

What Is the Recent Reshuffling in Russia’s Ministry of Defense Really About? Strengthening the “Economic Aspects”

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The economy has always been a crucial aspect of military power. With adequate industrial output, [a country could drastically enhance its military might](#) and that has been the case since the dawn of warfare. This is particularly true nowadays when the human factor is increasingly less relevant than was the case just a few decades ago. While militaries required millions of soldiers until relatively recently, the era of ever-evolving modern warfare brought tectonic changes. Nowadays, a heavily armed military force of just a few hundred thousand men could defeat an entire nation with four or five times as many troops (if not more). This is putting a lot more emphasis on the economic performance of any given country. A good example of that is the ever-growing importance of various [unmanned systems that now act as force multipliers](#).

All this requires drastic improvements in production, technological innovations and logistics, among numerous other things. Another important aspect is the simplification of bureaucratic procedures that are often slowing down the process and generally making it less efficient than it could be. In the aftermath of the special military operation (SMO), Russia initiated a number of reforms in order to harness [its growing economic might](#). This made it possible for the Russian military to [dominate in Ukraine](#), despite always being [massively outnumbered](#) by the combined forces of the Kiev regime and its NATO overlords.

The belligerent alliance itself now has [up to half a million soldiers just waiting to engage](#) in the US/EU-orchestrated Ukrainian conflict. This fact alone is more than enough for the Kremlin to realize it needs to further increase the efficiency of its military.

With that in mind, it's certainly not a coincidence that President Vladimir Putin chose former First Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belousov to lead the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD). Belousov has been at the helm of the country's most prominent ministry for over a month and his appointment also coincides with a massive increase in Russian defense spending, now slated to [exceed half a trillion dollars in real \(GDP PPP\) terms](#). The new Defense Minister immediately decided to streamline his department's leadership, reshuffling positions to accomplish maximum efficiency. President Putin agreed to the shakedown (no doubt, thanks to Belousov's suggestions), which now includes not only changes in the MoD's leadership, but also an increase in the number of deputies from ten to twelve, of which four have already been replaced.

Thus, Nikolai Pankov, Ruslan Tsalikov, Tatyana Shevtsova and Pavel Popov are being replaced by Leonid Gornin, Anna Tsvileva, Oleg Savelyev and Pavel Fradkov. This suggests that Defense Minister Belousov plans to continue [strengthening the economic aspects of the MoD](#).

Each of the appointed deputies is expected to improve the efficiency of the distribution of state funds allocated for defense. Belousov's first deputy, Leonid Gornin, previously served as first deputy minister of finance and his entire career has been in economics. He will oversee an entire range of budgetary aspects for the MoD, including the increase in transparency of financial flows and efficiency in defense spending. It could be argued that Gornin's appointment also suggests that the Kremlin is now actively taking the war economy route, although [the process is still in its initial stage](#).

This is completely understandable given the simple fact that Russia needs to maintain normal economic activity for as long as possible. However, the leadership realizes that [NATO's escalating enmity](#) leaves them with no other choice but to be prepared. And the populace also understands this fully. On the other hand, social security remains an important aspect for the MoD, which is why Anna Tsvileva will be appointed as the deputy responsible for ensuring the social protection of military personnel. She also heads the Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, which provides assistance to veterans and active duty personnel alike. Her colleague Oleg Savelyev is the new Chief of Staff of the Minister of Defense, a position he will take after previously serving as an auditor for the Accounts Chamber. His appointment suggests that stamping out corruption is a top priority.

In order to [strengthen other aspects of the MoD's resource allocation](#), Defense Minister Belousov appointed Pavel Fradkov to oversee the management of property, land resources and construction of facilities. Fradkov's significant professional experience, accumulated during his tenure at the Federal Property Management Agency and the Presidential Office, will help the MoD increase efficiency in this regard. All of these measures will improve the general state of the Russian government's most important department, particularly now that it's getting the largest share of the state budget. Making sure that the funds are allocated in the most efficient way possible means that the military will be getting what it needs to complete the SMO and [prepare the country for a possible confrontation](#) with the perpetually warmongering US/EU/NATO.

Increasing the production efficiency of the most important military enterprises is another top

priority for the MoD, which is why [it will be directly involved in the manufacturing of drones](#) and other unmanned systems. The military and the MoD are determined to use the invaluable experience accumulated during the SMO to further improve not only the weapons, but also the logistics and other aspects that can accelerate the procurement process and get such systems to the troops as fast as possible. While the pro-Western liberals are extremely displeased with these changes, the vast majority of the population supports such initiatives, including prominent military experts and milbloggers. Vasily Dandykin, a combat veteran (also a captain in the reserve), reiterated Belousov's plan to ensure that "every penny works for the needs of the military and the front".

"All appointments fit into this program of action," Dandykin told Izvestia, adding: "To do this, we need to streamline expenses. The new minister knows the situation; he was involved in this when he oversaw the defense-industrial complex. He saw how things were going, there's no doubt about it. He had time to draw conclusions and understand what was happening."

The military expert recalled that the MoD was previously criticized for the lack of efficiency in certain aspects such as housing. The appointment of new deputies is expected to resolve these issues. Still, the proper allocation of state funds and resources takes priority and will be the main concern of the MoD's new leadership. Other prominent Russian experts support Dandykin's assessment.

"It seems to me that the main thing [MoD] should do today is to increase the efficiency of using each budget ruble," geopolitical expert Konstantin Kalachev told Izvestia, adding: "Secondly, it is necessary to create such conditions for military personnel to feel they are truly cared for, that their needs and aspirations are the focus of the state's attention, that they are a real priority in everything from ammunition to the technical re-equipment of the military with the most modern weapons systems."

Military sources also told Izvestia that the new appointees are expected to improve budgetary efficiency, particularly as Belousov's first deputy, Leonid Gornin, has extensive experience in overseeing inter-budgetary relations. According to Izvestia, an unnamed source said that Gornin also worked in control and legal departments, but revealed that he's neither a bureaucrat nor a technocrat.

"[Gornin] always gave the impression of a military man; in his environment and secretariat there was precisely military discipline, clarity and scrupulousness. We can say that this is a person who understands finance, but with military precision and efficiency," the source stated.

Such changes are of the utmost importance and serve to [prepare Russia for any eventuality](#), including the worst one.

This is only one segment of the general trend in the Kremlin, which is now also [revamping the country's nuclear doctrine](#) to improve its deterrence capabilities.

With [the political West's incessant aggression against the world](#) leading to more global instability than seen in decades, Russia is positioning itself as [the leading counterweight to this highly exploitative system](#). President Putin's Asian tour is a good example of this, with the visit to North Korea yielding excellent results that the MoD itself will greatly benefit from. As NATO continues spreading its [malignant influence](#) (mostly through [endless proxy](#)

[wars](#) and [constant meddling in other countries' affairs](#)), Russia and its allies are streamlining their military spending and [coordinating joint projects](#).

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