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RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM FROM
PERESTROIKA TO PUTIN:
IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

By

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Preface

During my year as an Air Force Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy (ISCIP) at Boston University, I realized that the Russian military had been and was still in the throes of massive change. I had previously researched similar changes that occurred in the United States (U.S.) military before and after the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and thus, my interest in the subject of this paper was piqued. I would like to thank Major Scott Dullea, U.S. Army, whose previous work helped me find many hidden sources on this subject and to thank Professor Uri Ra'anana, the Director of ISCIP, for sharing his huge wealth of knowledge and understanding of all things Soviet and Russian. I would also like to thank CDR Paul Lyons (USN), Ms. Susan Cavin, Ms. Elena Selyuk, and all the other research fellows at ISCIP for helping me understand the enigma known as Russia.

Most of all I want to thank my wife, Deborah, and daughter, Katie, for their patience and support while I labored on this paper. They gave up much so that I had time to do this work.

Abstract

In the last 15 years, the size of the Russian armed forces has dropped 76 percent, from 5.32 million men down to 1.37 million men; the level of Russian defense spending has followed a similar slide. In 1989, the Soviet military was one of the most feared on earth. By 1994, the Russian armed forces suffered a major setback when they took on rebel fighters in Chechnya and by 1998, tanks were parked from lack of fuel and officers were working second jobs during duty hours to make ends meet. Aircraft could not fly due to lack of spare parts and ships sat rusting at their piers. In 2000, the submarine *Kursk* sank, in a preventable accident, with the loss of 118 lives. How did the Russian military come to be in such dire straits? What efforts were made to reform the Russian military as these problems became apparent? Have those reforms been well planned and executed or poorly done? Are things getting better? What are the future prospects for the Russian military?

To answer those questions, this study presents an overview of the continuous efforts to reform the Russian armed forces from the Gorbachev era through the Putin administration and analyzes each of the major security concepts and military doctrines that have (or should have) guided these reform efforts. Using the latest Russian news sources, it also examines the current reform efforts undertaken by Putin and details some of the challenges he faces implementing them.

This paper shows that despite 17 years of trying, it is only in the last two years, under Putin, that Russia has made real progress towards military reform. Putin's vision of Russia as a regional great power has provided a clear goal for reform and his persistent leadership has enabled him to force meaningful reforms through a stubborn military bureaucracy which had previously hindered all efforts. There are many challenges ahead, but through Putin's efforts, Russia is beginning to structure its military on a new model, one that is not quite an "all-volunteer" forces, but one that is much different than the Soviet mass conscript military. The Russian military today is no longer looking back, but it is only now starting to move forward.

Chapter 1

Introduction

[Russia] just cannot come to terms with the loss of superpower status, nor overcome its paranoia about external threats, and its leadership continues to regard military power as the only means of ensuring its security. That is Russia's tragedy--and ours also.

—C.J. Dick¹

Russia's Security Concerns

In order to understand Russian military reforms, one must first understand Russia's national security concerns. Of course, Russia's most vital concern is that of every state: maintaining territorial integrity and sovereign control of that territory. However, Russia also has extra-territorial concerns because of the millions of ethnic Russians, many of whom were citizens of the former USSR, who now live in other countries. One must also consider that Russia has been an expanding imperial power for centuries, culminating in the creation of the USSR in 1924 and the addition of allied or puppet states surrounding the USSR after WWII. In fact, many older Russians cannot forget that until recently, they were citizens of the largest and most feared world power. Although the former Warsaw Pact countries are now democratic and integrating into Europe and the former republics of the USSR are sovereign nations, Russia believes she has a legitimate "sphere of interest" in which she has a moral and security obligation to act. Recently Defense

Minister Sergei Ivanov commented, “Our closest allies, the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries, are significant for us in terms of security. The Russian Defense Ministry’s official doctrine consists [*sic*] in creating a security zone around Russia.”² In fact, in recent years, Russian leaders have clearly been working to regain regional “Great Power” status and stake out what they see as their natural “sphere of interest.” Nevertheless, President Vladimir Putin still speaks of the U.S. as a partner in many areas and a competitor, but not enemy, in others. In February 2004, Putin reiterated this to President Bush, saying, “...the partner aspects of our relations remain firm, and any speculations about some ‘coolness’ between Russia and United States are not based on reality. Russia will remain a stable, reliable and predictable partner.”³

Military Reform in the Soviet Union and Russia

In order to understand why the Soviet Union and then Russia have been continually working on “military reform” since the late 1980s, one must first understand the term, the definition of which has changed over time. Under Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev’s *perestroika* policy (a term used for all the restructuring efforts to keep the country together under the communist system), initially “military reform” meant moderately downsizing the military and the military-industrial complex in order to free up resources to enable other vital economic and political reforms. However, after a few years in power, Gorbachev’s worldviews changed dramatically (as shown by his winning the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize) and so to did his “military reform” efforts. From 1988 to 1991, the term grew to include significant nuclear and conventional arms reductions and further downsizing and restructuring to move the Soviet military from an offensive to a defensive posture (especially removing forces from Eastern Europe and the Far East).

Starting in the late 1980s, “military reform” took on another meaning when Gorbachev’s policy of *glasnost* (publicity about, or public discussion of previously forbidden subjects), allowed the first discussions of moving from a massive, conscript military controlled by the party leadership to a smaller, professional military controlled by civilian government leadership. However, those ideas went nowhere at the time.

In President Boris Yel’tsin’s administration, the term came to mean removing the communist party influence from the military, creating a new Russian high command, restructuring all the forces inherited from the Soviet Union (those inside Russia, those returning from foreign soil, and those who remained in former Soviet republics)⁴, and developing plans for the smaller, solely Russian force.

During the Putin era, “military reform” came to mean moving towards a smaller, more mobile, high-tech force with a mix of conscripts and professionals. It also came to mean rebuilding the military’s combat capability and morale, to enable Russia to take a more assertive, independent foreign policy, especially in what Russia calls “the near abroad” (the former Soviet republics).

Why Reform The Military?

Gorbachev began military reform actions to reduce the crushing, unsustainable burden on the Soviet economy caused by an oversized military and defense industrial complex. Under Yel’tsin years, reform efforts (mostly demobilization) continued because there was not enough money to maintain the massive military that Russia inherited; a number of other reform efforts were planned to improve combat effectiveness and improve the meager existence of her soldiers, but few ever happened. Putin’s vision

of Russia as a great power, necessarily backed by a creditable conventional military force and a minimal nuclear force, is driving his reforms.

This paper shows that despite 17 years of trying, it is only in the last two years, under Putin, that Russia has made real progress towards military reform. Putin's vision of Russia as a regional great power has provided a clear goal for reform and his persistent leadership has enabled him to force meaningful reforms through a stubborn military bureaucracy which had previously hindered all efforts. There are many challenges ahead, but through Putin's efforts, Russia is beginning to structure its military on a new model,⁵ one that is not quite an "all-volunteer" forces, but one that is much different than the Soviet mass conscript military. The Russian military today is no longer looking back, but it is only now starting to move forward.

Notes

¹ C. J. Dick, *Russia's 1999 Draft Military Doctrine*, Research Report (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, November 1999); 11, On-line, Internet, 8 February 2004, available from www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents.

² "Russia Surprised at NATO Plans to Deploy Bases in Baltic Countries," *ITAR-TASS*, 6 March 04, in *JRL* #8103, 6 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

³ "Putin Says Russia Will Remain A Stable, Reliable And Predictable Partner To The U.S.," *RIA Novosti*, 11 February 2004, in *JRL* #8060, 11 February 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

⁴ For example, Russia kept garrisons in Georgia (including three break-away regions of that nation), Moldova (again in a break-away region), and Tajikistan. Some of those units are still present in all three countries. These Russian troops are a source of friction between Moscow and the central governments of Georgia and Moldova, where Russia kept the troops in place at the request of the leaders of the breakaway regions.

⁵ Major Scott C. Dullea, "Russian Military Reform: Lessons from America and Obstacles to Progress," (Unpublished manuscript, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, June 2001), 3.

Chapter 2

Gorbachev: Unintended Consequences

Gorbachev took the fateful decision to reverse seven decades of Soviet military policy cautiously, almost by stealth, as a necessary step for political and economic change.¹

—Lt Gen William Odom

Russians call the years from 1964 to 1985, when Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko led the USSR, the “period of stagnation.” While Leonid Brezhnev’s policies provided the USSR with a formidable military and an industrial complex capable of supplying it with large numbers of relatively modern weapons, he did so at the cost of impoverishing the rest of the economy and the people.² During this same time, the Soviet Union found itself deeply buried in, and losing, a costly war in Afghanistan.³ Yuri Andropov, who took over after Brezhnev died, obviously realized the USSR was in trouble, stating, “We need economic reform and political reform. The central question is with which to start.”⁴ However, he had little time to make radical changes, as he died of acute kidney failure after only 15 months as General Secretary.⁵ Moreover, Konstantin Chernenko, who occupied the leadership chair for 13 months, was a semi-senile old man who continued the leadership vacuum.⁶

Without a doubt, twenty and a half years of conservative, inflexible and dogmatic leadership left the USSR as both a world military power and an economic basket case. Gorbachev’s views, shared by many in the second tier of Soviet leadership, were that the

economy was in terrible shape (mainly because so much dedicated to the military), and that ecological, health and corruption problems were slowly, but steadily dragging the USSR into decline. As he told his wife, Raisa the night before his election as General Secretary, “We cannot go on living like this.”⁷

The Beginning of Military Reform

Gorbachev, a protégé of Andropov, agreed with his mentor that the Soviet leadership needed to make political and economic changes to ensure the survival of the weakening USSR. He saw the military and the military industrial complex as economic behemoths that consumed far more resources than were necessary, dragging the Soviet system towards collapse. Gorbachev, the first post-WWII Soviet leader who was not a veteran, also believed the military should be subservient to the party and state, not the reverse. Thus, Gorbachev began his military reform efforts, not for the sake of making the military better, but rather to enable economic and political reforms and to free up some of the vast personnel and material resources devoted to the military for those reforms.⁸

Policy and Personnel Changes

Shortly after taking charge, Gorbachev realized that in order to reduce the size of the military, he had to change not only the answers to military policy questions, but also the questions themselves.⁹ Therefore, in 1986 Gorbachev, despite much resistance from conservatives, convinced the 27th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to make two key changes to the party ideology that changed the *very nature* of Soviet military theory. The first was to emphasize peaceful state-to-state relations in the international arena by removing from the ideology the idea that the USSR

must lead a worldwide class struggle against the capitalist camp. The second change was a direct result of the first; instead of getting unlimited resources to build a massive military based on the idea that the socialist countries had to be prepared to defeat the entire non-communist world at any moment, the Soviet Union would size and resource its military based on the idea of “reasonable sufficiency.”¹⁰

Gorbachev’s next challenge was to change the Soviet military doctrine, imbedded as it was in the official Warsaw Pact (WP) doctrine. He proposed the Soviet and Warsaw Pact militaries take on a defensive rather than offensive posture since party ideology no longer called for a worldwide class struggle. Gorbachev himself wrote in his book, *Perestroika*, “New political thinking...categorically dictates the character of military doctrines. They must be strictly defensive.”¹¹ Therefore, in 1987, after much cajoling and persuasion, the WP changed its official doctrine from “preparing to fight a war” to “preventing war.”¹² However, the military, except for a few leaders at the top, were slow to come around to the new policy, because it changed their entire worldview and the reason for their existence. A Gorbachev assistant, Georgii Shakhnazarov, noted that demilitarizing the country was the most difficult task Gorbachev undertook. Odom agreed, observing that essentially “...it required the destruction of the Soviet system.”¹³

In order to implement his other reforms, Gorbachev had been replacing the Party leadership as quickly as he could, but had left the military mostly alone. However, that changed on 28 May 1987 when a young West German, Mathias Rust, flew his Cessna across the northwest part of the USSR and landed in Red Square without the Soviet military ever challenging him. Gorbachev believed the military allowed it to happen in order to embarrass him (and thus slow his reform efforts) and was very angry.

Gorbachev's need for trusted lieutenants to implement his military reforms and lingering anger after the Rust incident led Gorbachev to sack almost the entire senior military leadership (including the Minister of Defense) over the next year, more than even Stalin had during his infamous purges of 1937-38.¹⁴ However, because of his lack of previous contact with the military, Gorbachev knew few military officers well. The replacements he picked, while willing to obey orders, did not buy into his "new thinking" and so continued to hinder him for years.¹⁵

The Rust incident also exposed the deep-rooted problems of the military to Gorbachev for the first time: discipline, training and morale were at post-WWII lows, caused by poor leadership, lack of housing and food, and the ills of *dedovshchina* (the brutal barracks hazing and servitude forced upon the junior conscripts by the senior conscripts).¹⁶ In the freedom of glasnost, the press began to report these problems and the public's attitude toward the military began to change. Mothers and wives of soldiers in Afghanistan became more vocal and, for the first time, the public questioned the value of a huge army of conscripted young men, led by aged and incompetent generals.¹⁷ Another Gorbachev aide, Anatolii Chernyaev, in a memo to his boss, became the first Soviet to bring up the idea of converting the massive conscript army into a professional force.¹⁸ However, the party and the military ignored the idea and little became of it then.

An Indirect Approach to Reform

Gorbachev quickly realized that he would make little headway in military reforms by trying to directly force changes upon the armed forces and the military-industrial complex where the bureaucracy slow-rolled his changes. Encouraged, and often led by his Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, Gorbachev switched to an indirect approach,

taking foreign policy actions that would force internal changes inside the USSR. The key tactics they used were renewed arms control agreements and later, unilateral force reductions in the name of improving relations with WP and other “socialist allies” by withdrawing Soviet forces from their countries. Shevardnadze and U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz, working in close tandem (and later genuine friendship), were able to use their close ties with their respective bosses to outflank conservatives within both nations and gain approval for actions and treaties that led to the end of the cold war.¹⁹

While cutting the number of troops on active duty would free up some resources, Gorbachev needed major arms control agreements to cut into the massive (between 20 and 40% of GDP), and very self-serving military-industrial complex, because that was where the major savings were. But this was a difficult challenge, for as Shakhnazarov pointed out, the industrialists and top brass believed that “while the politicians and propagandists blabbed about disarmament, the military must concern itself with its own business.”²⁰ During much of 1987-88, the defense establishment filled the media with discussions about the new defensive doctrine, but did almost nothing to implement this change in policy. Both the Defense Minister and the Chief of the General Staff believed a major war was still possible in Europe since NATO still existed and, that while the new doctrine meant they would fight a defensive battle at first, eventually they would have to counterattack on a theater-wide level. Thus, they felt that they needed as many or more troops as they needed under the previous offensive doctrine.²¹

Gorbachev, with prodding from Shevardnadze, decided to force the issue by entering into arms control agreements that would force reductions. In 1988, American and Soviet negotiators completed the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which regulated the

worldwide destruction by both sides of an entire class of weapon systems. They also made much progress on Strategic Arms Reduction (START) and Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) talks to reduce conventional forces in Europe (from the Atlantic to the Urals). However, while the INF treaty increased trust and reduced tensions, the cost savings were marginal and the other treaties were a long way from being completed.²²

Gorbachev realized in 1988 that he had gone as far as he could to reform the existing system. In order to free himself of conservative die-hards such as Yegor Ligachev, he decided to change the system itself, by reducing the CPSU monopoly on political power²³ and simultaneously creating state structures to which he could transfer his power base. Through intense personal lobbying and a great deal of public pressure, Gorbachev convinced the 19th Party Conference in June 1988 to establish a real legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies, with a senior chamber called the Supreme Soviet. In addition, in the later half of 1988, he managed to eject many conservatives from the Politburo and other party leadership positions, giving him more leeway for reform. Finally, in 1989, the delegates of the Supreme Soviet elected him their President, thus giving him a strong state position to go with his party secretary-generalship.²⁴

Withdrawals and Force Reductions

One of the first actions Gorbachev took after his rise to power was to begin the slow, but steady extraction of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, which they completed in 1989. Gorbachev did this for three reasons. First, the war was unpopular with the Soviet public; in fact, for the first time in Soviet history, there was a subtle, but strong backlash against the party leaders from a highly unlikely source: the mothers and wives of the servicemen who wanted their men home before they were maimed or killed. Second,

many of the senior military leaders realized that the war was not going well and was unlikely to go well unless the Soviets depopulated the country. Third, it was Gorbachev's first chance to reduce the expenditure of national treasure, both in lives and in materiel.²⁵ The Afghanistan withdrawal became, in effect, Gorbachev's first military reform effort; but there were many more withdrawals and reductions ahead, starting with unilateral force reductions he announced at the United Nations on 7 December 1988.

