

INSTITUT EUROPEEN DES HAUTES ETUDES INTERNATIONALES

Diplôme des Hautes Etudes Européennes et Internationales

# The Russian Military Reform

A Master's Thesis

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Nice

May 2003

To Her, Without Whose Patience And Help  
This Project Would Have Never Realised

*"Anya, I have solved my housing problems," Capt. Andrei Golubev,  
based in remote eastern Kamchatka, wrote in an all-too-typical suicide  
note to his wife last month. He then drew his service revolver and  
blew his head off.*

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*"A nation that does not support its own army will support a foreign one."*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Russian Federation, a country in transition has been the target of thousands and thousands of papers and analyses, trying to explain, the paradoxical practices followed to the former superpower. The army of the Russian Federation, following the general trends of the country, disintegrated and resolidated within two years, formulating a odd looking institution that encompasses the biggest part of the bizarre Russian realities.

Writing about the Russian military reform proved out to be much more different than I expected it to, for two main reasons: First of all, the quantity of information on the subject was of such an extend that one could have been easily lost during his research. On the other hand, a complete analysis of the subject was almost impossible to find, with most of the articles focusing mostly on the actual problems of the Russian military.

The first problem that I came along when trying to deal with the subject was the definition of the military reform itself. And that is because Russians distinguish between reform of the armed forces and military reform: For them, the former refers to the transformation of the military forces and involves only downsizing and some structural-organisational reforms to transform the force in such a way that it will meet the needs and requirements of Russia in the post-Cold War era. This way, the reform of the Russian armed forces constitutes a natural component of the Russian military reform, which in the contemporary Russian context constitutes a much broader concept, involving an effort for the comprehension of the country's requirements, its aims and objectives, its place in the world, its main security threats, internal and external, and the requirements to meet them. Therefore, the military reform encompasses not only changes to the armed forces but also to all the military and paramilitary formations of the Russian state such as the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Military-Industrial-Complex (MIC), the policy making apparatus, Command and Control (C2), the legal framework of the state and social and economic policies. It also treats with problems such as reforming the civil-military control system, and addresses the core political, economic, and social questions attached to raising, sustaining, training, arming, deploying, and employing a military as an element of Russian national power. Finally, military reform is closely tied to the issues of the ability of the national economy to fund national defence and security.

# Chapter 1: The Russian army until 2003

## 1.1) The History of the Russian army

*“The Soviet Army was a large and relatively effective force, at least for the high intensity war for which it was designed. It had a clear sense of mission, a high degree of internal cohesion and a plethora of adequate to good equipment. The disintegration of the USSR has destroyed all this<sup>1</sup>.”*

The Russian Army has its roots in a decree issued by Lenin’s Bolsheviks 86 years ago. Three and a half months after the Bolshevik revolution, the Bolsheviks seriously feared that they were about to lose their grip on the cradle of the revolution, Petrograd, so they called for volunteers to join them to save the city. This first group of untrained soldiers became the founding unit of the Red Army<sup>2</sup>.

The former Soviet Army had become the strongest military machine in the world by the mid-1970s, especially after America turned more isolationist following the debacle of the Vietnam War. But from that time on, as Western countries surged ahead into the era of « smart » weapons, the Soviet military grew weaker.

The prestige of the Soviet Army was already declining in the Gorbachev period: by the second half of the 1980s, it was clear that the Soviet military had lost its air of superiority when, in Afghanistan, it could not find an effective countermeasure to the American stinger anti-aircraft missiles. The lack of success in the Afghan War reflected on its professional

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<sup>1</sup> Dick C. J., “A Bear Without Claws: The Russian Army in the Nineties”, Research Paper C89, CSRC (RMA Sandhurst), June 1996, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> For more information see: Reese R. R., *The Soviet military experience*, Routledge, London and New York 2000.

credibility<sup>3</sup>, since under *glasnost* the media could publish stories about corruption among senior officers and bullying in barrack rooms. To the minds of the people, the military were tainted with the politicians' corruption and incompetence. The involvement of senior officers in the August 1991 coup attempt strengthened the picture of a self-serving caste whose ever-rising financial demands had worsened the standard of living of every Soviet citizen<sup>4</sup>.

In 1993 after the USSR disintegrated, the process was launched of forming up a qualitatively new military organisation of the state. The re-birth of Russia provided an opportunity to create new armed services which could appeal to the Russian national sentiment and act as a nation-building force. But this opportunity was immediately wasted as the high command fought to ensure that the Soviet Army survived the fall of the Soviet Union. That battle was lost when it became clear that the newly independent states were determined to create their own armed forces.

In this framework, the «new» military force of the Russian Federation was established in place of the Unified Armed Forces (UAF) of the CIS, when on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 1992, President Boris Yeltsin signed the decree No 446, "On the organisation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation". The new army included all former Soviet soldiers and military installations on Russian territory, as well as troops and naval forces under Russian jurisdiction based outside the republic. Strategic nuclear weapons also remained under the command authority of the UAF, although the loss of some border areas of the former Soviet Union (fSU), led to a loss of a big part of the most modern military hardware, infrastructure and parts of the Soviet Unions' air defence system. Many of the former republics nationalised the armed forces that were on their soil, with the attempts by Russia to keep a degree of cohesion through the mechanisms of the CIS having failed.

Seeing the situation, the Defence Ministry was directly ordered to submit proposals for military reform, including reducing the strength of the armed forces and moving from a conscript to a professional army.

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<sup>3</sup> Reese R. R., op. cit., p.p. 163-183.

### 1.1.i.) The heavy heritage of the past

During 1992–1999, Russia abandoned its superpower status and underwent a demilitarisation unprecedented for a country not defeated in a war. During Soviet times, the state itself was a war machine, and every aspect of its organisation was focused towards the mobilisation of massive economic and military potential to conduct a world war. At first there were attempts to preserve the former Soviet Army's unified ground and tactical air forces, but as Ukraine and other former Soviet republics moved toward the creation of their own armies, Russia had no choice but to do the same. The Former Soviet armed forces constituted a mass industrial mobilisation army system, with successive layers of readiness each comprising large numbers of divisions. Because of that massive-orientated doctrine, the new Army has had to face the problems of redeploying hundreds of thousands of men and items of equipment and managing downsizing and restructuring back to a heartland lacking the necessary infrastructure<sup>5</sup>.

From 1991 to 1995 Russia repatriated 800,000 troops, 400,000 civilian personnel, and 500,000 dependants from Eastern Europe, along with over 45,000 pieces of various military hardware, 3.5 million tonnes of material-technical means and strategic reserves. The first published estimates of the Russian Ground Forces in 1992 listed 103 divisions in widely varying states of readiness, but most of them dealing with serious disorganisation<sup>6</sup>. Instead of the gradual, managed change they had resisted, the armed forces were now in for massive, uncontrolled changes in conjunction with drastically reduced funding<sup>7</sup>. When the departure of the last Russian soldier from the Paldiski submarine training base in Estonia in September 1995 marked the end of the Russian presence in Central Europe, the unprecedented -in terms of scale, volume and time – process, taking place in conditions of severe financial-economic

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<sup>4</sup> See: Simon G. (chief editor), *Sowjetunion 1990/91*, Bundesinstitut fuer Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien, Hanser, Muenchen-Wien, 1991.

<sup>5</sup> See for example: *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. XLVI, 1993, no 3-4-5.

<sup>6</sup> *The Military Balance*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992-93, p.97.

<sup>7</sup> « L'armée russe en quête de réformes », in : *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 2000, p. 6,7.

crisis<sup>8</sup> made Boris Yeltsin to say that its completion was "the most important victory of 1994".

Russia's ex-USSR legacy included almost 60% of the former Soviet Army units, the entire nuclear arsenal, the bulk of the Navy<sup>9</sup>, Air and Air Defence Forces, and most of the heavy units of the Ground Forces). "Russia was left with only 37% of Soviet MIG-29's, 23% of SU-27's, 43% of IL-76's and it lost the overwhelming majority of TU-95M and TU-160 strategic bombers. It had only a little more than half the former airfields, half the runways over 1800m were in urgent need of repair, and facilities, including air defence, were -and are- generally lacking<sup>10</sup>."

The Russian Army's total number of enlisted personnel reached 2.8 million (over 1.8 percent of the country's population- a percentage almost double from that of the so-called "developed countries"). Defence expenditure accounted for almost 12 % of Russia's GDP (the rest of the world spends an average of 3-4 % for defence needs). Naturally, Russia could not afford this for long. Therefore the main efforts in 1992-1996 were concentrated on reduction of the Armed Forces -to 1.7 million of enlisted personnel. In 1997, another 200,000 of enlisted personnel were retired by Yeltsin's July decrees. By, 1999, the Russian Armed Forces numbered only 1.2 million (which is less than 1 percent of the country's population).

Table 1. Size of the Russian Military

1988	5,100,000 (estimate)
1992	2,000,000
1997	1,700,000
2000	1,200,000
2005	850,000 (planned)

Finally, the end of the USSR also brought to an end the primacy of the Army and the MIC, which had been at the heart of the Soviet system. The heritage of the MIC, overly present and scattered throughout the land, resulted to a situation where only a dozen or so large companies and their subcontractors were really able to operate.

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<sup>8</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », in *Géopolitique*, No. 54, summer 1996, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup> Boxberg K., "A slow motion Chernobyl", in *Europ Magazine*, No. 84, winter '96-'97.

<sup>10</sup> Deynekin P. S. Col. Gen., "Basic Directions of Air Force Organisational Development and Training under Current Conditions", in *Voennaya Mysl*, 7/1993, pp. 2 – 8.

## 1.2.) Current situation

*Today, said Vyacheslav Kommisarov, a regional parliamentary leader, "There is no more Russian army to speak of... Osama bin Laden could put on our uniform and march from the Far East to Moscow, and nobody would notice him"<sup>11</sup>."*

While the main purpose of this paper is not to repeat for one more time the well-documented plight of the Russian army, it is still necessary to see its parlous state, in order to understand the magnitude of the problem the reformers are facing: The situation is actually very heterogeneous, the Russian army being today more an accumulation of small different groups and institutions rather than one single institution<sup>12</sup>. Since the end of the cold war, the Russian military has struggled to define a new role for itself, lacking both resources and a clear foreign enemy. The once beloved of the nation is currently in search of a new identity being cornered and accused of everything. The armed services and the departments of the Russian General Staff have been trying to preserve as much of their strategic doctrines, personnel levels deployment patterns, arsenals, and missions as possible, but this has come at the expense of readiness, training, maintenance and modernisation. The altering of current security needs has left the Russian army dangling since it had been built to fight conventional wars.

The army has thus to face problems of an extreme complexity: loss of its political foundations, material and structural problems, national conflicts and a multiplicity of hot spots, a general denial for the military service<sup>13</sup>. Today, as well as in the past, both the quantity and quality of the army's manpower causes grave concern. The conscription system is failing to meet the army's needs, discipline is generally poor and morale is at rock bottom

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<sup>11</sup> Glasser B. S., "Deserting Russia's Desperate Army; Tales of Draftee Abuse, Expose, Failure of Reform, Hopes", in *Washington Post*, Foreign Service Friday, September 20, 2002; Page A01.

<sup>12</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 65.

<sup>13</sup> Human rights groups have denounced the current military service system, which often involves violent initiation rites that have led to a dramatic rise in army desertions.

(not least because of poor accommodation, feeding, health care and other conditions). Furthermore, the Army has a superfluity of senior and middle ranking officers, combined with a great overall deficiency, mostly in the ranks of junior officers. The best and brightest tend to resign (50% within five years of joining) and the quality of applicants fails to meet the military's needs, with crime and corruption being rampant, especially amongst senior officers<sup>14</sup>. As concerns the equipment, procurement for the Russian army has declined to negligible levels, with older Russian conventional equipment not being replaced or upgraded as the Soviet depot-maintenance system required. Even newer systems are suffering from lack of maintenance and spare parts. These problems cannot be resolved as long as debts to military industries remain unpaid and money is not found for new orders and for the continuation of R&D work.

### **1.2.i) An army built for a different country.**

Russia's Armed Forces were created to defend a different country, to fight different wars from those they may have to fight in future. But as concerns military doctrine there do not seem to have been any major shifts from the missile and tank based tactics of the mass Soviet Army, where generals equipped and planned their operations around the principle of numerical superiority. This was why the Soviet Army at one time had 3 million soldiers and only 60,000 tanks. The premise was that a Soviet soldier would be killed in his first battle, being replaced by a soldier from the reserves<sup>15</sup>. All strategic plans were based on the idea that if need be, millions of reservists could be called to arms. This is why conscript soldiers were and still are given only the most basic training - the assumption was (and is) that they only had to be able to fight just one battle. This military doctrine, still being taught in officer schools and military academies, was formulated in the 1940s, and updated by Marshal Vassily Sokolovsky in the 1960s in order to fight World War III against the United States.

In Russia a mass army was necessary in order to defend the lengthy frontier and multinational population of the country and functioned as an important mechanism for national and political socialisation. But, resistance to conscription has meant that the Russian army's Nation-Building role has been declining.

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<sup>14</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 65.

## 1.2.ii.) The outdated conscription system

*The development of military capacity, as Engels pointed out, depends “on material (economic) circumstances, on human resources, and weapons, which, in turn, depend on the quality and size of a nation’s population and on its technology<sup>16</sup>”.*

Manning the Russian armed forces is today the greatest of all problems. It is not just a question of quantity but, even more crucially, of quality. No matter whether it is a high-tech conventional war or a low intensity counter-insurgency operation (which is the sort of warfare the Russian Army will most likely be facing in the future), commanders will still have to rely on the skill and reliability of the individual soldier.

Like its Soviet predecessor, the Russian army remains in large part a conscript force that depends for much of its manpower on biannual call-ups of a quarter-million draft-age (18-27) young, men, who serve compulsory two-year terms. But the quality of military personnel is deteriorating, in a way that, twice a year, Russia drafts young men who should never be drafted or given access to weapons: drug addicts, alcoholics, mentally disturbed youths, others who have dropped out of high school or never held a job. Every year, only 11% of draftees are fit for military service<sup>17</sup> with inductees tending to be youths who are too uneducated, poor, badly connected or, ironically, too patriotic to wangle a draft deferment.

The main reason for this is the collapse of the conscription system which has meant that of those liable for call-up, around 84% are legally entitled to -real or phoney college-deferment or exemption (health situation and/or bribes)<sup>18</sup>. But every year, some of those eligible for drafting simply do not bother to turn up for conscription, since they know that evasion is generally going unpunished<sup>19</sup>. In autumn 1999, 49.000 men, almost one fifth of the

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<sup>15</sup> Odom. E. W., *The collapse of the Soviet military*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1998, pp. 159-165.

<sup>16</sup> Like their Soviet predecessors, the Russians argue that scientific breakthroughs depend not on a country’s political or economic situation but on the brains of its scientists. And Russian scientists claim to be « still ahead of the whole planet » in many areas and still conduct R&D in nuclear physics, high-energy and superconductivity physics, thermonuclear fusion and electronics.

<sup>17</sup> "Just 11 Percent of Draftees Fit for Service," Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty (*RFE/RL*) Daily Report, July 11, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Dick C., « L’ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Dauce F., « L’Insoumission en Russie », in *Le Courrier des Pays de l’Est*, No. 1022, February 2002, p.38.

total conscripted, did not report for duty. Despite the expected one million conscripts in spring 2000, the armed forces were only able to draft 13 percent, or 191.612<sup>20</sup>.

As virtually all students of higher education can defer their service, the Army is deprived of most of the more intelligent, better-educated citizens that used to fill the specialist and Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) ranks being capable of using sophisticated equipment. In fact only around three-quarters of recent draftees had completed their secondary education<sup>21</sup>.

One out of nine conscripts every year has a criminal record. In an unusually frank speech, Gen. Anatoly Kvashnin admitted once that the officer corps is "bogged down in embezzlement and corruption".<sup>22</sup> Conscripts are paid 1 ruble a day (about 3 Euro cents), while the contract servicemen, about 120 Euro a month. Their level of motivation remains low, and they are prone to involvement in local criminal operations, including arms trafficking networks, some of which are controlled by corrupt military commanders. And such problems are not limited to conscripts. More than 100 generals and admirals are under investigation for corruption. Discipline is braking down and stories of soldiers leaving their units are legion. The whole situation is worsened by the fact that 40 percent of each year's conscripts have not worked or studied prior to joining the army<sup>23</sup>. Thus, it is hardly a secret that many conscripts are used as cheap labour farmed out by their superior officers for construction projects and even factory and agricultural work.

The number of healthy conscripts dropped by 20% over the previous decade. According to MoD data, in spring 2000, 10% of conscripts in the ground forces and navy were drug addicts, and one in every nine crimes in the armed forces were drug-related<sup>24</sup>. In 1999 alone, the number of crimes connected with illegal drug trafficking committed by servicemen increased by 32 percent<sup>25</sup>. Drug addiction had soared by 100 percent since 1993. About 12% of every year's conscripts are habitual drinkers.

In autumn 1999, of those examined, 57% were regarded as unfit to serve. According to the Russian MoD, a large percentage of recruits are chronically ill or mentally unstable.

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<sup>20</sup> See: Shaburkin A., *Vremya Moscovsky Novostey*, 12 April 2000, p.7. See also 'A Dwindling Military Forces to Compensate', Stratfor.Com, 18 April 2000; Lambroschini S., 'Chechnya: Draft Avoidance Rises as Russia Ponders Professional Army', *RFE/RL Analyses*, 14 July 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Russian MPs say army desertion mirrors criminal trends in society," ITAR-TASS, June 18, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> See: Averbukh V. / Vladimirov D. / Punanov G., in *Izvestiya*, 27 April 2000, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> See Alf A., *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 21 May 1999, p2.

