



A NEW RUSSIAN DEFENSE DOCTRINE?

Stephen Blank¹

Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College

Abstract:

In the Tsarist, Soviet, and Russian military tradition, doctrine plays a particularly important role. Doctrine is supposed to represent an official view or views about the character of contemporary war, the threats to Russia, and what policies the government and armed forces will initiate and implement to meet those challenges. Since 2002 President Vladimir Putin has regularly called for and stated that a new doctrine, to meet the challenges of the post September 11 strategic environment will soon appear. However, no such doctrine has yet appeared or is in sight. Coherent planning and policy-making are still bedeviled by multiple threats that haunt senior military leaders. Today, if anything, we see a continuing inclination to turn back the strategic clock towards quasi-Cold war postures and strategies.

Keywords: Russia, military doctrine, armed forces.

Resumen:

En la tradición zarista, soviética y rusa, la doctrina desempeña un papel especialmente importante. La doctrina representa una visión o visiones oficiales acerca del carácter de la guerra contemporánea, las amenazas para Rusia, y las políticas que el gobierno y las fuerzas armadas iniciarán e implementarán para hacer frente a esos desafíos. Desde 2002, el presidente Putin ha declarado que pronto se publicaría una nueva doctrina para afrontar los desafíos del entorno estratégico tras el 11-S. Sin embargo, todavía no ha aparecido tal doctrina ni se conoce cuándo lo hará. La preocupación de la cúpula militar por múltiples amenazas continúa impidiendo una planificación y formulación de políticas coherentes. Hoy, a lo sumo, asistimos a una continua inclinación hacia el retorno a posturas y estrategias casi propias de la Guerra Fría.

Palabras clave: Rusia, doctrina militar, fuerzas armadas.

Copyright © UNISCI, 2006.

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNISCI. *Las opiniones expresadas en estos artículos son propias de sus autores, y no reflejan necesariamente la opinión de UNISCI.*

¹ Stephen Blank is Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. His areas of expertise are security issues in Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Eastern Europe.

Address: Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013-5244, USA. *Website:* <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil>.

Author's note: The views expressed here do not represent those of the U.S. Army, Defense Department, or the U.S. Government.



Introduction

In the Tsarist, Soviet, and Russian military tradition, doctrine plays a particularly important role. The state's defense or military doctrine possesses a normative and even, often a juridical quality that should be binding on relevant state agencies, or at least so its adherents would like to claim.² Doctrine is supposed to represent an official view or views about the character of contemporary war, the threats to Russia, and what policies the government and armed forces will initiate and implement to meet those challenges. Thus beyond being a normative or at least guiding policy document, defense doctrine should also represent an elite consensus about threats, the character of contemporary war and the policies needed to confront those threats and challenges.

Since 2002 President Vladimir Putin has regularly called for and stated that a new doctrine, to meet the challenges of the post September 11 strategic environment will soon appear. However, no such doctrine has yet appeared or is in sight. In 2003 the Defense Ministry published a kind of white paper that foreign observers then called an Ivanov doctrine after Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov.³ But no Russian authority has followed suit. This document argued that the Russian forces must be ready for every sort of contingency from counterterrorism to large-scale conventional theater war and even nuclear war.⁴ Ivanov and the General Staff also argue that the forces can and must be able to handle two simultaneous regional or local wars.⁵ This guidance also evidently follows Putin's direction that the armed forces must be able to wage any kind of contingency across this spectrum of conflict even though he apparently had ordered a shift in priorities from war against NATO to counter-terrorist and localized actions in 2002-03.⁶

Within this spectrum of conflict, most published official and unofficial writing about the nature of threats to Russia repeatedly states that terrorism is the most immediate and urgent threat to Russia, that Russia has no plans to wage a war with NATO, i.e. a large-scale conventional or even nuclear war, and that Russia sees no visible threat from NATO or of this kind of war on the horizon.⁷ Indeed, Russian officials like Putin and Chief of Staff, Colonel-General Yuri N. Baluyevsky have recently renounced the quest for nuclear and conventional parity with NATO and America, a quest whose abandonment was signified in the Moscow Treaty on Nuclear Weapons in 2002.⁸ Yet the absence of doctrine suggests an ongoing lack of consensus on these issues. And this discord is particularly dangerous at a time when Russian leaders perceive that "there has been a steady trend toward broadening the use of armed forces" and that "conflicts are spreading to larger areas, including the sphere of Russia's

² See Russia's last doctrine of 2000, Moscow, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* in Russian, 14 January 2000 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia, henceforth FBIS SOV, 14 January 2000).

