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Military Reforms in Russia

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The Russian military, with its nuclear capability, is probably Russia's last holdover from its former superpower status. The success or failure of Russian military reform could very much influence Russia's place in the regional and global security equation—whether Russia becomes an asset, a liability, or something else.

After many unsuccessful attempts at military reform in the last decade, the latest started at the end of 2000, making prospects for military reform in Russia somewhat more promising. Strong political support from President Vladimir Putin has engendered many factors—at least as pertain to the military dimension of national security—which prompt a favorable view of the current efforts at reform in Russia. These include new military doctrine, vast intellectual and high-technology potential for the defense industry, and rich military traditions and experience.

However, a number of factors on the national level could blunt the success of military reform in Russia considerably, or simply make it irrelevant. These factors include the significant influence of the Soviet heritage (i.e., a "superpower" mentality, ethnic divisions, anti-Western politics), the acceleration of negative trends stemming from years of Mikhail Gorbachev's and Boris Yeltsin's attempts at reforms (i.e., weak economy, poor infrastructure, severe demographic crisis, etc.), and general deficiencies inherent in Russia's post-imperial (some would argue still imperial) structure.

Tension continues at the heart of military reform in Russia. On the one hand, since 1991 there has been a tendency toward a much more open and cooperative security relationship with the West, a change which could lead to a thoroughly transformed military, as well as Western assistance in transforming it. On the other hand, military policy continues to reflect apprehension of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

(NATO) and gives priority to reviving Russia's military-industrial potential and its self-reliance. This apprehension limits the scope of military reform. At the same time, continuing economic weakness thwarts Russia's ability to achieve the goals for reform.

Russia's economic weakness, aggravated by its inability to end the policy of opposing the United States and NATO rather than cooperating with them, is at the heart of this chapter's largely negative answers to such questions as: Is Russia capable of ending its conscript system and establishing a professional army? Can Russia balance a strong nuclear capability with a robust conventional force structure? Moreover, the evident weakness of Russia's system of democratic civilian control over the military does not allow a definite answer to the question, "Can Sergei Ivanov make a difference as defense minister?"

This chapter discusses the prospects for military reform in Russia, and in this context it also touches upon the issue of Chechnya, inasmuch as this conflict has profoundly dangerous implications for Russia's military future and even for the future of Russia's statehood. Chechnya's aftermath could be much more dangerous for modern Russia than Vietnam was for the United States in the 1970s.

PROSPECTS FOR MILITARY REFORM

During the last ten years Russia repeatedly attempted to expedite the reform of its military. All of the attempts were misguided, mismanaged, and unsupported by resources. Each time the result was basically the same—a reduction in numbers and the failure to change the deficient legacy inherited from the Soviet era. So, at the end of 2000, President Putin had to admit, "The current state of the troops and their leadership—morale, discipline, and military-technical state—still do not match the goals or the scope of the tasks facing them. We continue to talk and have meetings while the flywheel of reform runs mostly idle."[1]

In January 2001, President Putin adopted the Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces, to be in effect until 2005. The above-mentioned plan is secret and only excerpts were published. The State Program of Armaments Development, 2001–10, which logically has to be an integral part of the military reform plan, is still awaiting presidential approval.

From the information made public, the basic outline of the current military reform effort in Russia is as follows: 1) the army and the state power structure should be optimized, and parallel ineffective structures should be liquidated;[2] 2) the number of active servicemen should be reduced with simultaneous improvement of troop quality; the reduction of about 600,000 personnel from all military formations already has been approved, including 365,000 servicemen and 120,000 civilian personnel from the Defense

Ministry (currently employing 1.2 million military personnel) over the next three years; and 3) the defense budget is to be balanced from the current 70 percent (personnel) versus 30 percent on research and development (R&D), acquisition, and operations and management (O&M), in favor of a 60 percent to 40 percent ratio by 2006, and 50 percent to 50 percent by 2011, etc.[3]

The reform looks ambitious, and has the potential to become at least a qualitative success. However, the fact that the plan is secret provokes suspicion that the substantiation of the basic figures may not be strong enough and that the plan's developers were mostly concerned with avoiding criticism, rather than soliciting much-needed parliamentary and public support for the reform. In this case, if in the course of implementation the plan appears to lack proper resources and to not be well-coordinated with national priorities, Russia will ultimately have just one more reduction and restructuring of the military—meaning, another failed attempt at military reform.

To assess the prospects of military reform in Russia as they look now, the issue must be viewed through the prism of key factors on both national and military levels, which could influence the final outcome of the reform:

1) *Leadership*—political and military leadership;
2) *Strategy*—national security strategy (concept) and military doctrine;
3) *Resources*—economic and technological base for military reform; and
4) *People*—the country's demography and staffing of the military.

The combination of these factors will ultimately shape the prospects for military reform in Russia.

