Modernize this! Diarchy and more discontent

Despite due skepticism, the modernization debate in Russia does appear to have concrete repercussions, if only insofar as it serves as pretext for opposition to the Putin-siloviki regime. Prime Minister Putin’s unscheduled appearance and address to President Medvedev’s showcase State Council meeting did not have the dampening effect intended on calls for modernization of the political system. Instead, certain “opposition” groups seemed emboldened and criticism of the “order from chaos” regime intensified.

Given the Kremlin’s response to the “color revolutions,” street protests would seem an unlikely avenue for discontent in Russia, but the end of January witnessed a thousands strong rally in Kaliningrad at which anti-Putin (and anti-Kremlin) sentiment was much on display, as well as more of the “Article 31” protests in St. Petersburg and Moscow, where the police heavy-handedly broke up the demonstrations and arrested protesters. Boris Nemtsov, who addressed the crowd in Kaliningrad, (1) was also a participant in the Moscow protest, during which he was detained, along with human rights activists, including Lev Ponomarev and Oleg Orlov. (2) While specific grievances differed at the rallies (in Kaliningrad, Moscow-initiated economic policies and the Kremlin’s control of regional political appointments were a major focus), elements in all of the crowds criticized the government, Kremlin, Medvedev, and even the “popular” Putin, who was repeatedly called upon to resign. In a statement that surely precipitated a shutter from the authorities, Nemtsov declared: "I believe this is a precursor to events likely to roll out over Russia.” (3)
By way of public response, Putin dressed down the members of United Russia for promising too much in attempting to woo voters: "You cannot turn into promisers, who make promises only to ... get into power and then spend their time solving their own personal problems." (4)

The public protests are only one facet of a much larger struggle underway. It seems clear that the two heads of Russia’s tandem are straining in different directions. On the surface, the battle appears to have a policy focus: Modernization and reform of the political system (and military!) versus the power vertical and central command of both politics and the economy. In fact, it is likely that Russia’s poorly conceived political diarchy is not functioning and that competition for power and authority has subverted the governance of the state.

Until Putin’s appearance at the State Council meeting on January 22, the policy end of the debate seemed to originate solely with the Medvedev modernization faction. (5) Attempts to differentiate himself from the prime minister seemed a wise and natural course for the new president as he settled into his position. However, as the discourse on changes to the system has focused on the negative aspects of the previous administration, the issue of diarchical discord seems to have become more relevant.

As if to mute the criticism, Putin has made seemingly nonchalant, yet pointed references to reassuming the role of president in 2012. Medvedev only recently began to counter with indications of his own intention to seek the office again. If Putin and Medvedev have been willing to bring their evident dispute over the future of the diarchy and the 2012 presidential decision (is it time to stop calling it an election?) into the public arena, is it not likely that the skirmish taking place “under the rug” is more fierce than ever?

In this context, the release by the Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR) of its "21st Century Russia: Image of the Desired Tomorrow" is quite a
stirring salvo in the battle. Bearing in mind that Dmitri Medvedev is Chairman of the INSOR Board and wrote the leadership statement on its website, the INSOR report’s critique of Russia’s political system, as well as its recommendations for changes not only to the political landscape, but to the security services seems to stand as a sharp critique of Putin’s presidency, as well. (6)

The Director of INSOR, Igor Yurgens, noted in a recent interview that modernization of the Russian state at some point would require a reform to the power organs: “[W]e will sooner or later have to follow the scenario of modernization development, if we want to become a civilized state that builds relations with our law enforcement agencies according to the principle of "they are for the people," and not "we are for them."” (7)

As to the response among siloviki supporters of the prime minister, Yurgens suggested that they had their own ideas for the future, but that their plans might not suit the president: “It is another question that there are people - well, let us say, from the bloc of ‘Igor Ivanovich the real’ [Sechin – TIA Analyst] or Chemezov (the head of the Rostekhnologii State Corporation - The New Times), all kinds of protectors and statesmen, who prefer other scenarios of the country's development. We will call them ‘mobilizational,’ ‘rented,’ and so forth. But we at INSOR have firmly decided: We are not considering these variants. And the president, in his message to the Federal Assembly, talked about adherence to modernization.” (8)

While the INSOR report was referred to as a “dream” by a Kremlin official, Yurgens seems to believe that the prime minister and president one day will see the need for its implementation: “Out of the instinct of self-preservation of Vladimir Vladimirovich and Dmitri Anatolyevich. Out of analysis of those systemic errors, whose consequences we encounter every day. The ineffectiveness of the system costs all of us much too dearly.” (9)
Yurgens seems to be correct in his assertion that the current situation may prompt the prime minister or president to act out of an instinct for survival. Sadly, however, it does not seem likely that the debate over the modernization of Russia’s political, economic, and security systems is likely to produce a blueprint to resolve the crisis. The modernization project, and reform to Russia’s political system in general, appears as another forum for the leadership to hash out its power struggle.

