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THREATS TO RUSSIAN SECURITY:  
THE VIEW FROM MOSCOW

Stephen J. Blank

July 2000

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## FOREWORD

The years 1999-2000 mark a watershed in Russian military policy. During this time President Boris Yeltsin resigned and was succeeded by Vladimir Putin, who was elected in his own right in March 2000. The Russian Army carried out an operation to descend on Pristina and challenge the NATO campaign in Kosovo, and launched the second Chechen war in August 1999. In addition, the Russian armed forces conducted the biggest and most openly anti-Western exercise of their post-1991 history, known as Zapad (West)-99. The defense establishment published a draft military doctrine in October 1999, and the government published its own draft national security concept and revised official national security concept in January 2000.

These developments led the Strategic Studies Institute, along with the Center for Strategic Leadership of the U.S. Army War College, to sponsor a conference on the Russian Army in February 2000, at which this paper was presented. A subsequent Institute publication will address the official Russian defense doctrine, which was published in April 2000.

The documented threat assessments addressed here by Dr. Stephen Blank are clearly the culmination to date of a long-standing process by which the Russian military and government have forsaken the optimistic Westernizing postures and visions of the initial post-Soviet years and returned in many respects to assessments and demands for specific policies that evoke the Soviet mentality and period. The armed forces and the government have adopted a viewpoint that magnifies both the internal and external threats to Russia that they perceive and regard those threats as growing in number and saliency. This viewpoint is fundamentally at odds with both the post-1985 Soviet and

Russian perspective and with Western perspectives on international security.

In adopting this heightened sense of threat, the armed forces may well have been guided as much by interests urging higher defense spending and greater visibility for the General Staff and armed forces in the framing of Russian security policy. To the extent that official policy statements accept that assessment, they reflect trends in both internal and external policy that are inimical to notions of democratic reform and stability at home and partnership with the West abroad. Needless to say, such perspectives also make it harder for the overstressed economy, society, and polity to provide genuine security for Russia in a dynamic international context.

The future course of Russian security policy is one of the most important and difficult questions in contemporary international affairs. This monograph addresses basic issues pertaining to Russia's future options for policy-makers' consideration and reflection as the global debate over Russia's future direction under Vladimir Putin takes shape. We hope that its publication contributes to an informed debate that enhances the quality of U.S. responses to Russia's national security policy.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

STEPHEN J. BLANK has served as the Strategic Studies Institute's expert on the Soviet bloc and the post-Soviet world since 1989. Prior to that he was Associate Professor of Soviet Studies at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education, Maxwell Air Force Base, and taught at the University of Texas, San Antonio, and at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Blank is the editor of *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Position in Asia*, coeditor of *Soviet Military and the Future*, and author of *The Sorcerer as Apprentice: Stalin's Commissariat of Nationalities, 1917-1924*. He has also written many articles and conference papers on Russian, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Eastern European security issues. Dr. Blank's current research deals with proliferation and the revolution in military affairs, and energy and security in Eurasia. He holds a B.A. in History from the University of Pennsylvania, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago.

## THREATS TO RUSSIAN SECURITY: THE VIEW FROM MOSCOW

Generals have told me that we must build a monument to Clinton because the campaign over Kosovo drastically changed political attitudes here. Now there is no more opposition to the idea that Russia should restore its military potential.

Alexander Zhylin  
Russian Military Correspondent

### The Security Concept, the Draft Defense Doctrine and Their Context.

In October 1999 Moscow published a draft defense doctrine and the next month published a draft of the national security concept. That concept was then revised and given official imprimatur in January 2000. The final official version of the military threat will be published during the spring of 2000. Because those publications have an official and normative, if not juridical, character, their content and unusual sequence of publication possess crucial significance. They aroused considerable interest due to their provisions on nuclear use and both documents' frank postulation of the United States and NATO as the source of rising military and political threats. Therefore, this monograph focuses on those threat assessments which underlie whatever justification may exist for the use of nuclear weapons or for any other defense policy.

Because of these documents' importance, their content, threat assessments, and the context of those assessments merit careful scrutiny. The draft doctrine states its purposes in its very opening:

Russian Federation military doctrine (henceforth military doctrine) represents a systemized aggregate of fundamental official views (guidelines), concentrated in a single document, on preventing wars and armed conflicts, on their nature and

methods of waging them, and on organizing the activities of the state, society, and citizens to ensure the military security of the Russian Federation and its allies. . . . Military doctrine elaborates on the 1993 “Basic Provisions of RF Military Doctrine” and, as applied to the military sphere, concretizes guidelines of the RF National Security Concept. It is based on a comprehensive assessment of the status of the military-political situation; on a strategic forecast of its development; on a scientifically substantiated determination of current and future missions, objective requirements, and real capabilities for ensuring RF military security; and on conclusions from a systems analysis of the content and nature of modern wars and armed conflicts and of the domestic and foreign experience of military organizational development and military art.<sup>1</sup>

The draft doctrine’s and security concept’s character importance, and the centrality of the threat assessment to them, ensure that both documents, and particularly their threat assessment, emerge out of continuing intense political struggles over the definition of the threat(s). These struggles are so highly charged because the winner gains decisive leverage over doctrine, strategy, and policy.

Assessments are developed through an ongoing “ordered ferment” that constantly assesses the nature and characteristics of war, along with potential threats to Russian security and options for countering those threats. Since this debate remains, largely though not exclusively, confined to officers within the General Staff, the Ministry of Defense, and the key national security officials in the leadership stratum, the issues under debate are matters of high politics and political struggle within the military leadership and atop the government. Indeed, today’s debate over a national security and a defense doctrine to revise that of 1993 had begun by 1996. Therefore, once the government announces an official doctrine based on the threat assessment and ensuing policy requirements, that doctrine should then determine the policies and strategy appropriate for defending Russia. But discussion and controversy clearly continue since the draft doctrine was sent back for revisions in February 2000.



All these documents appeared under very inauspicious conditions. Russian military apprehensions have grown with the collapse of Russian power, the augmentation of power of the United States and NATO, Kosovo, the Anglo-American bombing campaign against Iraq, the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), and the onset of information warfare and operations (IW and IO, respectively). Kosovo was the last straw since it united many of the most feared military and political elements of threat.<sup>2</sup> Authoritative spokesmen like Defense Minister General Igor Sergeev and Deputy Chief of the General Staff Colonel-General Valery L. Manilov, who chaired the doctrine's editorial "collective," admitted that Kosovo led to revisions of the draft doctrine. Manilov also admitted that there were enormous differences of opinion among those charged with preparing the draft doctrine. Thus, the published draft doctrine represented the fifth attempt since 1997 to promulgate such a document. Not surprisingly, he claimed the draft doctrine's "supertask" was to ensure unanimity concerning the threats, nature of contemporary war, and policy recommendations presented there.<sup>3</sup>

It is important, therefore, to understand exactly what threats Kosovo presented to or ratified in the minds of the Russian military-political elite and what the final unanimity concerning threats signified. According to Harvard University Professor Celeste Wallander, Kosovo presented or confirmed the following negative assessments of NATO enlargement.

For Russia, all the hypothetical security concerns of the past decade are the threats of today. NATO is now closer to Russian borders, and is bombing a non-NATO state. Even before NATO's new strategic concept, the alliance's development of Combined Joint Task Forces offered ways for the alliance to employ forces outside the constraints of Article 5 (self-defense). NATO's changes, combined with its determination to use force against nonmembers threatens Russia because political turmoil in the former Soviet Union increases the likelihood of NATO involvement near and perhaps even in Russia. Moscow has long feared that

expansion of the alliance could radicalize or destabilize neighboring countries, sparking internal splits or civil wars that could drag in Russia—a role it neither wants nor can afford.

Unfortunately, NATO-Russia cooperation failed to address these concerns even before Kosovo. After Kosovo, it is difficult to see what kind of cooperative relationship NATO and Russia can have. For one thing, the air strikes [as viewed from Russia—author] violated several principles of the NATO-Russia Founding Act—primarily NATO's commitments limiting its right to use force and promising the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. Russians interpret the ongoing military campaign absent U.N. [United Nations] Security Council approval as NATO's drive for unilateral security in Europe. NATO's new Strategic Concept adopted at the 50th anniversary expanded the alliance's mission to include non-NATO Europe as a potential area for further NATO use of force. While the Concept recognizes the role of the U.N. Security Council, it does not require that NATO obtain [a] U.N. mandate for actions beyond the alliance's border.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly these are largely political threats that would reduce and even potentially marginalize Russia's role in European and even Eurasian security processes. But they are not, for the most part, military threats against Russia or its vital strategic interests. However, this assessment, while correct as far as it goes concerning Russian perceptions of Kosovo's importance, does not go far enough. Conversations with Russian military leaders and military-political analysts told the author that, as they saw Kosovo, it presented serious military threats to Russia's military-political interests.