LEADERSHIP

In terms of the post–Cold War role of civilian political leadership, Russia could be defined as a country traveling down the same road of transformation as the countries of central Europe. In fact, President Putin is determined to move Russia in the same direction. In addition, many indicators demonstrate that civilian leadership is now deeply involved in the process of military reform. For example, the wording of the new Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation unequivocally and specifically puts responsibility for providing "leadership of the construction, preparation, and use of military organization" on the president, who is the supreme commander in chief of the armed forces. Such clarity was not typical in previous documents.

After almost two years at the top of the Russian hierarchy, Putin continues to enjoy the unparalleled support of the Russian public, which is an

important asset for any leader initiating reform. According to recent polls, more than 70 percent of Russians approve of Putin's work. Even more compelling proof that Putin intends to be an effective supreme commander in chief is his decision to appoint Sergei Ivanov, one of his most trusted men and his national security adviser, as minister of defense. There were numerous speculations about the hidden agenda behind this appointment, with the primary reason being Putin's realization that his vision of a strong, consolidated future for Russia will never come true without the restoration of Russia's military power. Therefore, this mission was entrusted to the best executive available.

Can Sergei Ivanov make a difference as defense minister? The short answer is probably yes. He is forty-eight years old and is a retired general of foreign intelligence. He prefers clear and concise reports. He is not superstitious and never forgives treason. He has never made friends with any of Russia's "oligarchs." He believes in a strong regulatory role for the state in the economy. As secretary of Russia's National Security Council, Ivanov proved to be preserving too much of the Soviet confrontational mentality. He has the reputation of being a conceptual designer respected by Putin—he was the key figure behind the preparation of the new Plan of the Development of the Armed Forces. It remains to be seen whether he will also be a persuasive and steady manager, capable of bringing about change in an environment as conservative as that of the armed forces. Therefore, the long answer to the above question will depend significantly upon how he manages his relations with the military brass, which represent a specific caste.

Many Russian generals reached their current rank based less on meritorious service than by having an aptitude for appeasing their senior civilian and military masters. They produced good shows during military exercises or provided good entertainment and lavish gifts for the inspectors and members of higher "commissions." These men may or may not have been criminal or dishonest at heart; they simply knew how the system worked and became masters at working it to their advantage. The result of applying that kind of "military leadership and management" led to difficulties in Afghanistan, and continued into the "new era" where it brought about the debacle in the first Chechen war and will apparently not bring much better results in the second. No wonder that during the 1990s numerous Russian generals were facing criminal charges for theft and abuse of power (though few were actually sentenced). So why should Russia's military leadership be expected to embrace civilian control, and (worse yet) modern methods of accountability in military training, operations, and management?

Andrei Nicolaev, retired general of the army and current head of the Duma's Committee on Defense, says that 90 percent of Russian generals are decent people, but somehow "it is not they who are holding the wheel

of the main military structures.... On the surface always appear some mediocre figures."[4] Outside observers immediately predicted: "Ivanov is certain to run into conflict with the General Staff, which will resist any attempt to reduce its role to 'technicalities.' In this new bureaucratic clash, Kvashnin's General Staff could seek to mobilize support from the cohort of 'Chechen generals' and emerge as the center of opposition to any political solution in Chechnya. ... The Chechen generals ... are essentially demanding rebuilding the Soviet military machine, only slightly reduced in scale, and Putin might find it as difficult to explain to them the new economic realities, as it is to 'pacify' Chechnya."[5]

It did not take long for evidence of resistance to show in the open. In June, *Nesavisimaya gazeta* (Independent gazette) insisted that "Anatoliy Kvashnin (chief of the General Staff) is attempting to subdue all meaningful structures of the Ministry of Defense in order to leave Sergei Ivanov without real levers of power, to make him totally dependant on the chief of the General Staff. "According to General Kvashnin," the article continues, "the minister of defense should be the head of the support apparatus of the armed forces. The rest—military policy, military construction, financial issues—must be left to the General Staff."[6]

Kvashnin's position has two main roots. The first involves his resistance and ambitions to be the exclusive defense (not just military) adviser to the president for at least two major areas (Chechnya's military strategy and military reform priorities). He has received clear support from President Putin. The second is simply the traditional military bias against an inexperienced "civilian" outsider, who presumably cannot understand the true nature of the military.

However, an open conflict between Ivanov and Kvashnin (similar to that between former Minister Marshall Igor Sergeev and Kvashnin) is unlikely—both have the respect of the president. Relations between Ivanov and Kvashnin could be termed as "peaceful coexistence." Ivanov's political position vis-à-vis Kvashnin is much stronger, but the military brass, especially from the land forces, supports Kvashnin. Despite regular hints in the media about the pending ouster of Kvashnin, his dismissal is not certain. Until the country's political leadership decides that it is time to proceed to a political solution in Chechnya, or until Putin can find a replacement trusted by the ranks, as well as by himself, Kvashnin is likely to remain in his post.