In his UN speech, Gorbachev made it clear that the reduction of 500,000 troops and thousands of tanks, artillery and combat aircraft, including 50,000 men and 5,000 tanks in East Europe, was in addition to whatever reductions were mandated by the treaties under negotiation. He also detailed the withdrawal of air assault, river crossing, and other units that were mostly offensive in nature from Soviet forces in Europe.²⁶ Two other statements he made that were lost in the hub-hub: the reduction of forces in the Far East and Mongolia and his plan to "transition from an economy of armament to an economy of disarmament."²⁷ There is no doubt that Gorbachev stunned the world when he announced these previously unthinkable changes, but he had the support of the more reform-minded Politburo for this most dramatic initiative. In November, he had convinced his fellow party leaders that the only way to improve the economy was to unilaterally reduce the military, which would both provide near-term savings and kick-start the on-going START and CFE negotiations, which would then provide major long-term savings. By now, even the General Staff was aware of the deepening economic crisis and offered only minor resistance. In the end, the force reductions, while very challenging, proved to be easier than converting the entrenched defense industry.²⁸

1989: The Year of Freedom

With the expansion of glasnost and the creation of the first functioning legislature, the debate on military reform grew loud and long. Civilian analysts from various Soviet think tanks, academicians, journalists, military officers (on both sides of the debate), Deputies from the legislature (often full-time military officers or government or party officials) and many ordinary citizens participated in these arguments. The debate involved many issues: the role of nuclear weapons, the meaning of the new defensive doctrine (especially in terms of force sizing and structure), what the new threat to be countered was (not coincidentally based on a debate about what the core national interests were) and, not least, if the military should be manned with conscripts or all-volunteer professionals.²⁹ For example, some thought NATO was still the major offensive threat while others saw a much lower level of threat. Several analysts, along with reformist junior officers, led by Major Vladimir Lopatin and Lieutenant Colonel Aleksander Savinkin, espoused reducing the navy and nuclear forces, returning all forces from outside the country (except some in Europe) and only keeping enough troops to defend the sovereign territory of the Union. Colonel Viktor Alksnis led a group of conservative officers called the “black colonels” who opposed the reformer’s ideas; for example, the “black colonels,” and most senior military officers, wanted to keep a massive military which necessitated a conscript force. The debates, at times acrimonious, went on in the media, in public forums and in the legislature.³⁰ While reformers seldom achieved direct results, for the first time they were able to bring about a public, rather than secret discussion, and were able to force the conservatives to compromise on many issues.³¹

However, events in 1989 rapidly overwhelmed discussion and an avalanche of withdrawals and force reductions soon overtook all rational reform plans.

In February 1989, the Defense Minister General Yazov, detailed the unilateral cuts Gorbachev had announced the previous December, as well as a number of reductions by other WP states, including 56,000 troops, 1,900 tanks, and 130 combat aircraft.³² He said the Soviet defense budget would go down by 14.2% and defense spending of the WP nations would decrease 13.6% on average (in May 1989 Gorbachev had finally let the world know the budget was 77.3 billion rubles). And during early 1989, reductions did start: the Central Asia Military District was disbanded, forces finished withdrawing from Afghanistan and Mongolia and by December 1989, over 265,000 people were released from active duty. However, despite the glowing press releases, the General Staff had no plan to implement Gorbachev's cuts and was just beginning to cobble together one when the bottom fell out of communist rule in Eastern Europe.³³

The summer and fall of 1989 brought freedom to Eastern Europe and another great headache for the Soviet General Staff. As each of the countries threw off the yoke of authoritarianism, several things happened simultaneously. First, they wanted Soviet forces out of their country, the sooner the better. Second, for financial reasons, many began to immediately reduce their own forces. Third, they no longer saw the need to remain a part of the WP, and several began to raise the idea of eventually joining NATO. In early 1990, Czechoslovakia and Hungary pressured the USSR into separate treaties to remove the 170,000 Soviet troops still stationed on their soil. Moreover, as the idea of German reunification became a reality, the General Staff was faced with the requirement to remove all Soviet forces from East Germany.³⁴ Finally, with the Group of Forces gone

from Germany, there was no longer be any rationale for keeping troops in Poland and the Poles certainly wanted the Soviet troops out as soon as possible.

Final Chaos

The collapse of the WP and the signing of the CFE treaty turned what had begun as the manageable return of 50,000 troops from East Europe (as part of Gorbachev's unilateral cuts) into a chaotic withdrawal of thirty-one divisions with all their associated equipment, supplies and weapons a year later. Shortly after the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, the future of the WP came into question and by June 1990, several members announced plans to leave. However, Gorbachev and NATO still wanted to complete the CFE treaty (which relied on the existence of the two alliances), so the members did not vote to dissolve the Pact until February 1991. The treaty, signed in November 1990, mandated additional large changes for Soviet military forces. Reductions of about 28,000 tanks, 37,800 armored combat vehicles, 28,000 artillery pieces and 2,200 combat aircraft were to take place within forty months from Eastern Europe and every part of the USSR west of the Ural Mountains. In addition, the treaty called for further personnel cuts and costly weapons destruction programs. The removal, destruction or restructuring affected the entire military.³⁵ Finally, on 31 March 1991, four months after all the NATO and WP countries signed the CFE treaty in Paris and just nine months before the USSR itself dissolved, the WP ceased to exist.³⁶

The Beginning of the End

Without ever having a structured reform program, Gorbachev changed the Soviet military more than it had been since WWII. Soviet troop strength went from a high of

5.3 million men in 1985, to 3.9 million in 1990 and 2.7 million at the end of the Soviet Union, with most of the cuts coming in the last three years of the USSR's existence. However, neither Gorbachev nor his military and industrial leaders developed anything like a comprehensive plan to deal with the overwhelming number of issues that would come up during such a mass demobilization. Party and military leaders were intent on keeping the Soviet military structure intact as it shrank, with political control through the party, rather than make any fundamental changes. "Systemic change," as Odom noted, "remained outside their thinking about military reform."³⁷ They failed to see that the old system was incompatible with the "new thinking" of perestroika, Gorbachev's economic reforms and the rapid transfer of political power from party to state to the Republics.

Additionally, the challenges of resettlement were prodigious. Vladimir Kusun estimated the Soviet military need to transport back to the Soviet Union and bedded down at a new locations "...about 650,000 Soviet citizens, including 350,000 conscripts, 150,000 officers, and an estimated 150,000 family members...."³⁸ No military staff, trained to control combat operations, could be prepared to tackle these non-combat problems. Although no easy feat, discharging the conscripts was the easiest problem for the military, because most could live with family and it was up to the local government committees to find them work or retrain them. However, resettling the officers and their families was much more complicated. Most did not want the military to discharge them because they had few non-military skills and fewer knew any other way of life. They needed housing, schools, daycare, and jobs for their spouses, all of which were in very short supply everywhere in the USSR. The Ministry of Defense and the German government (as part of the withdrawal agreement) began programs to rapidly built

apartments, but these were far too few and far too slow, so many families ended up living in the empty enlisted barracks. The military had to build new bases and storage facilities to house the tanks, ammo, equipment, and supplies that were coming back by the trainload. Tensions mounted as many of the republics no longer wanted either Soviet units or retired Slavic (mostly Russian) officers and families on their territory, correctly believing the officers would try to damp down the growing independence movements and that the units were put there to help violently suppress any overt acts of independence.³⁹

As the reductions started to take effect, Gorbachev finally got what he originally had sought, a reduction in defense spending. As shown below, it took an 8% drop in 1990 and continued to decline until 2001. However, as the Soviet and then Russian economies collapsed, so did the military spending, far more than Gorbachev anticipated or desired.

	1989	1990	% Change
Procurement	32.6	31.0	-4.9
R & D	15.3	13.1	-14.4
Operations, Maintenance and personnel costs	20.2	19.3	-4.5
Construction	4.6	3.7	-19.6
Pensions	2.3	2.4	+4.3
Other	2.3	1.3	-43.5
Total	77.3	70.1	-8.2

Table 2. Soviet Military Spending, 1989 & 1990 (billions of rubles)

Source: Odom, 232. Note that these figures include only MOD controlled troops and do not account for major R & D expenses buried in other parts of the budget.

Corruption, Black Markets, and Dedovshchina

As the tumult increased throughout the Soviet military, discipline continued to fail. Soldiers (on a small scale) or their commanders (on a large scale) sold large stocks of weapons, ammunition and military supplies, often to people they would later face in the Balkans, Baltics, Chechnya and many other places who wanted to become independent

and needed a quick stock of military wares for their paramilitaries. Beyond the black market arms sales, corruption grew rampantly, as senior officers continued and expanded their use of conscripts as their private manual labor force to build dachas, run private farms and even factories. The violent and sometimes deadly scourge of *dedovshchina* got even worse, causing a rapid rise in desertions and suicides.⁴⁰

Because of glasnost, all of these problems, previously known but unacknowledged, came out in the mainstream press and were a topic of much public discussion. As a result, the military's image suffered greatly and many families grew increasingly concerned about sending their sons to do military service. As Odom points out, there came "...a sense of legitimacy for young men to evade military service."⁴¹ This attitude meant that actual strength never came close to authorized strength and those that the military did draft were more likely to be poor or have a criminal past.

During the last three years of the Soviet Union (and to a lesser degree, today), the military was no longer a single entity, but three distinct groups. The conscripts, under the *dedovshchina* system, largely ran the brutal barracks and their own daily working lives. The junior officers, unable to control the troops because of lack of support, grew to fear and dislike their seniors, but stayed in the military because they had no other place to go. Moreover, many generals, admirals, and colonels became isolated, corrupt, and vain opportunists without the traditional concern for their men or equipment.⁴²

The Final Collapse

The failed coup of August 1991 was the trigger event that caused the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After the coup attempt, Boris Yel'tsin and the leaders of the other republics intensified the efforts they had begun before the coup and those centrifugal

forces pulled the Union into pieces. On 25 December 1991, Gorbachev passed the nuclear controls to Yel'tsin and the Soviet flag was hauled down from the Kremlin, and the USSR ceased to exist after midnight, 31 December 1991.

The Soviet military, while officially dissolving on the same day as its state, had in fact become a hollow shell of its former might much earlier, for five reasons. First, the calamity of Afghanistan changed the public attitude towards the military for the first time since post-WWII. Second, the unilateral cuts, the CFE treaty, and the breakup of the Warsaw Pact had led to an unplanned and disorganized withdrawal and drawdown of troops, which left many in dire straits. Third, the truth about the horrors of barracks life and the corruption of the generals (released into the open by glasnost) furthered the public's growing distrust of the military. Fourth, the rapid emergence of nationalist feelings in the republics started fractures along national lines within the military. Finally, because of the first four reasons, draft dodging gained widespread acceptance, which left the military with fewer and fewer young men and a greater ratio of criminals and other miscreants in the ranks. In the end, the mighty Soviet military shattered into pieces, some remaining in the new Russian Federation (RF) and some in the newly sovereign republics, but few of which were combat effective.

Notes

¹ William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 88.

² "Leonid Brezhnev, 1906-1982," *The History Guide, Lectures on Twentieth Century Europe*, n.d., n.p.; On-line, Internet, 1 March 2004, available from www.historyguide.org/europe/brezhnev.html.

³ J. N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812-2001*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 460.

⁴ Odom, 88.

⁵ Westwood, 436.

⁶ *Ibid*, 438.

Notes

⁷ Odom, 89.

⁸ Westwood, 514-515.

⁹ Odom, 88-89.

¹⁰ Ibid, 106-107.

¹¹ Quoted in Odom, 113.

¹² Ibid, 119-123.

¹³ Ibid, 117.

¹⁴ Westwood, 490; Odom, 110.

¹⁵ Odom, 107-111.

¹⁶ Ibid, 108 & 110.

¹⁷ Westwood, 514-516.

¹⁸ Odom, 109.

¹⁹ Ibid, 99-102.

²⁰ Ibid, 122.

²¹ Ibid, 120-124.

²² Ibid, 128-135.

²³ Article 6 of the Soviet constitution gave the Communist Party sole political power.

²⁴ Ibid, 135-141.

²⁵ Ibid, 102-103.

²⁶ Specifically, he said, "In the next two years...personnel will be decreased by 500,000 men, the volume of conventional weapons will be reduced considerably. These reductions will be carried out in a unilateral fashion, outside the negotiations under the Vienna mandate." Ibid, 144.

²⁷ Ibid, 145.

²⁸ Ibid, 141-146.

²⁹ Ibid, 165.

³⁰ Ibid, 147-172.

³¹ Ibid, 185-194.

³² Ibid, 161, 181-183.

³³ Ibid, 181-184.

³⁴ Ibid, 275.

³⁵ Ibid, 275-278.

³⁶ Ibid, 274-277.

³⁷ Ibid, 201.

³⁸ Vladimir Kusin, "The Soviet Troops: Mission Abandoned," *RFE Report on Eastern Europe* Vol. 1, 7 September 1990, 37-38.

³⁹ Ibid, 277-280.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 286-294 and 301-303.

⁴¹ Ibid, 283.

⁴² Ibid, 292.

Chapter 3

Yel'tsin: Years of Turmoil

“...What is taking place in Russia at the moment is not so much a military reform as the creation of a new army.”

—Major General Yuri Kirshin¹

Russian military reform during the Yel'tsin years was defined by three major themes: the continuous lack of funds; the massive withdrawals and continuous force reductions that started under Gorbachev but continued through the 1990s, and lack of strong and visionary leadership, either civilian or military.

In the first four years of its existence, numerous plans were put forth to reform the military, but Yel'tsin's priorities were to restore control of the military and secure its loyalty, so often the plans went nowhere.² Even though reform efforts continued to be devised, the daily struggle to feed and house the troops and try to keep a bare minimum of equipment operational left the Russian military little energy left to conduct military reform. However, from 1996 to 2000, there were a number of reform efforts, some successful and others not.

Creation of the New Russian Armed Forces

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the former Soviet armed forces were left adrift and stateless. In the rush of events, the RF had not officially stood up a military, though many of the former republics had. Therefore, Yel'tsin and the de facto senior Russian

military leadership (i.e. the Soviet Ministry of Defense and General Staff minus a those non-Russians who had returned to their native republics) started over from scratch. They tried hard to convince the CIS countries (all the former republics except the three Baltic states and Georgia, who joined later) to create a unified military, but with little success. The primary obstacles were Ukraine's intense desire for independence and the concern of many of the newly independent countries that Russia would try to re-impose hegemony in the region (they all understood Russia would dominate the combined militaries).³ Finally, Yel'tsin signed a decree on 7 May 1992 creating the Russian Federation armed forces, based on the Soviet forces left in Russia and those still outside the former Soviet Union, as well as some mutually agreed upon forces still in some of the republics. The former Soviet Defense Ministry and General Staff became the new Russian equivalent and Russia began to negotiate with the other republics over the troops, equipment, and facilities on their now sovereign soil.⁴ About this same time the General Staff released a draft military doctrine and the new Minister of Defense, General Pavel Grachev announced a plan to reform the military in three stages:⁵

- 1992-1993: Create the Minister of Defense, General Staff and other command, control and administrative structures of the armed forces of the new Russian Federation (RF).
- 1994-1995: Reorganize upper echelon formations of the services, including switching the ground forces to a system of brigades under corps vice the traditional structure of divisions under armies.
- 1996-1998: Reduce overall manpower to about 2.1 million; increase the number of contract servicemen, and field new high-technology equipment.

In 1993, Grachev further detailed the planned restructuring of the forces, now scheduled to take ten years rather than three. He said there would be three categories of units: Constant Readiness units, ready to react immediately in local conflicts; Mobile Forces, which will be light forces matched with transport aircraft to airlift them on short

notice to reinforce the Constant Readiness troops; and finally, Strategic Reserves, which would be manned at low levels and activated in the event of a major war. He partially reversed the 1992 plan by saying that numbered armies would not be replaced by corps, although some divisions would still reorganize into brigades.⁶

Russia's Early National Security Policies

For the first 22 months of the Russia's existence, there was no national security policy in place. With Yel'tsin occupied by political infighting, the General Staff stepped in and filled the void. They continued most of the cold-war tainted policies, such as military control of the armed forces, a massive conscript army (and an equally massive military-industrial complex) capable of mobilizing to defeat a now implicit, rather than explicit, enemy, NATO.⁷ However, they were overwhelmed with problems created by the previously agreed troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe and the now sovereign republics, and the resulting demobilization and disorganization. The result was a military structured like the gargantuan Soviet military, but hollowed out from the inside.

