

Dynamics of Russian Civil-Military Relations During the War with Ukraine

Legal Reforms, Elite Dynamics, and Societal Perceptions

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Abstract

This report examines the evolution of Russian civil-military relations between 2022 and 2025, focusing on how civilian authorities, society, and the military interact and influence each other during wartime. It analyzes legal and regulatory changes affecting civil-military relations, particularly the Kremlin's response to the Russian military's operational and structural deficiencies. The report also explores elite-level developments by analyzing coalition-building among key stakeholders in the Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, it incorporates public opinion data to assess societal perceptions of the war and the armed forces, highlighting how these are shaped by battlefield developments and state propaganda. The final section outlines how Russian civil-military relations may develop in the future.

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Executive Summary

This report continues CNA's study on Russian wartime civil-military relations.¹ It complements the previous work by suggesting an alternative analytical approach that traces how legal, institutional, elite, and societal changes have influenced Russian civil-military relations. The report conceptualizes civil-military relations as a dynamic process of interaction among the military, the presidency, and civilian actors, one in which the outcomes of these interactions reshape the distribution of power within the Russian political system.

The report demonstrates how the Kremlin has managed to keep Russian civil-military relations under control. These efforts enabled Russian President Vladimir Putin to navigate two major crises: (1) early battlefield setbacks and the subsequent partial mobilization and (2) the armed rebellion led by PMC Wagner.² The presidential coalition preventatively adopted large-scale legal and censorship measures intended to demobilize the civilian opposition to the invasion. At the same time, the Kremlin expanded welfare benefits for warfighters and military-industrial complex staff to ensure that they follow wartime policies. However, the welfare expansion met resistance in the Duma when civilian actors tried to take over this agenda from the Kremlin. Following the PMC Wagner rebellion, the Kremlin removed dozens of high-level MOD officials to fight corruption and improve military effectiveness. In addition, a small, patriotic segment of civil society mobilized to donate equipment and raise funding for forces deployed in Ukraine, both of which significantly helped the military. As of April 2025, Russia's civil-military system appears stable and

resilient. However, a major contraction in available financial resources could disrupt this balance by limiting the state's capacity to meet the military's demands and appease the social and elite groups, whose loyalty is contingent on material benefits and the belief in a victorious war outcome.

The Russian case serves as a cautionary example for states engaging in high-stakes conflicts, demonstrating the importance of a comprehensive, system-wide approach to ensuring military subordination, elite cohesion, and civilian support for the war. As European states reassess defense planning with reduced or potentially absent US military support and discuss potential military deployment in Ukraine, understanding national civil-military relations becomes increasingly relevant for both scholars and policy-makers. Understanding civil-military relations helps ensure that forces in the field have stable political and economic support at home.

¹ Julian Waller and Cornell Overfield, *Wartime Russian Civil-Military Relations*, CNA, DRM-2024-U-038041-1Rev, 2025, <https://www.cna.org/reports/2025/02/wartime-russian-civil-military-relations>.

² PMC stands for private military company/contractor.

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Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine war has become a significant test for Russian civil-military relations. This paper continues CNA's analysis of contemporary Russian civil-military relations by examining how the war has driven significant transformations across the legal, institutional, political, and social domains. It conceptualizes civil-military relations as continuously evolving interactions between the military, the presidency, and civilian actors that reshape the distribution of power within the Russian political system. The report traces key developments at the legal, institutional, elite, and societal levels and assesses their cumulative effects on the shifting balance of power among these actors.

Civil-military relations play a leading role in Russia's capacity to create a powerful military force and use this force effectively.³ This study argues that both external pressures and internal dynamics have shaped the distribution of power within Russian civil-military relations. First, the Russian constitutional framework facilitated the emergence of highly centralized presidential control over the armed forces and security agencies. Second, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, particularly its protracted attritional phase since mid-2022, reoriented Russia's strategic goals toward defeating Ukraine and deterring its Western partners. This shift elevated the military's role to a level not seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Third, the war exposed critical military shortcomings to the Kremlin, reducing the armed forces' ability to conceal failures and limiting their autonomy from presidential oversight. Finally, favorable socioeconomic conditions sustained the war effort, raising the political and economic costs of any subversive action seeking to influence presidential or defense policy.

This report offers empirical material about legal, elite, and societal changes in Russia during the Russia-Ukraine war. It also links these changes to the dynamics in Russian civil-military relations and shows how the presidential authority has solidified over the course of the war. At the same time, the study offers a flexible analytical framework consisting of a set of identifiable factors that can be used for case studies of civil-military relations in other contexts, in other countries, or for comparative analysis.

The study is based on analysis of open-source data, such as the database of legal amendments introduced by the Duma and the Russian government; media sources on the staff changes and institutional developments; and opinion polls conducted by Levada Center and Russian Field polling services.

The report is structured into three sections. First, the report introduces the theoretical framework, including its analytical element. The second section discusses wartime legal, institutional, elite, and societal developments in Russia. The final section describes how Russian civil-military relations may develop in the future.

³ Bettina Renz, "Western Estimates of Russian Military Capabilities and the Invasion of Ukraine," *Problems of Post-Communism* 71, no. 3 (2024), doi: 10.1080/10758216.2023.2253359.

Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the concept of civil-military relations and outlines the analytical framework employed in the report. It begins by defining the core problem that the concept seeks to address and briefly references CNA's earlier report on Russian wartime developments. It then presents a novel analytical framework based on a dynamic understanding of civil-military interaction. This framework draws on insights from public policy theory (advocacy coalition framework⁴) as well as foundational civil-military scholarship, particularly Samuel Huntington's professionalist model and Peter Feaver's agency theory.⁵

Defining civil-military relations

The general concept of civil-military relations refers to the interactions between military institutions and a range of civilian actors, including society at large, government bureaucracies, and individual political leaders.⁶ These relationships are dynamic, evolving through both routine, day-to-day engagement and large-scale institutional changes.⁷ They are shaped by a combination of formal structures, such as laws, directives, and administrative regulations,

and informal norms, traditions, and expectations. Although the military operates as a governmental institution and is primarily governed by formal rules, informal norms also influence typical patterns of military behavior. The overall nature and effectiveness of civil-military relations depend largely on these rules and norms and the extent to which they are actively upheld and enforced in practice.⁸

The study of civil-military relations examines how these rules and norms affect the distribution of power between a country's political leadership and its military command, with a core focus on preserving civilian control and identifying when and how this control is compromised. Mackubin Owens described civil-military relations as "two hands on the sword," emphasizing an idealistic division of roles: civilians determine when military force is used, and the military ensures its preparedness and operational effectiveness.⁹

In practice, however, the military can exert both overt and covert influence on political decision-making. It may delay, alter, or even obstruct the implementation of civilian policies that it opposes.¹⁰ In addition, it can document legal violations, leak

⁴ Paul A. Sabatier, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Revisions and Relevance for Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy* 5, no. 1 (1998), doi: 10.1080/13501768880000051.

⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁶ Risa A. Brooks, "Integrating the Civil-Military Relations Subfield," *Annual Review of Political Science* 22, no. 1 (2019), doi: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-060518-025407.

⁷ Christoph Harig, Nicole Jenne, and Chiara Ruffa, "Operational Experiences, Military Role Conceptions, and Their Influence on Civil-Military Relations," *European Journal of International Security* 7, no. 1 (2022), doi: 10.1017/eis.2021.29.

⁸ Kirill Shamiev, *Imperfect Equilibrium: Civil-Military Relations in Russian Defense Policymaking*, Edited by Ben Noble, New Perspectives on Eastern Europe and Eurasia (London: Hurst Publishers, 2026), <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/imperfect-equilibrium/>.

⁹ Mackubin Owens, "What Military Officers Need to Know About Civil-Military Relations," *Naval War College Review* 65, no. 2 (2018), <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol65/iss2/6>.

¹⁰ Risa Brooks and Peter M. Erickson, "The Sources of Military Dissent: Why and How the US Military Contests Civilian Decisions About the Use of Force," *European Journal of International Security* 7, no. 1 (2022), doi: 10.1017/eis.2021.34.

information to the press, or discourage officers from supporting certain actions affecting the calculus of politicians. These actions, although sometimes subtle, can limit the scope of decisions available to elected leaders.¹¹ Ultimately, militaries in both democratic and authoritarian systems are rarely passive instruments of the civilian government will.

Julian Waller and Cornell Overfield developed a multifaceted framework to analyze this continuum in the previous CNA report on Russian civil-military relations. It captured Russian wartime civil-military dynamics by examining five key dimensions: control (which side is dominant), authority (the influence each side wields on strategic and policy matters), hierarchy (the formal privileges and roles), institutionalization (the regularity or informality of interactions), and autonomy (the degree of self-governance within the armed forces).¹²

The authors claimed that over the first two years of the Russia-Ukraine war, Russian civil-military relations experienced both continuity and significant disruption across the five dimensions. Civilian control and authority, reflected in political oversight and direct intervention after battlefield setbacks, remained intact. This continuity was theoretically expected because countries tend to demonstrate the most stable type of civil-military relations with the strongest civilian control when the level of external threat is high and the level of internal threat is low.¹³ However, the formal hierarchy of Russian military command was blurred by the emergence of irregular forces such as PMC Wagner and Chechen fighters, which created a mixed structure of patron-client relationships outside the traditional military framework.¹⁴ Institutionalization also suffered as

political interventions and the instability of irregular units led to unpredictable relationships, which in turn increased uncertainty among military elites. At the same time, repeated political interference by Moscow undermined the military's autonomy, disrupting its ability to manage internal affairs independently.¹⁵

Waller and Overfield's report produces fruitful analytical insights and helps to structure the understanding of civil-military relations in Russia. This report continues this agenda but offers a different approach to studying it. The first key difference is that the current study views the outcome of interest (dependent variable in quantitative research) as the degree of the president's control over the military. This focused approach focuses on the key element in civil-military relations—the power to control the troops, who theoretically have enormous power to destroy the civilians. In the worst cases, civilian power is so weak that the military takes over and puts uniformed servicemembers in charge of the country. In reality, in most cases, including in democracies, the power lies somewhere in between: civilians rule the country through representatives, including the president; the military stays in the barracks, but sometimes they defy the civilian order. The analytical framework for this report suggests the determinants of this type of outcome in Russia's case.

Analytical framework

This study offers an alternative analytical framework for analyzing Russian civil-military relations (Figure 1). Its core assumption is that civil-military relations reflect competition among three distinct coalitions, each vying for primacy in the command and control

¹¹ Yagil Levy, "Control from Within: How Soldiers Control the Military," *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 1 (2017), doi: 10.1177/1354066116631807.

¹² Waller and Overfield, *Wartime Russian Civil-Military Relations*.

¹³ Michael C. Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment* (JHU Press, 2001).

¹⁴ PMC stands for private military company/contractor.

¹⁵ Waller and Overfield, *Wartime Russian Civil-Military Relations*.

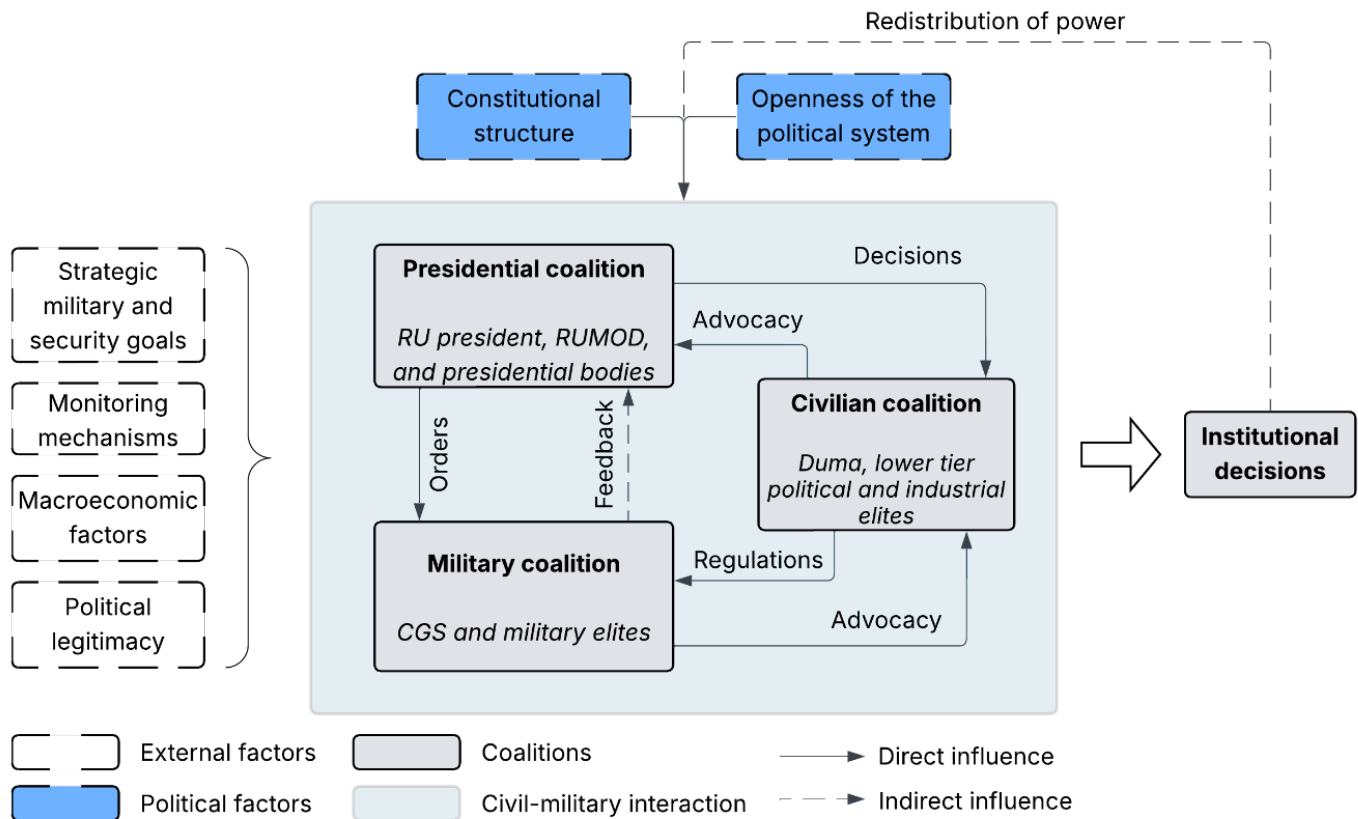
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of the armed forces. The coalitions are (1) the Russian presidential coalition, (2) the armed forces, and (3) lower tier civilian political and industrial elites. The military coalition includes the military command and its General Staff, who usually prefer to manage the armed forces autonomously. The civilian coalition consists of civilian political and industrial elites, such as parliament members and executives of military-industrial and civilian enterprises, who seek an opportunity to influence military development. The most influential coalition in Russia is the presidential

one, which comprises the president; his office; the ministries, including the minister of defense; and the executive agencies headed by the president.

The power of these coalitions depends on (1) resource control and (2) belief cohesion of actors within the coalition. The resources comprise formal legal authority, funding, expertise, public opinion, and the quality of leadership. Shared beliefs act as the foundation of coalition stability and reduce internal conflict.¹⁶

Figure 1. Visual representation of the analytical framework



Source: CNA.

¹⁶ Jonathan Pierce and Katherine Hicks, "Advocacy Coalitions in Foreign Policy." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2017), accessed May 8, 2025, <https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-355>.

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As summarized in Table 1, broader political and socioeconomic factors and external events affect the distribution of resources among the coalitions.¹⁷ First, the constitutional structure is a key determinant, as evidenced by the power allocated to the president and the minister of defense through the norms that govern the country's politico-administrative system. The Russian Constitution and derived federal laws delegate substantial powers to the president and their government bodies, making them the key actor in civil-military relations and thus empowering the presidential coalition by design. The constitutional structure also determines the low openness of the Russian political system, which undermines the civilian coalition's power and potential to gain influence in civil-military relations. Members of this coalition typically lack institutional access to the military or presidential decision-making and instead rely on advocacy, lobbying, and civil society mobilization. However, the political system further constrains these channels, limiting the coalition's potential power in civil-military relations.

Second, the wartime strategic military and security goals prioritize national security threats coming from Ukraine and its Western partners. These goals militarize the country and delegate additional human and financial resources to the military coalition. To ensure that the military coalition spends these resources to meet national security threats, the presidential coalition sets up monitoring mechanisms. The costs of monitoring, such as technological, organizational, and financial resources

required to oversee military activities, affect the degree to which the military can use its resources without presidential oversight.¹⁸

Last, economic and political resources affect the power of coalitions. Macroeconomic conditions can alter the coalitions' case-specific resources for and constraints against pursuing their goals. Political legitimacy, which is the general perception that a coalition's course of action is appropriate and acceptable within a societal context, determines the perceived credibility of the coalition's goal.¹⁹ When coalitions align their policy objectives with widely held societal values and norms, they enhance their power vis-à-vis the coalitions that have alternative policy goals. In Russia, however, the presidential coalition possesses the capacity to shape societal norms and discredit alternative policy ideas, thereby weakening their legitimacy. As a result, aligning with regime priorities becomes just as critical as securing broader social legitimacy.²⁰

In the next section, the report examines the legal and institutional changes implemented by the Russian government in response to wartime dynamics, assessing how these modifications have influenced the institutional power of different coalitions, such as their ability to pursue objectives independently.²¹ Then, the report delves into elite-level transformations, exploring how the war has reshaped Russian presidential, military, and civilian coalitions as well as the evolving rules of engagement both between and within these groups.

¹⁷ Daniel Nohrstedt, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Foundations, Evolution, and Ongoing Research," in *Theories of the Policy Process*, 3rd ed., ed. Paul Sabatier and Christopher Weible (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Feaver, *Armed Servants*.

¹⁹ Paúl Cisneros, "The Advocacy Coalition Framework Research Program: An Overview," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2021), <https://oxfordre.com/politics/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-212>.

