This policy-focused Global Environmental and Human Security Handbook for the Anthropocene (GEHSHA) addresses new security threats, challenges, vulnerabilities and risks posed by global environmental change and disasters. In 5 forewords, 5 preface essays and 95 peer-reviewed chapters, 164 authors from 48 countries analyze in 10 parts—military and political hard security and economic, social, environmental soft security with a regional focus on the Near East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia—and on hazards in urban centers. The major focus is on coping with global environmental change: climate change, desertification, water, food and health and with hazards and strategies on social vulnerability and resilience building and scientific, international, regional and national political strategies, policies and measures including early warning of conflicts and hazards. The book proposes a political geo-ecology and discusses a ‘Fourth Green Revolution’ for the Anthropocene era of earth history.

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Alexander Sergunin

13.1 Introduction

To understand the nature and orientation of Russia’s foreign policy it is very important to examine how this state identifies challenges to its security. This is also helpful for explaining how the national security discourse and ideas developed by various foreign policy schools are translated into concrete political initiatives and implemented by practitioners.

In defining its national security doctrine (including threat perceptions) in the 1990’s, Russian policy makers and analysts faced numerous problems. One of them was the lack of a point of departure because the old doctrine did not exist (at least in a formal sense). What has been called the Soviet national security doctrine, in reality, was a mixture of ideological dogma and real political considerations, a mixture which had usually been camouflaged by peaceful rhetoric (Kremenyuk 1994: 88). The very notion of ‘national interests’ or ‘national security’ was rejected because of the dominance of cosmopolitan ideas. At the same time, the concept of security was interpreted in purely military terms. Other (the so-called ‘soft’) aspects of security (such as economic, societal, environmental, information and other dimensions) were nearly completely ignored. For the above reasons, the Russian post-Communist theorists and practitioners had to start from scratch.

Drafting of the security concept began in the late Soviet period, but its completion foundered both on rapid changes in the international environment and on the political upheavals - and the related political infighting between competing interest groups - that have been a regular feature of the Russian political scene. The long failure by the country’s political elite to reach a consensus on the security concept complicated efforts to draft a series of other documents, including Russia’s military and foreign policy doctrines, that in principle needed to follow from the concept.

This chapter examines how Russian military threat perceptions evolved over the last two decades and what factors affected this process. Since elsewhere in this volume some issues of the ‘soft’ security problem- atique have been discussed this chapter will examine primarily traditional ‘hard’ or military aspects of Russian threat perceptions that still play a significant role in Russian strategic thinking. The analysis below focuses primarily on the official Russian documents but informal discussions among Russian strategic experts and academics are also taken into consideration.

The evolution of the Russian post-Soviet military or national security doctrines and strategies evolved in several phases.

• The first, formative, period took place in 1991-1993 when the new Russian politico-military elites tried to apprehend new domestic and international realities and formulate the country’s national interests and relevant strategies. First national security-related documents were adopted.

• The second period (1994-1999) was characterized by attempts to define more precisely Russia’s threat perceptions and national security interests (on the one hand) and develop a more coherent and integrative national security strategy (on the other). Particularly, a national security doctrine that integrated previous similar documents was adopted in 1997.

• The third period (2000-2006) was related to Russia’s efforts to reassess its national security strategy because of the second Chechen war, NATO military intervention in Kosovo, NATO’s eastward enlargement and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. A new set of military and national security doctrines was adopted in 2000 and the military reform that aimed at radical restructuring of the Russian armed forces was speeded up.

• The fourth period that started in 2007 and continues so far is famous by Russia’s more assertive for-
eign and security policies both in the ‘near’ and ‘far’ abroad, Moscow’s growing anti-NATO and especially anti-American sentiments and attempts to restore its former military strength (albeit for different purposes and on a different basis).

13.2 Early Concepts

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Yeltsin government surprisingly found itself as the only relevant military successor of the USSR. For the period of several months the Russian leadership simply did not have a coherent and clear vision of its future security strategy. The new Russian government was hesitating between the desire to keep a unified control over the military structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), especially of its nuclear forces that were based not only in Russia but also in Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, and plans to create national armed forces.

Initially, the new Russian leadership pushed the idea of creating collective armed forces of the CIS with a command centre in Moscow (without national armies). However, this idea very soon failed because for various reasons (civil or inter-state wars, nationalistic/anti-Russian sentiments among the local elites, etc) CIS member states started to form their national armies. By spring 1992 President Yeltsin had to abandon the idea of keeping a unified CIS military structure and decided to create independent Russian armed forces and develop Russia’s national security strategy.

13.2.1 Russia’s Law on Security of 1992

On 5 March 1992 President Boris Yeltsin signed “The Law on Security of the Russian Federation” which the Supreme Soviet (the then Russian Parliament) had initiated. The Law established some legal and institutional frameworks for Russia’s security policy. It was a rather interesting document from both the theoretical and practical points of view. First of all, it defined the very notion of security: “Security is freedom from internal and external threats to vital interests of the individual, society and state” (Yeltsin 1992: 5). In line with the foreign political thought the authors of the document singled out not only state and military security but also economic, social, information, and ecological aspects of security. Contrary to the Soviet legislation, which had focused on state or party interests, the above document declared priority of interests of the individual and society. It also established a national security system of the newly born Russian Federation. Along with already existing bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Security, Foreign Intelligence Service, Ministry of Environment, the Law recommended to set up the Security Council, the Ministry of Defence, and several committees including the Border Guards Committee and so on.

However, this document was too abstract and vague to design a coherent national security strategy. It mainly focused on domestic issues and lacked proper legal and conceptual grounds for a number of important areas such as foreign policy and military reform. A special section on threat perceptions was lacking as well. Moreover, in adopting this legislation the leadership of the Supreme Soviet was eager to use it as a tool in the power struggle with the President. With the adoption of the new Russian Constitution in December 1993, which has designed a new system of government, some provisions of the Law became outdated.

13.2.2 Russia’s Draft Military Doctrine of 1992

Following the recommendations of the Law on Security the armed forces of the Russian Federation have been formed in May 1992. In the same month, the General Staff published its draft of the military doctrine in its journal Voennaya Mysl (Military Thought). According to some accounts, some civilian experts

1 On this period of Russia’s strategic thinking see Blackwill and Karaganov (1994); Dawisha and Parrott (1994); Dunlop (1993); Razuvayev (1993); Sergunin (1998a: 146–148); Shearman (1995).