³ *Aktual'nye Zadachi Razvitiya Vooruzhennykh Sil' Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, Moscow, 2003, at <http://www.mil.ru> (Henceforth *Aktual'nye Zadachi*).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Address by Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, "Russia's Armed Forces and Its Geopolitical Priorities," 3 February 2004, at <http://www.polit.ru> (FBIS SOV, 3 February 2004).

⁶ Mansourov, A.Y.: "Russia's 'Cooperative' Challenge to the New Alliance Strategy of the United States of America," *KNDU Review* (Korean National Defense University Review), Vol. X, No. 1 (June 2005), p. 146.

⁷ OSC (US Open source Center) Analysis: *Russia: Focus of Threat Perception Shifts to Peripheral States*, 6 March 2006, at <http://www.opensourcecenter.gov>.

⁸ "Russia Not Set to Fight NATO-Chief of General Staff," *Interfax AVN News Agency Website*, 3 April 2006.



vital interests,” because they may be tempted to follow suit or react forcefully to real or imaginary challenges.”⁹

Indeed, if one looks carefully at Russian procurement policies and exercises, both of which have increased in quantity and intensified in quality under Putin due to economic recovery, we still find that large-scale operations, including first-strike nuclear operations using either ICBM's or tactical (or so called non-strategic) nuclear weapons (TNW) predominate, even when counterinsurgency and counter-terrorist exercises are included. In other words, the military-political establishment, rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, still believes that large-scale war, even with NATO or China is a real possibility. Ivanov's speech to the Academy of Military Sciences on January 24, 2004 excoriated the General Staff for insufficient study of contemporary wars and for fixating on Chechnya. Blaming it for this fixation, he said that,

We must admit that as of the present time military science has not defined a clear generalized type of modern war and armed conflict. Therefore the RF Armed Forces and supreme command and control entities must be prepared to participate in any kind of military conflict. Based on this, we have to answer the question of how to make the military command and control system most flexible and most capable of reacting to any threats to Russia's military security that may arise in the modern world.¹⁰

Ivanov had earlier observed that,

Military preparedness, operational planning, and maintenance need to be as flexible as possible because in recent years no single type of armed conflict has dominated. The Russian armed forces will be prepared for regular and anti-guerrilla warfare, the struggle against different types of terrorism, and peacekeeping operations.¹¹

Baluevsky has also since argued that any war, even a localized armed conflict, could lead the world to the brink of global nuclear war, therefore Russian forces must train and be ready for everything.¹² These remarks reflect the continuing preference for major theater and even intercontinental nuclear wars against America and NATO over anti-terrorist missions.

Neither are they alone. In 2003, former Deputy Chief of Staff, General (RET.) V.L. Manilov, then First Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Defense and Security Committee, told an interviewer that,

Let's take, for example, the possible development of the geopolitical and military-strategic situation around Russia. We don't even have precisely specified definitions of national interests and national security, and there isn't even the methodology itself of coming up with decisions concerning Russia's fate. But without this it's impossible to ensure the country's progressive development. ... It also should be noted that a systems analysis and the monitoring of the geostrategic situation around Russia requires the consolidation of all national resources and the involvement of state and public structures and organizations. At

⁹ “Putin, Ivanov Point to Bigger Policy Role for Military,” *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* (Henceforth CDPP), Vol. LVII, No. 46, 14 December 2005 (Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis); “Chief of General Staff on Changes in Russia's Military Policy,” *RIA Novosti*, 27 January 2006.

¹⁰ Speech by RF Defense Minister S.B. Ivanov at a Session of the Academy of Military Sciences, 24 January 2004, at <http://www.mil.ru>, in Russian (*FBIS SOV*, 24 January 2004).

¹¹ *ITAR-TASS News Agency*, in Russian, 2 October 2003 (Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis).