²⁰ Adam Douglas Henry et al., "Policy Change in Comparative Contexts: Applying the Advocacy Coalition Framework Outside of Western Europe and North America," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 16, no. 4 (2014), doi: 10.1080/13876988.2014.941200.

²¹ For a description of institutional power and autonomy in autocracies, see Nathan J. Brown et al., *Autocrats Can't Always Get What They Want: State Institutions and Autonomy Under Authoritarianism* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2024).

Finally, the study discusses the influence of Russian public opinion concerning the conflict, the military, and the broader political system on the presidential and military coalitions.

Table 1. Operationalization of external factors

Factors	Operationalization	Source
Constitutional structure	Russian constitutional norms regulating the distribution of power among coalitions in civil-military relations	The Russian Constitution and federal laws
Openness of political system	The degree to which civilian actors can enter civil-military relations independently and autonomously, as well as the civilian coalition actors themselves	Federal laws and law-enforcement practices (news)
Strategic military and security goals	The intensity of national security threats as defined by the presidential coalition through defense doctrines, statements, and official orders	Official statements and national security documents
Monitoring mechanisms	The availability of technological, organizational, and financial resources required to oversee military activities	Anecdotal evidence and regulatory norms on reporting
Macroeconomic conditions	The availability of budgetary resources necessary for financing military operations	Economic indicators and forecasts
Political legitimacy	The public perception of policies and coalitions' actions	Opinion polls

Source: CNA.

Wartime Developments in Russian Civil-Military Relations

This section presents the report's empirical findings. It begins with an overview of legal changes introduced in Russian federal legislation during the war with Ukraine. It then analyzes the institutional adaptations within Russian civil-military relations, focusing on the evolving structure of the armed forces, the Ministry of Defense (MOD), and the military-industrial complex (MIC). It also examines elite-level developments, particularly in the aftermath of the Wagner Group mutiny in June 2023. It assesses the political significance of the increasing number of returning war veterans and offers a short analysis of changes within the Military-Industrial (MI) Commission. It then summarizes public opinion trends regarding the war and the Russian armed forces. The section concludes with a discussion of potential developments in Russian civil-military relations.

Legal reforms governing civil-military relations

The legal changes in the 2022–2025 period greatly affected the military and civilian coalitions. Russian laws and regulations are vitally important for military and intragovernmental relations because they set the rules and boundaries of civil-military relations. During the war with Ukraine, the government coalition in the Duma preventatively restricted the power of the civilians to question the decision to use military force. These measures served to suppress potential challengers, criminalize dissent, and strengthen

both elite and societal unity. By making the Duma deputies support these restrictions, the Kremlin indicated that the country's elites are supporting the war effort. By raising the costs of influencing public opinion and expanding selective welfare benefits to the combatants and their families, the presidential coalition insulated itself from domestic and foreign pressure. In addition, authorities introduced stricter penalties for military insubordination to deter disobedience and reinforce command authority.

Since the first day of the war, the Russian government has prioritized increasing control over Russian society and preventing antiwar opinions from spreading. On February 24, 2022, Roskomnadzor, the presidential internet watchdog, instructed all media outlets to use only information from official Russian sources when reporting on the special military operation (SMO). The next month, more than 400 parliamentarians introduced severe penalties targeting the public dissemination of content considered to discredit the Russian armed forces. Repeated offenses trigger Article 280.3 of the Criminal Code, with penalties of imprisonment (up to 7 years), large fines (up to 1 million rubles), potential loss of citizenship, and removal of rank. The bill's number of authors and its interference in the Criminal Code indicate that it was likely sanctioned by the presidential administration.²²

In March, Roskomnadzor sued Google, alleging that it had disseminated "fake news" about the Russian military and restricted Russian state media

²² "The Bill on Imprisonment for up to 5 Years for Calls for Sanctions Against Russia Has Been Approved for the First Reading [Proekt o lishenii svobody na srok do 5 let za prizvyv k sanktsiiam p rotiv RF odobren dlia I chteniia]," Interfax, Mar. 28, 2025, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/1017104>.

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accounts.²³ Facebook and Instagram were officially banned in Russia in the same month. In addition, in July 2022, a group of United Russia members of parliament associated with the military and security services introduced a bill adding Article 275.1 to the Criminal Code. This article punishes Russian citizens for confidential collaboration with representatives of foreign states or organizations aiming to undermine Russian security and carries a penalty of 3 to 8 years' imprisonment and a fine of up to 1 million rubles.²⁴ Moreover, the same law made calls for actions against national security—such as calls for sanctions—illegal, with punishments of between 2 and 7 years of imprisonment, fines of up to 2.5 million rubles, asset confiscation, and loss of military rank.²⁵ This case illustrates how the nominal representatives of the civilian coalition acted in favor of the military and security services, using their institutional position in the Russian Duma.

These changes served several potential purposes. First, they preemptively undermined the power of any potential challenger against the goal of the presidential coalition, which is victory in the SMO. Second, they reinforced the legitimacy of the armed forces and the presidential policies by criminalizing alternative views. Moreover, they signaled the importance of elite cohesion and societal unity during wartime, also strengthening the regime's security. The Russian presidential coalition, with support from

the civilian coalition, significantly increased the costs of influencing public opinion, insulating the political legitimacy of the war from external influence.

Apart from repressive measures against the opponents of the war, the Russian government substantially widened the delivery of public goods to war participants and their families. In May 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin authored amendments that allowed children of deceased or severely wounded servicemembers to receive guaranteed admissions to specialized military educational institutions without examinations.²⁶ In the same year, veterans and their children became able to enter vocational colleges and technical schools without examinations. Moreover, special university admission quotas were introduced for veterans and the family members of soldiers who died in combat. The expansion of welfare benefits to veterans and their family members has become one of the pillars of presidential policies during wartime.

In addition, Putin initiated several employment and housing benefits that were developed by the government. In February 2024, special mortgage programs offering a 2 percent interest rate, previously available only in specific regions, were extended nationwide to veterans.²⁷ In November, young families of warfighters were granted priority access to state housing assistance.²⁸ In addition, spouses of

²³ "RKN Demanded That Google Stop Spreading Fakes About Special Operations [RKN potreboval ot Google perestat' rasprostraniat' feiki o spetsoperatsii]," RBC, Mar. 3, 2022, https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/03/03/2022/62207bb99a79477bf055dc7a.

²⁴ "The State Duma Decided to Add Articles to the Criminal Code in Case of Military Operations [V Gosdume reshili popolnit' Ugolovnyi kodeks stat'iami na sluchai voe nnykh deistvii]," BBC News Russian Service, May 25, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-61584618>.

²⁵ For the links to the specific laws mentioned in this section, see this list: "Special Military Operation, Mobilization 2022-2025 [Spetsial'naia voennaia operatsiia, mobilizatsiia 2022-2025]," Garant, accessed Apr. 7, 2025, <https://base.garant.ru/77188369/>.

²⁶ "Russian Universities Admit Twice as Many Ukraine War Veterans for 2024-25 Academic Year," *Moscow Times*, Aug. 22, 2024, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/08/22/russian-universities-admit-twice-as-many-ukraine-war-veterans-for-2024-25-academic-year-a86114>.

²⁷ Thibault Spirlet, "A New Way for Russia to Cement Its Hold on Ukraine: Dirt-Cheap Mortgages," *Business Insider*, Nov. 1, 2024, accessed Apr. 25, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/russia-way-to-cement-hold-on-ukraine-dirt-cheap-mortgages-2024-11>.

²⁸ "After Waiting Years for Social Housing, Russians Are Losing Their Place in Line to Veterans of the Kremlin's War Against Ukraine," *Meduza*, Sept. 20, 2024, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2024/09/20/after-waiting-years-for-social-housing-russians-are-losing-their-place-in-line-to-veterans-of-the-kremlin-s-war-against-ukraine>.

discharged SMO veterans were given preferential employment rights in state organizations and military units, priority retention in case of workforce reductions, and access to paid professional retraining programs. In January 2025, war veterans gained annual entitlement to free medical rehabilitation and sanatorium treatments, including travel cost reimbursements.

The expansion of expensive welfare provisions by legislators outside the presidential coalition met resistance in the Duma, however.²⁹ Most bills were rejected either during committee reviews or through plenary voting, including one-time housing payments for disabled veterans (introduced in April 2024, rejected in January 2025), insurance payments for siblings of fallen orphans (introduced in June 2024, rejected in January 2025), free travel to vacation destinations for SMO participants (introduced in October 2024, rejected in January 2025), and expanded deferments from mobilization (multiple bills between 2022 and 2024, most rejected by autumn 2024). Other proposals included special admission quotas to colleges (introduced in October 2023, rejected in July 2024), free education for children of SMO participants (introduced in December 2022, withdrawn in October 2023), and tax and mortgage relief for mobilized individuals (introduced in September 2022, returned to the bill authors in October 2022). The main initiators of these bills were deputies from the A Just Russia – For Truth Party, the Communist Party, and the Liberal Democratic Party, as well as some individual deputies from United Russia. These bills illustrate that representatives of the civilian coalition tried to capitalize on the welfare expansion for war veterans, but the presidential coalition controlled the welfare agenda and prevented unauthorized bills from coming through.

The Russian government also significantly tightened punishments for military insubordination. Additional stringent measures now apply to military personnel and volunteers, including severe penalties (5 to 15 years of imprisonment) for resisting commanders (Article 333), violence against commanding officers (Article 334), desertion (Article 338), evading service through deception or self-injury (Article 339), negligent or intentional breaches of combat duty and border or patrol duties (Articles 340–344), intentional or negligent destruction of military property (Articles 346–347), loss of military assets (Article 348), and voluntary surrender (Article 352.1). Refusal to participate in military or combat operations during mobilization or armed conflict (Article 332) now carries a penalty of imprisonment of between 2 and 10 years. In August 2024, military unit commanders also gained unilateral authority to arrest servicemembers committing serious disciplinary offenses.

The implemented changes, as summarized in Table 2, had dual effects. First, they deterred insubordinate military behavior by significantly increasing the consequences of noncompliance. Second, the new norms were designed to enhance the cohesion of the military coalition by granting commanders greater authority to enforce these stricter penalties. This empowerment enabled the presidential coalition to ensure the military's obedience and functionality during escalating political and combat pressures on servicemembers.

Institutional adaptations

The war has triggered several institutional changes in Russian civil-military relations. The president has personally initiated the creation of the Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, linking presidential directives with the needs of war veterans and their families.

²⁹ The links to the rejected bills are at the bottom of this summary: “Special Military Operation, Mobilization 2022-2025.”

Table 2. Summary of legal changes and their civil-military impact

Legal Changes	Civil-Military Impact
Media and internet censorship	The measures preemptively undermined potential challengers to the presidential coalition's goals and reinforced the legitimacy of the armed forces and presidential policies by criminalizing alternative views. They also signaled the importance of elite cohesion and societal unity during wartime, significantly increasing the costs of influencing public opinion and insulating the political legitimacy of the war from external and domestic influence.
Counterintelligence and anti-sanction punishments	
Welfare expansion for war veterans and family members	These changes helped legitimize the war and support the recruitment of warfighters. President Putin portrayed himself as the defender of war participants.
Strengthening and expansion of punishments for insubordination	These changes deterred insubordination by raising penalties for noncompliance and strengthened military cohesion by granting commanders greater authority, ensuring obedience under rising political and combat pressures.

Source: CNA.

He also strengthened the presidential authority demanding the integration of volunteer forces into the MOD and National Guard structures. The military coalition went through several internal changes with military districts losing air defense assets under their command and gaining additional responsibilities such as recruitment, psychological operations, and internal discipline. In parallel, the Kremlin launched an economic mobilization for the industrial representatives of the civilian coalition that empowered the military coalition to influence civilian industry to meet defense needs, introduced labor restrictions, and mandated fulfillment of defense contracts, further reinforcing the state's control over wartime production and security.

To support the delivery of the new public goods to warfighters, veterans, and their family members, the president established the "Defenders of the

Fatherland" foundation in 2023. Anna Tsivileva, reportedly Putin's relative, was appointed the head of the foundation. The foundation's activities include providing medical, legal, and psychological assistance; promoting social and professional reintegration; and ensuring access to rehabilitation and health care services. The foundation also supplies unregistered medicines and advanced prosthetics, adapts housing for disabled veterans, and helps veterans obtain official veteran status. In addition, it engages beneficiaries in patriotic initiatives, public outreach, and historical memory projects.³⁰

The foundation has become a typical boundary spanner in Russian civil-military relations. It enables communication and cooperation between coalitions and the bureaucracy that implements institutional decisions, especially war veterans and their family members, who are usually not versed in bureaucratic

³⁰ "Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of May 6, 2023, No. 1168-r on Approval of the Charter of the State Fund for Support of Participants of the Special Military Operation Defenders of the Fatherland [Rasporiazhenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 6 maia 2023 g. № 1168-r Ob utverz hdenii ustava Gosudarstvennogo fonda podderzhki uchastnikov spetsial' noï voennoï operatsii Zashchitniki Otechestva]," Garant, May 15, 2023, accessed Apr. 7, 2025, <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/406762562/>.

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relations. The bureaucratic performance conditions the effectiveness of the institutional decisions because civil servants are often the ones who actually implement it. The boundary spanner ensures that the presidential goals in the humanitarian field are translated across the military and civilian coalitions, reducing conflict and promoting responsiveness to the veterans' needs. Tsivileva is recognized and trusted by both the presidential and the military coalitions, which gives the foundation a dual legitimacy, and her "public outreach" activities further reinforce the Kremlin's pro-war indoctrination.

The war with Ukraine triggered the unprecedented growth of volunteer units. After the initial battlefield losses, Moscow launched the recruitment of thousands of volunteers across the country over the summer of 2022. A wide range of recruits were accepted into militia units of the self-proclaimed Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics and their battalions, such as Sparta and Pyatnashka. PMCs Redut and Wagner also began sending mercenaries to Ukraine, and smaller groups such as the Russian Imperial Legion and Rusich sent volunteers.³¹ These informal enlistments were politically disastrous for Russian civil-military relations; thousands of soldiers were not formally recognized or even registered in the MOD ranks. Analytically speaking, the volunteer units, especially PMC Wagner, were service providers for the military and presidential coalitions. They likely shared similar policy beliefs because most mercenaries had served in the Russian security structures before. However, they were not part of the traditional coordination system and relied on

informal resource flows, which undermined the unity of command and potentially threatened Russia's political stability. Yevgeny Prigozhin, then-head of PMC Wagner, publicly threatened to withdraw from high profile military operations unless his demands for resources were satisfied by the Russian military command.³²

In November 2022, the Kremlin amended the federal law on defense, authorizing Putin to incorporate volunteer formations into the structures of the MOD and the National Guard. In June 2023, the MOD ordered voluntary military organizations to sign contracts with the ministry. This demand triggered Prigozhin's mutiny and led to the end of PMC Wagner as an autonomous private military force. However, other units reportedly quickly signed up for service with the MOD.

The Russian military also started to adapt to the changing strategic military and security goals. This change reoriented Russian military development and increased the military's financial and political weight in it. First, in response to the accession of Finland and Sweden into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in February 2024, Putin split the western military district into two, Leningrad and Moscow, to strengthen command and control in the western and northwestern parts of Russia. The Northern Fleet was incorporated back into the Leningrad military district. In addition, by September 2024, the total size of the armed forces had expanded to nearly 2.4 million personnel (including 1.5 million military personnel),³³ continuing an earlier increase to 2

³¹ "More Infantry than Captivity. Dozens of Armed Groups - the Wagner PMC, the Kadyrovtsy, the Neo-Nazis - Are Accepting Everyone, Including Convicts and the Sick, as 'Cannon Fodder' for the War in Ukraine. We Tried to Become Volunteers [Pekhota pushche nevoli. Desiatki vooruzhennykh grupp — ChVK «Vagnera», kadyrovtsy, neonatsisty — prinimaiut v riady «pushchnogo miasa» na voynu v Ukraine vseh, vkluchaia zekov i bol'nykh. My popytali s' stat' dobrovol'tsami]," *Novaya Gazeta*, Aug. 10, 2022, <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2022/08/10/pekhota-pushche-nevoli>.

³² Josh Pennington, "Wagner Boss Threatens Bakhmut Withdrawal Unless His Forces Get More Munitions," CNN, Apr. 30, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/04/30/world/wagner-head-threatens-withdrawal-bakhmut-intl>.

³³ "Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 16.09.2024 N 792 'On Establishing the Headcount of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation' [Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 16.09.2024 N 792 'Ob ustanovlenii shtatnoi chislennosti Vooruzhennykh Sil Rossiiskoi Federatsii']," *Garant*, Sept. 16, 2024, accessed Apr. 7, 2025, <https://base.garant.ru/410387005/>.

million total personnel in August 2022.³⁴ In summer 2023, the government raised the conscription age limit to 30 years and increased the maximum age for reservists by 5 years.³⁵

Second, in 2023, the Aerospace Forces (VKS) took over all air defense assets, allegedly to improve coordination and prevent further cases of friendly fire against Russian planes.³⁶ The MOD then centralized command and control over the VKS and Navy, reassigning them from district commanders to service headquarters.³⁷ These changes aimed to improve the flexibility of air and naval asset deployment, especially important because a newly created military district necessitated sharing of these assets. The military districts were left with ground forces only but also gained additional responsibilities, such as managing mobilization reserves (including recruitment centers), conducting psychological operations, countering foreign intelligence activities, and engaging in information warfare. The districts also received command-and-control responsibilities for the military police, enhancing the disciplinary power of the military district headquarters.

In July 2022, the presidential coalition prepared the groundwork for the economic mobilization of Russian industry. It introduced special economic measures to support counterterrorist or military operations, including activating industrial reserve capacities, unsealing state reserves, and modifying labor regulations, such as extending working hours

and limiting annual leave. Companies became legally obligated to fulfill state contracts in the defense sector.³⁸ These changes enhanced the power of the military coalition. The military, on the one hand, gained the ability to intervene in the civilian economy to fulfill the state defense order. On the other hand, it simplified defense-related production.

