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RUSSIA'S ARMED FORCES
ON THE BRINK OF REFORM

Stephen J. Blank

March 16, 1998

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FOREWORD

Despite over a dozen years of talk, the Soviet and now Russian military has not undergone a true military reform. What did happen was a form of degeneration and disintegration, but not a methodically planned and directed transformation and/or adaptation to new conditions. Consequently, defense policy, in all of its ramifications, has remained essentially unreformed and remains an impediment to Russia's accommodation to today's strategic realities.

This study presents an assessment of Russian defense policy as Russia has begun, in late 1997 and 1998, to grapple with the enormous challenges that inhere in the process of military reform. The outcome of what can only be a protracted process will have profound implications, not only for Russia, but for its neighbors and partners, chief among them being the United States. Given the coincidence of this reform process with what many believe to be a revolution in military affairs and the continuing urgency of reducing nuclear threats, the ongoing observation of Russian military policies remains very important for the United States.

The Strategic Studies Institute offers this report on Russian military reform to contribute further to the analysis of the critical issues at stake in the process.

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SUMMARY

The Russian armed forces, by all accounts, are fast approaching a point of no return. The crisis in the armed forces is directly traceable to the policies of the Yeltsin government which have alternated among politicization, fragmentation of those forces into multiple, contending militaries, and the creation of a quasi-authoritarian political process where military policy is decided by irregular institutions that account to and answer to nobody other than President Yeltsin. Similar problems plague the defense economy which is probably still too large and at the same time misdirected, while being unable to support the forces presently under arms. In any case, nobody knows how many men are under arms or the cost of maintaining them, or where defense allocations go.

Not surprisingly, military policy and the so-called current military reform more resemble bureaucratic exercises in turf-grabbing or the court politics of the Tsars than they do real reform. While efforts are underway to downsize the armed forces, spend less on them, and revamp the force structure, these moves seem driven by concerns other than strategic rationality. Moreover, they threaten to bring about a further devolution of central power to the regions and heightened possibilities for state fragmentation.

At the same time, Russian writing on both nuclear and information war (IW) continues to manifest the same kinds of inability to think rationally and coherently about strategy and could lead the government to adopt military policies that will lead to disaster and which are misapplied to the real threats that Russia faces. Russian nuclear policy and much, but not all, thinking about information warfare could either lead to a military catastrophe or, in the case of IW, to an internal civil war. In either case, the only answer to the crisis of the armed forces and of the state is more, not less, democracy, and a truly stable defense establishment

tailored to the real economic needs and capacities of the country. Unhappily, neither of these possibilities seems likely to be realized anytime soon.

RUSSIA'S ARMED FORCES ON THE BRINK OF REFORM

In September 1996, Sergei Rogov, director of Russia's Institute of the USA and Canada (ISKAN), told a conference on U.S.- Russian relations that while he spoke for himself and was not responsible for anybody else, "my government is also responsible for nothing." Nowhere is this more true than in defense policy.

Russian defense policy is a study in failure. Russia has failed to develop a coherent governmental structure to make and implement effective or sensible defense policy. It has not built effective, civilian, democratic control of its multiple militaries and the burgeoning number of paramilitary and privately controlled armed forces. It has neither developed nor upheld a concept of Russian national interests or a strategy for defending them commensurate with Russia's real potential and forces. It has neither created forces that can counter threats to Russia's national interests, nor defined either the threats or those interests.

Instead, Boris Yeltsin has created a system of multiple militaries, a military pluralism, to secure his power as a virtual autocrat above an increasingly visible financial-bureaucratic oligarchy. This system displays a growing privatization of the state and of the means of public violence that resembles trends in failing African or Third World states.¹ This privatization of the state appears in the efforts of private, sectoral, or institutional players who use the multiple armed forces and accessories of public power for private, as opposed to national, interests for which they have scant regard. Many elites view public office as merely an opportunity to advance private interests that are commingled with their public position and responsibilities. And this privatization of the state, as a phenomenon, can be analyzed separately from the concurrent and overlapping criminalization of the state and society. Criminalization

alone could, if unchecked, cause the state to disintegrate.² Thus both it and privatization threaten the continuing existence of the state.

The media exemplifies this fusion of public and private interests and relates to the structure of armed power as well. The media is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few well-connected bankers and financiers, some of whom also enjoy high office. This concentration of power even includes the State Television Network (ORT), leading newspapers, and numerous uncounted private militaries. Thus, an unholy conglomeration of rival clans of linked media, business, Mafia, military, or paramilitary interests is developing. This privatization of the means of public violence and of public power demonstrates the failure of Russian state-building, for the monopoly of legitimate public violence is the hallmark of the state. The absence of that monopoly signifies an extreme crisis. And the linkages among all sectors of this fragmented elite show that the crisis transcends civil-military relations. Therefore Russia displays processes that have caused other states to disintegrate: privatization of public violence, failures in state-building and elite fragmentation. Further compounding these failures is the fact that in outlying areas such as the North Caucasus, and even in the Far East, local armed forces are assembling under the auspices of regional or republican governments because Moscow cannot or will not protect those areas or because of the local governor's revolt against Moscow as in Primorskii Krai (the Maritime Province).³

Yeltsin and his retinue are now reaping their bitter harvest. Yeltsin's autocratic attempt to impose an unsound military reform upon the armed forces and evade any parliamentary accountability and scrutiny of his attempts to politicize the multiple militaries has led the popular general and Duma member, Lev Rokhlin, to organize an opposition movement of serving military personnel, Yeltsin's political foes, and citizens whose avowed goal is to oust Yeltsin and his government, allegedly by constitutional

means. Rokhlin's movement has united the anti-reform opposition, organized chapters across Russia, and called on soldiers and officers to disobey Yeltsin. While the specter of a Duma member who is a general organizing such a movement with the Communists and quasi-Fascists is alarming, Rokhlin's withering critique of Yeltsin's non-accountability to the Duma is democratically right on target.⁴ Although such opposition would be illegitimate in a law-governed state, Yeltsin's Russia is not such a state. And it is largely Yeltsin's fault that the military and state have reached this impasse. As Russia's best known defense correspondent, Pavel Felgengauer, writes, "Today the Defense Ministry is a pyramid of purely military staffs and administrations whose inner workings are hidden from the public and beyond the control of the political leadership."⁵

Thus Rokhlin's movement not only underscores the utter lack of executive accountability to law and parliamentary scrutiny, it also highlights Yeltsin's failures in civil-military relations. Rokhlin's movement is only the latest and perhaps most dangerous instance of many cases where Yeltsin's effort to politicize, fragment, and marginalize the armed forces has bred repeated instances of insubordination. More broadly, given the pervasive elite fragmentation, lawlessness, and "deinstitutionalization" of Russian governance, Rokhlin's movement also highlights the continuing fragility of democratic institutions and absence of a consensus on vital foundational issues of Russian politics.

Under these conditions, the military's utility as a defender of Russia's interests is greatly, if not completely compromised. The regular army can neither defend Russia's integrity nor help integrate the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia's main foreign policy goal. Russia remains bogged down in many protracted "peacemaking" operations, most of which are far from political resolution. In none of these conflicts are Russian forces impartial peacemakers or peacekeepers. Rather they actively support one or another political side in these

contests, guaranteeing their presence for a long time to come. Yet, increasingly this burden is insupportable politically, strategically, and economically. Nor is military reform possible with so many forces engaged in operations. These incomplete operations and the Chechen war have forced a Russian military retreat from Central Asia and the Caucasus. Consequently, it is difficult to see what concrete and lasting benefits or interests these adventures have served.⁶ Although one could argue that military intervention abroad prevented the spread of these wars to Russia, Moscow has squandered most of the time it gained and is now importing violence into the North Caucasus, rendering such an assertion moot at best.

