programs in some units was accomplished by dropping important technical subjects. He observed that as a consequence some RTV personnel, whose main responsibility is manning radar sites, were ill-prepared to operate in other than "uncomplicated aerial situations."

Marshal Krylov, Commander in Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF), has attested to the disruptive influence of the new service regulations on the routine of operational units. In a *Red Star* article in February 1970, Krylov characterized the twice yearly callups and demobilizations of troops under his command as "a very tense period for every subunit," since they involved replacing seasoned specialists with inexperienced recruits. Krylov further asserted that the level of readiness of SRF units on combat watch cannot be lowered "even for a single day," but implied that it does happen since "a certain amount of time is nevertheless needed to bring young replacements into operation."

In an effort to accelerate the operational effectiveness of new recruits, the Soviet military is encouraging the wider use of aptitude and psychological testing during the induction process. Although the merits of such screening have long been acclaimed, commentaries

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in the military press stress its added importance under the new service regulations. In his article of May 1969 General Gichko observed that an improperly screened individual assigned to master a particular specialty can impede the training progress of a whole unit. The shorter terms of service and duration of training programs, he maintained, allow less time for slow learners.

The practice of screening recruits for optimum training and assignment, although now probably more widespread, apparently is still far from satisfactory. The failure to screen recruits properly received attention in a *Red Star* editorial before the 1971 May-June call-up. The editorial called upon draft boards to avoid a repetition of the mistakes made during the previous callup. On that occasion it noted that youths were inducted who should have been deferred for health or family reasons; some were granted deferments without sufficient cause; and others were assigned to units without any regard for their background.

Another way the military has sought to offset the effects of the new regulations has been to stress more effective, scientific training methods. General Gichko, for example, pointed out that some RTV units were adopting the "critical path" approach, a technique for optimizing the sequence, duration, and content of courses in a training program to shorten it.

The military has also stressed narrower specialization as a way to compensate for the disruptive effects of the new regulations. The former Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Zakharov, and the Commander in Chief of the Navy, Admiral Gorshkov, have indicated this practice would be adopted primarily in the Navy. Zakharov, for example, in a commentary on the new service law in early 1968 said that naval trainees would henceforth concentrate on mastering fewer pieces of technical equipment. This approach should expedite specialist training, but it may present special problems aboard ships at sea or submarines in remote areas where a specialist could not easily be replaced if he were disabled.

Where crew-served weapons are concerned, however, specialization apparently will not be stressed at the

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expense of versatility. A recent editorial on missile crew teamwork in *Red Star*, for example, praised those units where not only each crew member is a skillful specialist, "but where complete interchangeability has been attained."

Training in the Ground Forces will also probably continue to emphasize versatility. General Pavlovskiy, Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces, in a January 1971 article on training, cited the importance of assuring "that soldiers and sergeants learn how to use not only their own weapons, but also the weapons assigned to a platoon, company, or battery, and that they possess two to three related specialties." This, however, would appear to be more desirable than feasible for recruits serving a single tour under the new, shorter terms of service.

Quality of NCOs

The new regulations have apparently necessitated a relaxation in the standards for promoting conscripts, leading to more rapid advancement through NCO ranks. A naval officer writing in *Red Star* in January 1971, for example, blamed the new regulations for making it more difficult to develop good petty officers and remarked that it was now easier to make mistakes in selecting candidates for promotion to NCO.

One commonly aired complaint about the new terms of service is lack of leadership ability among NCOs. In an August 1970 article in *Red Star*, the First Deputy Commander in Chief of the SRF, Colonel General Grigoryev, referred to a study of naval NCOs which confirmed his observations regarding SRF NCOs. The study, he said, showed that "a certain number...still does not live up to the role of the 'ideal commander' because of the deficiency of primarily such qualities as the ability to exact high standards and lead men." Grigoryev concluded that "not every disciplined and competent fighting man can in the short time allotted 'learn to become a commander'." In other words, the reduced terms of service preclude developing good NCOs, even of some personnel who otherwise would appear to have desirable qualifications.

