



Research Review

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The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2010

Keir Giles¹

Key Developments

- Russia's new Military Doctrine highlights NATO as a military danger to the Russian Federation. NATO is listed explicitly in first place among these dangers - specifically the "striving to ascribe global functions to the force capability of NATO, implemented in breach of international law, and bringing the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by means of enlarging the bloc". (Section II.8.a)²
- Significantly for our interpretation of Russian statements, NATO is listed as a *military danger* not as a military threat. The distinction in Russian doctrinal lexicon is important – a "danger" is a situation with the potential "under certain conditions" to develop into an immediate military threat, rather than a threat per se. Clear definitions for both military threat and military danger are included in the Doctrine, as well as the distinction between military conflict and armed conflict. Previously to be found in other doctrinal statements, these definitions are essential for a precise understanding of the threat picture as expressed by official Russia. (Section I.6)
- Other military dangers include deployment of foreign forces on territory adjacent to Russia and its allies, not only on land but also at sea; the creation of strategic missile defence forces; and the development of strategic non-nuclear precision weapons systems. (Section II.8.c-d)
- Development of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) is a fundamental task in deterring and preventing armed conflict (Section III.18.e), alongside cooperation with other international organisations including, interestingly, NATO. Russia will also contribute forces to the CSTO's rapid reaction group and for deployment as CSTO peacekeepers. (Section III.24) Furthermore, the CSTO's collective defence provision, similar to but more binding than NATO's Article 5, is now explicitly included in Russian doctrine. (Section III.21)

¹ Keir Giles is an independent analyst specialising in Russian military and security affairs. All views expressed in this paper are the responsibility of the author, and should not be attributed to the NATO Defense College, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or any other government or international organisation.

² The full text of the 2010 Military Doctrine is available in Russian at <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/33.html>. An English-language version was issued by BBC Monitoring on 10 February.

- Despite widespread reporting that the new Doctrine would display increased readiness for first use of nuclear weapons, this provision is if anything subtly rolled back from the 2000 version of the Military Doctrine – instead of first use “in situations critical to the national security of the Russian Federation”, the criterion is now “when the very existence of the State is under threat”. (Section III.22) The related provision promising no use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states acting alone has been dropped.³ But Russia’s precise stance on nuclear use is detailed in a classified addendum to the Doctrine, so remains unclear.⁴
- The provision for use of Russian forces overseas “to defend the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens, and to protect international peace and security” is included. (Section III.26) Operations overseas to remove threats or suppress aggression can also be undertaken at the instigation of the UN “or other bodies”. (Section III.27.k)
- Preparation for mobilisation receives substantial attention, with several sections retained verbatim from the 2000 Doctrine and others new or re-drafted. These provisions concern both the economy and the military, with no regard to the substantial reorganisation of the military during 2009 towards permanent readiness and away from a mobilisation army. (Sections III.32-33, IV.48, and elsewhere)
- Information warfare (a concept which largely overlaps with what we might term cyber operations) is largely ignored in the Doctrine, except as a military danger and for the stipulation that the means to prosecute it must be developed. (Section III.41.c) Meanwhile, the largely outdated Information Security Doctrine of 2000 remains in force.

Introduction

On Friday 5th February 2010 the Russian Federation finally published its updated Military Doctrine, brought into force by decree of President Medvedev.⁵ “Finally”, because the long-overdue release of the document followed several years of false starts, false leads, and false promises that the Doctrine would be issued imminently.

After a process of drafting which had proceeded sporadically over a period of at least four years (the Security Council was reportedly tasked with developing a new version of the Military Doctrine in June 2005),⁶ the Doctrine finally appeared with elegant timing: shortly after the publication of the US Quadrennial Defense Review, and immediately before the annual Munich Security Conference, at which the much-publicised description of NATO as a military danger to Russia gave food for Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s chastisement of Europe for not embracing Russia’s proposal for a new security architecture.⁷ The timing of its publication also allowed little opportunity for digestion before the visit of NATO’s Group of Experts to

³ Throughout this paper, references quoting the 2000 Military Doctrine use the Russian-language text published in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* on 22 April 2000.

⁴ “Foundations of State Policy in the Area of Nuclear Deterrence to 2020”, approved by President Medvedev at the same time as the Military Doctrine. See <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/6799>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ See OSC: *Voyenno-promyshlenny kuryer*, 24 January 2007: “Russia: Partial Text of Gen-Army Gareyev Report on New Russian Military Doctrine”.