Despite its earlier successes in dividing Georgia and Moldova, Russia is now a trapped gendarme in protracted, unwinnable ethnic wars on its frontiers. Therefore Russian objectives and capabilities remain grossly unbalanced and reflect the lack of national strategy or of sound military policy. While new imperial adventures must be ruled out along with operations in the CIS above the level of minor, brief police actions, we cannot be sure that Moscow fully understands this and/or can act accordingly. The one thing we cannot be certain of is the most important one, namely the predictability of Russian security policy.

For example, Moscow cannot devise credible responses to larger-scale conventional contingencies on or inside its frontiers. Russia's current doctrine instead threatens nuclear first-strikes in purely conventional and even low-level contingencies. Moscow also cannot confront the exigencies of either the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) or Information Warfare (IW). Indeed, there are signs that Russian writers' concept of IW could easily degenerate into a pretext for a new round of internal political strife. Or else, Russia's failure to keep up with it could lead to terrible military outcomes due to Russia's relative backwardness.

Therefore Russian politics, and particularly military politics, resemble court and bureaucratic politics, with

endless personal conspiracies, the hallmark of a semi-despotic oligarchy under a Tsar with few institutional anchors in society, and an endless search for personal and departmental advantage. Military policy, including efforts at reform, more nearly resemble classic manifestations of bureaucratic politics of turf-building and intrigues against rival officials, factions, etc. than modern democratic politics. Hence much of the reform drive merely conceals power grabs and endless turf-grabbing to satisfy personal or departmental interests. National interests, of which few if any elites have any concept, count for little or nothing. Accordingly, in too many respects Yeltsin's system and policies uncannily resemble those of the later Tsars as Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov recently admitted.⁷ Since the military crisis is merely part of the state's general crisis, the nature of elite linkages among military, paramilitary, political, business, and media chains means that a settling of scores, i.e., purges (even murder) and a search for internal enemies, remains a constant and conceivable temptation. These trends bespeak a protracted crisis of the state and society with no easy way out of this impasse.

Military Politics.

Former Defense Minister Igor Rodionov conceded that Russia's military instruments are useless. The chains of command are broken and split into rival factions. There is no rule of law, systematic or regularized procedure for making and implementing policy decisions, or any accountability to the Duma or the Judiciary.⁸ Yeltsin has deliberately divided governing institutions so that nobody can establish a unified policy process and direct the government. The many diverse police and security forces have overlapping functions and renewed extra-legal powers while their leaders extol the KGB's esprit de corps.⁹ And since nothing has replaced the old party Main Political Administration as a control instrument, the Federal Security Service (FSB), has filled this vacuum, penetrated

the army and openly and regularly spies on it.¹⁰ Indeed, it openly boasts about its intense and highly visible scrutiny of Rokhlin's movement.¹¹

There are an estimated 15-24 formal organizations of armed forces including the paramilitary Cossack Voiska (orders), but not counting the many private security firms or governmental guards hired out to big banks, businesses, and even to Mafia leaders.¹² Thus we cannot systematically count Russia's armed, police, or paramilitary forces, many of which have overlapping internal and external missions.¹³ These military organizations comprise an estimated 3-4 million men. But nobody knows how many men are under arms, bear arms professionally, or where defense allocations go once the Duma approves them. Any analysis of these questions by all experts must remain speculative for even the ministries cannot or will not track these numbers. Nor will the Ministry of Defense (MOD) or other ministries tell anyone how they spend their monies. Therefore nobody can guess at the extent of the true military burden Russia has carried since 1992 except to guess that it remains a crushing one. Probably the MOD itself does not know where or how the money goes. So the MOD remains wholly unaccountable to legislative or even executive scrutiny, a fact that has enraged the opposition and perhaps Yeltsin, too.¹⁴ Indeed, opacity remains the military economy's distinguishing characteristic.¹⁵

Each military institution has its own administration and chain of command which intersect only at Yeltsin or his personal chancellery which are unaccountable to the Duma and any legal/judicial standard. These military organizations exist, not on the basis of a regular state budget, but essentially from Yeltsin's or the cabinet's largess, or off-budget expenditures. Hence, the defense and state budgetary process are wholly politicized beyond any legal accountability and there is neither public debate nor a public record of defense spending.¹⁶ While the militaries' true spending and budget remain hidden from public or legislative scrutiny, they still arguably get too much money

and resources (which are stolen or misdirected) rather than not enough despite the real and painful budget cuts of 1994-96. Thus Russia produces five different fighter planes. One could also contend that Moscow simply does not know what it is doing in devising and implementing the military budget. Sadly, these explanations are not mutually exclusive.¹⁷

While the economy remains excessively militarized, forces are rewarded to the degree that their political reliability is essential or questionable. The Ministry of Interior (MVD), upon whose performance the regime's internal security depends, is pampered. While the army starves, the MVD and the Presidential Guard (GUO) are lavishly rewarded. Indeed the MVD's functions now overlap with those of the police, intelligence, and investigative services. The MVD operates a force of 20 divisions and 29 brigades (some 250,000 men) under regulations which remain pretty much what they were under Alexander I, 1801-1825.¹⁸

Rodionov's predecessor, General Pavel Grachev, deliberately politicized the Ministry of Defense at Yeltsin's order, subjecting Russian regular forces to Yeltsin's demand for active participation in partisan politics.¹⁹ Accordingly, we should not fear a Pinochet, Rokhlin, or other forms of Bonapartism, but rather political leaders' efforts to use the various armed forces for partisan advantage. All contenders for political power now fight to control the multiple militaries and key state agencies. For example, because the regular armed forces cannot survive on their allocations, private agents who show political ambition, e.g., the Mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, support the Black Sea Fleet, or the building of a new nuclear powered submarine in Severodvinsk, signifying this privatization of public violence.²⁰

All these militaries are thoroughly corrupted and brutalized. Troops starve, freeze, beg, commit crimes or suicide while corrupt officers go free, brutalize their

subordinates, or play partisan politics. Russia cannot afford either to maintain, demobilize and/or professionalize the army. Nor can it raise the taxes or funds from privatizing industries to support or pay the armed forces.²¹ Soldiers live like serfs in an anomic and demoralizing limbo of crime, embitterment, corruption, hazing, abuse, violence, and politicization that could explode at any time and already adds to the crime rate.²²

The militaries participate in partisan politics and foreign policy, attack state policy, and form coalitions with disaffected regional leaders with impunity. Even before Rokhlin's election to the Duma in 1995, serving officers in the Duma publicly criticized the government on major issues of foreign and defense policy. And they were subsequently promoted!²³

Yeltsin has responded to the military crisis by forming new extra-legal and extra-constitutional commissions to usurp existing state functions of the Ministry of Defense. This is an ancient Tsarist and Soviet method of building autocratic and even dictatorial states, even if ostensibly this authoritarianism is to provide for a democratic society. These commissions were led by Deputy Premier Anatoly Chubais and former Defense Council Secretary Yuri Baturin, and were supposed to oversee the Ministry of Defense and bypass the Ministry's power in preparing military reform. Yeltsin has since created new commissions and reinvigorated the defense inspectorate to once again divide and rule over the entire defense policy process. Since 1996 such actions have been linked to Yeltsin's and Chubais' efforts to create a strong state freed from any social restraints. Some have welcomed this program as a new authoritarianism.²⁴

Yeltsin and Chubais have also tried to find funds for paying the military's social arrears (salaries, benefits, pensions) either from privatization programs or from arms sales. Since those revenues were originally earmarked for the state's and defense industry's economic recovery, the

fact that officials now talk of dumping weapons abroad to pay for those costs and the corruption of the privatization process means that Russia, despite talk to the contrary, still has neither a growth strategy nor a strategy for restoring defense industry. Nor can arms sales actually restore either the armed forces or the defense industry. The newest arms deal with Indonesia of \$1 billion for SU-30 fighters and MI-17 helicopters will be compensated only in countertrade. Nobody will really see the proceeds of that sale.