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Apparently the time-in-grade requirement for promotion from one NCO rank to the next is at least nominally the same as under the old terms of service, but exceptions are now more frequent. The following tabulation, based on information from a defector who served in the Soviet armed forces from June 1966 to December 1968, shows the typical time-in-grade when conscripts served three-year terms.

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Time In Grade</u>
Private to Private First Class	3 months
Private First Class to Junior Sergeant	6 months
Junior Sergeant to Sergeant	6 months
Sergeant to Senior Sergeant	6 months
Senior Sergeant to Master Sergeant	6 months
<hr/>	
Total time:	27 months

A conscript serving a three-year obligation and possessing the necessary qualifications could advance to the rank of master sergeant nine months before the end of his tour. Two other defectors, both enlisted men, one of whom served as recently as November 1970, have indicated that although the six-month requirement is still on the books, it is seldom observed. They noted that it is even possible for a conscript to attain the rank of master sergeant after only one year of service.

The military has also regarded reenlistments as a way to maintain desirable levels of technical expertise and professional competence. Shortly after passage of the new service law, Marshal Zakharov cited the added importance of retaining experienced personnel. He also

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announced the adoption of a "whole new series of measures...to enhance the role and improve the material and legal position" of reenlistees.

Although he offered no details at the time, Zakharov probably was looking ahead to a decree subsequently passed by the Supreme Soviet which promises to make military service more attractive for careerists below the officer level. The decree, issued in November 1971, calls for the replacement of the extended service system with a more prestigious one, beginning in January 1972. Formerly, conscripts who had completed their compulsory duty could apply for extensions of two, four, or six years, usually as senior NCOs. Information available thus far on the new system indicates that it will be more selective and involve lengthier contracts. Its appeal, however, will be in the officer-like status it confers and the opportunity it offers for an eventual officer's commission.

Depending on their branch or arm of service, those who are extended will be awarded the re-created Tsarist junior officer ranks of ensign or warrant officer. The rank of ensign, for example, will apply to personnel in the army, naval air and shore-based units, border guards, and internal security forces. Nonofficer careerists in naval seagoing and combat support units as well as in seagoing border guard contingents will serve as warrant officers. Men with these ranks will wear officer-like shoulder boards, enjoy the same vacation privileges as officers, and be eligible for a lieutenant's commission after five to ten years of service. Applications for extended service will require the approval of a higher authority than at present.

The new system is clearly intended to improve the lot of the regular cadres who run the Soviet military machine and provide its stability and continuity as conscripts come and go. The personnel who stand to benefit are those who serve as instructors or deputy platoon commanders, and supervise technical specialists.

The new system should serve to make career incentives more competitive with gradually improving living and pay standards in the civilian economy. It is not clear

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whether reenlistment rates have declined in recent years, prompting establishment of the new system. A more important consideration could have been the quality of personnel who tend to extend. In the experience of one of the defectors cited earlier, most extended-service personnel were of rural background and preferred military to farm life. Most conscripts, on the other hand, had at least ten years of schooling and wanted simply to discharge their obligation and to return to civilian life. As a consequence, the defector reported, a cultural gap existed between the better educated inductees and the extended-service personnel. The latter were regarded as ignorant, familiar with nothing but military life.

If quotas exist restricting the percentage of reenlisted personnel in the armed forces, a significant increase in the numbers of those seeking careers under the new system would permit the military eventually to weed out less competent personnel. Such quotas could have been established in order to strike a balance between the military's desire to promote its own professional interests and the economy's demand for skilled technicians. A ceiling on reenlistments may also be in force to permit the induction of as many youths as possible without greatly expanding the size of the armed forces. Disciplinary considerations as well as a desire to maintain a broadly based mobilization potential could have motivated this.

If, on the other hand, reenlistment rates are not bound by quotas, a significant increase in the number of career aspirants could present a favorable situation for alleviating some of the problems produced by the new compulsory service regulations. The military would then be able, for example, to reduce the ratio of conscripts to careerists in those units or operations where technical skills are demanded.