The generals had drafted Russia's first military doctrine⁸ in 1992 but Yel'tsin was unable to get it approved by the rebellious legislature. After Yel'tsin dissolved the legislature by military force in October 1993, he approved a new doctrine ("The Main Provisions of the Russian Federation Military Doctrine"), based on the 1992 draft, but with important changes made by the Security Council⁹ and Ministry of Defense, on 2 November 1993.¹⁰

This doctrine marked a sea change for Russia: while it acknowledged the "threat of a world war" had not been eliminated, it stated that, "local wars and armed conflicts pose the main threat to peace and stability."¹¹ It also contained other foreign policy elements:

- It listed terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) use, internal attempts to violate the integrity of Russia, organized crime, and weapons theft as other areas of concern.¹²
- It detailed the use of the armed forces in internal problems: particularly the roles and missions of the Border Troops and Interior Ministry Troops, but also stated the need for the military to support them if necessary.¹³
- It established the now entrenched policy that Russia, despite the loss of the Soviet empire, has major interests in the region around Russia (known as the “near abroad”) and still considers it within her sphere of influence. In particular, the doctrine names: “suppression of rights, freedoms or legitimate interests of Russian Federation citizens in foreign states”; attacks on its military facilities in foreign states; armed provocations from, or the build up of military forces in, neighboring states; and “the expansion of military blocs and unions to the detriment of the Russian Federation’s military security interests” as “existing or potential sources of external military danger.”¹⁴

The doctrine also advocated social and force structure goals for the armed forces:

- A return to the Soviet social-military traditions including: restoring the prestige of the armed forces; ensuring the social protection of its members, their families and retired or discharged members; renewing the close ties between the military and society, including pre-draft military skills training for all young men and renewing the patriotic mindset of the population.¹⁵
- Integrate with the CIS militaries if possible (but not in a unified alliance).¹⁶
- Ensure the military has first priority for all resources, both manpower and material (just as they did in the Soviet days!)¹⁷
- Ensure the armed forces have the best weapons in the world and lots of them. To do this, the doctrine says the state should rationally (i.e. minimally) convert factories to make dual-use or consumer goods, but maintain a strong military industrial base by selling a lot of weapons overseas to fund research and development (R&D) of new weapons.¹⁸
- Between 1994 and 1996: complete withdrawals from former allies and republics; cut the strength of the armed forces; create groups of forces on RF territory, some of which should be capable of responding quickly in any direction; and develop a mixed conscript/professional force (not an all-volunteer force due to costs and the need to ensure a strong mobilization potential).¹⁹
- Between 1996 and 2000, complete the reorganization of forces and conversion to a mixed force.

The doctrine was not well received outside Russia. While it was not nearly as war-like as any pre-1988 Soviet doctrine or even the 1992 draft, there was still a strong Cold War flavor to it, and taken together, the various “threats” it listed gave Russia a number of pretexts for military intervention in the nations around Russia, with or without the

agreement of that nation's government.²⁰ While there is no doubt that Russia needed an approved security doctrine, it was also obvious that those who wrote it had, "not adjusted well to the changes that have taken place over the last few years...{which} probably explains the 'Alice in Wonderland' nature of much of the new doctrine."²¹ This lack of clear vision led to a number of faulty assumptions: that the military was in good shape and just needed "reorganizing" and that, just like in pre-1987 USSR, the armed forces could lay claim to unlimited amounts of resources to meet their needs, not change their needs to match what the country could afford.²² Yel'tsin and his generals did not seem to understand that the Russian military was, "...a very brittle instrument."²³ That error led to a catastrophe in Chechnya and hindered military reform for most of the 1990's.

Budget Woes

One constant, depressing problem that continually wore down Russia as a whole, but especially the military, was the budget woes that the RF inherited from the USSR and that continued until 2000. Gorbachev began military reforms to reduce the massive portion of the state's resources that went to the military and that trend is evident through 1992. However, Yel'tsin's 1992 "shock therapy" efforts to convert the economy from a state controlled one to a market economy began a long string of terrible years for Russia and for the armed forces. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank every year, inflation was rampant, and in the turbulent political and social atmosphere, tax collection was anemic. From 1993 until 2000, defense spending was a major portion of the federal budget, but the real value of that funding shrank dramatically. Many years, the Finance Ministry withheld 20 percent of the budgeted amount from the military because tax collections were lower than anticipated, although the MOD and other armed forces were

able to get more than most social and other programs because the generals still held more political influence than most other elements of the government.²⁴

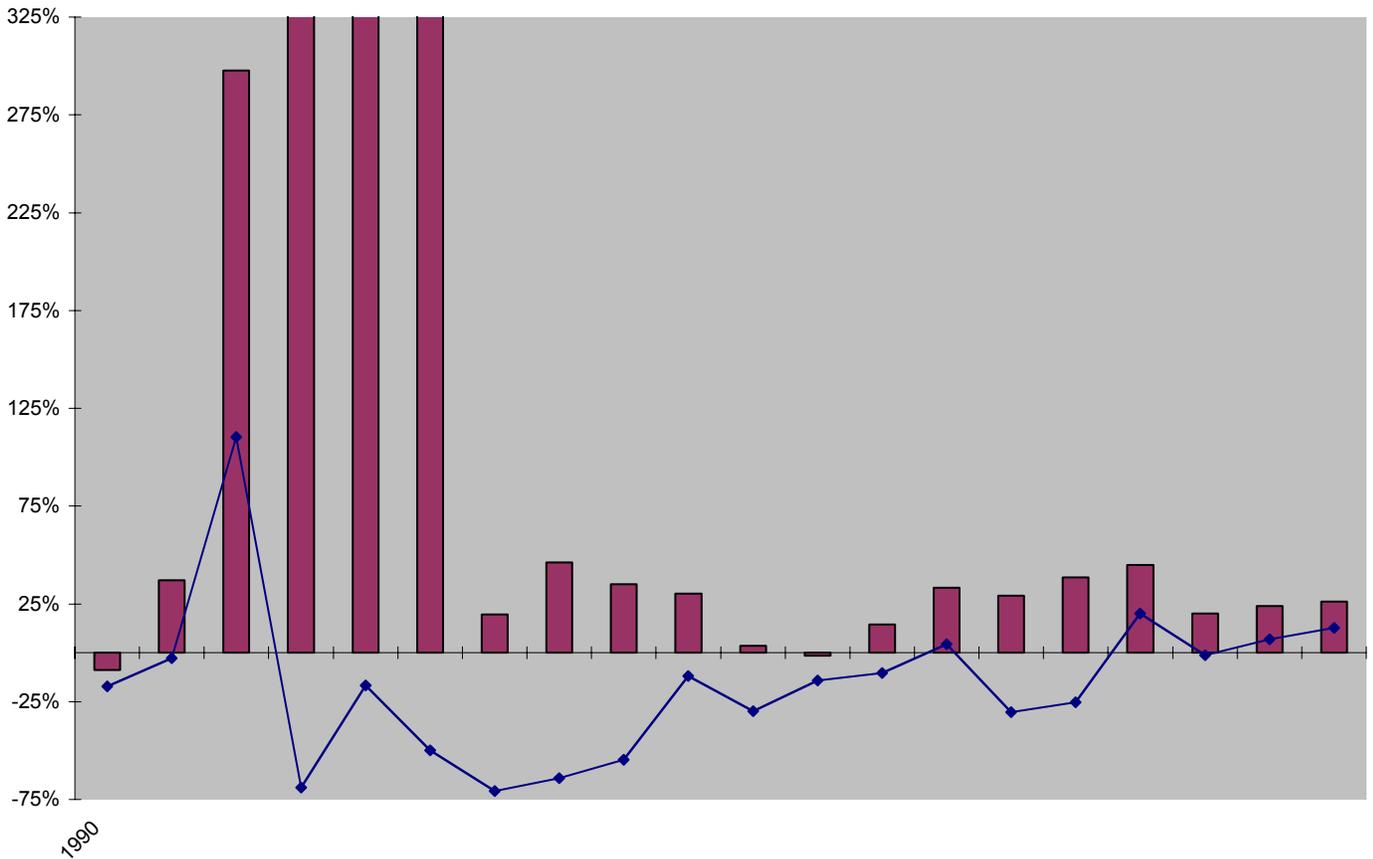


Figure 1. USSR/RF Year-over-Year MOD Budget Changes (Pre- and Post-inflation)

Note: Years with an “R” show the revised budget the government used during that year.

Sources: *The Military Balance* (1989-1990 through 2003-2004); “Kudrin Says Finance Ministry to Send Draft Budget to Government Friday,” *The Russia Journal*, 25 August 2003, n.p.; On-line, Internet, 5 September 2003, available from www.russiajournal.com/news/cnewswire.shtml?nw=40133; author’s own analysis.

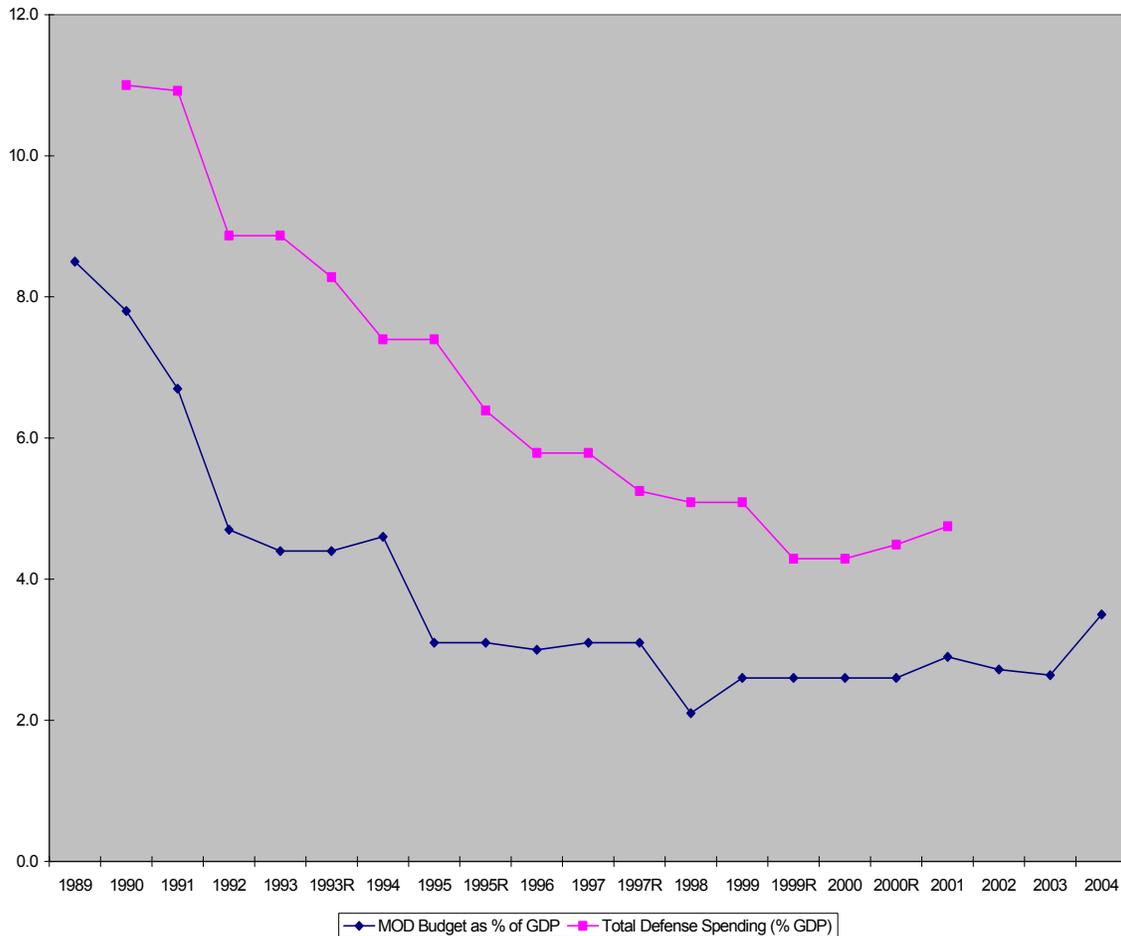


Figure 2. USSR/RF Defense Budget (% of GDP)

Note: Years with an “R” show the revised budget the government used during that year.

Sources: *The Military Balance* (1989-1990 through 2003-2004); “Kudrin Says Finance Ministry to Send Draft Budget to Government Friday,” *The Russia Journal*, 25 August 2003, n.p.; On-line, Internet, 5 September 2003, available from www.russijournal.com/news/cnewswire.shtml?nw=40133.

The First Chechen War (1994-1996)

The Russian military and other armed forces were ill prepared for the first Chechen War that Yel’tsin launched in December 1994 and, as a result, the war turned into a brutal, costly debacle, with large numbers of combatant and non-combatant casualties.²⁵

The war caught the military at a very bad time: in the midst of the massive changes

dictated by the end of the Cold War and the radical changes to Russia brought on by the end of communism and the breakup of the USSR. In the six years since massive reductions had begun in 1988, the Soviet military had demobilized over 2.5 million men or more than 60 percent of the troops (Fig 2 in Appendix A). Simultaneously, other major changes were taking place:

Thirty-seven divisions had [been] withdrawn from Central Europe and the Baltic States; 57 divisions were handed over to Belarus and Ukraine; new regulations granted exemptions from conscript service to thousands of students; a number of divisions were being reorganized into independent brigades or were disbanding; and thousands of tanks, ACVs and artillery were being destroyed as required by the CFE treaty. All units were under-strength, living conditions for many were deplorable, and morale was understandably low.²⁶

Although the war continued for several years, the federal government and the rebels negotiated a truce just before the 1996 presidential election and most of the military forces left Chechnya. However, the legacy of the debacle was much reduced public support for the military and a bitter and withdrawn military. The outcome also set military reform back for several years for three reasons. First, the war absorbed much of the time and energy of the military and other armed forces for two years; it was a huge financial drain on an already severely under-funded military.²⁷ Second, the abysmal showing further undermined already poor military morale. Third, the loss of so many conscripts due to poor training, equipment, leadership and physical condition turned much of the Russians population against their sons or husbands serving in the military, further exasperating manning problems.

Professionalization Efforts

Continued budget problems in 1994 and 1995 reinforced the generals' belief that a professional army was unobtainable in the near term due to cost (as well as their desire to

maintain a large mobilization capability). The problems in Chechnya was partially due to low manning²⁸ and poor training, so in April 1995 conscription service was extended to two years (18 months if the conscript served in a combat zone) and the deferment rules for students (relaxed in the late Soviet period) were tightened considerably.²⁹

None of this stopped Yel'tsin from making a pre-election bid for public support by announcing (and issuing a decree) in May 1996 stipulating that conscription would end by 2000 and the armed forces would become a professional force. However, the military leadership continued to disagree with that approach and ignored the decree. In 1997, Yel'tsin issued yet another decree announcing the same plan, but with a 2005 completion date. Again, the military did little to make it happen.

Yel'tsin's Second Term

With the Chechen war over in August 1996, the military tried to focus on reforms and reorganization, but as was the case throughout much of the 1990s, political infighting, poor leadership, and dreadful economic conditions prevented much progress. While the military continued to get around 20% of the federal budget, mismanagement, corruption and lack of a single clear, long-term plan ensured that reform progressed in fits and starts.³⁰ Part of this was due to the numerous changes in top military leadership, including three Ministers of Defense in a year.

During the 1996 presidential race, General Aleksander Lebed, a populist and popular military man, challenged the weak and unpopular Yel'tsin. As part of a deal worked out by Yel'tsin to get Lebed to withdraw from the race just before the second round of voting, Yel'tsin appointed Lebed as the Secretary of the Security Council and replace the tired Grachev with Lebed's candidate, Igor Rodionov. However, Rodionov only lasted

11 months, slightly longer than Lebed. Rodionov had a reputation as a thinking reformer and many analysts believed that for the first time since 1992, military reforms would bear fruit. However, because of the Byzantine politics of the Yel'tsin era, the continuously pitiful budget, and lack of support from the Kremlin, Rodionov was able to achieve little and finally quit.³¹

In May 1997, Yel'tsin appointed General Sergeyev as the Minister of Defense and the Minister laid out his priorities: increased operations and maintenance allocations (especially improved training), increased demobilization of forces, but increased pension to help those forced out. Yel'tsin followed with decrees in July 1997 announcing cuts in armed forces strength that actually just lowered the number of authorizations by 500,000, but since this was closer to the actual number of troops in the force it changed little. Moreover, the budget realities meant that while there was a slight increase in training, most of the military continued to struggle for food, housing, fuel, and spare parts.³²

A National Security Concept and Better Organizational Structures

In late 1997 and 1998, Yel'tsin issued a number of decrees and policy documents, which collectively had significant impact on the armed forces. In fact, for the first time since the RF was born, many of the reforms driven by these documents were actually completed. Most of these reforms were driven by the economic crises of May 1997 and August 1998 and many necessary reforms were not implemented, but it was a start.

In December 1997, Yel'tsin signed Russia's first *National Security Concept* and in August 1998, he issued the "Fundamental Concept of Russian Federation State Policy for Military Development up to the Year 2005." They addressed the threats to Russian security interests and provided some direction for dealing with them.³³

- The key threat to Russia was internal and came from the economic, social, and ethnic crises that threaten the country's integrity.
- Large-scale external war would not be a main threat for the next 10-15 years, although it cannot be ruled out in the long term (30-35 years).
- Russia must have an aggressive foreign policy to increase her influence in international organizations and protect her global interests.
- Russia must divert resources from the excessively large defense industry in order to help strengthen the ailing economy.
- Nuclear deterrence will be even more important than ever, in light of the "leaner" (i.e. smaller and less ready) military.