The announcement of the partial military mobilization significantly expanded demand for military production. The Russian MIC was originally incapable of supplying hundreds of thousands of new recruits with equipment and vehicles. To solve this problem, in December 2022, the government permitted advance payments of at least 80 percent on defense-related contracts and simplified product transfers between enterprises for defense-related production. The procurement processes were also simplified by allowing direct contracts with sole suppliers without competitive procedures. In addition, in August 2024, Russian security agencies and the military gained approval for closed competitive procurement methods, exempting them from public disclosure requirements. In December 2024, companies receiving subsidies for defense contracts became protected from forced debt collection until the end of 2027. At the same time, enhanced automated price monitoring managed by the Federal Treasury was introduced to oversee defense contracts and pricing, reducing the costs of monitoring the MIC.

³⁴ "Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 25.08.2022 N 575 'On Establishing the Headcount of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation' [Ukaz Prezidenta RF ot 25.08.2022 N 575 'Ob ustanovlenii shtatnoi chisl ennosti Vooruzhennykh Sil Rossiiskoi Federatsii']," *Garant*, Aug. 25, 2022, accessed Apr. 7, 2025, <https://base.garant.ru/405195747/>.

³⁵ "Federal Law of 04.08.2023 N 439-FZ 'On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation' [Federal'nyi zakon ot 04.08.2023 N 439-FZ 'O vnesenii izmenenii v otdel 'nye zakonodatel'nye akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii']," *Garant*, Aug. 4, 2023, accessed Apr. 7, 2025, <https://base.garant.ru/407483291/>.

³⁶ "An Expert Explained the Logic Behind the Reassignment of the Russian Air Defense Forces to the Russian Air Force [Ėkspert ob'iasnil logiku perepodchineniia voiskovoï PVO VKS Rossii]," *Vzglyad*, Feb. 27, 2023, <https://vz.ru/news/2023/2/27/1200972.html>.

³⁷ Dmitry Sotak, "Sailors and Airmen Were Given Back Their Sovereignty [Moriakam i letchikam vernuli suverenost']," *Kommersant*, Feb. 5, 2025, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7480065>.

³⁸ "Special Military Operation, Mobilization 2022-2025."

To address workforce shortages, in December 2022, the government began compensating MIC enterprises for salary expenses linked to efforts to attract employees from other regions and municipalities. In 2023, subsidized rental housing and specialized mortgages were introduced for MIC workers relocating to the Far East and the Arctic. Moreover, college graduates hired by the MIC received the right to free professional retraining programs and conscription deferments. Finally, a legislative proposal from February 2025 sought to allow young MIC workers to replace mandatory military service with alternative civilian service at the factory.³⁹

Last, the presidential coalition introduced strict measures to protect the state defense order from external influence and internal opposition. Between September 2022 and March 2023, the government introduced criminal penalties for disrupting state defense orders (Law 365-FZ) and external administration for enterprises failing state defense orders during wartime (Presidential Decree No. 139). Moreover, military-industrial organizations with annual revenue exceeding 10 billion rubles (USD 100 million) were designated as economically significant organizations (EZOs). EZOs are companies deemed essential for maintaining the country's economic sovereignty and national security. These entities are not required to publish information about their

operations; they also receive simplified rules for moving into Russian jurisdiction and can remove the rights of foreign shareholders from so-called unfriendly countries through court action.⁴⁰

Elite-level dynamics and coalition building

Elite dynamics play a crucial role in shaping Russian civil-military relations. The minister of defense and the president belong to the presidential coalition, and the former acts as a key manager of the military for the president. The minister must ensure that presidential demands are adequately "translated" into military orders and deliver military suggestions and resource demands to the president and the civilian government. The minister is also the key leader responsible for broader government relationships, such as those with the Ministry of Finance, security services, and the Duma. The Chief of the General Staff (CGS) is the most important military leader, the one who commands and controls the armed forces, develops and implements military plans, and delivers resource requests to the minister of defense.⁴¹ The president, the minister of defense, and the CGS form a key leadership troika at the core of Russia's civil-military relations. The troika's effectiveness primarily depends on pragmatic cooperation and mutual trust.⁴² In practice, building such cooperation requires a professional yet compliant CGS working

³⁹ "Draft Federal Law N 848123-8 'On Amending Articles 2 and 4 of the Federal Law "On Alternative Civilian Service"' [Proekt federal'nogo zakona N 848123-8 'O vnesenii izmenenii v stat'i 2 i 4 Federal'nogo zakona "Ob al'ternativnoi grazhdanskoj sluzhbe"'], Garant, Feb. 24, 2025, <https://base.garant.ru/76868930/>.

⁴⁰ "Federal Law of 08.08.2024 N 300-FZ 'On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Peculiarities of Regulation of Corporate Relations in Business Companies That Are Economically Significant Organizations..."' [Federal'nyi zakon ot 08.08.2024 N 300-FZ 'O vnesenii izmenenii v Feder al'nyi zakon "Ob osobennostiakh regulirovaniia korporativnykh otnosh enii v khoziaistvennykh obshchestvakh, iavlaiushchikhsia ekonomicheski znachimymi organizatsiiami..."]', Garant, Aug. 8, 2024, <https://base.garant.ru/409494263/>.

⁴¹ Greg Whisler, "Strategic Command and Control in the Russian Armed Forces: Untangling the General Staff, Military Districts, and Service Main Commands (Part Two)," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 33, no. 1 (2020), doi: 10.1080/13518046.2020.1723227; Aleksandr Golts, "Dead Brain of the General Staff [Mertvyj mozg Genshtaba]," *Compromat*, July 5, 2004, <https://compro-r.com/novye-postupleniya/item/16400-rossiyskim-genshtabom-komanduet-anatoliy-kvashnin-chto-samo-po-sebe-dokazyvaet-bespoleznost-etogo-uchrezhdeniya-v-ego-nyeshnem-vide>.

⁴² Kirill Shamiev, *Understanding Senior Leadership Dynamics Within the Russian Military*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-senior-leadership-dynamics-within-russian-military>.

under a capable civilian minister of defense, who in turn possesses sufficient resources and political capital to prioritize military development alongside broader governmental objectives.

Veterans as the new brown?

In his address to the Federal Assembly (State Duma and the Federation Council) in February 2024, Putin called the war veterans the new national elite. He explicitly compared them with the old elites who “enriched themselves during the 1990s,” claiming that the veterans have proven their loyalty through service and sacrifice. In his address, Putin launched a new program titled “Time of Heroes,” aimed at integrating veterans into leadership roles across public administration, education, business, and state enterprises, threatening the civilian coalition. The program is modeled on existing public official training initiatives such as the “School of Governors” and “Leaders of Russia.” Participants are mentored by senior officials and executives and will have priority access to further education and civilian specializations.⁴³

Despite the Kremlin’s narrative portraying veterans as a new elite, their presence in ongoing elections remains minimal. Russian independent media calculated that fewer than 0.5 percent of all registered candidates in the September 2024 elections were military personnel, with only 495 veterans running. In nearly half the regions, the share of military candidates

did not exceed 1 percent, and in 30 regions none ran at all. Poll data indicated that only a third of voters, mostly older TV viewers, valued combat experience, whereas most remained indifferent to a candidate’s veteran status.⁴⁴ In the future, however, the share of veterans running for office could increase once the now-enlarged military force begins to demobilize; these soldiers could become a valuable resource for the ideological renewal of the civilian coalition in Russia.

Putin’s initiative faced opposition from regional and federal elites. In the regional and local executive branch, veterans received positions related to patriotic education or SMO-related affairs that do not have significant influence. For example, the governor of Saratov announced the creation of approximately 40 new deputy positions for patriotic work across local education departments and district administrations to be filled by veterans. In December 2024, Yakutia’s head mandated similar appointments.⁴⁵ Similarly, Rosatom announced new positions for war veterans. Their official duties again include veteran affairs and patriotic education, but in practice they will have no staff or real authority. Similar appointments are planned across other state-owned companies.⁴⁶ Likewise, Putin himself has so far appointed only two acting regional governors with links to the war in Ukraine. However, both are long-time bureaucrats with formal education and prior political experience.⁴⁷

⁴³ “Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly [Poslanie Prezidenta Federal’nomu Sobraniyu],” Kremlin, Feb. 29, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20241223202038/http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73585>.

⁴⁴ Evgenia Alekseeva, “The ‘New Elite’ Is Not Being Nominated [«Novaia élita» ne vydvigaetsia],” iStories, Sept. 6, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20241224034829/https://istories.media/stories/2024/09/06/novaya-elita-ne-vidvigaetsya/>.

⁴⁵ “Regional Authorities Have Begun Creating Dozens of Positions for Putin’s ‘New Elite’ [Regional’nye vlasti nachali sozdavat’ desiatki dolzhnostei pod «novuiu élitu» Putina],” Agentstvo, Feb. 14, 2025, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250217011418/https://www.agents.media/regionalnye-vlasti-nachali-sozdavat-desyatki-dolzhnostej-pod-novuyu-elitu-putina/>.

⁴⁶ “SVO Veterans Will Appear in the Management of Large State-Owned Companies [Veterany «SVO» poïaviatsia v rukovodstve krupnykh goskompanii],” Verstka, Oct. 25, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250228034843/https://verstka.media/fetish-nachalstva-uchastnikov-voyny-v-ukraine-naznachat-v-rukovodstvo-krupnejshih-goskompanij-rossii>.

⁴⁷ Agentstvo News, “Putin Has Created the Appearance of a Career Elevator for War Veterans [Putin sozdal vidimost’ kar’ernogo lifta dlia uchastnikov voïny],” Telegram post, Nov. 5, 2024, <https://t.me/agentstvovnews/7960>.

So far, Putin's appeal for the selection of the new war elite serves only a symbolic function while in practice rewarding individuals already embedded in the existing coalitions. However, in the future, this mechanism could serve as a soft co-optation strategy for the most politically active war veterans, offering them noninfluential public sector roles in exchange for public loyalty to the president and ultimately helping to preserve Russian political stability with little cost to the state budget.

The conflict that shaped everything

Prigozhin's mutiny became the watershed moment for Russian civil-military relations. During the first year of the war, the presidential and military coalitions were under unprecedented public criticism from the pro-war factions of the civilian coalition within Russia. The conflict between the coalitions escalated when Prigozhin, who headed the Wagner Group PMC, initiated a short-lived mutiny.⁴⁸ The crisis stemmed from Prigozhin's and the military's divergent views on the use of force in Ukraine and Prigozhin's desire to gain formal authority in the Russian political system and increase Wagner's financial resources.⁴⁹ President Putin, as the key power broker in the security sector, failed to solve this conflict at an early stage, and the MOD under Minister Sergei Shoigu exploited its information dominance in the media, control over armaments and resources, and formal legal powers to undermine Prigozhin's struggle for power.

The minister of defense's decree to integrate volunteer formations into the official command structures of the MOD, mentioned previously, marked Putin's decision to end the Shoigu-Prigozhin rivalry in favor of Shoigu. This decision was crucial for Prigozhin, who escalated dramatically by launching

the mutiny and died shortly thereafter, in August 2023. His failure stems from the lack of open support from any prominent political or military figures who could have undermined Putin's grip on power with Prigozhin on the move to Moscow.

Prigozhin's mutiny drastically affected Russian civil-military relations and likely Putin himself. It underlined the importance of maintaining reliable, professional armed forces with a long-standing tradition of obedience to civilian leadership as opposed to relying on unregulated mercenary groups led by individuals personally connected to Putin. Without the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, PMC Wagner would likely have remained relevant—and Prigozhin would likely have remained alive—longer, conducting operations far away from Russian borders. However, the invasion presented the PMC's leadership with a unique opportunity (one they could not refuse) to recruit thousands of new fighters, volunteers and inmates alike, and acquire serious military hardware, including combat aircraft. This rapid growth enhanced Wagner's lethal capabilities, giving Prigozhin unprecedented leverage to pursue his political ambitions. Nevertheless, Prigozhin operated outside Russia's formal institutional framework, unlike the military embedded in the established hierarchy of Putin's power vertical, which created an explosive mismatch between Wagner's substantial combat strength and Prigozhin's nonexistent *institutional* political power (unlike his personal political power, namely his personal relationships with some of the leaders of the presidential coalition) within the existing Russian political order.

The Prigozhin affair also underscored the limited power of the military coalition in Russian politics. PMC Wagner was famously organized and supplied

⁴⁸ Waller and Overfield, *Wartime Russian Civil-Military Relations*.

⁴⁹ Kimberly Marten, "Whither Wagner? The Consequences of Prigozhin's Mutiny and Demise," *Survival* 65, no. 5 (2023), doi: 10.1080/00396338.2023.2261245

via the 78th Intelligence Center of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and stationed in the GRU based in Molkino, which is in Russia's Krasnodar region.⁵⁰ Yet the military did not support Prigozhin, who even took First Deputy Head of the GRU General Vladimir Alekseev and Deputy Minister of Defense Yunus-bek Yevkurov hostage.⁵¹ Some analysts claimed that the mutiny showed the fragility of the Russian regime and weakened Putin, citing the lack of active resistance from the armed forces and political elites.⁵² Although the regime was indeed weakened in the short term, Prigozhin's apparent assassination and the subsequent integration of mercenary units into official government structures ultimately reinforced Putin's control.⁵³ Putin had maintained firm command over the regular armed forces and political elites, and then he addressed the immediate crisis through a negotiated solution, physically eliminated his opponent, and enacted institutional changes designed to prevent similar challenges in the future. Because of the mutiny, the presidential coalition in Russian civil-military relations has become stronger than before.

The Kremlin chose not to disband Wagner PMC. Instead, Moscow split Wagner personnel and integrated them into existing units within the MOD and the National Guard. The largest Wagner formation was re-formed into the "African Corps" and officially redeployed to Africa, effectively replacing the original PMC presence on the continent.⁵⁴ Other mercenaries became soldiers and officers and continued to fight in Ukraine under the formal MOD command. Reports estimate that the ex-Wagner fighters number in the hundreds to low thousands and are distributed across various Russian military structures.⁵⁵ This integration reduced the actual battlefield effects of the mutiny and helped Russia minimize the loss of its combat potential.

Elite changed in the midst of war

The combined effect of Prigozhin's mutiny and Russian battlefield setbacks has been a major change in Russian civil-military relations. In May 2024, Putin replaced Minister of Defense Shoigu with Andrei Belousov; that decision was followed

⁵⁰ "The Mercenaries of the PMC Wagner Announced That They Were Closing Their Main Base in Krasnodar's Molkino [Naemniki ChVK Vagnera ob"javili, chto zakryvaiut svoiu glavnuu ba zu v krasnodarskom Mol'kino]," Meduza, July 17, 2023, <https://meduza.io/news/2023/07/17/naemniki-chvk-vagnera-ob-yavili-chto-zakryvayut-svoyu-glavnuyu-bazu-v-krasnodarskom-molkino>.

⁵¹ "Prigozhin Explained to the Highest Ranks of the Russian Army That It Is Necessary to Speak with Him in a Formal Manner. Contemptuous Talks of the PMC Founder with Deputy Defense Minister Yevkurov and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Alekseev. Transcript of the Conversation [Prigozhin ob"iasnil vysshim chinam rossiiskoi armii, chto s nim nado govorit' na vy Prezritel'nye peregovory osnovatel'ia ChVK s zamministr a oborony Evkurovym i zamnachal'nika Genshtaba Alekseevym. Rasshifrovka besedy]," Meduza, June 24, 2023, <https://meduza.io/feature/2023/06/24/prigozhin-ob-yasnil-vysshim-chinam-rossiyskoy-armii-chto-s-nim-nado-govorit-na-vy>.

⁵² Centre for Eastern Studies, *Prigozhin's Mutiny as a Stress Test for the Putin System: Events, Conclusions, Outlook*, July 4, 2023, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2023-07-04/prigozhins-mutiny-a-stress-test-putin-system-events>; Tatiana Stanovaya, "Beneath the Surface, Prigozhin's Mutiny Has Changed Everything in Russia," Carnegie Politika, July 27, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2023/07/beneath-the-surface-prigozhins-mutiny-has-changed-everything-in-russia?lang=en>.

⁵³ For an overview of Russian political resilience, see Julian G. Waller, "Putin the Resilient: Predicting the Collapse of His Regime Is Wishful Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, Aug. 14, 2024, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/eastern-europe-and-former-soviet-union/putin-resilient>.

⁵⁴ Ilya Lakstygai, "What Is Known About Russia's 'African Corps' [Chto izvestno ob «Afrikanskom korpuse» Rossii]," *Vedomosti*, Dec. 22, 2023, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/articles/2023/12/22/1012398-chto-izvestno-ob-afrikanskom-korpuse-rossii>; "African Defense Corps: Paid \$5k but Not Sent Home [Afrikanski korpus MO: platiat \$5 tys, no ne otpravliaiut domoi]," *Verstka*, Nov. 8, 2024, <https://verstka.media/iz-vagnera-v-minoborony-kto-verbuet-rossiyan-v-afrikanskij-korpus>.

⁵⁵ Ilya Barabanov and Anastasia Lotareva, "What Happens to the Military Legacy of Yevgeny Prigozhin and PMC 'Wagner' a Year After the Insurgency [Chto proiskhodit s voennym naslediem Evgeniia Prigozhina i ChVK «Vagner» cherez god posle miatezha]," BBC News Russian Service, June 21, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c0dd3rp0344o>.

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by a set of departures and arrests in the MOD leadership (Table 3). Unlike Shoigu, Belousov comes from a privileged family of former Soviet economists and KGB officials. Belousov possesses extensive economic policy experience across various sectors of the Russian government dating back to the 1990s, including developing strategic economic plans and serving as an economic advisor to Putin. Reportedly, Belousov coordinated military logistics between the presidential administration, the MOD, Wagner PMC, and broader governmental agencies.⁵⁶ He also curated the development of unmanned systems as Russia's first deputy prime minister. In April 2023, he told Putin about bottlenecks in drone production, warning that Russia could not independently produce drones. Localization levels for various drone types remained at only 10 to 30 percent, with all

power units (electric motors and internal combustion engines) being fully imported.⁵⁷

The military's quiet acceptance of a civilian as defense minister indicated a departure from historical norm. Belousov distinguished himself from his predecessor through a distinctly civilian style, consistently appearing in a suit and deliberately avoiding media exposure. Previously, civilian appointees faced ridicule and skepticism because of the military establishment's entrenched belief that only professional officers are suitable to lead the MOD. The war with Ukraine significantly delegitimized that belief.