The main problem here is not just the tension between a civilian minister and the top military officer, but the fact that civilian control over the military in Russia is severely handicapped now. After the Soviet Communist Party lost control of the military, Russia did not substitute viable democratic civilian control. Rather, control is limited mainly to the president and his top civilian officials, with no meaningful influence from the Russian parliament or society in general. This makes the top military personnel too influential in Russia compared to Western democratic society. Moreover,

there is practically no system of civilian supervision within the military structure. In essence, the military basically controls itself and, where not directly threatening civilian power, it often holds modern Russian civilian leadership "hostage" due to lack of proper oversight. Important examples include Chechnya, the Slatina airfield takeover in Kosovo in 1999 after the end of NATO's air campaign, Russia's military-driven policy toward the Caucasus and Central Asia, etc.

The great strategist Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) pointed to a trinity in military affairs between ways, means, and political ends. When the ways and means do not support the political ends, they need to be reformed. In this regard, if in modern Russia the process of threat assessment is not quite relevant, then consequently the future model (ways) and the reformed military itself (means) in Russia is very much at risk of becoming inadequate to the nature of any future threat, as it was many times in the distant and recent past. The first war in Chechnya is a vivid example.

Let us look at what the commander in chief of the Russian Armed Forces (President Putin), tells his generals about one possible direction of the threat: "In the West, unfortunately, there are still forces that live by the laws of the Cold War. They still see our country as the main geopolitical enemy. In our consciousness this is largely in the past, but unfortunately, it persists in some circles in the West.… [Chechnya] should never be a source of radicalization of our population, and *immersion of Russia in the bloody mire of regional ethnic conflicts, [is] something our geopolitical adversaries dream of*."[7] What Western actor(s) did Putin consider to be Russia's "geopolitical adversaries"? Read on.

Furthermore, Minister of Defense Ivanov has demonstrated marked cohesion with his president: "NATO likes to repeat that it doesn't view Russia as a threat, but its expansion eastward continues unchecked," he said. "This detail, and Washington's plans to build a missile defense system, are the stumbling blocks in Russia-NATO relations. It doesn't look like Russia will be content with the role of 'junior partner' in its relations with the alliance. *Russia can bare its teeth too, as the West knows very well*."[8]

Russia's Concept of Foreign Policy, as well as Russia's National Security Concept (both adopted by Putin in 2000), plainly imply that the main threat to Russia is the global hegemony of a single superpower in a unipolar world. The only superpower is the United States, which is also the key NATO player; thus Russia, by implication, will be in opposition to NATO.

Evidently, in the absence of real—rather than hypothetical or perceived—issues of conflict between Russia and NATO, the main reason for Russia's continuing opposition to NATO is probably internal: remnants of post-imperial trauma, the wounded psyche of a former superpower, the difficulty of openly admitting weakness vis-à-vis the United States and NATO. One example of this policy is found in the attempts to drive a wedge between NATO and the European Union over security matters.

Russia strongly opposes NATO enlargement, but at the same time seems much friendlier toward the European Union and sees no danger in EU expansion. Russia appears to view the European Union's Common European Security and Defense Policy (CESDP) as an alternative to NATO and has expressed a desire to take an active part in CESDP. Indeed, hopes that CESDP will move away from NATO and away from the United States are rather common among top Russian military officials.[9]

Some experts believe that after the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, relations between Russia and the United States may change. But so far the traditional anti-American agenda is still alive in the Russian military. Evidence exists that Russia's military and security officials are very concerned about a possible U.S. presence in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia north of Afghanistan: Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Among their basic concerns were not so much terrorism and the Taliban but possible spying over Russian military facilities by American planes and possible weakening of Russia's position in those countries.[10] According to the *Moscow Times*, Russia's top military brass was lobbying very hard against U.S. use of air bases in Uzbekistan or Tajikistan. "The problem is Russian policy in the region is not conducted by politicians, but by military people," an associate professor of history at Moscow State University said. "And unfortunately they lack vision: They still see America as the main enemy and the repressive governments as their main allies."

Nevertheless, the new Military Doctrine adopted by President Putin in 2000 is also less confrontational to the West. It is based on the realistic appraisal of politics and economics, rather than on ideology. The new doctrine stresses its own "transitional character," drops the previous tradition of mentioning of "world war," and puts more emphasis on diplomatic efforts as an important tool for avoiding conflict escalation. This looks like sober recognition of Russia's relative weakness vis-à-vis the perceived adversaries in the West in terms of conventional weapons and more reliance on nuclear power. Indeed, while the Russian military's nuclear component could still be regarded as on a par with NATO's (Russia has 9,196 nuclear warheads versus the United States at 8,876, Great Britain at 185, and France at 348[11]), Russia's conventional forces after the recent round of NATO enlargement are roughly 1:6 compared to NATO's.