As had been the case throughout the 1990's, reform in this period meant reduction and reorganization of the inherited force, rather than a reformation of the culture and ethos of the military. But, taken together, those policies, along with the July 1997 reform initiatives, two July 1998 decrees on Military Districts, and several other initiatives did improve efficiency and better organize the armed forces through actions such as:

- Merging the Air Force (VVS in Russian) and Air Defense Forces (PVO in Russian) in March 1998. By 2000, they had demobilized about 44 percent (117,000) of their combined troops and 31 percent (874) of their combined aircraft, many obsolete.³⁴
- Integrating the military space command and strategic defense forces into the Strategic Rocket Forces.³⁵
- Reducing the number of Military Districts (MDs) from eight to six (Leningrad, Moscow, Volga-Ural, North Caucasus, Siberian and Far Eastern) and the realigning the Interior Ministry (MVD in Russian) and other armed forces' districts on the same lines. Kaliningrad and Kamchatka forces were merged into separate joint operational groups.³⁶
- Giving district commanders operational command of all ground and air forces in their district (a first in Russia or the Soviet Union).³⁷
- Placing Interior Ministry troops in charge of operations inside Russia, augmented by the military and other services as required and allowed, while placing the military in charge of any troops and operations outside Russia, even in the CIS.³⁸
- Demobilizing 93,000 MVD troops (41 percent) between 1998-1999 by reducing the number of critical state facilities they guarded and increasing their focus on handling internal conflicts, such as Chechnya.³⁹
- Demobilizing 80,000 Border Troops (36 percent) between 1997-2000 and reorienting them towards "border protection" rather than rear area security. As a result, their heavy military equipment was somewhat reduced.⁴⁰
- Establishing three categories of forces: a) "Permanent Readiness" units, which were to be fully equipped and no less than 80 percent manned, b) "Reduced

Strength” units, also fully equipped, but with only 10-50 percent of their compliment during peacetime and thus requiring 30 days to reach readiness, and c) “Strategic Reserve” units, which were primarily unit equipment sets with some maintenance staff. Plans were made for three Permanent Readiness divisions and four brigades in the Moscow, Leningrad and North Caucasus MDs and 21 Reduced Strength Divisions and 10 brigades.⁴¹

There are two particularly interesting points to note. One, except for combined arms operations between the ground forces and frontal aviation, Russian joint actions, especially if they involved non-MOD armed forces had always “been negotiated on an ad hoc basis by unit commanders of the various forces.”⁴² These reforms, while not as transformational as the Goldwater-Nichols Act that forced the U.S. military into a joint framework, were a start. Second, Yel’tsin, like many leaders unsure of their power base, had retained from the Soviet days independent armed forces in the various power ministries to counter-balance each other.⁴³ These reforms, for proven unity of command reasons, change that system somewhat by placing all the armed forces within a district under a single commander during operations, one of the lessons learned from Chechnya.

Economic Crises of 1997 And 1998

The economic crises that struck Russia in May 1997 and even harder in August 1998 had a major impact on Russia as a whole and on the military as well. In 1997, the government reduced the military budget in the middle of the year (see Fig. 1) and in 1998, the military budget took an even greater hit, dropping a further 27 percent (in real terms) by one measure.⁴⁴ The result was that the MOD and General Staff went in to a crisis mode, focusing most of their efforts of ensuring the survival of the armed forces, and little on effort and no money on reform.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, by late 1998, Russia began to get over the “economic flu” when external events grabbed everyone’s attention.

The Kosovo War (March 1999)

During the first half of the 1990's, most Russians believed large-scale war was no longer the threat it had been during the Cold War, and the 1993 Doctrine reflects that belief, as did a subsequent 1997 National Security Concept. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russians had been wary of NATO expansion and concerned about being isolated economically, but because of their economic dependence on Western financial institutions, a general feeling of wanting to be more western, and because of their acknowledged weakness, Russia had treated NATO as an unwelcome neighbor, not as an alliance threatening general war.⁴⁶ But NATO's decision in 1997 to include three former Warsaw Pact members and its revised doctrine which allowed for out-of-area operations caused renewed uneasiness in many Russians, especially in the military.

However, there is no doubt that the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia and the threatened ground offensive into Kosovo radically changed attitudes across Russian society towards NATO and the west. A poll in early 1999 showed over 70% of Russians saw the Kosovo operations as a "direct threat to Russian security."⁴⁷ Many Russians saw NATO as an unprovoked aggressor, flaunting international opinion and defying the UN Security Council. Russians felt powerless, believing that NATO had not consulted Yel'tsin, and when Russia tried to use its UN veto, NATO causally brushed off Russia's concerns and ignored the UN. What caused the most frustration was that the Russian leadership and public both realized that there was nothing Russia could do economically or militarily to back up their diplomatic efforts. Russian legislator Alexei Arbatov said:

...Russia viewed NATO's military action as a final humiliation and a "spit in the face." NATO's attack, more than ever before, demonstrated a Western arrogance of power and willingness to ignore Russian interests--especially when they diverged from those of the West. Kosovo also

demonstrated Russia's total impotence in supporting its own declarations and commitments with even minimally tangible actions.⁴⁸

Russia Vows It Will Not Happen Again

Russia began efforts to improve its national security posture with action in three areas: a revitalized military exercise program, an expanded defense budget, and work on a more assertive and aggressive national security doctrine. In the first area, for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia held a series of large exercise. The first, "Air Bridge 99," took place in March 1999 and involved more than 12,000 troops and 100 transport aircraft. Then in June 1999, Russia held "Zapad-99," its largest exercise in 14 years, with military, MVD, Border Guard, and other troops from several MDs and sailors from three fleets.⁴⁹ While the exercise impressed many Western analysts, it was costly, using up the Navy's annual fuel allocation.⁵⁰ As reaction to Kosovo continued, the government, led by Secretary of the Security Council (and shortly, Prime Minister) Vladimir Putin, intensified work on a new national security concept.⁵¹ Once again, military reform became a hot topic, but this time, Putin defined reform as steps to put muscle on the military bone, rather than actions to reduce the forces. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Russian government increased the defense budget mid-year by 16 billion rubles, making what would have been a 10 percent decline in real terms into a 4 percent gain (see Fig. 1), which was a considerable challenge since Russia was still hurting economically.

Second Chechen War

In August 1999, about 2000 Islamic militants from Chechnya seized a number of villages in neighboring Dagestan with the intent to form an Islamic Republic. The

government, led by Prime Minister Putin, initiated an “anti-terror” campaign (thereby avoiding the need for Duma approval) to remove the rebels from Dagestan. Then in September, a series of apartment building bombings that killed hundreds in Moscow and two other cities were attributed to Chechen rebels (although there is some controversial evidence that the Federal Security Service (FSB in Russian) may have set them and blamed the Chechens). For the first time since the end of the Cold War, Russians began to fear for their personal safety and as a result, public support for a military campaign was strong.⁵² From October 1999 through May 2000, over 100,000 military and Interior troops conducted a full-blown combat operation to retake Chechnya. Although they did establish control of the majority of the republic, the rebels have conducted a successful insurgency since then, with somewhat diminishing results in the last few years.⁵³

The reforms initiated in 1997 and 1998, modest though they were, and the lessons learned from the First Chechen War enabled the Russian armed forces to perform slightly better in the Second Chechen operation than the first. Some joint training was conducted before deployment, conscripts were better trained and equipped, extensive artillery and close air support were employed, reconnaissance and logistic were much improved, and Russia used a coordinated combination of Interior and regular Army and Air Force units, not the ad-hoc groups formed just before battle in the first war. Unfortunately, the Russian tactics, while reducing the number of Russian casualties, were not very discriminate and caused a large number of civilian casualties. In fact, the Chechen wars as a whole are characterized by brutality and human rights violations by both the rebels and government troops.⁵⁴

A Hollow Force Enters the 21st Century

Even with the Russian military on the upswing for the first time in years, it ended the 1990's as a hollow force. Although reform efforts began in earnest in the last two years of the decade, for the first seven years that the RF has existed, "reform has largely meant simply managing and limiting decay."⁵⁵ The lack of money, inconsistent leadership, low morale and public appreciation, an ill-defined threat, massive dislocation, demobilization and reorganization and several disastrous military campaigns completely hollowed out and decayed the armed forces. Training rarely took place, planes did not fly, ships did not steam, and equipment rusted in place for lack of fuel, spares, and anyone to maintain it. One startling example of the problems with poor funding and maintenance: from May to August 1998 no Russian ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) was at sea on patrol, the first time, except for a one week period in 1996, that this has happened since 1960 when the fleet ballistic submarine force began operations.⁵⁶ In 1997, less than half the Air Forces' planes were serviceable; the lack of fuel limited flying hours to about 10 percent of what a NATO pilot would expect--well below flight safety, much less, combat training standards.⁵⁷ Except for the nuclear forces (and even they had similar problems, albeit on a much more manageable scale) and select airborne and special operations forces, the Russian military entered the 21st century with a glimmer of hope, but little conventional combat capability and an aging nuclear force.

Notes

¹ Keith Armes, "Russia's New Military Doctrine," *Perspective* Vol. 4, no. 2 (December 1993), n.p.; On-line, Internet, 13 November 2003, available from <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol4/Armes.html>.

² Pavel K. Baev, *The Russian Army in a Time of Troubles* (London: PRIO (International Peace Research Institute, SAGE Publications Ltd, 1996), 66-67.

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³ Dale R. Herspring, *Russian Civil-Military Relations* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 165; Charles Dick, “The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Special Report No. 1, January 1994, 1.

⁴ Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 1; Jane’s Information Group, *Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment: Russia*, 3d Update, June 1998 (Southampton, UK: Jane’s Information Group, 1996), n.p. (Section 8.10.2).

⁵ Herspring, 166; Jane’s, n.p. (Section 8.10.5).

⁶ *The Military Balance 1993-1994* (London: Brassey’s for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1993), 95.

⁷ Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 1.

⁸ Russian military doctrines typically include political, military-technical, and defense industrial sections, making them similar to what in the U.S. would be separate National Security and National Military Strategies.

⁹ In the RF, the Security Council works directly for the President, but the amount of influence it has depends almost entirely on whom the President appoints as Secretary. When the President gives the post to someone to placate him or her, such as Lebed under Yel’tsin, the council may have little power. However, when the Secretary is a rising player, such as Sergei Ivanov under Putin, the Council can wield a great deal of authority.

¹⁰ Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 1.

¹¹ “The Main Provisions of the Russian Federation Military Doctrine,” *Military Thought (Voennaya Mysl)*, Special Issue, November 1993, 9.

¹² Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 2; “The Main Provisions”, 4-5.

¹³ “The Main Provisions”, 11.

¹⁴ “The Main Provisions”, 4-5; Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 2.

¹⁵ Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 3; “The Main Provisions”, 7.

¹⁶ “The Main Provisions”, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁸ “The Main Provisions”, 8, 14-16; Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 5.

¹⁹ “The Main Provisions”, 12-13.

²⁰ Dick, “The Military Doctrine” (1994), 3.

²¹ Ibid, 5.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *The Military Balance 1997-1998* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1997), 102-107.

²⁵ Richard F. Starr, *The New Military in Russia: Ten Myths That Shape the Image*, (Annapolis, MD: The Naval Institute Press, 1996), 16-19.

²⁶ *The Military Balance 1995-1996* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1995), 102.

²⁷ *The Military Balance 1995-96*, 110-111.

²⁸ *The Military Balance* estimated that in 1994 no combat formations were manned with more than 75% of their authorizations and 70 percent had less than half their billets filled. *The Military Balance 1994-1995* (London: Brassey’s for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1994), 109.

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²⁹ *The Military Balance 1995-1996*, 106-111.

³⁰ *The Military Balance 1997-1998* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1997), 101-102.

³¹ Lester W. Grau, *Russian Minister of Defense Plans for a Smaller, Highly-trained, Modern Army Within a Decade*, FMSO Publication (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, December 1996) n.p.; On-line, Internet, 10 December 2003, available from <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/fmsopubs/issues>; Timothy L. Thomas and Lester W. Grau, "A Military Biography: Russian Minister of Defense General Igor Rodionov: In With the Old, In With the New," *Journal of Slavic Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (June 1996): 443-452; On-line, Internet, 10 December 2003, available from <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/fmsopubs/issues>.

³² *The Military Balance 1997-1998*, 101-102.

³³ *The Military Balance 1998-1999* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1998), 101; Eva Busza, *Yeltsin's Latest Military Reform Initiative: Operational-Strategic Commands*, PONARS Policy Memo 44, November 1998, 2-3; On-line, Internet, 3 March 2004.

³⁴ *The Military Balance 1997-1998*, 101-102; *The Military Balance 1998-1999*, 101.

³⁵ *The Military Balance 1997-1998*, 101-102.

³⁶ *The Military Balance 1998-1999*, 102-103.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 103.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ M. J. Orr, *The Russian Ground Forces & Reform: 1992-2002*, Research Report (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, January 2003), 6; On-line, Internet, 4 December 2003, available from www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents.

⁴² Busza, 1.

⁴³ Busza, 3-4.

⁴⁴ "Russian Military Expenditures, 1988-2002"; *Military Expenditure Database*, On-line, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 3 February 2004. Available from http://projects.sipri.org/milex/mex_database1.html.

⁴⁵ *The Military Balance 1999-2000* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 1999), 104; Alexei Arbatov, "Russia's Defense Policy," Meeting, Summarized by Rashed Chowdhury, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, Russia, 5 March 2004, in *JRL #8129*, 21 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

⁴⁶ Alexei Arbatov, *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned From Kosovo and Chechnya*, The Marshall Center Papers, No. 2 (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, July 2000), 12; On-line, 15 January 2004, available from www.marshallcenter.org/site-graphic/lang-en/page-pubs-mcpapers-1/cat/xdocs/coll/mc-papers.htm.

⁴⁷ Deborah Yarsike Ball, "Spurred By Kosovo, The Russian Military Is Down But Not Out," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 1999, 16.

⁴⁸ Arbatov, *Transformation*, 10-11.

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⁴⁹ *The Military Balance 1999-2000*, 104-109.

⁵⁰ Frank Umbach, *Future Military Reform: Russia's Nuclear & Conventional Forces*, Research Report (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, August 2002), 7; On-line, Internet, 4 December 2003, available from www.da.mod.uk/CSRC/documents.

⁵¹ Ball, 16-18.

⁵² *The Military Balance 2000-2001* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 2000), 112.

⁵³ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 112.

⁵⁴ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 112-115.

⁵⁵ Jane's, n.p. (Section 8.11.2).

⁵⁶ *The Military Balance 1998-1999*, 102.

⁵⁷ *The Military Balance 1997-1998*, 101-102.

Chapter 4

Putin: The Great Stabilizer

Putin...seems to have not only the heart of a great power nationalist but the soul of an accountant. He does not balk at pouring a quarter of his budget into defence, but wants to be sure that this will bring concrete results.

—Dr. Mark Galeotti¹

As 1999 waned, so to did the Yel'tsin era. Yel'tsin rapidly moved Putin up the ladder, from Director of the FSB to Secretary of the Security Council, to acting Prime Minister in August 1999 and finally, to acting President when he resigned in December 1999. The young, vigorous, sober Putin, such a contrast to the aging, sick, and at times drunk Yel'tsin, campaigned as a patriot and stabilizer, promising to restore Russian's pride in their nation and military, to win the war in Chechnya, to enhance Russia's place in the world and to improve their daily lives by revitalizing the economy. To a population made poorer by the August 1998 economic collapse, frustrated by NATO expansion and actions in Kosovo, and scared by terrorist bombings, Putin's message was what they were looking for and he won his first term as President in March 2000.

