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WPS ANALYSIS

Crisis of morale of the Russian army

The society started speaking about a need for revival of morale of defenders of the Fatherland

WPS observer

On March 22 of 2012, commission of the Public Chamber for problems of national security and social and economic conditions of life of servicemen, members of their families and veterans together with the Russian association of assistance to science organized a forum named "Spiritual and moral component of the military development of Russia. Contemporary condition and prospects."

Participants of the forum discussed the following questions crucial for our society, "Which army will defend us and if servicemen with low moral and spiritual qualities may become a threat for the society? What is the upbringing role of the Armed Forces and who forms the moral and psychological qualities of our defenders today? Why hazing and a big quantity of suicides remains in the army?"

Among participants of the forum were representatives of the Security Council, control department of the President, Defense Ministry, Interior Ministry, Federal Security Service, Emergency Situations Ministry and other security agencies, Duma, Federation Council, Auditing Chamber, Main Military Prosecutor's Office, military scientific community, public organizations, various religions and experts.

Alexander Kanshin, chair of the commission of the Public Chamber for problems of national security and social and economic conditions of life of servicemen, members of their families and veterans and head of national association of unions of officers of the reserve of the Armed Forces (MEGAPIR), announced, "Matters of rearming, material and

technical procurement of the troops, increase of professionalism, social guarantees and salaries of servicemen were discussed actively during reforming of the army in the last few years. Along with this, it was practically not taken into account that a serviceman should have certain spiritual and moral qualities and readiness for self-sacrifice for defense of the Motherland." Kanshin stresses, "It is the morale together with professional training that forms a real defender of the Fatherland."

According to Kanshin, the "Moral and psychological readiness of troops is on a low level now and the fact that the upbringing function of the army has been narrowed significantly and the role of the ideological structures of the Defense Ministry exposed to serious reductions has been lowered has contributed to this very much." Kanshin asks, "Can the people who know how to kill but who have low moral and spiritual qualities become a threat for our society?"

Kanshin emphasizes, "It is very important to create an ideological platform now on which the main motivating factors of Russian servicemen are built. A contract serviceman does not mean a mercenary who fights only for money and can fulfill any order, including a criminal one."

Kanshin adds, "As to the officers, they have practically degraded as tutors. Commanders are often afraid of the personnel, do not know and do not wish to do individual work with the subordinates." Kanshin states, "Reduction of the upbringing function of the army, the problem of training of officers pose a serious threat both to defense capability of

the country and to our entire society, especially against the background of cultivation of consumer positions and purely individual approaches in the contemporary Russian youth."

According to Kanshin, between 2009 and 2011 the quantity of officers for ideology in the Armed Forces was reduced almost by 90%. There are less than 1,000 officers with the special education left for the army of 1 million people. Kanshin adds, "Along with this, many houses of officers have been liquidated, the army newspapers and television and radio stations are being reduced or commercialized." He also thinks that it is expedient to create a youth organization in the army similar to the Youth Communist League (Komsomol) and to return to work on implementation of the program of transition of the Armed Forces and other troops to the unified system of upbringing approved by the President in 2002.

According to participants of the forum, foreign armies are actively using experience of the ideological work in the Soviet Army now adapting them for contemporary conditions. Along with this, they actively use the newest information and technical means, capabilities of the cinema, preserve and multiply military traditions, promote a high image of the army, respect for servicemen and increase the level of culture of servicemen.

Among the speakers of the forum were: head of the Main Personnel Directorate of the Armed Forces Major General Sergei Chvarkov, members of the Public Chamber, senior deputy chair of the defense and security committee of the Federation Council Nikolai Fedoryak, auditor of

the Auditing Chamber Valery Bogomolov, member of the public chamber of Rostov Region and member of the public council of the Defense Ministry Colonel General Alexander Ovchinnikov, chair of the synodal department of the Moscow patriarchy

for interaction with the Armed Forces and law-enforcement agencies Dmitry Smirnov, military observer of Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper Victor Baranets, Duma member Alexei Knyshov, sergeant of the reserve of a reconnaissance company

Ilya Krasnikov, representatives of the Interior Forces and other security agencies, scientists and cultural leaders.

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