Just as military reform won’t necessarily produce a military doctrine infused with a clear sense of objectives, capabilities, or realistic threats, so it has become clear that whatever policy, priority or reform serves as the centerpiece of political debate, a coherent response must await resolution of the power struggle. It appears that the tandem itself has broken an axle, and each side is attempting to steer on its own. In this case, two heads are not better than one.

Source Notes:
(1) Video of Boris Nemtsov’s address to the Kaliningrad rally, as well as his own commentary on the protests can be found at http://b-nemtsov.livejournal.com/2010/01/31/.
(2) Russia protests broken up by police, updated 1 Feb 10 via http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8490978.stm.
(3) Thousands rally to urge Russia’s Putin to resign Reuters, 31 Jan 10, 1:08 EST via http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE60T1T020100130.
(4) Putin scolds party after rally exposes discontent, Reuters, 31 Jan 10, 6:51pm EST, Reuters via http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6145UJ20100205.
A convict’s home is his prison

Federal law regulating house arrest came into force on January 10, 2010. (1) It could save hundreds of thousands of people, many of them juveniles, from prison. The correct legal term is “restriction of liberty” but “house arrest” is colloquially used. As a form of criminal punishment, house arrest has been on the books since 1996; the measure was to become effective in 2002, but its application was delayed until now, due to the absence of a regulating law. (2)

According to the law, house arrest can be imposed as a restrictive measure on suspects awaiting trial, as well as a sentence for convicted defendants. In a sentencing context, it could be used as a “main” (or sole) form of punishment for less-important crimes, such as libel, insult, theft, and fraud. It also can be used as a “supplemental” form of punishment (in addition to other measures) for more serious crimes. Its duration may be anywhere from two months to four years, depending on the gravity of the offense and the existence of prior convictions. The terms of house arrest restrict individuals' ability to leave their homes at night, travel beyond specific territory, participate in mass public events, visit certain entertainment facilities, and leave town without permission. They may continue to go to work or study and may be rewarded for good behavior with permission to leave town for a weekend or vacation. Violation of the terms of house arrest may
result in incarceration at a rate of one day of incarceration for every two days of house arrest. Individuals can be monitored by electronic bracelets with GPS tracking devices, random phone calls, and visits. (3)

Russia has the third largest (after the US and St. Kitts and Nevis) per-capita prison population in the world. (4) “Our jails have people that ought not to be there. Very often they get there because of misunderstandings, after a slip-up due to the general social disorder,” comments Senator Nikolai Tulaev. (5) Legal experts and practitioners agree that incarceration often does not achieve its rehabilitation goals and instead frequently exacerbates criminal behavior by functioning as a “criminal university.” “Almost half of all crimes are repeat offenses and are committed because a person ends up in a criminal environment,” according to Maria Kannabikh, the Federal Penitentiary Service representative. House arrest is four times cheaper to maintain than incarceration, and the Service expects that 113,000 convicts per year may be eligible. The measure is likely to be most beneficial to juvenile offenders, who often consider probation to be a slap on the wrist. (6)

The first individuals places under house arrest include a petty thief from Orenburg, an allegedly corrupt village mayor from the Omsk Region, and a Tatarstan farm worker charged with assault. The twenty seven year old petty thief has two prior convictions for disorderly conduct, theft, and robbery. This time he was charged with theft from a village house; after pleading guilty, he was sentenced to one year and eight months of incarceration, followed by one year of house arrest and an obligation to pay 5,000 rubles to the victim as compensation. (7) Village Mayor Oleg Ivanov was put under house arrest while awaiting trial on charges of fraud, abuse of authority, and assault on police officers. He may continue to serve as mayor, but is prohibited from leaving the house from 8pm – 7am, communicating with any parties in his criminal cases, and participating in mass gatherings. (8)
Ilkham from Tatarstan was sentenced to six months of house arrest for assaulting a fellow villager with a hoe, during a quarrel. The terms of his house arrest are virtually identical to those of the mayor, but Ilkham also is specifically prohibited from visiting the clubhouse, the only cultural and entertainment facility in the village. The chief of the local penitentiary service department, Lieutenant Colonel Talgat Bairamov, has never seen a GPS tracking device and does not believe in “fancy gadgets,” given that many villagers do not even have telephones. Well-tested old Soviet methods—public vigilance and surveillance by his fellow visitors—should suffice because the other villagers are quite entertained by the new house arrestee – they treat him as a reality show participant, while actively assisting in his rehabilitation. (9)

Critics of the house arrest point out that the Federal Penitentiary Service does not have nearly enough tracking devices, vehicles, or even sufficient budget funds to buy enough public transport tickets for inspectors to conduct random visits. (10) Effective enforcement of the measure is further hindered because the law delegates authority to the Government to enact a bylaw with a list of approved surveillance devices; currently no such list exists. Imported devices are prohibitively expensive at 20,000 rubles, and domestic models are still only in developmental stages. (11) These are valid concerns; however, their gravity is somewhat mitigated by the fact that it is not necessary to tag every minor offender with a tracking device – most are not hardened criminals and recognize that they have a lot at stake. For example, if someone registers a complaint against the house arrestee, or he/she is apprehended by the police on any unrelated matter, incarceration can replace house arrest. (12)