2 From the linguistic point of view the Russian word ‘security’ (‘bezopasnost’)) literally means ‘the lack of danger’, i.e. defines this concept in a negative rather than in positive way. That’s why some experts see this word as misleading because it does not explain what will be next when the danger is prevented. Some experts suggest the concepts of ‘stability’ or ‘sustainable development’ to provide the notion of security with a more positive content (see, e.g. Makarychev 2001: 13–24). Along with the concept of security, Russian specialists use terms such as ‘threat’ (‘ugroza’: a clear danger to security of an individual or the state or combination of factors that pose such a danger); ‘challenge’ (‘vyzov’: less threatening factor than danger but it requires preparedness and some kind of response); ‘risk’ (the same word in Russian: potential threats and challenges). On the Russian security-related terminology see: Sergunin (2003: 65–75).
(including Andrei Kokoshin, the then First Deputy Defence Minister) also took part in its drafting (Kremen’ yuk 1994: 91).

In the document, the sources of threat were described as purely external, whereas the possibility of internal threats had been ignored (with the exception of reference to potential conflicts between the members (regions) of the Russian Federation). The draft document underlined that Russia does not regard any state as its enemy. However, while not actually naming the USA and NATO as the enemy, there can be no doubt that its authors meant them when it referred to “some states and coalitions” which wished to dominate the world or particular regions and which continued to regard force as a means of resolving disputes. It was also declared that the violations of rights of Russian citizens and of the population in the ex-Soviet republics might be a major source of conflicts. The text described in detail how Russia intended to cope with such a threat. This particular section of the document evoked most negative comments of foreign analysts who immediately accused Russia of imperialist intentions (Sakwa 1993: 317-318; Tsypkin 1994: 197–198; Ra’anani 1995: 20).

In line with the Soviet tradition it was planned to design the armed forces mainly for high intensity conflict. It made a particular emphasis on the use of nuclear weapons as a political deterrent to nuclear or conventional aggression. Remarkably, the famous Brezhnev’s ‘no-first-use principle’ has been reiterated in the draft. At the same time, the paper stated that conventional attacks on nuclear systems, early warning or C3 (command, control, communications) facilities, or on nuclear or other ‘dangerous’ installations, could provoke a nuclear retaliation. The draft had also been based on the assumption that the CIS would soon become an integrated and cohesive military mechanism, which could be successfully used to meet security challenges. The document emphasized the need for priority to be given to the military’s needs in government spending. It also called for the preservation of the defence industry and on the maintenance of a mass mobilization capability (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation 1992: 4–7).3

There were also some alternative drafts that stemmed from the officer corps and ‘national patriotic forces’. For example, in April 1992 Major-General Aleksandr Vladimirov personally presented to Yeltsin a concept of his own. The document had been based on the principle of reasonable defence sufficiency and called for integration of the CIS military structures into a global security system under the auspices of the United Nations (Vladimirov 1992). Contrary to this liberal doctrine, the Russian National Convention, the leading organization of the ‘patriotic movement’ at that time, proposed a series of documents, which insisted on the preservation and further development of the defence industrial base and an active arms export policy, which in turn could strengthen Russia’s military security and international position (Modestov 1992).

These suggestions, however, did not affect the mainstream of Russian security thinking. According to many experts, at this stage the Russian security discourse had been dominated by traditionalists from the military agencies whose views were rather close to the General Staff’s draft (Malcolm/Pravda/Allison/Light 1996: 254–256).

13.2.3 Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept of 1993

In early 1993, the Foreign Ministry presented a foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation that was consequently approved by the Supreme Soviet (the then Russian Parliament) and President Boris Yeltsin (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 1993: 3–23). For the first time post-Soviet Russia has adopted a systemic foreign policy doctrine. Despite numerous inconsistencies and shortcomings this document clearly described Russian national interests and foreign policy priorities. Its basic premise was that Russia’s foreign policy must meet fundamental national interests, primarily the need to preserve the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country, strengthen its security in every respect, revive Russia as a free, democratic country, provide favourable conditions for the formation of an efficient market economy in keeping with the status of a great power and for the entry of the Russian Federation into the world community.

The document suggested greater emphasis on the economic aspect of foreign policy to mobilize international support for Russian economic reforms, integrate the national economy into world economic relations in competitive forms, ease the burden of military spending, solve the problem of foreign debt, support Russian business, carry out conversion projects. The text called for giving priority to the interests of the individual, to human and minority rights.

3 See also discussions on this draft published in Voennaya Mysl, Special Issue, July 1992 (in Russian).
According to the concept, Russia was to exercise its responsibility as a great power to maintain global and regional stability, conflict prevention, and promotion of the democratic principles such as rule of law, human and minority rights protection. The document emphasized Russia’s commitment to political and diplomatic methods and negotiation rather than to the use of military force, the admissibility of the limited use of force in strict accordance with international law to ensure national and international security and stability.

The aims of the military strategy had been depicted as follows: a) transformation of the international relations system from a bipolar, bloc-based model to a co-operative one; facilitating the arms control and disarmament process; b) bringing the military potential into line with a new pattern of challenges and threats and in accordance with the principle of reasonable defence sufficiency; c) a military reform should be conducted on the basis of a national security concept and it should take into consideration the economic and social potential of the country.

The concept did not see any serious threats to Russia's security. Even the Baltic states that discriminated Russian-speaking minorities and pushed the Russian Federation to withdraw its armed forces from their territory were seen as promising international partners. The only exception was the Third World that had initially been characterized as a main source of threats to regional and global security. However, in the document’s sections dealing with regional issues developing countries were depicted as an important resource for Russia’s successful global strategy.

In general, the document can be characterized as liberal and pro-Western in its spirit. This did not come as a surprise because the concept was prepared by the team of the so-called ‘Atlanticsists’ — a group of Russian liberal-minded pro-Western politicians and experts (led by the then Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev).

13.2.4 Skokov’s Foreign Policy Concept (1993)

In April 1993, a group of conservative politicians and experts who were discontent with Kozyrev’s doctrine have tried to develop a foreign policy concept of their own. This document was drafted by an anonymous collective of authors called “groups of experts from the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the staffers of the Directorate for Strategic Security and other structures of the Security Council” (Orlov 1993: 9). Some accounts suggest that the Council’s Inter-Agency Foreign Policy Commission organized the final stages of discussion and preparation of this concept (Diplomaticeskiy Vestnik 1993, 7–8: 67–68; Malcolm/Pravda/Allison/Light 1996: 114). It has been classified as ‘not for press’ and never been published, albeit Vladislav Chernov, Deputy Head of the Security Council’s Directorate on Strategic Security, quoted extensively from the document in his article in Nezavisimaya Gazeta published on 29 April 1993.

The new document, entitled “Guidelines of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”, had been prepared under supervision of Yuri Skokov, the Security Council’s Secretary. The paper both listed external threats to Russian security and defined Russia’s military-related national interests. From the theoretical point of view, it represented a mixture of various approaches. Contrary to some interpretations, it was not extreme, and with some adaptation, it could suit the radical democrats, the national patriots, political scientists and officials from the foreign policy and national security agencies. However, in some respects it was closer to the hard-liners’ position than to the liberal one. It used rather strong language regarding the Russian minorities in the Baltic states, the nuclear ambitions of Ukraine and admitted rivalry with the United States (Orlov 1993: 9). The document claimed that Russia should be responsible not only for the creation of a new world order but, in particular, for building a new security system in the post-Soviet space and assume the role of a guarantor of Eurasian stability.

