

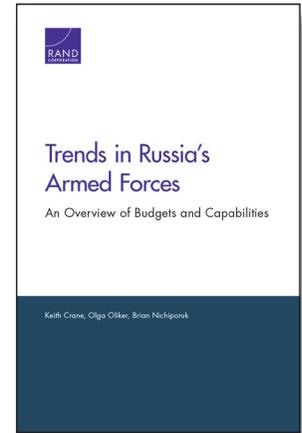


Trends in Russia's Armed Forces

An Overview of Budgets and Capabilities

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The authors assess how Russian military forces are postured and resourced and how they are likely to operate. They also discuss the goals and effects of Russian military reform efforts, including initiatives that span all of the Russian armed forces' services and independent branches. Touching on most of Russia's armed forces' major capabilities, the authors conclude with a look at how those capabilities are being integrated in practice.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What trends can be discerned in Russia's military budget since 2000, and what are their implications?
- What are the current and projected capabilities of Russian forces, as well as their strengths and weaknesses?
- What reforms have been implemented, and what has been their effect?



KEY FINDINGS

The Russian military has developed in three key ways since 2000

- A surge in funding starting in 2000 has enabled the development of Russian military forces that are more capable under more-varied circumstances than was the case in the first two decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- The modernization of Russia's weapons and equipment and changes in force structure have emphasized improvements in strategic and operational air defenses focused on key defensive bastions, faster generation of ground units at high readiness, and the deployment of technologically advanced long-range battlefield fires systems. Moscow has also improved its operational-tactical missile forces, especially short-ranged ballistic missiles and land attack cruise missiles.

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- Growing numbers of contract soldiers, improved training, more exercises and, increasingly, combat operations in Ukraine and Syria have resulted in broad improvements in the quality of Russian units. Although most Russian forces are postured defensively, the capabilities Russia has pursued gives them substantial offensive capability against states along Russia's borders. Russia's forces also now have some limited ability to project power farther abroad, as in Syria.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite Russia's economic and military limitations, NATO policymakers and defense planners will need to continue to track and seriously monitor improvements in its military.
- NATO policymakers and defense planners should also take into account Russian capabilities to invade or threaten its immediate neighbors, especially those countries not part of NATO.

