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**Conscription and Reform in the Russian Army**

May 7, 2004

**Abstract**

Conscription in the contemporary Russian Army faces many serious problems, the roots of which lie the legacy of the Soviet Union. The violent experience of conscript life was a pervasive feature of the late Soviet military and continues to be a pressing factor in making fear of conscription and draft evasion a reality of the Russian Army and a central issue in Russian society. Additionally, the economic crises of the transition have pressed the armed forces to greater extremes in the challenge of supporting their troops with basic needs, thereby lowering morale and exacerbating the problems of extortion and violence in the ranks. The current crisis also involves parents who are desperately trying to help their sons avoid service and authorities who readily accept bribes for granting exemptions. Consequently, the conscription problem adds to the general issue of corruption in public service, while barracks violence nurtures disparaging and hostile attitudes among Russia's young men. Meanwhile, Soldiers' Mothers movements are making nominal attempts to utilize new civil liberties and the rule of law to protest and work against the draft, and the government is struggling to turn the dilapidated and demoralized military into a modern professional-volunteer force.