The authors of the document underlined that in contrast with the previous practice, the document had been drafted in co-operation with all interested foreign policy agencies. The new concept had been approved by the heads of all so-called ‘power structures’ (including the then Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, Security Minister Vadim Barannikov, and Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service Yevgeny Primakov).

The new concept, however, had met a negative reaction from Kozyrev and some foreign countries. Kozyrev was discontent with the document’s recommendations on Russian policies towards the CIS and the United States (Orlov 1993: 9). The Baltic states expressed their concerns as to Russia’s intention to protect its citizens in the ‘near abroad’. In a hard-hitting speech to an audience in Stuttgart, Germany, on 3 May 1993, the then Estonian President Lennart Meri termed the stance a ‘Monroe doctrine’. “The change in Russia’s foreign policy places the democratic world
before a choice, which has a great deal in common with the fateful pre-Munich days”, he said. “I recall, for example, the use of armed forces beyond internationally recognized boundaries under the pretext of ‘protecting’ the human rights of the Sudeten Germans.”

In spite of the adoption of his version of the concept Skokov failed to retain his influence on the President. In May 1993, he was forced to resign due to his questionable loyalty to the President. Kozyrev who for a few months remained outside the ‘ring of power’ regained his former influential position (Malcolm/Pravda/Allison/Light 1996: 111, 135–136; Baev 1996: 45).

13.3 The Russian Military Doctrine of 1993

By autumn 1993, Yeltsin decided to proceed with the adoption of a new military doctrine. There were several reasons why a military doctrine had to be declared. The military badly needed guidance by the state in organizing, equipping and training the new armed forces. Moreover, the emerging civil society needed such a document for organizing democratic control on and accountability of the armed forces. Russia’s international partners also wished to know about Moscow’s intentions in the military sphere. Finally, the new doctrine was one of the rewards the military had received from the President for their loyalty in the October 1993 coup de état. The new military doctrine was approved by the Russian Security Council on 2 November 1993 and published. According to the document,

The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation are part and parcel of the security concept of the Russian Federation and represent a document covering Russia’s transitional period - the period of the establishment of statehood, implementation of democratic reform and formation of a new system of international relations. They represent a system of views officially accepted by the state on the prevention of wars and armed conflicts, on the development of the armed forces, on the country’s preparations to defend itself, on the organization of actions to ward off threats to the military security of the state, and on the use of the armed forces and other troops of the Russian Federation to defend the vital interests of Russia (Yeltsin 1994: 6).

In contrast with the earlier versions of the military doctrine and foreign policy concept of 1993, this document clearly defined both external and internal sources of military threats. The doctrine singled out ten major external challenges to Russia’s military security:

1. territorial claims of other states on the Russian Federation and its allies;
2. existing and potential seats of local wars and armed conflicts, above all in the direct proximity of the Russian borders (there was a special section on the attitude of Russia to armed conflicts);
3. the potential use (including the unsanctioned use) of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons owned by some states;
4. the proliferation of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, their delivery vehicles and latest military technologies, coupled with the attempts of certain states, organizations and terrorist groups to achieve their military and political ambitions;
5. the potential undermining of strategic stability by violations of international agreements in the sphere of arms control and reductions and the qualitative and quantitative arms build-up by other countries;
6. attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of and destabilize the internal political situation in Russia;
7. the suppression of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states;
8. attacks on military facilities of the Russian armed forces situated on the territory of foreign states;
9. expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the interests of Russia’s military security; and
10. international terrorism.

In a separate section, the document highlighted five crucial factors facilitating the escalation of a military danger into a direct military threat to the Russian Federation:

1. the build-up of forces on the Russian borders to limits which upset the existing balance of forces;
2. attacks on the facilities and structures on the Russian border and the borders of its allies, border conflicts and armed provocations;
3. the training of armed formations and groups on the territory of other states for dispatch to the territory of the Russian Federation and its allies;
4. the actions of other countries which hinder the operation of the logistics system of the Russian

4 See in: The Baltic Independent, 14–20 May 1993: 3.
strategic nuclear forces and of state and military control of, above all, their space components; and
5. the deployment of foreign troops on the territory of states adjacent to the Russian Federation unless this is done to restore or maintain peace, in accordance with the decision of the UN Security Council or a regional agency of collective security, by agreement with Russia.

Along with the external threats the new doctrine identified seven major internal threats against which the armed forces and other services may be used:

1. the illegal activity of nationalist, secessionist and other organizations, designed to destabilize the internal situation in Russia and violate its territorial integrity and carried out with the use of armed force;
2. attempts to overthrow the constitutional regime and disorganize the operation of bodies of state power and administration;
3. attacks on the facilities of nuclear engineering, chemical and biological industries, and other potentially dangerous facilities;
4. the creation of illegal armed formations;
5. the growth of organized crime and smuggling on a scale where they threaten the security of citizens and society;
6. attacks on arsenals, arms depots, enterprises producing weapons, military and specialized equipment, and organizations, establishments and structures which have weapons, with the aim of capturing them; and
7. illegal proliferation of weapons, munitions, explosives and other means used for subversion and terrorist acts on the territory of the Russian Federation, as well as illegal drug trafficking.

The section on threat perceptions had many important implications. Along with the systematic description of these threats it demonstrated rather substantial changes in Russia’s strategic thinking. In contrast with the General Staff draft of 1992 the new doctrine did not identify the USA and NATO as a primary source of military danger. Rather, they were warned not to provoke a new confrontation by violating the strategic balance, military build-up in the regions adjacent to Russia, NATO expansion and so on. This implied that Russia also would refrain from any destabilizing actions.

Instead of the traditional threat from the West, other challenges such as armed conflicts, subversive activities and territorial disputes in the post-Soviet space were seen to be a major danger. This was understandable because by the moment of the adoption of the above document all but two FSU (former Soviet Union) inter-state borders were disputed and 164 different territorial-ethnic disputes were identified in this region (Dick 1994: 3). The doctrine, however, did not specify what kinds of territorial claims and local conflicts that really threatened Russia’s security and which ones might be potentially dangerous. For example, the Russian-Japanese dispute on the Kuriles originates from the World War II and Russian-Norwegian disputes on economic zones and maritime borders in the Barents and North Seas date back to the 1920’s. However, these conflicts do not create an immediate military threat to the Russian Federation. Moreover, most of the countries being in dispute with Russia are simply unable to pose a military threat because they lack a sufficient potential. On the contrary, these countries fear the potential use of military force by Russia pursuing its interests.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and international terrorism, which have been on the periphery of the Russian strategic priorities in the previous doctrines and drafts, were given a rather important status in the new concept. Above all, this brought Russia closer to the major Western countries that also refer to these phenomena as the most dangerous international developments.