⁷ The Doctrine is careful to note that “the existing architecture (system) of international security... does not provide for equal security of all states”. (Section II.7) Lavrov’s Munich speech continuing this theme is available at http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/D39B2461D308890EC32576C40039F20E. For more analysis of the Russian proposals, see Monaghan, A (ed.) *The Indivisibility of security: Russia and Euro-Atlantic Security*. Forum Paper, January 2010.

Moscow in February, and the Doctrine will no doubt colour consultations both in Moscow and subsequently on the nature of NATO's new Security Concept.

Despite this careful timing, taken as a whole, the 2010 Doctrine gives the impression of retaining many elements from a draft that could have been drawn up three years ago – a point underscored when it is directly compared with leaks and public discussion dating from 2007-8. It also strikes a dissonant chord with other recent strategic documentation: in a number of areas, the Doctrine appears to roll back to a former world-view from the relatively progressive National Security Strategy to 2020 (NSS) published in May 2009, for instance.⁸ In particular, it does not reflect the NSS's easing of the emphasis on hard security threats following recognition of the potential for a substantially different relationship with the USA.

The document omits anticipated – indeed promised – controversial developments such as provision for preventive or pre-emptive nuclear strike.⁹ The apparently innocuous nature of the Doctrine's provision for first nuclear strike does not, however, give the whole picture. At the same time as signing the Military Doctrine into law, President Medvedev approved the "Foundations of State Policy in the Area of Nuclear Deterrence to 2020". At the time of writing, this document remains unavailable through open sources; it appears probable that this is the classified addendum to the Doctrine referred to by Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff Col-Gen Anatoliy Nogovitsyn¹⁰ – in which case the precise nature of Russia's nuclear policy will remain unclear despite leaks.¹¹ In any case, as correctly surmised at the time of the issue of the NSS,¹² detailed elaboration of nuclear deterrence posture has been saved for other documents.

Perhaps most striking from a Russian military perspective, and speaking most eloquently of the Doctrine's built-in obsolescence, is the document's complete failure to reflect the sudden forcing through of real reform in the Russian Armed Forces. It is impossible to overstate the magnitude of the upheaval, and of the shift in operational assumptions, that have shaken Russia's military over the last 13 months; nevertheless the new Doctrine reflects the *status quo ante*. It is true that the descriptions of command and control from the 2000 Doctrine which emphasise the key role of the General Staff have been dropped – but there is nothing to replace them, except if anything expanded stipulations for mobilisation readiness. Despite the fact that the "new look" of the Russian Armed Forces is now closer to reality than ever before following the first real overhaul in post-Soviet history, reading the 2010 Military Doctrine you could be forgiven for assuming that nothing had changed at all.

This paper opened with a brief summary of the key developments in the new Doctrine. The next section will examine some of these provisions in more depth, as well as other important changes and omissions compared both to the preceding version of the Doctrine and to public pronouncements during its development. Finally, the review will place the Doctrine in the context of Russia's ongoing overhaul of its security thinking, by examining the document's antecedents, long gestation, and much-delayed emergence into the light.

⁸ For detail, see Keir Giles, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020", Review, NATO Defense College, June 2009, available at <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/series.php?icode=9>

⁹ Amid a mass of reporting and comment in late 2009, see in particular Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, quoted by Interfax, 13 October 2009.

¹⁰ *Izvestiya*, 12 August 2009; *Agentstvo voyennykh novostey*, 11 August 2009.

¹¹ On 10 February *RIA Novosti* news agency quoted "a source in the Security Council" as saying that the "Foundations" set conditions for nuclear use, including "the threat of the state losing its sovereignty and territorial integrity". This differs significantly from the phrasing in the public Doctrine.

¹² NATO Defense College review, June 2009

New Provisions?

Adoption of the new Military Doctrine was long overdue. In common with a range of other Russian expressions of strategic intent, the Military Doctrine had last been updated in the year 2000; and so it referred to a very different world, and a very different place for Russia in the world, than does the new version. It is therefore surprising that more of the content of the 2010 Doctrine is not substantially new. The preamble to the 2000 Doctrine described it as “a document for the transitional period” – there is no such hedging in the new version.