Can Russia balance a strong nuclear capability with a robust conventional force structure or must it choose one or the other? Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov also speaks about the "vital necessity of the balanced development of strategic nuclear forces and conventional forces." He argues that "to counterpoise them is wrong in principle. Both components are necessary." Their development, according to Ivanov, certainly needs to be prioritized, with strategic nuclear forces maintained at the "minimum appropriate level required to guarantee the infliction of unac-

ceptable damage to any aggressor under any condition." The priority for conventional forces is on strengthening the "forces of permanent readiness," capable of accomplishing any mission when engaged in "possible armed conflicts and local wars."[12] However, it is common knowledge that the current "strong nuclear capability" has very dire perspectives. "With a modern ballistic missile program struggling to produce ten rockets a year,"[13] financially strapped Russia will have to significantly cut its nuclear arsenal soon. For example, in the year 2000, only four missiles were produced instead of the ten that had been planned.

Additionally, the new Military Doctrine envisions a new role for nuclear weapons, which could be used "in response to large-scale aggression using conventional weapons in situations critical to national security." It is open to speculation about who, when, and how it will be decided that a situation is "critical." This ambiguity could be interpreted as an attempt to offset conventional weakness by using nuclear deterrence, but with an ambiguous hint that the threshold of resorting to nuclear weapons could be significantly lower.

The potential also remains for Russia to ignore real security threats (Muslim radicalism, hotspots in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, and economic and social problems) in favor of a focus on perceived and proclaimed security threats (NATO "expansion," U.S. "hegemony," etc.). In this case even the bright prospects for military reform in Russia could once again make the future Russian military unprepared for real threats, and leave it without proper strategic allies.

RESOURCES

What are the foundations for Russia's security policy in terms of its economy and high technology? Opinions about the prospects for Russia's economy range very wide. There are many doomsday predictions about Russia's economy either defaulting in 2003, or an infrastructure catastrophe not later than 2005, yet current statistics say that the country's economy is growing, if not booming. In 2000, federal budget revenues as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) rose to more than 16 percent, while GDP grew more than 7 percent. Arms production and arms sales have grown too.

This might appear as an optimistic outlook for Russian security policy in terms of its economy. But the previous years left a heavy burden on the ability of Russia's economy to sustain the country's defense. It is difficult to disagree with Defense Minister Ivanov: "We must be realists; besides, we must keep in mind that the state's economic potentialities are not limitless."[14] Even after the second significant year of growth, Russian military output in 2000 represented only 17.5 percent of the 1991 level.

Again, Putin's leadership plays a decisive and encouraging role: "We have to know," he says, "the prognosis of economic development, to know how much we will have in the state budget through the next ten years, how much we should spend on defense and where specifically."[15] However, Russians also have to keep in mind that implementation of ambitious plans in Russia could be easily influenced by many unexpected events. The most dangerous of the potential impediments is probably the evident and endless infrastructure crisis. Ten years of scarce investment into pipelines, railways, power supply lines, storage facilities, bridges, etc., and mismanagement—even adventurism—brought about continuous natural and technological disasters, such as Chechnya and the Kursk submarine, and power shortages in the Far East.[16]

At the same time, if Russia's economy achieves the development predicted by Putin's analysts, by the year 2010 GDP will have grown 70 percent. This figure suggests that the defense budget could more than double from its current U.S.$7 billion to U.S.$15 billion by 2010. In terms of Western purchasing power parities—taking into account the low cost of Russia's labor, intellect, and resources—this figure might be able to purchase U.S.$30 billion to $40 billion worth of military power. But even then, Russia's budget will be approximately at the level of France's or Britain's budgets. Will this allow it to achieve military parity with the United States, China, or a united Europe? Certainly not. Russia might be able to put pressure on its neighbors, but it can do that now, even without reform. It probably suggests that in terms of economic impact on military reform, Russia ultimately will have to either rely primarily on nuclear forces against perceived "geopolitical opponents" or rely on conventional forces for dealing with local conflicts only. This is exactly what is envisioned in the new Military Doctrine, but it could still be too costly. Or Russia will have to take sides (i.e., form an alliance with either the United States, China, or Europe).