Another legitimate concern is that the new measure may invite additional corruption by giving defendants new payoff incentives in order to avoid the punishment they deserve and to continue their criminal activity. (13) While this is true for any criminal penalty, it must be noted that house arrest can only be imposed by a judge. Criminals with enough money to place bribes, generally
speaking, do so at the stages of preliminary investigation or police apprehension, before too many parties get involved in a case and it becomes more expensive. The risk that a minor offender might acquire enough sophistication or funds to bribe a judge is not likely to be high, even though there is an increased likelihood of defendants paying off other parties involved in the process, in order to induce a judge to issue a more lenient punishment, which is a risk in any criminal trial.

Nevertheless, the legalization of house arrest is an important step towards the humanization of the penal system and recognition of human rights. The measure has the clear potential to reduce Russia’s notorious prison overcrowding and increase the efficiency of rehabilitation for thousands of people, especially juveniles. Future analyses of judicial practice will demonstrate whether this potential can be realized, in spite of poor technical equipment and whether corrupt practices in Russia’s legal system outweigh the overall societal benefits of the newest legal reform.

Source Notes:
(3) Ibid.


(10) “Punishment in the form of restriction of liberty has been implemented since Sunday,” RIA-Novosti, 10 Jan 10 via http://www.rian.ru/society/20100110/203702263.html.


(12) “First ‘thief in a pound’ appears in Russia,” Moskovskii Komsomolets, Ibid.


Russian Federation: Security Services

By Fabian Adami

Korabel’nikov resignation redux

That a change in leadership might occur at GRU had been evident since November 2008, when press reports claimed that General Valentin Korabel’nikov, Chief of the service had submitted his resignation, along with a slew of other Generals, in protest at planned military reforms. The reports were
proven false, and Korabel’nikov continued in his post through the winter of 2008-2009.

In March 2009, two newspapers reported that the reforms called for GRU to be stripped of some of its elite Spetsnaz units and for some units to be disbanded or transferred to Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). Korabel’nikov again was reported to have composed his resignation in protest. (1) Within days, reports from General Staff suggested that Korabel’nikov would remain in command at GRU and that he would supervise the coming changes. (2)

Almost exactly a month later, Russian media reported that Korabel’nikov had been replaced as head of the service. Reports indicated that Korabel’nikov was simply relieved of his post by Defense Minister Anatoli Serdyukov and at the same time, formally discharged from military service by President Dmitri Medvedev. (3)

At the time, defense analysts claimed that the change had been forced by Serdyukov for political reasons: Korabel’nikov’s deputy and successor, General Aleksandr Shlyakhturov possessed “neither the ambitions nor the influence of his predecessor;” (4) in other words, he could be more easily controlled.

On 25 January, as the result of a story printed in Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye regarding the arrest of a Russian national (and alleged GRU agent) in Poland, specific details regarding the Korabel’nikov saga came to light. First, it appears that he was not in fact relieved of duty, but was permitted to resign “upon his own initiative.” Secondly, it appears that the “main reason” for his resignation was the failure to convince the civilian bureaucracy that GRU must not be stripped of its Spetsnaz capabilities, (5) because such action would constitute the “pulling down” of a “powerful” and “very effectively” functioning intelligence agency. (6)
Given that the source for this article was Colonel General Fedor Ladygin, a former GRU Chief himself, it may be viewed as credible. Possibly he is speaking on behalf of Korabel’nikov. The article did not address the question of the remarkable sequence of events in March-April 2009: Did Korabel’nikov accept a tenure extension on the basis of an understanding with Serdyukov that Spetsnaz would remain untouched or did he remain in situ believing he could win this battle and finally resign when failure became clear?

MVD: Polygraphs across the board
In the last six weeks, it has become clear that Russia’s Interior Ministry (MVD), is about to undergo major reforms. A decree signed by President Dmitri Medvedev in December orders the organization to make personnel cuts of 20%; to open its senior positions to applicants from the reserves; to increase salaries with the funds saved via the cuts; and to refine its hiring procedures, in order to weed out unsavory applicants. (7)

Late in January, Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev addressed the Presidium of the Association of Russia’s lawyers. During his remarks, he reported that “regulatory acts” had been drafted, introducing polygraphs into the selection procedure. It would seem that the test will be administered across the board, to every applicant, and Nurgaliyev believes the device will have the effect of shielding society from the “negative effects of ineptitude,” while also protecting “aspirants” from “unacceptable” stress in their jobs. (8) Clearly, the latter comment is intended as an attempt to “sell” increased supervision in the guise of support to his subordinates.