For example, by 1999 Russia had come to see itself as being under threatened or actual information attack, if not to the same extent as its friend, Serbia. Western reactions to the "anti-terrorist" operation in Chechnya is a case in point.<sup>5</sup> But this perception preceded that operation. Military leaders and analysts also argued that NATO's Kosovo operation represented the template of future NATO operations against Russia or its vital interests in the "near abroad" as outlined in NATO's April 1999 strategy concept.<sup>6</sup>

Again, that perception preceded Kosovo but the latter cemented and seemed to validate it.

A central element of that Russian perception is that NATO harbors designs of enlargement and unilateral out-of-area operations on both the Balkans and the Caucasus, areas that are regarded as more or less equally vital to Russian national security interests. When NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana told a NATO conference in September 1998 that both those regions were troubled areas from which NATO “cannot remain aloof,” he was not merely reiterating ideas he had already voiced publicly, he was confirming the expansive threat assessment held with increasing conviction in Moscow.<sup>7</sup> His subsequent statement that “We are not condemned to be the victim of events that lie beyond our control—we can shape the future” seemed to prove NATO’s and especially Washington’s hegemonic aspirations.<sup>8</sup>

The following examples show that, while official policy as embodied in the documents under examination here had not yet fully crystallized, the trend by 1998 was moving (at least in leading military circles) toward public acceptance of the expansive threat assessment found in the documents of 1999-2000. The following statement of November 1998 by Colonel General Yury N. Baluyevskii, Chief of the General Staff’s Main Operations Directorate, indicates the desire to say the military-political threat is growing and must be met by military means. But the concomitant pressure is not to go beyond the more optimistic line enforced by the 1997 security concept. Baluyevskii observed that,

A deepening of international integration, formation of a global economic and information space, and increased acuteness of the competitive struggle by world centers of strength for consolidating and expanding spheres of influence are among the main trends of the military-political situation. Views on [the] use of military force have also changed. Despite this, however its role as an important factor in the process of achieving economic and political objectives has been preserved.

Yes, large-scale threats to Russia are basically hypothetical in nature. They can and must be neutralized by political means with reliance on the state's military might, and first and foremost on combat-ready strategic nuclear forces and general-purpose forces with precisely functioning command and control, communications, intelligence, and early-warning systems. At the same time, with a diminished probability of a major war being initiated and with the main emphasis of interstate contradictions [being] transferred from the area of ideology into the sphere of politics and economics, there has been a significant growth in the danger of outbreak of armed conflicts where escalation can lead to their expanded geographic scale, an increased number of participants and development into a local and then a regional war. Therefore the Russian Armed Forces must be ready both to localize and neutralize them as well as to carry on wide-scale military operations.<sup>9</sup>

These remarks clearly outline the armed forces and General Staff's desire to have it both ways and conform to policy while registering the sense of expanding threats, the need for a large army, and the importance of the military factor as an instrument for resolving nonmilitary problems as well as actual conflicts and wars. They just barely stay within the confines of the 1997 security concept that the military resented because it stated that the main threats for now and the foreseeable future are not military but "are concentrated in the domestic, political, economic, social, environmental, information, and spiritual spheres." The 1997 concept also cited the particularly critical state of the economy.<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt this approach "unsettled" military commanders. General Leontii Kuznetsov, Commander in Chief (CINC) of the Moscow Military District, publicly stated that the Main Provisions of the 1997 Security Concept wrongly cited the low probability of large-scale war within the next few years. Kuznetsov complained that civilians had reinserted the statement there that Russia's army should be prepared only for conducting regional and local wars that he had removed from the original draft. Instead, Russian troops should prepare for large-scale aggression. The Kremlin, he lamented, accepted the draft, "without his amendments."<sup>11</sup>

Worse than this was that the 1997 concept expressly invoked the availability of numerous political mechanisms and avenues for resolving disputed issues. Thus,

There has been an expansion in the community of Russia's interests with many states on problems of international security, such as countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, settling and preventing regional conflicts, countering international terrorism and the drug business, and solving acute ecological problems including nuclear and radiation security. This significantly increases the opportunity to ensure Russia's security by nonmilitary means—through legal treaties, political, economic, and other measures.<sup>12</sup>

This posture presented Russian armed forces as more of a burden than an asset, and one whose priority has shifted from preparing for the previous total war template to the more extreme areas of the spectrum of conflict: nuclear deterrence, IW, and space war at one end; and preparedness for small scale, "local," and even internal conflicts at the other end.<sup>13</sup> While that posture met the desiderata of President Yeltsin, his national security teams of 1997-98, and Defense Minister General Igor Sergeev, former CINC of the Strategic Nuclear Forces, it assuredly did not conform to the General Staff's views on the threats facing Russia and the military forces needed to counter them. Their view emerges from the second example of pre-Kosovo threat assessments, one that also appeared in November 1998 under the authorship of lower-ranking but knowledgeable members of the General Staff.

This article, written as the crisis in Kosovo was nearing its zenith, lambasted NATO for desiring to act unilaterally out of area and impose a new world order by bypassing the U.N. and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It accused NATO, and specifically the United States, of trying to go beyond the Washington Treaty and convert the Alliance into an offensive military bloc that was expanding its "zone of responsibility" by punitive, military means.<sup>14</sup> The authors charged that,

At the same time, it is not unlikely that NATO could use or even organize crises similar to that in Kosovo in other areas of the world to create an excuse for military intervention since the “policy of double standards” where the bloc’s interests dictate the thrust of policy (the possibility of the use of military force in Kosovo against the Yugoslav Army and simultaneous disregard for the problem of the genocide faced by the Kurds in Turkey, the manifestation of “concern” at the use of military force in the Dniester Region, Chechnya, and Nagorno-Karabakh) is typical of the alliance’s actions.<sup>15</sup> (Emphasis by author)

The authors went beyond this hint that today’s war in Chechnya was already on the agenda to forewarn NATO openly about Russia’s likely reaction to an operation against Serbia. Rather than accept a NATO-dictated isolation from European security agendas and the negating of organizations like the U.N. and OSCE, Russia would act because this crisis provided NATO with an opportunity to project military force not just against Serbia but against Russia itself. This was because the main objective of NATO enlargement was to weaken Russia’s influence in Europe and around the world. Therefore, the following scenario was possible. “Once our country has coped with its difficulties, there will be a firm NATO ring around it, which will enable the West to apply effective economic, political, and possibly even military pressure on Moscow.”<sup>16</sup> Specifically,

When analyzing the development of events in the Balkans, parallels with the development of events in the Caucasus involuntarily suggest themselves: Bosnia-Herzegovina is Nagorno-Karabakh; Kosovo is Chechnya. As soon as the West and, in particular, NATO, has rehearsed the “divide and rule” principle in the Balkans under cover of peacekeeping, they should be expected to interfere in the internal affairs of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries and Russia. It is possible to extrapolate the implementation of “peace-keeping operations” in the region involving military force without a U.N. Security Council mandate, which could result in the Caucasus being wrested from Russia (it bears mentioning that this applies as well to the independent states of the Transcaucasus—an involuntary hint of the continuing

neo-imperial mindset of the General Staff—author) and the lasting consolidation of NATO's military presence in this region, which is far removed from the alliance's zone of responsibility. Is Russia prepared for the development of this scenario? It is obvious that, in order to ensure that the Caucasus does not become an arena for NATO Allied Armed Forces' military intervention, the Russian Government must implement a well defined tough policy in the Balkans, guided by the U.N. charter and at the same time defending its national interests in the region by identifying and providing the appropriate support for this policy's allies.<sup>17</sup> (Emphasis by author)

Clearly we were warned here first that Moscow would intervene in Kosovo along with Serbia in the event of an attack, and second, that it was ready to use force in Chechnya not just against secession and terrorists, or whatever threat Chechnya presented, but to forcefully oust NATO from the Caucasus, an area that remains, insofar as these authors and those for whom they spoke are concerned, exclusively part of Russia. The fact that NATO went ahead and intervened in Kosovo, probably not even understanding such warnings which probably were lost in the background "noise" of the Kosovo crisis, only confirmed the General Staff's views of the threats to Russia and the unilateral measures it had to take, e.g., landing in Pristina and attacking Chechnya to reorient defense policy and force structure. It was essential for the General Staff that it do so to reorient threat assessments and thus subsequent defense policy in the direction that these documents then took. If one then adds the threat posed by our pending decision about theater and national missile defense (TMD and NMD) which Russia regards as a threat to the very basis of strategic stability worldwide, then the reason and context for subsequent Russian statements and policies become much clearer.