Belousov's appointment kickstarted the reshuffle in the MOD (Figure 2). Several high-ranking officials and officers were dismissed or arrested for bribery, fraud, and corruption, including Deputy Minister

Table 3. Key staff replaced in the MOD

Shoigu Staff	Belousov Staff	Change
Nikolai Pankov	Anna Tsivileva	Closer relationship with Putin, more civilian experience, combination of social support with government relations functions
Tatyana Shevtsova	Leonid Gornin	Closer relationship with the Finance Ministry, more civilian experience in investment programs and MIC
Timur Ivanov	Pavel Fradkov	Closer relationship with Putin and Federal Security Service (FSB)
Yuri Sadovenko	Oleg Saveliev	Closer relationship with the auditors and economic development ministry, more civilian experience, undisclosed ties to the security agencies

Source: CNA.

⁵⁶ "The Dossier Center Accessed the Mail of Defense Minister Belousov and Learned That He Supervised the Work of Yevgeny Prigozhin [TSentr «Dos'e» poluchil dostup k pochte ministra oborony Belousova i uznal, chto tot kuriroval rabotu Evgeniia Prigozhina]," The Insider, May 21, 2024, <https://theins.ru/news/271757>.

⁵⁷ "Meeting on the Development of Unmanned Aviation [Soveshchanie po razvitiu bespilotnoi aviatsii]," Kremlin, Apr. 28, 2023, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/71016>.

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Timur Ivanov and Generals Yuri Kuznetsov, Ivan Popov, Vadim Shamarin, Dmitry Bulgakov, and Pavel Popov. In addition, several officials involved in defense procurement, logistics, communications, and property management were removed or placed under criminal investigation.⁵⁸

The arrests continued throughout 2024 and early 2025, with Russian authorities implicating at least 34 mid-level officials, generals, and contractors in large-scale bribery, procurement fraud, and misappropriation of state resources, more than the number of prosecuted officials in the Anatoly Serdyukov (ex-Minister of Defense) corruption scandal.⁵⁹ Investigations revealed inflated tenders, acceptance of substandard military goods, ghost employees, and illegal sales of state property. Moreover, some officials pocketed wartime payments, including embezzling volunteer training funds and manipulating combat participation records for financial gain.

The Kremlin used the purge to reassert presidential control over MOD intergovernmental relations and financial management (see Appendix B for the biographies of the appointees, in which they describe their professional histories and the connections they can bring to the MOD). This reassertion of control was evident in the departures of State Secretary Nikolai Pankov and Deputy Minister Tatyana Shevtsova. A longtime FSB officer, Pankov led military personnel management before becoming state secretary in 2005.⁶⁰ He served under three defense ministers,

but the departure of Shoigu signified the end of his service to the Russian president.⁶¹ Instead, in August 2024, Putin appointed his relative Anna Tsivileva, the head of the Defenders of the Fatherland foundation, as state secretary, despite her lack of prior military experience. Her husband, Sergei Tsivilev, became minister of energy in May 2024, following his tenure as governor of the Kemerovo region.

Former Deputy Finance Minister Leonid Gornin replaced Shevtsova, who had been transferred to the MOD in 2010 from the Federal Tax Service by then-Minister Serdyukov. Shevtsova oversaw the ministry's finances and budgetary operations, remaining in her position even after Serdyukov was implicated in corruption scandals. Widely regarded as competent and effective, she managed defense budget planning during a period of steadily increasing military expenditures.⁶² Gornin brings extensive experience in both regional and federal finance, including work on industrial development and the MIC. He previously served as deputy and assistant to Finance Minister Anton Siluanov, so his appointment reinforced the Finance Ministry's oversight of the defense budget and procurement system, with the potential to streamline investment and financial control procedures.⁶³ In parallel, Pavel Fradkov, son of former Prime Minister and SVR (Foreign Intelligence Service) Director Mikhail Fradkov and a former official in the presidential administration, replaced charged-with-corruption Ivanov and assumed responsibility for managing

⁵⁸ "Criminal Cases Against Generals and Officials of the Ministry of Defense. Infographics [Ugolovnye dela protiv generalov i chinovnikov Minoborony. Infografika]," RBC, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/30/08/2024/66d0b0689a7947d54fce35a3>.

⁵⁹ Sergei Dupin, "Who's Gonna Put Him Away? [Kto zh ego posadit?]," *Kommersant*, Sept. 9, 2013, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2259823>.

⁶⁰ "Security Forces [Siloviki]," *Kommersant*, June 4, 2002, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/325689>.

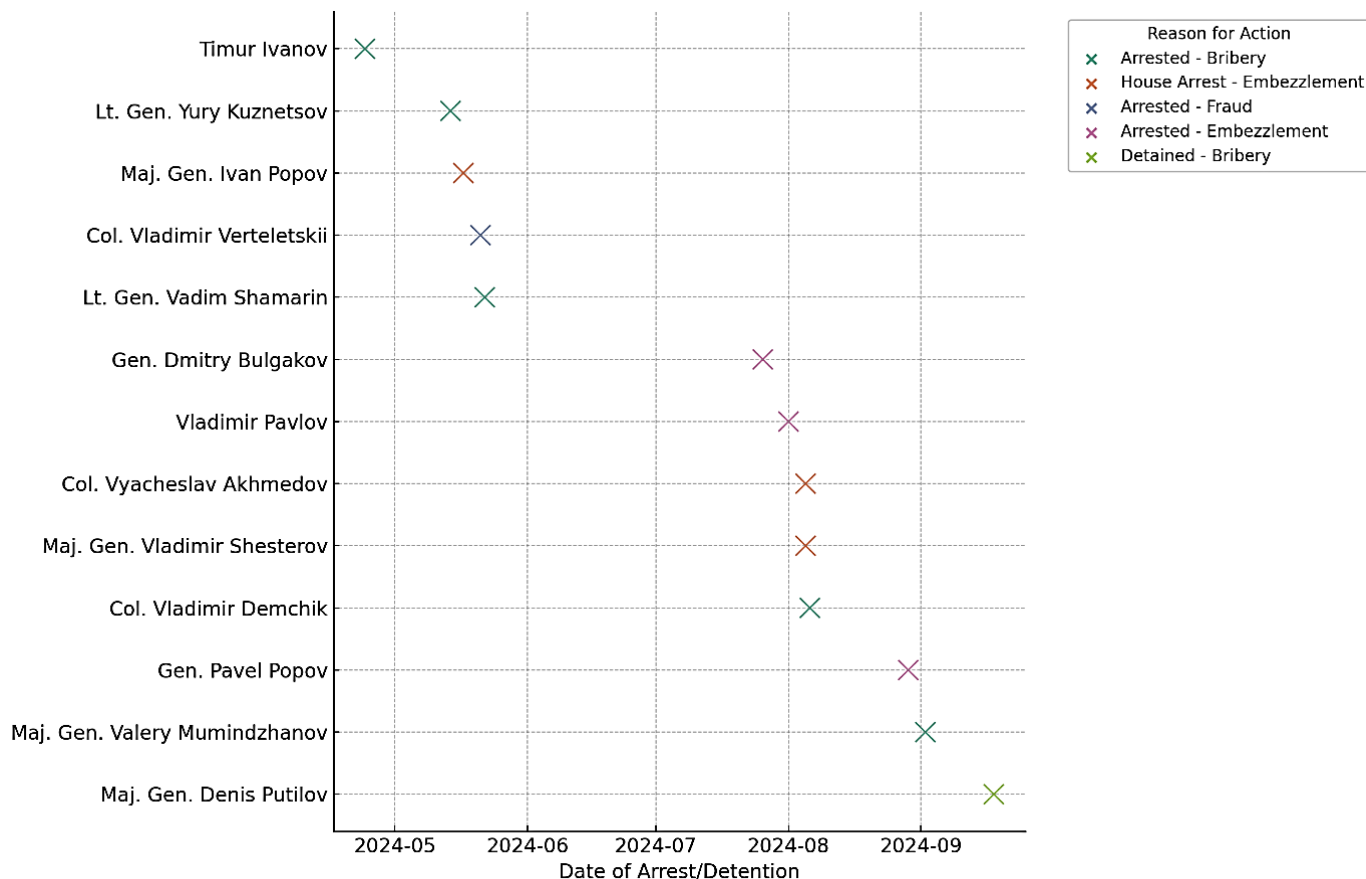
⁶¹ "Nikolai Pankov Appointed State Secretary of the Ministry of Defense [Nikolai Pankov naznachén stats-sekretarem Minoborony]," *Kommersant*, Sept. 19, 2005, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/986388>.

⁶² "The Defense Ministry Is Leaving the Only Female Deputy Minister [Minoborony pokidaet edinstvennaya zhenshchina-zamministra]," RBC, June 1, 2012, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/01/06/2012/5703f8619a7947ac81a68904>.

⁶³ "The Ministry of Finance Explained the Appearance of Another First Deputy to Siluanov [Minfin ob'iasnil poiyavlenie eshche odnogo pervogo zamestitel'ya u Siluanova]," *Vedomosti*, May 28, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180528182925/https://www.vedomosti.ru/economics/news/2018/05/28/770933-minfin-obyasnil-poyavlenie-eshe-odnogo-pervogo-zamestitel'ya-u-siluanova>.

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Figure 2. Timeline of criminal cases against senior military officials



Source: CNA, based on "General Popov's Term and Cases on Other Defense Ministry Officials, RBC, Apr. 8, 2024, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/30/08/2024/66d0b0689a7947d54fce35a3>.

military property. In addition, Belousov appointed Oleg Saveliev as his chief of staff and deputy minister of defense instead of Shoigu's old assistant, Yuri Sadovenko. Saveliev also comes from the civilian world. He began his political career in the mid-1990s, working on election campaigns for the pro-government party "Our Home – Russia" and later as a political consultant for Boris Yeltsin and regional

candidates such as Vladimir Yakovlev and General Alexander Lebed.⁶⁴ From 2008 to 2014, Saveliev served as deputy minister of economic development, including under now–Defense Minister Belousov, and was likely involved in defense-related projects. In 2009, he made comments about the destruction of Russian chemical weapons.⁶⁵ Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Saveliev was appointed

⁶⁴ "Oleg Savelyev, Auditor of the Accounts Chamber, Became a Deputy at the Defense Ministry [Oleg Savel'ev, auditor Schëtnoï palaty, stal zamom v Minoborony]," Verstka, May 21, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250228093338/https://verstka.media/oleg-saveliev-deputy-minister-of-defence>.

⁶⁵ "Russia Will Have Destroyed 45% of All Chemical Weapons Stockpiles by the End of This Year [V Rossii budet unichtozheno 45% ot vseh zapasov khimicheskogo oruzhiâ k kontsu ètogo goda]," Interfax, Dec. 17, 2009, <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/115397>.

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minister for Crimean affairs. From 2018 to 2019, he served as the Accounts Chamber's chief of staff and as an auditor, overseeing inspections in the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and State Courier Service. Saveliev will likely become a key administrative supporter for Belousov in the MOD, ensuring that his decisions are implemented across the ministry.

Military-industrial elites

A relatively unreported feature of Shoigu's dismissal was the fact that he became the deputy chairman of the MI Commission and curator of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSVTS, a military-industrial cooperation with foreign partners) in addition to the secretary of the National Security Council. These appointments keep the former defense minister, a close ally of Putin, in an influential position between the presidential, military, and civilian coalitions while removing his responsibility for developments in the war. The FSVTS was even resubordinated from the MOD to the presidential administration together with Shoigu.⁶⁶

The MI Commission includes a collegium, the principal coordinating body responsible for aligning federal executive agencies and military-industrial elites on matters related to the defense-industrial sector. Its functions include supporting science and technology development for national defense and security, overseeing the export control of military and dual-use goods, managing the economy's mobilization readiness, shaping the state defense order, and ensuring the implementation of government decisions.⁶⁷

The Commission acts as a platform for dialogue and cooperation between the industrial representatives of the civilian coalition, government officials, military representatives, and the representatives of the presidential coalition. Its composition reflects the immediate priorities of the military-industrial policy because it gives an opportunity for the participants to solve bottlenecks and discuss production issues quicker and more easily than through the traditional government bodies. After the appointment of the new minister of defense, the collegium of the MI Commission was expanded to include the suppliers of the ground forces more widely.

The collegium of the MI Commission is a permanent body under the government tasked with managing the commission's activities and implementing state policy in the defense-industrial sector. It is chaired by the President of Russia, with the deputy chairman of the Security Council serving as first deputy chair.

Its main responsibilities include coordinating government actions in defense policy, overseeing military exports, managing mobilization planning, resolving interagency disputes on arms development and procurement, and setting the commission's agenda. The collegium has the authority to summon officials, demand documentation, assign tasks, and propose disciplinary actions for noncompliance. Its decisions are binding on all federal executive bodies. The collegium operates through scheduled meetings or

⁶⁶ "Putin Fires Shoigu as Defense Minister - and Transfers Him to the Security Council. The New Head of the Military Department Will Be Economist Andrei Belousov [Putin uvolil Shoigu s posta ministra oborony — i perevel v Sovbez Novy m glavoi voennogo vedomstva stanet ekonomist Andrei Belousov]," Meduza, May 12, 2024, <https://meduza.io/feature/2024/05/12/putin-uvolil-shoigu-s-posta-ministra-oborony-i-perevel-v-sovbez>.

⁶⁷ "Collegium of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation [Kollegiia Voenno-promyshlennoi komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii]," Government of Russia, accessed Apr. 2, 2025, <http://government.ru/departament/628/about/>.

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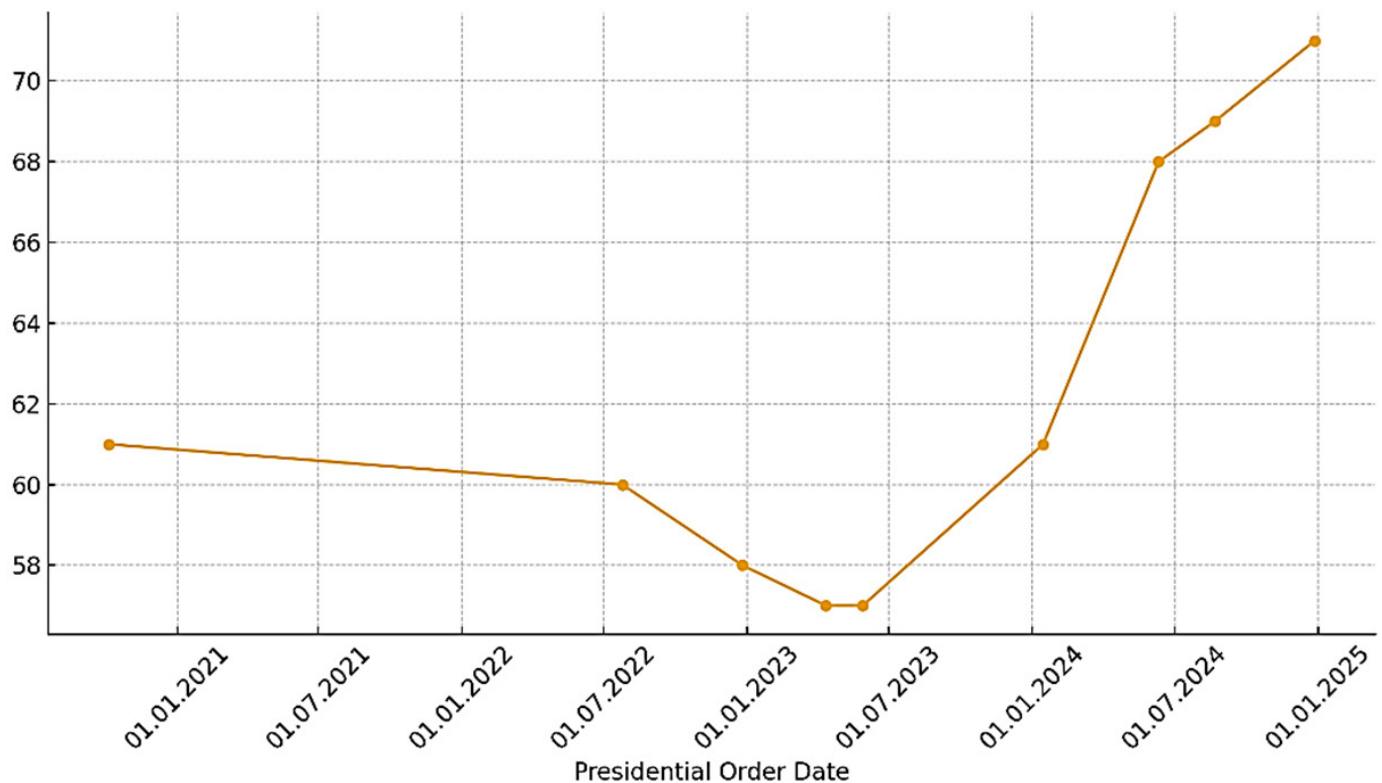
written procedures and is supported by a dedicated office within the government and a Scientific-Technical Council. Overall, it serves as the top coordinating authority for Russia's defense-industrial complex and national security programs.

The dynamics of the collegium of the MI Commission illustrate the changing priorities of Russian defense policy and the shift toward a more diversified representation of the MIC in Russian civil-military relations under Minister Belousov. The average size of the collegium has historically been about 60 members (not everybody participated in all the meetings), but in 2024, the collegium expanded to

more than 70 members (Figure 3; see Appendix A for the full list). There are 35 core members of the collegium, including major state corporations such as Rostech, Russian Helicopters, and Rosatom; the MOD; the FSB; Rosgvardia; MVD; and specialized agencies such as Federal Antimonopoly Service and Rostekhnadzor (The Federal Service for Ecological, Technological, and Atomic Supervision). Scientific organizations such as Russian Federal Nuclear Center and Russian Foundation for Advanced Research Projects have also always been part of the MI Commission collegium.