The idea that dishonest applicants to the MVD are to be rejected is welcome news. But the measure does not address the overall culture of corruption in Russia’s law enforcement agencies nor does it address causes of corruption, or the practices of current MVD officers.
**Borders: Maintaining pressure on Tbilisi**

Late in January, the FSB’s border troops detained nine people (including three Georgian citizens) at the South Ossetian-Georgian boundary, on suspicion of smuggling. In the course of their search, the authorities claim to have discovered a miniature arsenal consisting of at least three guided-anti-tank missiles, mortars along with shells, and 12 RPG rounds (9): weapons, it must be said, which would be a boon to any terrorist operation.

Six days later, on 2 February, during an operation in Dagestan, Russian special forces killed Mokhmad Mokhamad Shakhban, an Egyptian national known by the nom de guerre of Seyf Islam. (10) According to the FSB’s Dagestan directorate, Seyf Islam was the founding father of Al Qaeda’s North Caucasus network. (11)

On 3 February, Vyacheslav Shanshin (regional FSB Chief) appeared on Rossiya 1 television in order to support and underline the FSB’s view that Islam was a hardened operative with experience in Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan, and that he had “actively cooperated” with Georgia’s secret services, “on whose orders he organized acts of sabotage” against pipelines and rail networks. (12)

Georgia’s response to these allegations was a swift denial from Tbilisi’s Interior Ministry, claiming that the “international community” was “convinced” that the country had no hand in the “tragic events” in the Northern Caucasus. (13)

Given the lack of official comment (at the time of writing) on the weapons arrests, it is not clear whether the two events are linked, or believed to be. But, they demonstrate that Moscow has no intention of tempering its rhetoric against Georgia. Indeed, the Kremlin may be fishing for international support: If Georgia is providing aid to Al-Qaeda, helping it to move weapons, into Dagestan and Chechnya, who could reasonably object to Russian action against Georgia?

**Medvedev sets FSB tasks**
On 28 January, President Dmitri Medvedev addressed the FSB’s Annual Board meeting. The purpose of his speech was to assess the Service’s performance in 2009, and to “define priorities” for the future. (14)

Medvedev claimed that the FSB had successfully prevented some 80 terror attacks on Russian soil during the year, and had “neutralized” (read: arrested or, more likely, killed) “500 gunmen and senior militants.” (15) In spite of these successes, continued “criminal actions” in Ingushetia, Dagestan and Chechnya demonstrate that anti-terrorist operations should continue in a “systemic” manner, constituting the first task assigned to the agency. (16)

The FSB’s second priority, according to Medvedev, should be to target those individuals or corporations seeking to steal the “hundreds of billions of roubles” that constitute Russia’s stimulus package. Corruption and malfeasance are to be stopped in their tracks, because they could hinder Russia’s economic recovery.

Third, the FSB is to give increased focus to counterintelligence, since attempts by “foreign special services” to steal Russia’s “latest developments” have shown no signs of slackening. (17) Finally, the FSB is to maintain—and enhance—its border operations. Particular attention, not surprisingly, is to be paid to the South Ossetian and Abkhazian borders, in line with the obligations undertaken with those (putatively) independent states. (18)

Medvedev’s comments at the Presidium as reported thus far, are notable for the absence of any criticism of the agency. This fact is not surprising. His speech bears remarkable resemblance to comments made by his predecessor, Vladimir Putin in 2007 and 2008. (19) Medvedev’s remarks serve to substantiate the idea that the FSB is still the pre-eminent—and favored—Security Agency in Russia. In contrast to its rivals, especially MVD and GRU, it continues to remain free of censure or threat of dismemberment.
Source Notes:
(2) “Intelligence General Korabel’nikov To Stay In Office For Two More Years-General Staff, Part 2,” Interfax, 19 Mar 09; OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.
(3) See The ISCIP Analyst, Volume XV Number 13 (25 June 09)
(5) “Russia: Refutation of View that GRU Chief Resigned Due to Arrest of GRU Illegal. Article by Vladimir Vanin claiming that General Valentin Korabel’nikov, Commander of the Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU] of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, did not resign from his post because a GRU illegal was arrested in Poland, as it is being reported in the press, but because he believed that the military reformation in Russia was destroying the capabilities of his directorate. "Wow! They Captured the Russian James Bond!", Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye, 25 Jan 10; OSC Translated Text via World News Connection.
(6) Ibid.
(7) “Medvedev Orders Improvements to Interior Ministry Personnel Policy,” Interfax-AVN Online, 11 Jan 10; OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.
(8) “Applicants For Jobs To Take Polygraph Tests—Interior Minister,” ITAR-TASS, 23 Jan 10; OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.
(9) "Weapons, Ammunition Confiscated in Georgia’s rebel South Ossetia," South Ossetian Press and Information Committee Website, Tskhinvali, in Russian, 28 Jan 10; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.

(10) “Senior Al-Qa’idah Member Killed in Russia’s Dagestan,” RIA Novosti, 3 Feb 10; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.