## The Content of the Draft Doctrine and Security Concept.

The security concept's nuclear provisions stated that a vital task of the armed forces is to exercise deterrence to prevent nuclear or other aggression on any scale against Russia and its allies. Thus Russia extended deterrence to those allies, presumably CIS members. Likewise, "Nuclear weapons should be capable of inflicting the desired extent of damage against any aggressor state or coalition of states in any conditions and circumstances."<sup>18</sup> The concept also stated that nuclear weapons use would become possible "in the event or need to repulse armed aggression, if all other measures of resolving the crisis situation have been exhausted and proven ineffective."<sup>19</sup> The security concept tailors nuclear use to the particular threat at hand as implied by its phrases "aggression on any scale, nuclear or otherwise" and "to the desired extent of damage."<sup>20</sup> Other key officials, e.g., Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Mikhailov, confirm this interpretation of the conditions for nuclear use, thereby proclaiming limited nuclear war as Russia's officially acknowledged strategy in response to many different kinds of contingencies.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, Russian nuclear weapons serve two crucial, but not necessarily complementary, functions. They deter a wide range of phenomena along the spectrum of conflict that could conceivably threaten Russia. Second, they are also warfighting instruments that can be used in a wide range of conflicts, including limited war.<sup>22</sup>

The nuclear provisions of these documents clearly are related to NATO's Kosovo operation. Officers and analysts told the author in June 1999 that Kosovo led doctrine writers to include contingencies for deploying tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) in conventional threat scenarios.<sup>23</sup> In December 1999, General Vladimir Yakovlev, CINC of the Strategic Nuclear Forces, admitted this, attributing the new strategy to Russia's economic crisis—where nuclear



forces receive about half the funds they need—and new regional proliferation threats.

Russia, for objective reasons, is forced to lower the threshold for using nuclear weapons, extend the nuclear deterrent to smaller-scale conflicts and openly warn potential opponents about this.<sup>24</sup>

Russia would also continue modernizing its strategic rocket force with the new Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missiles. The foregoing statements illustrate as well their belief that nuclear weapons can deescalate conflict situations and wars.<sup>25</sup> These remarks also illustrate some of the “threat context” animating the formulations in these documents, amplify the security concept’s intent, and suggest that TNW will be the weapon and/or deterrent of choice for many of the smaller-scale contingencies that Russia fears. Russian doctrinal statements also represent the culmination to date of a debate going back at least to 1993 over nuclear first-strike use against certain kinds of conventional attacks on Russian interests and targets.<sup>26</sup>

Conforming to the security concept, Yakovlev tied the new posture to the multiple threats facing Russia. He stated that nuclear weapons serve the *political* function of deterring “possible aggression of *any intensity*” by convincing everyone to desist from aggression against Russia.<sup>27</sup> Like virtually every other senior commander and military-political analyst, he invoked Kosovo as a justification. He said that NATO’s campaign convinced Russia that Washington and other NATO allies were rehearsing methods of warfare that will be the basis for future wars to which Russia must adjust. The General Staff shares the notion that Kosovo is a template for future NATO strategy.<sup>28</sup> Yakovlev cited,

The massive use of aviation and long-range precision weapons; electronic countermeasures; and integrated use of space information assets—all these approaches have become a firm part of U.S. military threats beginning with Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1991. Moreover, the primary

targets in the course of the conflict were clearly specified; key installations of the economic infrastructure, elements of the state and military command and control system, and lines of transportation. NATO's eastward enlargement not only radically altered the force ratio in theaters of military operations, but also permitted a number of kinds of tactical and operational-tactical weapons to perform strategic missions previously set aside for Pershing II missile complexes and cruise missiles.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the draft doctrine's and security concept's statements on nuclear issues are a fundamental aspect of Russia's adaptation to future war. Yakovlev and the Russian leadership are equally adamant about blocking U.S. efforts to build ballistic missile defense (BMD), which they regard as a threat to the foundations of strategic stability between Moscow and Washington, and a violation of the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.<sup>30</sup>

The defense doctrine and the security concept, as well as published statements by authoritative officials and spokesmen, also invoke a broad range of political-military threats, many of which also directly emerge out of NATO enlargement, Kosovo, and the Anglo-American Iraqi operation of 1998-99. NATO enlargement and its many strategic repercussions constitute a large number of the military-political threats. Apart from political or military-political threats, we also can identify three specific military threats displayed in Kosovo and Iraq that particularly trouble Russian leaders: information warfare (IW) and information operations (IO), the use of high-tech precision weapons in a primarily aerospace and long-range offensive (what they call contactless war), and ballistic missile defense (BMD).

These documents' threat assessments also portray the United States and NATO as threats in and of themselves. Those formulations serve two purposes. They justify and shape the increasingly anti-NATO and anti-American political orientation of the military and government. And at home they are the essential pillars of the General Staff's

unprecedented resolve to define and control Moscow's entire national security policy and gain higher status and more resources for defense. Indeed, Sergeyev stated that the forthcoming officially revised defense doctrine examines 12 new external threats and 6 new internal ones that have appeared recently.<sup>31</sup> Inasmuch as only 2 years have elapsed since the old security concept and its official threat assessment, this remark tells us how much of the threat assessment we are now receiving has been fabricated out of a sense of paranoia and in order to justify obtaining more resources from the government. Or in other words, threat assessment is a major aspect of the military's rent-seeking proclivities as well as a justification of its status in Russian politics, and in the quest to retain Russia's global standing.

Consequently, the new security concept repudiated its 1997 predecessor's optimistic and supposedly scientifically substantiated, high-level, official prognosis of no direct threat by stipulating the rising possibility of direct aggression against Russia.<sup>32</sup> The security concept and draft doctrine invoke NATO and the United States as the authors of growing threats, define international affairs mainly in terms of the threat U.S. unipolarity poses to Russia's espousal of a multi-polar world, expand parameters for nuclear first-strikes, urge vastly increased defense spending, and calculate that spending on a Soviet basis, i.e., upon the military's proclaimed needs not Russia's actual capabilities.<sup>33</sup> Thus these documents give a kind of official imprimatur to the view that increasingly saturates the Russian media concerning the American and Western-inspired threats to Russia's very existence.

Western alleged misdeeds include: attempting to force inappropriate reform medicine down Russia's throat while failing to give real help to the ailing economy, stealing Russia's markets, including blocking the sale of arms and nuclear technology, endeavoring to turn Russia into an economic colony, a provider of cheap raw materials and a market for dumping, inciting Ukraine and other CIS states against Russia; trying to limit Russian influence in the Transcaucasus

and Central Asia with a view to controlling energy sources and transit routes; encouraging Balts and others to repress Russian minorities; establishing military and political hegemony through the expansion of NATO and the crushing of such Russian friends as Iraq and Serbia; perhaps even encouraging the disintegration of the Russian state [and civilization—author] (hence the increasingly vociferous condemnation of anti-terrorist actions in Chechnya).<sup>34</sup>

Signifying the greater militarization of assessments and thinking about national security, the official security concept also replaces the word “defense” (*oborona* and its derivative adjectives) in the 1997 concept with the word “military” (*Voennyi* and its derivations).<sup>35</sup> Thus the new documents not only conflate political and military threats together, strongly suggesting the need to respond to the former by military means, they also reflect an increased militarization of the “discursive practice” of thinking about Russian security.<sup>36</sup>

This mode of thinking about military-political, and specifically military, threats appears prominently in these documents and in public statements by leading military and political spokesmen and analysts. Sergeyev, Manilov, and Chief of Staff General Anatoly Kvashnin argue that, until and unless NATO recants over Kosovo and gives Russia a veto over its operations, the threat of more Kosovo-like crises and operations will remain, freezing Europe (and Russia) into permanent insecurity.<sup>37</sup> This essentially political threat will endure and govern defense policy.