Even during the Soviet period, the military-industrial complex (VPK) devoted only a limited part of its capacity to weapons production. This was a deliberate aspect of state mobilization policy, which placed a premium on having spare capacity that could be quickly reoriented to military production in the event of war. Today, because of economic collapse and unemployment, the Russian defense industry uses even a smaller portion of its overall capacity than it did in Soviet times. As a result, there is a vast network of facilities that can be brought into production if investments and orders arrive. Unfortunately, however, these facilities are often in a state of dilapidation bordering on entropy. Moreover, lack of investment has impaired testing equipment and stopped development of many prospective weapons systems in favor of upgrading existing ones. Therefore, it is not accidental that the State Program of Armaments Development has considered directing as much as 40 to 45 percent of the state defense orders to R&D through the first six to eight years of reform, to end in 2010. Under

this plan, the emphasis until 2005 would be placed on the modernization of armaments only, and only after that would Russia start the first significant acquisitions of new equipment. According to the first Vice Prime Minister Ilia Klebanov, "to have the possibility to buy new arms requires [the] concentration of [the] defense economy and maximum improvement of its effectiveness. Still, new arms should not be overly expensive."[17]

Therefore, to revive the defense production needed for military reform, Russia's economy must continue to grow and Soviet-era production and research facilities must be brought online. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited 73 percent of the Soviet Union's 55,000 defense production and research facilities. The Russian share of finished products of R&D in the former Soviet Union comprised as much as 91 percent. Whether Russia will be able to make good out of this situation will depend upon its ability to conduct the planned consolidations and mergers, and most of all on the ability to implement effective management, which Russia (and the former Soviet Union) often lacked before. This is especially evident in high technology areas. While in separate areas Russia had and still has state of the art technologies and products (which could serve as major deterrents to a would-be aggressor), the overall system of management is flawed. The Soviet tradition not to pursue cost effectiveness and its disregard of personnel's needs in favor of higher state goals could negate the benefits of having infrastructure and design.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Moscow lost approximately 40 percent of its conventional military potential. Not only did it lose a huge chunk of troops, military infrastructure, and defense industry, but it also lost a pool of highly reliable military personnel from Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia, etc. This loss is further exacerbated by the current deep demographic crisis, leading to the significant weakening of Russia's internal cohesion and geopolitical weight. "Since 1994 the adult population of Russia has fallen by two million, its young population by six million. In the past ten years mortality rates grew 31.8 percent for the whole population and 38.5 percent for the able-bodied population. In the past fifteen years the number of teenagers diagnosed as addicted to drugs has risen fifteen times."[18] Consider also: "Once American boys reach the age of sixteen, 88 to 90 percent of them go on to reach the age of sixty. But in Russia, only 58 to 60 percent of sixteen-year-old boys reach the age of sixty. Last summer … he [Putin] warned the country that it could lose another 22 million people by 2015 [currently the Central Intelligence Agency estimates Russia's population at 146 million]."[19] According to former Secretary of Russia's National Security Council Andrei Kokoshin, it is demography that prompts the transition to the professional army: "We can't avoid [the] transition to [a] professional army, at least because of demographic reasons. Compensation for the reduction of its strength is possible only by improving the quality of training."[20]

Yet today, as for the last 127 years, Russia's armed forces are supplied by a draft: since January 1, 1874, when recruitment was abolished and despite Yeltsin's decree No. 722 of May 16, 1996, ordering a changeover to a volunteer system for all soldiers' and sergeants' positions from spring 2000. The major purpose of that declaration was probably political—not military—to increase the public's rating of the incumbent Yeltsin in the presidential elections in 1996.

Today the political declarations have turned promising once again. President Putin stated that: "A professional army is the goal to which it is possible and necessary to strive. To a significant degree we already have a professional army today: the navy, air force, missile forces, some other arms and services are 80 to 90 percent equipped with professionals. But can we reduce the draft today? I think that we can gradually reduce [the] draft and bring it to the minimum … supposedly by 2010."[21]

Minister of Defense Ivanov said he "would slowly phase out conscription and train a smaller professional force—albeit in an evolutionary manner."[22] However, comments from professional military sound less optimistic. The Russian Defense Ministry believes that in the next five years Russia will not be able to form a professional army with sufficient national defense capability. This declaration was made by Colonel General Igor Puzanov, a top figure at the Defense Ministry. Puzanov agreed that the Russian military backs President Putin's intention of creating a professional army, but said lack of financing makes it impossible. General Puzanov said that the sums now allocated for the army are enough "only for providing food for servicemen." But they are not enough for the training process that would permit perfecting the professional skills of soldiers and officers.[23] The problem is not the conservatism of bloodthirsty generals or corrupt officials from the local recruitment commissions. Rather, Puzanov has once again proved the obvious: the key questions are not the pure desires (or wishful thinking) of politicians or the public, and not the formal difference between the ways of recruitment (whether by draft or by signing the contract). The key issue is that real professional soldiers, to be truly professional, should be intelligent and physically fit, they should be given all the conditions to gain and maintain their professional levels, and last, but not least, they should be paid accordingly if the country wants the best to stay in service. If those conditions are not met, we will see a continuation of today's catastrophic trend, reflected in the fact that one-third of all officers who retired from the armed services in 2000 were under the age of thirty.[24] Thanks to this attrition, almost half of all platoons are without a platoon leader. In sum, the officer corps is melting away.