NATO

The 2000 Doctrine noted the “decline in the threat of the development of a large-scale war”. The new version retains this formulation, but immediately adds to this the increase in the number of military dangers facing Russia. And in pole position among these dangers is the activity of NATO. In fact, NATO as a problem has been included in the Military Doctrine for the first time, after previously appearing in the National Security Strategy.¹³

The Russian threat picture is substantiated by assessment of both NATO capabilities and past actions. This came to the fore in Russian debate following NATO’s Operation Allied Force in 1999. As leading French analyst Isabelle Facon put it, writing during a period in 2007 when publication of the new Military Doctrine was expected imminently, this caused:

a real upheaval in Russia’s strategic perceptions by making clear, as they saw it, the following points: Western countries are prepared to resolve internal problems in sovereign states by the use of force; in this context they do not consider it necessary to obtain the approval of the UN Security Council (which reduces Moscow’s political influence derived from its permanent membership of the UNSC); Western precision conventional forces pose a distinct threat to Russia with their ability to strike at and neutralise strategic decision-making, economic or military targets.¹⁴

So scenarios for armed conflict during the most pessimistic phase of development of relations with NATO included, for example, conflict in the Caucasus due to “a Balkan scenario of restoring justice in the NATO model”.¹⁵ A further development of this theme is the equation of NATO activity with a terrorist threat. As repeatedly stated by the head of the Academy of Military Sciences, Army General Makhmut Gareyev:

Events of recent times clearly show that terrorists will not always act in small groups. They may seize entire countries, as was the case in Afghanistan and Kosovo, using large numbers of armoured vehicles, artillery and aircraft. In such cases antiterrorist operations will require the organised actions of regular troops.¹⁶

Since the armed conflict with Georgia in August 2008, Gareyev has updated his list to include Georgian action in South Ossetia as a form of terrorism requiring response by conventional troops. Although the Doctrine mentions terrorism as a problem without defining it, comments of this type by Gareyev and others serve to illustrate the gulf between definitions of terrorism in Russia and NATO.

¹³ For background, see Bertil Nygren, “Continuity and Change in Russia’s Foreign Policy in Putin’s First Presidential Term”, in “Russian Military Policy and Strategy”, Maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu, 2004.

¹⁴ Isabelle Facon, “Une nouvelle doctrine militaire pour une nouvelle Russie”; author’s translation.

¹⁵ Anatoliy Tsyganok, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 14 December 2007.

¹⁶ OSC: *Voyenno-promyshlenny kuryer*, 24 January 2007: “Russia: Partial Text of Gen-Army Gareyev Report on New Russian Military Doctrine”.

There is, however, one substantial alteration from earlier discussion of inclusion of NATO as a military danger. This is that in all previous leaks or reporting of debate on the new Doctrine, the reference has been to NATO and the USA, or commonly, NATO led by the USA.¹⁷ The “Concept for the Development of the Russian Federation Armed Forces through 2030”, a draft of which was released in August 2008, gave more prominence to the USA than to NATO. The dropping of the explicit reference to the USA could be interpreted as recognition that the Obama administration has the potential to differ substantially from that of its predecessor, and Russian attitudes should be adjusted accordingly. At the same time it is striking that, in common with the National Security Strategy, the Military Doctrine makes absolutely no mention of China – reinforcing the impression that the concept of China as a potential problem is taboo in Russian public utterances.¹⁸

The distinction noted above between “military dangers” creating conditions where threats are possible, and “military threats” themselves where there is “a realistic possibility of armed conflict arising”, makes for a more subtle argument in the Russian threat picture than has been largely reported to date. The list of “dangers” includes NATO and other current trends (nuclear proliferation, terrorism) but the “threats” listed, while mostly imbued with at least some basis in realism, are not currently on the horizon and could be called largely hypothetical (interference with state and military command and control, war mobilisation of a foreign state). As noted by Carolina Vendil Pallin and Fredrik Westerlund, “the fact that it [NATO] does not make it into the list of ‘military threats’ could be interpreted as giving Russia the chance to emphasize the issue without making it a main determinant of the structure of its military organization” – in other words, to grumble in public about NATO without actually being forced by the legislative status of the Doctrine to actually do something about it domestically, namely re-orientate the military to counter the supposed threat.¹⁹ In addition, of course, it allows Russia to adjust the tenor of its language towards NATO either scaling up or down the nature of the supposed problem; giving a much more real “flexible response” than the one which was promised in the part of the Doctrine relating to nuclear deterrence.²⁰

As in other security documents, a key point in defining NATO as a danger is “movement of military infrastructure closer to Russia’s borders”. It should be noted when considering this that there can on occasion be a rather fluid definition of what exactly constitutes “Russia’s borders”, as demonstrated by Col-Gen Vladimir Verkhovtsev pointing out that Russia, unlike the USA, has foreign nuclear powers “along its borders” – referring to the UK and France.²¹

Nuclear Deterrence

In the late stages of drafting of the new Doctrine, Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev promised a major revision of Russian policy on first use of weapons of mass

¹⁷ For just one of many examples intended to contribute to the new Doctrine, see Andrei Kokoshin in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 March 2007: “*Voyennaya doktrina: suzhdeniya i mneniya*”.