Impact on Political Officers and Party Organizations

Faced with the disruptive and constraining effects of the new regulations on the training process, commanders have become less tolerant of political activities in their units. Their view has long been that these activities are time consuming and contribute little to military

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professionalism and technical expertise. With shorter terms of service now in effect, commanders have come all the more to expect political officers and other party workers to direct their efforts to resolution of practical military tasks.

The tendency to regard political activities as irrelevant has been, and apparently still is, prevalent mainly among officers with technical backgrounds. A politically oriented editorial in the February 1971 issue of an air defense journal, for example, took to task officers in general, but technical officers in particular; for their negligent attitude toward political activities. The editorial called upon "each officer in the Soviet Army" to remember that, "in addition to being a specialist in his selected field, he is also a political leader of soldiers." It pointedly added, however, that

...unfortunately, life has clearly shown that not all officers, particularly engineer-technicians, have mastered the required skills for party life and political work.

This admission is especially significant in light of the numbers of officers who are engineer-technicians. According to figures frequently cited in the press, engineers and technicians comprise up to 45 percent of the Soviet officer corps and about 80 percent of the officers in the SRF.

The critical attitude of professional officers toward political organizations in the armed forces is symptomatic also of a resentment of the party's pervasive role in military affairs. At issue here is not the military's fealty to the political leadership, but its desire for greater institutional and professional autonomy. This desire conflicts with the party's insistence on controlling all aspects of military life.

The political officer personifies the elaborate system through which the party exercises control over the military establishment. He serves as either a deputy to a commander for political affairs or is attached to one of the numerous party organizations that

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exist throughout the armed forces. The channels through which he reports are outside the normal military chain of command. Moreover, his nominally subordinate status is overshadowed by the precedents of World War II and earlier when political officers exercised equal and, at times superior, authority. The presence of a political officer at every level of the command structure is felt, therefore, to be a potential, if not actual, abridgement of a commander's authority and independence.

Not all of the functions political officers and party organizations perform are without merit from the military's standpoint. In addition to their watchdog and indoctrination responsibilities, political officers and party workers are responsible for promoting respect for authority, upholding discipline, bolstering morale, and instilling in the troops an enthusiasm for training and a readiness to endure hardships. In a practical sense these latter responsibilities serve to foster compliance with military regulations, unquestioning obedience to a commander's orders, and a psychological predisposition to accept suffering--a quality that could make the troops more tenacious in wartime.

Military View of the Political Function

It is toward the more positive activities that the professional military would have political officers direct their efforts, especially under the new, shorter terms of service. In fact, if left to the professional military's discretion, the political officer's function would be limited mainly to enforcing the authority of commanders and promoting discipline and technical expertise among the troops.

Typical of how the professional military would define the political officer's role is the view expressed by Army General Pavlovskiy. In an article on combat training in the first issue in 1971 of the semimonthly journal of the Chief Political Directorate, *Communist of the Armed Forces*, Pavlovskiy leaves little doubt that in his estimation the worth of a political officer lies mainly in his contribution to the combat effectiveness of the troops. He commends, for example, those activities political officers sponsor that serve to instill in the

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troops a positive attitude toward training, discipline, and the mastery of combat equipment.

At the same time Pavlovskiy shows little tolerance for those activities political officers sponsor but which commanders consider useless, even counterproductive. He is especially critical of the "socialist competitions" political officers organize and of the responsibility they have for reporting on political attitudes. "Socialist competitions" are designed to whip up enthusiasm and encourage units to pledge to excel in training. Despite their worthwhile intent, they often amount, as Pavlovskiy indicates, to little more than ritualistic exercises.

After the pledges have been accepted and so many speeches delivered, there is a general period of calm with many of the pledges eventually being forgotten.

Finally, Pavlovskiy barely manages to disguise his contempt for the watchdog function of political officers and their tendency to be hypercritical in this respect. Pavlovskiy urges political officers to recognize that "every individual has good traits" and that "it is wrong to fly into a fit of temper over the conduct of a soldier or to note only that which is bad in his words and actions."