(11) Ibid

(12) “Killed Al-Qa’ida Member Cooperated With Georgia—Russian State TV,” Rossiya 1, 3 Feb 10; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.

(13) “Georgia Dismisses Russia’s Latest Accusation of Al-Qa’idah Links,” Rustavi-2 TV, Tbilisi, in Georgian, 3 Feb 10; BBC Monitoring via Lexis-Nexis.


(15) “FSB Must Fight Terrorism, Thefts of Budget Money—President,” ITAR-TASS, 28 Jan 10; OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.


(17) “Medvedev Expects From FSB Prompt Reaction to Attempts to Collect Classified Information,” Interfax, 28 Jan 10, OSC Transcribed Text via World News Connection.


Officer’s resistance to change and corruption challenge reform

In 2009, the Russian military made notable progress toward achieving several institutional reforms aimed at transforming itself into a 21st century fighting force. In a year-end interview, Chief of the General Staff, General Makarov, noted the completion of two major structural reforms in the armed forces. The first was a “radically” new three-tier command system consisting of the General Staff, military districts, and brigades that he characterized as “much simpler, more reliable, [and] more economical.” (1) The second was the transformation of all regiments and divisions into “more mobile” brigades that are “easier” to equip and command. (2) Despite the progress, significant challenges remain in reforming the officer corps, as well as in the battle against officer corruption.

Russia’s ambitious military reform project faces many challenges, which include modernizing the military-industrial complex, building a professional non-commissioned officer corps, and improving quality of life programs. However, one of the more critical projects involves reforming the current officer corps, as well as training the next generation of officers. The scale of the project is daunting, including personnel cuts, structural reforms, and new training programs. In 2009, the General Staff cut 420 general officers and 205,000 officers from the force structure, leaving 780 flag officers and 150,000 officers (15% of the total force) to lead the reformed military. (3)

Such dramatic change and downsizing has placed significant stress on the officer corps. One manifestation of this stress has been a general resistance to the reform efforts. In fact, General Makarov “identified the ‘mentality’ of the officer corps as a major obstacle to reform.” (4) One example of the officer corps’ general malaise and resistance involved a colonel selected to command a brigade of 4,500 personnel who claimed he “didn’t know what to do with it.” (5) In another example, many officers simply continue their profession, despite having
been discharged from the military. (6) Finally, in one extreme case, an officer committed suicide in front of his formation in protest against the reforms. (7)

In order to overcome the resistance, the General Staff has placed a member of its staff in every brigade, who then reports to General Makarov regarding how well the field implements reforms. (8) In addition, the Ministry of Defense is utilizing a bonus system, called “Order 400” to reward financially the best performing officers. (9) The bonus has made it possible to compensate good officers with benefits comparable to their western counterparts. (10) In order to increase oversight and pay, the ministry of defense has increased its emphasis on training. In fact, General Makarov indicated they needed to change the “mentality” of the entire officer corps from preparing for the next Great Patriotic War to preparing for modern warfare. (11)

According to the Russian Defense Minister, Anatoliy Serdyukov, 2010 will be a year of training for the armed forces. (12) Although the initial focus will be on individual physical fitness, the armed forces will spend a significant amount of time training officers to command. The Defense Minister expects the training to sharpen an officer’s ability to coordinate the actions of subunits with other operational units in order to accomplish the combat mission. (13) The new three-tier command system has been an impetus for intense focus on training, since the military district commanders now command all forces in their district. Unfortunately, many district commanders have very little experience directing the various ground, naval and air forces under their command. (14) Defense Minister Serdyukov expects the training to remedy this shortfall in experience. (15)

In addition to combat training, the Defense Ministry is considering social and moral education for service members. (16) One potential reason for the increased emphasis in character building was an increase in military crime, especially among officers. According to the chief prosecutor, “military officers were committing one out of every four crimes.” (17) More than 40% of the crimes
committed by officers were connected with the theft of military property and funds. (18) Criminal activity was not the sole domain of junior officers. In 2009, the military convicted eight general officers, mostly for malfeasance, exceeding their authority and fraud. (19) One of the fastest growing crimes in the armed forces is corruption and it has the Russian Federation Chief Military Prosecutor, Sergei Fridinskiy “extremely worried.” (20)

In 2008, the armed forces lost 1.5 billion rubles to corruption and in 2009, the figure has exceeded 3 billion rubles. (21) According to one newspaper, the defense ministry could have acquired 55 new T-90 tanks with the funds lost last year alone. (22) In a recent high profile case, Major General Artamonov, Chief of the Baltic Fleet's ground and coastal troops, was charged with extorting money from subordinates, collecting more than 130,000 rubles. (23) In another case, a Russian Major was detained for demanding 100,000 rubles for accelerating the process of allocating military housing to a service member. Consequently, the Russian Ministry of Defense has initiated a two month inspection (to be completed on 1 March 10) “to put an end” to military corruption. (24)

Although the Russian military has made progress on several reform initiatives, the continued transformation of the Russian officer corps remains a challenge. Future success will depend on the Defense Ministry’s strategy to cut through the officer corps’ resistance to change, limited experience with joint operations and rampant corruption.

