

Russia promises to raise the salaries and increase the size of the officer corps

On 2 February, President Dmitri Medvedev held a meeting with Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov on plans to raise salaries in the Russian armed forces from 2012. The defence minister reported the decision to increase the officer corps by 70,000. These decisions show the Russian government's determination to increase the army's potential, and means a significant revision of the plan to reduce the army's numbers.

The announced salary increases will apply as of 1 January 2012. The salary of a lieutenant after graduation from officer school should be between US\$1500 to US\$2500 (it currently stands at around US\$500-800). These increases had been already announced in 2008, and their introduction was linked to reducing the size of the officer corps. In this context, the Defence Minister's announcement that the number of officer posts will be increased by 70,000 is surprising (according to official information, the number of officers is currently around 150,000). The increase in the size of the officer corps to 220,000 is said to be motivated by the need to finish the process of creating a new structure, the Space and Missile Defence Forces, before 2020. According to estimates, these will be created by a merger of the existing Space Forces and the Air Force's missile defence units. Politically, their emergence is a response to the American plan to construct a missile defence system.

<peż>