¹⁸ Chief of the Main Staff of the Ground Troops Lt-Gen Sergey Skokov stated publicly that on its eastern borders, Russia needs to deal with “a multi-million troop army using traditional approaches to the conducting of combat operations” (Stoletiye.ru, 5 November 2009). But CGS Makarov, when listing a wide range of potential tasks for the new-look Armed Forces, would only say that “we are pursuing a very balanced, well-considered policy with the PRC”. (*Voyenno-Promyshlennyi Kuryer*, 17 June 2009)

¹⁹ RUFBS Briefing No. 3, February 2010: “Russia’s Military Doctrine – Expected News”, available at http://www.foi.se/upload/projekt/RUFBS/RUFBS_Briefing_feb_10.pdf

²⁰ See for example discussion of “Russia’s nuclear ‘flexible response’” in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 20 January 2010

²¹ OSC: *Vremya novostey*, 07 September 2007: “Tactical Nuclear Weapons Seen Likely Russian Negotiating Trump Card”

destruction, by stating unequivocally that “a nuclear strike at the aggressor, including a preventive one” would be provided for.²² “Changes of stipulations regarding the possibility of delivering strikes, pre-emptive, nuclear ones, will now become part of the Military Doctrine,” Patrushev told journalists in Novosibirsk on 8th October 2009.²³

The 2000 Doctrine provided that Russia reserved the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction against Russia or its allies, or in response to conventional aggression “in situations critical for the national security of Russia and its allies”.²⁴ Both the 1993 and 2000 texts of the Military Doctrine had envisaged nuclear usage in less extreme circumstances than during the time of the Soviet Union, a situation which was ascribed to the weakness of the armed forces meaning Russia possessed no other deterrent capability.²⁵ Even in 2007 Makhmut Gareyev was not unusual in suggesting that “with an extremely unfavourable force ratio on all strategic axes, nuclear weapons remain for Russia the most important, most reliable means of strategic deterrence of external aggression and assurance of our defence security.”²⁶

Russian commentators link a possible last-minute retreat from a public endorsement of pre-emptive nuclear strikes with the progress of negotiations with the USA over a new START treaty. It does indeed seem plausible, on the basis of public comment by informed individuals shortly before the publication of the Doctrine, that the language on nuclear use in the unclassified section was toned down at the last minute.²⁷

Nevertheless, on the day following publication of the Doctrine, Nikolai Patrushev appeared to be maintaining the view that pre-emptive strikes were possible. “We are not going to attack anyone, but neither are we going to wait for the moment when a strike is made against us. As a matter of fact, taking into account the armaments countries have at their disposal today, we would not be able to make any retaliatory strike... If the question is whether our state will exist or not, naturally, we have no other choice.”²⁸

International Cooperation and the CSTO

The section on “International Military-Political Cooperation” is not much expanded in the new Doctrine over the 2000 version. The repeated new references to the CSTO as an international defensive alliance to which Russia is committed occur in other sections, for instance “Activities of the Russian Federation to Deter and Prevent Armed Conflicts”. (Section III.18)

The Doctrine provides for Russia to contribute troops to formations operating under the CSTO banner, and implies that Russia will consider a CSTO resolution a valid mandate for deploying

²² *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 20 November 2009.

²³ Interfax, 13 October 2009.

²⁴ For a detailed examination of Russian deterrence policy, and its relation to Russia’s geo-strategic position, see the shortly to be published UK Defence Academy Research and Assessment Branch paper “Prevent to Deter or Deterring by Preventing”.

²⁵ For an informed view describing this evolution in detail, see Ivan Konovalov in *Ogonek*, 14 December 2009.

²⁶ OSC: *Profil Ukraina*, 22 January 2007: “Russia: Litovkin Interviews Gen-Army Gareyev on New RF Military Doctrine”

²⁷ For an interesting exchange on precisely this point, see *Agentstvo voyennykh novostey*, 23 December 2009, “Failed Military Reform in Russia Reason for Pre-emptive Nuclear Strike Concept”. A report on *Gazeta.ru* on 17 December 2009 quoted what looks plausibly like a leaked draft with a much more assertive mention of pre-emptive strike.