Future sales will probably go the same way or at knockdown prices because the world arms market is a buyers market and buyers can demand technology and production transfer as part of the deal, undermining Russia's lingering comparative advantages. Hence there already is not enough money to pay for professionalization and obtain a quality army rather than the disintegrating forces we now see. Nor can Russia maintain the army at even 80 percent of its assigned level plus the other military forces without large numbers of monthly conscripts.²⁵ This realization has begun to sink in on the new Defense Minister, General Igor Sergeev, the former commander in chief of Russian nuclear forces, especially as he contemplates the 1998 draft budget which further slashes investment and cannot meet the military's minimum needs. A new round of budgetary sequestration and the strangling of civil and military investment, not to mention arrears, is all too likely. And such practices hinder rather than reinforce progress toward democracy.

Worse yet, the new crisis originating in the 1997 crash of Asian economies means that there will be no economic growth in 1998, insufficient means to pay the already ballooning arrears to soldiers and workers, and no or few Asian markets for Russian arms manufacturers. Thus one of the by-products of the Asian crisis is the further evisceration of Russia's economy and defense sector.

Clearly nobody in power is either truly serious or knowledgeable about the military or economic elements of a

comprehensive, intelligent military reform. There has not been effective reform in 1997 even though one has been decreed, for it is clear, and indeed conceded, that the MOD staff and the General Staff are waiting out these decrees and leaders are already backtracking on reform. For example, a professional army by 2005 has already been ruled out for the following reasons. Sergeev has already said publicly that unless a 50 percent raise in salaries for officers (and presumably soldiers, too) occurs, nobody will want to serve and the reform will fail. Although the armed forces are now largely contract soldiers, they suffer from serious moral, psychological, mental, and physical defects that undermine quality. Thus he suggests the incentive structure must be comprehensively reformed.

Since that cannot happen under present economic conditions, soldiers and officers will essentially be thrown out on the street without their lawful benefits. Moreover, the political process and the command structure will not be changed significantly except under duress. As it is, the reform proposals discussed below by Minister of Defense General Igor Sergeev, former CINC of the Strategic Rocket Forces, and Chief of Staff General Anatoly Kvashnin reveal a very high degree of purely departmental and personal motives.

None of these reforms will benefit the rank and file who will once again be victimized financially. The regime will pay only 3.5 percent of the annual budget to the armed forces and expects to raise the money for reform by selling off state owned civilian and military industries and firms to private bidders. Those buyers invariably pay much less than these firms are worth, evade taxes, which the regime cannot collect, and thus prevent any real economic growth from occurring. The government also hopes to sell military infrastructure and surplus but those figures cannot make up the difference. And arms sales, the third alternative for fund-raising, is already compromised.

Accordingly, no rational national security strategy or consensus exists despite some common moods. Profound policy differences preclude any coherent policy and reinforce institutional fragmentation. The trends outlined above do not only resemble those of failing states, they could abet a trend towards regional warlordism as in Primorskii Krai (the Maritime Province), now nicknamed Palermo on the Pacific. Already regional and local governments increasingly must assume the burden of maintaining the armed forces, a relationship that forges ties of mutual dependence among both groups at the expense of the center.²⁶

Yeltsin's apparently consciously malign neglect of the army has helped bring this about. Clearly no modern, professional, democratic, and competent army is possible without major reform and democratization. The military reform, envisioned in the July 1997 decrees, now focuses on economics, and bizarre plans for force structure rather than on creating a democratic state or command structure which can control defense policies. Rodionov and the former Chief of Staff, General Viktor Samsonov, were dumped because they would not try to shrink the army, modernize it, and retire officers without their legal compensation and the requisite investment in modernization. This state spending would have broken the budget. Nor did they believe that the army could be professionalized anytime soon. Apparently now neither does anyone else.²⁷ Thus these two generals resisted a trend that would force much more accountability of the officer corps but probably ruin the armed forces as a reliable instrument of national defense.²⁸ They also held out, quite irrationally, for a threat assessment on a global scale as in the USSR, a program that would destroy the state, not to mention the army, if carried out.

The reformers, on the other hand, led by Baturin, Chubais, and Nemtsov, demand that the army live within an even more constrained budget and sack generals. But whereas Rodionov demanded an end to the multiple militaries, they refused to undermine the power of the

MVD, the army's strongest rival and their ultimate argument in the struggle for power. Although they do reportedly want to dismiss Kulikov, they want the MVD's power for themselves.²⁹ Nor will they democratize civil-military relations; instead they will probably further politicize them. While the MVD may be forced to undergo structural reform as Kvashnin wants, Kulikov will not likely willingly turn it over to his political enemies, Chubais and Nemtsov. Nor will Chubais' faction accept the notion that military reform is not cost-free.³⁰ Since they will not spend the needed funds and have appointed Sergeev Defense Minister, the army will continue to suffer *vis-à-vis* the MVD and the nuclear forces. Indeed, the weight of current policy suggests an overwhelming reliance on nuclear forces for a host of military-political contingencies that these forces cannot effectively confront.

The state of the regular and military economies dictates such a solution. Defense conversion has failed spectacularly. But though outlays have fallen, the economy remains excessively militarized. Defense spending and procurement appears oriented towards nuclear war scenarios and more R&D to exploit the RMA: e.g., new, mobile based ICBM's, SLBM's, investments in strategic ASW, R&D in conventional and strategic C³I systems, and new fighter planes.³¹ But since internal procurement will be impossible until 2005 because of budgetary stringency, defense industry is now being unleashed to export even state-of-the-art systems globally, evidently without state controls.³² Russia's putative rivals or their own regional rivals (China, India, South Korea, Indonesia, Iran) can obtain high-class weapons and systems relatively cheaply since the arms business is now a buyer's market. They can also compel Moscow and other suppliers to offer them offsets to build their own weapons and further reduce sellers' leverage over them.³³ Although many of these states are Russia's potential enemies, the government sees no conventional or nuclear threat at the higher end of the spectrum of warfare for another 8-10 years.³⁴

Strategy and Operations.

In this context, past policy's adventurism and strategic dead ends are hardly surprising. Chechnya exemplifies the former, an adventure that made Moscow the strategic center of gravity, lost Chechnya to its control, and has undermined key foreign policy objectives in Ukraine, Transcaucasia, and elsewhere. The North Caucasus is now more turbulent than before the Chechen war, which revealed that Moscow cannot exercise effective control over regional governments or maintain a competent army.