Reaction of the Chief Political Directorate

The response of the Chief Political Directorate of the Army and Navy to suggestions that political officers and party workers provide more practical assistance to commanders has been twofold. Predictably, this organization, which oversees party-political work in the armed forces, has responded by defending the importance of, and opposing any infringement on, the political responsibilities of its representatives. At the same time, however, it has shown itself amenable to having its representatives engage more in activities that serve to promote technical military expertise.

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This latter reaction does not necessarily reflect a sympathy for, and a willingness to alleviate, the problems besetting commanders because of the reduced terms of service. It more likely represents a self-serving attempt to have political officers and party organizations become more effective instruments of party control by having them ply their trade in a wider variety of contexts. It is possible also that disruptions have occurred in their own routines under the new service regulations. Less time, for example, may now be allotted for formal political training on a day-to-day basis. Authorities within the Chief Political Directorate probably also regard the conduct of political work in circumstances more closely related to practical military tasks as an opportunity to appease commanders.

Whatever the motivation, the Chief Political Directorate has been encouraging political officers and party workers to broaden their support of the entire training process and to become more actively involved in the daily affairs of their units. Directorate officials attribute the need for this to the reduction in terms of service. An editorial addressed to political officers and party organizations in a July 1970 issue of *Communist of the Armed Forces*, for example, issued specific instructions on what is expected of them under the prevailing, shorter terms of service. It directed them to "show special concern for the intensive use" of the time allotted for training in order to assure high standards "in every category of combat training." Lest they construe their obligation to be limited to moral support, the editorial specifies that political workers "can and should conduct more substantive military technical propaganda...."

Apparently less of a recruit's time is spent exclusively in political studies under the new service regulations. There have been numerous references to the closer relationship that combat and political training have assumed as a result of the shorter terms of service. This line suggests that political officers and party organizations are now having to pursue their indoctrinational activities as the troops go about their day-to-day business. An article in the second issue

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of *Communist of the Armed Forces* for 1971 observes that the reduced terms of service have not only made technical training more difficult but have also dictated the "need for organically combining" combat and political training. The article went on to explain that the shorter terms of service have fostered the closest type of interrelationship between combat and political training, party-political work, and the daily work of the soldiers.

In the eyes of some political workers the changes affecting the manner in which they are to go about their work are not only of questionable merit but the source of some confusion. A *Red Star* article published in May 1970 and based on interviews with political officers showed the officers divided on the question of whether formal training sessions or the closer day-to-day contact constituted the more effective way for them to exert an influence on the troops. The interviews also indicated that some political officers felt exploited because of the unpopular or irrelevant assignments commanders now expected them to carry out. One young lieutenant complained that the various combat training and duty assignments he received were not in keeping with his concept of what a political officer's profession entailed. The week-to-week demands upon him to serve as unit duty officer, gunnery instructor, and participant in staff exercises, he said, presented unfavorable conditions for performing political work.

Military Training of Political Officers

The Chief Political Directorate undertook several years ago to provide political officers with more respectable and specialized military credentials. In 1967 it established seven new schools, each designed to prepare political officers for a particular branch or arm of service. Previously there were only two schools that trained political officers for the entire armed forces.

In addition to political studies, the new schools offer four-year programs that include instruction in higher mathematics, radioelectronics, communications, and technical mechanics, as well as in the use of weapons and other pieces of combat equipment. Graduates are

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commissioned as lieutenants and receive university-level diplomas.

The primary consideration in establishing these schools almost certainly was to produce more effective political officers, able to command more authority and respect in their relations with enlisted men as well as with their professional officer counterparts. Although the new service law was adopted the same year, it does not seem likely that the Chief Political Directorate established the schools with a view toward the problems that would arise because of the law. The directorate has since probably come to realize, however, that without these schools its functionaries would become increasingly irrelevant encumbrances within a military establishment faced with the challenge of training new recruits to master complex technology under the constraints imposed by the 1967 service regulations.