Russia's New Military and National Security Policies

In light of NATO expansion and the wars in Kosovo and Chechnya, Russia began an internal reappraisal of its security policies in 1999, which resulted in the Putin government publishing a series of national security and military doctrines during the first

half of 2000 that were conspicuously different from the 1993 Military Doctrine and the 1997 National Security Concept (NSC). The foundation, which Putin had a key role in developing before becoming President, was the NSC he signed in January 2000. Rapidly following that came a naval doctrine in March, a military doctrine in April, and a foreign policy concept in June. There were two common threads running through all of them. The first was a greater emphasis on external threats vice the earlier almost exclusive focus on internal (especially economic and political) challenges. The second was references to states and alliances (sometimes explicitly naming NATO) trying to interfere in Russia's "sphere of influence" or threatening her security, including, for the first time since the Cold War, concern about the possibility of a large-scale war against Russia.²

The 2000 NSC, while still devoting much attention to internal threats, greatly expanded both the number and criticality of external threats. Unlike the earlier policies, this NSC "no longer states that there are no external threats arising from deliberate actions or aggression."³ It argued that following the end of the Cold War, international relations would naturally evolve into a multi-polar world based on international law, in which Russia had a major role as a "Great Power" with regional and in many cases, global interests. The document warned that NATO's use of force without UN sanction, its new "out-of-area" doctrine, and its past (and anticipated future) expansion into Russia's "sphere of influence" clearly showed that the U.S. and its allies were attempting to establish a unipolar world outside international law, thus jeopardizing international stability.⁴ While still recognizing terrorists, separatists and other internal armed groups as dangers, the new NSC, unlike the 1997 version, listed as major concerns a set of dangers to the safety and well-being of citizens such as: lawlessness, discontent in

society, economic reforms that enabled a very few to become billionaires while making the majority poorer, and the lack of a rule-based state. Putin's NSC signaled Russia's new political, military, and economic policies:⁵

- Russia would do whatever it could to move the international system to a multi-polar system, consolidating its position as a great power in the process. Hence, Russia would strive for "cooperation" with the West in areas like counter-proliferation and stopping the spread of terrorism and transnational crime, rather than working in "partnership" as earlier policies had mandated. Russia would also actively engage with other potential "poles", such as China, India, and later the European Union (EU), in an effort to mold the system.
- Russia's military policy was to deter nuclear or large-scale conventional attacks with her nuclear arsenal, while ensuring enough conventional military capability to protect her sovereignty and territory in local wars and defeat enemy forces in regional wars. Russia would also ensure her military-industrial complex was strong enough to retain scientific and technological independence.
- Russia would strive to improve her economic position in the world and continue to pursue integration into the world economic structures while moving from a western-dependant, strictly market based economic reform policy to one that emphasized the role of the state in "shaping the economy, safeguarding stability, and regulating social and political life."⁶

The NSC emphasized that Russia was determined to bring about a multi-polar international system with Russia as one of the poles. The state would focus its resources and efforts on gaining (economically) or regaining (militarily) her place as a Great Power. In line with Putin's personal beliefs, the NSC made it clear that the government intended to mold the chaotic, turbulent, stumbling Russia of the 1990s into a structured, competent, and strong Great Power, where the state was much more involved in maintaining order.

The naval doctrine stressed the need for an effective ocean-going navy to guarantee access to the sea and to prevent domination of the seas (especially seas adjacent to Russia) by any states or alliance (read the U.S. or NATO). But the reality was that the main duties left for the Navy were to provide about half of Russia's strategic nuclear

forces and to protect the seas around Russia with a limited number of tactical submarines and surface ships (more than 80% of the fleet has retired since 1990).⁷

The new military doctrine was very much in line with the new NSC in its threat assessment, listing NATO's enlargement and out-of-area operations as potential threats, along with the possibility of the spread of local wars on Russia's southern flank. In that vein, the doctrine documented the informal policy of using the armed forces in both external and internal operations, particularly those that "threaten Russia's territorial integrity" (an obvious reference to Chechnya).⁸ Finally, the doctrine provided four priorities for reform: 1) establishing joint groups of forces from all the armed forces (MOD, MVD, Border Guard, etc.), 2) improving the readiness and mobilization potential of the armed forces, 3) bringing the permanent readiness units to mission ready status by improving their manning, training and equipment, and 4) strengthening Russia's strategic deterrent, including her nuclear forces.⁹

Because the NSC and the doctrines were so different from their predecessors, when they first appeared many observers wondered if the Kremlin had reverted to an almost Cold War style anti-Western policy. However, in truth there was much more balance. One finds much discussion of Chechnya and the dangers on Russia's southern flank, as well as real concern about the general well being of an increasingly criminalized society dominated by the super-rich and gangs of thugs. Over the next two years, it became apparent that while Russia had definitely made a break from the idea of becoming part of the West, she was in fact embarking on an independent, rather than an anti-Western, path towards her goal of being a great power in a multi-polar world. Putin and most of

Russia's political leadership also recognized that without successful military reform that goal would be almost unobtainable. That led to Putin's first reform efforts.

Putin's Initial Military Reform Efforts

Putin's background is in intelligence, and he had little intimate contact with the military leadership until he came to Moscow in 1996. He worked to keep them happy because he wanted and needed their support, but he also kept them out of his immediate circle. He observed their continuous infighting during his tours as FSB Director, Secretary of the Security Council and Prime Minister, but it really hit him when his top two military leaders had a very public falling out shortly after he became president.¹⁰ A heated disagreement between the Minister of Defense, Marshall Sergeyev, and the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel General Kvashnin about the future direction of the armed forces boiled into an open confrontation in the summer of 2000. Sergeyev, a career nuclear missileer, wanted to continue to devote a large share of the defense budget to the nuclear forces, expanding and rapidly modernizing them. Kvashnin, an army officer who commanded forces during the First Chechen War, wanted to slow modernization of nuclear forces, move the Strategic Missile Force (RSVN in Russian) under the Air Force and use the savings to modernize and improve the ground forces, which he felt were more important to dealing with Russia's current security threats.¹¹ Putin brought the discussion under control and behind closed doors, but he realized then that he needed an outsider he could trust to plan and implement, rather than just argue about, military reforms, if he wanted them to succeed. Putin had promised Yel'tsin to keep the old team on for at least a year, so rather than firing Sergeyev or Kvashnin¹², he took the job of developing a new

reform plan from the MOD and General Staff (where it had been since 1992) and gave it to the Security Council, chaired by his closest ally, former FSB General Sergei Ivanov.¹³

Shortly after, at the 11 August 2000 Security Council meeting, Putin issued the guidance on how he wanted to implement military reforms. First, every reform must be designed to organize the armed forces to meet the near-term threats to Russian security. Second, every reform, supported by careful analysis, should make the armed forces more efficient to eventually reduce public spending on defense.¹⁴ This then, is the essence of Putin's military reform vision: fix the military, but in parallel with and not at the expense of, the budding recovery of Russia's economic health.

The *Kursk* disaster on 12 August 2000, and the cover-up by the Navy and General Staff that left him looking foolish in front of the Russian public, increased Putin's distrust of the military leadership. It also brought home to him how immediate and widespread the problems the military faced were.¹⁵ Therefore, even while Ivanov worked on a plan, Putin moved out with some quick action. In September, he announced a cut of 365,000 billets that the Security Council had agreed to in August. This third major reduction since 1992 would take the military from 1.2 million slots down to somewhere near 900,000 (depending on how the cuts were distributed among the armed forces).¹⁶ As expected, political infighting over how to distribute the cuts continued for months. Originally, the Defense Minister announced that the cuts would be distributed proportionally: 180,000 from the ground troops, 50,000 from the navy and 40,000 from the air forces with the remaining 80,000 from the Interior troops. Then the General Staff suggested that the RSVN could be cut in half, but that went nowhere.¹⁷ Ivanov had the last word, stating that most of the cuts would come from the duplicative rear and logistics

troops that each service and ministry maintained and few cuts would be made in combat or combat support units (although some would result from the planned elimination of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) over the next decade).¹⁸ In fact, with probably less than a million servicemen in the force at this time because of conscription shortfalls, junior officers departing as quickly as they could, and many contract troops leaving early, more than half of the cuts were a bookkeeping drill that eliminated vacant slots.¹⁹ Unfortunately, these cuts changed nothing in the basic structure. The Russian armed forces were not much different than a shrunken version of the Soviet military, with a cadre of officers and a large number of conscripts, designed to enable rapid expansion into a mass army upon mobilization.²⁰

Russia's First "Civilian" Minister of Defense

A second major meeting of the Security Council was held in November 2000 and finally, on 15 January 2001, Putin signed off on the "Plan for the Buildup and Development of the Armed Forces for 2001-2005", but in a throwback to Soviet days, the document was classified top secret. Then, in March 2001, Putin put his own team in place, replacing Marshall Sergeyev as Minister of Defense with Sergei Ivanov, something he had probably been ready to do for months. Putin gave Sergeyev a quiet corner office in the Kremlin as his advisor on strategic forces. Then he fulfilled one of the long nourished goals of civilian military reformers by installing the first non-military officer as the Defense Minister (although Ivanov, a former FSB general, is not exactly a civilian).²¹ Putin also filled the senior MOD positions with his or Ivanov's allies (one notable reform was the appointment of the highly competent civil servant Lyubov Kudelina, moved from the Finance Ministry to become the first senior woman in the MOD ever and the

equivalent of the MOD comptroller). By now it was obvious that Putin was going to go with Kvashnin's ideas for the most part, but by appointing Ivanov, rather than Kvashnin, to replace Sergeyev Putin was able to keep the generals in check.

Putin's First Reform Plan (January 2001)

Putin came to power with a gut belief that the military was in need of serious reform in a number of areas, but with few detailed ideas. However, once Ivanov had worked out a plan and Putin had tweaked it, things started to happen. The plan, most of the details of which had leaked out by April, continued the trend of previous reform plans by focusing on manpower cuts and organizational and structural changes, but did address efforts to improve the lives of service members. As Ivanov wrote, the purpose of the plan was to bring the armed forces' "...structure, composition, and numerical strength into conformity with the character and direction of threats to Russia's military security and with the financial and economic capabilities of the state."²² Here are the key points from the plan and the meetings that preceded it, broken out by major areas:²³

Organization and Structure of the Combat Forces

- By 2006, the military would move to a three-service structure, consisting of the Ground Forces, Air Force and Navy, with three lesser branches: the Airborne Forces, and two branches created by breaking up the fourth service, the RSVN.
- RSVN, reduced from a service to a branch, would contain the ICBM forces and would move under the air force in 2005. MOD would separate military space forces and missile defense units from the RSVN in 2001 to form a new military branch, the Space Force. A victory for Kvashnin, this action unraveled the 1997 merger of the three forces.
- The number of operational strategic nuclear warheads would be reduced to 1000-1500, but by letting the ICBM force decline gradually as each missile reached the end of its service life, rather than retiring many early as Kvashnin proposed. As a modest replacement of the retiring systems, Russia will buy about 10 new *Topol-M* missiles each year and refurbish some SS-25s to extend their life.
- Priority of effort would go to improving the ground forces, which the MOD had significantly weakened by neglect and poorly planned reforms in the 1990s. The

number of permanent readiness units would increase, mainly in the south and southwest regions.²⁴

- Putin further confirmed his emphasis on conventional, and especially ground, forces by reestablishing the post of Commander-in-Chief, Ground Forces and appointing Colonel General Nikolai Kormiltsev to that position, as well as making him a deputy Minister of Defense (the Navy and Air Force chiefs are not deputy ministers). This also undid another 1997 Sergeyev reform.²⁵
- Further accelerating the shift of power to the ground forces, the six MDs were placed under the Ground Forces Main Command, rather than directly under the operational control of the General Staff.²⁶
- The air force and navy were hardly mentioned, except the air force was to ensure it could help localize armed conflicts (obviously referring to Chechnya) and the navy was to get rid of redundant staffs and obsolete weapon systems.
- In an attempt to rein in the other armed forces, the plan tasked the MOD to create a command and control system that provide would centralized command of the armed forces, but allow initiative and independence at lower echelons.

Organization and Structure of the Logistics, R&D, and Procurement Functions

- The MOD would revamp the entire contracting system, starting with the creation of a single arms development and procurement plan for the entire MOD and all other armed forces. The goal was to reduce the expense of having each service design and purchase their own weapons with their own contracting bureaucracy. The varieties of similar weapons would be reduced and contracting centralized, ensuring the highest priority purchases got the funded first.
- The MOD would also merge the multitude of logistics and rear support systems. As it stood, each service, branch and ministry had its own supply, logistics, medical and other service organizations and units. Within each MD, these functions were to be combined under the MD commander, who would then have the mission of supporting all armed forces either stationed in or deployed to that district. As discussed above, Ivanov felt that this area and the merger of the contracting system would provide many of the 365,000 cuts planned.
- The vast and inefficient military training and education system (much left over from the Soviet days) was also to be optimized, by reducing the number of small institutions supporting only one branch or service and making the larger institutions joint. The curriculums were to be updated to reflect both the revolution in military affairs and to reduce the time needed to graduate officers from five to three or four years (to help fill the junior officer vacancies quickly).
- Much like the procurement, logistics, and training functions, the military laboratory system was to be rationalized and restructured to support all the services, based on an annual approved research plan.

Funding

- The government would no longer split military funding equally between the services, but would divide it based on the priority needs of each service.
- Further cuts of 365,000 troops would be prudent and provide badly needed money for the other reforms (see above for discussion on these cuts).
- Funding for all ground forces would be increased, mostly with new funds, not from elsewhere in the defense budget.
- The plan emphasized that MOD intended to shift the funding ratios within the armed forces over the next decade. In 2001, about 70 percent of the budget went to personnel, operations and maintenance, while 30 percent was spent on R&D and procurement (both new systems and upgrades). Both Putin and Ivanov wanted to gradually change that ratio to 60/40 by 2006 and 50/50 by 2011. In other words, they would provide funding in 2001-2005 to improve the lives of the servicemen and provide more training, fuel and spare parts, while later, the money would be spent on reequipping the force.

Social Protection of Servicemen and Their Families

- The plan called for stopping the decline of “social protection standards” (pay, housing, retraining, etc.) by 2005 and, by 2010, bringing those standards back to where they ought to be to reflect the “significance, complexity, and intensity of military service.”²⁷
- The plan called for legislation to link military pay to federal civil service pay by duty position starting 1 January 2002 and by rank starting 1 January 2003. Between 2003-2010, pay by rank would be made 50 percent higher than civil servants and pay by position would be made 100 percent higher. All of this was planned to raise the service member’s pay 60 to 100 percent.
- Develop a program for retraining and housing servicemen released from service and their families.

While this was an ambitious plan, so were many others proposed in the decade since the Soviet Union crumbled. But Putin had four things going for him that Yel’tsin never had: 1) Putin believed military reform was vital to his goal of remaking Russia, so even if he had the wrong plan, he was determined to move out with reform and fix his plan as he went, rather than just keep talking; 2) Putin took the reform process out of the hands of the bickering generals and gave it to someone he could trust and who had his full support; 3) the military brass, having seen peers get fired, realized that Putin would put up with

discussion, but not overt nor covert hindrance, and most importantly of all; 4) to his great good fortune, Russia's economic doldrums ended as Putin came to office.

Rising Budgets

After falling every year but one from 1990 to 1998, Russia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen every year since, thanks to larger exports (due to the 1998 devaluation of the ruble) and to a rise in oil prices in 1999 (due to increased consumption as the world recovered from the 1998 slump in Asia)(see Table 2). Putin made the situation even better by using all the levers of state power to begin enforcing the collection of taxes for the first time since Russian was reborn.

	Change In GDP	Official MOD Budget (Billions of redenominated Current rubles)	Official MOD Budget (% of GDP)	Estimated Total Defense Spending (% of GDP)
1988	4.0	0.083 (est.)	N.A.	N.A.
1989	1.9	0.077	8.5	N.A.
1990	-3.0	0.071	7.8	N.A.
1991	-5.1	0.097	6.7	N.A.
1992	-14.5	0.384	4.7	10.92
1993	- 8.7	8.3	4.4	8.87
1994	-12.6	40.6	4.6	8.28
1995	- 4.1	59.4	3.1	7.4
1996	- 3.4	80.2	3.0	6.39
1997	0.9	83.0	3.1	5.79
1998	- 4.9	81.7	2.1	5.25
1999	5.4	109.0	2.6	5.09
2000	9.0	151.0	2.6	4.29
2001	5.0	218.9	2.9	4.49
2002	4.3	262.9	2.7	4.75
2003	7.3	325.6	2.6	4.81
2004	6.4*	411.0	3.5*	N.A.

* Estimated

Table 4. USSR/RF GDP and Budgets

Sources: The Military Balance (1990-1991 through 2003-2004); International Monetary Fund, *Russian Federation: Statistical Appendix*, IMF Country Report No. 03/145 (Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund, May 2003), 2; On-line, Internet, 8 January 2004, available from www.imf.org/external/pubs; *2003 World Development Indicators*; CD-ROM (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2003); "Putin Says Economic Forecast For 2004 More Optimistic," *ITAR-TASS*, 29 March 2004, in *JRL* #8143, 30 March 2004. E-newsletter; "Statistics Committee Says Russia's GDP up 7.3 per cent in 2003." *Prime-TASS*, 3 February 2004. On-line. Internet, 28 March 2004. Available from www.gateway2russia.com/st/art_206833.php.

As Table 2 shows, Putin has been able to fulfill his promise to better fund the military by increasing the official MOD budget every year (although not to the degree the military desired). The first evidence of this came in 1999, when the government took some of the oil windfall, along with money from elsewhere in the government, and provided MOD and the other armed forces about 30 billion rubles above their budget to cover the cost of the war in Kosovo and some new equipment.²⁸ In 2000 and 2002, however, inflation and large payments due on the foreign debt (much from 1998) meant a slight real (post-inflation) decline in the MOD Budget. But, during Putin's first term, he was able to ensure the MOD budget was between 2.6 and 2.9 percent of GDP, which, with a sharply rising GDP meant a much healthier budget. Overall, during those four years, he ensured the military had both nominal and real increases in funding (see Fig 1).