Russian military leaders charge that Kosovo, as aggression against sovereign Serbia, breached the U.N. charter and by-passed the U.N. NATO’s claim to use force unilaterally could trigger an international and global catastrophe. NATO also overturned European politics and security by negating concepts of territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. This allowed Washington to intervene abroad under the pretext of human rights and place a “bomb” under the structures of world politics.<sup>38</sup> Kosovo also damaged nonproliferation efforts because it

convinced other governments that they could only deter Washington by obtaining nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD).<sup>39</sup>

Kvashnin openly stated that any enlargement of NATO is at Russia's expense and that European security is a zero-sum game. Thus "We will view NATO's further practical actions for eastward enlargement and for annexing Central and East European states to it as a challenge to national security."<sup>40</sup> Sergeyev went even further, saying that,

The approaching of NATO's infrastructure to Russian borders is a direct increase of NATO's combat possibilities, which is unfavorable for our country in a strategic sense. We will regard the approaching of NATO's tactical aviation to Russian borders as an attempted nuclear threat.<sup>41</sup>

Sergeyev here reiterated and even expanded Yakovlev's threat assessment. He also showed how far he would go to expand deterrence against NATO in discussing the parameters of what the armed forces now call expanded deterrence.<sup>42</sup>

His remarks evoke expanded deterrence with a vengeance. But they are not far removed from Kvashnin's harsh rhetoric that reads like a late 19th century treatise on Realpolitik where alliances "annex" states to themselves than to our times. Like Manilov and Yeltsin, Kvashnin demands an all-European security system based only on the OSCE's framework. That supposedly would assure Moscow of an exclusive zone of influence in the CIS and equal status with Washington and NATO.<sup>43</sup> Kvashnin's justification is simple, NATO's enlargement extended its zone of responsibility 650-750 kilometers eastward, substantially reducing Russia's warning time of an offensive. Russia's nuclear weapons, not to mention its conventional ones, are therefore insufficient as a deterrent.<sup>44</sup>

Despite this implicit belief in the inutility of Russia's nuclear deterrent, Kvashnin also takes for granted the need

to extend nuclear deterrence to unspecified allies. Of course, few states might want such an alliance since Moscow is ready to risk nuclear war even in small contingencies on their behalf. Neither does anyone anywhere spell out the criteria for becoming a Russian ally and enjoying this extended deterrence. That omission in itself is a sign of how dangerous and slipshod is the new approach to security issues. Simultaneously, the contradiction between affirming both the inutility and potency of Russia's nuclear systems' apparently eluded Kvashnin and other elites as well. But this ambivalence reflects key strategic dilemmas. Indeed, if any of Russia's neighbors or enemies went nuclear, that would intensify the burden on an already overstressed nuclear force and the threat to vital Russian interests.<sup>45</sup>

In December 1999 Sergeyev, too, called NATO enlargement, in and of itself, a threat to global and European collective security and world politics. He particularly stressed the deployment and use of NATO forces out of area without U.N. or OSCE sanction as a threat that devalues confidence-building measures, arms control treaties, and security (probably having in mind the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe [CFE] Treaty and the strategic weapons agreements).<sup>46</sup> Kosovo duly became a moment of truth for Russia that rendered efforts to work with NATO towards equal security "totally worthless." It also follows that the nightmare scenario of NATO supporting secessionist or anti-Russian movements in the CIS is now a staple of threat assessments, including the doctrine and security concept.<sup>47</sup> After all, such threats, manifested in NATO's support for the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and supposedly backed up by NATO's tactical aviation, tactical, or operational-tactical missiles, could appear as attacks against either Russia's nuclear missiles or their command, control, and communications, and intelligence (C3I).

Consequently, military leaders express the fear that NATO's continued existence in its present form will

intensify Europe's dependence upon Washington, precluding any hope of a solid European security system. As Manilov, like Kvashnin, insists,

There has to be a search for a "European identity," and the "European factor" should be strengthened in dealing with the USA. This means establishing a pan-European security system serving the interests not only of two, five, or seven states but absolutely all European countries.<sup>48</sup>

These remarks in favor of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) neatly illustrate this conflation of political and military threats and the armed forces' efforts to direct foreign policy on European security issues.

Sergeyev's strictures against NATO also stress Kosovo's impact regarding IW and IO. These two phenomena carry a many-sided threat and are cited for doing so in the new security concept as well as in official briefings given to foreigners.<sup>49</sup> Implicit in these publications, briefings, and many Russian writings is the understanding of an ongoing RMA where the nature of war has changed or is undergoing a revolutionary transformation. Contemporary war typically displays new components that must be taken into account in constructing armed forces. And those components include all aspects of the art of war on display in Kosovo, prominently including IW and IO.

Threat Assessments in the Draft Doctrine and the Security Concept.

The draft doctrine, security concept, and associated military-political commentary paint a very alarming picture. Because military elites view Kosovo as a template of NATO's future operations, they charge that NATO's Strategic Concept challenges the strategic military situation and the entire structure upon which the defense of Russian interests, and, supposedly, world peace rest.<sup>50</sup> The draft doctrine, security concept, and its authors' threat assessments also demonstrate the General Staff's

determination to realize the countermeasures it and political leaders suggested to NATO enlargement.

The melange of political and military threats and recommendations for policy in the draft defense doctrine tell us that it is, first of all, a blueprint for a total national security policy, not just defense policy. As such, it represents the General Staff's effort to seize the rudder of the ship of state with regard to national security. The discernible resemblance of both documents' military-political threats illustrates the primacy of the General Staff's vision of the threat. The draft doctrine postulates the following external military-political threats: territorial claims upon Russia; intervention in its internal affairs; attempts to infringe upon or ignore Russian interests in resolving international security issues and oppose Russia's strengthening as a center of a multipolar world; armed conflicts, especially near Russia's and/or its allies' borders; creation and buildup of forces and troop groupings that disturb the balance of forces near Russia's or its allies' waters; expansion of military blocs and alliances against the interest of Russia and/or its allies' military security; introduction of troops without United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanction to states contiguous with and friendly to Russia; creating, equipping, supporting, and training armed groups abroad to redeploy them for attacks upon Russia and/or its allies or against installations and structures on Russia's or its allies' borders; operations aiming to undermine global and regional security or stability, including hindering the operation of Russian state and military C2 systems, systems supporting the functioning and combat stability of nuclear forces and missile attack warning, ABM defense, and space surveillance systems; hindering the operation of nuclear munitions storage facilities, power plants, chemical installations, and other potentially dangerous installations; information operations of a technical, psychological, or other nature against Russia and/or its allies; discrimination against Russians abroad; and international terrorism.<sup>51</sup>



This all-encompassing list of military and political threats portrays NATO, and not only in its enlarged form, as a threat in and of itself and shows tremendous concern for the use of IO and IW in all their guises against Russia. Russian views of IO and IW form a consensus that they can be used to unhinge the basis of military control over weapons, political control and governance over the state, and overall social stability.<sup>52</sup> Given the centrality of nuclear weapons to Russian strategy and policy and the criticality of proper C3I for their deployment and use, obviously any weapons that strike at that C3I network are seen in the worst possible light.

Hence the draft doctrine's and the security concept's threat assessments in many ways evoke Soviet precedents. By publishing the draft doctrine before the security concept that it is supposed to concretize the General Staff sought to preempt and dominate debate on national security policy. No other approach to potential threat assessments and policy recommendations would command a public platform.<sup>53</sup> Second, for the first time Russian doctrine articulates Soviet-like perceptions of growing Western threats. The causal links between the military's dominance of threat assessment, its recommendations for defense and foreign policy, and unilateral efforts to define the volume and direction of defense spending recall Soviet practice. The concurrent military operations in Pristina and Chechnya, as predicted above, further sharpen the doctrine's anti-Western animus and serve three related goals.

The first goal is to forestall NATO's further enlargement in scope or mission. Russia still rejects NATO enlargement on principle and regards further NATO expansion in territory or mission as intolerable. Pristina and Chechnya forcefully illustrate how Russia plans to resist either kind of enlargement, especially in the Caucasus. Second, Pristina, Chechnya, and the threat assessment forcefully and directly reply to U.S. policies in Kosovo, NATO's attempts to exclude Russia from the Balkans, and their implications for future warfare. Moscow's premeditated war with Chechnya

serves the second goal of forcefully suppressing threats of secession from Russia that may become aligned with foreign, and probably NATO support, as in Kosovo, and deterring NATO participation in those wars, once again particularly in the Caucasus.