The identification of violation of the rights of Russian citizens in foreign states and attacks on Russian military facilities in foreign countries as potential sources of military threat is a rather common stance not only for the Russian but also for other great powers’ security doctrines. However, from a legal point of view it was not clear who could be considered as Russian citizens in the FSU countries and what was the status of the Russian military bases in these republics for the time being. The Russian foreign policy concept of 1993 acknowledged that Russia was only in the very beginning of negotiating and concluding corresponding agreements with the former Soviet republics. In fact, the lack of a legal framework for the relations with the FSU countries gave a certain number of excuses for interventions in the ‘near abroad’ (Ra’anan 1995: 21–22).

The most significant change in the Russian threat perceptions occurred with regard to internal threats. The Law on Security of 1992 only mentioned that some of these might exist. The General Staff draft of the military doctrine (1992) simply ignored the very possibility of internal threats to Russia’s security and therefore did not foresee any internal mission for the armed forces. This view was a result of the military
elite’s belief that the armed forces should protect the country only from external enemies, not internal ones. The latter should be the business of the Ministry of Interior and of the security services. However, accepting reality, the military doctrine of 1993 acknowledged that there were many dangers stemming from domestic developments. This inevitably led to a commitment of the military to an internal role. As the failed coup of August 1991 and the attack on the White House in October 1993 demonstrated, the armed forces have already been involved in domestic power struggles.

The new reading of military threats has led to the new approaches to military strategy, as well as to an appropriate organization and training of the armed forces.

Since the main threat to stability and peace in the post-Cold War period comes from local wars and armed conflicts, the document called for a re-targeting of the Russian armed forces from large-scale war to low intensity conflicts. The main aim of the use of the armed forces and other services in armed conflicts and local wars, the doctrine said, was “to localize the seat of tensions and stop hostilities at the earliest possible stage, in the interests of creating conditions for a peaceful settlement of the conflict on conditions suitable to the interests of the Russian Federation” (Yeltsin 1994: 9). Military operation in armed conflicts and local wars should be carried out by peacetime groups of forces (those which organized for peace-time conditions, i.e. have incomplete personnel and arsenals; in the war-time period they are reorganized to be a full-fledged military units), deployed in the conflict area. In case of need, they might be strengthened by a partial deployment and redeployment of forces from other regions.

According to the document, the priority was to develop the armed forces and other services designed to deter aggression, as well as mobile elements, which can be quickly delivered and deployed in the required area and carry out mobile operations in any region where the security of Russia might be threatened.

When faced with conventional war, the armed forces must act decisively, using both defensive and offensive methods to destroy the enemy. The armed forces should

a.) repel the attacks of the enemy in the air, on land and in the seas;
b.) defeat the enemy and create conditions for ending hostilities at the earliest possible stage and signing a peace treaty on conditions suitable for Russia; and
c.) carry out military operations together with the armed forces of allied states, in accordance with international obligations of the Russian Federation.

A number of tasks have been set up by the doctrine for other services:
a.) to ensure a stable operation of intelligence, control and communication systems and to seize and keep the initiative in different spheres;
b.) to isolate the intruding groups of forces of the aggressor;
c.) to flexibly combine firepower and manoeuvre;
d.) to ensure close co-operation of the arms and services, including special services of the armed forces and to co-ordinate the plans of using the armed forces and other services in armed conflicts and wars, and in performing joint tasks;
e.) to hit the facilities of the enemy’s troop and weapon control systems.

This combination of defensive and offensive methods was an important distinction from Gorbachev’s military concept that had been oriented only at defensive operations.

Some military experts were concerned with the fact that the doctrine said nothing about the country’s role in regional security systems; this absence could be interpreted as an intention to ensure Russia’s security by unilateral, purely national efforts (Davydov 1996: 267). Despite the focus on local conflicts the military doctrine of 1993, however, said nothing about the need for a different force structuring, equipping and training for low intensity operations. Besides, some military experts noted, the emphasis on mobile forces could be seen as a preparation for an intervention in the ‘near abroad’ (Dick 1994: 4; Grigoriev 1995: 6).

In the document, the requirement to deploy troops outside the Russian territory is specifically stated. This resulted both from threat perceptions and Russia’s international obligations (peacekeeping operations, military bases, joint groups of forces, etc.). It was underlined that irrespective of the terms of deployment, Russian military formations deployed on the territory of other states remain a part of the armed forces and should act in accordance with the procedure established for the Russian armed forces on the basis of bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements. However, some specialists believed that despite the reference to international agreements and commitments the possibility was left open that such
agreements could be imposed by Russia on weaker states (Davydov 1996: 267).

The doctrine did not exclude the possibility of large-scale war. It was mentioned in the document that under certain conditions, armed conflicts and local wars can develop into an all-out war. Factors which increase the danger of the escalation of conventional war into a nuclear war can be deliberate actions of the aggressor designed to destroy or undermine the operation of strategic nuclear forces, early warning systems, nuclear and chemical facilities. The document also included a provision according to which any, including limited, use of nuclear weapons even by one of the sides can provoke a mass use of nuclear weapons, with catastrophic consequences.

The doctrine clarified Russia’s nuclear policy, which had not been updated since the Gorbachev period. It has been declared that the aim of the Russian Federation’s nuclear policy is to avert the threat of a nuclear war by deterring aggression against Russia and its allies. Therefore, nuclear weapons were no longer regarded by the Russian strategic planners primarily as war fighting means. Instead, their main use has been seen as a political deterrent to nuclear or conventional aggression. This marked the change in Russian strategic thinking to a Western-like concept of deterrence, compensating for conventional weakness.

The most distinct departure of the new Russian nuclear doctrine from the Soviet one was Russia’s abandonment of the principle of no-first-use (introduced by Leonid Brezhnev in 1982). At the same time, the document promised that Russia would never use its nuclear weapons against any state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), which does not possess nuclear weapons, unless:

(a) such a state, which is connected by an alliance agreement with a nuclear state attacks the Russian Federation, its territory, Armed Forces and other services or its allies; (b) such a state collaborates with a nuclear power in carrying out, or supporting, an invasion or an armed aggression against the Russian Federation, its territory, armed forces and other services or its allies (Yeltsin 1994: 6).

In one way or another all NATO members, China and Japan as nuclear states or the allies of nuclear powers, the Baltic states and Central and Eastern European countries should they join NATO or WEU (Western European Union) come into these categories.