As another Russian general admits, "A conscript costs us 17,900 rubles a year, while a professional soldier costs 32,000 rubles. A professional army would require the corresponding infrastructure, which would also cost a lot."[25] Right now a Russian contract soldier (corporal) is paid 1,294 rubles

(U.S.$44) a month; a *praporschik* (warrant officer) 1,541 rubles (U.S.$52); a lieutenant (platoon leader) 1,626 rubles (U.S.$55); a lieutenant colonel (battalion commander) 2,562 rubles (U.S.$86).[26] But even if those sums are tripled, it will hardly be enough, because of many other requirements, competition from the commercial sector, etc. Russia will hardly be able to pay for everything needed for the military to become professional by the year 2010.

The question of whether Russia is capable of ending its conscript system and establishing a professional army will not be answered until 2010. However, in terms of the prospects for military reform, a totally professional military is not the major priority. For example, it could be effective for Russia's armed forces to have 70 percent as a professional cadre and another 30 percent rotating as conscripts and then going into the reserves with further periodic training. But Russia must first improve its obsolete military education system, increase social benefits for servicemen, and finally change its military ethics in order to get rid of such current problems as *dedovschina* (hazing of draftees by their senior comrades), corruption, and abuse of power. The last challenge is no less challenging than ending the conscript system, but requires less money, which means Russia may be able to afford it sooner rather than later.

THE CHECHNYA FACTOR

Chechnya might be worse for Russia than Vietnam was for the United States. In fact, if Russia disintegrates, the inability of the country's leadership to find a peaceful solution to the Chechnya problem would likely be the most important factor.

If Russia's leadership finds no peaceful solution to the unsolved Chechnya problem, further problems could ignite. The conflict could spill over the borders of the breakaway republic and destabilize the entire northern Caucasus. The Russian population may lose faith in the political leadership of the country. Regions could start moving away from Moscow. Russia's Muslim republics (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and the others), which are growing in population as the population shrinks in non-Muslim areas, are becoming more influential and may reorient toward influences outside the country.

Continuing the war in Chechnya is fraught with another danger: it has a negative influence on how military and security forces should deal with the civilian population. This can potentially influence the hostile behavior of the military not only in Chechnya but in other places too. The Russian military feels a sense of desperation when it bears the losses on "native soil."

In the "first" Chechen war Russian troops officially lost 3,959 persons, with 1,196 missing in action. Unofficial statistics put the number of military

losses as high as 25,000 and the number of civilian losses between 25,000 and 100,000.[27] To this day statistics on the "second" Chechen war suggest that Russian troops already have sustained nearly the amount of casualties of the "first" war—more than 3,400 have been killed and more than 10,000 wounded.

But the population, and even the political leadership, seemingly lack proper appreciation for the casualties. According to Putin, "Often these are losses caused by lack of professionalism and not infrequently lack of elementary discipline. Such losses today are unforgivable."[28] This sense of desperation, accumulated with other similar feelings, can possibly precipitate unpredictable behavior by the military.

Certainly, war in Chechnya also brings many "advantages" to the military. It offers combat experience, enables the testing of new military equipment, exposes weaknesses, and prompts speedy reforms. However, the overall effect of this campaign at the national level could be catastrophic. As Russian military expert Pavel Baev recently suggested, "The most difficult decision [for Putin] is about Chechnya and, paradoxical as it may seem, the best case for Moscow in this war would be to return to political solutions and compromises, accepting yet another military defeat."[29]

Russia has three major policy options for trying to solve the Chechnya problem: political, military/security, and evolutionary. The most widely known political solution is that of former Vice Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov. This plan has two parts. First, make Chechnya a special subject of the Russian Federation and try to solve the problem by economic and administrative means. If the first approach fails, then in several years separate the mountainous territory of Chechnya from Russia and call it a "rebellious territory" with maximum isolation, giving the Chechen people the right to choose whether they live in the "flat" Russian territory or the mountainous "rebellious" one.

Regarding a possible military/security solution, some Russian security experts are seriously discussing the possibility of Russia adopting a policy akin to "the only good Chechen is a dead Chechen." This policy would be based on the assumption that most of the active, able-bodied male Chechen population would be physically exterminated. The Russian liberal democrat and leader of the Yabloko Party, Grigoriy Yavlinsky, in his address at the Nobel Conference in Oslo, Norway, recently warned that the policy of fighting the entire Chechen nation rather than just criminal elements brings growing disillusionment with Moscow's policy in the northern Caucasus.[30]

An evolutionary solution would entail a continuation of the current situation in hopes of wearing down the opposing force and attempting to find collaborationist locals. Russia would seek to break the will of the fighters by military and economic means; block sources of human and materiel for the rebels; and finally persuade the Chechen population to become part of Russia.