Russia's protracted peacemaking operations add to this depressing picture. While they arguably prevented bad situations from worsening and becoming bigger threats to Russia, beyond emplacing troops, Moscow does not know how to establish durable peace settlements that safeguard its interests while easing its military burdens. In Tajikistan it has had to retreat and support power-sharing with the rebels. In Abkhazia Russia is caught between Georgian threats to repeal the invitation to Russian forces and its demands for resettlement of Georgian refugees, a process that would fatally undermine Abkhaz aspirations to independence. Russia, as regional gendarme, could be blamed and caught between unreconciled ethnic forces who could easily resume hostilities among themselves. Since Georgia is vital to Russia's interest in a Transcaucasian hegemony, but the forces available to Moscow cannot maintain order, the whole region could either elude Russian control or break out into open warfare. Therefore Yeltsin had to broker a peace process that the other parties had started, due to their understanding of Russia's imperial tendencies, or face threats of renewed war.³⁵

In Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia broke the Tashkent collective security treaty with all CIS members including Azerbaijan, covertly ran over a billion dollars of arms to Armenia, coerced Armenia into granting it bases, and repeatedly threatened Azerbaijan. Yet no settlement is in sight, and Western influence is growing in Georgia and

Azerbaijan. Though Armenia may resume hostilities, it will probably be denied any true victory as long as Western oil interests now play a major regional role. Here too, Moscow's failed economic reconstruction limits Russia only to a regional policy of military interventionism that cannot effectively sustain its political or economic objectives. Hence the outcome is a protracted, prolonged, and volatile conflict situation. Moscow may instigate acts of obstruction and benefit from the ensuing Western frustration, but it will not achieve tangible material gains or lasting security thereby.

In Central Asia and around Chechnya, not only is the army in retreat, Moscow, the Border Troops led by General Andrei Nikolaev, and Kulikov also seem constantly tempted to use local Cossack paramilitaries with an atavistic imperialist outlook for patrolling the border and to threaten Kazakstan and Chechnya.³⁶ The use of such forces and of the Ussuri Cossacks by Governor Yevgeny Nazdratenko to defy Moscow's orders in the Far East underscores the general loss of control over paramilitary forces. Furthermore these and other uncontrolled forces could easily be incited to start something that Moscow would have to join, but could not finish.³⁷

Finally, Kulikov has successfully campaigned for using the army domestically, along with the MVD, against insurgencies and all kinds of undefined threats to political stability.³⁸ Surveys tell us that army officers are very dubious, if not angry, about such missions, and conceivably might refuse to quell them. This would risk internal stability.³⁹ But these missions are written into Russian doctrine and reflect Yeltsin's determination to politicize the army for domestic purposes. Hence lack of control and of effectively disciplined forces could trigger another war endangering Russia's own stability and integrity.

Nuclear Issues.

Absent usable conventional forces, Russia has few options other than the nuclear one. Moscow now advertises

its readiness to launch even preemptive first-strikes against adversaries who are allied to nuclear powers, against conventional strikes on power plants, C³I targets, or nuclear installations.⁴⁰ More recently, Baturin's January 1997 reform plan, which could become a basis for the new doctrinal guidance given Sergeev's mandate and predilections for emphasizing the nuclear forces, demonstrates that even in expanding ethnopolitical conflicts nuclear options remain distinctly possible. 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 serves to regain escalation dominance and force a return to the status quo.⁴¹

For 40 years Soviet and Russian writers stridently insisted that limited nuclear war was impossible. We now know that this was because Moscow had relatively tenuous controls over its second strike capabilities and was uncertain that they would survive a first-strike intact.⁴² Russia's first-strike was its only strike and entailed launching thousands of warheads. If anything, controls have eroded, and most existing nuclear weapons are diminishing assets that must be replaced by 2003-2007.⁴³ Lastly, Russia retains a launch on warning system, meaning that it will launch nuclear weapons, not on actual attack, but if it perceives one to be in progress, rightly or wrongly. Since its military experts expect a surprise attack, and its early warning and air defense have significantly degraded since 1991, the possibilities for erroneous launch are high.

These facts have two implications, not counting the danger of rogue actions. First, there is growing danger of accidental or unintended launches due to failure to distinguish real from false enemy launches. Second, Moscow could escalate a conventional war way out of control in the crazy belief that nuclear strikes can somehow limit warfare and give it escalation control, despite 40 years of contrary argument, assertion, and policy. For example,

there might be those tempted to reply to what they believe is an information attack by such means. Since an information attack or the perception of it is one of the easiest things in the world to misread, a nuclear first strike, a move out of all proportion, is hardly inconceivable. In January 1995, for instance, Russia almost launched a nuclear strike at a Norwegian weather rocket.

Here again strategic means and strategic interests remain disconnected, another outcome of the failure to create adequate political mechanisms for the making of strategy, defense policy, and overarching definitions of national interests. Moscow faces the choice of going nuclear and risking mutual suicide for purely smaller, conventional conflicts, or of losing those conflicts for lack of usable general forces. This reliance on nuclear weapons can only weaken confidence in Russian policy and power's ability to achieve Russia's self-proclaimed interests or to maintain regional or global peace.

The So-Called Military Reform.

Military reform is clearly necessary, but while the issue has been on the agenda since Brezhnev, we still await effective reform. Sergeev actually has said that his plans include ideas going back as far as Brezhnev's last Chief of Staff, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov!⁴⁴ In July 1997, Yeltsin issued several decrees intended as the first signs of military reform. If implemented, they could have lasting and major significance for Russia and its multiple armed forces. However, these decrees also reflect the political struggles around the armed forces where each of the key players has different goals for them, a sure sign of impending failure.

Furthermore, the national security concept and reform plan were supposed to be out originally by June 25, 1997. The latest story is that they will appear in early 1998. Obviously there is a serious struggle occurring here and Yeltsin has already made side deals with forces that breach the principles of true reform, thereby casting doubt on the

whole process. Furthermore the ongoing reform process may turn out to be at variance with the eventual doctrinal product which is supposed to function as guidance for threat assessment and force building. Indeed, though everyone concedes that local wars and internal threats are the most vital ones facing Russia, allocations go to SSBNs, Strategic ASW, fighter planes and ICBMs, as well as strategic nuclear C² exercises while the army cannot train above regimental levels if that. Clearly this disparity reflects a deeper malaise.

Therefore to understand the decrees' and the reform process' significance we must first grasp the goals the authors of these decrees have in mind. Sergeev sees seven elements to the reform plan.

- First, the blueprint embodied in the national security concept examines threats to Russian security and concludes no direct military threats up to the level of "wide-scale war" exist until 2005. Until then the nuclear forces—Sergeev's former command—guarantee security and stability.
- Second, on the basis of an economic-demographic survey, based on the assumption that growth will begin at a rate of about 2 percent in 1998, decisions about manning the army and investing in defense industry are now being taken. We may note that this planning basis is already invalid—due to the stock market and financial crisis stemming from Russia's vulnerability to the Asian-generated financial crisis that began in late 1997—as are the results that flow from it, another sure sign of failure to achieve the reforms' goals.
- Third, an assessment of the armed forces' required combat potential, based on Yeltsin's 3.5 percent of GNP decree, is now underway.

- Fourth, Sergeev also hopes to give more precise definition of the other forces' missions in order to optimize them. He wants to eliminate duplicate structures, unify combat training, the rear services, and other organizations, while not encroaching on their legitimate functions.
- Fifth, one of the real obstacles is that defense industry cannot provide orders in full for the existing 2000 defense enterprises. Therefore a new conversion program is needed. Russia now sells weapons abroad for less than it costs to buy them at home! Given the lamentable history of the previous conversion program, this is a confession of despair.
- The sixth element of the program is to reconsider the needs of the mobilization program. The Soviet economy stored vast resources for perpetual mobilization, a major factor in the ultimate collapse of the Soviet war machine. Yeltsin has freed the factories from the need to maintain these stocks or at least has so decreed, but it is unclear what capacities and resources are needed for mobilization or what that would entail.
- Finally, the reform plan must match the optimum feasible levels of economic development and the military threat that the government might perceive.

In addition, the reform plan Sergeev envisages has several key aspects or objectives to it.

- The military should end up at about 1.2 million men, down from 1.7 million (it is not clear whether these figures mean billets or authorized numbers of troops) and the ground forces are to be cut in half, from 420,000 to 200,000.
- These new forces are to make the transition to an all-volunteer force of men who join for professional

reasons, but later than Yeltsin's target of the year 2000.