In the summer of 2022, Deputy Prime Minister and ex-Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov became chairman of the MI Commission. Manturov

Figure 3. Number of MI Commission members



Source: "Collegium of the Military-Industrial Commission."

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replaced Yuri Borisov, who spent his post-service career in the post-Soviet MIC, the MOD, and as deputy prime minister. Borisov went on to head Roscosmos. Manturov is one of Russia's richest officials, allegedly making a fortune from the privatization of the post-Soviet MIC, state contracts, and his wife, a plastic surgeon.⁶⁸ He claimed that his goal as the deputy prime minister is to ensure technological sovereignty in the interest of Russian industrial companies.⁶⁹

Before Belousov, the MI Commission's focus was on resolving missile and naval issues. The 2022 Commission introduced a set of aerospace, naval, government, and FSB entities, and 2023 saw the addition of a specialized navigation technology institute. In 2024, especially after Belousov's appointment, a wide spectrum of organizations involved in small arms and complex defense technologies and high-level administrative bodies joined the collegium. Large post-Soviet military-industrial players still dominate, despite the practical importance of more than 850 small private-sector initiatives that have supplied the Russian armed forces with crowdfunded equipment throughout the war.⁷⁰

In particular, in 2022, two organizations, Northern Design and Engineering Bureau and Roscosmos, were added, and the Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities was removed. Roscosmos manages Russia's spaceflight programs from launch vehicles to satellite development; RKK Energiya reappeared on the list after a short break

between July and December 2022. Overall, the 2022 MIC collegium included major missile and air defense entities that specialize in radar, propulsion, and guidance systems (Almaz-Antei, Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, and Tactical Missile Technology Corporation). Three naval design bureaus (Malakhit, Severnoye Design Bureau, and Rubin Central Design Bureau) focus on developing submarines, surface warships, and maritime technologies. Last, the Center of Special Technology of the FSB, which works with modern surveillance and intelligence systems, also joined the collegium. In 2023, only the Institute of Navigational Technologies was added. It specializes in research and development (R&D) of navigation and geolocation solutions, including satellite-based guidance.

The appointment of Belousov in 2024 indicated a shift toward ground forces in the composition of the collegium. The group included small arms and drone manufacturer Kalashnikov; specialized armored vehicle and missile developers (KB Machinostroeniya, NPO Splav, Central R&D Institute Burevestnik, NPO Strela, and the Ural Design Bureau of Transport Machine Building); and R&D house Evrika, which specializes in sensor technology, electronics, and control systems. In addition, the Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities, which develops secure data processing, software, and specialized IT systems, was included again. Their work ranges from modernizing weaponry and vehicles to pioneering aerospace,

⁶⁸ Sergei Ezhov, "Money - by KAMAZ. What Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov Earns Hundreds of Millions on [Den'gi — KAMAZami. Na chem zarabatyvaet sotni millionov vitse-prem'er Denis Manturov]," The Insider, Feb. 10, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/https://theins.ru/en/corruption/259298>.

⁶⁹ "Manturov Announced a Move Away from Market-Oriented Industrial Policy [Manturov anonsiroval ukhod ot rynochnoi promyshlennoi politiki]," RBC, July 15, 2022, https://web.archive.org/web/20240806233515/https://www.rbc.ru/economics/15/07/2022/62d13a1f9a79476ad8ac4709?from=newsfeed?utm_source=telegram&utm_medium=messenger.

⁷⁰ "Russia's Defense Industry 2024: Balanced Innovative Development, Technology and Efficiency [OPK Rossii 2024: sbalansirovannoe innovatsionnoe razvitie, tekhnologii i i éffektivnost'," TSR Media, accessed Apr. 27, 2025, <https://tsrmedia.ru/analitika/opk-rossii-2024-sbalansirovannoe-innovatsionnoe-razvitie-tehnologii-i-effektivnost-.html>.

drone, and IT systems. The collegium also included new governance bodies, such the Duma Committee on Industry and Trade and the Scientific and Technical Council of the MI Commission. The Office of the President for State Policy in the MIC was also included.

Societal perceptions and public opinion

Although Russian public opinion is unlikely to empower a coalition for political change, it has acted as a barometer of the presidential coalition's grasp over the developments in the country. However, public opinion in Russia became a focal point of debate following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Politicians and analysts questioned the extent of popular support for the war, the reasons behind the support, and the potential policy consequences. This discussion has been largely manipulated and unproductive. In democracies, public opinion can indirectly shape the actions of elected officials and government agencies by strengthening those aligned with shifting sentiments while weakening opponents.⁷¹ In Russia, public opinion plays a marginal role because the presidential coalition possesses extensive mechanisms to manage and manipulate it.

Russian resilience to public opinion shifts operates in three key domains. First, civil-military relations in Russia had become insulated from civilian influence well before the invasion. The armed forces and the presidential coalition are structurally protected from external pressures, limiting their responsiveness to shifts in public sentiment. Second, the Russian military has historically demonstrated

unwavering loyalty to political leadership, even during the unstable and economically poor 1990s. Lastly, this obedience is continually reinforced through cultural norms that prioritize hierarchical discipline over democratic norms.

A potential counterfactual, when a dramatic shift in public opinion challenges the war effort, would likely see the military continue its operations while cracks appear within the civilian and presidential coalitions. However, the Kremlin has preemptively undermined this possibility through systematic repression and co-optation of actors who might otherwise leverage public discontent for political change.

Nevertheless, Russia exhibited certain shifts in public opinion, along with the presence of select civil-military actors who have persistently sought to influence it. The following section outlines how these actors have attempted to leverage societal perceptions within a highly constrained political environment that generally limits such initiatives.

Survey data on public opinion

One of the startling characteristics of this war is its level of casualties, one unseen by Western militaries since the Vietnam and Korean wars. Theoretically, casualties incurred in external wars tend to empower the military relative to civilian authorities because of the interplay among media coverage, public opinion, and domestic politics. When intervention operations result in significant casualties, the opposition and media raise concerns about the war's objectives, as well as the strategic guidance provided by civilians. Senior military officials are often seen as the most credible respondents to these issues, thereby gaining an enhanced public and political role.⁷²

⁷¹ Jonathan J. Pierce, Holly L. Peterson, and Katherine C. Hicks, "Policy Change: An Advocacy Coalition Framework Perspective," *Policy Studies Journal* 48, no. 1 (2020), doi: 10.1111/psj.12223.

⁷² Anit Mukherjee, "'Every Death Matters?': Combat Casualties, Role Conception, and Civilian Control," *European Journal of International Security* 7, no. 1 (2022), doi: 10.1017/eis.2021.28.

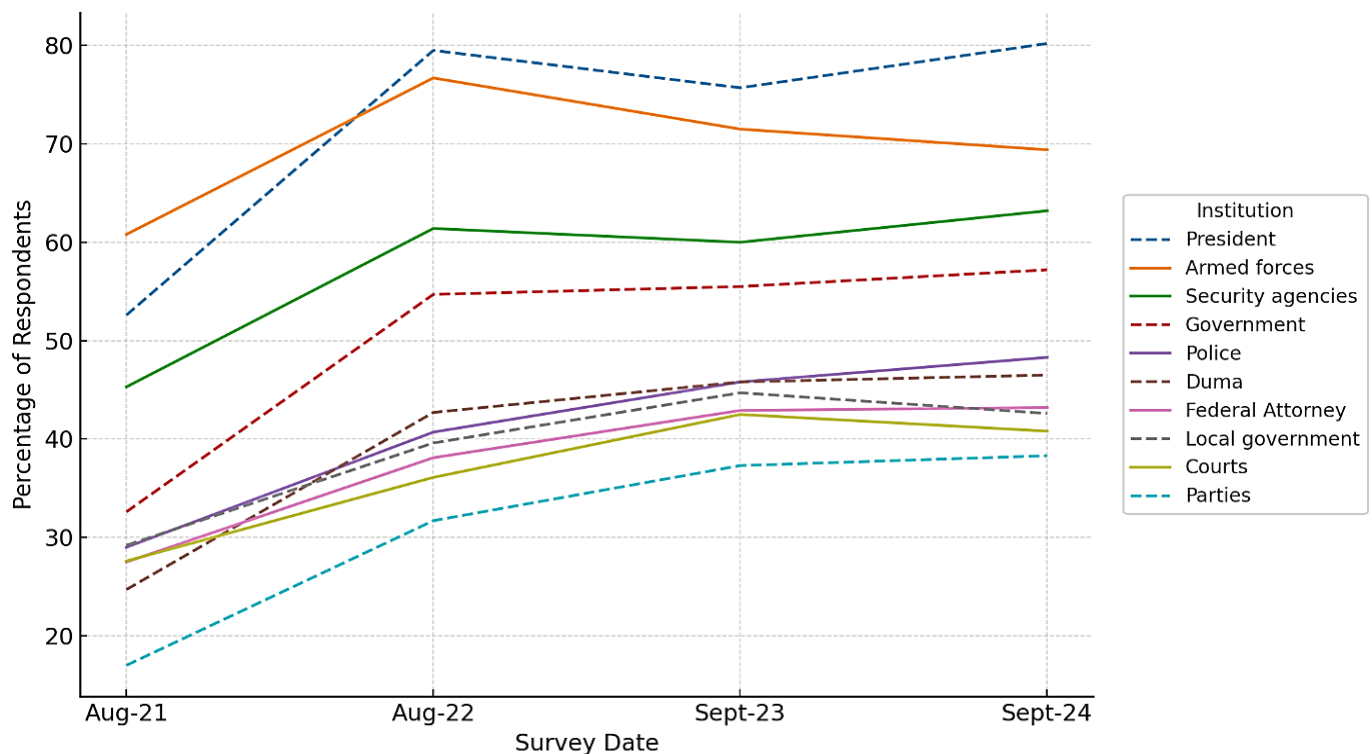
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In Russia, the empowerment of the military seemingly did not happen. Although the Russian military remains the second most trusted public institution in the country after the president, the military has not become significantly more autonomous or influential outside the scope of the permitted war mandate.⁷³ Although casualties generally reduce support for military interventions, Russian public willingness to accept wartime costs has offset that effect. The effect of casualties is conditioned by the perceived benefits of war, the threat level, public approval of the war's objectives, elite consensus, and the military's social profile.⁷⁴ As discussed

previously, the Kremlin has greatly emphasized its delivery of the benefits for participating in the war to the combatants, veterans, and their family members.

In addition, the full-scale invasion triggered a growth in support for the armed forces and security agencies (Figure 4). All government institutions, especially the president, received a "rally around the flag" effect. The lack of elite opposition to the war further prevented any opposition from the public. However, Russian public trust in the armed forces has slightly declined since August 2022 despite the legal prohibition to criticize the armed forces. The Russian military's performance, corruption cases

Figure 4. Trust in government institutions



Source: Levada Center, *Institutional and Interpersonal Trust*.

⁷³ Levada Center, *Institutional and Interpersonal Trust: September 2024* [Institucional'n oe i mezlichnostnoe doverie: sentâbr' 2024], Oct. 24, 2024, <https://www.levada.ru/2024/10/24/institutsionalnoe-i-mezhlichnostnoe-doverie-sentyabr-2024/>.

⁷⁴ Yagil Levy, "How Casualty Sensitivity Affects Civilian Control: The Israeli Experience," *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 1 (2011), doi: 10.1111/j.1528-3585.2010.00420.x.

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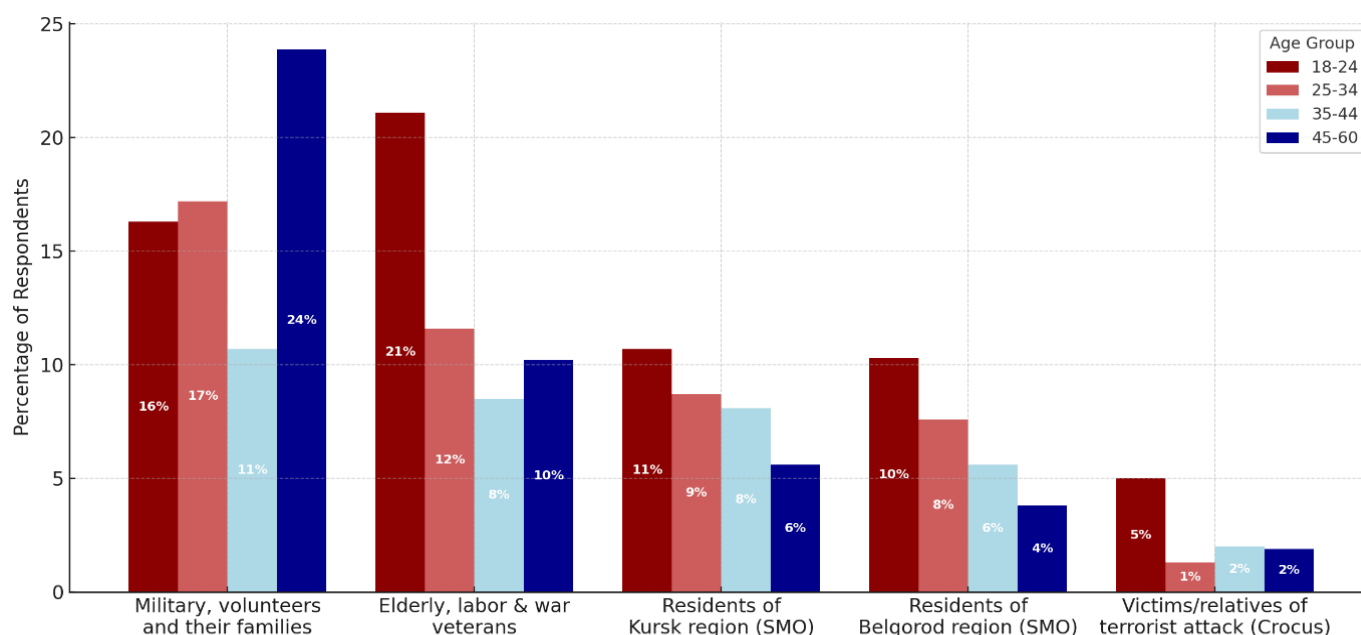
against senior MOD officials, and the announcement of the partial mobilization have likely contributed to the slight decline in trust.

The Russian armed forces have historically enjoyed a high level of public trust, however, even in the early 2000s when hazing and catastrophes were common. Instead of reflecting actual support for the armed forces, these results show an ideational perception of the military as the guarantor of Russian security and national sovereignty. A more reliable indicator is the scale of donations to the Russian military (Figure 5). About 10 percent of Russian adults expressed their support for the military and the war by donating money to war-related organizations. In 2024, 64 percent of Russians indicated that they supported charitable

organizations.⁷⁵ Of these 64 percent, about 16 percent donated to frontline military support organizations in 2024. Those aged 45 to 60 especially showed a preference for supporting military-related causes, with significantly higher contributions to soldiers than to Russian civilians affected by the war. Donations to regional populations (Kursk and Belgorod regions) and victims of the terrorist attack in Moscow remained relatively low across all age groups.

These donations turned out to be lifesaving for the Russian troops. One military blogger and warfighter reported that he collected 135.23 million rubles (about USD 1.45 million) in the 2023–2024 period alone with the help of Russian businesspeople, governors, cryptotraders, and ordinary citizens.⁷⁶

Figure 5. Donations by age group in 2024



Source: "Almsgiving, Aid to the Military."

⁷⁵ "Almsgiving, Aid to the Military and Distrust of Foundations. What Was Happening to Russian Philanthropy in 2024 [Milostynia, pomoshch' voennym i nedoverie k fondam. Chto proiskhodilo s rossiiskoi blagotvoritel'nost'iu v 2024 godu]," *Yesli byt tochnym*, Feb. 5, 2025, <https://tochno.st/materials/milostynia-pomoshh-voennym-i-nedoverie-k-fondam-cto-proiskhodilo-s-rossiiskoi-blagotvoritelnosti-v-2024-godu>.

⁷⁶ Diomeddog, Telegram post, Jan. 13, 2025, <https://t.me/diomeddog/3925>.

These funds helped procure drones, vehicles, personal protective equipment, medicine, and other similar goods.

Support in the information space

The effectiveness of donations was largely due to the war becoming a fertile ground for the rise of a network of pro-war military bloggers, often referred to as “Z-bloggers.” With followings on Telegram often reaching the hundreds of thousands, these semiautonomous figures, including some active combatants, provided updates from the front lines, criticized military leadership occasionally, and organized donation campaigns to support the troops. Avoiding direct criticism of political authorities allowed them to disseminate more realistic narratives about the war without crossing red lines. Putin responded by embracing these bloggers, holding private meetings with them and formally recognizing their role. This low-level co-optation served to reinforce public support for the war, channeling frustration away from the Kremlin without giving government responsibilities to the bloggers. As a security measure, as of January 10, 2025, all bloggers with more than 10,000 followers are required to register their identities with Russia’s digital watchdog or face administrative penalties.⁷⁷ Anonymity is no longer guaranteed for big Russian players in the blogosphere.

Russia’s strongest control over public opinion is rooted in its dominance of mainstream media, particularly national television, which reaches more than 98 percent of the population with more than 60 percent generally trusting it (Figure 6).⁷⁸ Historically, one of the first victims of state control over broadcasting was the ORT channel and journalist Sergei Dorenko, who was fired for broadcasting a program highly critical of Putin after the Kursk nuclear submarine disaster in 2000.⁷⁹ The Kremlin then reasserted political control over major broadcasters and universally dismantled independent Russia-based media outlets.⁸⁰

The power of TV is very strong, and TV has remained the main and most trusted source of news for Russian society since before the war. A recent study showed that even mild exposure to state narratives in the media raised public support for the war against Ukraine from 8 percent to as high as 59 percent among pro-Putin respondents. Propaganda leverages fear, anger, and nationalist sentiment, portraying Putin as a protective leader.⁸¹

Data from March 2024 show a notable difference in media trust between the youngest and oldest groups of Russian society (Figure 7). Younger Russians trust Telegram channels and social media as much as they trust television. This generational divide poses a challenge to the Russian propaganda machine. Younger Russians raised in the digital age are the prime candidates for serving in the military, but they are less influenced by television propaganda than older generations.