Nearly 33% of all conscripts are either exempted or “reprieved” for health reasons and 15% of them are underweight on enlistment (see table 2).

Table 2: The Class of 1997.

Men Subject to call-up	2.200.000
Of Whom	
Entitled to Deferment	1.500.000
Medically Unfit	225.000
In Jail	71.000
Available For Service	437.000 (Includes 20.000 with suspended jail sentences.)

[www.fas.org/nuke/guide/Russia/agency/c99.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/Russia/agency/c99.htm)

The army has not been spared the changes in mentality appearing in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet regime<sup>26</sup>. Every spring, military enlistment registration offices and the police are chasing young men who are avoiding their "sacred duty"<sup>27</sup>: This “spirit of resistance” has been reinforced by the war in Chechnya, which on the contrary is largely approved by the Russian people. Tendencies to avoid military service, which have increased over that last ten years, cannot be explained only by the feeling of "losing one's time". This phenomenon is also due to severe hazing, intolerable treatment, abysmal living conditions and reported abuses by commanding officers, including savage beatings, torture, extortion, lurid threats, and routine humiliation. The worst of all conscription realities is *dedovshchina*<sup>28</sup>, which combined with the poor diet and hygiene conditions and lack of effective medical care in the over-crowding barracks, mean that up to 50% of draftees do not want to serve. *Dedovshchina* starts with routine demands for young conscripts to clean toilets, wash older soldiers' socks or beg on the streets for cigarette money. The defiant are beaten and, in some cases, tortured, raped and killed. Large numbers of soldiers desert -latest figures suggest 2,265 missing soldiers- or are even killed because of it. The Mothers of Soldiers, an organisation for the protection of the rights of Russian soldiers- believe that about 3.000 servicemen die every year in shootings, suicides and accidents, not counting daily casualties in the war with

<sup>26</sup> Mandeville L., « Armée Russe : menace ou recours. », in *Politique Internationale*, No. 67, spring '95, p.52.

<sup>27</sup> Smirnoff A.I., *Russia: On the way to a professional army (experience, challenges, perspectives)*, Centre of Human Values of the Sociology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1998, p.140.

<sup>28</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 64.

Chechnya<sup>29</sup>. The official figures for deaths among servicemen in the last year talk for 1,624 deaths, of which 521 were the result of crimes and 1,103 caused by accidents. In addition there were 487 suicides. Although these figures are lower than in previous years they still reflect very poorly on man-management within the armed services.

Thus, the number of deserters from units has been steadily growing and the official figures probably understate the problem. Most young “resistors” use legal means as counselled by various associations, in particular Mothers of Soldiers, and only a minority is prepared to resort to illegal means. Captured deserters usually face a military tribunal and are sent to punishment units. Sometimes, the authorities simply return deserters to their units.

Table 3: Conscription Evasion 1996-97.

	Evasions	Prosecutions
Spring 1996	26,000	59
Spring 1997	32,000	32
Autumn 1997	40,000	19
Deserters at large in Spring 1998 6,300		

[www.fas.org/nuke/guide/Russia/agency/c99.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/Russia/agency/c99.htm)

So what is to be done? Where can the Russian military find physically, mentally, and morally healthy men with a strong sense of responsibility and at least a high school diploma? Some lawmakers mostly right-wingers advocate abolishing deferments for college students as the only remedy, while others insist on an immediate transition from conscription to contract service. But, despite the fact that the last years there has been an improvement in the manning situation, reform is a promise Russian leaders have been making and braking for more than a decade.

From 1998, responsibility for the conscription process is being transferred to local authorities, a fact that improved the efficiency of recruitment, but did not solve problems with the health and educational standards of the intakes. In 1993-94, when nobody wanted to serve, the Russian army took contractors. But the attempts to improve quality with contract soldiers have been a failure and later, many of them refused to stay in the army. At present, the General Staff claims that approximately 22% of all Russian military personnel are

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<sup>29</sup> Gloaguen C., « Les forces armées russes ont dix ans », in *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, no. 1022, February 2002, pp. 12-15.

"kontraktniki." The Duma's Defence Committee, meanwhile, puts the total number of contract personnel at 157.000, and says that about 40 percent of them are women<sup>30</sup>.

While traditionally barred from it in times of peace and limited to very specific sectors in wartime, women have been granted career opportunities in the Russian army since 1991. As the army and military professions lose prestige among men, women are coming to fill the gap. The reasons for this change are linked to peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, as well as recognition of their high levels of education. But the advancement potential of female soldiers is less than that of their male counterparts, even if, as shown by surveys among the hierarchy, they are seen to be more stable, punctual and responsible than their male colleagues. The gist of the matter is that most of the times, instead of ensuring that highly paid volunteers fill slots in key combat and technical roles, the MoD is recruiting the wives and daughters of Russian officers who join the army because they cannot find other work near their husbands' garrisons. Most of them tend to serve in communications, administrative and medical specialities, further reducing the pool of professionals available for duty.

Contract service has been seen, as a possible solution to the manning crisis. But while it has potential, the process of moving to a greater degree of professionalisation has only met with limited success because of wrong setting of priorities and misjudgements.

### **1.2.iii.) Hierarchy**

*"Today the MoD is a pyramid of purely military staffs and administrations whose inner workings are hidden from the public and beyond the control of the political leadership."<sup>31</sup>*

According to the 1992 Law on Defence, the President and the State Duma, had roughly approximate powers. The President was the Commander-In-Chief of the Army, but responsibility for issues as the direction of state military policy and doctrine, deciding the size and structure of the military, overseeing promotions, discharges and awards of high military posts, ordering partial or complete mobilisation of the armed forces and declaration of a state of war, were shared. The President for example was in control of the "nuclear button", but Parliament had a say in defining the conditions under which nuclear arms could be

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<sup>30</sup> Kozlowski-Sieca E., « Les femmes dans l'armée russe », in *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, no. 1022, February 2002, pp. 26-35.

<sup>31</sup> Felgengauer P., "Does Latest Shakeup Bode Civilian Control of Army?," in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, XLIX, No. 35, October 1, 1997, p. 7.

employed<sup>32</sup>. The 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation changed everything<sup>33</sup>. It became the sole prerogative of the President to: appoint and remove the Army's high command, introduce martial law and states of emergency throughout the Russian Federation (RF) or in individual localities with notification of the Federation Council<sup>34</sup> and approve the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation<sup>35</sup>. But, as with everything else in Russia, the chain of command of the military is not following the laws of the state. The Russian government has questionable control over its armed forces: The war in Chechnya continues despite being counterproductive for Russia, mostly because the military wants it to continue (the war provides the military relatively greater budgetary outlays and a greater voice in policy making). The military is not afraid of taking action on its own, as evidenced by events in Pristina in 1999, where Russian troops were ordered by the general staff into Kosovo, timing their arrival to beat the NATO troops there, and then lied about the deployment to the Russian civilian leadership<sup>36</sup>. The government maintained that the Russian troops were not moving when TV cameras clearly showed that claim to be false.

Political leadership of the army is not the only problem though. The army itself is highly fragmented. Upon the fall of the USSR, the Soviet General Staff, in order to deceive the West, began depleting the army of men and materiel, moving them into "other" forces creating a maze of independent armed forces (Interior Forces, Border Guard, Natural Calamity, Railroad Forces, the Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information etc.). Yeltsin, himself had deliberately divided the army so that it would not be able to direct the government. The system of competing armies had helped to maintain political stability during a decade of great social upheaval but in purely military terms it is a total disaster, since all these armies not only compete for scarce resources in peacetime, but also continue the fray in war.

Nowadays, troops serve under 24 different ministries and departments, with many forces having overlapping functions. The Ground Forces' (MVD) functions for example overlap with those of the police, intelligence, and investigative services.<sup>37</sup> The "other armed services" total about half a million, or 50% of the troops and forces under the Russian MoD.

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<sup>32</sup> Law of the Russian Federation "On Defence", No. 3532-I, 24 September 1992, Chap. 2, Arts. 4 & 5.

<sup>33</sup> Constitution of the Russian Federation, 12 December 1993, Chap. 4, Art. 83, Para. K.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Chap. 4, Art. 87, Para. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Chap. 4, Art. 83, Para. G.

<sup>36</sup> « L'armée russe en quête de réformes », op. cit., pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> Galeotti M., "Russia's interior Troops on the Rise," in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June, 1997, pp. 243-246.

In order to cope with this situation, Russian armed forces have more than 2,000 generals and similarly huge numbers of other senior officers<sup>38</sup>. This top-heavy structure has been one of the key obstacles to reform. During the last years, there have been many attempts to massively expel old generals from the Russian military, and over 300 generals' posts have been demoted to level of colonels' positions<sup>39</sup>. However, this did not concern the General Staff, while such radical measures have given birth to a group of generals who oppose such reorganisation. Generals do not want to leave the Army and therefore some new Generals' positions have also been introduced as a part of the reform<sup>40</sup>. But, according to the Russian press, 90% of the generals who received promotion in 2000 did not have experience as division and upper-level field commanders.

Lower to the hierarchy, half of the army is composed of officers, compared with a quarter in most countries. This fact reflects the Soviet and Russian tradition and the logic behind it was that these officers, would be able to command regiments and divisions formed by men called up from the reserves. Much of this bulge is made up of senior field-grade officers who no longer are needed in a smaller military but who are too young to retire. So in some units, the officer to other ranks ratio has dropped to 1:1, and proper training is nearly impossible.

On the other hand, because of low pay<sup>41</sup> and miserable conditions in the lower ranks, there is no strong contingent of qualified junior officers and NCOs, who should normally provide the backbone of experience and communication between officers and soldiers and work closely with conscripts. Job satisfaction is low and motivation is poor. Pay and allowances while being low come usually in arrears. Almost 100.000 officers have no apartments and a further 150.000 are living in sub-standard housing<sup>42</sup>. Plus, the military equipment is in such poor condition that it is dangerous to use it.

The Russian army not only lacks sufficient personnel, but is also losing the little expertise it still has. Military training institutions of the MoD are unable to provide enough officers to the Russian Army<sup>43</sup>. The number of military institutes' students is still being

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<sup>38</sup> Odom. E. W., op. cit. pp. 39-44.

<sup>40</sup> Urban V., "A Visa to Generals' Country. Generals refuse to leave the Army", in *Novye Izvestia*, 25 April 2002, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> An Army junior lieutenant, for example, makes just 2,600 rubbles monthly, (about 85 euro).

<sup>42</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

calculated on the basis of 5-6% norm of reduction of the number of officers, which was valid only when officers served in the army for 20 - 25 years. But from 1993, contracts gave officers an opportunity to resign after five years of service, and at present the number of officers who leave the army is two to three times higher<sup>44</sup>. Over 15.000 young officers under 30 resigned between 1999-2001. Whereas, in the army's controlling structures 100% of positions are filled up, each third post of a platoon or a company commander is vacant. Furthermore, according to data recently released by the General Staff, every 10th medium-rank officer position is vacant. Professionals and specialists that retire are frequently replaced with men without proper training. Since many of them are leaving service early, the Ministry tries to produce more lieutenants to compensate for the loss<sup>45</sup>. So, nowadays, Russian sergeants are usually soldiers that have been trained for just three months in a sergeant school. For solving the problem, the General Staff is working on the option of doubling the period of the primary officer contract -at present, a graduate cadet signs up for five years of service. But this kind of a solution seems unrealistic since salaries of lieutenants are too low. If military wages are raised, there might be extra incentives to serve.

Even if one were able to turn things around tomorrow, so much training time has been lost that it will take years to retrain a new military cadre. But today, only a dozen lieutenants stay on, out of a hundred graduates a fact that is causing people to propose that those who quit military service ought to pay the state compensation for their training costs.

In the West, there is a key difference between civilian and military personnel. Civilian personnel are intermediaries between the military and Government, and between the military and society, and their promotions depend on their performance. This cannot be the case in the Russian MOD where to occupy a high position one must have a military rank. Even the so-called civilian personnel are not civilians. They are retired military officers, indebted to the Ministry for not being dumped into retirement completely. Obviously, under such circumstances civilians cannot play an independent role and mediate between the interests of the military and the Government, or society as a whole<sup>46</sup>. The fact that there is no legislation concerning civilians in the defence establishment makes the problem even more difficult. Putin has done a great effort to demilitarise public life, installing civilian leadership into the military. And although this is not the first time that civilians lead the Russian military, this fact constitutes a big change.

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<sup>44</sup> see table 25 in Smirnoff A.I., op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> "Russian Army Lacks Officers", in *Nezavisimoe Voyennoye Obozrenie*, June 7, 2002, p. 1 ,

## 1.2.iv.) Equipment

*“If such a situation persists for another five to six years, our army will turn into a museum, not into armed forces capable on defending the country.”<sup>47</sup>*

A common expression employed in Russian military circles is "to signify." It 's used during military exercises when one thing often signifies another. A running soldier, for example, can signify an armoured personnel carrier on the move. A shot from a grenade launcher during manoeuvres can signify a round of heavy artillery fire. The Russian Military has remained to a great degree a product of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> Arms procurement accounts for 6% of total defence expenditure as opposed to a minimum 20% in NATO member states. 70% of the military budget is spent on army maintenance and only 30% on its technical upgrade. In 2001 the balance has been redressed, with 56% allocated to maintenance and 44% to investment<sup>49</sup>. But even if this persists, the situation of the Russian Armed Forces is far from being ideal.

Military depots across the country hold today huge arsenals, but the number of up-to-date weapons is diminishing and troops get little training. For example, the air force is so short of fuel that pilots fly an average of 25 hours a year, compared to the West's minimum of 200 hours. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the armed forces have not purchased a single military transport plane. There has also been no mass production of new technology such as the KA-52 helicopter, T-90 tank, close-battle-radar location stations and closed communication radio stations. The army has only 5-7% of equipment, which is more or less new (under 10 years old), with no more than 25% of the equipment and military hardware being combat ready<sup>50</sup>. Modern types comprise only about 40% of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, 30% of SAM and artillery systems and 2% of helicopters. The Russian pilots for example still fly aged MI-8 and MI-24 helicopters.

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<sup>46</sup> Odom. E.. W., op. cit. p.23.

<sup>47</sup> Arbatov A., Quote selected by Johnson's Russia List #5262. (AVN Military News Agency, 18 May 2001)

<sup>48</sup> Dick C., « L'ours sans griffes », op. cit. p.63.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Sergey Ivanov, strana.ru, 23 February 2002. The minister explains that the aim is to achieve a 50:50 ratio in 2006. However the armed forces reduction and professionalisation projects, one requiring expenditure to support demobilised officers on their retirement and the other a substantial increase in the individual pay of servicemen employed under contract, might slow down the adjustment of the budget towards investment. Also, according to the government's declared intentions, the army should not be making any major new equipment purchases until around 2007-2008.

<sup>50</sup> Shurygin Vadim: « Generals' wars », in *Novaya Gazeta*, 30 April 2002.

The Russian space forces have half of the satellites of the US Space Command<sup>51</sup>, and their number “Is decreasing faster than new ones are being launched.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, 70 % of the Russian satellites have already expended their service life and therefore it’s not at all certain that they can fulfil their original tasks such as strategic intelligence, early warning of missile attacks and communication.

In addition, most of Russia’s heavy missiles will be withdrawn from service in 2008 having long since passed their guaranteed service life. SS-19s (Stiletto) would rapidly reach the end of their operational life after 2007<sup>53</sup>; the SS-24 (Scalpel) will be phased out by 2007 and few if any SS-18s (Satan) and SS-25s (Sickle) would remain by the end of 2010<sup>54</sup>. The number of operational Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) may equally drop over the next decade as nuclear-fuelled Russian Ballistic Missile Submarines; (SSBNs) have reached the end of their service lives<sup>55</sup>. In total, 60% of Russian ICBMs are past their guaranteed life; half of the operational SSBNs (and 75% of their missiles) and most of the ICBM warheads require replacement by 2005 at latest. It is unlikely that Russia will be able to build new missiles of this class. This leads us down to the most modern SS-28s (Topol-M)<sup>56</sup>. It had been hoped that Moscow would be able to produce 30 new ones each year, but the reality is no more than 10 a year.<sup>57</sup> Russia also continues operational deployment of mobile-launched-based Topol-M2 ICBM, or SS-27. However, the available maintenance infrastructure is in a dire plight, starved as it is of equipment and wherewithal required for making repairs.

In the air force, there is no realistic prospect of receiving funding for new aircraft before 2005<sup>58</sup>, so faith is being placed in upgrading existing models. The basic MIG-29 fighter will be converted to Mig-29UBT and Mig-29Smt standards to increase the aircraft’s

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<sup>51</sup> see for more : *Baltic Defence Review*, no 6, volume 2001.

<sup>52</sup> Yakovlev interviewed by Ludmila Averina, Trud, 13 May 2000, p.2.

<sup>53</sup> At the end of 2000, the Russian strategic rocket forces test-fired an SS-19 missile, reporting that it reached its target in Kamchatka from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The SS-19 missile has been part of the forces’ arsenal for 25 years. A spokesman for the forces told Reuters the previous day that the missile is likely to be removed from service to join the SS-18 rocket as a booster for commercial satellites. Under the START-2 treaty, the SS-18s and SS-19s are to be decommissioned.

<sup>54</sup> See Disarmament Forum (the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research), vol. 1, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Status Report : *Nuclear weapons, Fissile Material and export controls in the Former Soviet Union*, Center for Non-Proliferation Studies (CNS) Print Publication, 2001, <http://cns.miIs.edu/pubs/print/nsr2.htm>, p. 14-17, 19.

<sup>56</sup> In October 2000 a 16-year-old Topol ballistic missile was also successfully test-fired , and a strategic Rocket Forces spokesman said that while Russia is upgrading to a newer version of the missile, the Topol-M, it will also extend the original lifetimeservice of the old Topol.