Source Notes:
(1) Top Russian general gives year-end progress report on military reform, Zvezda TV, 28 Dec 09 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Chief of Russian Gen Staff on army reform, personnel cuts, Interfax-AVN; 22 Dec 09 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(4) Russian chief of General Staff discusses army reform, Rossiya TV, 29 Dec 09 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Army cuts to aggravate housing problem - Russian Public Chamber, Interfax-AVN, 1 Feb 10 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(7) Nonbattle losses on the rise in Russian forces, Interfax-AVN, 1 Feb 10 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(8) Russian chief of General Staff, Rossiya TV, Ibid.
(9) The Results of the Year with Dmitry Medvedev, Official website of the Russian Federation president, 28 Dec 09; OSCE Translated Excerpt via World News Connection.
(10) Ibid.
(11) Russian chief of General Staff, Ibid.
(12) Russian defence minister discusses military reform, has faith in Bulava missile, Rossiyskaya gazeta, 27 Dec 09 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(13) Ibid.
(14) Ibid.
(15) Ibid.
(16) Russian paper: Defence Ministry hopes to fight corruption by educating personnel, Nezavisimaya gazeta, 30 Jan 10 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(17) Russian paper decries army corruption, Komsomolskaya Pravda, 30 Jan 10; via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(18) Corruption inquiry targets Russian Defence Ministry senior officials – source, Interfax-AVN, 13 Jan 10; via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
(19) Russian paper decries army corruption, Ibid.
(20) Ibid.
(21) Ibid.
(22) Ibid.
(23) High-ranking Russian military official to stand trial for extortion, Interfax-AVN, 2 Feb 10 via Lexis-Nexis Academic.
Medvedev approves new military doctrine
On February 5, 2010, during a meeting of key members of the Russian government including Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, Secretary of the National Security Council Nikolai Patrushev, as well as the heads of the military, Interior Ministry and FSB, President Dmitri Medvedev simultaneously approved two documents: the military doctrine and the fundamentals of the state policy on nuclear deterrence. Together, the documents are to form the foundation of Russian military and security policy through 2020. (1)

The new military doctrine is the third approved version in the history of post-Soviet Russia – the first dating back to 1993 under then-president Boris Yel'tsin, and the second to April 2000, approved by Medvedev's predecessor, then recently-elected president Putin. Following the official announcement, Patrushev emphasized that the new doctrine does not represent a repudiation of the former two, but rather “builds on the experience that has already been developed during the formulation of the previous doctrines,” noting, however, that “of course, new data concerning the situation both within and outside the country has been incorporated.” (2) Comparing the two doctrines, a few notable changes immediately come to mind.
Both the former and the new doctrines contain a list of the main external and internal military threats to Russia, and it is in these lists where the most significant changes have been made. In 2000, the number one external threat was considered to be “territorial claims against the Russian Federation; interference in the internal affairs of the Russian Federation; attempts to ignore the interests of the Russian Federation in the resolution of international crises, and to oppose the strengthening of its position as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world.” (3) Next on the list were: armed conflicts in regions bordering Russia; stationing of forces near Russia in a manner that alters the regional balance of power; and the expansion of military alliances that threaten the military security of Russia. Finally, at the bottom of the 2000 list of threats were: international terrorism, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and international crime and drug trafficking. (4)

According to the new doctrine announced by Medvedev, the number one external military threat facing Russia today is the “tendency to apply the military potential of NATO on a global scale, resulting in the violation of the norms of international law; and to move the military infrastructure of the member-states of NATO to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by means of expanding the alliance.” (5) Another item listed as a specific threat in 2010 that was absent in the 2000 doctrine is the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and other weapons that upset the existing strategic balance of power. (6) In addition to these new alleged external threats to Russian security, the order of the threats changed considerably. Thus, claims against Russian territories went from first place in the previous doctrine to fifth place in the new one, while the presence of nearby armed conflicts, previously named as the second-most imminent external threat, has moved to ninth. (7)

In terms of internal threats, both the previous and current doctrines list “overthrow of the constitutional order by force” as number one. Interestingly
enough, however, the presence of separatist and extremists armed groups, listed as the second-most serious internal security threat in 2000, (8) was omitted completely in the new doctrine. Neither is there any mention of domestic terrorism, organized crime, drug and weapons smuggling, or any other similar activities as internal security threats. The only mention of terrorism, in fact, is “international terrorism,” listed as an external threat. According to the new doctrine, the only internal security threats facing Russia in 2010, aside from the danger of violent revolution or a coup, are the “undermining of sovereignty of the Russian Federation” and the “disorganization of the organs of power.” (9)