The reaction of Russia’s international partners to the repeal of the no-first-use principle was rather contradictory (Davydov 1996: 267). On the one hand, they considered this change to a Western concept of deterrence as evidence of a greater inclination towards openness and frankness in military matters on Russia’s part: few in the West took the old Soviet doctrine of ‘no-first-use’ seriously. They understood that Russia’s new nuclear doctrine reflected Moscow’s intention to rely mainly upon nuclear deterrence to compensate for its conventional weakness and keep its great power status. On the other hand, they perceived this change as a clear message to them, especially to the Baltic states and the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) that they would come into the categories of exceptions if they joined NATO or the WEU or supported any Western intervention in Russia or the ‘near abroad’, for example, by giving rights of passage or providing bases. This had also been a pressure on Ukraine, which delayed the transfer of the nuclear weapons deployed on its territory during Soviet times to Russia (Dick 1994: 2; Lockwood 1994: 648).

Along with these innovations the document confirmed Russia’s long-standing interest in (a) a comprehensive nuclear weapon test ban; (b) reduction of nuclear forces to a minimum which would guarantee against a large-scale war and maintain strategic stability, and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; and (c) strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and making it universal.

Since internal armed conflicts have also been regarded as a considerable threat to the vital interests of the country, the document described the aims of using armed forces and troops in this case as to localize and blockade the conflict zone, suppress armed clashes and disengage the warring sides, take measures to disarm and eliminate illegal armed forces and confiscate weapons from the population in the conflict zone, carry out operational and investigative operations in order to remove the threat to internal security, normalize the situation as soon as possible, restore law and order, ensure social security, render the requisite assistance to the population and create conditions for a political settlement of conflicts. These functions had to be fulfilled mainly by the Interior Troops. However, as the document prescribed, separate elements of the armed forces and other services (the border guards and counter-intelligence) might be used to help the law-enforcement bodies and Interior Ministry troops localize and blockade the conflict zone, preclude armed clashes and disengage the warring sides, and protect strategic facilities. Having in mind antipathy of the military to internal missions General Manilov of the Security Council explained that the armed forces can only be used
when nationalist or separatist groups are active, using armed violence and posing a threat to Russia and its integrity, or when attempts are made to use force to overthrow the constitutional system, or when nuclear facilities are attacked, and also when illegal armed formations are being created (Dick 1994: 4).

So, the legal foundations for the use of the armed forces in internal conflicts such as Chechnya had been laid by the new doctrine (Davydov 1996: 267). Given that fact that the Interior Troops had been manned and equipped insufficiently, the use of the armed forces in internal operations was inevitable. And the two subsequent Chechen wars have confirmed this suggestion.


On 17 December 1997 President Yeltsin signed the decree No. 1300 thus approving a new Russian national security concept. It outlined Russian national interests, the major threats to the country's security and established a set of domestic and foreign policy goals aimed at strengthening Russia's statehood and geopolitical position. As it was emphasized in the document, the concept was

a political document reflecting the officially accepted views of the goals and state strategy in ensuring the security of the individual, society and the state against external and internal threats of a political, economic, social, military, technogenic, ecological, information and other character with account of available resources and opportunities (Yeltsin 1997: 4).

Similar to the Law on Security (1992) and the Duma draft of the Law on National Security (1995), the new doctrine departed from the broad understanding of security and focused not only on the interests of the state but also on the interests of the individual and society. According to one of the authors of the concept, Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Leonid Mayorov, this document, which had been developed in the course of several years, comprehensively reflected, for the first time in Russian history, the system of views on the security of the individual, society and the state (Chugayev 1997).

In fact, the concept was a sort of guideline, a theoretical base, which could be used to develop such requisite programme documents as the military doctrine and the economic security doctrine. This was also the base for military reform. At least it made it possible to understand better what armed forces Russia must have and which conflicts they should be prepared for. It was specified in the preamble that "The Concept is the basis for the development of concrete programmes and organizational documents related to the national security of the Russian Federation" (Yeltsin 1997: 4).

The paper described the global situation and Russia's place in the world. Similar to the foreign policy concept of 1993, the paper saw the rise of a multipolar world as the most important characteristics of contemporary world dynamics. According to the doctrine, Russia should find its own 'niche' in this complex world structure and even become one of the 'poles'.

Despite the fact that the document mentioned a couple of times, en passant, the need for retaining Russia's great power status it did not insist on Russia's global responsibilities and interests (as some previous doctrines did). On the contrary, the paper acknowledged that Russia's capacity to influence the solution of cardinal issues of international life has greatly diminished.

The document singled out both positive and negative factors affecting the country's position in the world system. Interestingly, the paper pointed to the changing nature of world power in the post-Cold War period. "While military force remains a significant factor in international relations, economic, political, scientific-technical, ecological and information factors play a growing role" (Yeltsin, 1997: 4).

The document noted that some prerequisites have been created for the demilitarization of international relations, strengthening the role of law in conflict resolution, and that the danger of a direct aggression against Russia has diminished. There were some prospects of greater integration of Russia into the world economy, including some Western economic and financial institutions. Russia shared common security interests with many states in areas such as nuclear non-proliferation, conflict resolution, combating international terrorism, environmental problems and so on. At this point, the paper arrived at an important conclusion that Russia's national security may be ensured by non-military means.

At the same time, a number of international and especially domestic processes undermined Russia's international positions. The shift of world power from military-strategic parameters to economic, technological and information ones has intensified international competition for natural, financial, technological and information resources as well as for markets. Some states did not accept a multipolar world model. In some regions, traditions of the 'bloc politics' were
still strong and attempts to isolate Russia could be identified (the document refers to NATO’s enlargement and to the Asia Pacific). The document said that the Russian domestic environment was not very helpful for developing an active foreign policy. Russia had yet to develop a unifying national idea that would determine not only the view of the world but also transform the society. The country’s economic, scientific and demographic potentials (Lutz 2009) were shrinking. The former defence system has been disrupted and the new one had yet to be created.

However, the concept was quite optimistic with regard to the country’s prospects. It stated that Russia had all the prerequisites for maintaining and strengthening its position in the world. Russia possessed a sizeable economic and scientific-technical potential as well as natural resources. It occupied a unique strategic position in Eurasia. The country has created a democratic system of government and a mixed economy. The paper also mentioned Russia’s century-old history, culture and traditions which could be an important spiritual resource for rebuilding the country.

The new national security concept asserted that Russia faced no immediate danger of large-scale aggression, and that, because the country was beset with a myriad of debilitating domestic problems, the greatest threat to Russia’s security was now an internal one. The document said: “An analysis of the threats to the national security of the Russian Federation shows that the main threats at present and in the foreseeable future will not be military, but predominantly internal in character and will focus on the internal political, economic, social, ecological, information and spiritual spheres” (Yeltsin 1997: 4). This was a distinct departure from previous doctrines. Even the military doctrine of 1993 was based on the assumption that the main threat to Russia’s security was posed by external factors such as local conflicts or territorial claims.