⁷⁷ “Registration of Bloggers with More Than 10 Thousand Subscribers: The Procedure for Maintaining the List Has Been Published [Registratsiia blogerov s bolee 10 tys. podpischikov: opublikovan por iadok vedeniia perechnia],” Consultant Plus, Jan. 5, 2025, <https://www.consultant.ru/legalnews/27463/>.

⁷⁸ “Television in Russia: Statistics & Facts,” Statista, Dec. 23, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/topics/6724/television-in-russia/>.

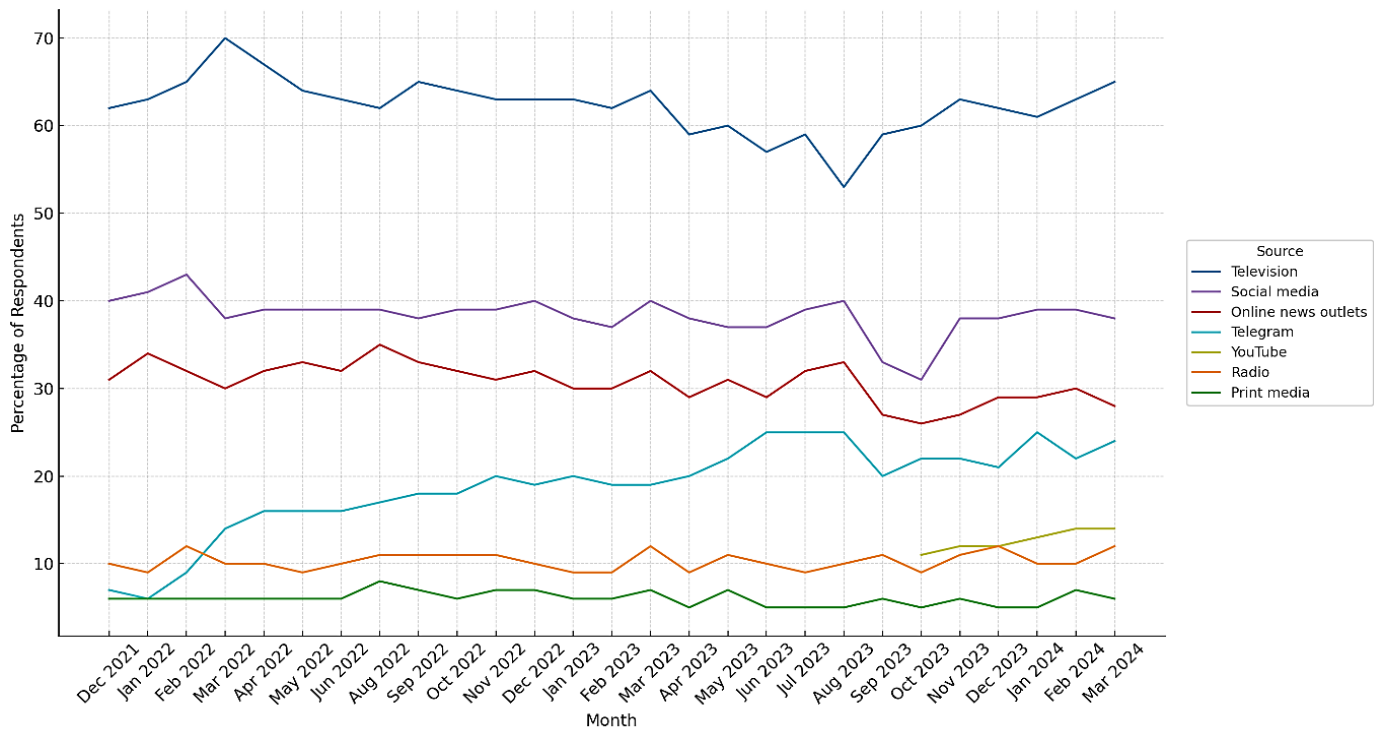
⁷⁹ Mira Livadina, “25 Years of Restrained Silence. How Putin Reacts to Terrorist Attacks and Other Tragedies in Russia. A Detailed Retrospective from Novaya Gazeta Europe [25 let sderzhannogo molchaniia. Kak Putin reagiruet na terakty i drug ie tragedii v Rossii. Podrobnaia retrospektiva ot «Novoi gazety Evropa»],” *Novaya Gazeta Europa*, Mar. 25, 2024, <https://novyagazeta.eu/articles/2024/03/25/25-let-sderzhannogo-molchaniia>.

⁸⁰ Maya Vinokour, “Russia’s Media Is Now Totally in Putin’s Hands,” *Foreign Policy*, Apr. 5, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/05/russia-media-independence-putin/>.

⁸¹ Suthan Krishnarajan and Jakob Tolstrup, “Pre-War Experimental Evidence That Putin’s Propaganda Elicited Strong Support for Military Invasion Among Russians,” *Science Advances* 9, no. 45 (2023), doi: 10.1126/sciadv.adg1199.

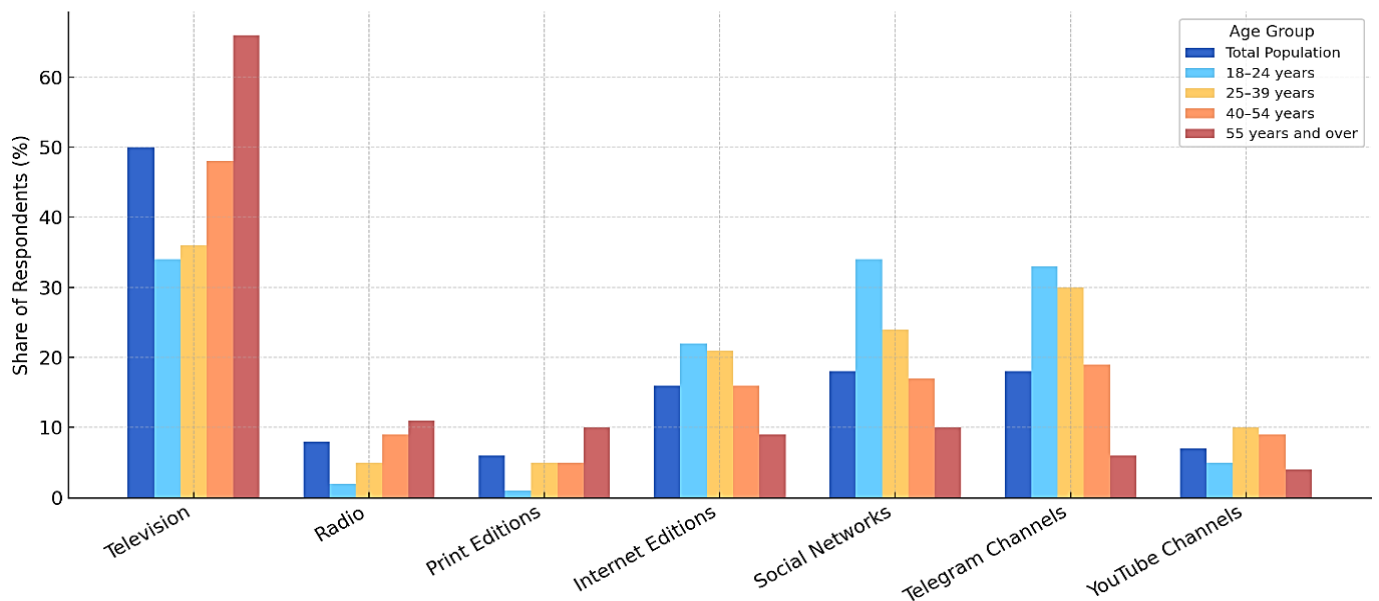
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Figure 6. Primary sources of news over time



Source: Levada Center, *The Role of Television and the Internet as the Main Sources of News and the Top Most Popular Russian Journalists*, Apr. 18, 2024, <https://www.levada.ru/2024/04/18/rol-televideniya-i-interneta-kak-glavnyh-istochnikov-novostej-i-top-naibolee-populyarnyh-rossijskih-zhurnalistov/>.

Figure 7. Media trust by age, March 2024



Source: Levada Center, *The Role of Television and the Internet*.

In response, the Kremlin has intensified its efforts to control Russian school and university education to instill a more patriotic and statist belief system in the new generation. In 2022, Putin ordered expanded military propaganda in schools, with patriotic education funding jumping 510 percent, from \$70 million to \$430 million. The program includes weekly “Conversations About Important Things,” basic military training, and curriculum changes that vilify Ukraine and glorify Russian soldiers.⁸² In the 2024–2025 school year, more than 12 percent of total classroom hours in public schools have included content promoting Kremlin narratives (a value that has tripled since 2022). This expansion supports the introduction of new history textbooks, the reshaping of civics education, and new directives targeting social science instruction.⁸³ In 2023, the government rewrote the history curriculum to emphasize Russia’s geopolitical justification for the invasion of Ukraine. Social studies classes have been repurposed to promote Russia’s political system and anti-Western ideologies.⁸⁴

Propaganda and school education explicitly work to increase ideological support for the war (Figure 8). Some opponents of negotiations with Ukraine demonstrate the sunk costs effect (“we must finish what we started,” 41 percent) or ideological imperialist or anti-Ukrainian positions (13 to 14 percent). Others disagree with the peace talks in general because they do not believe that they will be effective (12 percent). The pro-negotiation camp tends to cite similar reasons but this time for ending the war, such as high casualties or ideologically anti-war pacifist views.

Potential developments in Russian civil-military relations

The war with Ukraine has accelerated shifts in Russian civil-military relations, reinforcing the power of the presidential coalition, increasing civilian militarization, and expanding efforts to improve military cohesion and effectiveness. This trajectory is expected to persist in the coming several years.

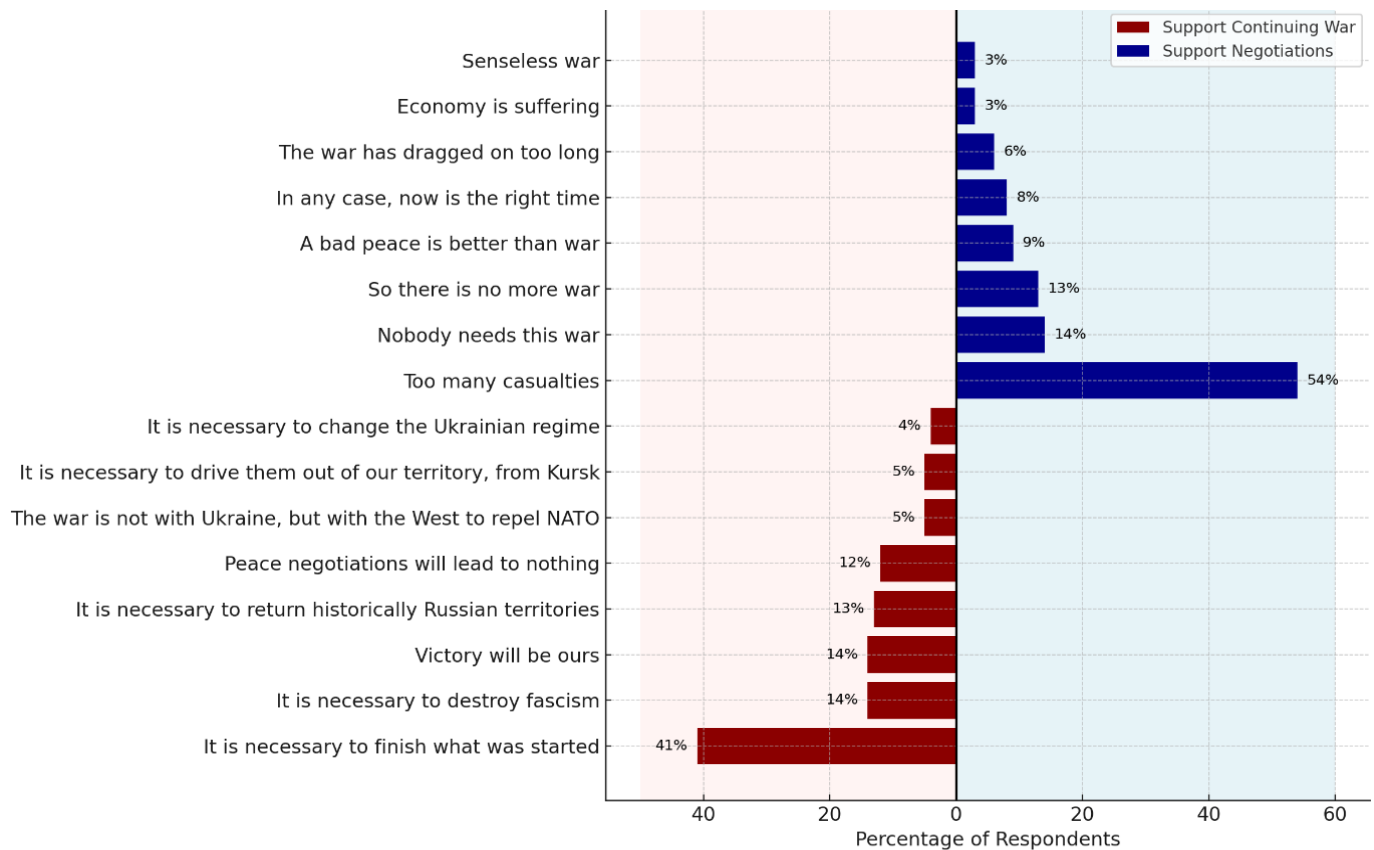
This report analyzed how the Kremlin and the representatives of the civilian coalition adopted numerous legal, regulatory, institutional, and elite changes to keep the elites and the public under control and the defense machinery running. Therefore, it is likely that the Kremlin will keep asserting its dominance over the military and civilian coalitions because it keeps the regime stable and resilient to unprecedented external (the war and sanctions) and internal (mutiny and partial mobilization) shocks. Wartime repressive measures and censorship produced positive spillover effects for the regime, making criticism of the president virtually illegal. The presidential coalition and the representatives of the civilian coalition from the State Duma are expected to continue codifying restrictive norms to root out antisystemic attitudes within society, including in the veteran and military communities. Gradual recruitment of war veterans for civilian government jobs, combined with targeted welfare benefits and incentives for loyalist constituencies, suggests the institutionalization of a militarized civil-military framework reminiscent of Soviet-era functions, albeit under a modernized market-oriented guise. Independent information channels, including those on

⁸² Alla Hurksa, “Generation Z: Russia’s Militarization of Children,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 20, no. 134 (2023), <https://jamestown.org/program/generation-z-russias-militarization-of-children/>.

⁸³ Dima Kortukov and Julian G. Waller, “The Foundations of Russian Statehood: The Pentabasis, National History, and Civic Values in Wartime Russia,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2024), doi: 10.1525/cpcs.2024.2271407; Allyson Edwards and Jennifer G. Mathers, “Anyone Can Be a Hero: the Militarization of Children in Putin’s Russia,” *International Affairs* 101, no. 2 (2025), doi: 10.1093/ia/iaae329.

⁸⁴ “Russian Schools Will Be Able to Spend a Record 1,300 Hours on Propaganda [Rossiiskie shkoly smogut potratit’ na propagandu rekordnye 1300 chasov],” *Agentstvo*, Sept. 2, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250331194552/https://www.agents.media/rossiiskie-shkoly-smogut-potratit-na-propagandu-rekordnye-1300-chasov/>.

Figure 8. Support for war versus negotiations



Source: Levada Center, *Conflict with Ukraine: Attention, Support, Attitude Towards Negotiations and Possible Concessions, Opinion on Various Conditions of the Peace Agreement in February 2025*, Feb. 28, 2025, <https://www.levada.ru/2025/02/28/konflikt-s-ukrainoj-vnimanie-podderzhka-otnoshenie-k-peregovoram-i-vozmozhnym-ustupkam-mnenie-o-razlichnyh-usloviyah-mirnogo-soglasheniya-v-fevrale-2025-goda/>.

the state of the armed forces, will likely be suppressed further through deanonymization, import substitution (e.g., VK replacing YouTube), and the consolidation of control over platforms such as Telegram.

The growing competition for human resources among the armed forces, the MIC, and the civilian economy will likely keep generating tensions. The conflict will be shaped by the existing parameters of Russian civil-military relations: the competition between strategic military and security goals and socioeconomic demands. The MOD has increased the

total size of the armed forces to 2.4 million, including 1.5 million servicemembers, placing additional pressure on the national labor pool. Simultaneously, the government is offering financial incentives to attract workers to the MIC, further diverting talent from civilian sectors already facing a shortage of qualified personnel. High inflation and the risk of an economic downturn, particularly if energy prices decline, may further limit the government's capacity to balance the diverging needs of the military, the MIC, and the broader civilian economy.

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To solve this problem, the presidential coalition is promoting deeper collaboration with civilian enterprises, particularly in drone production. However, this strategy places additional burdens on Russia's military education system and increases competition for highly skilled specialists. The armed forces will need to recruit large numbers of IT experts, electrical engineers, and operators, straining current personnel pipelines. These roles, previously confined to strategic, missile, radar, and communications forces, will likely expand horizontally across military structures. Keeping war veterans in the military will alleviate some immediate pressure on retention and recruitment, and school propaganda will support the recruitment of younger specialists in the armed forces.

