

Analysis

Russia's New Military Doctrine: A Compromise Document

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Abstract

In an earlier Russian Analytical Digest article (RAD no. 62, 18 June 2009), I discussed President Dmitry Medvedev's foreign security policy by analyzing his major security documents and statements at the time: the July 2008 Foreign Policy Concept, the August 2008 major policy principles, the September 2008 Arctic Strategy and the May 2009 National Security Strategy. I noted that Russia's military doctrine, the third pillar of the "troika" of the country's security policy hierarchy—after the national security strategy and the foreign policy concept—was expected to appear in a new edition during the course of 2009. With some delay, the new military doctrine was published on 5 February 2010. This article analyses the drafting process of the doctrine as well as the final text.

Preparation of a New Military Doctrine

After many years of discussion focused on revising the military doctrine of 2000, and repeated announcements predicting the publication of such a document, at the end of 2008 signals became stronger that the process of launching a new military doctrine was finally under way. Probably the on-going military reforms and the aftermath of the 2008 Georgian conflict had convinced Russia's security elite that an updated military doctrine was now necessary.

In December 2008 the Kremlin announced plans for a new military doctrine. At a meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF), Moscow's highest security organ, an interdepartmental working group was formed, consisting of delegates from numerous federal state bodies, including the Duma, the Federation Council, the regional presidential representatives, the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Military Sciences, as well as scientific and civil organizations. The working group responsible for drafting the new doctrine under the auspices of the SCRF was led by Deputy Security Council Secretary Yuri Baluyevsky. Army General Baluyevsky was a former Chief of the General Staff (CGS). Deputy Chief of the General Staff Colonel General Anatoly Nogovitsyn was head of the working group of the Ministry of Defence on developing the military doctrine. Army General Makhmut Gareyev, president of the Academy of Military Sciences and member of the scientific council of the SCRF, was also involved in drafting the new doctrine. In spite of the fact that an all-government working group was to draft the new doctrine, the key actors all had a military background. Thus, the influence of the military on the contents of the document must have been substantial. On 8 October 2009, Nikolai Patrushev, the Secretary of the SCRF and former Director of the Federal Security

Service (FSB), announced that Russia would soon adopt a new military doctrine.

Statements in Advance of Publication

Several key figures involved in drafting the new military doctrine leaked elements of the early drafts, whetting outside interest in the document. The controversy these statements aroused, however, apparently prevented them from appearing in the final text. Instead, they were likely included in a secret protocol, whose existence was first signalled by Nogovitsyn.

Most importantly, Baluyevsky pointed out that statements on the use of nuclear weapons would be adjusted ("V Rossii" 2009). In an *Izvestiya* interview Patrushev stressed that in the foreseeable future nuclear weapons would remain Russia's highest priority. The doctrine would list adjustments in the conditions for using nuclear weapons in repelling aggression with conventional arms, not only in large-scale wars, but also in regional and even local fighting. Furthermore, the doctrine would provide a variety of options for using nuclear weapons, depending on the situation and the intentions of the adversary. Patrushev also remarked that in situations critical to national security, pre-emptive (preventive) nuclear strikes against the aggressor would be possible. In addition to "traditional threats," such as the USA and NATO, the escalating struggle for energy and other raw materials was to be listed as a new threat, since this would increase the potential for conflict on Russia's borders, including the Arctic region.

The Military Doctrine of 2010

Russia finally published its new military doctrine on 5 February 2010. The following analysis examines it in light of the structure of Russia's primary security document, the National Security Strategy.

Russia in the World Community

Russian security thinking about global developments in the military doctrine showed that its authors had a mixed view of the world. On the one hand, they saw reduced political and military threats, but, on the other hand, they highlighted the use of military force to solve conflicts and the intensification of military dangers in some areas. The chapter on dangers and threats started with the observation that the existing architecture of global security did not ensure the equal security of all nations. This concern seemed to correspond with President Medvedev's call for a new European security architecture, in which the "Cold War vestiges" of the OSCE, NATO and the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty would be replaced by an all-European security treaty and conference, preventing the use of force by individual states or organizations.