²⁸ Speaking in an interview for Russia’s English-language RT television channel, carried on *Rossija TV* on 6 February.

peacekeeping or other forces overseas. The provisions are entirely consistent with Russia's aim to promote the CSTO as an equivalent or counter-weight to NATO, while presenting the organisation as being much more akin to NATO than to the former Warsaw Pact. As put by Army Gen Gareyev, commenting on an earlier draft of the Doctrine:

“A division of zones of responsibility between NATO and the CSTO is possible. It's advantageous for Russia to unite countries around itself that are interested in strengthening the United Nations and other international organisations... Above all we have to see allies among CIS countries, CSTO members and other states prepared to cooperate most closely with us.”²⁹

This and the provision for contributing forces to the CSTO's Collective Rapid Reaction Force (KSOR) and peacekeeping forces were promptly welcomed by CSTO Secretary-General Nikolai Bordyuzha, who said that this “reflected new realities in the sphere of ensuring military security”.³⁰

Section III.21 of the new Doctrine first refers to the Union State with Belarus, before echoing Article 4 of the Collective Security Treaty.³¹ The Treaty article is closely reminiscent of NATO's Article 5, with the distinction that it requires, rather than invites, all other States Parties to come to the assistance of a Treaty signatory that has suffered an act of aggression. Thus this section does not strictly add any new international obligation for the Russian military, but in common with other sections it does add to the explicit range of circumstances under which they could be deployed abroad.

Other Changes and Omissions

Use of Troops Abroad

Section III.26 stipulates that formations of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation can be used beyond the bounds of the Russian Federation *operativno* – a Russian term which it is notoriously easy to mistranslate but which invariably implies a degree of speed and urgency. Recent adaptations to Russian legislation have streamlined the procedure for approving sending troops overseas, from the previous situation where the legal position regarding direction and oversight was muddled by a range of contradictory laws: the end result is that the president can now send troops outside Russia with less consultation and in a slightly broader range of circumstances.³²

At the same time, despite earlier speculation, the Doctrine does not stipulate the number of conflicts of any type which the Russian Armed Forces should be able to engage in simultaneously.

²⁹ OSC: *Voyenno-promyshlenny kuryer*, 24 January 2007: “Russia: Partial Text of Gen-Army Gareyev Report on New Russian Military Doctrine”.

³⁰ *Agentstvo voyennykh novostey*, 8 February 2010: “Russia to Protect CSTO Allies from Armed Aggression”, ITAR-TASS, 8 February 2010: “RF Military Doctrine Confirms its CSTO Commitments – Bordyuzha”.

³¹ Text in English available at the CSTO website (hosted on a Russian government domain), at <http://www.dkb.gov.ru/start/index.htm>

³² The key amendments were to the law “On Defence”, but conflicts with other legislative documents such as the law “On the Status of Servicemen” needed to be resolved. For more detail on the implications of the changes, see *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 12 August 2009, *Vremya Novostey*, 26 October 2009. For a critical appraisal of Russia's new legal position and military options, see Yury E. Fedorov, “Medvedev's amendments to the law on defence: the consequences for Europe”, UPI 27 November 2009, available at <http://www.upi-fiia.fi/en/publication/94/>

Military Reform

The section of the 2000 Doctrine describing the respective roles of the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff and the Military Districts has been removed and not replaced. This does appear to be the only recognition that the structure of the Russian Armed Forces has changed beyond recognition during 2009, with enormous manpower re-deployment and layoffs and abandonment of the Soviet system in favour of brigades.³³ The figures involved are striking and serve to provide a picture of the scale of the changes: according to one much-publicised part of the plans, the number of tanks in service with the Russian Armed Forces is to be reduced from 23,000 to 2,000.³⁴ Figures for the cuts in manpower, particularly among mid-ranking officers, are equally dramatic.

Despite the abandonment of cadre units designed to be manned with reservists on mobilisation, throughout the Doctrine references to mobilisation reserves and procedures abound. Some of these, referring to preparations for war in the economy and civil society, may still be pertinent. But it is difficult to see to what the provisions on military mobilisation are now referring. Russia's Military Doctrine is an aspirational document, attempting in part to prescribe the nature of current future war and what is required for it. The contradiction between these prescriptions ("reduction in the time parameters of preparation for carrying out military activity", "unpredictability of their [military conflicts] arising") on the one hand, and on the other the hankering for a "pre-revolution in military affairs" mobilisation capability which has now in theory been dispensed with, clearly has yet to be fully resolved.