In the military coalition, the departure of CGS Valery Gerasimov is anticipated by some but remains uncertain. Gerasimov has led the Russian military for more than a decade, delivering several strategic achievements for the Kremlin. These include the annexation of Crimea, effective military interventions in Syria and Kazakhstan, the expansion of Russia's presence in Africa, the growing influence and politicization of military intelligence, and the formal annexation of multiple Ukrainian regions. Although the war in Ukraine has exposed significant shortcomings within the armed forces, responsibility for battlefield failures cannot be attributed to

Gerasimov alone. His long-standing loyalty and contributions continue to offer him a high degree of protection. However, the evolving nature of warfare and the ongoing Russian military reform may require a leadership transition toward an officer better suited to meet new structural and technological demands. Moreover, the influx of war veterans in command positions will require new leadership. Nonetheless, one requirement remains constant: any successor must demonstrate unwavering loyalty to the Russian political system and its foreign policy objectives. The change of the CGS could trigger a reshuffling of the military coalition, leading to cascading effects throughout Russian civil-military relations.

Overall, Russian civil-military relations have settled into a new equilibrium. The presidential coalition dominates, with the military firmly subordinated to the state and operating in close coordination with the president. Lower tier political actors have been integrated into the presidential structure, limiting their independent influence. However, the competition for resources between military and civilian industrial actors could make the conflicts within Russian civil-military relations more acute. Although the system remains largely insulated from external pressures, the emergence of socioeconomic challenges could strain the cohesion of the presidential coalition or undermine the military's capacity to implement state directives.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how wartime developments have reshaped Russian civil-military relations and altered the distribution of power among the president, the military, and civilian actors. The report analyzed legal, institutional, elite, and societal changes between 2022 and 2025. Overall, the findings indicate that civil-military relations in Russia have become more centralized under presidential authority than at any previous point. Politically, the war with Ukraine has reinforced the strength of the Russian regime. However, growing socioeconomic challenges remain difficult to ignore and will likely persist as a key source of tension in Russian politics.

Russian leadership has effectively employed a carrot-and-stick strategy, combining legal repression with targeted welfare benefits. On one hand, public criticism of the military or the government's actions in Ukraine is criminalized and subject to punishment, and independent sources of information are largely confined to the online sphere and have limited influence, particularly among older demographics. On the other hand, the state provides extensive benefits to war participants, veterans, and their families, as well as significant financial incentives through war-related procurement contracts. This dual approach has significantly weakened the civilian coalition, which is now virtually absent apart from a handful of soldiers' rights groups and semiautonomous military bloggers.

The institutional response to wartime pressures lagged, contributing to the conditions that enabled the Wagner Group's mutiny, which risked destabilizing the entire Russian state. However, the Kremlin successfully halted Prigozhin's advance before it reached Moscow, avoiding a potentially devastating urban conflict in the capital. In the aftermath, Wagner's leadership, including Prigozhin,

was eliminated in a plane crash, and remaining volunteer and mercenary formations were formally absorbed into state structures. Simultaneously, President Putin took steps to strengthen government cohesion and improve the welfare system for war participants and their families by launching the Defenders of the Fatherland foundation. The military also began gradual institutional reforms in response to battlefield shortcomings and Finland and Sweden joining NATO.

Russia's political elite is undergoing a controlled transformation. A series of corruption cases against military officials appear aimed at both reducing mismanagement and consolidating loyalty within the armed forces. The appointment of Belousov as defense minister was reinforced by the selection of allegedly more competent civilian deputies with close ties to the presidency and Ministry of Finance. Belousov has also rebalanced relations with the MIC, prioritizing ground force-oriented industries within coordination bodies.

Speculation about the political role of war veterans remains largely premature. Only a small number have transitioned into civilian roles, often symbolic positions with limited real power. Nonetheless, the potential influence of veterans may rise in the post-war period, particularly as they move up the military command ladder or economic pressures create opportunities for them to serve the interests of both state and private actors, often illegally.

Finally, Russian society has largely adapted to the state's wartime policies and will likely accept any outcome that the Kremlin deems favorable. Although only a minority of citizens provided active monetary support for the war effort, their material and financial contributions were critical, helping to

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sustain the Russian armed forces during their most vulnerable phases and continuing to fill procurement and logistical gaps to this day.

The analysis of Russian civil-military relations provides important insights into one of the key structural pillars holding the Russian Federation together as a political project—its military. Following the initial shocks of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin was able to maintain control over the civil-military sphere and adapt to the evolving wartime environment. However, this stability is contingent on the state's ability to accumulate sufficient resources to implement presidential directives. The war has raised the stakes, placing growing pressure on the political system. Failure to secure the necessary financial and institutional support may trigger cascading disruptions across civil-military relations.

At the same time, international conditions may be shifting in Moscow's favor. President Donald Trump's willingness to negotiate a deal with Russia over Ukraine could potentially ease some of the external pressure on the Kremlin. The restoration of economic ties between Russia and the West would significantly benefit Moscow.

The Russian case thus provides a cautionary yet instructive example for other states contemplating high-stakes military interventions. It underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to strategic planning that goes beyond traditional assessments of military power. The analytical framework adopted

in this study may serve as a model for evaluating civil-military relations in other contexts. By identifying internal vulnerabilities and examining how other states adapt to external shocks, governments can better insulate themselves from instability and ensure continuity in their military operations and policies.

This study does not claim to offer an exhaustive or definitive analysis of Russian civil-military relations. It lacks firsthand empirical data, which ideally would be gathered through interviews and analysis of internal government data. Furthermore, because the full-scale invasion of Ukraine is ongoing at the time of writing, the battlefield trajectory could alter political and institutional developments within Russia. These evolving dynamics are not included in the current analysis because doing so would require a comparative analysis of Ukrainian civil-military relations, including the level of sustained Western support for Kyiv's defense of its sovereignty and national security.

Nonetheless, this report aims to contribute to a growing interest in civil-military relations within Europe that warrants greater attention from scholars and policy-makers. As European states seek to enhance their defense capabilities and, in some cases, consider pursuing joint military structures independent of US backing, a sober, policy-relevant understanding of the opportunities and constraints within national civil-military relations is essential.

Appendix A: List of Participants in the Military-Industrial Commission Collegium

Table 4. Commission in 2020–2022

Presidential Order of Oct. 5, 2020	Presidential Order of July 25, 2022	Presidential Order of Dec. 26, 2022
Government of the Russian Federation	Government of the Russian Federation; Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation; Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation	Government of the Russian Federation; Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation; Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation
Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation (MIC)	MIC	MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Security Council of the Russian Federation	Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Security Council of the Russian Federation
Rostekhnadzor	Security Council of the Russian Federation	State Duma Committee on Defense
Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Rostekhnadzor	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation
Rosgvardia	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"

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Presidential Order of Oct. 5, 2020	Presidential Order of July 25, 2022	Presidential Order of Dec. 26, 2022
Committee of the Federation Council on Defense and Security	Joint-Stock Company "Northern Design and Engineering Bureau"	Rostekhnadzor
Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	Rosgvardia	State Corporation "Roscosmos"
Rosrezerv	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"
Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"
Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies, and Disaster Relief	Rosrezerv	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"
Foundation for Advanced Research	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief	Joint-Stock Company "Northern Design and Engineering Bureau"
State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	Foundation for Advanced Research	Rosgvardia
Joint-Stock Company "Research Institute of Micro Devices-K"	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security
Center of the FSB of Russia	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"
Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Joint-Stock Company "Research Institute of Micro Devices-K"	Rosrezerv
Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (MOD)	FSB Center of Russia	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation

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Presidential Order of Oct. 5, 2020	Presidential Order of July 25, 2022	Presidential Order of Dec. 26, 2022
Main Directorate for Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation (GUSP)	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief
Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	MOD	Foundation for Advanced Research
Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	GUSP	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"
Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	Joint-Stock Company "Research Institute of Microptronic Devices-K"
SVR of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"
Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	SVR of Russia	MOD
Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	GUSP
Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"
Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"
FSB	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"	SVR of Russia
Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	FSB Special Equipment Center of Russia	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation

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Presidential Order of Oct. 5, 2020	Presidential Order of July 25, 2022	Presidential Order of Dec. 26, 2022
Federal Service for Technical and Export Control (FSTEC) of Russia	Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"
Federal Medical-Biological Agency (FMBA) of Russia	FSTEC of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"
Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	FMBA of Russia	Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	FSTEC of Russia
Federal State Autonomous Scientific Institution "Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities"	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	FMBA of Russia
Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Federal State Autonomous Scientific Institution "Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities"	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"
Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"
Armaments Directorate of the Federal Protective Service (FSO) of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"
Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia (FAS)	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia
Russian Science Foundation	FAS	FAS

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Presidential Order of Oct. 5, 2020	Presidential Order of July 25, 2022	Presidential Order of Dec. 26, 2022
FSB of Russia	Russian Science Foundation	Russian Science Foundation
State Duma Committee on Defense	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia
FSVTS of Russia	State Duma Committee on Defense	FSVTS
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (MVD)	FSVTS	MVD
Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	MVD	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"
	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	

Source: Government of Russia, "Board of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation," <http://government.ru/department/628/members/>.

Table 5. Commission in 2023–2024

Presidential Order of Apr. 12, 2023	Presidential Order of May 29, 2023	Presidential Order of Jan. 15, 2024
Government of the Russian Federation; Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation; MIC	Government of the Russian Federation; Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation; MIC	Government of the Russian Federation; Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation; MIC
Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"
MIC	MIC	MIC
State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"
Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation

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Presidential Order of Apr. 12, 2023	Presidential Order of May 29, 2023	Presidential Order of Jan. 15, 2024
Rosgvardia	Rosgvardia	Rosgvardia
Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security
Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"
Rosrezerv	Rosrezerv	Rosrezerv
Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation
Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief	Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief	Foundation for Advanced Research
Foundation for Advanced Research	Foundation for Advanced Research	State Duma Committee on Industry and Trade
Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"
State Duma Committee on Defense	State Duma Committee on Defense	Scientific and Technical Council of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation; MIC
Joint-Stock Company "Institute of Navigation Technologies"	Joint-Stock Company "Institute of Navigation Technologies"	State Duma Committee on Defense
Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Institute of Navigation Technologies"
Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
MOD	MOD	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"
GUSP	GUSP	MOD
Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"

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Presidential Order of Apr. 12, 2023	Presidential Order of May 29, 2023	Presidential Order of Jan. 15, 2024
Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	GUSP
SVR of Russia	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"
Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	SVR of Russia	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia
Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	SVR of Russia
Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Security Council of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"
Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation	Security Council of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific Research Institute of Precision Instruments"
FSTEC of Russia	Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation	Security Council of the Russian Federation
FMBA of Russia	FSTEC of Russia	Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	FMBA of Russia	FSTEC of Russia
Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	FMBA of Russia
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"

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Presidential Order of Apr. 12, 2023	Presidential Order of May 29, 2023	Presidential Order of Jan. 15, 2024
MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"
Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"
Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Rostekhnadzor	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"
Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia	Rostekhnadzor	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia
State Corporation "Roscosmos"	Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia	Rostekhnadzor
Russian Science Foundation	State Corporation "Roscosmos"	Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia
Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia	Russian Science Foundation	State Corporation "Roscosmos"
State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	Russian Science Foundation
FSVTS	FSVTS	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"
MVD	MVD	FSVTS
Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	MVD
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"

Source: Government of Russia, "Board of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation," <http://government.ru/departments/628/members/>.

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Table 6. Commission in 2024

Presidential Order of June 11, 2024	Presidential Order of Aug. 22, 2024	Presidential Order of Dec. 28, 2024
Government of the Russian Federation; MIC	Government of the Russian Federation; MIC	Government of the Russian Federation; MIC
Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation
MIC	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"	Joint-Stock Company "Saint Petersburg Marine Engineering Bureau 'Malachite'"
State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	MIC	MIC
Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"	State Corporation for the Promotion of Development, Production and Export of High-Tech Industrial Products "Rostech"
Rosgvardia	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department of the Defense-Industrial Complex of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	MOD	MOD
FSB of Russia	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department for Ensuring the Activities of the Administrative Bodies of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security	Russian Science Foundation	Russian Science Foundation
Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	FSB of Russia	FSB of Russia
Rosrezerv	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security	Federation Council Committee on Defense and Security

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Presidential Order of June 11, 2024	Presidential Order of Aug. 22, 2024	Presidential Order of Dec. 28, 2024
Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"	Foundation for Advanced Research
Foundation for Advanced Research	Rosrezerv	Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Federal Nuclear Center – All-Russian Scientific Research Institute of Experimental Physics"
State Duma Committee on Industry and Trade	Foundation for Advanced Research	Rosrezerv
Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	State Duma Committee on Industry and Trade	State Duma Committee on Industry and Trade
Scientific and Technical Council of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation; MIC	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"	Joint-Stock Company "State Rocket Center named after Academician V.P. Makeev"
Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'SPLAV' named after A.N. Ganichev"	Scientific and Technical Council of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation; MIC	Scientific and Technical Council of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation; MIC
Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute 'Burevestnik'"	Presidential Administration for State Policy in the Field of the Defense-Industrial Complex	Presidential Administration for State Policy in the Field of the Defense-Industrial Complex
State Duma Committee on Defense	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'SPLAV' named after A.N. Ganichev"	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'SPLAV' named after A.N. Ganichev"
Joint-Stock Company "Institute of Navigation Technologies"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute 'Burevestnik'"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute 'Burevestnik'"
Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Corporation 'Design Bureau of Mechanical Engineering'"	State Duma Committee on Defense	State Duma Committee on Defense
Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Institute of Navigation Technologies"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"

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Presidential Order of June 11, 2024	Presidential Order of Aug. 22, 2024	Presidential Order of Dec. 28, 2024
Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Corporation 'Design Bureau of Mechanical Engineering'"	Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Corporation 'Design Bureau of Mechanical Engineering'"
Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation
MOD	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"	Joint-Stock Company "Helicopters of Russia"
Joint-Stock Company "Concern 'Kalashnikov'"	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"	Public Joint-Stock Company "United Aircraft Corporation"
Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	Rosgvardia	Rosgvardia
Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	Joint-Stock Company "Concern 'Kalashnikov'"	Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief
GUSP	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Concern 'Kalashnikov'"
Public Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'Strela'"	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"	Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	GUSP	Joint-Stock Company "Radioelectronic Technologies Concern"
Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia	Public Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'Strela'"	GUSP
SVR of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Central Scientific Research Institute of Mechanical Engineering"	Public Joint-Stock Company "Scientific and Production Association 'Strela'"
Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia	Scientific and Technical Service of the FSB of Russia
Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Security Council of the Russian Federation	Security Council of the Russian Federation
FSTEC of Russia	SVR of Russia	SVR of Russia

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Presidential Order of June 11, 2024	Presidential Order of Aug. 22, 2024	Presidential Order of Dec. 28, 2024
Federal State Autonomous Scientific Institution "Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities named after A.V. Starovoitov"	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation	Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
FMBA of Russia	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Department for the Formation of the State Defense Order of the Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	FSTEC of Russia	FSTEC of Russia
Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"	Federal State Autonomous Scientific Institution "Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities named after A.V. Starovoitov"	Federal State Autonomous Scientific Institution "Center for Information Technologies and Systems of Executive Authorities named after A.V. Starovoitov"
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	FMBA of Russia	FMBA of Russia
MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"	Joint-Stock Company "Air and Space Defense Concern 'Almaz – Antei'"
Joint-Stock Company "Ural Design Bureau for Transport Engineering"	Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"	Public Joint-Stock Company "Rocket and Space Corporation 'Energia' named after S.P. Korolev"
Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology'"
Rostekhnadzor	MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation	MIC; Office of the Government of the Russian Federation
Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia	Joint-Stock Company "Ural Design Bureau for Transport Engineering"	Joint-Stock Company "Ural Design Bureau for Transport Engineering"
State Corporation "Roscosmos"	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia	Weapons Directorate of the FSO of Russia
Russian Science Foundation	Rostekhnadzor	Rostekhnadzor
Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia	Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia
Joint-Stock Company "Eureka"	State Corporation "Roscosmos"	State Corporation "Roscosmos"

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Presidential Order of June 11, 2024	Presidential Order of Aug. 22, 2024	Presidential Order of Dec. 28, 2024
State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"	Joint-Stock Company "Central Design Bureau for Marine Technology 'Rubin'"
FSVTS	Joint-Stock Company "Eureka"	Joint-Stock Company "Eureka"
MVD	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"	State Atomic Energy Corporation "Rosatom"
Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	FSVTS	FSVTS
Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	MVD	MVD
	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"	Joint-Stock Company "United Instrument-Making Corporation"
	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"	Joint-Stock Company "Corporation 'Tactical Missile Armament'"

Source: Government of Russia, "Board of the Military-Industrial Commission of the Russian Federation," <http://government.ru/departments/628/members/>.

Appendix B: Biographies of Key MOD Officials

Andrei Belousov, Minister of Defense

Andrei Belousov was born in March 1959 and grew up in a Moscow academic family. His father, Rem Belousov, was a prominent Soviet economist involved in Alexei Kosygin's mid-1960s reform efforts. He studied economics at Moscow State University. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, he worked as a researcher at the Central Economic Mathematical Institute and later headed a laboratory at the Institute of Economic Forecasting of the Russian Academy of Sciences.⁸⁵

Belousov transitioned from academia to government in the 2000s. From 2006 to 2008, he was deputy minister of economic development and trade, and in May 2012, Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed him minister of economic development. Belousov oversaw work on long-term economic strategy and argued for using government funds to stimulate stagnating economic activity. In June 2013, Belousov moved to the Kremlin as assistant to the president for economic affairs, becoming Putin's chief economic adviser. Reportedly, he was the only top economic aide to support the annexation of Crimea in 2014, viewing Western sanctions and confrontation as challenges to be met with a mobilized economy. Belousov subsequently supported the Kremlin's import substitution policy and push for "technological sovereignty" after 2014.⁸⁶

Belousov often clashed ideologically with liberal economists, such as former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin. Putin tasked Belousov with drafting an alternative economic strategy to Kudrin's plan. Whereas Kudrin's Center for Strategic Research urged fiscal prudence, low inflation, and a leaner state role to improve the business climate, Belousov advocated boosting growth through active state investment and monetary easing. He also helped set up a national drone development program to boost high-tech industries. In 2018, Belousov made headlines by proposing that the state impose a mechanism to reap extra revenues from booming metal and mining companies to transfer more than 500 billion rubles (\$7 to 8 billion) to public needs.⁸⁷

In January 2020, Belousov was elevated to first deputy prime minister in Mikhail Mishustin's government, making him the highest ranking economic policy-maker. As first deputy prime minister (2020–2024), Belousov oversaw Russia's economic policy through COVID-19 and the subsequent war-driven transformation of the economy. He also chaired the board of Russian Railways from 2020 to 2024. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Belousov coordinated efforts to reorient industries toward military production and shield the economy from sanctions. During these years, he sat on the Military-Industrial (MI) Commission. In May 2024, Putin appointed Belousov as minister of defense. Belousov immediately focused on eliminating inefficiencies

⁸⁵ "Belousov, Andrei Rémovich," TASS, accessed Apr. 12, 2025, <https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/belousov-andrey-removich>.