Russia's National Interests

With respect to Russia's national interests, three aspects in particular came to the fore. First, the authors expressed a desire to expand Russia's circle of partner states on the basis of common interests in strengthening international security. This idea focused in particular on the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Second, they stressed that the RF Armed Forces might be used operationally outside Russia to protect the interests of Russia and its citizens and maintain international peace and security. The protection of Russians abroad appeared three times in the doctrine. Consequently, as laid out in the Law on Defence adopted after the 2008 Georgian conflict, Moscow gave itself the right to use military force abroad. The third aspect comprised the creation and training of special units from the Armed Forces and other troops for use in the interests of Russia's economy. This provision was probably related to protecting energy infrastructure and possibly also with an eye toward securing future resources, such as those in the Arctic region.

Threats to Russia's Security

Previous doctrines only mentioned threats; this time the doctrine also referred to dangers. Actually, the threats seemed to be of less importance. They only appeared after the dangers. Furthermore, only the dangers were concrete, the (external) threats were of a vaguely-defined general nature: a drastic deterioration in the military-political situation (interstate relations); efforts to impede the operation of state and military command and

control systems; a show of military force with provocative objectives on the territories of states contiguous to Russia or its allies; and the partial or complete mobilization of armies in other states. The listed dangers were specific and referred mainly to the West. First of all, the doctrine stated the danger that NATO posed, in particular by globalizing its endeavours and attempting to expand its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders, among others ways, by welcoming new members. Clearly, this section referred to plans to include Georgia and—until the 2010 Presidential elections—Ukraine into the alliance. The next danger described was the deployment (or expansion) of foreign military contingents on territories neighbouring Russia or its allies. This section probably pointed to the American military contingents deployed in Romania and Bulgaria. Another listed foreign danger was the development and deployment of missile defence systems. Although not specifically mentioned, this provision presumably meant the global US missile defence network of which the cancelled components in Poland and the Czech Republic were a part. Furthermore, the doctrine pronounced the danger of the use of military force on territories neighbouring Russia in violation of the UN Charter and other norms of international law. This entry possibly addressed NATO's attack on Serbia in 1999, but even more Georgia's attack on South Ossetia in August 2008.

Ensuring Russia's Security

In response to dangers and threats, the doctrine explained that Russia retained the right to use nuclear weapons in response to an attack against itself or against its allies with weapons of mass destruction, and also against an attack with conventional weapons when the very existence of the state was under threat. Furthermore, Moscow would ensure the protection of Russian citizens abroad. Other provisions seeking to ensure Russian security related to the strengthening of collective security, within the framework of the CSTO, CIS, OSCE and SCO; as well as to developing relations in this field with the EU and NATO. Next, the main priorities of military-political cooperation were with Belarus, CSTO, CIS, SCO and the UN. More specifically, on international security cooperation, an armed attack on a (Russia-Belarus) Union State member or a member state of the CSTO would be regarded as an act of aggression provoking retaliatory measures. In addition to the listing of a (CSTO Treaty) military assistance article, the doctrine also underlined Moscow's willingness to assign troop contingents to CSTO peacekeeping forces. Moreover, Russia can assign forces to the

CSTO Collective Rapid-Response forces for the purpose of responding promptly to military threats.

Assessment

As to threats to Russia's security, the 2010 Military Doctrine considered NATO as the main problem. However, in denouncing NATO expansion, Russia did not recognize that states have the right of self-determination in choosing their alignments with international organizations, such as with the EU and NATO, even though the doctrine repeatedly states that international law is of crucial importance to Moscow. Even though Russia frequently declares that it has privileged interests in regions, i.e. the former Soviet Union, the Kremlin does not have the right to decide what the countries in this region are allowed to do. With regard to foreign troops deployed close to Russian borders, the military contingents of the USA deployed in Romania and Bulgaria were in other security documents mixed up with those of NATO. However, if US and NATO policy were the same, Georgia and Ukraine would already have been NATO members. Considering the West as the primary adversary was a disappointing continuation of old thinking. However, by listing the West under "dangers" instead of "threats," damage to the relationship with NATO and the US was less than it could have been. In that respect, possibly, the term "dangers" was introduced in order to avoid complicating the then ongoing negotiations with the USA towards a new START Treaty on the reduction of strategic nuclear arms.