As some analysts emphasized, no less important was the fact that for the first time it has been substantiated at such a high official level (the President, Security Council, and Parliament) that there was no external military threat to Russia.5 The concept clearly suggested that today’s relatively benign international climate afforded Russia the opportunity to direct resources away from the defence sector and toward the rebuilding of the Russian economy.

The development of a qualitatively new pattern of relations with the leading world states and the political absence of the threat of a large-scale aggression against Russia, while it preserves its nuclear deterrent, makes it possible to redistribute the resources of the state and society to address priority internal problems (Yeltsin 1997: 4).

In general, it placed this rebuilding effort in the context of continued democratization and marketization.

The document focused in particular on the dangers posed by Russia’s economic woes, which were described frankly and at length. It was underlined in the paper that “The state of crisis in the economy is the main cause from which threats to national security of the Russian Federation arise” (Yeltsin 1997: 4). The concept highlighted a number of major threats to economic security such as a substantial drop of production and investments; destruction of the scientific-technical potential; disarray in the financial and monetary systems; shrinkage of the federal revenues; growing national debt; Russia’s overdependence on export of raw materials and import of equipment, consumer goods and foodstuffs; ‘brain drain’, and uncontrolled flight of capital.

The document also pointed to internal social, political, ethnic and cultural tensions that threatened to undermine both the viability and the territorial integrity of the Russian state. Among these social polarization, demographic problems (in particular, the reduction of the birth rate, average life expectancy and population), corruption, organized crime, drug-trade, terrorism, virulent nationalism, separatism, deterioration of the health system, ecological catastrophes and disintegration of the ‘common spiritual space’ were singled out.

Along with the major internal threats to Russia’s security, the document identified a number of dangers stemming from the international dynamics. The doctrine highlighted the following sources of external threat: territorial claims; attempts of foreign countries to use Russia’s domestic problems for weakening its international positions or challenging its territorial integrity; local conflicts and military build-up in the country’s vicinity; mass migration from the troubled CIS countries; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; international terrorism and drug-trafficking and growing activities of foreign intelligence services. These, however, were of less significance than internal threats.

In general, this shift in Russia’s threat perceptions could be assessed positively. Looking at the bright side of the document, three main advantages could be distinguished. First, this was a step to a more realistic

estimation of Russia’s domestic and international problems. Second, given Russia’s limited resources this doctrine helped in setting a proper system of political priorities. Finally, it almost dismissed xenophobia regarding to Russia’s relations with the West and, thus, laid foundations for more intense international co-operation.

From the critical point of view, two minor comments can be made. First, some threats (environmental, information, spiritual, etc.) have just been mentioned but not substantiated. Some of them, however, were described implicitly in the section on the national security strategy. Second, there were some grounds for concern that ‘securitization’ of Russian domestic politics, i.e., identification of main security threats inside rather than outside the country, under certain circumstances might result in a sort of ‘witch-hunt’. To prevent this, some analysts believed, individuals and civil society should serve as a check on the state and should not allow the state to be the sole agency in national security matters (Chugayev 1997; Sergunin 1998b).

Along with explaining Russia’s national interests and threat perceptions, the doctrine determined ways and means of the country’s security policy. According to the document,

The chief purpose of ensuring national security of the Russian Federation is to create and maintain such an economic, political, international and military-strategic position of the country which would provide favourable conditions for the development of the individual, society and the state and preclude a danger of weakening the role and significance of the Russian Federation as a subject of international law and of undermining the capability of the state to meet its national interests on the international scene (Yeltsin 1997: 4).

The document set up a number of particular tasks to ensure national security of the Russian Federation: a) to develop the country’s economy and pursue an independent and socially-oriented economic course; b) to further improve the legislation and strengthen law and order and social-political stability of society, Russian statehood, federalism and local self-administration; c) to shape harmonious inter-ethnic relations; d) to ensure Russia’s international security by establishing equal partnership with the major states of the world; e) to strengthen state security in the defence and information spheres; f) to ensure the vital activity of the population in a technogenically safe and environmentally clean world.

With regard to Russia’s military policy, the national security concept served as a post-facto justification for the down-sizing of Russia’s armed forces that has occurred since the Soviet Union’s dissolution, and for the continued restructuring envisioned in the Kremlin’s still evolving military reform programme. By emphasizing domestic rather than foreign threats to Russia’s security, it seemed also to justify the rapid strengthening of the country’s internal security forces relative to the regular army during the past ten years, even if defence reform plans aimed to moderate that policy somewhat. In a related fashion, the document described an alleged threat to Russian economic interests posed by foreign competitors, and underscored the importance of the role played by Russia’s intelligence services in counteracting it.

The document also emphasized the overriding importance of Russia’s strategic forces to the country’s security and again disavowed the no-first-use principle. With regard to conventional weapons, the concept proclaimed a policy of ‘realistic deterrence’ in discarding officially any effort to maintain parity with the armed forces of the world’s leading states. The concept highlighted the importance of Russian participation in international peacekeeping missions as a means of maintaining Russia’s influence abroad.

The document declared that in preventing war and armed conflicts Russia preferred political, economic and other non-military means. However, as far as the “non-use of force” (Art. 2.7 of the UN Charter)⁶ has not yet been fully implemented as a norm of international relations, the national interests of the Russian Federation required sufficient military might for its defence. The document said that Russia might use military force for ensuring its national security, proceeding from the following principles:

- Russia reserved the right to use all the forces and systems at its disposal, including nuclear weapons, if the unleashing of armed aggression results in a threat to the actual existence of the Russian Federation as an independent sovereign state.
- The armed forces of the Russian Federation should be used resolutely, consistently up to the point when conditions for making peace which are favourable to the Russian Federation have been created.
- The armed forces should be used on a legal basis and only when all other non-military possibilities of settling a crisis situation have been exhausted or proved to be ineffective.

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⁶ This is referred to in Art. 2.7 of the UN Charter of June 1945 and are binding on all states although this principle has been largely ignored.
• The use of the armed forces against peaceful civilians or for attaining domestic political aims shall not be permitted. However, it was permitted to use individual units of the armed forces for joint operation with other services against illegal armed formations that present a threat to the national interests of Russia.
• The participation of the Russian armed forces in wars and armed conflicts of different intensity and scope shall be aimed at accomplishing the priority military-political and military-strategic tasks meeting Russia’s national interests and its allied obligations.

The doctrine underlined that Russia had no intention of entering into confrontation with any state or alliance of states, nor did it pursue hegemonic or expansionist objectives. Russia will maintain relations of partnership with all interested countries of the world community.