High-ranking military commentary explicitly yokes together internal secessionist threats with U.S. pressure and NATO enlargement and implies that they are already joined together as a single composite threat. Therefore, the strongest possible military action is urged to resist those converging threats. The doctrine's third goal was to reorient the domestic and defense agenda and preserve Yeltsin and now his successor, Vladimir Putin, in power. Accordingly Manilov charged that,

Actually, today the internal threat, that is associated with terrorism that is covered by Islamic phraseology, has become extremely exacerbated. That threat does not have anything in common either with Islam or with national-ethnic problems. Its roots and primary sources are outside Russia. . . . The pragmatic conclusion is as follows: we cannot weaken external security, while placing the emphasis on internal security. Or vice versa.<sup>54</sup>

He also listed new threats present in the new documents that are not listed in the 1993 doctrine:

Attempts to ignore and all the more so infringe upon Russia's interests in the resolution of international security problems and to oppose its consolidation as one of the influential centers of the modern world. As you know, that's what happened when the United States and NATO made the decision to bomb the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Or [another threat is] the creation, equipping, support, and training of formations and groups on the territory of other states with the goal of their transfer for operations on the territory of Russia and its allies. Specifically, that is what happened with the manning, equipping, training, and financing of the Chechen terrorist formations that committed aggression against Russia in the North Caucasus.<sup>55</sup>

Kvashnin also listed these items as threats as they are contained in the draft defense doctrine.<sup>56</sup> These primarily political and psychological threats now justify the *military* response of a major buildup of conventional weapons. Putin, too, linked foreign and domestic threats, even invoking the domino theory, and charging that the Chechen threat was part of an overall attempt to detach whole territories from Russia and CIS governments on behalf of an international Islamic project. He stated that,

What happened this summer in Dagestan should not be seen as some particular, local occurrence. Combine in a single whole Dagestan, the incursions of the gang elements from Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and the events in Kyrgyzstan. What was happening—we will call a spade a spade—was an attempt at the military and political assimilation of part of the territory of the former Soviet Union. . . . A rebellious self-proclaimed state supported by extremist circles of a number of Islamic countries had in these four years (since the Khasvayurt agreement of 1996 ending the first war with Chechnya—author) fortified its position on the territory of Russia. A self-proclaimed state which, in the intentions of these extremist circles, was to have become Greater Ichkeria from the Caspian to the Black Sea, that is to have seized all of the Caucasus, cut Russia off from the Transcaucasus, and closed the route into Central Asia. Dagestan was, after all, to have been merely the first step. . . . So the danger for our country was extremely high. We really could have lost Dagestan and quit the Caucasus. And subsequently in the very near future, we would have had, in accordance with the domino principle, attempts by the international terrorists to detonate the situation in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, the Volga region. We must not close our eyes; these attempts could well have been successful. Centrifugal trends in the relations of the federal authorities and particular regions of the country are still strong on the territory of Russia. And it would not then be a question of today's anti-terrorist operation, which some overseas and Russian politicians consider incommensurate. It would be a question of truly broad-based combat operations, a callup of reservists, and the transfer of the entire country absolute to a war footing.<sup>57</sup>

Kvashnin also echoed the draft doctrine and 1997 security concept that direct military aggression is presently unlikely. However, potential external and internal threats have been preserved, "and in a number of regions are intensifying."<sup>58</sup> This parallels the revised and now official security concept's line that "the level and scope of the military threat are growing," an unprecedented statement in Russian Federation official documents.<sup>59</sup> Kvashnin also took a strong line towards these perceived threats. The principal threats facing Russia are for him:

- Territorial problems connected to the absence of precise juridical borders;
- Intervention in Russian Federation affairs, including encroachment on state unity and territorial integrity;
- Attempts to ignore or infringe upon Russian Federation interests in resolving international security problems;
- The appearance and escalation of armed conflicts, particularly near the borders of the Russian Federation and its allies;
- Creation and buildup of troop groupings that disturb the balance of forces near those same borders;
- Expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of Russian security; and,
- Actions aimed at undermining global regional security.<sup>60</sup>

While this list parallels Manilov's, the draft doctrine, and the security concept's assessment, Kvashnin, as stated above, assessed any enlargement of NATO as being at Russia's expense and that European security is a zero-sum game.<sup>61</sup> Kvashnin's response to the enlargement threat, extended deterrence to the CIS, is also not a new departure and reflects a continuing policy trend. Preliminary discussions on doctrine in 1997 took extended deterrence in

the CIS for granted. Secretary of the Security Council Yuri Baturin's January 1997 reform plan stated that Russia, when confronting local wars that expand due to outside assistance into large-scale conventional wars, reserves the right to use nuclear weapons as first strike and preemptive weapons. This allegedly limited first strike will equally allegedly regain escalation dominance and force a return to the status quo.<sup>62</sup> Obviously this formulation closely anticipated the language of the security concept and its optimistic belief that Moscow could launch and control a supposedly limited nuclear war.

Kvashnin also strongly argued that Russia's exclusion from NATO means that NATO ignores Russian security interests. NATO's benevolent intentions are irrelevant because its capabilities are what matters and they are awesome and growing. Kvashnin similarly invokes NATO's defiance of the OSCE and U.N. in Kosovo as an example of the growing trend towards using force unilaterally out of area and of NATO's attempt to dictate European security by force. Hence he, too, saw Kosovo as a moment of truth for Russia. He also invoked the threat of proliferation in the Middle East, blaming Israel, not Iran or Iraq, for it. Yet his answer to this problem is purely dialogue with potential proliferators, this being the official Russian position.<sup>63</sup> Though Russia shares Washington's unease about proliferation, Kvashnin dismisses the likelihood of Third World states having the requisite technology to constitute a threat in the near future and rejects ballistic missile defense (BMD) because that will undermine arms control and the reduction of strategic weapons.<sup>64</sup> This statement follows the official line in regard to BMD. But it also suggests indecision either concerning the desirability of fighting proliferation or about the best method of doing so.<sup>65</sup>

Kvashnin's reasoning also suggests that Russia refuses to believe in the reality of the new proliferation threats even though the U.S. Rumsfeld Commission's findings in 1998 demonstrated that such threats are already a fact of life, multiplying in previously unforeseen ways, and remaining

undetected either by Moscow or Washington.<sup>66</sup> Or his argument may be an attempt to conceal the fact that Russia is assiduously proliferating dual-use technologies and systems to China, Iran, India, and perhaps other states.<sup>67</sup> Given Russia's past record as nuclear proliferator, one might be pardoned for suspecting that Russia, like China, is not totally unhappy to see certain states gain nuclear weapons, thus reducing the reach of U.S. military power.<sup>68</sup>

Statements by Sergeyev and Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov now follow the same line as Kvashnin, Manilov, the Security Concept, and the draft doctrine concerning the linked foreign and internal threats sponsored by or emanating from the United States. On November 12, 1999, Sergeyev, for the first time, linked internal and external threats, claiming that U.S. interests are best served by a continuing smoldering war in the North Caucasus. Allegedly that would force Russia into major exertions to localize the conflict and thus weaken it.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Kosovo showed that NATO's new strategy relies on the use of force. That strategy "is an attempt to defy Russia's positions, to oust it from the Caspian region, the Transcaucasian area, and Central Asia."<sup>70</sup> Four days later Ivanov wrote that,

The question often raised in Moscow is whether Kosovo and Chechnya are links in a chain of steps toward the creation of a one-dimensional, NATO-centered world. Is Chechnya being used as a smokescreen for preparing NATO to assume the role of a world policeman, for undermining the fundamental components of strategic stability and reversing the disarmament processes? Has the anti-Russian campaign over Chechnya been launched to force Russia out of the Caucasus, and then out of Central Asia? And these are by no means the only concerns that have arisen in Russian public opinion with respect to the actions—or sometimes, the lack of actions—of our Western partners.<sup>71</sup>

Accordingly, the draft defense doctrine and the security concept emit a pervasive sense of linked internal and external threats. Sergeyev's article on the foundations of

Russia's military-technical policy in December 1999 reinforced that outlook. He listed as internal threats not just Russia's horrible socio-economic crisis and the constraints that this crisis put upon modernizing and restructuring of the armed forces, but also the "aggravation of international relations, regional separatism and regional extremism which create favorable conditions for the outbreak of internal armed conflicts."<sup>72</sup> Consequently, the main foreign threats to Russia that derive from its weak global military position and that represent a threat to its sovereignty and integrity include,

- Negatively developing trends in the entire system of international relations expressed in the United States and NATO striving for military resolution of political problems and bypassing the U.N. and OSCE.

- The strengthening of unfriendly military-political blocs and unions (i.e., the U.S. alliance system) "and the broadening of their 'sphere of influence' and 'zones of responsibility' with the simultaneous intensification of centrifugal forces within the CIS" (Emphasis by author).<sup>73</sup>

- The outbreak and escalation of armed conflicts in proximity to the borders of Russia and the CIS.

- "The sharp escalation of the scale of international terrorism against Russia and its allies, to include the possible use of OMP (weapons of mass destruction)."<sup>74</sup>

- The increasing gap between those leading military powers who are breaking away from other states and the growth of their capabilities for creating a new generation of military and military-technical weapons. This trend triggers a qualitatively new phase in the arms race and significantly changes the character, forms, and composition of military operations.