Outlook

The Soviet military leadership probably harbors no illusion that premilitary training or the efforts of political workers in the armed forces will ever compensate for the detrimental effects of the new service regulations. If anything, the difficulty of training conscripts under the shorter terms of service is likely to become even more acute as the armed forces acquire increasingly complex equipment. Efforts to facilitate the training process by introducing innovative techniques, such as programmed learning, will undoubtedly continue, but with uncertain success.

The best prospect for alleviating the problem over the near term is the effort just begun to stimulate reenlistments of experienced personnel below the officer level by offering new career incentives. If the program attracts sufficient numbers of capable people, the armed forces would be able to increase the ratio of careerists to conscripts in operational units and do a more effective job of training short-term conscripts. If it fails to live up to expectations, however, the military probably will press for another revision of the compulsory service regulations to extend the terms of conscripts assigned to particular technical specialties.

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Despite its shortcomings, conscription will continue to be the principal source of military manpower, enabling the USSR to maintain substantial forces while at the same time building a large contingent of trained reserves. Political considerations will also assure its longevity. Conscription provides an important means for promoting patriotism, discipline, and conformity, and it serves to prevent the military establishment from becoming a closed society.

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Summary

The 1967 Soviet military service law introduced major changes in the regulations governing the service of conscripted personnel. The principal changes were a one-year reduction in the length of active service and the scheduling of semiannual instead of the previous once-yearly callups and demobilizations.

The changes, which appear to have been motivated by economic and sociological considerations, have disrupted and complicated the training of single-term conscripts as technical specialists or competent noncommissioned officers. There is no reliable way of measuring the combined effect of the new regulations on the overall combat effectiveness of the Soviet armed forces. The evidence that is available, however, primarily from the Soviet military press, strongly suggests that they have impaired the proficiency of technical operations in which conscript personnel are heavily involved.

Compulsory premilitary training, also provided for in the law, has not satisfactorily compensated for the reduction in terms of service. Nor are prospects favorable for an early or significant improvement in the efficacy of premilitary training. A comprehensive assessment of the premilitary program in December 1970 at a plenum of the paramilitary society DOSAAF portrayed it as haphazardly run and failing to receive the support and resources necessary to implement it. Furthermore, a recent governmental investigation of DOSAAF, which has a major role in implementing the program, found the society in a distressingly chaotic state from a fiscal and managerial standpoint. Both the assessment of the premilitary training program and the investigation of DOSAAF identified numerous problem areas but fell short of endorsing any effective remedial action.

One upshot of the change in service regulations has been to exacerbate the already sensitive relationship that exists between professional officers and the party's official political representatives in the armed forces. Because of constraints imposed by the new regulations on training programs, commanders have become even less

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tolerant of the various time-consuming activities that political officers and party organizations within the armed forces sponsor. In their view these activities contribute little to technical expertise or military professionalism. The professional military has also seized upon the disruptive and complicating effects of the new service regulations to air its resentment over the more basic issue of the party's role in military affairs. Lines of debate on this issue can generally be drawn between those who advocate that military commanders have complete authority over political, as well as military, affairs and personnel in their units, and those who uphold the party's right to dominate or interfere in all aspects of military life.

Since the new regulations have gone into effect, political officers and party organizations have been encouraged by their parent organization, the Chief Political Directorate of the Army and Navy, to do more in support of activities that serve to promote general as well as technical military proficiency. The motivation for this, however, is to have directorate functionaries become more effective instruments of party control through a closer, more active involvement with the troops rather than to have them help alleviate the problems stemming from the new service regulations.

The Soviet military leadership probably has no serious expectations that the support of political organizations or premilitary training will ever adequately offset the effects of the new service regulations. If anything, the problem of training conscripts under the shorter terms of service is likely to become even more acute as increasingly complex hardware is introduced into the armed forces.

Recently established incentives to encourage reenlistments of experienced personnel offer the greatest promise for a solution in the near term. A significant increase in the number of capable people seeking to extend would permit the armed forces to increase the ratio of careerists to conscripts in those units or operations where technical skills are required. If the response elicited by the incentives is not satisfactory, the military will probably seek a revision to the compulsory service regulations to extend the obligations of conscripts assigned to particular technical specialties.

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