<sup>57</sup> Golts A., « Kremlin Moves to Rekindle Cold War Missile Plan », in *The Russia Journal*, June 28, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> The 1997 Military Planning consists of three stages: The first stage of its realisation (from 1997 to 2000), called a reduction by 30% of the armed forces. The second stage (2000-2005) is dealing with structural changes in the remaining armed forces, obliging no purchase of weapons and military technique and concentration on R&D. It finally foresees purchase of the next generation of weapons while financial situation allows that. The third stage is after 2005: this should be the time for the re-organised armed forces to start being supplied with new weapons designed in the previous ten years.

air to ground capabilities. Similarly, though later on, numbers of Su-27 will be upgraded to the Su-27IB version to form the basis of strike and reconnaissance aviation. After those projects, Russian officials are thinking of improving the old Su-24 and Su-25 as well as the MIG-31. All these projects are of course nothing more than stopgap solutions. Real solutions have according to Russian officials already been developed and only require money for their production to begin. In accordance with the principle of reducing to a minimum the types of aircraft fielded, “There will be one multi-role aircraft, the Su-34. It has been built and it is being tested. It will be the main aircraft of the air force. There will also be one training aircraft if MIG and Yakovlev-Dondukov design bureaux come to terms”<sup>59</sup>. Further on, there will also probably be “scientific research studies to determine the potential capabilities of the multi-role fighter aircraft, the most advanced aircraft of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century to accomplish the support of the troops<sup>60</sup> (within the framework of existing financial possibilities).”

Russia has also under construction the fifth-generation Borei-class ballistic-missile submarines, a new submarine-based ICBM, the Acula-2-class nuclear attack submarine and many other weapon systems, for example air to surface PGMs<sup>61</sup>. Russia’s defence industry has also introduced a new generation of nuclear warheads as well as a new stealth bomber and a stealth cruise missile, which could reach U.S. territory over the Arctic Circle.<sup>62</sup> Russian experts seem to understand very well that superiority in the era of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) proceeds mostly from superiority in Information Weapons (IW)<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Col. Gen. A.M. Kornukov by Interfax , 10 June 1998. The warning that no new weapons could be fielded before 2005 was given by defence minister Igor Sergeyev in an Interfax interview on February 8, 1999: “even then they would depend on defence absorbing 3.5% of the GDP”, he said.

<sup>60</sup> Kornukov, in another interfax interview 11 March 1999.

<sup>61</sup> Kornukov A.M. Col. Gen., « Win. Suppress. Support ? », in *Armeyskiy Sbornik* , 12/1998.

<sup>62</sup> Col. Stanislav Lunev in Maxnews.com on Friday, Oct. 4, 2002.

<sup>63</sup> Gompert C. D., Kugler I. R. and Libicki C. M., *Mind the gap*, National Defence University Press, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 34.

### 1.3.) The failure of reform up to now

Talk of military reform began in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. The decrease of the armed forces that started during the period of Gorbachev was fitful because of the country's financial deficit<sup>64</sup>. But the U.S.S.R. has not been able to develop a concept of National Interests or a strategy for defending them commensurate with its real potential and forces. This inability to "restructure" (Perestroit) is what most observers believe underlaid Gorbachev's calamitous efforts to save Soviet power from itself<sup>65</sup>. So, before the demise of the U.S.S.R no comprehensive reform plans were adopted.

Despite global changes after the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War, the Soviet military chiefs were only reacting to events: withdrawing weapons and troops as the Warsaw pact fell apart, moving tens of thousands of outdated pieces of armour and heavy weaponry east of the Urals and into Uzbekistan to "save" them from the CFE Treaty limitations.

The last attempt to reform the military of the former USSR, in the fall of 1991, was led by Konstantin Kobets, who at the time was chairman of the Military Reform Committee under the State Council of the USSR. But General Kobets' reasonable proposals were supported by neither Mikhail Gorbachev nor Boris Yeltsin<sup>66</sup>, who were, at that time, preoccupied by their political struggle.

After the Soviet Union was disbanded in December 1991, the old Soviet Army also fell apart, with local military commanders swearing allegiance to the new republics. The generals in Moscow did not expect the Great Red Army to disintegrate. But in several months in 1992 it was all over. President Boris Yeltsin and the media were calling for military reform and the generals simply had to put something forward. From then on, Russian generals and politicians have repeatedly come forward with plans to turn the Russian army into a lean, modern, well-armed, professional and mobile force, but little has been achieved in practice<sup>67</sup>.

General Pavel Grachev was named Russia's new Defence Minister<sup>68</sup> on May 18th 1992 succeeding Yeltsin, who has held the post since the creation of a Russian Defence

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<sup>64</sup> Odom. E. W. op. cit. p. 89.

<sup>65</sup> Rogov S., "Military Reform: Now or Never," in *European Security*, I, No. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 5-12.

<sup>66</sup> Facon I. « La reforme de l'armee russe » in *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, no 1022, February 2002, p.16.

<sup>67</sup> Kipp W. J., "The Uncertain Future of the Soviet Military, from Coup to Commonwealth: The Antecedents of National Armies," in *European Security*, I, No. 2 (Summer 1992), 207-238.

<sup>68</sup> Mandeville L., op. cit. p.48.

Ministry in March 1992<sup>69</sup>. The newly appointed minister immediately unveiled plans to undertake large-scale military reforms. In the course of two to three years, he intended to substantially cut the size of the armed forces without diminishing its readiness and transform it so that it would correspond with new geopolitical conditions. His principal efforts were performed for the creation of highly mobile airborne forces, while trying to preserve as much of the Soviet system as possible. But even Grachev realised that he could not sustain the force at its Soviet levels. His goals were therefore not achieved, a fact with negative impacts on the readiness of the troops. Military units and sub-units were manned at only 40 to 50% of full strength, material and technical supply was cut by 60%, and only two to three divisions in each military district and three to four detachments of ships in each fleet could be called even comparatively ready.

Grachev's reform plans were based on the prospect of a dynamic and growing economy, and on the expectation that the armed forces would enjoy a stable-funding base. But, high inflation and lower production levels in the Russian MIC, resulted in large military budget deficits. Moreover, the MoD did not take into account spending neither on so-called peacekeeping forces nor to the cost of withdrawing of troops from Germany and the Baltic States<sup>70</sup>. Military reform, quickly became entangled in the political manoeuvring of the executive and legislative organs of power where both sides sought to recruit the military to its side of the struggle. This period culminated in the assault on the White House in October and the President's proclamation of a new military doctrine in November 1993<sup>71</sup>. Thereafter, the fervour for military reform gave way to other priorities, especially after the decision to intervene in Chechnya in December 1994 and the protracted and bloody war that followed. Under Pavel Grachev the army was cut but not reformed<sup>72</sup>.

In 1996 military reform re-emerged as an issue during the presidential campaign with President Yeltsin promising military reform and a professional army by the year 2000. With the end of fighting in Chechnya, the poor performance of Russian forces was once again raised to a major political topic. General Igor Rodionov after his appointment as Minister of Defence in the summer of 1996 proceeded with institutional innovations within the Presidential apparatus -the creation of the Defence Council and its subsequent abolition and

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<sup>69</sup> Gloaguen C., op. cit. p.5.

<sup>70</sup> As a special audit has shown, in 1993, the cost of keeping Russian troops in Abkhazia was about two billion rubles per day; in Tajikistan 15 billion. Maintaining just one peacekeeping detachment for one day cost approximately 1 billion rubles

<sup>71</sup> See : Lavoie J. P. and Levesque J., « De l'URSS a la Russie » in *Etudes Internationales*, vol. XXX, no 2, June 1999.

<sup>72</sup> Gloaguen C., op. cit. p.4.

merger with the Security Council- and rapid personnel turnovers in key leadership positions within the Defence Ministry and other power ministries<sup>73</sup>. In a major interview with *Moscow News*, General Rodionov told: "We are talking about creating a small, mobile, well-trained army capable of carrying out its principal assignment--deflecting or sustaining the first blow<sup>74</sup>." General Rodionov favoured the establishment of a strong, professional NCO Corps for the Russian Army. Progress, however, has not been neither during Igor Rodionov's tenure (defence minister in 1996-1997), which was mainly marked by his increasingly strident complaints of the meagre finances available to the army.

The most significant steps toward not just a smaller but also restructured military have taken place under Igor Sergeyev (defence minister in 1997-2001). Further cuts were enacted in a more logical fashion -assembling of a small number of "permanent readiness" divisions- while a real effort to integrate all components of strategic deterrence under one command and reduce the number of military districts was realised.<sup>75</sup> Moderate structural reforms, such as the merger of the air defence and air forces and a reduction in the number of military educational institutions, were also pushed through. However, the resumption of the Chechen war, a shortage of money, and the increasingly bitter disagreements between Sergeyev and his Chief of Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, have undermined more far-reaching reforms.

The starting point in the efforts to reform the Army and the Navy was the Decree of President Yeltsin of 16 July, 1997 entitled "On the Priority Measures in Reforming the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and Improving their Structure".<sup>76</sup> Later on that month a number of decrees were issued. If implemented, those decrees could have had lasting and major significance for Russia and its multiple armed forces. However, these decrees reflected more the political struggles around the armed forces. Though Yeltsin required an all-volunteer force by 2000 and spoke of the need to modernise, his basic strategy was to leave the military alone in exchange for its loyalty. Given the economic difficulties and political disarray of much of the Yeltsin era, it was probably unrealistic to expect more significant reform.

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<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p.6.

<sup>74</sup> Zhilin A., "Igor Rodionov: Unpopular Measures Can No Longer Be Avoided", in *Moscow News*, 11-18 August 1996, No. 32, 7.

<sup>75</sup> Baev P., "Putin's military reform. Two Trajectories for the First Presidency" in *The Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Security Policy Library*, 2001, No. 6, p. 4 – 6.

<sup>76</sup> FitzGerald C. M., *Russian Military Policy and international objectives : interim strategies and plans for long term systemic change*, Project on Eurasian Security, Hudson Institute, Washington DC, 2001, p.27.

The reform of Russia's military machine has defeated all Russian leaders since the collapse of communism, and the problem still remains today. If one did a content analysis of Russian military writings, "military reform" would be one of the most frequent policies mentioned. In practice, reform has primarily meant further cuts in the size of the armed forces with some moderate organisational changes. But all efforts have had little or no effect because a General Staff that was out of touch with the budgetary situation, and could not get rid of «old thinking» had largely drafted them<sup>77</sup>. Military authorities have until today followed a simple logic in their planned cutbacks -if they can spend more money on each soldier, servicemen will serve better and have more resources. The catch is that this logic does not work. The armed forces have shrunk, but this has not led to any proportional increase in effectiveness. The resources saved were allocated to maintaining the structure, but not to reorganising it. So, the armed forces have remained deeply underfunded, with all the consequences this had for training, maintenance, morale, safety and combat-readiness. In this way, military restructuring not only failed to reinforce economic, political and social reforms in Russia, but also only complicated or even undermined their progress.

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<sup>77</sup> Simon G., op. cit. pp. 126-132.

### 1.3.i.) Putin's efforts.

Once coming into office, Vladimir Putin made armed forces reform a priority<sup>78</sup>: His plans included trimming Russia's 1.2 million military personnel by nearly one-third, modernising weapons arsenals, gradually abolishing the draft and turning the military into a fully professional force. And he seemed to believe that when the amount of servicemen will grow in number, the period of regular army service will reduce.

One of the first steps taken by Putin was the endorsement of the National Security Concept (NSC)<sup>79</sup> of the Russian Federation (Decree No. 24 of January 10, 2000)<sup>80</sup>. Though the document is not something amazingly original -being mainly a modified version of the 1997 National Security Concept<sup>81</sup>- approaches to national security issues have been largely changed. The NSC focuses on a radical reappraisal of the situation in the world and in Russia's international environment. It also defines Russia's strategic goals of becoming an integrated part of the world political, economic and financial system. The main points of concern according to the NSC are of domestic nature, with political developments and economy being the central issues. Attention is also being paid to "national interests" who include protection of the individual, society and the state from terrorism. All parts of the concept connected with military problems have also been radically revised. Throughout the document, the term "defence" has been replaced by the term "military". The concept puts forward a demand to raise the state's military potential. "Our world is far from being safe; therefore, Russia must have effective armed forces, an army and a fleet respected in their own country and with which other countries would reckon. Only in this case can we counteract new threats to security"<sup>82</sup>.

But Putin did not stop there, since for him the problem concerns Russia's national security<sup>83</sup>. And he apparently wanted to make obvious that he gives great importance to the legal bases of the army. So, in April he adopted a new Military Doctrine<sup>84</sup>, in June a new Foreign Policy Concept<sup>85</sup>, and in August 2001 a new Naval Doctrine<sup>86</sup>. In August 11, 2000

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<sup>78</sup> Facon I., op. cit. p.16.

<sup>79</sup> *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 18 January 2000.

<sup>80</sup> 1997 NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION Endorsed by the Russian Federation President's Decree No. 1300 (dated December 17, 1997) in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 13.01.2000.

<sup>81</sup> Yeltsin, B. The national security concept of the RF, in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 26 December 1997, pp. 4,5.

<sup>82</sup> Vladimir Putin Said Continuation of Military Reform is one of Priorities, in *Pravda* 25.06.2002.

<sup>83</sup> Yugov S., "Army reform: good intentions or political populism?" in *Pravda*, 27.8.2002.

<sup>84</sup> *NG*, 22 April 2000, pp5-6; *Izvestiya*, 25 April 2000.

<sup>85</sup> *NG*, 11 July 2000, pp. 1,6.

the RF Security Council decided on reducing the Armed Forces by 365,000 troops (to an authorised strength of 1 million by January 1, 2004), with mandatory measures to ensure the requisite level of basic qualitative parameters (resources available per serviceman, combat training expenditures per serviceman, amount of money allowances, outlays on subsistence per serviceman etc).

While risking tensions between civil and military authorities, Putin took in hand the upper echelons, in particular the "Chechnya generals". At the end of March 2001 he appointed a civilian -the retired KGB Lieutenant General and a close friend of his -Sergey Ivanov to head the Defence Ministry and made a senior woman official Lyubov Kudelina –who, while in charge of the military budget at the Finance Ministry, insisted on maximum secrecy<sup>87</sup> - one of his deputies, in an attempt to impose more rigorous management of the armed forces' budget. When one considers the level of the Russian defence budget, the importance of this job is obvious. Over the past decade two of Kudelina's predecessors have been dismissed. This way, Putin claimed to have begun demilitarising Russia and proved he really considers military reform a top priority. A few months later, he used September 11 to call for one more time the generals and admirals to order and put forward a reform plan for 2001-2005, which called for the creation of a more mobile, modern military.

Putin's approach towards the military, mirrors his approach toward the rest of the political system. Those who expected from him a new version of the previous "military reform plans" were disappointed. Putin believes that real reforms come slowly. So, with the help of Ivanov, Putin proceeded in a number of changes focused on avoiding redundancy and saving money, living the important changes for later.

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<sup>86</sup> *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, No 28, 3 August 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Antonenko O., "Putin's New National Security Team", *IJSS Reports*, March 29, 2001. Golts A., "Civilian Goes to Top, but Same Old Approach" in *The Russia Journal*, <http://www.Russiajournal.com/Index.cgi>, March 30, 2001. From the perspective of "secrecy-openness" an interview with Kudelina is eloquent: "Lyubov Kudelina: vopros ob otmene igot voenosluzhaschim ne stojit", April 2, 2001 in <http://www.strana.ru/>

### 1.3.ii.) Legal aspect

Putin's near obsession with the legal aspect of the Russian military reform can be more than easily understood. Until his presidency, the legal provisions which should support the military reforms, were at least chaotic<sup>88</sup>. This was of course due to the respectively chaotic situation within the RF in the years after the collapse of the USSR.

But in today's Russia, laws that are critical for the military reform and for the construction of a system of democratic-like civil-military relations are still not being adopted. The process of lawmaking for the regulation of military reform is going on very slowly and final texts are usually discussed for several years before being adopted<sup>89</sup>. What is usually going on, is a situation, where the administration comes up with a law project. But as soon as it introduces it into the state Duma, the all-powerful General Staff lobby intervenes and most of the times changes the President's mind. Therefore, for a real change-producing law to be passed, the administration is waiting for a very good or very tragic coincidence.

Due to this situation and lack of national and even inter-institutional consensus for example, a law on the civil control of the military organisation has still not been adopted.

But contrary to what everybody believed, Putin signed in July 2002 one of the most difficult bills to adopt, creating an alternative civilian service for conscientious objectors who do not want to serve in the armed forces. But critics say the term of alternative service is too long and the law gives local draft boards too much power in determining who qualifies: An applicant must prove his pacifist credentials before a military tribunal, then accept three years' service (instead of two), living in regular barracks under the command of the same officers<sup>90</sup>. People against the law say it just looks like a punishment prescribed for those who don't want to serve.

In any case, the adoption of a proper legal framework should be a top priority for any administration, declaring a will to reform; but as always in Russia laws follow the changes instead of regulating them.

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<sup>88</sup> see for more : Konovalov A. and Oznobishev S. *Russian armed force: Perspectives of military reform and evolution of the military doctrine*; NATO Grant of 1997-1999, Institute for Strategic Assessments, Moscow, June 1999, pp.11-15.

<sup>89</sup> Odom. E.. W. op.cit.