The concept reiterated Russia’s opposition to NATO enlargement and it called for multilateral collective security organizations such as the UN and the OSCE to play a greater role in ensuring international security. The paper called on the international community to create a new Euro-Atlantic security system on the basis of the OSCE as well as to strengthen (with Russian participation) multilateralism in the Asia Pacific.

The national security concept formally stated what has long been a cornerstone of Russian declared foreign policy: i.e., that the rebuilding of Russia is best served not by a passive diplomatic posture, but rather by an aggressive and multi-faceted diplomacy aimed at winning membership, or increasing Russia’s influence, in various international organizations, while simultaneously striving to make Russia an important global player.

13.5 The Putin and Medvedev Era

During the late Yeltsin and early Putin period four major factors have changed Russian threat perceptions – its financial collapse of 1998, NATO’s military intervention in Kosovo (1999), NATO’s new strategic doctrine (1999) and the second Chechen war that also started in 1999.

Russia’s financial crisis of August 1998 undermined to some extent the popularity of liberal concepts (including a positive attitude to globalization) in the country by exposing Russia’s vulnerability to the international economy and financial markets. But some specialists believe that the fundamental sources of this crisis were internal policy failures and economic weakness, but it was triggered by the vulnerability of the ruble to speculative international financial markets (Wallander 2000: 2). Moreover, because Russia’s economy began to recover in the aftermath of the decision to devalue the ruble and implement limited debt defaults, the crisis reinforced statist arguments that a less Western-dependent, more state-directed policy of economic reform could be Russia’s path to stability and eventual prosperity. One of the lessons of the 1998 financial meltdown was that globalization may be a source of threat to Russia’s economic security.

As for the Kosovo war of 1999, Russia has again become suspicious about NATO’s real character and its future plans. In the Russian view, in this case NATO - contrary to previous declarations on its intentions to be transformed from a military-political to a political-military organization - demonstrated that this alliance still preferred to be a ‘hard’ security organization and continued to reproduce a Cold War-type logic and policies. Moreover, NATO demonstrated its ambitions to be a major (if not a sole) security provider in Europe trying to sideline other regional organizations, such as OSCE, EU, the Council of Europe, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, etc.

In addition, the Kosovo war coincided with the adoption of a new NATO strategic doctrine that turned out much more expansionist than the previous one (Wallander 1999: 4). In particular, the new doctrine envisaged further enlargements of NATO towards the east, a redeployment of its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders and even military operations beyond its traditional ‘zone of responsibility’ (in fact, globally). Finally, the Kosovo crisis gave the Russian military much needed arguments to force through their view that a large-scale conventional war is not a nearly remote possibility as stated in the national security concept of 1997 (Ball 1999: 2).

The second Chechen war has affected Russian threat perceptions as well. First of all, it demonstrated that in the modern era international and domestic terrorism are intertwined and it is impossible to fight them separately. In addition, it turned out that the financial and military-technical basis of terrorism in the North Caucasus was that strong that it was unrealistic to wage the war only by special forces and internal troops (without the help of regular armed forces). As mentioned, Russia’s previous military and security doctrines admitted only a limited and short-term involvement of the regular army. It should also be noted that Russia was both disappointed and irritated by
what it called a Western ‘policy of double standards’ with regard to Chechnya. On the one hand, Western countries called on Russia to join a ‘global war on terror’ after the events of 11 September 2001 and Russia responded in a positive way. But, on the other hand, the West treated Chechen rebels as ‘freedom-fighters’ rather than terrorists, provided Chechen leaders with political asylum, allowed Chechen representative missions to wage anti-Russian propaganda in Europe and in the U.S. and heavily criticized Russia for human rights violations in the region. Such a policy contributed to the rise of new mutual suspicions and mistrust in Russia’s relations with its Western partners.

In 2000, under the new President Vladimir Putin, a series of new security-related documents was adopted, among them a national security concept, a military doctrine, a foreign policy concept and even an information security concept. The national security concept of 2000 was the most significant document for understanding Russia’s new approaches to its security policies.

There were several differences between the concepts of 1997 and 2000. The most important aspect of the 2000 concept was that it elevated the importance and expanded the types of external threats to Russian security. The concept no longer stated that there were no external threats arising from deliberate actions or aggression. It provided a substantial list of external threats, including: the weakening of the OSCE and UN; weakening Russian political, economic, and military influence in the world; the consolidation of military-political blocs and alliances (particularly further eastward expansion of NATO), including the possibility of foreign military bases or deployment of forces on Russian borders; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery; weakening of the CIS, and escalation of conflicts on CIS members’ borders; and territorial claims against Russia (Putin 2000: 4).

In several places the concept of 2000 emphasized that the natural tendency of international relations after the Cold-War confrontation was toward the development of a multipolar world in which relations should be based on international law and a proper role for Russia. It argued that the United States and its allies, against this tendency, under the guise of multilateralism have sought to establish a unipolar world outside of international law. The document warned that NATO’s policy transition to the use of military force outside of its alliance territory without a UN Security Council approval was a major threat to world stability, and that these trends could create the potential for a new era of arms races among the world’s great powers. The concept of 2000 links the internal threat of terrorism and separatism (clearly with Chechnya in mind) to external threats: it argues that international terrorism involves efforts to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia, with the possibility of direct military aggression. However, in dealing with the threat the document calls for international cooperation (Putin 2000: 4).

Russia’s military doctrine of 2000 enlists almost the same threats to Russia’s security. Perhaps there was the only exception: in addition to the threats that were mentioned in the national security concept of 2000 and in the military doctrine of 1993 the new document points to a new threat of an information war against Russia as an important factor of the contemporary security environment in the world.

The military doctrine of 2000 describes in detail the nature of contemporary and future wars distinguishing the following trends:

- The use of high-precision and non-contact weapons (with a minimal involvement of ground forces);
- An emphasis on the predominant use of air/space and mobile forces;
- An aspiration to destroy an enemy’s military and administrative command structures; making strikes on military, administrative, economic and infrastructure objects throughout the whole enemy’s territory;
- Widespread use of methods of information war - both world-wide and inside the enemy’s country;
- Potential technical catastrophes as a result of strikes on nuclear, chemical and industrial installations and communications;
- Involvement of irregular/paramilitary formations in waging war (along with regular armed forces);
- The high risk of escalation of an armed conflict to a large-scale war in terms of a number of participants and the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Depending on the level of confrontation the doctrine singles out the following types of armed conflicts:

- Armed conflict – intra-state (Chechnya, Trans-Dniestria, Georgia-Abkhazia, Georgia-South Ossetia, the civil war in Tajikistan) or inter-state (Russia-Georgia);
- Local war (Iran-Iraq in the 1980s, Armenia-Azerbaijan: Nagorny Karabakh);
- Regional war with the participation of a group of states (Afghanistan, both Iraq wars);
Alexander Sergunin

• Large-scale war (both world wars). The possibility of a large-scale war is seen by Russian strategists as purely theoretical.

