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CAUCASUS UPDATE- CHECHNYA

Real Peace in Chechnya?

27 April 2009

FMSO Commentary: *While wars sometime end with the signing of a peace treaty, there is much less clarity with terminating a counter-insurgency operation. Even if the majority of the terrorists/insurgents are eliminated, their cause can remain alive in the memory and history of their children. One essential preliminary step, however, in ending a counter-insurgency operation is a formal announcement that the stronger side has achieved victory. This past month (16 April 2009), Russia announced that their counter-terrorist operation (CTO) in Chechnya was complete, and that law and order (of sorts) had been restored in this war-torn region.*

All politics contains an element of hypocrisy, and rarely do official pronouncements fully resemble reality, but this dissonance has been the defining hallmark since Russian military operations began in Chechnya 15 years ago. To put it mildly, both the Russian and Chechen side have been less than forthright in describing the actual state of affairs. Alongside the tens of thousands of killed and wounded, the "truth" has been an ongoing casualty of this conflict, particularly since 2000, when the Putin government enacted strict media controls. In the past decade there have been numerous occasions when Russian officials claimed that hostilities had ended, only to have another large explosion within 24 hours.

*The motives behind this latest pronouncement are both murky and manifold. First and foremost, the fighting and violence have not stopped as the story below describes. Nor is it (or has it ever been) a simple question of Chechens versus Russians. There are a number of variables at play at the clan, local, regional and international level. Chechnya and the surrounding region will remain an area of instability for the foreseeable future. **End of FMSO Commentary.***

A Myth Came to Chechnya

Militants mark the abolishment of the regime of antiterrorist operation with the murders of Russian servicemen.

REGIME OF ANTITERRORIST OPERATION MAY RETURN TO CHECHNYA

An impudent attack at federal forces took place in Chechnya a week after abolishing the regime of the antiterrorist operation in Chechnya. Three Russian servicemen died as a result of the ambush arranged by militants. Security agencies say that, unfortunately, this is only the beginning because in the summer after appearance of vegetation, wahhabis usually grow more active and the quantity of attacks grows significantly. It is not clear how it will be possible to explain the decision to abolish the regime of antiterrorist operation after that.

On Monday, the militants arranged the biggest operation in the last few weeks. About 4 p. m. they attacked a military Ural truck from abandoned buildings not far from Bamut village. Three servicemen were killed. By the time a maneuverable group of the troops arrived the militants were gone.

The militants possibly planned this action in connection with the abolishment of the regime of antiterrorist operation. In any case, the regime of the antiterrorist operation was implemented again a few years ago in the Vedeno and Itum-Kale districts of the republic due to growing activeness of the militants. In reality, the militants did not grow more active but just kept fighting against the federal forces as they had fought before. The federal center probably needed a legal ground for placing the usual elements of antiterrorist operation like checkpoints and special operations without coordination with local authorities. Besides, a top-ranking office of Vypmel detachment died last week during a combat task.

President of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, who struggled for the abolishment of the regime of antiterrorist operation in the republic permanently said that all militants were liquidated. On the day of the regime of antiterrorist operations, Boris Gryzlov announced that " Chechnya and its capital are being built anew Grozny is a tourist destination and a peaceful life is being established."

Officers from the tenth brigade of special forces which are based in Bamut told Moskovsky Komsomolets: "What kind of peaceful life? Let journalists and officials come here and see how we live. We have daily special operations, firing and explosions. What kind of peace and tourists?! Of course, the situation here is not like the situation of the Americans are in Afghanistan, but this can be called a real guerilla war."

Source: "A Myth Came to Chechnya," *Defense and Security*, No.43, April 27, 2009.
<<http://dlib.eastview.com/>>

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Chechnya Marked the First Victory Day

17 April 2009

FMSO Commentary: *As Kremlin-appointed (and supported) strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov has been able to defeat and/or co-opt many of the other Chechen clans who were vying for positions of power. Forces loyal (albeit temporarily) to Kadyrov control most of the region. Exact numbers are unavailable, but it is estimated that there are approximately 500-1,000 Chechen fighters who have yet to lay down their arms and join Kadyrov. These fighters (or as the Russians refer to them, "bands of terrorists") will continue to destabilize the region. And they are not alone.*

Russian motives for calling an end to this operation center largely upon economics and manpower. As oil revenues have plummeted over the past year, the Russian government has found it increasingly difficult to fund this splendid little operation, particularly with the added expenses of combat pay. While Russia intends to keep about 20,000 soldiers and other armed Russian units (i.e. MVD) in and around the region, they will not be eligible to receive these extra funds if the CTO has been officially terminated. As the past has demonstrated, economic factors may prove to be key incentives among both Russian and Chechen forces to foster instability in the region.

Just as there are plenty of rifts within the forces loyal to Kadyrov, so there are plenty of divisions within the Russian forces, both in Chechnya and along the periphery. Much of the commentary from the Russian side expresses concern that with the removal of federal forces from Chechnya, the region will again fall prey to all sorts of banditry and fundamentalism. Having

built a security structure around the perceived strength of one Chechen warlord (Kadyrov), what would happen to the security of the region if he were to be eliminated?