- Territorial claims on Russia from neighboring states. This is most powerfully expressed in NATO's "expansion to

the East and their aggression against Yugoslavia, as well as the events in the Northern Caucasus.”<sup>75</sup> Here Sergeyev, too, linked domestic and foreign threats, recklessly conflating them to formulate his assessment and justify his political-military agenda.

The draft doctrine and security concept echo this inflated threat perception. They both begin by polarizing two opposed tendencies, U.S.-led unipolarity and Russian-led multipolarity, as determining “the status and prospects for development of the present day military-political situation.”<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, the basic features of the military-political situation are as follows. While there is a diminished threat of world war, including nuclear war and the development of mechanisms for safeguarding international peace regionally and globally; doctrine writers nevertheless discern the formation and strengthening of regional power centers, national-ethnic and religious extremism, and separatist tendencies associated with those phenomena.

Although there are economic, political, technological, ecological, and informational trends favoring a multipolar world and Russia’s equal position in it, the United States and its allies’ policies, and policies of other countries associated with proliferation, are working to circumvent international law and threaten Russia. Hence military force and the resort to violence remain substantial aspects of international relations, a favorite justification of the military for their policy aims.<sup>77</sup>

According to the draft doctrine, those negative trends foster the escalation of local wars and armed conflicts, strengthened regional arms races, proliferation of WMD and delivery systems, aggravated information contestation (*protivoborstvo* in Russian), and expanding transnational threats: crime, drug running, terrorism, and the illegal arms trade.<sup>78</sup> These actual and potential threats create basic destabilizing factors of the military-political situation.



Those factors are support for extremist nationalist, ethnic, religious, separatist, and terrorist movements and organizations (Chechens or the KLA in Kosovo); the use of informational and other nontraditional means and technologies to attain destructive military-political goals; diminished effectiveness of international security organizations, particularly the U.N. and the OSCE; operations involving military force in circumvention of "generally recognized principles and rules of international law (and) without UNSC sanction"; violation of international arms control treaties—the U.S. intention to amend or withdraw from the ABM treaty.<sup>79</sup>

Russia's active foreign policy and the maintenance of a sufficient military potential, including nuclear deterrence, presently avert direct and traditional forms of aggression against Russia and its allies. Nonetheless "a number of potential (including large-scale) external and internal threats to Russia and its allies' military security remain and are strengthening in a number of directions." (emphasis in the original)<sup>80</sup> The original draft security concept went further, reflecting the General Staff's preeminence, charging that the combination or sum total of specific internal and external threats which encompass all the threats arising out of Russia's socio-economic catastrophe "can present a threat to Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the possibility of direct military aggression against Russia."<sup>81</sup> Likewise, "The spectrum of threats connected with international terrorism, including the possible use of weapons of mass destruction, is widening."<sup>82</sup> Much of this language obviously paralleled Kvashnin's and Sergeev's views.<sup>83</sup> Although the final version of internal and external threats listed in the official security concept is broader and more specific in detail, interestingly, this language was left out except to cite the growing level and scope of the military threat.<sup>84</sup> In this context, the armed forces' nightmare scenario of NATO support for an ethno-secessionist (and, in Russian eyes,

necessarily terrorist) anti-Russian movement is not surprising.<sup>85</sup>

### Fusing Internal and External Threats.

The scope of *internal military threats* that these documents outline also deserves attention because the manner of its presentation permits the fusion of internal and external threats described by Sergeev, Manilov, Kvashnin, Putin, and others. As the other military forces have proven unable to cope with these threats in Chechnya, the draft doctrine and security concept now also strongly imply the use of the regular armed forces for those other forces' domestic missions.<sup>86</sup> This new set of missions is an extremely dangerous risk for the army and government because of the incompatibility of police functions and missions with those of the regular army. But in so stressed a state as Russia where both the MVD and the armed forces are already thoroughly criminalized, placing the army in the domestic line of fire is apparently the only alternative. Here Russia is flirting with the risk of state failure.<sup>87</sup> The progression from linking internal and external threats to fusing foreign and domestic missions in a single organization automatically entails many great risks and was probably taken without the requisite forethought concerning them. Although it makes a nice logical progression, in practice such policy decisions already represent a confession of failure or of despair at the absence of usable effective police or military power inside Russia, a point all too tragically on view in Chechnya in 1994-96 and again today.

We should also note that this fusion of internal and external threats also continues previous Leninist and more recent military-political arguments invoking IW to link together external and internal threats of aggression and subversion.<sup>88</sup>

The draft doctrine's internal threats comprise:

- Attempts at a violent overthrow of the constitution;
- Separatist ethno-national, terrorist movements seeking to disrupt state unity and Russia's integrity or to destabilize the internal situation there;
- Planning, preparation, and accomplishment of actions to disrupt and disorganize the activity of state governmental organization;
- Attacks on governmental, military, economic, and information infrastructures;
- Establishment, equipment, training, and functioning of illegal armed units; unlawful proliferation of weapons usable for terrorist or criminal actions; and,
- Organized crime, terrorism, smuggling and other unlawful acts on a scale threatening Russian military security.<sup>89</sup>

While Putin altered the draft of the security concept to put more emphasis on internal threats and crime, the document as a whole exudes the Soviet sense of pervasive and all-encompassing threats.<sup>90</sup>

After laying out a comprehensive description of those internal threats, the revised security concept then addresses the foreign threats. It is noteworthy that their order of presentation represents a full-blown attack on the United States. These threats are:

- States' desire to bypass organizations of security like the U.N. and OSCE;
- Weakening Russian influence in the world;
- The strengthening of military blocs and alliances, particularly NATO's eastward expansion;
- The possible emergence of military bases and presences "in the immediate proximity of Russia's borders," (not specifically in neighboring states one should note—probably to include the Balkans);

- Proliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles, weakening of integrative processes within the CIS;
- The outbreak and escalation of conflicts near the borders of Russia and/or the CIS states; and,
- Territorial claims on Russia.<sup>91</sup>

The revised concept also lists as threats attempts by other states to prevent a strengthening of Russian positions in world affairs and hinder the exercise of its national interests in Europe, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. The latter region was added now due to Putin's intervention and to signify renewed Russian interest in playing a key role there.<sup>92</sup> A new note crept into this document in the wake of Kosovo and perhaps belatedly as a result of the Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests of 1998. Moscow seems to show more concern, if not fear, of nuclear proliferation. Perhaps because of Pakistan's supposed support for the Chechens and Taliban forces in Afghanistan, its nuclear status now gives Moscow pause. Thus the new security concept warns expressly against the aspiration of a number of states to strengthen their influence in world politics, including the use of proliferation.<sup>93</sup>

Not surprisingly then, the security concept cites terrorism as a serious threat. Information threats are also rising. They grow out of states' (i.e., the United States) desire to monopolize the global information space "and expel Russia from the external and internal information market." The development of concepts of information warfare fit in here as well.<sup>94</sup> Finally, the rising military threats are attributable, as in the draft defense doctrine, to NATO's high-handed unilateralism in expanding its scope and missions in Kosovo without international agencies' sanction.<sup>95</sup>

All these threats, including upgraded intelligence subversion of Russia, are growing as the Russian military remains at a "critically low level" of training and facing

block obsolescence of its technical base. Moscow also even sees cultural threats from abroad, not to mention the standard litany of transnational threats, narcotics, and crime.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, these precepts are shared by the military and will be solidified in the official doctrine that was published on April 21, 2000, and represent a revised version of the draft doctrine which we have discussed here.<sup>97</sup>

### Signs of Continuing Debate.

Because they are supposed to be authoritative documents, both the defense doctrine and the national security concept are obviously the source of enormous political maneuvering, much of it hidden from view. However, the struggles leading up to publication of both these documents evidently continue. For the first time the Navy has been allowed to publish its draft of a naval strategy, and Putin went out of his way to focus on critical challenges confronting this service.<sup>98</sup> Evidently the Navy has won its constantly reiterated point that there is such a thing as a separate naval strategy (if not doctrine), thereby upgrading to some degree its status in Russian military policy.<sup>99</sup> Clearly there was a struggle over these issues. In October 1999, Eduard Shevelev, a leading naval theorist and Vice-President of the Academy of Military Sciences, wrote to the MOD, fearing that the navy was being ignored in the new doctrine.<sup>100</sup> This upgrading evidently occurred to some degree at the expense of the Army, i.e., ground forces who have yet to reclaim their special status in the MOD that Sergeev and Yeltsin abolished in 1997-98. As a result of this struggle, Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, Head of the Navy's main headquarters, announced plans to create a Russian naval presence in all the world's major waterways, including the Mediterranean Sea. Heavy cruisers will regularly be posted there. Design and construction of fifth generation ships are underway, and work on the naval strategic nuclear forces is "being conducted as a priority." This means that by 2005 the Russian navy will carry 55 percent of Russia's strategic nuclear forces. Moreover,

present tests of SLBMs RSM-50 are intended as possible responses to the U.S. expected withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty and subsequent construction of an American national missile defense system.<sup>101</sup>