With a political and economic stabilization and subsequent economic growth in Russia under President Putin Russia’s foreign and security policies became more assertive. President Putin’s ‘Munich speech’⁷ of 10 February 2007 exemplified a new Russian stance (Putin 2007). Although there were no radical changes in Russia’s basic threat perceptions, President Putin has emphasized some interesting nuances in Russia’s approaches to international security. Moscow’s security concerns were related to the following recent developments:

• The unilateral use of military force by the U.S. and its allies (in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq). The Russian Federation was also discontent with regular U.S. military threats to Iran, Syria and North Korea.

• The weakening of traditional international security institutions such as the UN (Security Council) and OSCE where Russia is represented on equal footing with other countries. President Putin said that the crisis of these organizations is a result of a deliberate strategy conducted by a small group of states that are interested in creation of a uni-rather a multi-polar world.

• NATO’s eastward extension and the growth of its military infrastructure on the Russian borders.

• The U.S. plans to deploy elements of ABM (anti-ballistic missile) defence system in East and Central Europe (in Poland and in the Czech Republic).

• The lack of progress in arms control and disarmament. In particular, Putin criticized also other nuclear powers who do not want to join existing arms control regimes and reduce their nuclear arsenals. The Russian President also criticized NATO for its unwillingness to ratify the 1999 Adaptation Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe that aimed at significant force reductions and development of confidence-building and security measures in Europe. Protesting against NATO’s position Putin has suspended Russia’s participation in the CFE Treaty in 2007.

• The lack of efficient cooperation between Russia and its Western partners on fighting international terrorism. Putin reiterated Russia’s famous stance on the Western ‘policy of double standards’ and proposed to the international community an intensified cooperation in this sphere.

Russian security thinking under Putin was also deeply affected by a series of the so-called colour revolutions (Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan). It has resulted in a certain reassessment of Russian security perception towards the ‘near’ abroad, particularly in implementing ‘tightening of the screw’ policies. The Russian leadership now believes that Russia cannot be a regional great power (and a pole of the world multi-polar system) if it cannot keep its central position in the former Soviet space. Along the same lines, Putin tried to re-animate CIS collective security structures such as the protection of the common CIS borders, a single air defence system and the creation of the collective rapid reaction forces.

The new Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has repeatedly said that his foreign and security policy course will continue the strategy of his predecessor and that there should be no expectations of major changes in Russia’s threat perceptions and security policies.

However, the beginning of his presidency was marked by two security challenges that earlier were seen as highly hypothetical – the interstate military conflict with Russia’s participation (South Ossetia) and ‘energy wars’ (Russian-Ukrainian gas conflict). When in August 2008 Georgia has attacked South Ossetia and the Russian peace-keepers who were located there, for the first time in its post-Soviet history the Russian government had to execute a full-fledged peace-enforcement operation forcing Georgia to return to a status-quo situation. It appeared that the Russian armed forces were ill-prepared for such an operation (although the possibility of a limited armed conflict was foreseen in the Russian military doctrine). It took a long time to re-deploy forces from North to South Ossetia. The mobile forces were almost not engaged in the operation. The air and electronic intelligence were inappropriate and this inevitably led to mistakes in command chain and losses in manpower and military equipment. It was reported that the Russian General Staff has initiated a special investigation to draw lessons from the South Ossetian conflict.

The ‘gas war’ with Ukraine that had quite serious repercussions for Europe has demonstrated Russia’s vulnerability in the energy sector, its dependence on the transition countries and challenged its credibility as a reliable energy supplier.

Changes in the Perception of Military Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks in Russia (1991-2009)

In both cases (South Ossetia and the Ukraine) Russia called for multilateral decisions. To avoid conflicts similar to the Russian-Georgian one President Medvedev proposed a new Trans-Atlantic Security Charter that should lay foundations for a new international security architecture in this huge region. A multilateral mechanism to prevent and solve local conflicts was proposed. Although the US and EU reaction to the Medvedev’s proposal was cautious, it was not completely rejected and further discussions were suggested.\(^8\) In addition, at the EU-Russia summit in November 2008 the EU and Russia decided to intensify their cooperation on external security, including conflict management and joint peacekeeping operations throughout the world.\(^9\)

As far as the problem of reliable energy shipments to Europe is concerned President Medvedev has also proposed to create an international control mechanism that could monitor the supply process. It is planned that the issue of energy security will become an important part of a new EU-Russian cooperative agreement that is now under negotiation. In addition, President Medvedev invited European energy companies to actively invest in the construction of alternative gas pipelines that could be independent of transit countries (the so-called projects ‘Nord stream’ and ‘South stream’).

Medvedev has continued Putin’s course on strengthening the CIS collective security system (i.e. the Tashkent Treaty of 1992). In 2009, he signed an agreement with President Alexander Lukashenko on the creation of a single Russian-Belarussian air defence system and completed the creation of collective rapid reaction forces of the CIS (mainly consisting of the Russian airborne troops).\(^10\)

The new Russian National Security Strategy that was adopted by the presidential decree no. 537 of 12 May 2009 has incorporated these developments into the Russian strategic thinking. The list of military threats remained almost unchanged but they were presented in a slightly different way. For example, it distinguished between threats to the state and society, on the one hand, and to the individual, on the other. The paper is a bit more detailed in the description of the sources of the military threats to Russia than previous documents. And it has a more strategic, forward-looking character (Strategia Natsionalnoi Bezopasnosti Rossiiyskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda).

13.6 Conclusions

Six conclusions emerge from the above review of the evolution of Russia’s military threat perceptions and national security doctrines:

- **First**, during the past two decades Russia has managed to formulate its national interests, threat perceptions and a more or less coherent national security strategy.
- **Second**, Russian national security doctrines defined both national interests and security threats quite realistically. They are based on the assumption that there are no major external threats to its security and that internal sources of threats should be given more attention. Logically, Russian security concerns have shifted from the ‘hard’ to the ‘soft’ security domain.
- **Third**, Russian national security doctrines are based on a broader understanding of the notion of security in which the non-military issues such as the economy, social problems, environment, demography, information, culture and religion are included.
- **Fourth**, in line with the democratic principles, these concepts acknowledged the need for ensuring national security at three levels (the individual, society and the state) albeit the state ‘bias’ still remains (particularly in the field of implementation of the national security strategy).
- **Fifth**, with the adoption of a non-aggressive military strategy and clarification of Russia’s national security interests, Russia becomes a more attractive and predictable international partner.
- **Sixth**, it appears that the national security debate has been a rather effective way of nation-building and constructing a new Russian identity. The national security concepts claim that they are based on national values and traditions and aim at the search for a national consensus and a unifying national idea.

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