- Military districts will be replaced with operational or territorial joint commands where the commanders will have authority over all services deployed in their boundaries, possibly including the other armed forces as well.
- Available forces will be concentrated on forming several full-strength, combat ready divisions to be dispersed among the four operational-strategic directions [*Napravleniya*] (the new title for these territorial commands).
- The air and air defense forces will be amalgamated and the strategic missile, space and space defense forces will be amalgamated into a single service, too.
- The four naval fleets and Caspian Flotilla will be preserved in their reduced state but obtain limited missions, probably providing combat stability for SSBNs, strategic ASW missions, and coastal defense.
- A strong strategic nuclear force will remain as the main deterrent to all sorts of external aggression and threats.
- The government will undertake major reductions in the military bureaucracy in Moscow, cut generals' positions and military academies.
- By the year 2005 Sergeev hopes to increase the amount spent on procurement and R&D to 40 percent of the defense budget from its current 12 percent.
- Sergeev aims to triple the amount spent on procurement by 2001 and by 4.5 times by 2005 allowing for replacement of 5 percent of weapons

annually until 2025 so that the forces will be wholly reequipped with modern weaponry and technology.

- Increase per capita funding for training by a factor of 12 starting in 1998.
- Double officers' salaries by 2001 and by 2.5 times by 2005.⁴⁵

Conscripts will presumably join the armed forces, MVD, or Border Troops, but not the other paramilitary organizations. The Border Troops will become regional directorates, give up their heavier arms, disband large units, and perhaps undergo a substantial civilianization. Troops of the Emergency Situations Military may become a State Rescue Service, relying more on MOD forces in special engineering and WMD defense. And the Internal Troops are supposed to undergo further reductions to a level of 220,000 from the present estimated 257,000.⁴⁶ As we have seen, these goals are already in deep trouble.

Kvashnin, however, has rather broader personal goals. He wants to establish six territorial formations or districts (Moscow, North Caucasus, Leningrad, Siberia, Far East and Urals) for all the power ministries and their forces on a unified basis. Military districts should be standard size with no overlap or opportunities for the MVD or other forces to have multiple districts that do not correspond with the army's districts. He believes this should allow for a more orderly and coherent devolution of policy allowing the regions to come into their own and seems to look rather favorably on regionalism. However, in all these districts, the regional collegial body overseeing and coordinating all these forces should be the General Staff which he leads. Under presidential authority the General Staff will see to it that all these forces do not overstep their functions and missions and will seek to unify their infrastructure. As a sign of this program, Kvashnin offered a draft reform program that would consolidate all the other militaries under his control. This draft, submitted as part of the MOD's reform concept,

contains guidelines on how to reform the other services, the creation of unified inter-departmental control, planning, and logistics departments inside the MOD. The other armed forces will have permanent representatives in the General Staff of the Defense Ministry so that the General Staff can exercise unhampered daily operational control in wartime and peacetime over these forces.⁴⁷ Thus it will assume a new and unprecedented responsibility that it has never had in modern Russian/Soviet history.

But against his efforts even to unify the Border Troops and Internal Troops under the General Staff, their leaders and other power ministries have coalesced to demand that not one soldier be downsized without full payment of his legally entitled compensation, a move which would break the budget and reform. Furthermore, this draft, like earlier MOD plans, was not shown to the Defense Council which, under Andrei Kokoshin, has united with all the other service chiefs to fight this so-called reform plan, which is merely one more bureaucratic political ploy rather than a mature concept for military organization. Rather than accept what it calls an unbalanced and badly prepared document, the Defense Council is considering other alternatives, including an at least paper demilitarization of the other services and forces, renaming and converting them into paramilitary, police organizations that are unworthy of MOD scrutiny. Thus the reform struggle is now heating up further along the lines of bureaucratic politics.⁴⁸ Kulikov, too, has offered at least two different projects to coordinate all crime-fighting forces under the MVD and has pushed these proposals repeatedly.⁴⁹

Kvashnin's openly self-interested proposals illustrate the turf war aspects of the reform process. Sergeev's plans are similar. They will give his forces access to the space forces and their access to lucrative foreign contracts for satellites and the boosting of various payloads into outer space while depriving other services of such outside funding. Kulikov continues to make his own proposals for a

rather different reform. And Nikolayev of the Border Troops makes his own side deals with Yeltsin.

Accordingly, each of the reform's main authors sees in it, not only a way to overcome existing defects, but even more a way to augment their turf and power. Thus military reform is a true paradigm of the factional, bureaucratic, or more precisely court, politics around Yeltsin. Therefore, despite the supposed content of the decrees from July 1997 and the forthcoming security concept, the actual goals of the reform have little to do in reality with creating a sound military machine.

Those actual goals are:

- To continue the tradition of multiple politicized armed forces whose distinguishing criteria is their personal loyalty to Yeltsin and his current retinue. The point of this operation in political terms is also to remove the parliament, once again, from any possibility of controlling the armed forces who must remain exclusively beholden to the executive branch.
- To create a substantial and separate Praetorian Guard or force that is wholly at Yeltsin's disposal and personally subordinate to him and his retinue. They view the threat as an internal threat to the stability of his government, not to Russia's integrity, sovereignty, or other vital interests.
- To destroy, as far as possible, the MOD's central apparatus which they are (probably rightly) convinced opposes reform and will subvert any policy counter to its corporate interests. This also entails fundamental reorganization of the regular armed forces' services in order to degrade the central control of the CINCs and their direct subordinates.
- This reorganization entails the creation of new, reorganized institutions to deprive the MOD of its

powers. In effect, this means the creation of new, extra-legal agencies of control by men Yeltsin can trust. Thus Yeltsin reinvigorated the Defense Inspectorate, placed Kokoshin atop it and the Defense Council, and gave him an extensive mandate that effectively oversees the Ministry of Defense with a man and an agency responsible to him alone, not the Minister of Defense and certainly not parliament. Although Kokoshin insists that he will not administer the armed forces, his inspectorate possesses oversight over all armed formations, monitors compliance by federal executive branch agencies and federal (provincial) agencies with acts and regulations affecting the military, including treaties.⁵⁰

This also entails continuing the tradition of Yeltsin's idea of civilian control, i.e., he, as a civilian, controls the military and relies on his agents to make sure nobody is plotting a coup. In true Russian style, "mutual tattling" replaces control by laws.⁵¹ Thus the inspectorate, apart from its broad powers of supervision, monitoring, and ability to demand any and all information from the armed forces and MOD, will be under presidential control but operationally supervised by Yeltsin's Chief of Staff.⁵²

Other actual goals of the new decrees are:

- To reduce substantially the amount of money the government spends on defense while preserving and equipping forces supposedly adequate to any future challenges.
- Allegedly to terminate the mass volunteer army based on conscription and raise a wholly professional new army. This goal has already been undermined.
- As discussed later, to enrich the banking interests to whom Chubais, Nemtsov, Baturin, etc., are closely connected.