Kravchenko's observations correspond to the revised program or budget for military spending in the year 2000. According to that program, there will be a 50 percent increase in defense spending, 80 percent rise in spending on Research and Development, and a 70 percent increase in the state order. Future defense spending will display major increases in aerospace systems, microelectronics, electro-optical systems, new strategic, tactical, and miniature nuclear weapons, the first *Borey* class nuclear submarines armed with the new SS-NX-28 SLBM, the Navy, C3I technologies for IW and nuclear weapons. Spending on naval force development will double to bring new ships on stream by 2008. Current plans also include increasing strategic naval forces to 55 percent of the total by 2005.<sup>102</sup> Other large-scale programs are also now being announced.<sup>103</sup>

Putin also apparently contributed to this struggle by decreeing changes in the draft security concept and publishing them in the revised version in January 2000. They are designed to strengthen the Security Concept's emphasis on fighting terrorism and crime, provisions, that, if taken to their logical end, mean following Yeltsin's line of strengthening the Ministry of Interior Troops (VVMVD) and FSB at the expense of the Army, or, alternatively engaging the Army even more in domestic "counterinsurgency" operations, which it has never liked.<sup>104</sup> Yet, as suggested above, there is no alternative. The replacement of MVD CINC General Vladimir Ovchinnikov with Army General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov suggests an attempt once again to bring the MVD's army up to snuff, but one that probably cannot succeed for all the usual reasons such as lack of funding, corruption, and inter-service rivalry.

## Analyzing the Threats.

These threat assessments are notable for their pessimism, pervasiveness, and expanded scope. They also play a significant role in the internal political struggle to direct military reform and obtain increased appropriations. Yet at bottom, many reflect essentially psychological projections of threats to Russia's vision of itself and/or political and diplomatic threats more normally the province of the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They expose the exaggerated but prevalent ideas held in many quarters concerning Russia's place and future in world affairs. While clearly derived from the sense of outrage at being disregarded over Kosovo, they also reflect Russia's inability to come to terms with its ability to contribute to international and European security. In addition, they provide a refuge from the reality that Russian policy did nothing to contribute to a peaceful outcome in Kosovo before March 1999 and was, in fact, obstructive of Western efforts to do so. While the United States and its allies had their own share of follies and misdeeds throughout this crisis, it is Moscow, not Washington, that has attempted to have one standard for Europe and another for its projected exclusive zone of influence in the CIS, an outcome that is clearly unacceptable to those states, Europe, and Washington. Thus many of the fears and threats that Moscow projects due to Kosovo owe at least as much if not more to Russian policies and policy failures than they do to so called Western "aggression."

For example, another widely feared threat is that NATO's enlargement will isolate and marginalize Russia as a serious player, let alone a great power, in areas of historic influence and dominance. The idea that Russia will cease to be counted a great European and global player on a par with Washington terrifies many elites, even if the younger generation is allegedly—though this is unproven—more reconciled with contemporary reality. The determination to play this global role or the belief that Russia "is entitled" to

such a seat at the “presidium table” of world affairs dies very hard, indeed too hard.<sup>105</sup>

This great power mystique of *Derzhavnost'*—a kind of objectively fated quality that Russia must be a great power and be seen as such by all—pervades even the most routine diplomatic and political statements.<sup>106</sup> It also has been the most consistent justification of the anti-reform groups for stopping reform ever since the Decembrist Movement in 1825. This mystique has played this role because of the profound conviction, going back to the Tsars, that in a multinational empire and state like Russia, any reform could put the whole system and state at risk. Functionally speaking, *Derzhavnost'* is essentially the most recent contemporary manifestation of the deeply rooted Tsarist idea that the state and the empire are identical and inextricable concepts.<sup>107</sup>

For instance, at a recent meeting of the Academy of Military Science on future war that Sergeyev attended, its director, Retired General Makhmut A. Gareyev, one of Russia's leading thinkers and a former Deputy Chief of Staff, stated openly that,

One of these unifying factors is the idea of Russia's rebirth as a great power, not a regional power (it is situated in several large regions of Eurasia) but a truly great power on a global scale. This is determined not by someone's desire, not just by possession of nuclear weapons or by size of territory, but by the historical traditions and objective needs in the development of the Russian society and state. Either Russia will be a strong, independent, and unified power, uniting all peoples, republics, krais, and oblasts in the Eurasian territory, which is in the interests of all humanity, or it will fall apart, generating numerous conflicts, and then the entire international community will be unable to manage the situation on a continent with such an abundance of weapons of mass destruction. In the opinion of the president of the AVN (i.e., Gareyev himself—author), there is no other alternative.<sup>108</sup>

Gareyev's perspective, widely shared across the entire Russian military-political elite, also logically entails the



precept, enshrined in official policy documents, that Russia must expand territorially and politically as a central pole of the multipolar world if it is to survive at home.<sup>109</sup> The national security concept went so far as to insist upon Russia's need for foreign bases in CIS countries.<sup>110</sup> Prominent statesmen like Yevgeny Primakov and Andrei Kokoshin also share a revisionist agenda concerning the territorial settlement of 1989. And they are hardly alone in their thinking.<sup>111</sup> The distinguished Finnish diplomat and historian, Max Jakobson, observes that virtually everyone he meets in Russia expects the reintegration of the CIS into Russia.

The public flaunting of such delusions, revisionism, and anger at the post-1989 European status quo has long saturated the Russian media. But it only intensifies Russia's inability to devise realistic national security policies or threat assessments while fueling neighboring states' constant fear and negative perceptions of Russia. *Derzhavnost's* prevalence also reflects the failure to consummate democratic reforms. It profoundly distorts the perceptual lenses through which Russian elites see themselves and other states, as well as broader trends in world politics, creating a self-centeredness that cannot, or refuses to, understand why a politically blighted state with a devastated economy does not count as much as the United States does.

Nevertheless, it is clear that adherents of these views remain blind to the way in which provocative Russian actions have brought about Russia's worst nightmares. Russia wants status not responsibility and indeed cannot comprehend its own substantial responsibility for its currently unfavorable international situation.<sup>112</sup> Naturally, so archaic an outlook will cause an over-ambitious policy and expansive threat assessment.

For example, even though economic conditions rule out the need for power projection forces, the new Security Concept openly states that,

The interests of ensuring Russia's national security predetermine the need, under appropriate circumstances, for Russia to have a military presence in certain strategically important regions of the world. The stationing of limited military contingents [the same term used to describe forces in Afghanistan—author] (military bases, naval units) there on a treaty basis must ensure Russia's readiness to fulfill its obligations and to assist in forming a stable military-strategic balance of forces in regions, and must enable the Russian Federation to react to a crisis situation in its initial stage and achieve its foreign policy goals.<sup>113</sup>

This is an open call for stationing forces in CIS countries for Russia's benefit and thereby restoring the former military unity of the Soviet Union. Such stationing would resemble a permanent military occupation, albeit under an organizational scheme often described as being the son of the Warsaw Pact, hardly a coalition of equal allies. Apart from all the other unanswered questions in that paragraph, the fact that Moscow could take for granted the necessity to publicly state its need for a higher degree of security than its supposed allies enjoy epitomizes the strategic insensitivity that still characterizes too much Russian policy.

Thus NATO's enlargement in both scope and mission threatens some of Russia's most basic foundational myths. It undercuts the reformers of 1991 and their acolytes' cherished belief that the Russian people and Boris Yeltsin, and not NATO's steadfast resistance to Soviet power, destroyed the Soviet Union. Second, enlargement equates the Soviet system with Russian imperialism. It strikes at the very tenacious Russian myth that Russia suffered more than anyone else, or at least as much as other peoples, from the Soviet system. This Russian version of Dostoyevsky's "egotism of suffering," or what Freud called the "narcissism of small differences," is very deeply ingrained now among many members of the elite alongside older notions of state and empire being equivalent concepts. Thus an enormous propaganda effort making Russia the victim in the Chechen campaign is now underway. Competitive victimization, almost by definition, cannot serve as a realistic basis for

assessing either threats or opportunities in the international arena. By conflating Soviet power with Russian imperialism, NATO and partisans of enlargement also reveal their skepticism as to the extent of democratic rule in Russia.