These solutions, though different, bear at least one resemblance—they each involve the possibility of marginalizing either the political leadership of the country, the military establishment, or the security services, and are ultimately fraught with instability and possible disintegration of Russia in the end. A political solution may alienate the military and security services, a military solution could make the political leadership hostage to the military and security apparatus, and an evolutionary approach bears danger for all.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pace of military reform under Putin has noticeably intensified, but many key factors within Russia's military organization suggest that success will only occur under favorable conditions. The general prospects for military reform in Russia are still at significant risk of being held hostage to the national-level problems.

Table 6.1 Basic Prospects for Military Reform in Russia

	Leadership	Strategy	Resources	People	Chechnya
National level	+?	–	+?	–	–
Military level	–	+	+	+?	+?

This table shows that prospects for military reform in Russia on the strategic (national) level are not very optimistic and questionable at best. However, within the military establishment itself the prospects look somewhat better and could possibly become the basis for noticeable progress, especially if Russia succeeds in further development of civilian control over the military and builds an effective military leadership selection system based on true merit, rather than personal connections. Past and current complicated relations between the minister of defense and the chief of the General Staff are certain to be of the same conflictive nature without solution of the above-mentioned problems.

In general, such a picture probably means that, despite the best efforts of Russia's defense-related agencies, the final outcome remains at risk. It could be hampered either by an inaccurate threat assessment on the strategic level, or the debilitating influence of the demographic situation, or the likely negative political consequences of the war in Chechnya. And these negative factors and misjudgments exist despite the political leadership's priority interest in military reform and its determination to provide necessary resources for the armed services. In sum, prospects for success of military reform in Russia are shaky.

As far as policy recommendations for the United States are concerned, analysis of past and current patterns in the development of Russian security

policy in relation to the United States and NATO indicates that this policy derives from two major characteristic trends. The first trend, which is still stronger and generally dominant, could be defined as "assertive" and is based on Russia's continuous efforts to restore "Russian greatness," in particular by restoring a strong military capable of countering the "plots" of Western "geopolitical enemies." This is a policy more attuned to the desire for superpower status rather than to the real needs of the Russian people and Russian military. It is characterized by the demand to have equal say with the United States and NATO in all "geopolitical" issues and by Russian attempts to establish a "Russian sphere of influence" recognized by the United States and NATO. Another trend that could be defined as [reluctantly] "pragmatic" is less evident and is characterized by Russia's realization of the need to cooperate with the United States and NATO, and by a realization of the real benefits of this cooperation.

The question is still open as to which of the two major tendencies will prevail—the desire to show an "arrogant" United States its "proper" place vis-à-vis Russia by spending scarce resources on nuclear armaments, or a sober understanding that an "imperial virus" and opposition to the United States are exhausting Russia and making her spend scarce resources inefficiently.

Consequently, the United States and NATO will have to counter those two trends by adopting a more or less symmetrical approach, which could basically consist of two major complementary components: 1) "Engagement" through the continuation and strengthening of attempts to engage Russia in more cooperative relations and to persuade it of the nonthreatening character of U.S. policy; and 2) "Restriction" of the benefits for Russia in cooperating with the United States and NATO, as well as development of impediments and lost opportunities for Russia in case it chooses to continue with its confrontational approach.[31]

For example, on one hand, it was not that impossible for NATO countries to adopt a more favorable approach on cooperation with Russia by making a positive decision on a Ukrainian-Russian bid for medium transport aircraft An-70 (An-7x), and it was not that impossible to implement former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's 1998 proposal for a joint U.S.-Russian peacekeeping brigade. But the West's domestic agenda and NATO experts' skepticism prevailed, and another golden opportunity to bring Russia closer to the West vanished.

On the other hand, if Russia successfully vetoes the accession of the Baltic countries into NATO, it will mean that the United States and NATO are still prone to a "Russia first" policy when it concerns Russia's self-proclaimed "sphere of influence," but still favor a "Russia out" policy when it concerns more vital interests of Western countries, the United States included. Such an approach is a remnant of the Cold War and provokes a freezing of Russia's confrontational mentality, rather than healing it.

NOTES

1. Remarks by President Vladimir Putin at the Meeting of Senior Officers of Russia's Armed Forces, Moscow, November 22, 2000, http://www.mid.ru.

2. Vladimir Putin, "We made a step on the road to consolidation of the society," *Izvestia*, March 22, 2001.

3. Interview with the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Sergei Ivanov, "Military reform is the organic part of changes in Russia," *Krasnaya zvezda,* April 24, 2001.