## **Chapter 2: Reforming the Russian Military; The need for reform.**

*“If one takes a look at today’s situation, one must acknowledge that the breakdown of expenses not only in the Armed Forces, but also in all power structures is hardly optimum. We cannot describe it as optimum today when despite considerable resources being committed by the state to the country’s armed and power-related component, many of our units conduct no drills, no combat training. If pilots do not fly, if sailors almost never put to sea, is everything all right in terms of the structure of the Armed Forces<sup>91</sup>?”*

The debate on Russian military reform appeared to have been put on the back burner until the advancement of Putin’s military reform concepts in the summer of 2000 and the open confrontation between Kvashnin and Sergeyev, a fact that awakened many in Moscow: In August 2000, the tragic loss of the nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) "Kursk" in the Barents Sea and the navy’s futile rescue effort as well as its Soviet-style misinformation of its own public illustrated for many Russians and outside observers the crisis in Russia’s armed forces, the incompetence of the country’s military leadership, and have re-focused the attention of both the country’s leadership and the Russian public on Russian defence reform issues. Soon after, in September, a plan to radically reduce the size of the Russian Armed Forces was announced. The urgent need to restructure and reorganise the whole military system was confirmed during the series of the meetings of the Security Council during autumn 2000<sup>92</sup>.

In May 2001 a fire at a Russian satellite control centre showed how far the plans to create an independent space force are from reality. It took almost a day to put out the fire at this strategic military site, suppressing the fact that Russia does not have the specialised fire fighting equipment needed for this kind of emergencies<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Dauce F., op.cit.p.37,41.

<sup>91</sup> (Opening remarks by President Vladimir Putin at a Security Council meeting on 11 August 2000 to discuss a new Russian strategy for military planning until 2015.)

<sup>92</sup> Trenin D., “Russia’s Military in Crisis” in <http://www.carnegie.ru>

<sup>93</sup> Golts A., “Russia’s Superpower Illusions go up in Smoke” in *The Russia Journal*, <http://Russiajournal.com/index.cgi>, May 18, 2001.

Finally the 118 victims in the MI-26 transport helicopter crash in August 2002, as many as in the Kursk submarine disaster and in similar relatively peaceful conditions<sup>94</sup> became the last drop.

## **2.1.) Necessary for solving modern problems**

Military reforms in the Russian army have always met the concrete conditions of the given historical stage in the country's development and the ongoing military reform is no exception in this respect, since it is based on the serious changes in the life of society that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the transition of the economy to market relations, the easing of the international situation and the need to give the Armed Forces a new, modern look to meet present-day requirements. Today's Russia, is a different state, with a different social and economic system. The Armed Forces, however, have hardly changed since the Soviet era. They have only become smaller in size and weaker in combat effectiveness.

In November 1997, Andrea Nikolayev a State Duma deputy and army general wrote in *The Russia Journal*: "How can we improve our military potential without a clear picture of what modern war is all about?" A response to this question was given two years later by Russia's 1999 Draft military doctrine:

"Regional war [...] will be characterised by: [...] warfare in all spheres; coalition operations; mass use of PGMs, electronic and other new forms of combat; attacks throughout the territory of the opposing sides. [...] An independent technological and productive base must be developed to meet the military's needs, especially for a new generation of armaments. Priorities in this area are: qualitatively upgrading strategic arms; developing C3I<sup>95</sup> and fire control systems; strategic warning; electronic warfare; mobile, precision non-nuclear weapons and their information support; reducing and standardising the numbers of different weapons and equipment."

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<sup>94</sup> Soloviov V., "An Extremely neglected security issue; Building a new army is easier than reforming the old one", *Via WPS Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 12 September, 2002.

<sup>95</sup> Command , control, communications and intelligence.

The numbers, strength and combat ability of the Russian army constitute a military secret and we can mostly refer to them by assessments and statistics. However, it is commonly accepted that the army needs urgent reforms: To respond to security challenges in Central Asia and elsewhere, Russia needs a highly mobile, high-tech military force, being able to fight in a broad variety of terrain and to deploy at short notice. A wholly professional army, with well-trained troops is required to take on radical Islamist guerrillas and drug traffickers. This is exactly what President Putin has committed to do in November 2001, to the great chagrin of his generals.

Recent wars, especially the conflicts in Kosovo and Afghanistan and the operation «Iraq Freedom », demonstrated that maintaining vast armies is of little use. What is needed today is rapid and decisive force employment, and reduced vulnerability. In Russia's most-likely future wars, the terrain will probably not support large armoured formations and that therefore Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) and Electronic Warfare (EW) systems should govern the allocation of scarce defence resources, as they represent the most cost-effective way to increase combat capabilities without actually increasing the quantity of weapon systems<sup>96</sup>. That is why it is necessary for Russia's top brass to completely discard their prevalent, though obsolete, ideas of the army that many now use as basis for reforming the Armed Forces. In a modern war, ground forces will have new kinds of arms at their disposal, including high-precision arms, which can only work in conjunction with satellite intelligence. This, was something very much lacking for example during the initial stages of the "counter-terrorist" operations in Chechnya.

The way the American military fought in Afghanistan<sup>97</sup> and Iraq suggested a path of change for the Russian military as well. Following this path will clearly require several major changes. But after years of "virtual" military reform, experts say that Kremlin is this time serious, mostly because the latest US-led wars have exposed the crushing deficiencies of Russia's military. "Our military brass was saying [...] that the American bombing campaign in Afghanistan would produce no results. The sudden unravelling of the Taliban shocked them," says Alexander Goltz, a military expert with the weekly magazine *Ezhenedelny Journal*. "The ability of the US to wage remote-control warfare, to destroy its enemies without

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<sup>96</sup> FitzGerald C. M., op. cit. p.2.

<sup>97</sup> Facon I. op. cit. p.22.

a costly effort of occupying territory, has been very eye-opening for our military leaders”.<sup>98</sup> So, the era of large-scale wars and consequently massive armies is about to pass for Russia as well, since defence is being steadily replaced by military affairs: The vocation of “protecting the motherland” has been transformed into the job of protecting national interests (or certain principles and values) by military means, so, crucially the focus shifts from the quantity of personnel and arms to their quality.

In the era of the RMA, the changed international geopolitical environment, the changing ways in which military force is utilised<sup>99</sup> and the changes in the relations between society and the military, have a defining influence over the nature of military reform. According to the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, Col Gen. AM Kornukov, “the main mission of the Russian armed forces is to be ready to conduct local wars and armed conflicts in the World’s contemporary military-political situation. Its participation in regional wars and, consequently, in a large scale conventional war has not been excluded<sup>100</sup>.” In case of a war, a peacetime professional military needs reinforcements. Therefore there arises the necessity to call up reservists. However impossible a new war might seem, Russia needs a trained reserve.

Furthermore, cross border warfare is being superseded by internal wars, peacekeeping missions and anti-terrorist efforts. The events of September 11 have radically changed the geopolitical and military political situation in the world. The Russian military can not stay the same. The authorities of the Russian Federation must modernise their military to cope with new challenges of aggression and international terrorism. For this Russian needs a professional military.

How can Russia respond to these new challenges? “Reforming the Defence Ministry- that is to improve the existing army- is impossible. Not that it is bad to itself. The main reason is that it was created to pursue different objectives. It is an army from the last century, mobilising all national resources. What it is not is a high-tech, modern army, which serves those resources and “covers” them. There is only one-way out of the situation: change over to a strictly professional army. One created on a new foundation. With new goals. For the new century. Will Russia have the sufficient political courage and financial funds to make the breakthrough? This is the gist of the matter.<sup>101</sup>”

### **2.1.i.) Demographic pressures.**

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<sup>98</sup> Medetsky A., « Putin OK’s plan to cancel conscription », in *Vladivostok news*, 4 December, 2001.

<sup>99</sup> FitzGerald C. M., op. cit. p.16.

<sup>100</sup> Kornukov A.M. Col. Gen.: op. cit.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous, « Deserters go on a shooting spree ». in *Izvestia*, 6 February 2002.

Today, the conscription system makes no longer sense for Russia. Given the country's demographic situation, the "conscript resource" looks set to shrink substantially in the coming years<sup>102</sup>. As a consequence of a falling birth-rate in the second half of the 1980s, Russia will run up against a "demographic trough" in the coming years that will mean there simply won't be enough people to call up<sup>103</sup>. According to the Russian MoD, the number of 18 to 27 year olds in 2005-2007 will enable the army to recruit only 40 to 50% of the men it needs<sup>104</sup>. This will leave Putin with the choice of either abolishing the various provisions that currently allow young men to defer their military service - and make himself unpopular - or speed up the transition to a professional army.

## 2.1.ii.) Civil military relations

Having liberated the Soviet Union from its nazi invaders, the army was once the most visible symbol of Russia's superpower status. But these days its reputation is at an all-time low. Therefore, the legitimacy of conscription has undergone a rapid decline since 1989 -both as a basis of military organisation and an agent for socialisation<sup>105</sup>. Russian society no longer accepts the necessity of military service, at least in its present form. The appalling conditions within units have been well publicised by the Russian media, so families do not want to see their sons serving in the armed services and young men with the wit or money to avoid conscription do so<sup>106</sup>. A national survey by All Russia Centre for Public Opinion Research (VtsiOM) has shown that most Russian families shudder at the thought that their loved ones might have to serve in the armed forces. From 1600 Russians, 69% of respondents would not like their son, brother, or husband to serve in the Russian forces<sup>107</sup>. Only 10% of those questioned favoured retaining compulsory military service while 84% wanted it abolished.

But at least, in the field of relations to the society, the Russian military reform has produced a few success stories. The most profound one was the de-mobilisation of over one million of its military personnel into civilian society without major social instability, political upheavals, or significant economic costs<sup>108</sup>. Few countries in transition can claim a similar track record, particularly given the degree of Russia's economic decline. In the context of a

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<sup>102</sup> The average life expectancy dropped by an astonishing six years, from 70.1 in 1986/87 to just 64 years in 1994. Russia now occupies just the 100th spot on a world-wide list of life-expectancy rankings.

<sup>103</sup> See Nemtsov B., NG, 2 April 2002, p2; Solovyov V., NG, 12 April 2002, p10.

<sup>104</sup> For further details, see Orr M. J., *Manpower Problems of the Russian Armed Forces*, Conflict Studies Research Centre, February 2002, pp3-4.

<sup>105</sup> Dauce F., op. cit. p.36.

<sup>106</sup> Smirnoff A.I. op. cit. p.161.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p.133.

combination of rapid reductions, the general devaluation of the military's role in Russian society, widespread corruption, and criminalisation, this relatively smooth demobilisation is a major achievement of Yeltsin's administration in the field of military reform.<sup>109</sup>

## **2.2.) Internal stability needs of the Russian Federation**

*"Holy Mother Russia One and Indivisible."*

### **2.2.i.) Maintaining internal order.**

Given the diminished level of confrontation in international relations, the expansion of partnership and co-operation, and the reduced threat of incursion from outside, the problems of providing internal security have become exceptionally important. At the Russian Federation's present stage of development, among the more dangerous threats is the broad and protracted economic crisis, which brought with it a crisis in political power and a significant increase in the nation's crime rate.<sup>110</sup>

Russia, remaining one of the world's leading military powers has to face itself a deep economic and social crisis, which create all sorts of undesirable consequences -growing popular discontent and criminal activity (especially organised crime), rising state indebtedness, and a threat to traditional Russian national values, like culture, language and the Orthodox faith (especially within the 18% of the population that comprises ethnic minorities). In the multinational Russian Federation, the primary internal sources of military threat could include nationalist, separatist and other organisations aimed at destabilising the internal situation in the Russian Federation and the violation of its territorial integrity, attempts aimed at the violent overthrow of constitutional order and at disrupting the operations of the organs of state power and control and terrorist attacks against sensitive facilities (especially nuclear plants). The military apparatus is to be restructured to respond to these potential risks and be able to conduct operations in low and medium intensity conflicts. The need for building a more flexible and mobile army that is capable of better interaction with the other forces structures (MVD, FSB, Ministry of Emergency Situations, border guards, etc) in the field should be stated as a priority by the Russian authorities.

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<sup>108</sup> Smirnoff A.I., op. cit., p.135.

<sup>109</sup> Although carried out with the help of British and Norwegian specialists and funds.

Russia might seem as a quite stable federal state, but the truth is that the relations of subsidiarity between the federal state and the regions have not yet been clearly defined.<sup>111</sup> The army in Russia cannot be analysed merely at the level of the state; the regional level must also be considered. Many units depend on their local political bosses to supply them with the necessities of life. Therefore the Russian government should have doubts about the army's reliability in any trial of strength between the centre and the regions, since it is unlikely that they would favour a central government which has left their pay in arrears against their local sponsors. The harsh conclusion is that any attempt by the Russian government to use military force internally is likely to lead to civil war.

## **2.2.ii.) The excruciating Chechen experience.**

The Chechen terrorist attack on the Moscow theatre in October 2002 and its violent denouement stimulated Russia's government to launch, yet again, a round of military reform. Immediately afterwards, President Putin and Defence Minister Ivanov ordered fundamental changes in Russia's defence policy and posture.<sup>112</sup>

The ineptness of the Russian military in the Chechen war has demonstrated again and again very clearly how serious its personnel and equipment problems have become. The North Caucasus has now become more turbulent than before the war, which revealed that Moscow cannot exercise effective control over regional governments or maintain a competent army. Inter-ethnic and regional problems associated with the poverty and destroyed infrastructure produced by the war in the North Caucasus area have exacerbated these presumptions. And it is now quite possible that an attempt to renew the fighting in Chechnya from the Russian side would be met with large scale combat refusals and desertions, weakening Russia's position in the North Caucasus more than allowing Chechnya effective independence<sup>113</sup>.

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<sup>110</sup> Pocheptsov G. G. "Conflict potential of post communist countries: a system approach" in *Peace and the Sciences*, vol. XXV December 1994.

<sup>111</sup> The example of the Republic of Tatarstan demonstrates how the weakening of the central federal power and the concurrent strengthening of Tatar power have transformed the army into an object of negotiation, negotiation which has led to cost- and power- sharing where the army is concerned.

<sup>112</sup> Blank S., "This Time we Really Mean it: Russian Military Reform", in *Russia and Eurasia Review*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, January 7, 2003.

<sup>113</sup> see also : Lorrain P. 'La manne du petrole et la guerre de Tchetchenie » in *Geopolitique*, no. 54, summer 1996, pp.74-76.

At the outset of the Chechen campaign in December 1994, the Russian Army invaded Chechnya with a collection of various units, without an adequate support base. To the extent that the Chechnya conflict of 1994-96 was a fair test of combat capability, Russia's armed forces were far from fighting form, even by their own evaluation. The conflict showed just how far standards of professionalism had sunk - from the first disastrous entry into Grozny in 1994, which left hundreds dead, to its recapture by a few hundred determined Chechen guerrillas the following year<sup>114</sup>. This led the Russian President Boris Yeltsin in February 1995 to call the Russian military "inefficient" and "not well prepared for settling conflicts of local character", as well as to admit that the military reform to that date had been "unsatisfactory".

Indeed, the Chechen war had demonstrated that reform of the Russian armed forces, which had been triumphantly announced by Russia's leadership several years earlier, was nothing but a myth. The so-called *kontraktniki* (contract soldiers), notorious for their looting in Chechnya, turned out to be less capable fighters than the paratroopers, naval infantrymen, and or even the recently drafted privates. The Russian military was badly embarrassed in the 1994-96 war -a failure that nonetheless, included an alarming amount of Russian brutality against the Chechens.<sup>115</sup>

The Russian military suffered more than 6,000 casualties before their withdrawal in 1996 without restoring central government control over the breakaway republic<sup>116</sup>. Many more were recorded as missing, but there are reports that many of those may have actually been soldiers who had deserted. The Russians left Chechnya from 1996 to 1999, to a de facto independent status but with a totally destroyed economy. The only economic activities in the region were illegal: hostage taking, arms trafficking and oil stealing from the Bakou-Novorossisk pipeline, a fact that would play its role during the second war in Chechnya.<sup>117</sup>

This second war revealed again the limitations of Russia's military capabilities. In the summer of 1999 the MoD had great difficulty in mustering 60.000 soldiers for the operation in Chechnya, and more than 40.000 troops had to be mobilised from other forces in order to secure the operational minimum of 100.000 –in contrary to the total 60.000 of the first Chechen war. But, during the first year, the second Chechnya campaign saw Russia's losses rise to 2,472 soldiers with 7,076 wounded in action. These figures, which do not include casualties in the ranks of the Interior Ministry and other power ministries, whose units are

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<sup>114</sup> Mandeville L., «Armee Russe : menace ou recours » in *Politique Internationale*, no. 67. spring '95, p.56.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.* pp. 59-62.

<sup>116</sup> Army troops suffered 1.568 dead and 4.719 wounded from Dec.11, 1994, to Dec.1, 1995. Committee of Soldiers' Mothers figures cited in Blandy C.W., "Chechnya: Two Federal interventions - An interim Comparison and Assessment", Conflict Studies Research Centre, *RMA Sandhurst*, 2000, p.21.

deployed in Chechnya,<sup>118</sup> exceed the average annual losses sustained in Afghanistan or during the first war in Chechnya. And for one more time, their treatment of Chechen civilians - described by human rights groups as wholesale looting, rape and murder- has helped dash chances of peace. The Russian military has demonstrated a serious lack of professionalism, being guilty of human rights violations that mount to the level of war crimes, with operations directed against Chechen civilians. The UNHCR paper on asylum seekers from the Russian Federation in the context of the situation in Chechnya<sup>119</sup>, stated that “parties to the conflict” have committed and continue to commit abuses against the civilian populations and that statements of witnesses indicate a pattern of violence directed at non combatants including torture, summary executions, arbitrary detentions, disappearances, rape, ill-treatment, widespread destruction and looting of property. Over 350.000 persons have been forced to flee from their homes mostly to Ingushetia but also to other regions of the Russian Federation as well as inside Chechnya itself and in central and western Europe.