- To preserve the multiple militaries in their functions but to bring them all supposedly under more direct presidential control either through the Defense Council and the commissions chaired by Chubais, or now the General Staff, or Kokoshin's Defense Inspectorate.
- To enrich the nuclear forces by merging the space forces with them in order to gain access to Western contracts for space cargoes, shuttles, space stations, etc. which allegedly are mainly built using technologies similar to nuclear weapons.⁵³

Yeltsin's decrees followed much of Sergeev's agenda. He abolished the office of Commander in Chief of the Ground Forces, stated that the MOD's central apparatus will only be allocated or allowed to spend 1 percent of the defense budget, and amalgamated the Air Force and the Air Defense Forces. Tactical Air Forces go to the Army in the six Military Districts. Those districts will be consolidated from the current eight districts and will now be called operational-strategic directions. They will no longer answer to the MOD but to their commanders. Those commanders will be virtually autonomous in their districts regarding peacetime training, operational plans, and mobilization of resources, and supposedly will answer directly to the President, or more likely the Defense Council. Strategic nuclear weapons: ICBMs, SLBMs, space missile forces, space missile defense troops, and air based strategic systems, presumably including strategic ASW assets and surface vessels to protect both the SSBNs and the hunter-killer SSNs, will be merged into a single Strategic Nuclear Forces (S.Ya.S). The two non-nuclear fleets, the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets, will probably be restricted to coastal defense and naval operations in support of the army's flanks in their theaters. However, tactical nuclear weapons, both land-based and tactical air-based systems, will devolve to the operational control (not release authority) of the District CINCs. In 1997 the nuclear forces are to be merged, in 1998 the air and

air defense forces will also be amalgamated. Ultimately by 2001-2005 all forces will be grouped by the designation land, sea, air.⁵⁴

As regards Russia's other militaries, despite Kvashnin's postulated reform goals for them, Yeltsin has already undermined this plan by giving the Border Troops under General Andrei Nikolaev authority for an expanded structure, comprising offices in Almaty, Tbilisi, and Kyiv, and giving it a large role in Russia's foreign policy towards its three key CIS neighbors, Ukraine, Kazakstan, and Georgia. Indeed Nikolaev sought offices all over the CIS only to be rebuffed by those governments. The Border Troops are also supposed to become the major coordinator of all forces on the borders, another bureaucratic ploy.⁵⁵ This "reform plan" clearly contradicts the reform's stated goals, but not Yeltsin's political proclivities. Thus this reform must be viewed with considerable skepticism.

While the multiple militaries, MVD, FSB, Border Troops, FAPSI, etc., will remain in their current structure, forces taken presumably from them and the various special forces, including but not only Spetsnaz, will be reorganized, along with the Airborne Troops into the President's Special Reserve or Guard that is at his disposal for emergencies. Most likely these will be internal emergencies, including domestic political strife, and these troops will not come under any service or district commanders, making them a kind of Praetorian Guard for Yeltsin and the Defense Council. They will thus also be removed from any connection to the MOD and could even be used against it.⁵⁶

Yeltsin also decreed a reduction in force of 500,000 men and the move towards professionalization, but set no date for completing this task. Thousands of officers will be removed, presumably given vouchers with which to buy houses from construction companies that will be privatized and removed from the MOD's construction and trade organization. One can expect that given the fortunes that can be made by contracting to build housing for them and

their families, the big banks, along with smaller entrepreneurs, will immediately establish construction firms who will be paid in these government vouchers that they can redeem for cash. This will enrich the banks and other officials' clients.

While this may be called privatization, it should be noted that the banks will be doubly enriched due to these reforms. Not only will they be able to redeem these vouchers for cash, most likely the government will bypass the MOD in paying new soldiers and officers in the districts by depositing monies or vouchers for their upkeep in the banks which commanders and district governors or Yeltsin's plenipotentiaries can then draw on to pay them. The banks will charge for the services at each step of the way and reap a fortune from the interest floated on monies deposited in them as well as from the funds for building the houses. Moreover, since the vouchers will devalue unless turned in rapidly, the banks will soon harvest the cash while the soldiers, given the ballooning arrears, will probably wait a long time to see housing and other benefits accruing to them upon separation from the armed forces.

And to students of Russian history this operation evokes Tsarism's redemption payments that were imposed upon the serfs after their emancipation in 1861. Today the government cannot redeem military arrears and wages, or give generous and deserved pensions to people who, after all, risked their lives for Russia, so it gives them vouchers with which they pay for housing, but which are really a concealed subsidy to the banks and ultimately a return of some monies to the government which still lacks a central treasury and must rely on the banks to finance its operations. And even after the government sets up its own bank as it is supposed to do in early 1998, it is unlikely that it will be independent of either the government, the president, or leading factions in his entourage. That is, it, like existing banks, will be politicized.

Finally, nothing listed here allows for parliamentary oversight either of the armed forces or of the financial operations involved, so again the government will eliminate parliamentary scrutiny further demolishing any notion of civilian democratic control of the military. So these operations can hardly be reckoned as strengthening either democracy or the state's capability to govern. This scheme, in its efforts to shove costs of provisioning and maintaining the army onto local and regional governments, also evokes memories of Peter the Great's more desperate (because it was done in wartime) scheme of quartering the armed forces on the population while his fiscal officers remorselessly taxed everything they could think of.

The military consequences of the plan are no less ruinous. This plan terminates all hope of strategic coordination by professional military people, unless the General Staff receives that function, a most unlikely procedure since it has been made a department of the MOD. Each District Commander will be an autocrat in charge of his own men, training resources, and mobilization base. There will be no practical way to coordinate training, war plans, mobilization, or resource plans in different districts. The central government will maintain those forces through supposedly direct control and by fiscal levers. But given the absence of money to pay for the reform, Moscow will probably raise regional governments' taxes and try to force them to pay for the armed forces. This step conforms to Yeltsin's, Chubais', and Nemtsov's efforts to recentralize authority at the expense of provincial and local governments while forcing the latter to pay higher taxes.⁵⁷

Russia will also be unable to plan on a national basis for any kind of economic, military, or strategic operation. Mobilization schedules and resources will not be coordinated in any reasonable way. Neither will training or manpower needs be strategically coordinated except through the Defense Council. The role of the General Staff remains unclear. There is no way Russia could defend itself conventionally above the regional level, if then. Moreover,

this conventional forces disability will last, if these plans are implemented, at least through 2005-2007. For the next decade, Russia will have no truly usable conventional forces except possibly for local or regional police actions.

Thus we must confront the nuclear issue. Since tactical and strategic nuclear weapons will be separated with the former going to regional CINCS whose operational control from Moscow has been considerably reduced, it is unclear if a unified system of strategic planning for the use of nuclear weapons or control over them can be devised. Local commanders might obtain greater flexibility in deciding when to use them. When one factors this disturbing possibility into the equation that already consists of a weakening command and control system and a launch on warning doctrine, the results become positively alarming. Once again the military forces needed to secure Russian national interests are lacking as is any concept of either those interests or the proper way to defend them. Strategy and policy remain divorced in Russian thinking and action.⁵⁸

The regional political alternatives are no better. They are either closer dependence of commanders upon regional governments, thereby enhancing an existing trend, or the incitement of a venomous competition between them for scarce resources coming from Moscow. Neither alternative is without serious risks to the sociopolitical stability of the state, especially as regional commanders will garner much more autonomy now. Thus there is a serious danger of a further growth of regionalization here.

The Regionalist Danger and Military Reform.

The consequences of regionalization could become very dangerous indeed for Russian security.

The whole trend of Russian politics today is decentralization. Power is being devolved by Moscow to local mayors and provincial governors because Moscow doesn't have the money to support them. Roughly 20 of its 89 provinces now have power-

sharing treaties with Moscow, allowing them to keep much of their tax revenue and making them each small, but autonomous, alternative power centers. This means the Kremlin's ability to mobilize resources to rebuild the Russian Army diminishes with each day.⁵⁹

Indeed, the regions and republics already can severely obstruct key security policies. Chuvashii's President Nikolai Fedorov absolved troops in the republic from going to Chechnya in 1995. Observers believed he did so not only to object to the war, but also to compel Moscow to reestablish the Council of the Heads of Republics, i.e., to "start toughly dictating terms to the federal center." They also viewed this move as part of a larger effort by regional figures to remove members of the government.⁶⁰ Regional leaders also evidently prevailed in 1994 to cut military spending or increase it only slightly because of their interest in cutting spending on personnel and redirecting it to investment in defense production and industry which brings jobs and revenues into their bailiwicks.⁶¹ Since the MOD and the armed forces have sacrificed future investment to maintain force structure and existing operational missions, this defeat at the hands of local authorities probably had no little impact on the armed forces' declining readiness.