¹² “Press Conference With First Deputy Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, Yuri Baluevsky”, 19 February 2004 (Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis).



the same time, one has a clear sense of the shortage of intellectual potential in the centers where this problem should be handled in a qualified manner.¹³

Since Russian planners cannot develop a truly credible hierarchy of threats or adequately define them or Russia's national interests they inevitably see threats everywhere while lacking the conceptual means for categorizing them coherently. Lacking a priority form of war or threat for which they must train, the troops must perform traditional tasks and priority missions like defending Russia's territorial boundaries, i.e. Soviet territorial boundaries, preventing and deterring attacks on Russia, and maintaining strategic stability. They also must participate directly in achieving Russia's economic and political interests and conduct peacetime operations, including UN or CIS sanctioned peace operations. Consequently coherent planning and policy-making are still bedeviled by multiple threats that haunt senior military leaders. In 2003, Baluevsky said that,

In order to conduct joint maneuvers (with NATO-author), you have to determine who your enemy actually is. **We still do not know** (Bold-author) After the Warsaw pact disappeared, there was confusion in the general staffs of the world's armies. But who was the enemy? Well, no enemy emerged. Therefore the first question is: Against whom will we fight? ... But the campaign against terrorism does not require massive armies. And NATO's massive armies have not disappeared at all. No one says "We do not need divisions, we do not need ships, we do not need hundreds of thousands of aircraft and tanks ..." The Russian military are accused of still thinking in World War II categories. Although we, incidentally realized long before the Americans that the mad race to produce thousands and thousands of nuclear warheads should be stopped!¹⁴

Thus the General Staff and for that matter the Ministry have abdicated their critical task of forecasting the nature or character of today's wars.

Today, if anything, we see a continuing inclination to turn back the strategic clock towards quasi-Cold war postures and strategies. Much evidence suggests that various political forces in Russia, particularly in the military community, are urging withdrawal from arms control treaties, not least because of NATO enlargement towards the CIS and U.S. foreign and military policy in those areas. In March, 2005 Ivanov raised the question of withdrawal from the INF Treaty with the Pentagon.¹⁵ Since then Russian general Vladimir Vasilenko has raised it again more recently though it is difficult to see what Russia gains from withdrawal from that treaty.¹⁶ Indeed, withdrawal from the INF treaty makes no sense unless one believes that Russia is threatened by NATO and especially the U.S.' superior conventional military power and cannot meet that threat except by returning to the classical Cold War strategy of holding Europe hostage to nuclear attack to deter Washington and NATO. Apparently at least some of the interest in withdrawing from the INF treaty also stems from the fact that Vasilenko also stated that western missile defenses would determine the nature and number of future Russian missile defense systems even though admittedly it could only defend against a few missiles at a time. Thus he argued that,

Russia should give priority to high-survivable mobile ground and naval missile systems when planning the development of the force in the near and far future. ... The quality of the

¹³ *Krasnaya Zvezda*, in Russian, 7 February 2003 (*FBIS SOV*, 7 February 2003).

¹⁴ *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, in Russian, 9 January 2003 (*FBIS SOV*, 9 January 2003).

¹⁵ Dinmore, Guy; Sevastopulo, Demetri and Wetzell, Hubert: "Russia Confronted Rumsfeld With Threat to Quit Key Nuclear Treaty," *Financial Times*, 9 March 2005, p. 1.

¹⁶ Sieff, Martin: "Russia Rattles Missile Treaty," *UPI*, 2 March 2006.



strategic nuclear forces of Russia will have to be significantly improved in terms of adding to their capability of penetrating [missile defense] barriers and increasing the survivability of combat elements and enhancing the properties of surveillance and control systems.¹⁷

But then, Russia's government and military are thereby postulating an inherent East-West enmity buttressed by mutual deterrence that makes no sense in today's strategic climate, especially when virtually every Russian military leader proclaims that no plan for war with NATO is under consideration and that the main threat to Russia is terrorism, not NATO and not America.¹⁸ Nonetheless Russian generals do not raise the issue of withdrawal from the INF treaty unless directed to do so. As of 2003 the General Staff made clear its opposition to joint Russian-NATO exercises allegedly on the grounds of NATO enlargement and the improvement of missiles.¹⁹ In fact, the military's enmity to NATO is due to the fact of its existence. As the so called Ivanov doctrine of October, 2003, stated,

Russia ... expects NATO member states to put a complete end to direct and indirect elements of its anti-Russian policy, both from military planning and the from the political declarations of NATO member states. ... Should NATO remain a military alliance with its current offensive military doctrine, a fundamental reassessment of Russia's military planning and arms procurement is needed, including a change in Russia's nuclear strategy.²⁰