We can therefore understand that the Second Chechnya war plays a major role in the future of Russia’s political system. For the second time, Russia is burying its potential for economic development in Chechnya, which costs annually about 25% of the defence budget. This conflict wastes scarce economic resources needed to fund reforms, while helping to institutionalise corruption and corrodes the professionalism of the soldiers serving in Chechnya.

But how could the third largest army in the world be unable to put down a rebellion in a territory like Chechnya? Only 2.000 rebels held the city of Grozny against several times that many Russian troops. In addition, the Russian soldiers were supposed to have tanks and heavy guns and be supported by missiles, aircraft, a vast intelligence network, satellites and helicopter gunships. But the Russian army was not able to fight this local war because of shortages of good officers, inadequate training, lack of co-ordination among the troops from various “power ministries”, numerous tactical failures, and the soldiers' unwillingness to put their lives in danger for a war that had for them no meaning.

Understandably, the military fabricated a myth about the First Chechen War that it was lost in Moscow by the politicians, not by the Army on the ground<sup>120</sup>. Yevgenia Aibats in the Moscow Times, for example, wrote that “the military won't allow the politicians to take

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<sup>117</sup> Cheterian V., « Erevan. Destructures et exactions » in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2002, p.14

<sup>118</sup> “Kremlin Policy Russian Army Deaths in Chechnya Approach 2,500”, in *Security Watch* 16 October 2000, Vol. 1, No. 13.

<sup>119</sup> UNHCR paper on asylum seekers from the Russian Federation in the context of the situation in Chechnya, January 2002.

away its victory.<sup>121</sup>” But the truth lies elsewhere: The defeat in Chechnya has been the result of the many ills plaguing the Russian armed forces, like the potentially fatal inability to fight effectively on a conventional battlefield.

Experts say that Moscow's troops, struggling to contain a few thousand mobile guerrillas, lack night-fighting equipment, all-weather air support, and even supplies such as steel helmets and bullet proof vests. Furthermore, Russia’s military is ragly divided fifty-fifty between defence Ministry forces and others. This way, all attempts to establish good coordination in Chechnya have failed.

Russia, for many years has been preparing its soldiers for a war in Central Europe against a highly skilled, technologically advanced adversary. In Chechnya, it found those skills and capabilities incompatible with the task at hand: overcoming a comparatively low-technology enemy on the streets and in the buildings of a modern city. And, while the Russian military was able to significantly improve its ability to carry out certain tasks in the three-year interval between the two wars, other important missions, particularly in the urban realm, were ignored. This conscious decision not to prepare for a most stressful battlefield met with devastating results.

On the other hand, Russian general earns 400 Euro a month; a colonel 200 Euro and conscript soldiers do not get more than 1-2 Euro. Not surprisingly many make a living on the side. And despite their “fighting bonus” in Chechnya, troops sell arms to the rebels they are supposed to be fighting -only to get blown up later by them. One often-cited reason for continued war is that so many officers profit from it through deals with Chechen terrorists, from sale of weapons to ransoming of captives (by both sides<sup>122</sup>).

All these facts make the decision about Chechnya difficult. Paradoxically 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<sup>123</sup>. But the Kremlin is not going to fall back that easily<sup>124</sup>. Taking into account the support of Russia’s public opinion for the military campaign, and the world situation after September 11<sup>th</sup>, it is hard to forecast eventualities.

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<sup>120</sup> Astigarraga I., in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2000 p. 9.

<sup>121</sup> *Moscow Times*, 12 November 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Blank S., op. cit.,

<sup>123</sup> *Security Policy Library* no. 6 - 2001

<sup>124</sup> Trenin D., op.cit.

## 2.3.) Russia's main security threats.

We stated before that reforming the armed forces, should be linked to Russia's strategic outlook. The 1993 version of Russian military doctrine contained the declaration that Russia has no foreign enemies or opponents. So, is today the Russian military not supposed to prepare for any war? The reality is that it has been a long time since the Moscow military district was Russia's front-line area of defence, making the Russian urban administrative and industrial heartland be within the combat radius of even tactical aircraft.<sup>125</sup> A military doctrine should define the state's potential opponents, something that would also define all the system of the military doctrine and accordingly, the course of the military reform.

Russia's present frontiers are still relatively liquid and the nation finds itself in an entirely new international environment. Russia's west and south is dominated by former Soviet republics with a high degree of political economic and social instability leaving them open to outside influences like radical Islamic fundamentalism. Some indeed have controversies among themselves and with Russia.

Within Russia itself, as a result of the events of 1991, the Russian national entity has been divided. Given the size of the Russian diaspora in the Near Abroad – approximately 25 million Russians live outside Russia but within the confines of the fSU – and the violation of their human rights in a number of republics with the exception of Belarus and perhaps Ukraine, there is the potential for Russia to feel obliged to use its military might in order to protect the rights of native Russians. The Baltic area<sup>126</sup> North Caucasus, south Urals and the Far East should therefore become the primary new stationing areas for the Russian armed forces. This would also answer Russia's needs against Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China and counter the danger posed by the expansion of Islamic fundamentalism into the Muslim populations in east southern Volga<sup>127</sup>. Finally, one should not neglect regional conflict scenarios such as possible domestic turmoil in Ukraine or Belarus (which Russia's main export routes cross), instability in the North Caucasus and infiltration of rebel groups into border regions with Kazakhstan<sup>128</sup>.

It's not clear how the Defence Ministry would co-ordinate border issues with neighbouring countries and how these countries would react to a possible militarisation of

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<sup>125</sup> Sergounin A., "In search of a new paradigm: the Russian national security doctrine of 1997", in *Peace and Security*, p.24.

<sup>126</sup> Sanner J. T. "La baltique et la securite europeenne", in *Regard Europeen*, no. 13, March 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Facon I., « La reforme de l'armee russe », in *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, no. 1022, February 2002, p. 20.

<sup>128</sup> Sultangazin U. "Kazakhstan's nuclear problems", in *Peace and the Sciences*, vol XXV, June 1994, pp. 34-37.

their border areas, in case e.g. Russian border guards were replaced with Russian army units. Something like that could complicate even further Russia's relations with CIS neighbours, which are already problematic. Things in border districts of Russia are not easy. In Tajikistan for example, Russia had to retreat and support power sharing with the rebels. If this agreement drifted apart; Tajikistan could blow up at any minute, as could the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the internal conflicts in Georgia.

The main irritant in Russo-Georgian relations in the past few years was the involvement of Moscow in the settlement of the Abkhaz problem. Or rather, the fact that Moscow links the deployment of Russian troops in Abkhazia with the settlement process. Russia is therefore caught between Georgian threats to repeal the invitation to Russian forces and its demands for resettlement of Georgian refugees, a process that would fatally undermine Abkhaz aspirations to independence. Russia, as regional gendarme, could be further blamed and caught between unreconciled ethnic forces that could easily resume hostilities among themselves<sup>129</sup>. Since Georgia is vital to Russia's interest in a Transcaucasian hegemony, but the forces available to Moscow cannot maintain order; the whole region could either elude Russian control or break out into open warfare.

The bad news is that conflicts, as those in Georgia and Tajikistan are likely to typify the future challenges to be faced by the army. Up until now, Russia has been more or less able to avoid direct involvement in such armed conflicts. But this is not out of the question, especially in connection with the direction the Baku regime is taking in usurping part of the Caspian Sea.

It is more than clear that Russia pursues its own interests in the Caucasus within the "near abroad" policy, trying to re-establish control over the borders of the CIS with Turkey and especially Iran<sup>130</sup> and thus wanting to maintain military forces in Azerbaijan as it does in Armenia and Georgia<sup>131</sup>. Russian policy was unveiled in Azerbaijan when Russian troops intervened after the state's government refused to enter the CIS in 1992.<sup>132</sup> In Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia has not only covertly ran over a billion Euro of arms to Armenia, but has

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<sup>129</sup> Philippe barret la raison Imperiale geopolitique no 45 pp 17-20.

<sup>130</sup> Russia has been trying to post troops on the Azeri/Iranian border since mid 1992.

<sup>131</sup> Russia currently operates military bases in armenia end georgia and the strategic Gabala radar facility in azerabijan which Is capable of monitoring air traffic over turkey Iran China india Iraq pakistan even much of northern Africa.

<sup>132</sup> Svante C. "The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict reconsidered" in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 20, no.4, Fall 1997.

also repeatedly threatened Azerbaijan<sup>133</sup>. Though Armenia may resume hostilities, it will probably be denied any true victory as long as Western oil interests now play a major regional role. Here too, Moscow's failed economic reconstruction limits Russia only to a regional policy of military interventionism that cannot effectively sustain its political or economic objectives. Hence the outcome is a prolonged, and volatile conflictual situation. Russia, calling for a peacekeeping force in the region, wants it to be composed of only Russian forces. On the other hand of course, Russia is trying to gain control over the Azeri oil riches.

Finally we should never forget that some Central Asian states continue to serve as home to a number of vital Russian military installations, including not only the Baikonur space launch centre (open to Western companies since the mid-1990s) in Kazakhstan, but also the quasi-secret ballistic missile test range of Sary Shagan (Kazakhstan), a navy communication centre and a torpedo testing facility in Kyrgyzstan, and a space control centre in Nurek (Tajikistan)<sup>134</sup>. If any of those facilities were to be deprived from Russia's control, Russia would most likely want to intervene in those states.

The last ten years, Russians have put a lot of hard work in creating a co-operation climate between them and their Asian neighbours -mostly China, Japan, and India. The truth is that Russia today lacks forces to provide a conventional defence against e.g. a hypothetical Chinese attack to the Far East –a scenario that was outrightly rejected until recently by the Moscow military planners. Some indeed state that there is no military threat to Russia on the part of China and that China is a strategic partner. Ivanov for example has constantly been emphasising that the time of the “Iron curtain” is long gone<sup>135</sup>. But the potential of “China-ization” of scarcely populated Siberian regions is one of the factors that condition the need to strengthen the border by means of the Armed Forces and other troops, since in the future, in the Russian Far East, 80.000 Russian troops will be facing more than 2 million Chinese soldiers along a border of more than 4.000 kilometres.

Nevertheless China's strategic nuclear arsenal could grow from its current 300 to between 600 and 900 warheads by 2010-2015. This would call into question the Russian nuclear deterrent. For today's Russia, the use of its present tactical nuclear arsenal even in a major military conflict with China is very questionable because of the vicinity of almost all major Russian cities and military headquarters in the region to the common border with

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<sup>133</sup> Emerson M., *The elephant and the bear*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2002. P.38.

<sup>134</sup> Golotyuk Y., "Soyuznik podkral'sya szadi," in *Vremya Novostei*, February 5, 2002, on-line edition.

<sup>135</sup> “Garrisons as a Form of existence in Siberian Regions” in *Russian Military Analysis*, Issue. No.100, 30.8. 2002

China. The use of non-strategic nuclear forces could become possible only if Moscow would use longer-range tactical nuclear weapons that would threaten China's hinterland and major cities beyond the common border. Recognising these defence dilemmas on its potential eastern front, Russia should develop a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons and munitions with low yield, delivered to targets by both strategic and tactical delivery systems such as the newly developed Iskander 400 KM short-range missile<sup>136</sup>. Because, if China's rapid modernisation is to be followed by a military modernisation, China would turn into a country that could challenge Russia and threaten its natural resources. And, with military technology being transferred from Russia to China on a daily basis, some in Moscow, such as Alexander Sharavin, Director of the Institute for Political and Strategic Analysis, warn that the People's Liberation Army could rapidly become more battle-worthy than the cash-starved Russian army. For China, Russia is at the moment a source of sophisticated, reasonably priced armaments that are unavailable from the west. But in time, China might threaten the Russian Far East, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan. Whether China develops as a threat actually depends on Russia's military reform and its ongoing arms and technology transfers to Beijing. It also depends on Moscow's future relations with the buffer states named above and the course of future relations with Japan. For the moment, deploying screening forces and a developed logistical and supply infrastructure to the Far East would be able to accommodate rapidly deploying re-enforcements and suffice. But eventually, a larger group of forces would probably need to be permanently deployed in the Transbaikal area to protect the extremely long lines of communication and supply.

As concerns Russia's eastern flank, Japan could also theoretically present a threat to Russia but at least within the next decade Japan's offensive conventional capabilities will not meet the Russian standards. However a re-militarisation of Japan could in the future represent a major change in the security environment of the Far East<sup>137</sup> -although any Japanese attempt to take the Kurile or the Sakhalin islands would be highly unlikely to meet Washington's approval<sup>138</sup>.

To its south, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan may pose a security problem for Russia individually or in some combination, but most probably this threat would be indirect, manifesting itself through support of regimes, movements or policies in the Transcaucasus

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<sup>136</sup> See also Arbatov A. G., *The transformation of Russian military doctrine : lessons learned from Kosovo and Chechnya*, George C. Marshall, European Center for Security Studies, July 2000, p.18.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.* p.6.

<sup>138</sup> Joyaux F., «Le face a face Moscou-Tokyo », in *Geopolitique*, no 54, summer 1996 pp. 103,104.

and in central Asia which are directed against Russia or its allies.<sup>139</sup> Another possibility is that these states would support secessionist activities against the federal government as in the case of Chechnya. Of course one should take under consideration Turkey's membership to NATO, a fact that for the moment being, seems to exclude any threat from that state.

When one talks about the R.F-NATO relations should be very careful. The status quo of those relations is constantly changing in a way that any long-term predictions seem to have no scientific base at all. But these relations play a huge role to the reform of the Russian military<sup>140</sup>: If the U.S. (NATO) is not an opponent, then Russia needs to build an army where the strategic sector will be reduced to its minimum, while the highest attention will be paid to building professional compact armed forces, able to efficiently wage war operations within or close to the borders of the Russian Federation<sup>141</sup>. If Russia becomes a long-time ally of the West, there is no need whatsoever for example to keep the Northern Fleet as it is today and no need at all to begin a massive new shipbuilding program.

But the events of September 11 have mixed all the cards<sup>142</sup>. While Russia's foreign policy has become much more friendly to NATO and the U.S., the Russian military still live with the same anti-NATO military doctrine, related strategic concerns and operational plans<sup>143</sup>. The high command still counts on repelling an attack by NATO in the West<sup>144</sup> and especially after the war in Iraq which for one more time caused some to say that NATO has an offensive nature and that therefore plans to expand it toward the east have to be viewed as openly aggressive<sup>145</sup>.

U.S. actions against the "axis of evil" -Iran, Iraq, and North Korea- affect both Russia's position as a great regional power and its important economic interests. All three countries are within Russia's centuries-old sphere of influence, and Moscow wants to play an important role in any development in its geopolitical backyard. But seeing the present state of the Russian army, one could say that external threats will be in the near future mostly tried to be met by non-military means as far as possible, including diplomatic initiatives, co-operation with other states (or groups of states) and use of the UN, CIS and OSCE, a fact that was also made clear during the recent Iraq crisis.

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<sup>139</sup> Arbatov G. A., op. cit. p.6.

<sup>140</sup> See also Facon I., « La nouvelle doctrine militaire Russe et l'avenir des relations entre la Russie et l'occident in *Annuaire Francais de Relations Internationales*, volume II, 2001, pp. 733-754.

<sup>141</sup> Sung G., "Secondary power" in *Europ Magasine*, no. 7, 1999, pp. 31,32.

<sup>142</sup> Facon I., «Le 11 septembre: un nouveau souffle dans les relations russo-americaines? in *Annuaire Francais de Relations Internationales*, volume III, 2002, pp. 90-103.

<sup>143</sup> Golotyuk Y., op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> See Lavoie J. P. and Levesque J. op. cit.

## Chapter 3): The optimum solution and its financing.

### 3.1.) Proposed solutions.

We saw before that the Kursk disaster in August 2000 brought, even for a short time, serious public attention to the status of the Armed Forces. Immediately after the crisis died down, a lot of political “platforms” for reform projects were erected.

The first political project was advanced by Yabloko. Its main designer was Alexei Arbatov, deputy Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, who had made relevant proposals in the past<sup>146</sup>. Arbatov, saw Russia as enjoying a “window of security”, which should guide Russian military reform with regard to its conventional forces. According to him, Russian conventional forces should for now limit their preparations to local conflicts on the southern axis of instability. Over the mid-term, (the next 10-15 years), those forces should be prepared to deal with larger regional conflicts; and in the long-term (15-20 years), they should prepare for “regional or large-scale conflicts in the south and/or east.”<sup>147</sup> During this “window of security” Russia should according to Arbatov carry out all necessary reforms<sup>148</sup>-with internal reform, political stability, and economic development being the first priorities<sup>149</sup>. But as the leader of Arbatov's own party, Grigory Yavlinsky has pointed out; military reform that will serve a democratic Russia will require a fundamental break with "Russia's Phoney Capitalism" of criminalisation and corruption. According to Yavlinsky, new policies should lead to the birth of a Russian middle class in a state under law<sup>150</sup>. In his plan, Yavlinsky further suggested a sharp growth in military spending -from 2.6% to 3.5% of GDP - with a simultaneous reduction in the army to 800.000 people. According to Yabloko members, this would make it possible to halt conscription immediately and switch fully to a voluntary army service on a contract basis. From the very first day of the reform, all servicemen from soldiers to top officers should have double salary, while retaining all their privileges. If the military budget was increased in this way, it would make it possible to

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<sup>146</sup> Khisamova Z., « Spring army conscription », in *Expert*, April 29, 2002.

<sup>147</sup> Arbatov, *The Russian Military in the 21st Century*, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, Moscow, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid..

<sup>149</sup> Arbatov A., "Natsional'naya Ideya I natsional'naya bezopasnost'," in *Mirovaya ekonomika I mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 6, June 1998, pp. 5-19.