Contemplating a Professional Armed Force

Those larger budgets allowed Putin to seriously contemplate the possibility of being able to afford a professional, volunteer force. Early in his administration, Putin wanted to transform most, if not all, of the armed forces into a smaller, professional force, but had been persuaded by the General Staff that it was too expensive to do and that the military still needed conscripts in order to rapidly fill out the army if a major war occurred (the same reasons professionalization had been discussed and abandoned since 1992).

Nevertheless, Putin stayed with the idea for a number of reasons.²⁹ First, he accepted the fact that the major threat facing Russia was more “local and regional wars” not a major war with NATO or the Chinese. Second, Putin, along with a number of military officers, understood that the way militaries fight wars had changed. Small, well-trained, well-led, highly mobile forces with high-technology precision weapons were the way of the future. The successful U.S. operations in Desert Storm and Kosovo, and Russia’s poor showing in two wars in Chechnya illustrated that clearly. He wanted Russia to move into the future, not stay in the past. Third, Putin understood that a professional force would initially cost more, but he believed that it would cost less in the end, and more importantly, help eliminate many of the morale and prestige problems the Russian armed forces had had since they were created. Fourth, Putin and Ivanov, unlike all the military officers who were raised in the Soviet school of massed armies, had grown up in an organization that was compact, professional, and manned only with volunteers. Putin’s KGB experience probably made him comfortable with a smaller, more professional force. Fifth, while he personally served his country, he recognized that many Russians and their families did not want to be in the military, for a variety of reasons. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Putin understood the demographic facts, even if the military was burying its head in the sand. The simple problem is that the number of eligible males will start falling rapidly, beginning in 2004, due to a low Russian birth rate since 1987.³⁰ For all these reasons, at a November 2000 Security Council meeting, Putin directed the MOD and General Staff to develop a set of options on how to transition the armed forces to a professional force.³¹

Planning For a (Partially) Professional Armed Force

The terrorist attack of 11 September 2001 changed the entire tenor of U.S.-Russian relations, sweeping away some of the bitterness that had tainted relations between 1997 and 2001. There were some political and military leaders who still had not changed their attitudes, but that did not get in Putin's way. He was the first world leader to call President Bush after the attacks and eventually he personally worked with the leaders in the Central Asian countries to let the U.S. use bases for counter-terrorist actions in Afghanistan. However, the events of 11 September 2001 made Putin impatient about his entire military reform plan.³² In light of the increased terrorist threat and the rapid, effective toppling of the Taliban by a small group of U.S. soldiers allied with local forces and supported by airpower and superior technology, Putin decided it was vital to stop having "protracted talks" and get on with concrete actions.³³

On 21 November 2001, Putin made up his mind to begin the long delayed change of the Russian armed forces from a conscript force to a partially professional, volunteer force. Consistent with his previous decisions, he decided to make the change without jeopardizing the improving economic situation; hence, "the number of contract soldiers...will increase gradually, from year to year...in accordance with the economic capabilities of the state."³⁴ Putin also directed Ivanov and the General Staff to develop a detailed conversion plan. But because Putin was determined to pay off \$17 billion of 1998 bailout loans from the International Monetary Fund (to reduce external influence on Russia's future), large-scale efforts could not be financed in 2002, or even 2003.³⁵

It took the MOD and General Staff most of 2002 to flesh out the professionalization plan. This was due to arguments about which units to convert and in what order, what type of facilities to build and where, how much the infrastructure work would cost, what

pay scale would attract and retain contracted troops, how long the contracts would be and who would be offered them, what role conscripts would play, and many other issues. But even though the military leadership argued about the timetable and amount of change, no one tried to overtly or covertly block the plan, as they had done successfully many times in the 1990s.³⁶ As Dr. Mark Galeotti reported at the time, “Putin has made it clear that he will not tolerate open dissent or the kind of challenges to presidential authority which were common under Yel’tsin.”³⁷

In the meanwhile, Putin was active on many fronts. He pushed the conversion idea in his April 2002 State of the Nation address. He worked with the Duma to change the law so military pay scales would match the Federal civil service pay scale, based on expertise and rank. He directed the government provide enough money for the conversion plan. Putin also laid the groundwork for his efforts to improve the patriotic feelings in Russia (and not incidentally raising the prestige of military service) by reintroducing mandatory basic military training in high schools and civic organizations.³⁸

On 22 November 2002, Putin approved the MOD draft plan and gave the Prime Minister until June to coordinate it through the rest of the government ministries. Because of a lack of current funding, and because no one knew how the conversion process would work, MOD decided the first phase would be the experimental conversion of an airborne division, which Putin had already approved in the summer of 2002. Phase Two, starting in 2004 and going to 2011, involved the conversion of the permanent readiness military units in the Ground Forces, Airborne Forces, Air Force, Navy, Space Force, and Strategic Missile Force, starting with those units who routinely deployed to or were stationed in Chechnya (including the army’s 42nd Division and the MVD’s 106

Brigade).³⁹ The third phase, whose timing was undetermined, would include most remaining military units. The key to the whole plan was the idea that conscripts would still be called up and given six months training, at which point they could sign a contract and move into the professional (and much better paid) ranks, or they could finish their conscript service doing basic military duties and get out. This would ensure a large mobilization pool, while providing the field units with contract troops needing only tactical unit, rather than basic military, training. The plan also said that the MOD would cut conscript service to 18 months in phase two and possibly six months in phase three.⁴⁰

The MOD chose the 76th Airborne Division, stationed at Pskov (southwest of St. Petersburg), as the first unit to convert and on 1 September 2002, the division began the transformation. Over 2.6 billion rubles (around \$89 million), funded mainly from the existing budget, was set aside for the conversion of the division, of which 75 percent was for infrastructure such as new barracks (with four person apartments rather than open bays), family housing, recreational facilities, and improved training facilities, with the rest for increased salaries for the sergeants and privates.⁴¹ The Ministry's goal was to complete the conversion by the end of 2003 and on 22 December 2003 Ivanov was able to report to Putin that the more than 5,000 men in the unit were all on contract, including the first regiment, which was serving in Chechnya.⁴²

Even while the 76th Airborne Division was working through the first conversion, Putin continued to push the military to keep working all his military reform issues. For example, on 4 February 2003, Putin told the senior military officers:

...The top priority now is to modernize the Armed Forces. Current objectives include improving the structure and organization of military units and gradually moving over to a contract-based professional system of service. Other priority tasks include improving troops' combat

readiness and providing the Armed Forces with new generation arms and equipment. Building up a good base of commanding officers that can succeed each other, and keeping discipline among the troops are also important tasks. Another priority is to improve the work of the military prosecutor's office [to root out corruption]...⁴³

During this same period, the MOD, the Finance Ministry, and other power organizations (such as the FSB, SVR, and Emergency Services Ministry) worked diligently to resolve their issues, which included the Finance Ministry's concern about funding and the other power ministries wanting to make sure it was tolerable to them. By March, the agencies reach agreement that the plan would run from 2004 through 2007, convert 167,000 billets to contract positions, and allow CIS citizens to enlist in the professional units.⁴⁴ In May and June, Putin continued to beat the reform drum, making his goal perfectly clear when he said, "...the aim of military reform is to give Russia Armed Forces that are small, but effective and equipped with modern technology."⁴⁵ Putin also gave out more details of the upcoming military reform program: only contract soldiers would serve in conflict zones, there would be an accelerated effort to professionalize NCOs, after 2007 conscripts would serve for one year (not the previously announced 18 months), and the Border Guards and Interior Troops would also convert to a professional force. Putin stated that after three years, contract troops would gain a number of benefits, including the "guaranteed right to a higher education paid for by the state (or simplified citizenship if they were a troop from a CIS country)."⁴⁶

On 12 May 2003, Putin reminded the government that all ministries were supposed to complete their coordination on the professionalization plan by 1 June,⁴⁷ but it took until the fall to finalize the plan and brief Putin. In the end, what the MOD produced, coordinated through the rest of the government, and got a green light (but not a signature) on from Putin, became far more than just a federal program to professionalize the

military. It became the demarcation point between two eras: the military reform era of Russia's first decade and the new military modernization era of Putin's second term.

The “Ivanov Doctrine” (October 2003)

On 2 October 2003, Defense Minister Ivanov issued a glossy brochure called “Urgent Tasks of the Development of the Russian Federation Armed Forces”⁴⁸ and hosted a day-long meeting of senior military and Duma leaders to describe his vision of the future of the Russian armed forces as written in the brochure. At first, both the Russian and foreign press dubbed this document the “Ivanov Doctrine” because Ivanov spoke at length about it and because it contains both national security policy sections and military development sections, but neither Putin nor Ivanov used the word doctrine and it's much more accurately called a white paper than a doctrine.⁴⁹ In fact, as Pavel Felgenhauer pointed out, since Putin had not issued it by decree, it had no official standing or force of law, which the earlier doctrines and national security concepts did have.⁵⁰ Senior official in the MOD told a number of journalists in the weeks after the meeting that it was a “draft document” meant to generate discussion for six months or so, when it would be finalized and signed into law by presidential decree. The real purposes became clear: it was a re-election policy plank for Putin before the December 2003 legislative and March 2004 presidential elections, a straw man draft of a new national security concept and/or military doctrine, and, not the least, a genuine list of military development issues that Putin and the MOD will work on for the next several years.

The White Paper also caused quite a stir when it first hit the press because many observers thought it changed Russia's nuclear use policy, but Ivanov and Putin both made it clear that nothing had changed from the 2000 NSC.⁵¹ However, White Paper does

show a more hawkish tone from Ivanov and the MOD than Putin normally takes. While the national security section of the document is not radically different from the 2000 NSC, it is changed in several areas. While the 2000 NSC was written at the height of Russian concerns about NATO expansion and unilateral use of force in Kosovo, this paper clearly reflects Russia's current concerns about terrorism, local wars and its "sphere of interest."⁵² Like the U.S. National Security Strategy, the paper emphasizes Russia's right to take preemptive military action if it deems necessary, but goes beyond the U.S. policy by including in its reasons to take action *economic threats or threats to ethnic Russians (who may or may not be Russian citizens) in the near abroad*. In a fairly strident tone, the paper counterbalances hope for partnership with NATO with concern about NATO's "offensive strategy." Finally, Ivanov's paper reflects Russia's renewed hegemonic approach to Central Asia and the other states formerly part of the USSR. The paper also expresses concern about the possibility of other nations (clearly referring to the U.S.) lowering the nuclear threshold by making clean mini-nukes.⁵³ The bottom line is that while clearly not yet official policy, the national security policy section of the White Paper reflects Russia's current foreign policy views.

The title of the first section of the White Paper is "The Russian Armed Forces: On the Threshold of a New Stage of Development" and those words says a lot. The publication of the White Paper clearly marked the end of Putin and Ivanov's first reform phase and launched a trial balloon for the second phase. This next phase will deal much less with structural changes and troop reductions and much more with transforming Russia's military into a force capable of waging modern, rapid, precision warfare in the style of the U.S. and other developed nations. It also marks a significant milestone in

Russia's post-Soviet military changes. The Russian military, having lived through a decade of ill considered and poorly executed reforms, are tired of "reforming" and the associated implication that they have to fix something that is bad or broken. They have now adopted the terms "development" and "transformation" from the Pentagon, because those terms imply changing something decent into something excellent.⁵⁴ Putin made this point clearly during his remarks on 2 October when he said,

We are not planning any further significant reductions. The country's armed forces have been cut by more than half since 1992. That was a truly difficult and painful process. It was enough. That stage is largely over...radical reforms that were vital at a certain stage have given way to long-term development and transformation that should result in increasing the army's potential.⁵⁵

Ivanov continued in the same theme, when he noted that the military had to, "...radically change [its] ideas on what a contemporary armed conflict is and how victory is achieved."⁵⁶ It is also clear from the paper that Putin believes it is necessary to change not just the weaponry, combat training and command structure, but the military culture and ethos of both the armed forces and the Russian population as a whole.

In general, the White Paper summarizes many previously announced and on-going actions, but it does clarify many issues and fills in many previously vague details. Here are some key points that are new or different in the military development sections⁵⁷:

- Global nuclear and large-scale conventional wars with NATO or the U.S. are no longer among the probable conflicts to prepare for.
- In peacetime, using only permanent readiness troops, Russia must be able to successfully complete two simultaneous armed conflicts (which don't involve state against state war) and take part in permanent peacemaking operations.
- In wartime, Russia must be able to successfully repel an "enemy aerospace attack" and, after calling up the reserves, fight two simultaneous local wars (limited scope state versus state wars). Hence, a well-defended, jam-proof air defense system is vital and a combat ready reserve is still important.
- Modern war requires real-time intelligence, comprehensive command and control systems, mobile forces, and precision weapons. Russia has a great deal

of work to do in all of these areas to enable her to fight this kind of action, or defend against those who do.

- In the strategic forces: by 2007-2008, the RSVN will consist of no more than 10 ICBM divisions (currently there are 18); the Tu-160 bomber will be upgraded to carry precision weapons; and a new SSBN and sea launched ballistic missile (SLBM) will be developed and fielded. Russia will also upgrade its nuclear command and control system and expand its satellite fleet, especially communications satellites.
- Civilian control of the military has been achieved and the military budget is now mostly declassified. These reforms are necessary to create a modern military in a democratic society.⁵⁸
- By 2005, the armed forces will reach a manpower floor of one million troops, which is the correct “level of defensive sufficiency.”
- Permanent Readiness forces will be increased in size and manning, and will be made more mobile and logistically self-sufficient.
- The Russian armed forces have begun the transition to a volunteer, professional force. Currently 55 percent of the military is on contract with 12 percent being enlisted sergeants and privates.⁵⁹ By 2008, 70 percent of the force will be on contract, and almost 51 percent of the soldiers and NCOs will be enlisted. Starting with the permanent readiness units, by 2008, 80 units and 147,500 billets will be converted to contract, including 72 military units, three Border Guard units and five MVD units. In 2004, 9.7 billion rubles will be spent and 15,700 men enlisted; in 2005, 20.9 billion rubles and 54,500 men; in 2006, 21.7 billion rubles and 26,800 men and in 2007, 26.8 billion rubles will be spent to enlist 50, 600 men.
- The government has allocated over 30 billion rubles in the last two years to help demobilizing troops and their families with severance pay, housing they are due (by law), and money to pay for their final move.
- A great deal of progress has been made over the last two years [2002 and 2003], but much more needs to be done in the areas of pay, housing and other benefits for the troops and their families.
- Combat training will be improved at all levels: at the unit level, the focus will be on tactics needed to fight insurgency and local wars, while at the staff level, the focus will be on preparing to repel large-scale aggression. At the operational level, mandatory joint training will be conducted with the other armed forces.
- Currently 20-30 percent of Russia’s weapons systems are modern. By increasing spending, that figure will be 35 percent by 2010 and 40-45 percent by 2015.
- Russian citizens are no longer as patriotic as they should be, so the MOD will begin a vigorous program to help re-instill patriotism, including reinstating initial military training at all educational institutes.

Clearly, the MOD is already using the military development portion of the White Paper as the basis of current and planned efforts. In his remarks at the 2 October

meeting, Putin emphasized was that “reform” was over and now it was time to “modernize” the military.

The Current Situation

Without a doubt, the Russian military is in better shape than it was when Putin came to power. The increased budgets have resulted in improved, but not great, pay; more, but not enough, fuel and spare parts; and some new gear, albeit, no major weapon systems. The MOD is making serious efforts to build housing it is legally bound to provide to retired, demobilized, and active duty officers. The 76th Airborne Division has converted to a fully enlisted professional division. The military has conducted several major exercises in the last 18 months, including the first naval deployment to the India Ocean in decades and the biggest strategic exercise in 20 years. Finally, while Chechnya is still a simmering hot spot, Russia seems to be gaining ground slowly against the rebels (but in doing so, violating a lot of human rights).

On the other hand, there are still major problems today. The higher budgets are still well short of what the military needs to eliminate numerous training and maintenance shortfalls. There are still more than 135,000 officers waiting for their promised housing.⁶⁰ The 76th Airborne Division experiment has not gone nearly as smoothly as the Kremlin portrays: construction is behind, recruits were not up to standards, salaries aren't always as good as promised, and the commander won't give any of the new housing to the enlisted recruits until all his officers are given quarters.⁶¹ The spring draft was another in a long series of failures: draft dodging, poor health and numerous exemptions continue to make manning the vast majority of the military than is not contract an on-going challenge.⁶² Corruption, crime, and suicide continue to haunt the

force. A recent survey found that less than half the 16 year olds have confidence in the military, while there was nearly universal concern about dedovshchina.⁶³ In a clearly etched example of the state of the Russian military, Russia was able to successfully test two ICBMs and put a new satellite in orbit during the “Security 2004” exercise in February of this year, but during the same exercise, the navy was unable to launch one SLBM and had a second self-destruct 98 seconds after it was launched from an SSBN in the Barents Sea.⁶⁴

The bottom line is that the situation is not nearly as bleak as it was at any time during the 1990s, but there is certainly a great deal of room for further improvement as Putin enters his second term as president.

Notes

¹ Dr. Mark Galeotti, “Putin Wields His Scalpel,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, January 2001, 9.