The importance of attracting professional servicemen and particularly non-commissioned officers (NCOs) within the Russian military has long been recognised, with successive Federal Targeted Programmes working towards this aim. At various stages the ambition has been stated of having permanent-readiness units completely manned with contract servicemen. In the new Doctrine this is phrased more loosely, and less ambitiously: Section III.34.n states that "other ranks providing for the combat capability of formations and military units... should *in the majority* be on contract military service" (emphasis added). This need not necessarily imply an admission of defeat on the professionalisation programme; the more favourable interpretation is that in a rare instance of the new military reality having filtered through into the Doctrine, it reflects the 2010 concept that all units are notionally at permanent readiness, including those containing conscripts.

Pre-emptive Strike

It is not only in the field of nuclear deterrence that the option of pre-emptive action was promised, only to be let down in the actual text of the document. There had been multiple suggestions that use of Russian forces to "prevent threats from arising, including abroad"³⁵ were coming to the fore of Russian thinking – at any rate, in statements intended for public or foreign consumption. These reached their greatest prominence at the apogee of Russian pique over the proposed stationing of ballistic missile defence systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, with suggestions that Russia would feel compelled to act pre-emptively to safeguard its own interests. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov illustrated this at a joint press conference with Defence Minister

³³ Authoritative commentary on the intention and progress of the reforms abounds; but an informed overview is provided by the invaluable Vitaliy Vasilyevich Shlykov in "*Tayny bližskogo Serdyukova*", *Rossiya v globalnoy politike* No 6, Nov-Dec 2009. An extensive end-of-year report is also available in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 December 2009.

³⁴ *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 10 July 2009; *Novyy Region* 8 July 2009.

³⁵ Konstantin Rashchepkin, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 March 2007: "*Desant na vzlete*"

Serdyukov, Condoleezza Rice and Robert Gates, when he noted that “a potential threat in this regard does exist for us. And of course, we, as our President and other officials of the Russian Federation have already said more than once, will be forced to take appropriate action to neutralise these threats.”³⁶

This was also the case for Russian responses to non-military threats which it did not feel capable of countering in kind. According to the usually well-informed analyst Andrei Kalikh, the Ministry of Defence argued for the inclusion in the new Doctrine of an additional section on “Tasks of state bodies and organisations to oppose actions taken by politico-diplomatic, economic, information and other non-military methods and means” – by implication, positing military responses to non-military threats.³⁷ But in the event none of these potentially controversial sections appear in the final version, with all references to military tasks suggesting straightforward parry and riposte rather than preventive or pre-emptive *prise de fer*.

Foreign Arms Purchases

A key task for the development of the military-industrial complex is “providing for the technological independence of the Russian Federation in the area of production of strategic and other weapons, military and specialist equipment”. This is significantly toned down from provisions in a leaked earlier draft which set strict conditions for arms purchases abroad.³⁸ The aim needs to be set in the context of Russia now considering it necessary to purchase key capabilities overseas, with fresh impetus following the armed conflict with Georgia in August 2008. Publication of the Doctrine calling for this independence was followed immediately by the announcement that Russia wished to purchase not one but possibly four French helicopter carriers.³⁹

Development

This new version of the Doctrine was initially commissioned by Vladimir Putin in June 2005, by which time it was already clear that there had been substantial changes both in the external threats perceived by Russia, and in Russia’s capacity to deal with or pre-empt them.⁴⁰ The last update of the Doctrine in 2000, published in a tense atmosphere after NATO’s Kosovo campaign, had accompanied a number of other documents outlining Russia’s strategic posture, many of which were also substantially outdated by 2005.

Yet little visible work on developing a new text was done until a widely-reported consultative conference on 20 January 2007, which included representatives from the presidential staff, government, State Duma, Academy of Sciences, Academy of Military Sciences, Federation Council, Security Council, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Federal Security Service, Federal Protection Service, Emergencies Ministry and the Ministry of Defence.⁴¹ Many of the provisions

³⁶ Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, 15 October 2007: “Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defence Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov at Joint Press Conference with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defence Robert Gates after Russian-American ‘Two Plus Two’ Meeting, Moscow, 12 October”.

³⁷ Andrei Kalikh, *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, 16 March 2007: “*Nevoynnyye ugrozy v Voyennoy doctrine*”.