<sup>150</sup> Yavlinsky G., "Russia's Phoney Capitalism," in *Foreign Affairs*, May-June 1998, pp. 67-79.

abruptly change the 70-30% ratio of army budgetary items. The ratio under the Yabloko project should come to 50/50. Actually, the most interesting point of this programme is the suggestion to use the Russian-speaking population of the CIS as a resource for a contract-based army, in a way that those willing to accept Russian citizenship will be able to obtain it through army service.

So, this plan envisages the immediate start of a thorough reform and requires a considerable increase in expenditures, but does not actually settle the problem of maintaining the mobilisation reserve at the necessary quality level. Due to Yabloko's marginal influence in the State Duma, the military leadership rejected the plan, based mostly on the scale of proposed cuts and the levels of the proposed budget increases.

The second project was presented by the Communist Party in co-operation with the Movement in Support of the Army (founded in 1997 by late General Rokhlin). This plan was a much less elaborate and essentially declarative "platform" which basically called for rebuilding a Soviet Army of about a halfsize, while paying less attention to Chechnya and more to the looming confrontation with NATO. Its main presenter was Viktor Ilyukhin, but its real "asset" was former Defence Minister Igor Rodionov. Edited by Zyuganov himself, the plan was devoted to military reform and addressed both threats to Russian National Security and specific measures to be undertaken as part of the military reform<sup>151</sup>.

While opposing START II ratification, Zyuganov used the language of threat, i.e., that of the geopolitics of the continental "heartland" against the threatening encroachment of the West, led by the U.S. and NATO<sup>152</sup>. The authors of the plan, however, placed the greatest immediate military danger in the unstable south and the threat of local wars there and went on to state: "Today the country does not have enough resources to conduct even one local war of high intensity. Therefore, priority in the resolution of problems in the post-Soviet space must go to diplomats and special services, anticipating the use of small military units only in an emergency situation and only on the smallest scale"<sup>153</sup>. According to them, the end product of the military reform process would be "an army with the combat power equal to Russia's geopolitical situation and role in the world as one of the great powers"<sup>154</sup>. Addressing the problem of financing military reform, the authors proposed the issuance of "military bonds"

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<sup>151</sup> Zyuganov G., ed., *Voyennaya reforma: Vooruzhennye sily Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, Moscow: "Dukhovnoe nasledie," 1998.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

as loans to the state to pay for the costs of reform. These would be like the war bonds of the tsarist governments or the defence bonds issued for sale by the United States during World War II<sup>155</sup>.

The third project was less of a party-political nature (though linked to the OVR faction in the Duma) and represented an effort of the Council on Foreign Affairs and Defence. This plan, being a relatively cheap one, would not resolve the problem of transition to a professional army in the near future since it stipulated that the reform of the conscription system should be ready by 2006. And it is easy to understand why: being proposed by the generals, the reform plan was focused towards not producing any reform at all: For centuries the Russian army had been based on a cheap and powerless soldier who has been the cornerstone of the whole system. If this stone is taken away, generals fear that everything would fall apart, and the army would be destroyed. So for them, the present legal base and the two-year conscription system should persist and the number of privates and NCOs serving under contracts kept at the current level. Any decrease in numbers should only start in 2006 and be completed in the indefinite future. The amount of expenditures for personnel should also be maintained at practically the same level, since the increase in salaries of contract servicemen would be compensated by the future decrease in number of new draftees.

The Union of Right-Wing Forces (SPS) hired the Transitional Economy Institute (ITPE) to prepare a military reform programme. ITPE analysts calculated the cost of implementing the proposals of Yabloko and the General Staff, and came up with a project themselves. The ITPE plan stipulated a mixed army conscription, where new recruits would undergo a six-month course of military training in special training centres. Afterwards, those willing to continue army service should conclude an extendable three-year contract, depending on the will of soldiers and their commanders. According to the project's authors, such a system would make it possible to resolve several very serious problems: First, as the term of service would be drastically reduced, the number of draft-dodgers would also decline considerably. Second, there would be no harassment by older soldiers, as young recruits would enter and leave their training together. Third, the young men would not be sent to any combat zone against their will.

ITPE ordered the VTsiOM to perform a national poll on the plan. Men from 18 to 28 were asked what salary would be enough to serve in the army. According to the results,

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., pp.41-42.

400.000 Russians would agree to sign a contract for 3.000 rubles a month, whereas 900.000 would go serve in the army for 4.000 rubles a month. Therefore, if the salary were to be fixed at 3.500 rubles a month, there would be more candidates than necessary. After increasing the salary to 4.000 rubles a month, the Defence Ministry would be able to hold contests, where two people would compete for one position. A plus of the ITPE programme was the fact that no changes to the Constitution were needed to be made in order to implement it since changes were covered by the current legal basis.

President of the Academy of Military Sciences Makhmud Gareev prepared his own concept, which represented a hybrid of the ideas of the Union of Right-Wing Forces and the General Staff. Gareev proposed a transition to a professional army on a contract basis over five to six years. In his opinion, it would be primarily necessary to determine a basic, regular component of the Armed Forces responsible for implementing immediate combat tasks, that would gradually be transformed into a completely contract-based army within five to six years. According to him, conscription should not only be preserved, but also expanded: all unsubstantiated conscription deferrals should be cancelled and the term of military service should be reduced to a year or eighteen months, and later to six to eight months.

The military serving under a fixed period of service would consist of what he called "the variable component of the Armed Forces", comprising special training centres for recruits. On the basis of decent financial incentives on graduation from a training course at the centre, about half of the young people would be able to sign contracts. Another component would acquire a military profession and retire, thereby filling the military reserve. But Gareev did not agree with the General Staff, which suggested that only 40-50% of sergeants should serve by contract. According to Gareev, this category should be entirely professional, and sergeants should be prepared at special one-year schools. The problem with this project was that its implementation would be possible only if there existed an "adequate funding for the military budget", amounting to no less than 3.5% of GDP.

General Nikolaev -the head of the Duma Defence Committee- proposed his own program for change, which was trying to solve the financial problems of Russian military reform by introducing the principle of periodic reshufflings of funds to the military budget. But at best, periodic reshufflings would mean a temporary reallocation of funds from one branch of the military to another, something that is usually based on personal rivalries among commanders and does not reflect an overall strategic concept.

Finally, in November 2000 Kvashnin proposed a strict division of functions between the Defence Ministry and the General Staff. Under this plan, the Defence Ministry would take on political and administrative functions, while the General Staff would be responsible for the operational command of the troops. Kvashnin's proposals would probably just fragment the command of the military. If they were implemented, Putin, as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, would lose his direct link with the troops. At the same time the General Staff - the agency responsible for planning military operations for every occasion - would get the chance to meddle directly in political life.

We can therefore conclude that at present, Russia does not have a deficit of concepts of military reform. What has been lacking is effective leadership and economic resources<sup>156</sup>. Until recently, it seemed that the plan of the Union of Right-Wing Forces and ITPE was winning supporters: both the presidential administration and the Cabinet, and even the Defence Ministry accepted this concept. The only stumbling block was the timing. The leaders of the Union of Right-Wing Forces and ITPE insisted that the reform should start in 2003, while the General Staff wanted a start after three to four years, extending over ten years. However, after calculating the possible increase in costs, the Russian political leadership retreated. The military again started persuading Vladimir Putin that a completely switch from conscripts to professionals would lead to a year to year decline in the nation's defence capability. Finally, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said that the idea of transition to a mixed conscription system was nonsense. This means that over the next years the Russian Armed Forces will not have reforms, apart from -maybe- some experiments costing considerable amounts of money. But understanding President Putin is not difficult: if the generals are against his plans, who will implement the reforms? However, this is the case everywhere: courts object to the court reforms, state officials are against the administrative reform; bankers are opposed to the banking sector reforms, and so on and so forth. At present, the words "political will and political support" are still the key words - no reforms can be carried out without them.

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<sup>156</sup> Galeotti M., "Crisis Continues for Russia's Army," in *Jane's Intelligence Review*, June 1998.

### 3.1.i.) Experimenting with the military.

Before starting - or not starting - the reform, Russian generals and politicians have been trying to introduce model units of professional soldiers so as to work out exactly what kind of infrastructure changes would be required for a professional army and how much they would cost. Due in part to lobbying by the SPS party, Putin was convinced and Ivanov announced in March 2002 that the 76th Airborne parachute Division, based in Pskov south of St. Petersburg, was to undergo a transition to a professional basis by the middle of 2003<sup>157</sup>. This first pilot scheme would be part of a bigger experiment to decide whether to end decades of military conscription<sup>158</sup>. Later last year, Pskov stopped taking conscripts and started employing only soldiers on a contractual basis while the authorities were looking for ways of luring soldiers into the new professional unit. But finding the right type of soldier was again the biggest problem. The MoD wanted only the best professionals to serve in the division. But the offered salary of about 70 Euro a month was not the kind of money a professional would subscribe to.

At the beginning, there used to be a number of benefits for the military to top up their meagre salaries. But later on, the government abolished them, and many of those already on contracts decided to quit. According to reports, the building of new accommodation for soldiers and officers also fell behind schedule. So, a few months after its beginning, Putin had to express his doubts about the success of the experiment, saying that it has proven to be too expensive.

But some say, that the result of the Pskov experiment has been all too predictable.<sup>159</sup> In any similar case the generals have been constantly arguing that Russia does not have the necessary funds to switch from a free conscript army to an expensive, professional force. And although Putin has doubled defence spending since 1999, the generals constantly complain of lack of funds for structural reform<sup>160</sup>. The, traditional-thinking General Staff is obviously not a supporter of a professional force, as it remains convinced that the current mass mobilisation system is superior. To try to defend the current system, the General Staff has raised the cost estimates for the Pskov experiment to a level of 1 billion Rubles (30 million Euro) in an effort to prove that it would be too expensive. Later the generals raised the sum for the experiment

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<sup>157</sup> Boyle J., "Elite Troops are Reform Guinea Pigs", Reuters via *Moscow Times*, March 6, 2002.

<sup>158</sup> Facon I., «La reforme de l'armee russe», op. cit. p19.

<sup>159</sup> Felgenhauer P., in *Moscow Times*, 18 July 2002.

<sup>160</sup> Blank S., op. cit.

(to over 2.6 billion), in an effort to further torpedo the reforms and discredit the whole idea. In the meantime, the Pskov experiment began and some work was initiated, mostly with credits loaned from private banks, a fact which increased the cost of the project enormously. In other words, everything possible was done to enable generals to report to Putin that the experiment has failed and that contract army in Russia is impossible<sup>161</sup>. But this is not true - the 201st division stationed in Tajikistan has been entirely professional for the last few years.

### **3.2.) Overcoming ...general problems.**

Putin's conversion plans hinge on two challenges: low levels of available funding and the resistance of the military to reform. Top generals are opposed to reform proposals, because any such proposal entails according to their perceptions that the military's power be diminished<sup>162</sup>. This resistance is based on ideological grounds since many of them continue to live in the past, refuse to recognise that Russia is no longer a superpower and believe the Cold War is as real today as it was twenty years ago<sup>163</sup>. "Our generals were trained in the Soviet times, and think the Soviet Army was the world's greatest", says Pavel Felgengauer<sup>164</sup>. "Their aim is to restore that army, not move forward to a new type of force."<sup>165</sup>

Russian generals have their own concept of a reform and a standard explanation for all army crises: it is not organisational defects, but lack of money<sup>166</sup>. So instead of taking measures for gradual disassembling of the recruitment system, they insist on its toughening. And they say that a contract system in the army wont work unless salaries are raised to levels high enough to attract volunteers, meaning a huge increase in the military budget. But the truth is more likely that they are scared of reform that would shrink the army's size, prestige and perks (Russia's top brass for example is notorious for using conscripts as free labour to built or repair their country cottages). Besides, reform would threaten a lucrative system of corruption that allows officers to exempt conscripts in return for bribes. "The generals don't want to do anything", says Boris Nemtsov, leader of the Liberal SPS Party. "But if we don't do something, we will soon end up with no army at all".

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<sup>161</sup> Litovkin V., "A Ploy for the president. Military reforms have no effect on the major problems of the Russian army", in *Vremya MN*, 29 August, 2002.

<sup>162</sup> Golts A., "Hide-and-Seek in the Manner of Generals," in *Yezhenedelny Zhurnal*, No. 23, June 18, 2002.

<sup>163</sup> See Golts A., 'Russia's General Staff Resisting Putin's Fore Reforms', in *Kommersant*, 19 April 2002, p4.

<sup>164</sup> Felgenhauer P., "Generals prefer restoration.", in *Moscow Times*, 15 February 2001.

<sup>165</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 30, 2002 edition.

<sup>166</sup> Facon I., op. cit. p18.

### 3.3.) Financing the reform.

*Good soldiers are expensive, but bad soldiers are even more expensive.*

Unquestionably, one reason Soviet power collapsed was its excessive militarisation. The entire economy operated without regard for real prices or costs and there were no fiscal or economic institutions or markets to impose discipline. Russia inherited 60% of the Soviet GDP (which has dropped to 25% because of the recession) and 85% of the Soviet armed forces (which dropped to 30-35%). From that date on, the gap between the force structure, which the military wants to keep and the budget, is widening, the debt of the defence Ministry exceeding its annual budget<sup>167</sup>.

Because of limits on defence spending and multitudes of other problems, the Russian military has undergone a time of great troubles:<sup>168</sup> Total spending on the Russian military had fallen from 33% to 3% in a decade<sup>169</sup>. In January 1992 alone, Yegor Gaidar cut military procurement by 85%. According to a leading Russian expert, by 1996 the expenditures for organisation and maintenance of Russian armed forces were 2.5–4 times lower than in 1990, for procurement and military construction 9-12 times and for research and development 10 to 11 times<sup>170</sup>.

According to an official report, the percentage of funds provided to the MOD for 1997 was about 2,6% of the GDP<sup>171</sup>. But in November 1997 Defence Minister Sergeyev complained that the Ministry had received less than half of the appropriated funds<sup>172</sup>.

The state budget for 1998 allocated 81.8 billion rubles -or 2.88% of GDP- to the MoD. Of that total the MoD expected to receive about half that sum or 40.9 billion<sup>173</sup>. But the implications of the 1998 economic crisis made even that impossible.

In April 1999, the federal government owed nearly 7.5 billion rubles just to armed forces personnel<sup>174</sup>. In the second quarter of 1999, the under-financing of the armed forces

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<sup>167</sup> Mandeville L., *op. cit.* p.48.

<sup>168</sup> FitzGerald C. Mary, *Russian Military Policy and interntional objectives, op. cit.* p.1.

<sup>169</sup> Gloaguen C., *op. cit.* p.11.

<sup>170</sup> Rogov S., "*Military Reform and the Defense Budget of the Russian Federation*," Center for Naval Analysis, August 1997.

<sup>171</sup> Oznobistchev S., *The Situation in Russia Today*, Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria, VA: May 1998, p. 8.

<sup>172</sup> Shlykov V. V., "The Real Defense Burden in Russia," a paper delivered at Swedish Defense Research Establishment's Conference: Russian Military Prospects, March 12, 1998, Stockholm, Sweden, p. 20.

amounted to 200 million rubles, while only 31% of the military budget had been confirmed.<sup>175</sup> At the same time, total debts to the Army and Navy had reached 50 billion rubles, almost half of the entire defence budget. And as a result of domestic uncertainties, details of the 1999 defence budget were classified again - for the first time since 1991<sup>176</sup>.

Since 1999, Russia's official defence budget has nearly tripled -in ruble terms- from 109 billion to a high of 284 billion rubles. But that money has mostly been spent on a lot of things which, a poor country -which Russia is in terms of defence finance- cannot afford to do. Consequently, the Armed Forces have accumulated “internal” (non-paid salaries and benefits) and “external” (payments to suppliers) debts on the scale compared with their overall budget.

In 2000, some measures were taken to cover those deficits, but the planned increases in the defence budget were not sufficient. Moreover, by the end of May 2000, the military had only received 6.5% of that year's promised funds<sup>177</sup>.

In September 2001, Putin proudly noted that for the first time in its history Russia was spending more on education than on defence<sup>178</sup> -while in Russia's 2002 budget social policy outlays, which included education, received 22%, with defence expenditures being 14%.<sup>179</sup> At the same time, tougher treasury controls were implemented over the actual spending of appropriated funds. But everything changed after the Kursk crisis and the defence-budget expenditure for 2001 rose more than 150% compared with the previous year -from 140 to 212 billion roubles<sup>180</sup>, or to the level of about 2.8% of the GDP. In addition, Putin reinstated reform of the Armed Forces as a separate line item (3.9 billion rubles) in the budget. But the ‘new money’ were mostly spent to cover some increases in officers' salaries plus a part of extra expenses related to Chechnya..

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<sup>173</sup> Shlykov V. V., "Paradoksy Rossiyskoy demilitarizatsii," in *Voyenny vestnik*, No. 1 April 1998, pp. 4-5.

<sup>174</sup> See *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1999, p7.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Press Conference with Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeev’, Federal information Systems Corporation. Official Kremlin int’ News Broadcast, 9 July 1999 (here <ftp://nautilus.org/nnnnet/references/Sergeev070999.txt>), pp1-10.

<sup>176</sup> IISS (Ed), ‘The Military Balance 1999-2000’, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, December 1999, pp.104-118.

<sup>177</sup> See Alexander Shaburkin, *Vremya MN*, 7 June 2000, pp1 and 2.

<sup>178</sup> *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty(RFE/RL) Newslines*, September 4, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>179</sup> *RFE/RL Newslines*, December 17, 2001, p. 3. Of the 1.95 trillion ruble (65.5 billion Euro) budget, the social policy expenditures were 430.3 billion rubles, and defense spending, 284.1 billion rubles.

