

Russian Pro-War Voices Lukewarm on Sidelined Commander's Promotion

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Colonel General Alexander Lapin. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Russia's widely read pro-war bloggers offered mixed reactions to the promotion of Colonel-General Alexander Lapin, a senior military officer who was widely blamed for Russia's battlefield retreats in the second half of 2022.

Russian media reported Tuesday that Lapin, 59, was named chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, an appointment neither confirmed nor denied by the Kremlin.

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Lapin previously led Russia's Central Military District from 2017 until late October 2022, when he was reportedly removed from his post after facing intense criticism for Russian withdrawals in the face of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Here's how pro-war bloggers reacted to the news:

— [Igor Girkin, aka Igor Strelkov, former Russian intelligence officer who led pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014:](#)

“Lapin’s promotion is, to put it mildly, a mistake.”

“The problem isn’t his commanding qualities (if they exist at all), but that it was under his command that our troops suffered a heavy defeat in Balakleya and Iziurm, having left almost 10 cities and ‘regrouped’ from the Kharkiv region as a result.”

“Promoting this is a savage demonstration of the Russian Defense Ministry leadership’s own invincibility.”

— [Mikhail Zvinchuk of the Rybar Telegram channel:](#)

“Lapin’s resignation under public pressure was not only not accepted, but the Supreme [leader Putin] himself insisted that Lapin stay because ‘people follow him’.”

“They couldn’t make a lightning rod out of the ex-commander of the Central Military District. Maybe his appointment to the Ground Forces will change something.”

— [Vladlen Tatarsky, prominent war blogger:](#)

“I think a structure like command of the Ground Forces is an absolutely useless institution. The General Staff of the Ground Forces and the General Staff will simply duplicate each other’s functions.”

“It’s good that Lapin is back from his sick leave, it’s just a shame he’s returning to a useless post. He belongs on the front line.”

— [Roman Alekhin, volunteer:](#)

“This appointment shows that the hate and hype [toward Lapin] did not affect the president’s construction of a balanced power structure, though it may have accelerated a number of reforms and replacements.”

“As with many modern generals, there were and are complaints about Lapin since he, like everyone else, was preparing for [war] using old rules and standards. But, unlike many, Lapin has been called a ‘trench general,’ meaning that he was often in the trenches, that is, trying to absorb and address gaps in his understanding of the new war.”

“Hopefully this experience will now help him command all the ground troops.”

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