On the other hand, the crisis of center-periphery relations can also encourage potentially dangerous symbiotic local governmental relationships with the armed forces. Opportunistic regional politicians have formed coalitions with the armed forces to frustrate major strategic initiatives coming from Moscow. In 1992, Sakhalin's Governor Valentin Fyodorov and the armed forces coalesced to obstruct any rapprochement with Japan and the return of the Kurile Islands to Japan. This coalition's objections impelled Yeltsin to cancel his trip to Japan and freeze relations with Tokyo, severely curtailing Russia's participation in the Asia-Pacific economy and the progress of domestic reform.⁶² They established a dangerous but abiding precedent showing Moscow's inability to control regional governments and the armed forces who can openly

forge political coalitions with the former against central policies with impunity.

Indeed, precisely because Moscow has often abdicated its responsibilities to the regions and the armed forces or cannot fulfill them, it has frequently encouraged joint action by regional political and military authorities. In December 1995 Kulikov requested that Stavropol's Territorial Administration help the 54th division of MVD troops stationed there. The unusual nature of this request led journalist Andrei Zhukov to remark that Governor Marchenko of Stavropol Region, the governor of "democratic Nizhny Novgorod," Boris Nemtsov, and the regional government in the pro-Communist Kemerovo region were all courting the military. As he wrote, "It is quite possible that if an emergency situation occurs these military units will betray their commanders in favor of the territorial administration."⁶³

By commanders, Zhukov clearly meant those in Moscow, not necessarily their local commanders. Nor was Kulikov's request unique. Grachev's remarks on his last inspection tour in the Ural, Siberia, and Transbaikal military districts showed the powers that regional authorities have over the armed forces. Grachev thanked Transbaikal's local administration for helping get food and housing for servicemen at a most critical time. But in Siberia's case, he noted, some local leaders ignored soldiers' interests and pocketed the money for themselves, obstructing the provision of basic supplies.⁶⁴

This observation points to the powers of regional authorities *vis-à-vis* the armed forces on their territories. And increasingly district commanders depend on the local authorities for resources. This dependence is mutual since they depend on the military for ultimate order. Thus the army commanders also hold some trumps. In an interview, Col. General Viktor Andreyevich Kopylov, CINC of the Siberian Military District remarked that the district contains 42 percent of all military industry in Russia and

has troops deployed in Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, and Kemerovo Oblasts, Krasnoyarsk and Altay Krays, and the republics of Tuva, Khakass, and Altay.⁶⁵ Similarly, in 1995, Grachev proposed restructuring the Moscow military district so it would become an elite formation.

Autonomy presupposes that the district will exercise its own command and control of troops, provide its own communications and rear services support, and have its own paymaster for officers and enlisted men. The pay issue alone could create tendencies toward autonomy within other envious military districts.⁶⁶

Moscow's weakness fosters strong incentives among local civilian and military leaders to come together to defend their autonomy or to act autonomously, even against or without Moscow. Because Moscow has conspicuously failed to provide for its soldiers' and officers' needs, both necessity and central encouragement have led officers and regional authorities to work with each other to supply those needs, often bypassing Moscow. Since the regions can withhold tax revenues from Moscow for use at home, they possess real resources with which to buy support.⁶⁷

While the internal fractures among the armed forces militate against a coup by a serving officer, there are several real dangers in the current situation. A regional or central leader may use the armed forces who support him in a bid for power or secession. In that case, polls conducted among army officers reveal that a large majority of them oppose using the army for internal purposes like stopping a province's secession.⁶⁸ That finding raises the danger that some military forces will go over to the secessionist side or rebel against Moscow if a coup or another misconceived war like that against secessionist Chechnya is launched there.

Alternatively a commander could begin conducting his own foreign policy, e.g., the Border Troops, who now have official authority to act abroad, or he and/or the political leader could create their own military-police forces from official and paramilitary forces. In multiethnic areas, like

the North Caucasus, the potential for an Algerian like scenario, reminiscent of the French forces in Algeria, 1954-62 could also develop.⁶⁹ In short, there are numerous dangers that could result from the preexisting regionalism and from trends towards regionalism in the new decrees that could be exploited for regionalist objectives.

Another military danger results from the inchoate structure of the state administration. A 1996 analysis of the state's structure concluded that despite Moscow's so-called new policies,

The Russian Federation will remain a complex federated-unitary state with different systems of administration in different territories (okrugs, republics, and oblasts or krays) and different relationships between these territories and the center until 2000—until the end of the new president's term.⁷⁰

This administrative diversity, if not chaos, is found in the structure of the military districts which has not changed since 1991 and which remains amorphous and normatively undefined.⁷¹ Absent the rule of law or conformity of Russia's regional economic structure to that of the military districts, over 30 different military organizations: Border Troops, MVD Internal Troops, Russia's Ministry for Civil Defense and Emergencies, etc. have unilaterally formed their own districts and regional centers that do not correspond to each other's borders or the existing administrative system.⁷² As military districts fulfill vital administrative, military, operational, and mobilization tasks, they cannot currently coordinate among themselves or with civil authorities to effectively fulfill their responsibilities.⁷³

Since military districts do not conform to the economic principles according to which Yeltsin is reorganizing local government, failure to reverse this situation will gravely disrupt civilian-military interaction. Because all current military districts are effectively first echelon and border troop districts, this lack of coordination among military organizations and with the economic administration emanating from Moscow constitutes a grave risk to security

in a military conflict. This absence of coordination among the army and the MVD's troops has been a constant throughout the war in Chechnya.⁷⁴

Therefore, the author of this Russian report decries the independent creation of new districts by what are essentially former internal districts that lack the needed infrastructures, airfields, C² facilities, operating areas, depots, etc. Instead the state must create a new military administrative system to realize civilian-military and inter-service coordination realities and provide for effective command, control, and deployment of military assets.⁷⁵ Obviously Kvashnin has a real point, for all his turf-grabbing.

But as long as Moscow cannot frame coherent regional policies and create a stable legal basis for Russian federalism and for the armed forces' military administrative structure, further breakdowns like Chechnya's are all too likely and/or the necessary administrative coordination will not take place. For this reason Yeltsin, Chubais, and Nemtsov are steadily attacking the regional governors in an effort to recentralize power in Moscow and deprive them of autonomy.

Final Notes on the Reform Plan.

While this reform plan is clever with ulterior political and financial motives, the foregoing shows that it is also a recipe for strategic and military disaster by people who are seriously deficient in understanding military issues. The already large gap between objectives and capabilities is widening not shrinking. Furthermore because the national command structures and their politicization of the MOD, General Staff, and the multiple militaries are not addressed, this is in reality only a reform of the armed forces (*Reforma Vooruzhenykh Sil'*), not a true military reform (*Voennaya Reforma*) in the sense of past Russian historical reforms. God alone knows what will come of this melange of graft, opportunism, strategic ignorance and regression to

Tsarist models. But if a serious attempt is made to implement this sham reform, we can be reasonably certain that Russia will continue to be anything but a stable, democratic partner. The status quo is already not holding, as this series of decrees shows us. The question then becomes, what structure will be the next to buckle and what happens then?

Information Warfare.