Analyzing and comparing the 2000 and 2010 Russian military doctrines provides a useful gauge of the trajectory of Russian foreign policy thinking during that time frame. In particular, the identification of the supposed threats facing Russia, as well as the order in which they are presented, reflects, as the preambles to both doctrines state, a summation of the official viewpoints that guide the principles underlying Russian foreign and military policy. (10) Setting aside the vague reference to hypothetical claims against Russian territory, the 2000 doctrine states quite unambiguously that the most serious international threat facing Russia is the attempt by other powers to exclude it from taking part in the resolution of international crises – in other words, denying Russia its rightful role as a major international player. Of course, given the timing of the approval of the 2000 doctrine, just a year after the military intervention by NATO in Serbia, in the face of vehement Russian objections, such sentiment is hardly surprising. It is interesting, nonetheless, that a sentiment which, properly speaking, belongs to the category of emotional or psychological, is stated as a cornerstone of official doctrine. At any rate, it reflects rather accurately the siege mentality of Russia’s view of its role in the world at this period in its post-Soviet history.

In the new doctrine, the list of perceived threats to Russian security reflects a much more precisely-defined vision of Russia's strategic goals for the next decade. In naming the eastward expansion of NATO, along with the planned
deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems (particularly in former Warsaw Pact member states) as the primary external threats to Russian security, the doctrine prescribes that, during the next decade, Russian military (along with diplomatic, economic and other) resources are to be devoted first and foremost to the prevention of the aforementioned threats - or at least this is what follows logically from the principles outlined in the doctrine. How exactly this will happen, and to what extent it will be successful, of course, remains to be seen, but the implications of the new doctrine are significant. In particular, the changes between the new doctrine and the previous one reflect the evolution in Russia's self-perception from a country seeking desperately to retain (or regain) some semblance of international relevance, to one that has defined for itself a specific set of foreign policy objectives, which put it on a path of confrontation with both the United States and many of Russia's neighbors.

Both the previous and the new military doctrines, then, are in large measure derived from the official Russian position on a number of foreign policy issues considered to be of central importance at the time of the formulation of the respective documents. If these doctrines are indeed prescriptions for Russian military development during the next decade, they demonstrate the extent to which Russian strategic-military thinking focuses not on countering real, imminent security threats, but rather on pursuing geostrategic goals defined by “collective official opinion” as vital to the “national interest,” whatever that may mean. Such thinking, aside from being the hallmark of an aggressive (“expansionist”) state and inevitably provoking conflict, also carries the danger of turning a blind eye to real threats. The historic example of Stalin's preoccupation with confronting the Western democracies, leading him to sign a nonaggression pact with Hitler and ignore the imminent threat posed by Nazi Germany, comes immediately to mind. Similarly, domestic terrorism and violent separatism, which continue to be a real security threat (recently highlighted by the bombing of the Moscow-St. Petersburg high-speed train), have been given low priority, even as internal threats, in the new doctrine. Such disparity between real and imagined
security threats in Russian military-strategic thinking does not bode well for either Russia's external relations with other nations, or for its genuine security, during the upcoming decade.

Source Notes:
(2) “Utverzhdena voyennaya doktrina Rossiyskoy Federatsii,” (“Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation has been approved,)” from transcript of “Pervyy Kanal” (Channel One), 06 Feb 10 via http://www.1tv.ru/news/polit/160669.
(4) Ibid.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Ibid.
(10) Ibid.

Russian Federation: Energy Politics
By Creelea Henderson

Reorientation: ESPO points away from the West
European energy customers may find comfort in the presumption that, for all of its Eurasian singularities and nationalist policies, Russia remains steadfastly
oriented toward the west. The country’s energy trade certainly has pointed in that
direction—the vast majority of Russia’s total annual energy exports flow to
European markets across ports on the Baltic and Black Seas through the
western-bound Druzhba pipeline. (1) But a confluence of recent events has
begun to erode that sense of certainty. With the inauguration of a new pipeline
pumping oil across Eastern Siberia to China and the Pacific, Russia acquired the
infrastructure it needs to reorient a significant share of its energy trade toward
markets in the east.

In November 2009, Transneft, Russia’s oil pipeline monopoly, completed the first
branch of the East Siberia—Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline, a 1,675 mile stretch
that runs from Taishet, in Irkutsk Oblast, to Skovorodino in Amur Oblast, 42 miles
north of the Chinese border. (2) From there, Siberian crude volumes are
transported another 1,300 miles by railcar to a new Pacific export terminal at
Kozmino, the destination of the second phase of the ESPO trunkline, which is
scheduled for completion by 2012-2014. A spur under construction from
Skovorodino is expected to reach Daqing in northeastern China by the end of
2010. (3)

At a celebration to mark the opening of the new export terminal in Kozmino in
December 2009, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin told assembled officials that the
ESPO “is not just a pipe,” but rather, “a geopolitical project.” (4) His words give a
measure of the strategic importance that the Russian government has assigned
the ESPO pipeline. It was singled out as a top priority project in “Russian Energy
Strategy through 2030,” a report issued by the Ministry of Energy in November
2009 that set out a coordinated policy plan calling for an increase in Russia’s oil
exports to East Asia from 6 percent of the country’s total oil exports in 2009 to 25
percent by 2030. (5) Increased oil export volumes to the dynamic economies of
East Asia would, in turn, support a broad diversification strategy that projects
Russian energy exports into important global markets, where Japan, South
Korea, China, India, and the United States are all potential customers. European
countries remain important markets for Russian energy exports, though their share of Russia’s total exports will be steadily reduced over time.

