



BULLETIN

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The Russian Federation's Military Doctrine

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In its Military Doctrine, approved on 5 February 2010, Russia points to the USA and NATO as its potential enemies. It states that it is opposed to further enlargement of NATO and globalization of its functions but at the same time it says that it is ready to cooperate provided that NATO has regard for Russian interests. Considering the poor state of its conventional forces, nuclear weapons remain the main tool for its defence policy and deterrent against aggression towards Russia.

On 5 February 2010 President Dmitry Medvedev approved the Russian Federation's Military Doctrine. Work on the Military Doctrine has been going on since 2005. The document focuses on the question of how to ensure the Russian Federation's security in military terms, and elaborates on and supplements the Russian Federation's National Security Strategy of May 2009. Despite certain changes to the wording of the previous Doctrine of 2000, (the chapter "Military and political grounds for the doctrine" was replaced by the chapter "Military challenges and threats to the Russian Federation," and the chapter dedicated to the military and economic aspects of defence policy has been considerably extended), the fundamental structure of the document is the same. It is noticeable that the new Doctrine is not characterised as a defensive one. This can be interpreted as a move made to accommodate demands by Russian generals, who criticize qualifications of that kind as a restriction of the freedom with which the armed forces can operate.

Russia's Assessment of Threats. In the assessment of the international situation it has been emphasized that the danger of a large-scale war is fading, but the tendency towards resolution of international conflicts with the use of force remains, and in some areas the military challenges for the Russian Federation's security are becoming greater. The most serious of these is considered to be the attempt "to attribute global functions to NATO in breach of international legal norms" and the bringing closer to Russia of the military infrastructure of the NATO members, as well as NATO enlargement. Since the 1990s Russia has had a negative stance towards NATO enlargement and its operations outside of the treaty area, but this is the first time that it has identified NATO as a potential source of military threat so explicitly. The Doctrine does not mention the US, but an analysis of the list of military challenges and threats suggests that Russia also sees this country's policy as a potential threat to its security. At the moment only the US has the capacity to neutralize Russia's nuclear forces, its early warning systems and space control assets, is developing a strategic anti-missile defence system and strategic systems for precision-guided conventional weapons, and does not exclude militarization of space. In Russia's view such activities compromise strategic stability, which it considers to include not only a relative balance of strategic offensive forces, but also ballistic missile defence, space-based armaments and long-range precision-guided conventional weapons.

The Doctrine contains references to the plan for a European Security Treaty presented by Russia in November of last year, stating that the currently existing architecture does not guarantee all of the states an equal standing. The strengthening of collective security systems with Russia's participation is therefore becoming one of the main demands connected with the halting and averting of conflict. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been added to the list of the organizations prioritized by Russia, together with the Collective Security Treaty System, the CIS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. That confirms Russia's will to promote President Medvedev's initiative. In line with its basic assumptions it is precisely the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that is intended to gain in importance as a universal security organization in the Euro-

Atlantic region. The Doctrine also provides for development of relations with the EU and NATO. Cooperation with NATO to enforce international security on the basis of unity of interests only has the appearance of being contrary to classification of NATO as the main military challenge to Russia. Announcement of the Doctrine with a message formulated in this way during work upon a new strategic concept for NATO is a clear message from Russia to the NATO countries. In exchange for accommodation of Russia's objections regarding issues such as further enlargement of NATO or locating of America's anti-missile defence system in Europe, Russia is willing to cooperate in questions which are vital for NATO, such as the operation in Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear weapon program, and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction. As in the previous Doctrines, no mention is made for the potential threat from China, despite the long-term growth of its economic and military potential.

Rules for Use of Nuclear Weapons and Armed Forces. A fundamental change was made to Russia's position with regard to the rules for use of nuclear weapons in 1993, and this remains unchanged in the current Doctrine. Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to an attack against it or its allies involving a weapon of mass destruction, and also in the event of aggression of a conventional nature and situation presenting a threat to the country's existence. By providing for a first-strike use, Russia has based its security policy on the deterrent function of nuclear weapons. Taking into account the poor state of its conventional forces, this assumption cannot be expected to change in the foreseeable future.

Together with the approval of the Doctrine, President Medvedev approved the secret "Basic principles for the state's nuclear deterrent policy up to 2020." This document most probably contains plans for development of strategic nuclear forces and the conceptual plan for use of tactical nuclear weapons which could compensate for the disproportion in conventional forces on a regional level—above all with respect to China.

The Doctrine specifies Russia's right to use its armed forces to defend its citizens beyond the Russian Federation's borders. This is the transfer to Doctrine of rules for use of armed forces as specified in the 2009 amendment to the Defense Act, brought about due to experiences in the war with Georgia. One of the tasks of the armed forces during peace time is considered to be keeping order and ensuring safety of civilians. This raises concerns as to whether the army can be used to contain civil unrest, because in the 2000 Doctrine the use of the armed forces inside the country was possible only when dealing with the effects of natural disasters or the outbreak of domestic armed conflict.

Conclusions. Russia's new Military Doctrine does not bring any significant changes to its defence policy. It continues to perceive NATO and the USA as potential enemies and it makes cooperation with them conditional upon the readiness of NATO and the USA to accommodate Russia's interests in their military and political planning. Russia can be expected to maintain this negative stance towards NATO enlargement, construction of the Organization's infrastructure and location of America's anti-missile defence system in new member countries. Russia's ultimate aim will be to gain greater influence over NATO decisions in Russia's priority policy areas, offering in exchange cooperation in areas of strategic interest to NATO. Another important goal for Russia is to initiate formal cooperation between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

In the foreseeable future nuclear potential will remain an essential element of the strategy to deter the USA (openly) and China (in a less obvious fashion) as the core of Russian security policy. With respect to conventional forces, the priorities will be the following: improvement of command and communication, electronic warfare and reconnaissance systems, improvement of cooperation between the branches of armed forces and troops, introducing modern armaments, creation of integrated air and space defence, development of a mobilization base, safeguarding the necessary level of military personnel, and equipping and training full-time response units. Russia will not abandon general conscription but it will aim for the majority of soldiers to be professional, even among non-commissioned officers and privates. Retention of conscription is intended to ensure adequate reserves for mobilization. The Doctrine assumes that the domestic military industry will enable Russia to continue to be technologically independent with respect to strategic and conventional armament production. Announcements of purchases of ships of the Mistral type and unmanned aircraft systems abroad suggest however that this obligation should be treated with caution.