4. A. Nicolayev, "The Wheels of the Army Hold Mediocre Figures," *Moskovskiye novosti,* March 7–13, 2000.

5. P. Baev, "Putin's Military Reform: Two Trajectories for the First Presidency," Norwegian Atlantic Committee, *Security Policy Library,* no. 6 (2001), p. 13.

6. I. Korotchenko, "The General Staff Is Waiting for Changes. Kremlin Is in Search for the Substitution to Anatoliy Kvashnin," *Nesavisimaya gazeta,* June 7, 2001.

7. Remarks by Putin at the Meeting of Senior Officers of Russia's Armed Forces.

8. V. Sokirko, "Russia Is Looking for a Rambo," *Moskovsky Komsomolets,* May 31, 2001. Cited from WPS Monitoring Agency, www.wps.ru/e_index.html, by CDI Russian Weekly, no. 156, May 31, 2001, www.cdi.org/russia/.

9. Some high-ranking military officials put it in a very straightforward way: "We are ready to cooperate with the CESDP, but not with the one that is emerging now. If the CESDP is built up as something within, linked with, or additional to NATO, we cannot accept it. In other words, the problem is whether and when the CESDP moves out from under NATO's umbrella." See: V. Baranovsky, "Common European Security and Defence Policy," *National Security & Defense*, no. 9 (2001), pp. 40–42.

10. Ana Uzelac, "Central Asia Is Crux of Dilemma," *Moscow Times,* September 21, 2001.

11. As of January 2001. Appendix 6A, "Tables of Nuclear Forces," *SIPRI Yearbook 2001* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2001).

12. Interview of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Sergei Ivanov, "Construction of the Armed Forces Will Correspond to the Challenges of the Time," *Krasnaya zvezda*, August 20, 2001.

13. I. Traynor, "Bush and Putin: The End of the Affair? With his latest visit, the American defence secretary has quashed Russian hopes of US magnanimity over arms control," *The Guardian* (United Kingdom), August 16, 2001.

14. A. Gavrilenko, "Russia Is to Modernize Its Navy," *Krasnaya zvezda,* May 24, 2001.

15. Vladimir Putin, "Positive Tendencies Do Exist," *Nesavisimaya gazeta,* December 26, 2000.

16. P. Baev, "Putin's Military Reform," p. 12. "The ongoing severe energy crisis in the Far East shows how fragile the most basic infrastructure has become, but going from one *Kursk*-like disaster to another—pragmatic policy as that might appear—would amount to following a pattern of state collapse."

17. NewsLine: "Russia Plans to Increase the Financing of Defense Research," Kyiv, Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, August 5, 2001, http://www.defence-ua.com/rus/news/?day=05&month=08&year=2001.

18. I. Rodionova, "Latest Data on the State of the Population's Health Are Shocking," *Obshchaya gazeta,* February 28, 2001.

19. J. Dillin, "The Incredible Shrinking Russia," *Christian Science Monitor,* February 22, 2001.

20. R. Zaripov, "Army Service Only Teachers Will Be Able to Avoid," *Moskovsky komsomolets,* March 3, 2001.

21. Vladimir Putin, "We made a step on the road to consolidation of the society," *Izvestia,* March 22, 2001.

22. V. Bennet, "Pity the Russian conscript, his mum is his best hope of escape …," *The Times,* March 30, 2001.

23. Gosudarstvo, "Russia Cannot Have Professional Army in 5 Years to Come," June 5, 2001, http://www.prabda.ru.

24. K. Matvev, "If Studied and Retired—Pay," *Nesavisimoye voennoye obozreniye,* May 25–30, 2001.

25. V. Komarov, "Russia's Army Still Mired in Conscript Crisis," *Russia Journal,* April 24–30, 2000.

26. "Size of Military Pay," *GRANI.RU*, January 18, 2001, http://www.grani.ru/mil_spending/articles/allowance.

27. A. Trubinsky, "How Much Does the War Cost," *Deloviye liudi,* no. 110 (May 2000), pp. 8–12.

28. Remarks by Putin at the Meeting of Senior Officers of Russia's Armed Forces.

29. P. Baev, "Putin's Military Reform," p. 13.

30. Grigory Yavlinsky, lecture at the Nobel Institute, Oslo, Norway, May 30, 2000, http://www.eng.yabloko.ru/Publ/2000/Speech/yavl-oslo.html. "I think that this war has a dead end, given the way in which the government is implementing its policy there.… Now many people see that this conflict has reached an impasse: lots of blood is being spilt, but no solution is being found."

31. D. Karns, "NATO Relations with Ukraine: Prospects for Progress," *National Security & Defence,* no. 8 (2000), p. 36. "The best way to solve the 'Russia problem' is to give it fewer and fewer alternatives to being a constructive member of a peaceful, globalized community, where the final wrong choice is to collapse under the weight of its own irrelevance."