² *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 110-111; Celeste A. Wallander, *Russian National Security Policy in 2000*, PONARS Policy Memo 102, January 2000, 4; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003.

³ Wallander, PONARS Memo 102, 4.

⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁵ Wallander, PONARS Memo 102, 4-7; John R. Staples and Harold Otto, *Russian Defense Spending: Trends and Consequences*, Study for the International Security Research and Outreach Programme (Ottawa, Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, September 2000), 1-12; On-line, 3 November 2003, available from <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/arms/russian/menu-en.asp>.

⁶ Wallander, PONARS Memo 102, 4.

⁷ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 111-112; *The Military Balance 1990-1991* (London: Brassey’s for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, Autumn 1990), 31-43.

⁸ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 111.

⁹ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 110-111.

¹⁰ Pavel Baev, *Putin’s Court: How the Military Fits In*, PONARS Policy Memo 153, November 2000, 1-2; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003; Astrid Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism and Vladimir Putin’s Russia*, PONARS Policy Memo 151, April 2000, 2-3; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003.

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¹¹ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 109; Nikolai Sokov, “Kosovo Syndrome” and the Great Nuclear Debate of 2000, PONARS Policy Memo 181, December 2000, 1-5; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003; Staples, 30-32.

¹² While Putin left Yel'tsin's direct appointees in place for the first year, he was not afraid to fire those further down the chain. He fired six senior officers in the RSVN who weren't willing to go along with his plan to reduce the RSVN to a branch. After the *Kursk* disaster, he fired 14 senior naval admirals and captains, allegedly for their complicity in the *Kursk* affair, but more likely because they were hard-line conservatives opposed to his plans. He also fired Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, another ultraconservative and one of the most vocal critics of his efforts to improve ties with Washington. Umbach, 13; Dr. Mark Galeotti, “A Military Reform Consensus?” *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2002, 48-49.

¹³ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 109.

¹⁴ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 109-110.

¹⁵ Baev, *Putin's Court*, 4; Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, trans. Antonia W. Bouis (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 114-120.

¹⁶ Dr. Mark Galeotti, “Russia's Phantom Cuts,” *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 2000, 8-9.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sergei Ivanov, “Military Reform As Part and Parcel of Transformations in Russia,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 April 2001, pp. 1-2, in *Federal News Service*, 25 April 2001, n.p.; On-Line, ISI Emerging Markets, 3 February 2004, available from http://site.securities.com/doc.html?pc=RU&print=1&doc_id=16659784.

¹⁹ Galeotti, “Russia's Phantom Cuts”, 8.

²⁰ Ibid, 9.

²¹ *The Military Balance 2001-2002* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 2001), 105-106; Umbach, 22; “Putin Dumps Two Military Advisers...,” *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 8, No. 60, Part I, 31 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

²² Ivanov, n.p.

²³ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 110; “Putin To Shake-up Russian Military,” *Reuters*, 12 August 2000, n.p.; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003, available from www.cnn.com/2000/World/Europe/08/11/russia.defense.reut; Ivanov, n.p.; Svetlana Babayeva, “Sergei Ivanov: Results Of The Military Reforms Will Appear In 2004 At The Earliest,” *Izvestia*, 25 June 2001, in *WPS - Defense and Security*, 27 June 2001, n.p.; On-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 3 February 2004, available from http://site.securities.com/doc.html?pc=RU&doc_id=18799859.

²⁴ Sokov, 1.

²⁵ Orr, 6.

²⁶ Ibid, 7.

²⁷ Ivanov, n.p.

²⁸ *The Military Balance 2000-2001*, 115-116.

²⁹ Galeotti, “A Military Reform Consensus?”, 49.

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³⁰ Victor Semenov, "A Soldier Is A Good Soldier If He Does Not Get Into The Army," *Russkii Kuryer*, 20 February 2004, p. 5, in *WPS - Defense and Security*, 24 February 2004, n.p.; on-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 3 March 2004, available from <http://sites.securities.com>.

³¹ Chronology, Military Reform Actions During Putin Administration, November 21, 2001 section; On-line, Internet, 3 February 2004, available from www.kremlin.ru/eng/priorities/events21817.

³² Chronology, October 17, 2001 section.

³³ Ibid, November 12, 2001 section.

³⁴ Ibid, November 21, 2001 section.

³⁵ Dr. Mark Galeotti, "Putin Faces Reform Dilemmas," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2003, 48-49.

³⁶ Galeotti, "A Military Reform Consensus?," 49.

³⁷ Galeotti, "A Military Reform Consensus?," 49.

³⁸ Chronology, June 3, 2002 and October 3, 2002 sections; "Putin Calls For Military Reform," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* Vol. 8, no. 77 (19 April 2002): n.p.; On-line, Internet, 27 January 2004, available from http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=25&issue_id=224&article_id=19327.

³⁹ Chronology, December 19, 2002 section; Ivan Safronov, "Sergei Ivanov Has Reported On The Conceptual Plan Of The Military Reform To The President," *Kommersant*, 20 November 2002, pg. 2, in *WPS - Defense and Security*, 22 November 2002, n.p.; On-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 3 November 2003, available from <http://site.securities.com/>.

⁴⁰ Safronov, n.p.

⁴¹ Chronology, May 20, 2002 section; *The Military Balance 2002-2003* (London: Oxford University Press for The International Institute For Strategic Studies, October 2002), 85.

⁴² Chronology, August 15, 2002 and December 22, 2003 sections.

⁴³ Ibid, February 4, 2003 section.

⁴⁴ Ibid, March 19, 2003 section.

⁴⁵ Ibid, June 20, 2003 section.

⁴⁶ Ibid, May 16 and June 20, 2003 sections.

⁴⁷ Ibid, May 12, 2003 section.

⁴⁸ *Urgent Tasks Of The Development Of The Russian Federation Armed Forces*, White Paper (Moscow: Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, October 2003), 1-68; On-line, Internet, 3 February 2004, available from www.psan.org.

⁴⁹ "Russia: Media See Putin, Ivanov Presenting 'New Military Doctrine'," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Media Analysis*, 20 October 2003, in FBIS-SOV-2003-1021, 20 October 2003, n.p.; On-line, World News Connection, 23 October 2003.

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⁵⁶ "Russia: Defense Ministry Announces New Military Doctrine," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Report*, 3 October 2003, in FBIS-SOV-2003-1003, 3 October 2003, n.p.; On-line, World News Connection, 6 October 2003.

⁵⁷ *Urgent Tasks*, 1-68.

⁵⁸ However, there is a biting paragraph immediately following those comments which states that the civilians in charge must have extensive military knowledge or they will be "prone to superficial or distorted ideas or will end up under the influence of pacifist myths on the 'original sin' of all military personnel..." Clearly the generals have a lot of pent-up resentment about no longer having one of their own running the entire show as they did for 70 years under the Soviet system. *Urgent Tasks*, 4.

⁵⁹ The other 43 percent are officer's wives and daughters in medical, clerical and logistics jobs, who have little other employment options in remote military bases.

⁶⁰ "The President Has Focused On Solving Problems Of Homeless Officers," trans. Alexander Dubovoi, *WPS - Defense and Security*, 29 March 2004, n.p., On-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 2 April 2004, available from <http://sites.securities.com>.

⁶¹ Yuri Gavrilov, "Contract, Russian Way," *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, 19 February 2004, p. 4, in *WPS - Defense and Security*, 24 February 2004, n.p.; On-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 3 March 2004, available from <http://sites.securities.com>.

⁶² "To Conscript Everybody They Can," Trans. Alexander Dubovoi, *WPS - Defense and Security*, 5 April 2004, n.p.; On-line, ISI Emerging Markets, 5 April 2004, available from <http://sites.securities.com>.

⁶³ Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, *Strong Public Support For Military Reform in Russia*, PONARS Policy Memo 288, May 2003, 1; On-line, Internet, 3 November 2003.

⁶⁴ Lt Col Kris Beasley, "'In'-Security 2004," *NIS Observed*, Vol. 9, no. 4 (5 March 2004): n.p.; On-line, Internet, 5 March 2004, available from www.bu.edu/iscip/digest/vol9/ed0904.html#armed.

Chapter 5

Assessment and Conclusion

The Kremlin's increasing assertiveness is partly grounded in its improving military capabilities. Although still a fraction of their former capabilities, Russian military forces are beginning to rebound from the 1990s nadir. Training rates are up-including some high-profile exercises-along with defense spending.¹

—Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet

Since 1989, the Russian armed forces have gone from 5.25 million to 1.25 million men and defense spending followed a similar slide (Figs 2 and 3). Gorbachev began the massive demilitarization of Soviet society in order to free resources to ensure the continued existence of the Soviet Union, but he failed. He had no reform plan, but cut with the zeal of a surgeon trying to save a badly infected cancer patient. Yel'tsin, coming to power as the USSR imploded, tried to create a joint military with the CIS. Failing that, and having no other plan, he continued the massive demobilization of the now Russian armed forces and the chaotic withdrawals from Central Europe and the former Soviet republics. During his tenure, a number of reform plans were proposed and pieces and parts of some were carried out, but there was little vision or leadership, and even less money. The aging generals who held tightly onto their grip over the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff could not break out of their decades of thinking as Soviet officers intent on preparing to overrun Europe and perhaps winning a nuclear war. They continued to organize, man, train, and equip the armed forces as though they were

leading an emaciated version of the mighty Soviet army. The cadres of increasingly impoverished or corrupt officers had little time or means of training the mass of conscripts (fewer and fewer of which showed up each year) and the system of brutal hazing, *dedovshchina*, grew rampant. Then came the horrors of Chechnya. The armed forces threw untrained, ill fed, and poorly led troops together into ad hoc units and sent them into rebel-infested Grozny where they suffered massive casualties.

By the start of Yel'tsin's second term, the military was in abysmal condition. However, Yel'tsin himself was in poor health and so was the Russian economy. Military spending continued to plummet, troops were not paid, morale was terrible, and ships and aircraft were being sold for scrap. At the end of Yel'tsin's second term, things were hardly better than four years earlier, but there was one glimmering hope: oil. After the economic collapse of 1998, the devalued ruble helped Russian exports soar, and to make things even better, the price of oil skyrocketed and stayed high.

When Putin came on the scene, he proved to be a much different man than Yel'tsin. He cared about the military and it showed. He told them he would increase their funding and he did. Morale began to improve a bit, and the government made good on the back pay it owed. The armed forces, while far from perfect, organized and waged a much better campaign at the start of the second war in Chechnya. Then came a key turning point, the *Kursk* disaster.

Putin has a vision for his country as a revitalized great power. That vision mandates a powerful, but not excessively large military to complement a thriving economy and an active foreign policy in Russia's sphere of interest (and at times, globally). The loss of the *Kursk* led Putin to quickly realize that the military was still in poor shape. He also

began to understand that in the preceding decade, the only reforms that the military actually implemented were the massive reductions; the rest were mostly a lot of talk and little action. Therefore, Putin fired Yel'tsin's Minister of Defense and brought in his own guy, Sergei Ivanov. Then he pushed the generals to get serious about reform. The first efforts were much better thought out than previous attempts, but still of the same pattern: the generals wanted a better funded and better equipped mass conscript military. Putin, knowing Russia's spending limits and staying true to his vision, persisted in his views, and finally several of his generals took notice of the changing world. They studied the recent U.S. campaigns in Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq and realized that their military was unprepared to wage that kind of fight. They quit hiding their heads in the sand and realized that the demographic and social trends in Russia meant they had to choose between converting to a mostly professional enlisted force or face a massive deficit of conscripts starting in 2004. Moreover, more than a decade after the breakup of the Soviet Union, some of them began to realize that Russia and her military had to move on. The empire was not coming back, but they could regain great power status if they did the right things. The generals finally began to understand that, despite decades of inculcated distrust, the West was not their biggest threat; the threat lay to the south and if they did not reshape Russia's armed forces to deal with that threat, Russia would eventually be in jeopardy. That is where the Russian military is today: no longer looking back, but only now starting to move forward.

Challenges to Reform Efforts

Despite a major lack of funding and considerable resistance to military reform from both civilian and military leaders, Russia has made progress in the last 12 years, and

especially in the last three years. However, while Putin has set a good course, there are a number of challenges Russia must overcome in its efforts to reform the military.

First and most important is funding: what has broken every reform effort in Russia since 1992 is the lack of funding. Without reasonable and consistent levels of funding over the next decade, all reform efforts are destined to fall short. Although the Russian economy is still miniscule compared to the other developed nations, Putin has been able to use some of the increased oil revenues to boost defense funding. Nevertheless, if oil prices fall very far, much of the increased budget goes with them.

Secondly, due to demographics and continued distrust of the military, the conscription system is crumbling. The entire military must commit to the transition to a professional service or it will become a hollow force from lack of manpower. A crucial, yet seldom mentioned element of this conversion process, is the creation of a professional NCO corps. Without such a corps, which is the backbone of every modern military, the conditions that created *dedovshchina* will continue and combat capability will remain elusive. The author, as well as a number of Russians analysts, considers this the key challenge to overcome.²

Third, Putin must overcome the small, but well entrenched element in the military that pines for the glory days of the USSR. Since Gorbachev's era, corrupt and careerist senior military and defense industry leaders have been one of the main stumbling blocks to reform. As Vice Admiral Jacoby recently said, "Proponents of Western-style military reforms believe the results [of the war in Iraq] demonstrate the need for change in the Russian armed forces. However, they face resistance from an entrenched bureaucracy and senior leaders with vested interests in the status quo."³

Fourth, ingrained corruption still is a major hamper on all activities and must be reduced. Russia is still one of the most corrupt societies on earth, near the bottom of the list maintained by Transparency International, a monitoring group that tracks corruption worldwide.⁴ Although not to the scale of the early 1990s, many officers still use conscripts for manual labor, weapons are still stolen and sold on the black market and the top brass continue to demand and get special treatment.

Lastly, Russia must continue to improve transparency in its entire military, so that Russian society as a whole can help determine what type of military it will have. During Putin's presidency, public confidence in the Armed Forces has resembled a roller coaster ride, although overall the trend has been upward. A February 2004 poll by sociologist Yuri Levada shows that 77% of Russians would not want a son, brother, husband or other relative to serve in the Russian military, an improvement from the 84% response from a similar poll in 1998. As expected, the reasons give for not wanting relatives to serve were: *dedovshchina* (42%) and possible injury or death in combat (42%). Another recent poll revealed that while 28% view the military positively, and 15% were neutral about it, just less than half of Russians view it negatively.⁵ As Putin has recognized, one of the key elements of military reform is to completely change the culture and ethos of the military. If the military continues to be unethical, corrupt and brutal, Russian society will not give it much support and the reforms will fail in the end.

If Russia continues to work these challenges and stay the course, her military will continue on an upward trend and fully enable her to secure her own sovereignty and help maintain peace and prosperity in her neighborhood.

Conclusions

What Will Putin Do?

Putin, recently re-elected to his second four-year term with 71.3 percent of the vote,⁶ will continue on the same path he blazed during his first term, striving to return Russia to great power status. In his first four years, he initiated many changes, but was able to see few to conclusion, so his focus in the next four years will be to solidify his earlier changes and work to reach his vision of Russia's future.

In international relations, Putin and his new foreign policy team will continue to be "more assertive, realistic and regionally focused,"⁷ taking Russia down an independent path towards being the "Eurasian" great power. Russia will continue to cooperate to the West, while developing closer ties with China, India, and other Asian nations. During his first term, Putin closed the last Russian bases outside the former Soviet lands, in Cuba and Vietnam, and pulled Russian peacekeepers out of the Balkans. That trend will continue, as Russia focuses most of her energies on "the near abroad," especially Central Asia and the Caucasus.⁸

Economically, Putin will seek to make Russia less reliant on oil and other natural resources, but in the near term, he is counting on prices to remain high. He will also continue his efforts to make Russia more autonomous. In the past, he was willing to delay much needed military reform in order to pay off foreign debts and he will continue to do that. In fact, as he said in February, he is proud of his efforts to reduce Russia's "humiliating dependency on international financial organizations."⁹

In the military arena, Putin knows there is much left to do. Recently he said,

Last year we did a great deal to consolidate military organization and the law enforcement bodies of the state. And so there is every reason to expect that there will now be a fundamental rise in the effectiveness of their work.

The process of modernizing the Armed Forces continues. The staff structure of the army and navy has become more optimal. Alert units are being recruited from contract soldiers. Our troops have begun to use new kinds of weaponry and technology. The material provision for the officer body is gradually improving.