³⁸ OSC: Gazeta.ru, 18 December 2009: “Russian Draft Military Doctrine Proposes Restricting Foreign Weapons Purchases”

³⁹ AFP, 8 February 2010: Russia wants four warships from France: French ministry.

⁴⁰ OSC: *Voyenno-promyshlennyy kuryer*, 24 January 2007: “Russia: Partial Text of Gen-Army Gareyev Report on New Russian Military Doctrine”.

⁴¹ OSC: *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 15 February 2007: “Russian Defence Minister, General Staff Seen at Odds over Army Reform, Doctrine”; Oleg Gorupay, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 January 2007: “*Sil’naya armiya, Rossiya!*”

in the current text of the Doctrine appear to have been agreed or at least aired at this event, including a need to emphasise the NATO problem instead of “the battle against terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and other threats that were more pressing seven years ago”.⁴²

When considering the vastly different shape of the Russian Armed Forces in real life to that provided for in the Military Doctrine, it is worth bearing in mind that the man notionally in charge of drafting the Doctrine, former Chief of the General Staff Army General Yuriy Baluyevskiy, was supposedly encouraged to leave his post for the Security Council because of his confirmed opposition to plans for substantial military reform. Speaking in May 2007, Baluyevskiy had been sure that “there have been no changes in the world that might cause our military to adjust the plans for military organisational development up to 2010”.⁴³ The fundamental reforms intended to give the Russian Armed Forces a “new face” have been forced through by Baluyevskiy’s successor, Army General Nikolai Makarov, an ally of Defence Minister Serdyukov who had already shown a strong inclination towards substantive reform in the areas of manning and training while serving as chief of the Siberian Military District.

A repeat conference intended to develop the Doctrine, much less widely publicised, was held under the auspices of the Academy of Military Sciences in January 2008.⁴⁴ This was shortly after Baluyevskiy, then still serving as CGS, had stated that Russia’s doctrine “had been determined”, and did not need to be reviewed in the light of US missile defence plans.⁴⁵ In fact the great majority of public comment by figures contributing to the drafting of the Doctrine dates from 2007 or from the period immediately before its final release, with the long hiatus broken only by sporadic promises of imminent publication.

By December 2008, Yuriy Baluyevskiy had been in his new post as Deputy Secretary of the Security Council for six months, and was reported to have started work on the Doctrine together with representatives of the Ministry of Defence and other power ministries, both houses of the Russian parliament and “experts”.⁴⁶ At this time Nikolai Makarov said that “vigorous efforts” were under way to draw up the new Doctrine.⁴⁷ And already in February 2009, he was announcing that the new Doctrine had been “formed, as such” and it remained only to be “fine-tuned and negotiated”.⁴⁸ At the same time, Makarov was facing a campaign of criticism that his programme of reform of the Armed Forces was proceeding without the requisite documentation on their form and uses, in other words before the new Military Doctrine was agreed.⁴⁹

A Security Council working group chaired by Yuriy Baluyevskiy in his capacity as Deputy Secretary-General once more took the draft Doctrine in hand on 23rd April 2009,⁵⁰ and

⁴² OSC: *Vedomosti*, 06 March 2007: “Russia: Anti-Terrorism Will Not Be Top Priority in New Military Doctrine”.

⁴³ BBC Monitoring: *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 08 May 2007, “*Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Reports General Baluyevskiy’s Book Launch Comments”.

⁴⁴ Interview with Army General Makhmut Gareyev in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 12 December 2008.

⁴⁵ Interview with Vesti TV, 19 December 2007.

⁴⁶ Interfax-AVN, 09 December 2008; *Gazeta*, 10 December 2008.

⁴⁷ Interfax-AVN, 10 December 2008.

⁴⁸ Rosbalt, 22 February 2009.

⁴⁹ For example leading commentators Viktor Ilyukhin, quoted in *Vladimirskiy Vedomosti* on 21 February 2009, and Anatoliy Tsyganok quoted in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on the same day.

⁵⁰ Security Council representative Vasiliy Marchenko, speaking at the Public Chamber Press Club, 27 April 2009.

substantial re-working continued during the course of that year.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the military structure described in the Doctrine is more akin to the forces Baluyevskiy led until 2008 than to what is now in place following the changes forced through by Serdyukov and Makarov. When Makarov commented on the content of the new Doctrine in a lengthy interview with the MoD's Zvezda TV channel in December 2009, he seemed to be describing a rather different document to what eventually appeared.⁵²

Repeated promises by Nikolai Patrushev that the Doctrine would be approved and presented to President Medvedev by the end of 2009 followed earlier suggestions of a due date in the third quarter of 2009, 2008 or even 2007.⁵³ Eventually, the text received approval by the Security Council in mid-December.⁵⁴ Shortly afterwards, Yuriy Baluyevskiy stated that the remaining work on the document was “technical work on full stops and commas” rather than amendments to the text.⁵⁵ The long delay between approval and publication would support the suggestion earlier in this paper that the timing of release of the text was entirely tactical in nature.