In autumn 2009 some of the drafters revealed that the new doctrine would entitle Russia to use nuclear weapons in preventive (pre-emptive) strikes. At that time this news caused a lot of turmoil and criticism in the West. Perhaps because of that concern, this provision was absent in the doctrinal text of 2010. However, it is doubtful that this provision was totally deleted. On 5 February 2010, together with the Military Doctrine, President Medvedev also announced his approval of the "Principles of State Nuclear Deterrence Policy to 2020." It is possible that this document, which was not released publicly, contains the secret nuclear part of the

doctrine, including provisions on preventive (pre-emptive) nuclear strikes.

Another striking feature of ensuring security was the choice of "friends" for enhancing collective security and military-political cooperation: CSTO, Belarus and SCO were the main actors deemed suitable for cooperation. The inclusion of a clause on military assistance—derived from the CSTO Treaty—together with doctrinal provisions on Russian troop assignments to CSTO peacekeeping and rapid reaction forces, unmistakably marked the CSTO as the primary security partner for Moscow. The other international organization in which Moscow played a leading role, the SCO, was also given priority status for cooperation. However, in contrast with other recent security documents, the special relationship with China and India was not listed in the military doctrine. Perhaps by keeping silent about China, the Russian military thus avoided this taboo, making clear that China could develop into a threat to Russia. Finally, EU and NATO were mentioned in the sphere of collective security, as evidenced by RF military contingents participating in operations of both Western organizations. However, they were excluded from the list of military-political cooperation, underlining that these actors did not belong to the category of favoured military partners.

The contents of the new doctrine did not quite live up to the earlier statements related to it, nor to the realities of the RF Armed Forces. For instance, the expected emphasis on energy security was completely left out. Furthermore, the repeatedly announced provision on preventive/pre-emptive nuclear strikes was also missing. Moreover, the ongoing deep reforms of the RF Armed Forces and the intended huge influx of modern weapons before 2020 were also absent in the doctrine. The new doctrine was probably a compromise between different competing groups in the security elite, resulting in a document that has little relation with current international security developments, domestic military reforms or the line in other security documents. Hopefully a better formulated doctrine will not take another decade.

About the Author

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(Literature: see overleaf)

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Analysis

The Role of China in Russia’s Military Thinking

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Abstract

The continuing rise of China requires the Russian military to prepare a plan that allows it to counter Beijing’s potential supremacy. However, military preparations alone will not suffice. Russia needs to reverse the negative socio-economic and demographic trends in the Far East and Siberia before they create conditions facilitating an armed conflict.

The East-2010 War-Game: Who Are Russia’s Potential Foes?

In June 2010 the Russian armed forces will stage an operational-strategic exercise dubbed Vostok-2010 (East-2010) that will become “the main combat-training event” of 2010, according to a recent Defense Ministry press release. Thousands of soldiers from the Army (including the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Protection Forces) Navy, Air Force, Airborne Troops and other elements of the Russian armed forces will participate in the joint exercise staged by the Far Eastern and Siberian Military Districts. While these two eastern districts and the fleet will play the lead role in the game, Vostok-2010 will also involve forces and assets from other military districts and all of Russia’s four fleets, including submarines, according to senior commanders. Russia’s long-range aviation and the Ministry of Interior Affairs’ Interior Troops will also participate in the war game.

The importance given to Vostok-2010 marks a significant change from the recent past. More often than not, it is the Zapad (West) exercise, which simulates a Russian war with NATO, that concludes the Russian armed forces’ combat training season. That was the case

last year when tens of thousands of troops participated in Zapad-2009, which featured large-scale operations in western Russia and Belarus, including beach landings and a simulated nuclear strike.

But this year Vostok will mark the apogee of Russian military training, according to commander of the Ground Forces Col. General Alexander Postnikov. President Dmitry Medvedev has already promised to attend the war-game, during which troops will test the new chain of command (military district-operational command-brigade) and practice re-deployment from one region to another, chief of the General Staff Army General Nikolai Makarov told RIA Novosti on January 15.

While commenting extensively on the West war-games, top Russian commanders would not publicly identify either potential foes or the overall scenario for East-2010. One unnamed, but obvious foe to prepare for is Japan. In an April 7 interview Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Popovkin openly stated that one reason why Moscow wants to buy Mistral helicopter-carrying warships from France is because Russia has an unresolved territorial dispute with Japan.