Russia's failure to confront such strategic realities as unconventional and nuclear warfare also appears with regard to thinking about future war, namely Information Warfare. Russian writers on this subject are as interesting and visionary as their predecessors in the 1970s and 1980s in writing about the RMA, or in the 1920s and 1930s about future wars. Indeed, Soviet writers coined the term "revolution in military affairs" and greatly developed the concept before U.S. writers and officers appropriated it.⁷⁶ Russian writers have a much broader definition or notion of information warfare than do American writers. They include warfare targeted against the minds and physiques of enemy combatants and even of whole societies. They see this form of warfare as ushering in a new series of weapons or technologies that can strike enemies in wholly new way including biological or psychotropic weapons.⁷⁷

Many commentators, civilian and military officials, e.g. former Chief of Staff Col. General Viktor Samsonov, contend that IW proceeds during peacetime. Some are clamoring for a new definition of war to include this kind of bloodless, peacetime campaign against key political and informational strategic targets. Allegedly Russia has, for several years, been in an information war with the United States and the West. Moreover, Russia is losing or lost that war. Its domestic anomie and loss of values reflect the West's successful targeting of the Russian media who, it is said, have then betrayed Russia as servants of the West.⁷⁸ Echoes of this doctrine appear in the new, 1997 security

doctrine that stresses internal threats, including threats to Russia's spirituality, morale, and moral integrity.⁷⁹ Other officials, like Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, evoke threats to Russia's intellectual, communications, or information space.⁸⁰ The discussion about an intellectual or ideological threat is pervasive, even if assessments vary. While this discourse of informational threat reflects Russia's profound disenchantment, it does not necessarily entail the sense of being presently in an information or psychological war.

But those disaffected elites who believe this war is occurring are updating Lenin's notion of constant political or ideological warfare with the West to our time and openly raising the Leninist-Stalinist notion of internal enemies. Political opposition equates with sabotage and opens the way to a domestic war. War at home and war abroad could become a seamless web. The ties of office, political power, access to military, paramilitary, and/or private armed forces and media outlets on the part of almost all of the key players make it clear that any major political initiative, even merely a personnel reshuffle, means a bitter struggle among both the possessors of armed force and the media barons. Often they are the same persons or factions. Internal wars and purges could easily take place if the fragile political system collapses due to elite fragmentation or falls into the opposition's hands. Many oppositionists are particularly attracted to this notion of contemporary politics and warfare.

If the trend towards bitter elite fragmentation combines with the aforementioned privatization of violence, the consequences are utterly unpredictable. The fall, 1997 struggle between the rival forces of Boris Berezovsky, former Deputy Secretary of the Security Council, and Chubais and Nemtsov, was accurately labeled an information war in Russia.⁸¹ Things could easily degenerate further before improving, leading to the real thing, not just a media war. In other words, as Russia's own power struggle remains unconsummated and perhaps is entering a new

and dangerous phase, one or more groups may try to use the media and other channels of information to exploit this alleged external danger or threat for purely domestic purposes connected with taking power.

Information technology could thus tremendously expand the scope for political and military conflict beyond anything we can envision, targeting whole sectors of societies through what used to be called "the hidden persuaders." Current U.S. boasting about this capability betrays a touching innocence about its strategic potentialities in troubled societies and about the nature of war in general.⁸² Such bragging only fuels Russian paranoia. But these new weapons could, in the Russian definition, include whole series of biological or psychotropic weapons, or simply novel uses of information and other technologies to destabilize a society from within. And Russia is still building or devising biological and chemical weapons which could play an enormous role in this context. For us there is the warning that we must renounce our ingrained ethnocentrism and realize that for other cultures, information warfare, as they understand it, is a radical, even revolutionary development that puts their whole society at risk and makes it the center of gravity. We ignore these considerations at our peril.

Conclusions.

While this is not the whole story of Russian writing on IW, when taken in tandem with the other developments outlined here, it is only one of all too many grounds for alarm about Russia today and tomorrow. Russia is not a democratic state, and arguably is not moving further towards democracy. Neither is it stable or predictable. Its strategic mechanisms are flimsy and ephemeral. Its armed forces cannot defend against threats to Russia but may be quite useful for internal coups or insurgencies. Its doctrine and strategy place an inordinate stress on nuclear scenarios without the means to control them. And the opportunities

presented by IW are beyond Russia due to socio-economic constraints and the failure of military reform. Or else they open up radical and terrifying prospects for mass domestic warfare of a new type having terrifying vistas for future conflicts.

Meanwhile, Russian national security is endangered by this haphazard effort at reform and Yeltsin's merely sporadic interest in military issues except when there is a threat to his authority or a grave crisis. But such reform needs continual leadership. Russia faces block obsolescence of its technology and weapons unless the economy and the state's leadership of it are rejuvenated and military affairs are funded rationally, not by irrational fiat. It is also clear that the enormous bureaucratic infighting and obstacles to a coherent and rational national security policy and the mentality of elites who still wish for defense on all azimuths must be overcome. The continuation of the Soviet mentality is breeding yet another nightmare for the army and the country. Soviet propaganda used to say the army and the people are one. Is it not true then that their crises are also one?

ENDNOTES

1. This notion of the Africanization of Russian security policy is discussed at length in Stephen Blank, "Who's Minding the State: The Failure of Russian Security Policy," *Problems of Postcommunism*, March-April 1998, pp. 3-12, and the sources cited therein.

2. On the extent to which criminality alone can destroy the state, see Center for Strategic and International Studies, Global Organized Crime Project, William H. Webster, Project Chair, *Russian Organized Crime*, Washington, DC, 1997; and for recent Russian sources, Moscow, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* in Russian, September 26, 1997; *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Central Eurasia (henceforth FBIS SOV)*-97-276, October 3, 1997; and Moscow, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, in Russian, October 1, 1997, *FBIS-SOV-97-279*, October 6, 1997.

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6. Pavel Baev, *Challenges and Options in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997, pp. 6-8, 15; Taras Kuzio, "NATO Enlargement: The View From the East," *European Security*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring, 1997, pp. 57-58.

7. Moscow, *NTV*, November 16, 1997, from *Johnson's Russia List*, davidjohnson@erols.com, No. 1395, November 25, 1997; David McLauren MacDonald, *United Government and Foreign Policy in Russia, 1900-1914*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, demonstrates what late Tsarist foreign policy was like and the resemblances to Yeltsin's court are striking.

8. Blank, *op. cit.*

9. "The Man From Lubyanka," *Vek*, No. 34, September 1996.

10. This goes back at least to 1995, if not earlier; for example, see the law on the FSB, Moscow, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, in Russian, April 12, 1995, *FBIS-SOV-95-076*, April 20, 1995, pp. 19-28; Moscow, *Segodnya*, in Russian, February 16, 1995, *FBIS-SOV-95-033*, February 17, 1995, p. 19.

11. Moscow, *RIA, Novosti*, July 19, 1997, translated in *Johnson's Russia List*, July 19, 1997, davidjohnson@erols.com.

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14. For an examination of Russia's incredible defense economy, see *OMRI Daily Digest*, October 30, 1996; Vitaly Shlykov's articles, "Russkaya Ruletka ili Soldatskaya Kasha is Topora," *Sreda*, No. 4, September, 1996, pp. 67-75; "Biudzhet i Armiya," *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, May 16, 1996; "Voennyi Kamuflazh Rossiyskoi Ekonomiki," *Sreda*, No. 2, 1996, pp. 19-24; and "Economic Readjustment Within the Russian Defense-Industrial Complex," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 1995, pp. 19-34; and Sergey Rogov, *Military Reform and the Defense Budget of the Russian Federation*, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1997.

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