Alexander Golts, one of Russia's most prominent defense commentators, observes that the military must continue to have NATO as a 'primordial enemy'. Otherwise their ability to mobilize millions of men and huge amounts of Russian material resources would be exposed as unjustified.²¹ Similarly Western observers have noted the resistance of the military to a genuine military reform, even though the forces are being reorganized.²² The problem here is well known to the Russian military. Genuine reform is a precondition for effective partnership with NATO. Therefore resistance to reform, in particular, democratization of defense policy, inhibits cooperation with NATO and is therefore deliberately created from within the military and political system.²³ Evidently Russian leaders no longer perceive democratization as a mere ritual for the White House, as in the past, but as a threat to the foundations of Russian statehood, including a threat to the structure of the armed forces and its top command organizations.²⁴

¹⁷ *Interfax*, 27 February 2006.

¹⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁹ *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, in Russian, 5 December 2003 (*FBIS SOV*, 5 December 2003).

²⁰ *Aktual'nye Zadachi...* *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 18.

²¹ Golts, Alexander: "Russia-NATO Relations: Between Cooperation and Confrontation," *Defense Brief*, No. 2 (2005).

²² Blank, Stephen: "Potemkin's Treadmill: Russian Military Modernization," in Tellis, Ashley J. and Wills, Michael (eds.) (2005): *Strategic Asia 2005-2006: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty*, Seattle, National Bureau of Research, pp. 174-205; *Interfax*, in English, 22 June 2003 (*FBIS SOV*, 22 June 2003).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Moscow, *RBSC Daily in Russian*, 22 February 2005 (*FBIS SOV*, 22 February 2005); "Russia Slams U.S. 2006 Freedom Agenda", 31 December 2005, at <http://www.mosnews.com>; Golts, Alexander: "Russia At Risk of Collapsing, Putin Says," *Associated Press*, 18 April 2005 (retrieved from Lexis-Nexis); "Interview with Chief of the Presidential Staff Dmitri Medvedev," *Ekspert Weekly*, 5 April 2005 (retrieved from Lexis-Nexis); "Vladislav Surkov's Secret Speech: How Russia Should Fight International Conspiracy," 12 July 2005, at <http://www.mosnews.com>; "Interview with Vladislav Surkov, Moscow," *Ekho Moskvy* (*FBIS SOV*, 29 September 2004). It should be noted that in his interview with the Dutch Newspaper *Handelsbad* on 1 November 2005 Putin explicitly denied that he is afraid of such contingencies, raising the question of who is telling the truth: "Interview with Dutch Newspaper *Handelsbad*", 1 November 2005, at <http://www.president.ru>.



This hostility to NATO as such also appears in the growing opposition to continuing to observe the CFE treaty. Since the bilateral partnership with NATO began, Russian officials openly stated that if the Baltic States remained outside the treaty then its future would be at issue along with Europe's overall security of which it is a key part.²⁵ Ivanov frequently says that Russia has fundamental differences with NATO over the CFE Treaty and that NATO's insistence upon Russia withdrawing from Moldovan and Georgian bases as promised in 1999 at the OSCE's Istanbul summit is a "farfetched" pretext for not ratifying the treaty or forcing the Baltic States to sign it. Thus the Baltic States form "a gray zone" with regard to arms control agreements that could in the future serve as a basis for first-strikes, mainly by air, upon nearby Russian targets.²⁶ This sums up many of Moscow's military arguments against the CFE treaty.

Ivanov and other officials, like Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov, linked the CFE to the realignment of U.S. forces and bases in Europe.²⁷ Likewise, speaking of the connection between the CFE treaty and enlargement, Lt. General Alexander Voronin wrote in the General Staff's journal *Voyennaya Mysl'* (Military Thought) that,

Russia's opposition to CIS members' joining NATO is immutable and that NATO's failure to take Russia's interests into account here is very troubling. Russia should fully take into account the alliance's strategy of spreading its influence to countries neighboring Russia in the west, south, and southeast, uphold its interests, show strong will, make no concessions, and pursue a pragmatic and effective foreign policy. This raises a number of questions: First, *why do we have to cooperate with NATO at all?* Second, *what could be the practical payoff from this interaction?* And finally *in what areas is it expedient to develop military cooperation with the alliance?*²⁸ (Italics in the original)

Voronin's answer to these rhetorical questions is that it all depends on how soon NATO overcomes Cold War inertia to meet new challenges and threats. In this respect his approach merely confirms earlier military arguments against the CFE treaty.