In light of Russia’s announced strategy to diversify markets, of which ESPO represented the first step, it is understood that at some point the share of energy deliveries to Europe will be curtailed, although whether that will be measured in crude volumes or market share remains unclear. Russia has put the infrastructure in place to position itself as a swing producer between eastern and western markets, but without significant new sources of oil to fill pipelines flowing east and west, there is reason to suspect that Transneft, the pipelines operator, simply will re-route oil supplies from west to east, forcing up prices and reducing volumes available to customers in Europe, a scenario that Transneft officials will not rule out. (6) When oil began to flow east through the ESPO pipeline at the start of the new year, the immediate concern among Russia’s European customers was that oil deliveries would be cut back in other directions. (7) And, as a matter of fact, less than a month after the first branch of ESPO opened, the International Energy Agency reported that Russian loading schedules already showed a rerouting of crude oil from Baltic and Black Sea ports to the east. (8)

Apprehensions among western consumers are compounded by expectations in the industry that Russia soon will face a slump in crude production, as over half of the country’s major oil fields have already reached maturity and are in decline. (9) From 2005 to 2009, Russian production grew by about 0.42 million barrels per day, a figure representing a sharp drop from production levels between 2000 to 2004, when oil production grew by 2.55 million barrels per day. (10) In recent months, swelling oil production levels in a new generation of oil fields in Eastern Siberia have more than balanced production declines in the mature oil fields of Western Siberia. However, with the arrival of the ESPO, Eastern Siberian oil production is now dedicated to the eastern route. (11)
Most of the crude supplying the ESPO will derive from Eastern Siberian green fields: Verkhnechonsk, developed by TNK-BP and Rosneft; Talakan, developed by Surgutneftegas; and Vankor field, developed by Rosneft. (12) In 2010, the first phase of the ESPO will transport 300,000 barrels of oil per day, volumes that are expected to double in 2011. (13) Transneft anticipates a one million barrel per day boost in national oil production by 2012, which would provide enough oil to fill exports in both directions. (14) When the second phase of the pipeline is complete, the ESPO will have a total capacity of 1.6 million barrels per year, nearly one-third of Russia’s total energy exports in 2009. (15)

Russia’s decision to reorient its energy exports away from the west has given its traditional European trading partners pause to reassess certain assumptions about the relationship with their dominant energy supplier. One notion that has been called into question is the idea that, even between sometime adversaries, the bond of mutual dependency is enough to ensure that suppliers and consumers will deal fairly with one another. Benita Ferrero Waldner, the EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood, advocated that view when commenting on the complex and at times difficult relationship between Russia and the EU: “Just under 40% of the EU’s gas imports rely on one monopoly alone: Gazprom. But Russia is equally dependent on us: over 60% of Russian oil and gas exports flow to the EU and Russia’s pipelines are largely directed towards us.” (16) Where there is mutual dependency, there are opportunities for mutual benefits, she concluded. But Russia’s decision to redirect a significant proportion of its oil supplies to other markets suggests that mutual dependency only works when neither party has a better option. Professor Marshall Goldman anticipated the impending collision between European expectations and Russian pipeline diplomacy in Petrostate: “Whenever Europeans try to reassure themselves that they need not fear that the Russians will use energy to bully them because the Russians need Europe to buy the gas, Putin runs off to Asia with promises that even though it will be very costly, Russia will ship gas from fields the Europeans assumed had been set aside for their
use.” (17) According to this view, the ESPO serves as both a pipeline carrying energy supplies to customers in the east, and a stick to shake at balky customers in the west.

Source Notes:
(1) Although there is universal agreement that European markets consume the lion’s share of Russia’s energy exports, estimates of Europe’s share of Russia’s total energy trade vary from 60 to 90 percent. Sixty percent of oil and gas imports to EU: “Russia, EU have difficult relations dominated by energy – Waldner,” EU-Russia Centre, 14 Oct 09 via (http://www.eu-russiacentre.org/news/russia-eu-difficult-relations-dominated-energy-waldner.html); European markets receive 90 percent of Russian exports: Wojciech Kono?czuk, “Russia launches its own oil pipeline to Asia,” Ordons News, 12 Jan 10 via (http://www.ordons.com/201001122319/russia-launches-its-own-oil-pipeline-to-asia.html).


(9) Russia Country Analysis Brief, EIA, May 08 via (http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Russia/Oil.html).


(12) Russia Country Analysis Brief, EIA, May 08 via (http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Russia/Oil.html).