Implications

Russia's Military Doctrine is a document with juridical force. It is “a system of officially accepted doctrinal views mandatory for all on the most important defence issues”, and a “declaration of state policy in the defence area”.⁵⁶ In Stephen Blank's description, it constitutes “an elite consensus about threats, the character of contemporary war and the policies needed to confront these threats and challenges”.⁵⁷ In addition the doctrine is a public document for both domestic and international consumption: it is “a declaration of state policy on defence issues, declared to the public and to the whole world”.⁵⁸

As with other doctrinal documents recently released or still in development, it is the Security Council which is determining the national strategic agenda and priorities. The National Security Strategy (NSS) set as the key task in strengthening national defence “transition to a qualitatively new appearance for the Russian Federation Armed Forces”, but remained vague as to how this should be achieved. Now the Military Doctrine has also remained coy on the same subject. It is tempting to read into this lack of doctrinal support for military reform a degree of discord between the Security Council, in the person of Yuriy Baluyevskiy, and proponents of the new concept for the Armed Forces which he resisted in his previous post.

As noted above, earlier amendments to Russia's position on use of nuclear weapons were stimulated by the weakness of conventional forces. Now that those forces have a more realistic prospect of being organised, manned and equipped for ready use, this position may well be in flux, which could in part account for the apparent last-minute deletion from the Doctrine of contentious clauses. This could be a signal of continued willingness by Russia to engage in

⁵¹ In May, the Doctrine was to be ready for signature by 1 August. (*Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 May 2009.) By August, however, Patrushev was saying that substantial revisions were under way. (*ITAR-TASS*, 5 August 2009.)

⁵² OSC: *Zvezda* TV, 27 December 2009, “Top Russian general gives year-end progress report on military reform”

⁵³ See for instance *Voyenno-promyshlennyy kuryer*, 28 October 2009.

⁵⁴ Interfax, 14 December 2009.

⁵⁵ Interfax-AVN, 17 December 2009: “Russia's New Military Doctrine Based on Preserving ‘Nuclear Triad’”.

⁵⁶ OSC: *Voyenno-promyshlennyy kuryer*, 24 January 2007: “Russia: Partial Text of Gen-Army Gareyev Report on New Russian Military Doctrine”.

⁵⁷ Stephen Blank, “A New Russian Defence Doctrine?”, UNISCI Discussion Papers, October 2006.

⁵⁸ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 26 January 2007: “*Kakoy byt' Voennoy doktriny Rossii?*”

bilateral arms reduction work as stipulated by the NSS, which in fact called for “consistent advance toward a world free of nuclear weapons”.

At the same time the new Doctrine, while committing to a defensive posture (defending Russian interests, intriguingly, by means of not only military, political, diplomatic, legal but also “ecological instruments”) expands the range of justification for use of these new more capable forces outside Russia. Commitments to CSTO military projects, to mutual defence within the CSTO, and to peacekeeping at the direction of “other bodies” (again, read CSTO) join with the provision for coming to the military aid of any state that requests it, and the new simpler procedure for sending troops overseas, to remove former obstacles to more assertive use of the Russian military. The qualified success of operations in Georgia in August 2008, and the substantial transformations and investments made with the benefit of that experience, will have done little to remove this temptation. This demands increased attention to the new capabilities of the Russian military in the near term, and to the tasks for which it is training.

In effect, the new Doctrine is interesting and important not for what it includes (in particular the widely misunderstood mention of NATO), but for what it leaves out. While the Doctrine cross-refers to the new National Security Strategy (2009) and Foreign Policy Concept (2008), expressing a more unified strategic view than previously, it is distinctly out of step with the military itself given the lack of consideration for the fundamental transformations in the Russian Armed Forces in 2009. And rather than clarifying Russia’s precise doctrinal position on first use of nuclear weapons, the Doctrine contains only an anodyne formulation leaving all detail to a classified addendum. In this respect it is too early to use the wording of the Doctrine to discount public statements by Nikolai Patrushev promising a major shift in Russia’s nuclear stance; this particular story has only just begun.