At the same time, a great deal remains to be done...¹⁰

Putin believes that a strong nuclear deterrent will prevent a major war in the next two or three decades, so he will try to execute his plans to professionalize and modernize Russia's armed forces, in terms of both tactics and weaponry. He knows that the conscript system will not work in the long run, but for budgetary and "mobilization" reasons will move at a reasonable, but not brisk, pace towards a mostly volunteer force. What Putin will not do is dramatically increase the funding for the armed forces. His goal is to make the military strong enough, but no stronger than necessary, so he can continue to modernize Russia and improve the lives of its citizens. He has raised real spending from the nadir of the mid-1990s, and will continue to ratchet up defense funding somewhat, in order to finance the professionalization and modernization efforts, but he will not forgo efforts to improve the social system, raise pensions, improve health care, and reduce poverty. Putin expects oil prices will continue to stay high and has very publicly promised to both double the GDP in ten years and reduce by half the number of people below the poverty line in four years,¹¹ neither of which he can do if he splurges on defense. Therefore, he will balance his expenditures of both national treasure and political capital, keep the MOD budget between three and a half and four percent of GDP, and limit overall defense spending to five and a half to six percent of GDP.

Putin's ultimate goal is to return Russia to great power status and he understands that means balancing political, economic, and military power. He also realizes in today's globalized world economy, economic power is often more influential than military power. Therefore, while he will work hard to revitalize the armed forces, he is realistic about their limitations. As he said in March, "The main goal of our [military and foreign] policy is not to demonstrate some imperial ambitions but to ensure favorable external conditions for the development of Russia."¹² In the end, Putin wants his legacy to be more like that of Peter the Great, who modernized Russia in his era, than that of Stalin, who built the world's most threatening military in his era.

Implications for U.S. Policy

The U.S. needs to be concerned about Russian military reform because: 1) as a sometimes partner, sometimes competitor, the U.S. will have frequent contact with Russia and will need to understand the status and capability of its military, but more importantly, 2) a professional and competent military will enable Russia to remain stable, secure, and hopefully democratic. It is always in the U.S.'s interest for that region to be stable, especially as the U.S. and the rest of the world fight a global war on terrorism.

The U.S. must recognize that Russia is developing a separate, but not necessarily hostile, identity. Unlike in the 1990s, Russia is no longer looking to join the West, but instead to become the sole Eurasian great power in a multi-polar world. Putin will continue to rely on Russia's nuclear arsenal, both to deter aggression, and to legitimize his efforts to claim great power status. In the mean time, he will continue his efforts to "transform" the Russian military, which is still very weak conventionally, into a modern, high-tech, mobile force capable of defeating regional threats to Russia's existence.

Provided the U.S. doesn't take aggressive actions in Russia's immediate region without working in close coordination with her, Russia is not likely to become a significant conventional threat to the security of the U.S. anytime in the next few decades.

As the old "Soviet school" generals retire, the U.S. and NATO have a chance to engage the new generation of leaders and work to build mutual trust. The West must understand, but not be frightened by, the paranoid words that sometimes come from Moscow, and expand both the military-to-military contact and joint exercise programs. Thirteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's military is finally starting to move in new directions. The U.S. should not miss this opportunity to engage the Russians and support them as they move toward the future. The benefits are an improved U.S.-Russian relationship, and less paranoid Russia, more willing and able to help the world fight the major challenge of the next few decades: transnational terrorism.

Notes

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² Sergey Karaganov, "Armed Forces Which We Need," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 2 April 2004, in *CDI RW* #301, 9 April 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

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⁴ Paul Quinn-Judge, "Four More Years," *Time Europe*, 15 March 2004, in *JRL* #8104, 8 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

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⁶ "Elections Commission Officially Announces Putin's Victory," *Interfax*, 23 March 2004, in *JRL* #8132, 23 March 2004, n.p.; E-Newsletter.

⁷ Andrew Jack and Stefan Wagstyl, "Four More Years for Putin," *The Financial Times*, 17 March 2004, in *JRL* #8123, 17 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

⁸ *Ibid.*

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⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Vladimir Putin, "Speech at a Meeting with Superior Officers," 10 February 2004, n.p.; On-line, Internet, 1 March 2004, available from <http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2004/02/10.shtml>.

¹¹ Alex Rodriguez, "Russia's Putin: Monarch in All But Name," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 March 2004, in *JRL* #8140, 28 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter; "Russian Deputy Premier Pledges To Make People's Lives Better Soon," *RTR Russia TV* (Moscow, in Russian), 1725 GMT 27 March 2004, via *BBC Monitoring*, 28 March 2004 in *JRL* #8140, 28 March 2004, n.p.; E-newsletter.

¹² Jack and Wagstyl, n.p.

Appendix A

Charts

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are needed to see this

Figure 3. Map of Russia and the Former Soviet Republics

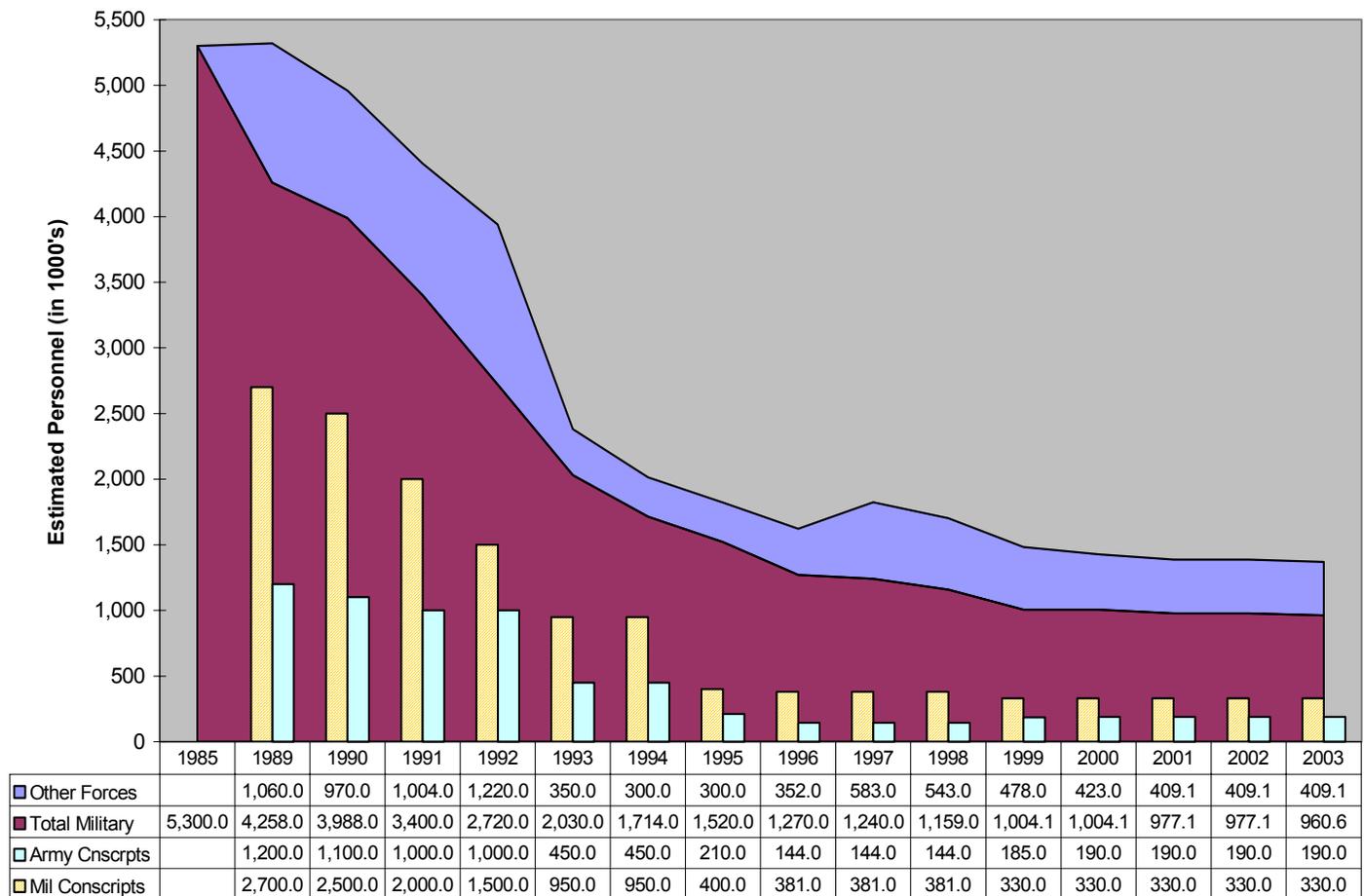


Figure 4. USSR/RF Total Armed Forces Personnel (1985, 1989-2003)

Sources: *The Military Balance* (1989-1990 through 2003-2004)

Note: “Other Forces” include, at various times: Border Troops, Interior Ministry Troops, Military Railway and Construction Troops, The Kremlin Guard, and Federal Communications and Information Security Troops. “Total Military” includes all Forces controlled by the Ministry of Defense. The two columns refer to the total number of MOD conscripts and of those, how many are estimated to be in the Ground Forces.

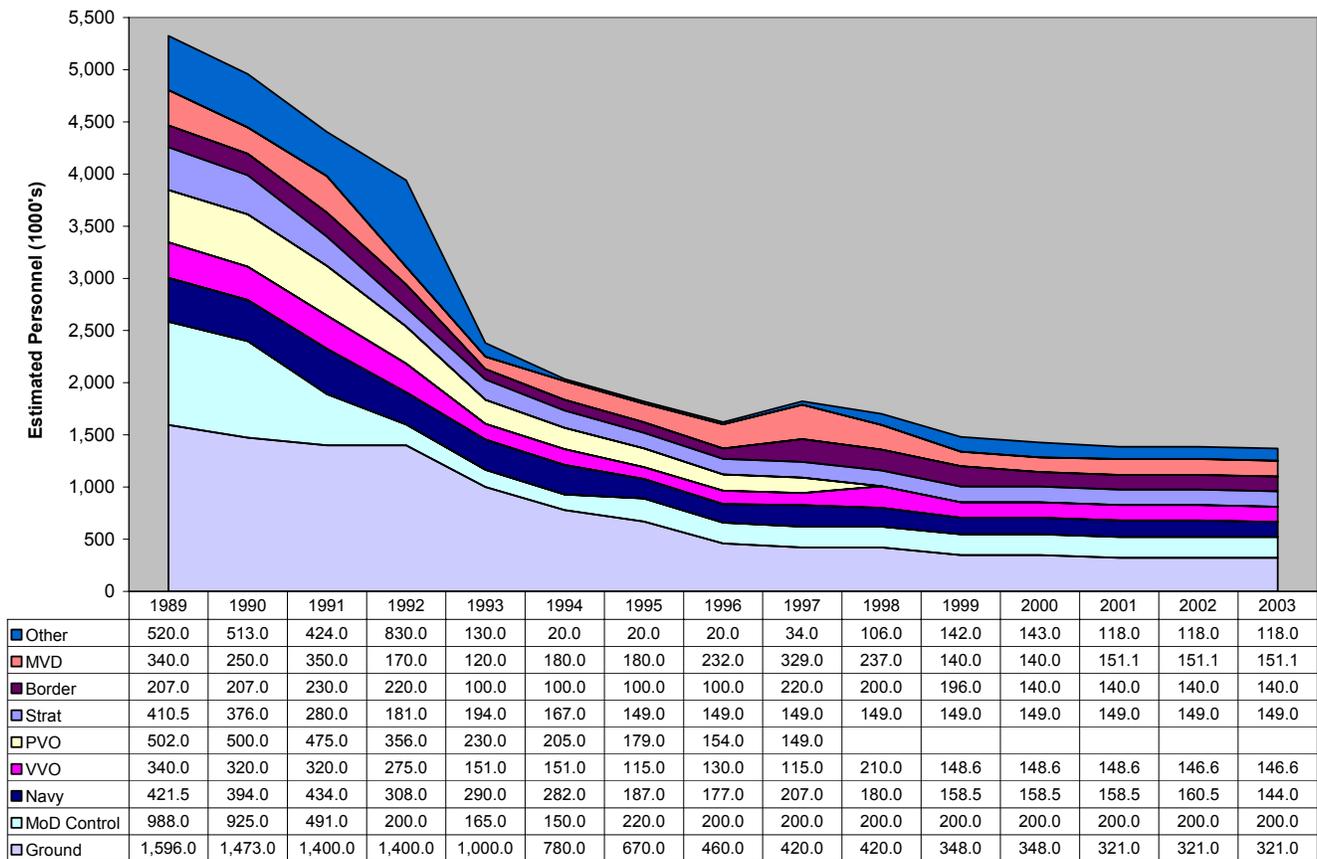


Figure 5. USSR/RF Armed Forces Personnel (By Service/Ministry)

Sources: *The Military Balance* (1989-1990 through 2003-2004)

Note: “Other Forces” include, at various times: Military Railway and Construction Troops, The Kremlin Guard, and Federal Communications and Information Security Troops; “MVD” indicates the Interior Troops (VV); “Border” indicates the Border Troops; “Strat” indicates all MOD strategic nuclear forces, including the RSVN, naval SSBN forces, strategic nuclear bomber units and the early-warning and strategic defense troops; “PVO” indicates the Air Defense Force (until its merger with the Air Forces); “VVS” indicates the Air Forces (Frontal Aviation, non-nuclear bombers and transports); “Navy” indicates all naval forces excluding the SSBN force; “MOD control” indicates all centrally controlled staffs and units; and “Ground” indicates all Ground Force (Army) and Airborne forces (even though they are a separate branch).

Glossary

ACV	Armored Combat Vehicle. Includes armored infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, etc., but not main battle tanks.
Border Troops	A paramilitary armed force whose mission is to control the borders of the nation and transportation ports (air/sea ports). Has a rear area security mission in time of war under the operational control of the MOD General Staff of the Armed Forces. In the USSR, a part of the KGB. In the RF, originally under the Security Ministry, then an independent service under the President, then back under the FSB.
CFE Treaty	Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty between NATO and the then Warsaw Pact. This treaty greatly reduced the chances of war in Europe by reducing the number of combat forces from the Atlantic to the Urals. Any equipment above the agreed thresholds had to be destroyed by the owning nation and any troops above the thresholds had to be removed from the area.
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States. A loose treaty-bound union of Russia and the other former republics of the Soviet Union, except Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
FSB	Federal Security Service (<i>Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti</i>). The heir to the KGB, except in the area of foreign intelligence gathering.
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile. Land-based (silo, rail or mobile transporter) ballistic missile typically armed with one or more nuclear warheads.
MD	Military District
MOD	Ministry of Defense (USSR, then RF)
MVD	Ministry of the Interior (<i>Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del</i>). Includes police forces as well as paramilitary forces. See also, "VV".
O & M	Operations and maintenance. Funding to pay for fuel, spare parts, exercises and training, etc.
PVO	Air Defense Forces (<i>Voiska protivovozdushnoi oborony</i>). The PVO is tasked with defending (and controlling) the airspace of the USSR (later RF) using a nationwide integrated air defense system of radars, control centers, air

	defense interceptors, and surface to air missile units. In March 1998, the VVS and PVO merged.
RF	Russian Federation
RVSN	Strategic Rocket (or Missile) Force (<i>raketnye voiska strategicheskogo naznacheniya</i>). A separate military service until 2001, now a separate branch of service. Expected to be integrated into the VVS in 2005 or 2006.
SLBM	Organizes, trains, equips and operates all Russian ICBMs. Sea-launched ballistic missile. Ballistic missile, typically armed with one or more nuclear warheads, launched from a submarine. In Russia, SLBMs and their nuclear- or conventionally-powered submarines, are part of the Navy.
SSBN	Ballistic missile submarine, nuclear-powered.
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VV	Interior Troops (<i>Vnutrennie Voiska</i>). The paramilitary armed forces of the Interior Ministry (MVD), with a number of divisions and brigades equipped with some tanks, numerous ACVs, a little artillery and some armed helicopters. In peacetime, their missions are to protect key installations and maintain internal control. They will normally be in command of any military operations within Russia. In time of general war, they maintain, with other non-military forces, rear area security under the operational control of the MOD General Staff.
VVS	Air Forces (<i>Voенно-vozdushnye sily</i>). The VVS includes all air forces in the USSR (later RF), except strategic (nuclear) bombers and their tankers, naval air forces and air defense forces in the PVO. In March 1998, the VVS and PVO merged.
VPK	Military Industry Commission (<i>Voennaya promyshlennaya kommissiya</i>). Under the Soviet system, controlled all primary defense industry ministries and through them the military-industrial complex.

Dedovshchina. Literally “Grandfather rule,” it means the violence and degradation used by the oldest conscripts to control the youngest conscripts and force them to be little more than personal servants. The practice includes beatings, obscene nicknames, forcing youngsters to do the heaviest and most dangerous work, taking their food and mail at whim, occasional homosexual rape, and more seldom, death from injuries.

Glasnost. Literally “openness” or “transparency”, in the mid-1980s, it came to mean the opening up of Soviet society, especially semi-freedom of the press, freedom of speech, discussion of problems by Soviet leaders, etc.

Perestroika. Literally “restructuring,” Gorbachev used it to describe his policies to reform the Soviet system so it could be economically strong, but remain a communist country. As time went by, came to also include his military and increasingly broader political changes. It began around 1986.

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JRL: *Johnson's Russia List* is a daily E-newsletter containing news about Russia. Issues are available at www.cdi.org/russia/.

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