⁸⁶ Yakov Feygin, "Andrei Belousov and the Tragedy of Soviet Economics," Riddle, June 20, 2024, <https://ridl.io/andrei-belousov-and-the-tragedy-of-soviet-economics/>.

⁸⁷ "In a War of Attrition, You Want an Economist as Defense Minister," May 17, 2024, <https://en.thebell.io/in-a-war-of-attrition-you-want-an-economist-as-defense-minister/>.

and corruption in procurement and accelerating weapons production. As minister of defense, he quickly gained a seat on Russia's Security Council and returned to the collegium of the MI Commission.⁸⁸

Anna Tsivileva, State Secretary

Anna Tsivileva was born in May 1972 in Ivanovo, Russia, into a family of surgeons. Her father, Yevgeny Putin, was a urologist. She graduated from the Ivanovo State Medical Academy as a certified psychiatrist. Starting in 1996, she served at the "Bogorodskoe" Psychiatric Hospital in Ivanovo region. Following the political ascent of Vladimir Putin in 2000, Tsivileva relocated to Moscow and earned degrees from the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in public health organization and from the State University of Management in organizational management.⁸⁹

She joined the state-owned company Medtekhsnab and later moved to a private medical equipment firm called "Digimed." In the late 2000s, she married Sergey Tsivilev, a former naval officer turned businessman. Tsivileva became the head of Kolmar Group, one of Russia's biggest coal mining companies. In 2012, Anna and Sergey Tsivilev acquired a controlling stake from Gennady Timchenko, a billionaire and close associate of Putin. Following the acquisition, Kolmar received substantial state support in government financing and tax incentives. From 2016 to 2018, Tsivileva served as general director and chair of

the board of directors of a Swiss-based subsidiary handling international coal trade. In March 2018, Anna Tsivileva became the chairwoman of the board of Kolmar Group.

In 2018, Sergey Tsivilev was appointed governor of Kemerovo oblast, Russia's coal heartland. Thereafter, Tsivileva effectively controlled Kolmar's strategy and operations. In November 2018, she was appointed the inaugural chairperson of the Council for Guardianship in the Social Sphere of Kuzbass, a regional advisory council focused on social policy and charity. In this role, Tsivileva coordinated efforts to support vulnerable populations in the mining-dependent region. In 2019, she became a member of the Federal Council on Guardianship in the Social Sphere, representing Kemerovo oblast at the national level. On April 3, 2023, Putin signed a decree establishing the Defenders of the Fatherland foundation, which was created to support veterans of the war in Ukraine and the families of fallen soldiers. He appointed Tsivileva as the chairwoman of the fund.⁹⁰

On June 17, 2024, Putin appointed Tsivileva as a deputy minister of defense of the Russian Federation.⁹¹ Two months later, she was further elevated to the role of state secretary – deputy minister of defense. Tsivileva serves as a key liaison between the MOD and other government bodies, drafting legislation and overseeing legal and social

⁸⁸ Guy Faulconbridge, Darya Korsunskaya, and Andrew Osborn, "Surprise Pick as Russia's Defence Minister Is Tough-Talking Economist and Putin Ally," Reuters, May 14, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-surprise-defence-minister-belousov-economist-out-boost-war-budget-2024-05-13/>.

⁸⁹ "Ministry of Defense: Who Are Leonid Gornin, Anna Tsivilyova and Pavel Fradkov [Minoborony: kto takie Leonid Gornin, Anna Tsivileva i Pavel Fradkov]," Verstka, June 17, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20250324025359/https://verstka.media/anna-tsivileva-zamministra-oborony>.

⁹⁰ "'Fake Benefactress'. How 'Putin's Niece' Became the First Lady of Kuzbass [Feikovaia blagodel'tnitsa". Kak "plemiannitsa Putina" stala perv oï ledi Kuzbassa]," Sibir.Realii, Jan. 20, 2022, <https://www.sibreal.org/a/kak-plemyannitsa-putina-stala-pervoy-ledi-kuzbassa/31662568.html>.

⁹¹ "Putin Appointed Anna Tsivileva Deputy Defense Minister of Russia: Working Photos [Putin naznachil Annu Tsivilevu zamestitel'm ministra oborony Rossii: rabochie foto]," Moskovskii Komsomolec, June 18, 2024, <https://www.mk.ru/photo/gallery/43401-852527.html>.

policy matters for the military.⁹² At a parliamentary hearing in December 2024, she reported that about 48,000 requests for DNA testing had been received from families searching for soldiers missing in action.⁹³

Leonid Gornin, First Deputy Minister of Defense

Leonid Gornin was born in December 1972 in Novosibirsk. In 1997, he graduated from the Siberian Commercial Academy of Consumer Cooperation with a specialty as an engineer-technologist and completed training at the Academy of Budget and Treasury of the Russian Ministry of Finance with a focus on public finance. He later continued his education alongside his career: in 2004, he earned a degree in accounting and audit from the Siberian State Transport University, and in 2006, he completed a program at the Academy of National Economy specializing in organizational economics.⁹⁴

Before entering government service, he briefly worked in various commercial enterprises, but by April 1997, he had joined the regional branch of the Ministry of Finance's Control and Audit Department. From 1997 to 1999, he served as a controller-auditor in the Novosibirsk oblast financial control office and was promoted to senior controller-auditor in September 1998. In these audit roles, Gornin was responsible for scrutinizing financial operations and ensuring compliance with fiscal regulations at the regional level.

Between 1999 and 2011, Gornin progressed through a series of increasingly senior positions in the Novosibirsk oblast administration's financial apparatus. He held roles ranging from chief accountant to head of the Finance and Tax Policy Department of the regional administration and eventually became the minister of finance and tax policy of Novosibirsk. By the early 2000s, Gornin was effectively managing the region's budget and tax policy and navigating the challenges of post-Soviet fiscal reforms at the regional level. In October 2011, Gornin's regional career culminated in his appointment as first deputy governor of Novosibirsk oblast.

In late 2012, Gornin transitioned to the federal government. On August 25, 2012, he was appointed as a deputy minister of finance of the Russian Federation. He worked under Finance Minister Anton Siluanov (who had headed the ministry since 2011). During this period (2012–2018), he was involved in formulating federal budget policy and supervising the implementation of budgets for key sectors. Within the Finance Ministry, Gornin eventually oversaw the Department of Interbudgetary Relations, which allocates federal transfers to regional governments.⁹⁵

In May 2018, Gornin was promoted to the position of first deputy minister of finance. In this role, Gornin oversaw Russia's budgetary policy for defense, security, and law enforcement. He headed the ministry's Department of Budget Policy for State Military and Law Enforcement Service and State Defense Order, which designs and monitors the

⁹² "Bloomberg Attributed Putin's Niece's Appointment to the Defense Ministry to the Great Impression She Made on the President [Bloomberg ob"iasnil naznachenie plemiannitsy Putina v Minoborony bo l'shim vpechatleniem, kotoroe ona proizvela na prezidenta]," Agentstvo, Aug. 21, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20241207122610/https://www.agents.media/bloomberg-obyasnil-naznachenie-plemyannitsy-putina-v-minoborony-bolshim-vpechatleniem-kotoroe-ona-proizvela-na-prezidenta/>.

⁹³ Mark Trevelyan, "Russian Minister Says 48,000 Relatives Trying to Trace Soldiers via DNA," Reuters, Dec. 4, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-minister-says-48000-relatives-trying-trace-soldiers-via-dna-2024-12-04/>.

⁹⁴ "Appointments and Resignations in the Ministry of Defense. Main [Naznachenia i otstavki v Minoborony. Glavnoe]," RBC, June 17, 2024, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/17/06/2024/6670464b9a79477e88f06848>.

⁹⁵ "Gornin, Leonid Vladimirovich," TASS, <https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/gornin-leonid-vladimirovich>.

budgets for the armed forces, police, intelligence, and other security institutions. Gornin was therefore a key figure in allocating funds for Russia's defense and security needs. He was also involved in the State Defense Order process, overseeing financial aspects of military procurement contracts.⁹⁶

On June 17, 2024, Gornin was named first deputy minister of defense of the Russian Federation. He was assigned a broad mandate to supervise the military's financial and logistical support systems. Gornin oversees the entire complex of financial provision for the Russian armed forces, including budgeting for personnel, operations, procurement, and infrastructure within the MOD.

Pavel Fradkov, Deputy Minister of Defense

Pavel Fradkov was born in September 1981 in Moscow. He is the younger son of Mikhail Fradkov, a former prime minister of Russia (2004–2007) and longtime director of the SVR. As a teenager, Pavel attended a Suvorov military cadet school. He enrolled at the Saint Petersburg Suvorov Military School in 1995 and later transferred to the Moscow Suvorov Military School, graduating in 1998 with a gold medal. Fradkov then entered the Academy of the FSB. He was a classmate of Andrei Patrushev, the son of Nikolai Patrushev. After completing his studies in 2003, he pursued further studies at the Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), focusing on world economics.⁹⁷

Fradkov began his government career in 2005 at the age of 23, joining the Russian MFA. He served in the MFA's Department of Pan-European Cooperation, a division responsible for managing Russia's relations with the Group of Eight (G8) countries and the European Union (EU). Fradkov worked in the MFA for several years, gaining experience in international cooperation during a period of active Russia-EU and Russia-G8 engagement. Then he transitioned to the FSB, in which he took on a role in economic security. By the late 2000s, he served as a deputy head of a section in the FSB's Directorate "K," which is the department tasked with oversight of the credit and financial sector. In this capacity, Fradkov was involved in monitoring and securing Russia's banking and financial system.

In the summer of 2012, Fradkov moved into a high-level economic management role when he was appointed deputy head of the Federal Agency for State Property Management. This federal agency is responsible for overseeing and privatizing state assets. As a deputy head of Rosimushchestvo, he managed legal affairs, internal administration, and the appraisal of state-owned assets. Colleagues from this period describe him as a calm, diligent, and nonconfrontational manager who avoided scandals and handled his responsibilities professionally.⁹⁸

In May 2015, Fradkov was promoted to a senior position within the presidential administration as a deputy head of the Presidential Administrative Directorate. This directorate handles everything from government facilities and official residences

⁹⁶ "What First Deputy Defense Minister Leonid Gornin Is Known for [Chem izvesten pervyĭ zamministra oborony Leonid Gornin]," *Kommersant*, June 17, 2024, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/6773502>.

⁹⁷ "Pavel Fradkov Became Closer to the Old Square [Pavel Fradkov stal blizhe k Staroi ploshchadi]," *Kommersant*, May 21, 2015, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2731094>.

⁹⁸ Alexandra Djordjevic and Vladimir Prokushev, "Inherited Principles. How the Russian Elite Puts the Country in the Hands of Its Children [Naslednye printsipy. Kak rossiiskaia elita peredaet stranu v ruki sv oikh detei]," *Novaya Gazeta*, Nov. 18, 2020, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/11/17/87990-naslednye-printsipy>.

to medical, recreational, and logistical support for state officials. In January 2021, he was promoted to the position of first deputy head of the Presidential Administrative Directorate.⁹⁹

In June 2024, Fradkov transitioned to the MOD. As deputy minister of defense, he is responsible for overseeing the management of military property, lands, and construction for the armed forces. In essence, he handles the infrastructure and real estate side of the MOD, ensuring that bases, facilities, housing, and other physical assets of the military are properly managed and developed.

Pavel's brother, Pyotr Fradkov, is also a notable figure among Russia's elite. Pyotr rose through the ranks of VEB, the Russian successor to the Soviet Foreign Trade Bank, joining its board by 2007. He went on to lead the Russian Export Center (a VEB subsidiary) and in 2018 became the chairman of Promsvyazbank, the state-designated bank for defense industry financing. Alexander Ivanov (the son of ex-Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov) took over the role in VEB that Pyotr vacated.¹⁰⁰

Oleg Saveliev, Deputy Minister of Defense, Chief of Staff

Oleg Saveliev was born in October 1965 in Saint Petersburg. He graduated in 1988 from the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute's radiophysics faculty. In the late 1980s, after university, he worked for the Social-Democratic Association, which introduced him to Russia's emerging political sphere during the perestroika period. Throughout the 1990s, Saveliev made a name for himself as a "spin doctor" (political

consultant) and public relations (PR) advisor. He was part of the team for the pro-government Our Home – Russia party during the 1995 State Duma elections. In 1996, he served as a leading PR strategist in President Boris Yeltsin's reelection campaign. Saveliev contributed to the successful 1996 campaign of Vladimir Yakovlev for governor of St. Petersburg and managed the 1998 gubernatorial campaign of retired General Alexander Lebed in Krasnoyarsk Krai. By the early 2000s, he began transitioning from campaign work to government advisory roles. He worked as an unpaid advisor to the minister of economic development of Russia and led an expert group at Herman Gref's Center for Strategic Research.

Saveliev entered public service full-time in 2008, joining the Ministry of Economic Development as a deputy minister. He worked under three successive ministers: Elvira Nabiullina, Andrei Belousov, and Alexei Ulyukayev. His responsibilities included overseeing federal targeted programs and other economic policy initiatives. Saveliev worked particularly closely with Andrei Belousov, who served as minister from 2012 to 2013. In February 2009, Saveliev's potential was formally recognized when he was named to the presidential reserve of management talent, a cadre of 100 promising officials under the patronage of the president.¹⁰¹ In March 2014, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, Saveliev was appointed minister for Crimean affairs in Dmitry Medvedev's government. He became the first (and only) holder of this ministerial portfolio. As Crimean affairs minister, Saveliev oversaw the harmonization of laws and regulations

⁹⁹ "Putin Appoints Fradkov's Son as First Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff [Putin naznachil syna Fradkova pervym zamestitelem upravdelami prezidenta]," RBC, Jan. 18, 2021, <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/18/01/2021/60059a649a794744207de15a>.

¹⁰⁰ Djordjevic and Prokushev, "Inherited Principles."

¹⁰¹ "Audit Chamber Auditor Oleg Savelyev Appointed Deputy Defense Minister [Auditor Schëtnoj palaty Oleg Savel'ev naznachен zamestitelem ministra oborony]," dp.ru, May 20, 2024, <https://www.dp.ru/a/2024/05/20/auditor-schjotnoj-palati-oleg>.

and determined how local officials and institutions would be absorbed into Russian federal structures.¹⁰²

From July 2015 to September 2018, Saveliev served as deputy chief of staff of the government of the Russian Federation. In September 2018, Saveliev shifted to the Audit Chamber of Russia. He was appointed chief of staff of the Accounts Chamber that month, joining the team of newly installed chairman Alexei Kudrin.¹⁰³ In September 2019, Saveliev was appointed to the position of auditor of the Accounts Chamber. He was assigned to auditing the national defense, security, and law enforcement sectors, meaning that he was responsible for examining the finances of the MOD, EMERCOM, MVD, and related agencies for compliance and efficiency. During his five years as an auditor (2019–2024), Saveliev worked with defense procurement and military budgeting.

In May 2024, Putin appointed Saveliev as a deputy minister of defense and chief of staff of the MOD. Saveliev's direct experience in auditing defense expenditures made him an ideal candidate to enforce financial discipline. In this role, he acts as the top civil servant managing the ministry's day-to-day headquarters operations. He ensures that the defense minister's directives are implemented throughout the vast bureaucracy of the armed forces and that the ministry's various branches work in sync.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ekaterina Shcherbinina and Alexey Nikolsky, "Putin Appoints Audit Chamber Auditor Oleg Savelyev as Deputy Defense Minister [Putin naznachil auditora Schetnoï palaty Olega Savel'eva zamministra o borony]," *Vedomosti*, May 20, 2024, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2024/05/20/1038307-putin-naznachil-saveleva>.

¹⁰³ Sergei Ezhov, "Same as the Old Boss: New Deputy Head of Russia's Defense Ministry Oleg Savelyev Conceals His Wife — and Her Luxury Properties," *The Insider*, July 3, 2024, accessed Apr. 12, 2025, <https://theins.ru/en/corruption/272848>.

¹⁰⁴ Natalia Glukhova, "Corruption on the Pencil. Oleg Savelyev, an Auditor of the Audit Chamber and a Technocrat Who Has Been Tracking Financial Flows in the Armed Forces, Was Appointed Deputy Defense Minister. Why Does Putin Need Him? [Korrupsiia na karandashe. Zamministrom oborony naznachili auditora Schetnoï palaty Olega Savel'eva — tekhnokrata, kotoryi otslezhival finansovy potoki v vooruzhennykh silakh. Zachem on nuzhen Putinu?]," *Novaya Gazeta Europa*, May 21, 2024, <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2024/05/21/korrupsiia-na-karandashe>.

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Abbreviations

CGS	Chief of the General Staff
EMERCOM	Ministry of Emergency Situations
EU	European Union
EZO	economically significant organization
FMBA	Federal Medical-Biological Agency
FSB	Federal Security Service
FSO	Federal Protective Service
FSTEC	Federal Service for Technical and Export Control
FSVTS	Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation
GRU	Main Intelligence Directorate
GUSP	Main Directorate for Special Programs of the President of the Russian Federation
G8	Group of Eight
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MI	Military-Industrial
MIC	military-industrial complex
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PMC	private military contractor
PR	public relations
R&D	research and development
SMO	special military operation
SVR	Foreign Intelligence Service
VKS	Aerospace Forces

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