<sup>180</sup> Security Policy Library no. 6 - 2001

Table 4. Share (%) of world military expenditure

Rank 2001	Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	Share (%) of world military expenditure
1	USA	274.3 <sup>181</sup>	275.1	285.7	281.4	36
2	Russia	30.6	35.9	40.3	43.9	6
3	France	40.0	40.4	39.9	40.0	5
4	Japan	37.7	37.8	38.1	38.5	5

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2002. Appendix 6A

In 2002, Russia increased its military budget by another 25 % due to robust economic growth<sup>182</sup>. But this time the additional funds were almost entirely used to buy new equipment. Over the last ten years, when most of the money the military received was going to maintaining and modifying old arms and technology<sup>183</sup>, this was the biggest sum allocated directly to new armaments procurement and R&D work financing. But, Russia's 2002 budget was for one more time based on unrealistic or at least risky economic assumptions<sup>184</sup>. As to the reason for the beginning of such urgent rearmament, Putin said: "the situation in the world is forcing us to do this."

Finally the government's 2003 budget -its third surplus one- calls for new spending increases in the military, reflecting Russia's gains from high oil prices in the international market and results of a revolutionary flat 13% income tax introduced two years ago.

Despite those augmentations, the Russian defence budget is well below 3.5% of GDP - a figure indicated by the Russian authorities since the mid 90s as the minimum needed to maintain the defence capability. In the 2002 federal budget law for example, defence expenditure was set at 2.64% of the Russian GDP of 308 billion Euro, which in overall is a

<sup>181</sup> In billion US Dollars

<sup>182</sup> See the interview with Colonel-General Nikolai Kormiltsev by Nikolai Poroskov, in *Vek*, No 1-2, 11-17 January 2002, pp.1 and 3.

<sup>183</sup> Golts A., "Greedy Bureaucrats Hinder Defense Reform" in *The Russia Journal*, April 4, 2001.

<sup>184</sup> See Farizova S., 'Moscow Budget Belt to Tighten' in *Kommersant-daily*, 18 September 2002, p2.

sum smaller than the US annual military budget -around 320 billion Euro)<sup>185</sup>. This strict budgetary policy seems to contradict the forecasts by some experts on the remilitarisation of the economy under President Putin. Of course, more realistically the defence budget of the Russian Federation comes up to 5-6%, according to Western and Russian experts, however, the forces actually receive only a portion of the earmarked resources.

In any case, the fact is that even if the real figure falls in the higher end of the estimate range, it would seem insufficient to maintain the army at its current state, much less to fund the expensive projects necessary to reform (especially R&D). But the reformers estimate that cutbacks in the armed forces will double the amount of money available for each serviceman by 2005 and triple it by 2010. The truth is that cutting the army's size could actually be even more costly because retired non-conscript officers will have to be provided with free housing, job training and severance pay. In addition, more money, or even existing sums spent more wisely, will not solve some critical personnel problems severe structural weaknesses dating back to Soviet times<sup>186</sup>. As Aleksey Arbatov, Deputy Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, argued: "If Russia decided to bring the financing of its servicemen up to US standards, it would have either to reduce its army from the current 1.2 million servicemen to 100.000 people or increase the military budget up to 6 trillion rubles, or seven times greater a sum than the overall total of the 2000 federal budget."<sup>187</sup>

Reform, as opposed to downsizing, requires significant new funds. An increase in military spending from the government's proposed 2.64 % of GDP to 3% would be unlikely to have a positive impact on reform since Russia would still face an acute shortage of resources in the military sphere: Simultaneously confronting the West, waging a war in the south, and keeping its powder dry in the east on such a budget is an impossible mission.

These facts are more than oftenly used by those who do not want to see a reformed Russian Army. But arguing that a military reform is too expensive to be realised is not true: When France changed over to a professional army its defence budget rose only slightly. Furthermore, India and Pakistan, neither of which are rich countries, both have professional armies.

A volunteer soldier -of which the 1.2 million Russian army has 150.000, costs according to MoD sources, 3900 rubles (about 120 Euro) per month (over 46,800 roubles a

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<sup>185</sup> « Problems of the Russian Armed Forces Must be Addressed », in *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Prospectus*, Volume 3, Number 3 Fall 2002.

<sup>186</sup> On the prospects for Russia's military reform see in particular Arbatov A. G., 'Voyennaya reforma: doktrina, voiska, finansy', in *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, 4/1997, pp5-21.

<sup>187</sup> Arbatov A. / Romashkin, P., NVO, No 8/2000, 3-16 March 2000, pp1 and 3.

year, compared with 16,000 to 17,000 roubles for a conscript),<sup>188</sup> plus a 800 ruble (25 Euro) daily bonus when serving in combat operations. So, if you perform the calculations, the difference in maintaining a soldier for a fixed period of time and a contractor comes to 30.000 rubles a year. Consequently, if the Russians replace 400.000 recruited soldiers with contractors –a number that is necessary in order to implement the planned army cuts by 2005- spending on maintenance of the army will grow by 12 billion rubles a year. And if we add non-recurrent spending on transforming for instance a hundred divisions on a contract basis, we will get an additional increase of around 50 billion rubles more (judging from the Tajikistan experiment). Overall, it will cost about 62 billion rubles - 2 billion Euro to be clearer - which about half of the present military budget of the country –keeping in mind that most of this expenditure will last for several years. Of course, action will also need to be taken on infrastructures, since professional soldiers will not accept the conditions that conscripts live in at present<sup>189</sup>. But in any case, the fact is that the current conscription system wastes the resources of the army on basic instruction and training of unfit young people.

A conscript takes much less money himself, but the whole system has a tremendous amount of waste in it, since a conscription-based military is extremely inefficient in using the resources it receives from the budget. No one has ever calculated how much it costs in finances and material resources to give new conscripts elementary military training every six months. Each fresh influx of conscripts is estimated to cost 80 million to 100 million rubles. Regional authorities cover a large portion of this money, and that gives military officials the impression that conscription doesn't cost anything. The government anticipates that, when conscription is abolished and further manpower reductions are made<sup>190</sup>, it will be possible to adjust the balance of the defence budget towards investment whilst offering servicemen more attractive pay.

According to many analysts, the basic condition for a successful continuation of the military reform would be a further strengthening of the country's economic position and an achievement of a sustained annual GDP growth rate of 5-6%. But in today's Russia, there is little room for manoeuvre in the economy. As Minister Sergeyev put the issue, "To draw up a budget like Mozambique but demand armed forces like the United States is not entirely logical<sup>191</sup>." So other solutions for funding the military reform, need to be found.

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<sup>188</sup> Facon I. op. cit. p.19.

<sup>189</sup> *Russian Military Analysis*, No 113, 28 September 2001.

<sup>190</sup> see Baev P., "Putin's Military Reform – Two Trajectories for the First Presidency", *op cit*, p10).

<sup>191</sup> Nesirsky M., "Russian Armed Force in Critical Shape," *Johnson's Russia List #2168*, 8 May 1998.

To my opinion, a few changes can help achieve the desired result: First of all, Russia needs to effectively use the financial resources it does have. Therefore strategic questions need to be asked such as how much it needs to spend and on what. Secondly, there is no doubt that funds are mismanaged due to corruption. Even according to modest Russian calculations, over 1 billion Euro may have been stolen from the Armed Forces in 2001.<sup>192</sup> That is why the Russian leadership should take any new opportunities for staff cuts and large-scale computerisation within the army, in order to reduce maintenance and mismanagement costs. Accounting of all financial operations should be entrusted to specially established accounting departments, whose personnel could be recruited from among the real civilian staff of rear services and financial agencies and all operations connected with supplies to the troops, should be placed under tight control.

Apart from enhancing the use of money it already has, Russia needs more funds in order to realise its military reform. According to the 2003 military budget, Moscow will have a chance to use additional billions of Euros, coming from high oil gas and metal prices in the international market. But becoming the hostage of world prices for energy and metal is not a sound financial basis for military reform in the forthcoming decade.

Another possible source of increase in Federal budget revenue, could be the –much discussed- military tax on persons of draft age not serving in the Armed Forces for one reason or another. Given the present draft contingent, such a tax could be a weighty source of revenue for funding the Armed Forces. Finally, the system of military educational establishments should be enhanced, something that would also save millions of rubles on an annual basis.

The latest changes in the West's policy toward Russia, and rapprochement with the U.S., have given Moscow an unprecedented chance to cut costs and free up funds for restructuring its military establishment. The new Western economic benefits, as well as foreign policy changes favourable to Moscow, allow Russia to concentrate on military reform and transform its ground forces from their recent troubles into a modern army. In the same framework, Putin, announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2001, the closing of Lurdes, Cuba military complex, Russia's largest military base and electronic listening post in the western hemisphere. Established in 1964, the 25 Km<sup>2</sup> installation housed 1500-1600 full-time

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<sup>192</sup> Delyagin S., in *Vremya MN*, 18 October 2000, pp1 and 3.

personnel<sup>193</sup>. Its cost of renting came to around 200 million Euro a year, not counting the salaries of the base's personnel. The rent was paid to Havana in the form of crude oil and spare parts for obsolete Soviet military equipment -hardly a heavy burden for a country like Russia. But in the words of Russian officials, with those money twenty reconnaissance satellites or 100 sophisticated radar stations could be purchased.

On the same day, Putin stated that Russia would shut down its naval base in Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam. The Soviet Union and then Russia had maintained the base since 1979. And even if some say that Cam Rahn was leased rent free, chief of the armed forces' General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin reported that the leasing of the base in Vietnam costed Russia annually a sum that was equal to the value of a modern nuclear-powered submarine with armament. In any case, the additional means released from the pullout of the Russian military bases in Cuba and Vietnam can now be spent to finance priority military programs.

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<sup>193</sup> In addition to gathering and analysing US communication, Lurdes reportedly guided Russian intelligence agents to North America, provided links to the Russian spy satellite network, sent instructions to Russian ships and submarines and tracked US naval activities in the Caribbean.

### 3.3.i) Adjusting Russia's Military Industrial Complex.

When one is trying to give solutions to a Russian problem, he should never forget the numerous exclusive characteristics of the Russian post-Soviet system<sup>194</sup>. Russia's huge and unreformed MIC for example represents a massive section of the state's resources both in Soviet times and in Russia.<sup>195</sup> In March 2002 there were more than 2 million employees in 1,700 state-connected firms. And until today, almost none of those factories have been closed or liquidated in spite of the fact that many of them are bankrupt.

The Russian defence industry cannot survive without arms exports. This is why Russia has become the largest arms exporter (according to SIPRI).

Table 5: Estimate of numbers of weapon systems  
Manufactured for domestic and international sales 1992-1999

	Domestic procurement	Export sales
Ships	2	11
Tanks	31	435
Submarines	2	10
Aircraft	7	278
Helicopters	8	98
Air defence systems	1	22
Armoured vehicles	17	217

Source: Argumenty I Fakty, April 2000, no 14 on the basis of data from the Russian arms exporting agencies.

The largest buyers of Russian arms are the Chinese, with purchases, amounting to well over 6 Billion Euro over the last few years. The agreements give the Chinese the right to develop and make some weapons through collaborative development programmes, for example in aero engines. This trade may well grow in the short term but must sooner or later provide diminishing financial returns to Russia. India is also buying a similar range of equipment.

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<sup>194</sup> "Prospects for Military Reform in Russia" in <http://www.ceip.org/files/events/trenin.asp>

Iran is Russia's third largest arms customer<sup>196</sup>. The arms sales' agreement signed in 2001 could bring Moscow 300 million Euros in annual sales and could reach 1.5 billion over the next few years- an important sum for the starved Russian MIC.

Of course, Moscow would like to export more to the post-Soviet states, including those in Central Asia or Malaysia and Indonesia, but much of the purchase price is paid in goods such as food, and the strong Western military and political presence in the region after the war in Afghanistan may result in a reduced market for Russia's arms exporters<sup>197</sup>. Attempts to break through to markets like Latin America have very doubtful prospects, while in the meantime, Russia has lost its east European markets –apart from Greece- for good after the NATO enlargement.

To respond to these challenges and since internal procurement will be impossible until 2005, the Russians are not reluctant to export even some of their most advanced weapons, many of which are top-quality, practically without state controls. In addition to conventional weapons, Russia exports missile and nuclear technology<sup>198</sup>. This way, Russia's rivals can obtain high-class weapons and systems, relatively cheaply.

Long among the major irritants in US-Russian relations, the White House views those transfers with still greater concern now that Iran is part of the “axis of evil”. Russia also received repeated warnings from the US about the dangers of enhancing China's military capabilities. But for Russia, China is for the time being, a source of hard currency. So, Russian politicians defend their exports, by arguing that the proceeds provide the only way to fund developments of the next generation of weaponry<sup>199</sup>.

Analysis of those exports prove that it is questionable whether Russia will be able to maintain them on such a high level in the next few years<sup>200</sup>. Russian gains from arms sales come up to around 2 million Euro/annum in cash terms<sup>201</sup>. There is no way that such a sum will support the still vast MIC reported above, even if the whole revenue actually reached the factories and was spent correctly.

This is why the Russian MIC tries to enlarge its sales world-wide by learning techniques of marketing such as providing better after sales' service, spare parts centres and

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<sup>195</sup> Simon G. op. cit. pp. 151 –164.

<sup>196</sup> Gloaguen C., op. cit p.8.

<sup>197</sup> Golotyuk Y., op. cit.

<sup>198</sup> see also “Le commerce des armes” in *Studia Diplomatica*, vol. XLV, 1992, no 1-2-3, pp.45-61.

<sup>199</sup> The Sukhoi OKB is funding the S-37 BERKUT technology demonstration programme through the sale of SU-27/Su-30 aircraft to China and India.

<sup>200</sup> Blagov S., in *Asia Times*, 2 July 2002.

training of technicians in countries such as India. And it has the capability to undercut Western suppliers because its prices, as in Soviet times, are unrelated to true costs. There are no exact figures on how much Moscow spends in direct subsidies on the country's some 1700 state-linked defence enterprises. But combined with indirect subsidies such as artificially low prices for energy and rent, the true cost of manufacturing might actually be higher than any profits the country receives. The value of return to the factories from all this much-heralded trade has to be heavily discounted, especially after deducting the shares taken by the trading companies and the State in taxes.

The Russian MIC has actually a vast excess capacity, but it is doing little productive work: even its production for the civilian sector is falling, as the goods it makes are not of merchantable quality and are being driven out of the market by imports. Their civilian output, which in the last years of the USSR occupied about the 40% of their capacity, has fallen to about 15%, thus the factories are only using 30% of their potential. Writing in "Segodnya" on 7 October 1998, Pavel Felgengauer argued "the Russian MIC can survive only as a small, separate, narrowly specialised sector. If [Russia] attempts to continue the Soviet tradition of combining the development and production of TV sets and teleguidance for aviation at the same firm, then televisions will spontaneously explode as they used to and half the bombs will miss their targets".

Experience shows that the factories are not in a condition to start new production aimed at competing in civilian markets<sup>202</sup>. This is in spite of the fact that that basic stock of machine tools is adequate some indeed is modern. The problems lie elsewhere, above all in the mentality of managers, engineers and the work force: There are people at every level, even at the highest levels of the government, who have no intention of abandoning the old Soviet system and its inflated size<sup>203</sup>.

This is why military factory conversion programs for the past years have been more than disappointing.<sup>204</sup> The Economic Minister, Yakov Urinson, reported that in 1995 the government provided factories only 25% of the funds authorised in the budget for conversion programs<sup>205</sup>. The figure dropped to 11 percent in 1996 and zero percent in 1997. At the same time, the Russian government reduced incentives for the factories to initiate their own local

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<sup>201</sup> Cercone M. "Arms shopping in Moscow" in *Europ Magazine*, no 88, winter 97-98, pp. 38-39.

<sup>202</sup> Gonchar K., "Russia's defense industry at the turn of the century", BICC, Bonn, 2000, p.28.

<sup>203</sup> Odom. E. W. op. cit. pp. 223-234.

<sup>204</sup> Krivokhzhzha V., "The reconstruction of the Russian MIC" in *Peace and the Sciences*, vol XXV, December 1994.

<sup>205</sup> Le Blanc G., *Les combinats militaires en Russie 1992-1995 ; de la conversion a l'entreprisiation*, CERNA, Paris, 1995.

conversion programs by continuing to provide just enough social benefits to workers to keep them tied to their jobs. So, despite some rationalisation (especially in the aerospace sector) few defence or R&D institutes have been closed or reformed.

The reforms of the MIC proposed up to date merely scratch the surface of the problem. The sector's debts, mostly to suppliers, total 97 billion rubles, so the government's settling of 20 billion rubles debt will make comparatively little difference. And arms sales abroad, while significant, will not save the MIC, which needs root and branch reform and substantial downsizing.

The current complicated problems of Russia's defence industry can only be resolved through co-ordinated efforts of governmental and nongovernmental structures. First of all there needs to be a deep restructuring of the 200-400 R&D establishments,<sup>206</sup> many of which are now understaffed, in order to maintain their skeleton existence in the hope of later expansion.

The military-technical policy announced lately by the Defence Ministry of the Putin administration, is indeed focused on R&D and creation of new models of military hardware. In other words, scientific and designing structures will have to pay for the maintenance of idle production facilities within holdings. As a matter of fact, since Russian technological capabilities will not be able to cope with the task of producing new weapons due to lack of capital<sup>207</sup>, the market of military hardware may be replaced with the market of ideas and know how<sup>208</sup> (at least until the necessary financing is found).

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<sup>206</sup> To these must be added the many institutes of the Academy of Sciences, sections of so-called civilian institutes of higher education involved in research and teaching.

<sup>207</sup> One of the main objectives of Russian military technical policy is to form a "scientific-technical" reserve, equivalent to the western concept of "hovering" which permits defense industries to focus on development of prototypes and avoiding costly serial production.