In 2004 Baluevsky raised the issue that the Baltic States' membership in NATO would doom the CFE treaty.²⁹ In 2005 Colonel-General Anatoly Mazurkevich, Chief of the Main Directorate of International Military Cooperation in the Russian Ministry of Defense, complained that the CFE treaty has been ignored since it was revised in 1999 and that it is slowly 'expiring'. Allegedly the CFE treaty can no longer uphold the interests of the parties or stability in Europe and now in a strategic region adjacent to Russia and under NATO's full responsibility — the Baltic — the region is absolutely free of all treaty restrictions. This

²⁵ Grushko, A.V.; "Russia-NATO Twenty Appears To Be Working," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* (July 2002); Ministry of Foreign Affairs Internet, 9 July 2002 (*FBIS SOV*, 9 July 2002).

²⁶ Ivanov, Sergei: "Maturing Partnership," *NATO Review* (Winter 2005), at <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue4/english/special.htm>.

²⁷ Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Communities, Press Service: "Speech by Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Chizhov at the Conference 'Russia and EU Common Foreign Policy Aims and Challenges,'" Berlin, 27 February 2004; Ivanov, Sergei: "International Security in the Context of the Russia-NATO Relationship," Speech given at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, 7 February 2004, at <http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/reder.php?menu 2004>.

²⁸ Voronin, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²⁹ Baluevsky, Yuri, First Deputy chief of the Russian General Staff: "NATO Expansion Will Strike a Fatal Blow to the Treaty on Conventional Arms in Europe," *Izvestiya*, 3 March 2004 (retrieved from Lexis-Nexis).



creates the so called gray zone where no restrictions apply.³⁰ Thus Mazurkevich threatened that,

As things stand, observance of provisions of the treaty have for years been restricted to fulfillment of only one parameter (ground force-author), and not exactly the most important one from the point of view of the whole treaty. It has been restricted to fulfillment of its flanking commitments by Russia alone. All of that is happening when the international community is fighting terror, the danger that originates — among other areas — in the Caucasus and therefore requires substantial military presence in the region. We are convinced that the second wave of NATO expansion that disrupts the flanking limitations altogether is making observance of its pledges by Russia and absurdity. Even worse, it is making it an unprecedented episode of discrimination in the history of international arms control. And that's how we end up in a situation where NATO expands eastward and the Accord on Adaptation is not working. A situation, in other words, that makes the treaty absolutely unviable. The Russian Federation is not going to pretend that the treaty is working fine and dandy. Unless progress is made, we will initiate a serious discussion of the future of the Treaty at the 3rd Conference scheduled to take place in Vienna in May 2006.³¹

On January 24, 2006 Ivanov similarly raised the possibility of withdrawing from it as had Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, a month earlier.³² Russian spokesmen appear to regard this treaty as an obstacle to Western redeployment around its borders but they fear that NATO is not taking Russian interests at all seriously by putting airplanes in the Baltic, setting up missile defense bases in Poland, expanding to the Black Sea and towards the CIS.³³ They view these new bases and missions as a threat to Russian interests, especially as NATO makes clear that it takes issues like pipeline security in the Caucasus very seriously.³⁴ And the General Staff also sees a rising threat to Russia, e.g. that missile defenses will preclude the use of Russia's tactical or other nuclear missiles against threats which are all they have given Moscow's conventional inferiority to NATO. Hence NATO could threaten a military action to impose political concessions, e.g. democratization somewhere in the CIS if not Russia itself. After all, Ivanov recently stated that Russia regards threats to the constitutional order of CIS regimes as the main threat to its security.³⁵ For example, in July, 2005 Konstantin Sivkov of the General Staff's Center of Military Strategic Studies stated that,