NATO enlargement, seen from Moscow, is hostile even to what Russians believe are voluntary, foreordained integrationist tendencies in the CIS that would preserve what Russians perceive as the positive ties of the old empires. It allegedly denigrates the extent to which Russia has refrained from inciting its co-nationals in the CIS and Baltic states and following Serbia's example under Slobodan Milosevic.<sup>114</sup> The fact that Russia has flouted basic democratic agreements with Europe on the use of the military at home and civilian democratic control of these forces, has tried to restrict the OSCE from the CIS at every opportunity, and wages "economic wars" and makes other threats against its neighbors, all actions which show it still does not behave as European states think a state should act, continues to elude Russian thinkers as does the fact that they cannot play a role equal to that of the United States. As the Finnish Institute of International Affairs' Russia 2010 report recently stated,

In the realm of foreign and security policy, Russia is not committed to the principles of democratic peace and common values. Its chosen line of multipolarity implies that Russia is entitled to its own sphere of influence and the unilateral use of military force within it. Russia refuses to countenance any unipolar hegemonic aspirations, in particular it will not accept security arrangements in which the United States seems to have a leading role. As a solution, Russia proposes a Europe without dividing boundaries which will, however, require a buffer zone of militarily non-aligned countries between Russia and NATO. Russia's idea of Europe's new security architecture is therefore based on an equal partnership of great powers and supportive geopolitical solutions—not on common values accepted by all, nor on the right of every small state to define their own security policy. The above summary of recent Russian developments is, in every

aspect, practically in opposition to Finland's and the EU's fairly optimistic goals. (emphasis by author)<sup>115</sup>

## Implications for the U.S. Army.

These threat assessments present the U.S. armed forces and particularly the Army with difficult problems. First, while undoubtedly Russian military elites crave discussions with us, they inhabit a different conceptual universe than we do and will not readily learn from others or change their mind as their cognitive predispositions happen to serve their sectoral interests quite nicely. This does not preclude bilateral programs between U.S. and Russian armed forces, but it does render the chances of successful dialogue quite low. For this reason we can expect a relatively frozen debate or only a minimally warming one between Russia and NATO on all issues affecting the European security agenda.

A second problem that goes beyond the difficulties in formal dialogue is that there will remain a high level of military-political elite suspicion of American policies that is deliberately cultivated and diffused throughout the Russian media and political-military systems. This mistrust and suspicion will place immense difficulties ahead of any agreement on security issues.

Third, our bilateral military programs in Russia, especially those that seek to alter the nature of the relationship between state and armed forces, will come under attack. This Russian elite appears uninterested in democratization; quite the opposite. The area of civil-military relations is likely to be a particular neuralgic point for them.

Fourth, we can expect that the Russian army, and there is evidence in support of this trend from 1999, will show a much warmer attitude towards China. Threat perceptions of a resurgent China have diminished even as Chinese-Russian positions on major issues of international security have come together. Military exchanges have picked up considerably since late 1998 and there are visible signs of

enhanced military as well as political cooperation against the United States on issues like national missile defense (NMD) and theater missile defense (TMD).<sup>116</sup> Therefore we can anticipate, if all things remain equal, greater Sino-Russian military cooperation and Russian weapons and technology transfers to China that are openly targeted deliveries against U.S. policies and interests. Taken together, all these likely trends in the bilateral military relationship will probably reduce, if not nullify, the effectiveness of the bilateral military dialogue to a considerable degree outside of shared concerns in Bosnia and Kosovo. Even in those cases, the dialogue may come to nothing or be frozen for political reasons originating in Moscow or in the larger U.S.-Russian relationship.

## Conclusions.

The strategy of limited nuclear war and first-strike use of nuclear weapons, as a backup to a deterrence policy and the singling out of the United States and NATO are the most prominently reported negative aspects of these documents. But the deeper trends that undergird those strategies and policies are equally, if not more disturbing. The draft doctrine, security concept, and Russian military policy as shown in Pristina, Chechnya, highlight forces and factors that are much more troubling and structurally threatening than the temporary absence of usable conventional forces.

First of all, these documents and policies reinforce the bitter truth that there has been no military reform and little or no democratization of the entire edifice of defense policy including its cognitive structures. A government that could start internal wars three times in 6 years and do so, as in the most recent case, mainly to win elections and give the General Staff a larger share of control over defense policy is a permanent threat to its own people, even more than to its neighbors and interlocutors.<sup>117</sup>

The absence of democratization and reform is evident in the following aspects of the documents analyzed above.

They conflate political and military threats. While doing this, they support use of the army for purposes of domestic repression. They postpone true military reform and professionalization to some unknown date while maintaining, if not increasing, the already high economic burden of militarization. They continue to conceal that burden's dimensions from elected officials, while insisting that the army must be ready for deterrence and defense on all azimuths and against all-encompassing threats across the entire spectrum of conflict.<sup>118</sup>

These documents also demonstrate the ascendancy of the trend that sees threats everywhere and postulates military approaches over all other aspects of national security policy. It offers primarily military solutions to political challenges. These documents also demonstrate a military-political elite that cannot deal with the realities of Russia's shrunken estate, and who therefore constantly act in ways that unsettle their neighbors and interlocutors. The self-centered mystique of *Derzhavnost'* and the deeply entrenched Leninist axiom that international security is a question of who does what to whom (*kto-kogo*) rather than a mutual opportunity for gain for all players remain among the greatest impediments to Russia's internal and external security and to its ultimate democratization and prosperity.

The greater danger here is not necessarily that a nuclear provocation will occur, it is rather that the military institutions and government have yet to devise a strategy and policy based on reality. Instead they continue to chase after fantasies of recovering a lost status and of being a military-political global superpower. The deeply embedded notions of international security as a zero-sum game, of the militarization of politics, and the pervasiveness of threats from all sides, are axioms that are deployed, first of all, for domestic advantage and to obstruct reform. When juxtaposed to the absence of coherent controls and institutions to formulate and direct defense policy, these axioms are an invitation to disaster.

These documents and the security consensus that lies behind them represent only the latest manifestation of Russia's continuing failure to become a true democracy at peace with itself and the world. As long as this unrealism and pre-modern structure of politics govern the discourse and practice of Russian security policy, continuous internal unrest is the best scenario we can predict for Russia. But experience shows that this unrest does not remain bottled up in Russia. The war in Chechnya is now accompanied by threats against Tbilisi and Baku as well as attempts at military-political union in the CIS.

Thus Russia's refusal or inability to adapt to reality presages a continuing struggle in the CIS and other unsettled areas like the Balkans. Every preceding time when state power in Russia fragmented, the whole region within which it acted was engulfed in instability, if not conflict, and foreign armies were either tempted to invade or dragged into the quagmire. Thus these documents are ultimately a confession of political, economic, social and moral bankruptcy and an admission of despair. If Russia perceives everything around it as a threat whose origins lay beyond its borders, then the temptation to avert domestic reform will continue to strengthen and breed still more internal unrest and instability. Nor will any outside attempts to help be appreciated or accepted. Absent a reliable defense policy and defense forces and following an elite that seems determined on racing to the brink of a precipice, Russia's elites remain fixated on military threats that exist mainly in their fantasies. Thus they show themselves utterly unable to come to grips with the new but very real threats to Russia's security and stability.<sup>119</sup> If this situation continues, then the Russian people, if not their neighbors and partners, will be thrown over the edge as Russia falls into an economic, ecological, demographic, and possibly even nuclear abyss.

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*Reflections on Russia's Past, Present, and Future*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, 1998, p. 31, is an excellent example of this pervasive mentality. At the time he was Deputy Defense Minister and soon after became Secretary of the Defense Council. Vassily Krivokhiza, *Russia's National Security Policy: Conceptions and Realities*, Richard Weitz, trans., John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA: Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, 1998, p. 32; Alla Iaz'kova, "The Emergence of Post-Cold War Russian Foreign Policy Priorities," in Robert Craig Nation and Stefano Bianchini, eds., *The Yugoslav Conflict and its Implications for International Relations* Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1998, p. 112.

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In the years to come Russia will stay a suspended, yet constant security threat on the edge of Europe; a nuclear power and still a major military force with unclear intentions, complicated domestic policies, with multiple interest groups influencing foreign and security policy, producing scores of refugees and migrants, raising security concerns of the CIS states and Eastern Europe, and finally unable to cooperate with the West on security issues.

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