### 3.4.) Changes to make a difference.

Seeing Russia's current situation, one could easily come to the conclusion that the Russian military reform should be focused on two main issues: The first would be to overcome the Soviet legacy of a militarised state, society, and economy with the creation of an effective system of civilian control over the military and the transformation of Russia's multiple militaries and defence industry to meet current demands<sup>209</sup>. The second should involve creating the foundations for a new military that would meet the needs of that new state, society and economy.<sup>210</sup>

So first of all, what Russia needs is the adoption of a new military doctrine that would give the main guidelines for reform, based on the real needs of the country and the impartial consideration of the international and internal situation of the Russian Federation. Among the most important issues that need to be addressed is the problem of local and regional wars: The current reliance on nuclear weapons to deter aggression is inappropriate, not to say downright dangerous<sup>211</sup>. A need for a realistic military doctrine that takes account of the possibility of local and regional wars, the fragmentation of Command and Control (C2) and the over-reliance on nuclear weapons is now more obvious than ever. Unless a decision about who are the state's potential enemies is taken, reform of the Armed Forces will be impossible. Secondly, the Russian leadership should try and place the war in Chechnya under effective political control, since **it is virtually impossible to conduct a reform to an army that is engaged in a war.**

This reform should start from eliminating and restructuring Russia's multiple military organisations that have up to now obstructed all efforts to create a professional, democratically accountable, or technologically capable army adapted to today's real threats, and able to fight a war against them<sup>212</sup>. The number of ministries and departments allowed to have troops or military formations on their strength should be reduced and the system of C2 elements should be optimised in order to minimise decision making time and provide for a more rapid response to quickly evolving situations.

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<sup>208</sup> Alexandrov A., « Restructuring and privatisation », in *Rossiiskie esti*, March 14-20, 2002, p.10.

<sup>209</sup> Konovalov A. and Oznobishev S. Russian armed force: Perspectives of military reform and evolution of the military doctrine; NATO Grant of 1997-1999, Institute for Strategic Assessments, Moscow, June 1999.p24

<sup>210</sup> Kokoshin A. A., *Armiya I politika: Sovetskaya voyenno-politicheskaya I voyenno-strategicheskaya mysl', 1918-1991 gody*, Moscow: "Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya," 1995, pp. 3-15.

<sup>211</sup> Durrieu J., « Russie: la securite nucleaire en matiere militaire » in *Le Regard Europeen*, no. 10, April 1999, pp. 35-49.

The Defence Ministry has to become a civilian organisation<sup>213</sup>, primarily responsible for logistic and financial maintenance of the armed forces, arms procurement, military-diplomatic issues and work on military treaties, personnel issues and conscription, while the Ground Forces General Headquarters, should –after being cut and restructured- concentrate on combat training and be responsible for strategic and operative planning, direct command of troops, creation of military groups and maintaining them in the required state of combat readiness<sup>214</sup>.

Sergeants being selected under stringent criteria and serving under contract, with real command powers should then become the backbone of the new military, something that will automatically put a stop to cruelty in the barracks. Without a well trained and educated officer corps, Russia will never have a modern military. Without responsible professional sergeants and other non-commissioned officers whose promotion would be based on achievement, Russian troops will never be disciplined.

Further on, Russia really needs a much smaller, more professional army that would be better paid, better prepared and more motivated. The current system of conscription perhaps made sense in the past, but conscripts would be of little use in a future operation. The widely unpopular conscription system should not be totally abandoned but only reduced to 6 months –with an option to enlist for contract service at the end of the training. The problem of draft dodging will then become less urgent due to such a significant reduction of the term of service and radical changes in its essence and conditions.

Of course, a reduction in the numerical strength of the Armed will call for a new approach to the deployment of troops and the determination in strategic and operational terms of the most convenient areas for locating military garrisons, which are to include mobile and well-equipped units and formations manned with well-trained personnel.

Forming new Russian armed forces should go on with changes in the system of military education. After selecting the right students, military training should be about wars of the future, not for “World War II plus nuclear weapons and missiles” (for which the Russian Armed Forces are still trained), aiming to develop the key characteristics of leadership: responsibility, professional integrity, and respect for subordinates. Upon graduation, the soldiers should be assigned to new units; units created from scratch, rather than to

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<sup>212</sup> Blank S., op. cit.

<sup>213</sup> Stephen Ch., “Changes in Power Structure” in *The Scotsman*, May 10, 2001.

<sup>214</sup> Shlykov V., "Nuzhen li rossii general'nyy shtab?" in *Voennyi vestnik*, no. 7, Moscow, October 2000, p. 30.

“reorganised” ones. Personnel in these units should be trained and used for modern warfare - not for helping out with the harvest, or building country cottages for generals<sup>215</sup>.

And of course, the salaries of those soldiers should be at the level of earnings of public employees<sup>216</sup> and paid on schedule, something that will also affect pension levels and –in accordance with the solving of housing problems- induce young officers to remain in the ranks. This would also lift the morale and raise the status of Armed Forces personnel. In the epoch of the RMA this may seem anachronistic, but the restoration of troop morale will only come from such a policy, and low morale is certainly at the centre of many of the armed forces' problems today<sup>217</sup>. So, Russia needs an elaboration of its legislative base, which will improve the position of the armed forces and give social and economic guarantees to servicemen<sup>218</sup>. Moreover, a PR campaign emphasising those changes should attract conscripts into the new military.

This new military should of course also apply more modern military technologies, and acquire new weaponry. New units should be equipped with new hardware and sophisticated communications, intelligence, and combat control systems (some of them may even be foreign-made). “The modernisation programs should be aimed not as much at acquiring new weapon systems, as on upgrading the C3I systems and investing in basic infrastructure.”<sup>219</sup>. These acquisitions should of course be organised by a centralised command structure coordinating the needs of the various military structures.

And of course, new equipment would hardly change anything, if the structures of the army itself are not altered to meet modern-era needs. Russian army should become more mobile and effective preparing itself for local conflicts and not for large-scale wars. In this framework, the district structure should be abandoned and a system of strategic commands should be adopted. These administrative independent commands should be created for specific tasks, having authority over all matters of military supplies, including procurement of equipment and food, construction of military facilities, and so on. Such administrations should be staffed with personnel from the respective supply and finance services, with wider recruitment of civilian personnel or persons called up for alternative service. In the

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<sup>215</sup> Vorob'ev E., "Specific Features of Russian Military Reform," in *Military News Bulletin*, VII, No. 6, (78) (22 June 1998), p. 5.

<sup>216</sup> Today the appointment pay of officers and warrant officers is on average 2.5 times lower than the official salaries of Federal government employees, and their grade allowances are lower than the monthly allowances for skill category and rank being paid to government officials.

<sup>217</sup> Dick C., op. cit. p. 65.

<sup>218</sup> Vorob'ev E., op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>219</sup> Baev P., « Putin's military reform», in *Security Policy Library*, no.6, 2001.

foreseeable future, Russia will not be able to afford many units of the new type, but the number of these units will grow as the state of the economy improves.

In previous chapters we have seen how money will be found to finance higher pay in the military, attract more contract soldiers, buy new military equipment, as well as to support legal reform. But a very important aspect of the reforms in the financial field is that defence spending must be subjected to real institutional, legal, and fiscal controls<sup>220</sup>.

Anyone trying to analyse Russia's defence or military economy soon learns that opacity is its distinguishing characteristic. As in Soviet times, Russia's official defence budget represents only a portion of the money Moscow spends on the military: The military budget is worked out largely by the Ministry of Finance in negotiation with the MoD, but much spending, including military construction and arms production, is concealed within the budgets of various ministries, in a way that Stephen Blank, of the US Army War College, likens to a type of pyramid scheme, whereby funds obtained from one source are used to cover short term debts elsewhere. Today, there are only 3 open lines in the military budget, with one (open) line accounting for 90% of the budget. Unfortunately, these three lines are so general, that they provide no sense to Duma members, or society, of how the armed forces is actually allocating its budget, thus making it impossible for the Duma and its defence committee to exercise proper parliamentary oversight of the military. Probably the MOD itself does not know where the money goes, something that allows for massive corruption<sup>221</sup>. Colonel-General Andrei Nikolayev confirmed in September 2000: "The detailed breakdown of the defence spending has been classified top secret, with no coherent explanations offered, for the fourth year in a row. There are only three expenditure items in the open part of the budget. As a result, the Federal Assembly is deprived of the opportunity to openly discuss and solve financial problems related to defence spending that do not include any classified data. Actually, Russia informs the world about its defence spending, via the UN, much more thoroughly than it informs its own citizens and legislators"<sup>222</sup>.

As we saw before Lyubov Kudelina, Deputy Minister of Finance, responsible for the power ministries, has been in the past the main obstacle to a more transparent budget. So, in

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<sup>220</sup> Konovalov A. and Oznobischev S. op. cit., p.24.

<sup>221</sup> For an examination of Russia's incredible defence economy see, OMRI Daily Digest, October 30, 1996, Vitaly Shlykov's articles, "Russkaya Ruletko ili Soldatskaya Kasha iz Topora," Sreda, No. 4, September, 1996, pp. 67-75; "Biudzheto I Armiya," Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, May 16, 1996; "Voennyi Kamuflazh Rossiyskoy Ekonomiki," Sreda, No. 2, 1996, pp. 19-24; and "Economic Readjustment Within the Russian Defence-Industrial Complex," Security Dialogue, XXVI, No. 1, 1995, pp. 19-34; and Sergey Rogov, Military Reform and the Defence Budget of the Russian Federation, Alexandria, VA.: Center for Naval Analyses, 1997.

the absence of strong pressure for a more open military budget from a civilian MoD this policy of budget secrecy is likely to remain in place<sup>223</sup>. But until for example Duma deputies can find out the true cost of the war in Chechnya, how much is being spent on salaries and benefits to the bloated officer corps, and how much subsidies to defence enterprises really amount to, reforms will continue to add up to nothing.

The military budget must become more open and detailed. The entire budget -prepared by independent experts -with really confidential items being the only exception, must be openly discussed in the parliament<sup>224</sup>. Moreover, once approved, the budget must be strictly observed by all, army and government officials, while the state Duma and Federation Council must have the right to check the ways money is spent on an itemised basis. When this is achieved, the defence orders will be fulfilled, R&D work will be paid for on time, the armed forces will get new equipment, while officers and warrant officers will get their pay. If this is not done, an irreparable situation might occur where there will be nothing to reform, and the Russians will have to begin building an army from scratch.

Of course, what is also needed is a better military-technical co-operation within the Russian MoD. New technologies may exist, but their military application is not apparent. A real reform can only occur through strategy. And strategy, starting from the very higher levels of government, should go all the way down to the last soldier: Sophisticated weapon systems should be sold only after approval of the President, the government and the MoD, whose tasks should also include preventing of illegal export of defence technologies and uncontrolled supplies of individual weapon items to other countries, taking into consideration the state's interests in military-technical co-operation, as well as the fact that any agreement on such co-operation could have an impact on the country's international relations. In this sense, reform of Russia's MIC is vital in order for its practical policy guidelines and actual performance to be framed in the context of the real challenges to security. In other words, it is now a matter of high policy that the military economy be restructured to assure Russia's military and technological competitiveness.

The Russian military requires clear direction from the political centre when it comes to funds and doctrine. But since bureaucrats are unwilling to take decisions from a number of

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<sup>222</sup> Interviewed by Valery Aleksin, in *NG*, 15 September 2000, pp1 and 3.

<sup>223</sup> Greater glasnost is hardly the watchword under Putin. Program on New Approaches to Russian Security Policy Memo Series Editor: Erin Powers Memo No. 154 *PONARS*, 2000. The Duma and Military Reform Brian Taylor University of Oklahoma, October 2000.

<sup>224</sup> Vorob'ev E., op. cit., p. 5.

competing priorities, a clear policy can only be imposed by a determined political leadership, operating outside and above the defence establishment<sup>225</sup>. A real reform can only be a presidential initiative, executed by a committed team of reformers with sufficient political support under constant financial supervision<sup>226</sup>. “Real military reform would require a lot of concentrated political will to carry out,” says Igor Bunin, head of the Centre for Political Technologies, an independent think tank. “At least until the coming round of parliamentary and Presidential elections (December 2003 and March 2004) there is little hope for this”.

Hence, one needs to set clear deadlines for the military reform. But for Russia, short deadlines can never be realistic and long deadlines will probably have to be implemented by many different administrations. So, one needs to set mid term deadlines defining at the same time interim solutions such as the development of asymmetrical/niche technology capabilities<sup>227</sup>. Indeed, whereas approximately 50% of the 2002 defence budget for modernisation and new procurement was spent on upgrading obsolete military hardware,<sup>228</sup> currently the focus of new procurement spending is directed towards the modernisation and upgrading of air and naval weaponry and in particular satellites, high precision weapon systems and reconnaissance-strike complexes<sup>229</sup>. Finally, another interim solution would involve the development of the Russia-China nexus, in a way that it would transcend the simple cash-for-weapons transactions of the past and potent a much more unpredictable alliance in the future<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Golts A., “Greedy Bureaucrats Hinder Defense Reform” In *The Russia Journal*, April 4, 2001.

<sup>226</sup> Khranchikhin A., “The armed forces of a different country; Russia needs to create new armed forces from the ground up,” Center for Defence Information (*CDI Russia Weekly #227 Contents #6 Konservator* No. 7 October 11-17, 2002.

<sup>227</sup> Space systems, IW, anti-satellite and RF weapons

<sup>228</sup> See Solovyev V., *NVO*, 33/2002, 7 September 2001, pp1 and 3; Sergei Putilov, *Vremya MN*, 14 June 2001, p4; Mark Galeotti, ‘Budget for Defence Reform’, *JIR*, March 2002, pp50-51.

<sup>229</sup> See Golts A., *JDW*, 11 July 2001, p4.

<sup>230</sup> FitzGerald C. M., *op. cit.* p. 10.

## Conclusions.

As outlined above, President Putin has already set the targets and deadlines for military reform. The military reform program calls for gradual increases in spending on R&D and procurement over the next several years, with a significant jump in funding again only after 2005<sup>231</sup>. Rearmament of the army will have to start by that date<sup>232</sup>: it is planned to update 5% of weapons each year and to complete rearmament until 2025, placing emphasis on those areas where Russia retains competitiveness<sup>233</sup>.

However, this project is most likely to several obstacles in the future: There is no clear strategy for implementing the military downsizing, financing the reform may also present problems and there is a lack of committed reformers<sup>234</sup>. Furthermore, a successful military reform will be feasible only after the Chechen war ends<sup>235</sup>. Despite that, there is evidence of progress in key areas -co-ordinating Russian multiple militaries, reducing the size of the ground forces and of forces outside the MOD and tailoring them for local wars, strengthening the role of the General Staff, and getting effective sustained leadership from the Security Council.

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<sup>231</sup> Putilin V., "Optimize the Strength of the Armed Forces," in *Military News Bulletin*, VII, No. 6 (78) June 1998, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> See : « No big changes planned in size of Russian arms budget » , in *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 23 January 2002 ; and Alexander Golts, « The shadow that lags behind » , in *Yezhenedelnyy Zhurnal*, No 25, (July 2002).

<sup>233</sup> See for more : FitzGerald C. M., *Russian Military Policy and interntional objectives : interim strategies and plans for long term systemic change*, Project on Eurasian security, Hudson institute, Washington DC, 2001.

<sup>234</sup> According to Anatoly Lieven, a former correspondent for the Times of London, Western military attachés in Moscow believe it would take at least ten years to work a real transformation of Russia's conventional forces, and even then it would require favorable economic circumstances-which are unlikely.

Russians continue to plan for a future war. For the short term, they seem to be pragmatically oriented to stopgap solutions and operational countermeasures (including “non-traditional” weapons<sup>236</sup>), whereas for the long term they seem to be trying to create an infrastructure that would permit rapid production of state of the art prototypes. For the transitional period between the two they seem to rely on their nuclear arsenal. But perhaps one of the greatest factors in the future success or failure of Russian military reform is economic development. Such reforms will be costly.

One thing is sure: Despite their economic malaise, the Russians are fixated to becoming able to compete militarily in the future as they have done it in the past. The difference appears to be that they are making priorities now whereas in the 1960s and 1970s multiple programs received priority across all services. To attain their international objectives, Russian military officials have already developed both interim and long-term strategies. Will they be able to implement them? In the past they were.

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<sup>235</sup> Lopata R. and Laurinavicius C., “Russia’s Military Reform: Political Trajectories” in *Baltic Defence Review* no – 6 volume 2001.

<sup>236</sup> Extensive research is being conducted on laser weapons, incoherent light sources, super high frequency and infrasonic weapons and last but not least Electronic and Information Warfare

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# ANNEXE I

## *Liste des Acronymes:*

C2	Command and Control
C3I	Command Control Communications and Intelligence
C4IS	Command Control Commun. Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNS	Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies
CSRC	Conflict Studies Research Centre
EW	Electronic Weapons (or Warfare)
FSB	Federal Security Service
fSU	former Soviet Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IW	Information Weapons (or Warfare)
MIC	Military Industrial Complex
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officers
NG	Nezavisimaya Gazeta
NSC	National Security Concept
OSCE	Organisation for the Security and Co-operation in Europe
OVR	Fatherland all Russia (Political Party of Y. Primakov)
PGM	Precision Guided Munition
R&D	Research and Developpment
RF	Russian Federation (or Radio Frequency)
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SLBM	Sea Launched Ballistic Missile
SPS	Union of Right-Wing Forces
SSBN	Rusian Ballistic Missile Submarine
SSN	Nuclear Powered Attack Submarine
UAF	United Armed Forces (of the CIS)
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
VTsiOM	All Russia Centre for Public Opinion Research