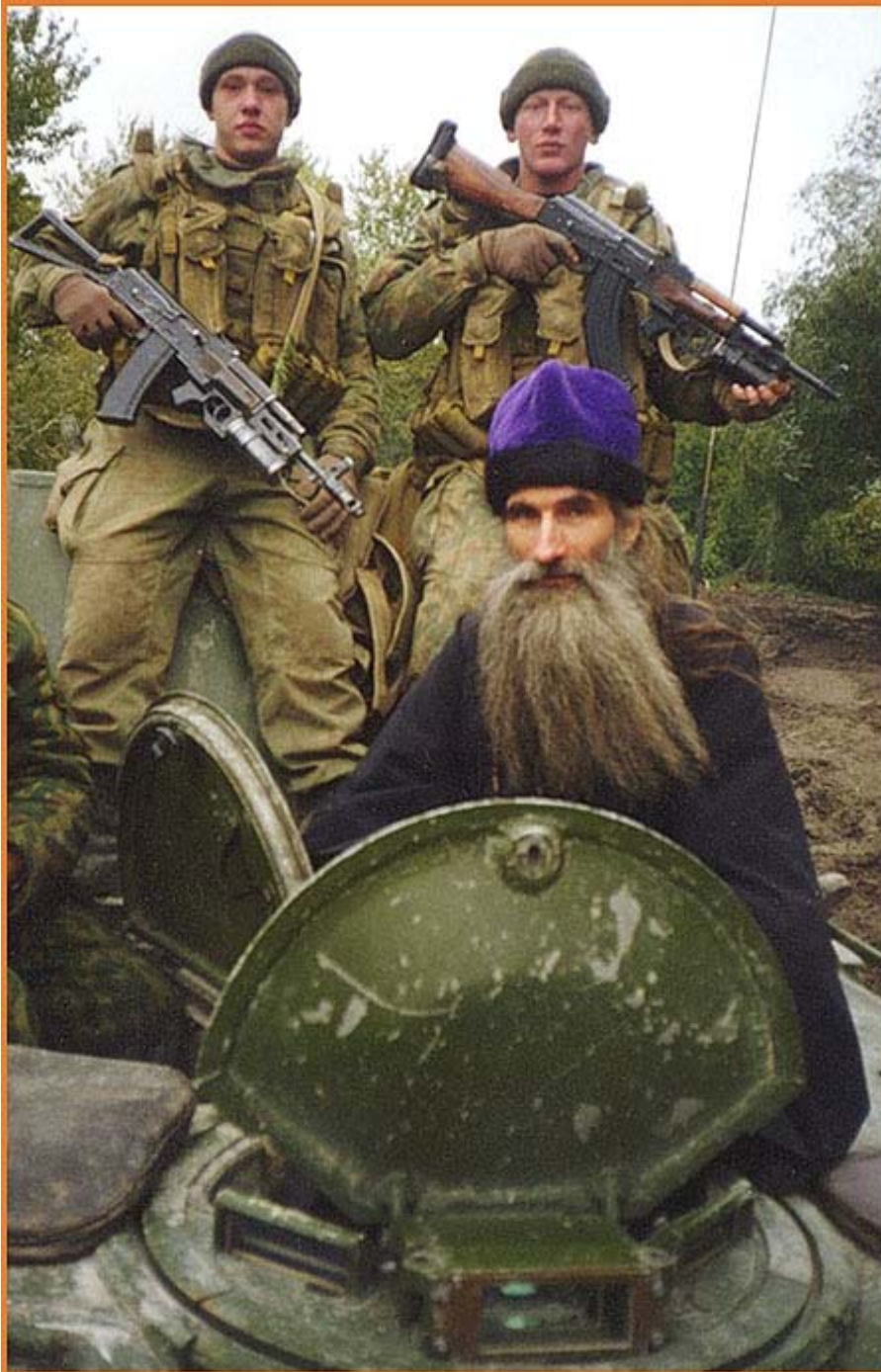


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Medvedev Backs More Religion in Russian Schools and in the Russian Army

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By Nabi Abdullaev / The Moscow Times

President Dmitry Medvedev pledged Tuesday to support the study of religion in schools and hiring chaplains from major Russian religions, in what could pose a

major challenge to the constitutional separation of religion and state.

“I have made a decision to support both these ideas: teaching the basics of religious culture and secular ethics in Russian schools, and I also consider it expedient to organize on a regular basis the work of clergymen representing traditional Russian confessions in our Armed Forces,” Medvedev said at the meeting with top religious and government officials at his Barvikha residence outside Moscow.

The so-called traditional Russian confessions include Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

Medvedev said he based his decision on requests and suggestions sent to him by religious leaders.

The two initiatives are among the most debated and controversial in Russian society. Their critics claim that the Russian Orthodox Church is significantly better prepared to install its priests in schools and garrisons, which would leave others at a disadvantage. Opponents also say a conflict of subordination could arise in military units between priests and commanders. [περισσότερα...](#)