The Alliance has achieved strategic depth of operations in Russia, U.S. tactical aircraft operating from NATO airfields may now reach Moscow, Tula, Kursk, and other cities of Central European Russia. This is an important factor from a geostrategic point of view ... It means that there are no more strategic barriers between Russia and NATO. What may it lead to? It may lead to escalation of border disputes with NATO countries (say because of certain territorial claims, or problems with oil production at sea, and fishing matters) into armed conflicts. Dangers of this sort exist in the Baltic region (Estonia claims the Pyatlov District of the Pskov Region) and in North Europe. ...the situation is such that a local conflict may promptly become international. When it happens, it will be the alliance as such or the

³⁰ Tuliev, Mikhail: "The Treaty on Conventional Arms in Europe and Security of European States," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyi Kurier*, 16-22 November 2005 (retrieved from Lexis-Nexis).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Yasmann, Viktor and Fuller, Liz: "Russia Threatens to Withdraw from the CFE Treaty," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Russian Political Weekly*, Vol. VI, No. 2, 26 January 2006.

³³ "Minister Wants Full Transparency in Russian-NATO Relations," *Baltic News Service*, 27 December 2005 (retrieved from Lexis-Nexis).

³⁴ Walker, Martin: "NATO Means Business To Protect Pipelines," *UPI*, 13 October 2005.

³⁵ Ivanov, Sergei: "Russia Must Be Strong," *Wall Street Journal*, 11 January 2006, p. 14.



United States that will be putting forth demands, not the initiator of the conflict. Weapons may be used if Russia refuses to make concessions — space weapons first and foremost.³⁶

Alternatively, informational weapons that were once thought of as science fiction but are now usable, might be deployed.³⁷ In any case Russia must be prepared for its sees efforts to overturn the constitutional order in CIS states as its biggest threat and those efforts, pace Sivkov, could then escalate.³⁸ Not surprisingly, Ivanov demands full transparency from NATO about its actions and plans and raises or has his subordinates raise the issue of withdrawal for these arms control treaties.³⁹

These doctrinal ambivalences illustrate another and final aspect of doctrine, namely that it is a basic component of the state's self-presentation or representation at home and abroad. And Russia's efforts to encompass the entire spectrum of conflict confirm what its elites say, namely that it remembers itself as an empire or superpower and still sees itself in this fashion.⁴⁰ Russia's imperial tendencies originate in the elite fear that without autocracy and empire Russia will break up. Consequently the enemy, i.e. Western power and democratization, is always at the gates and can only be stopped by imperial and autocratic policies that unify the Russian government's executive arm.⁴¹ As Russian political scientist Egor Kholmogorov has observed,

'Empire' is the main category of any strategic political analysis in the Russian language. As soon as we start to ponder a full-scale, long-term construction of the Russian state, we begin to think of empire and in terms of empire. Russians are inherently imperialists."⁴²

Similarly, John Loewenhardt reported in 2000 that despite the fact that Russia's alleged status as a leading pole in global affairs was then understood to be increasingly more rhetorical than real,

In one of our interviews a former member of the Presidential Administration said that the perception of Russia as a great power "is a basic element of the self-perception of high bureaucrats." If a political leader were to behave as if Russia was no longer a great power, there would be "a deeply rooted emotional reaction in the population."⁴³

The inconsistencies of Russia's ongoing quest for doctrine are traceable to this obsession with empire and autocracy. The absence of doctrine signifies more than a dissensus about the nature of war and of Russia's strategic environment. It signifies, in fact, that Russia's abortive military reforms remain incomplete. Yet since they are critical elements of any democratic reform, the failure to reach a coherent defense doctrine is a critical sign of the

³⁶ Moroz, Vitaly: "Konstantin Sivkov of the Center of Military Strategic Studies of the General Staff is Worried by the Threat Posed by NATO", *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 July 2005, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ivanov, "Russia Must Be Strong," *op. cit.*, p. 14

³⁹ "Minister Wants Full Transparency", *op. cit.*; Ivanov, "Maturing Partnership", *op. cit.*

⁴⁰ Kosachev, Konstantin: "Russia Between European Choice and Asian Growth," *International Affairs*, Vol. LII, No. 1 (2006), p. 4.

⁴³ Loewenhardt, John: "Russia and Europe: Growing Apart Together," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Winter-Spring 2000), p. 171.



failure of Russia's democratic project. But as that failure has a profound military and security character to it, this failure to devise a coherent doctrine that realistically assesses Russia's capabilities and prospects, is not just a failure to achieve democracy, it also represents an enduring threat to Russia itself, its neighbors and interlocutors.