*The political and social situation is also complicated by serious economic problems. Unemployment remains above 50% and the region's infrastructure remains mostly in ruins (though to his credit, Kadyrov has made some visible improvements in major cities). The economic factors will likely be further complicated by competing claims for oil revenues and petroleum transit fees. As Chechnya moves toward de facto independence, there will likely be increased pressure by Kadyrov to keep these oil-based revenues under his personal control. This, in turn, could be the seed of a future conflict. **End of FMSO Commentary.***

Chechnya Marked the First Victory Day

People in Chechnya took the long-awaited news about accomplishment of the anti-terrorist operation with joy and President of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov announced April 16 a holiday.

DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL SECURITY SERVICE ABOLISHED THE ORDER DECLARING CHECHNYA A ZONE OF ANTI-TERRORIST OPERATION

What will change? The regime of anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya was in effect for almost ten years between October of 1999 and 00:00 a.m. of April 16 of 2009. Serious limitations were in effect on the territory of the republic during all this time: citizens entering Chechnya and leaving it were examined meticulously, their movement in the republic was controlled,

correspondence and telephone conversations were tracked, there was no customs office and the airport of Grozny had no international flights.

Very soon the situation will change for the better: the authorities of Chechnya call for the opening of the international airport and customs office their priority tasks.

The certain timeframe for the restoration of the customs and launching of international flights is not named yet. This will possibly be done in the next few weeks.

Will there be enough forces for combating of terrorists?

The withdrawal of troops from the Chechen Republic will begin in a few days. The Interior Ministry is ready to withdraw up to 20,000 policemen and servicemen of other federal security agencies.

A source in security agencies says:

- This will mostly be applicable to the attached servicemen of the law-enforcement agencies who are sent to Chechnya on the temporary basis from various regions of Russia, as well as servicemen of the Interior Forces.

Only the 46th brigade and the 42nd division will stay in Chechnya on the permanent basis.

Vladimir Vasilyev, chair of the security council of the Duma, reported:

- There will also be armed forces in the regions neighboring Chechnya that will be ready to come to rescue if necessary.

The majority of terrorists agree that terrorism does not threaten Chechnya anymore. Information about the quantity of the militants in the mountains of Chechnya varies from 300 to 1,500. The abolishment

of the regime of anti-terrorist operation does not mean that they will not be combated. Only not the entire republic but certain territories will be zones of special operations. So it happens in Ingushetia and Dagestan that neighbor Chechnya.

How much will this cost? The abolishment of the regime of anti-terrorist operation will lead to a serious saving of money of the federal budget. To date, the main task of providing security in the republic was fulfilled by servicemen and policemen sent to Chechnya on a temporary basis. According to various sources, there were from 60,000 to 80,000 of them in Chechnya. All of them received travel allowances. Henceforth, the quantity of troops from other regions will be reduced by a few hundreds of percents and order in Chechnya will be maintained by forces of the republic itself. For the budget this means saving money at a rate of 66.66-80%.

It was never said officially during all ten years of the campaign how much one day of the anti-terrorist operation cost. Various sources confirmed that the abolishment of the regime of anti-terrorist operation was partially connected with saving of budget funds.

A source in the Duma said:

- It is high time to count every ruble. It is difficult to say yet how much money will be spent on stopping the operation. It is obvious that these expenses will be smaller than expenses on its continuation.

Which price did Chechnya and entire Russia pay for the peace in this republic?

Ramzan Kadyrov said:

- We were moving towards this day for a long time. Our clan alone lost 420 people during the anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya.

Information about the losses of Russian troops during the second Chechen campaign is very contradictory. According to official information, about 4,000 servicemen died between 1999 and 2009. However, representatives of the soldiers' mothers committees union of Russia are convinced that this figure is at least 50% smaller than the real one.

Responsible secretary of the union, Valentina Melnikova, explained:

- The wounded who have died in hospitals are not included into the statistical data officially published by authorities. Servicemen missing in action, prisoners of war or killed servicemen whose bodies are not found or bodies of the servicemen "forgotten" on the battlefield due to various circumstances are automatically included into the category of "deserters" and are also not included into the data about losses.

If we speak about losses of the militants, they themselves said that approximately 3,600 wahhabis died in Chechnya between 1999 and 2004. According to the Defense Ministry, this figure is at least fivefold bigger.

Source: Anton Zaritovsky, "Chechnya Marked the First Victory Day," *Izvestiya*, April 17, 2009, p. 4, <<http://dlib.eastview.com>>

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Chechnya Move Worries Russian Press

17 April

FMSO Commentary: *Russia in the spring of 2009 does not resemble Russia of 1999, nor does it resemble that of 1989, particularly when it comes to press*

freedoms. For the past 15 years, Chechnya has served as a grim prism to measure the degree of free speech in Russia. The press played a key role in transforming public opinion against the 1994-96 stage of the war. When Russia moved in to reestablish order in the fall of 1999, one of (then) Prime Minister Putin's first directives dealt with limiting press freedom in the region. By the time Putin stepped down from the Russian presidency in May 2008, there was a virtual media vacuum around Chechnya, where only the Kremlin-approved perspective reached a national office. As the excerpts below indicate, this control over reporting something other than the official version of events in Chechnya appears to be slackening. [End of FMSO Commentary.](#)

Chechnya Move Worries Russian Press

Several Russian newspapers have expressed concern about Moscow's decision to end its "counter-terrorism operation" in Chechnya, with some fearing that a dangerous local leader has now become the sole master of the territory.

Some commentators believe that the need to trim military budgets is part of the drive to end the 10-year operation against separatist rebels in the southern republic.

Others worry that the move does not signal the end of the conflict in the republic, but rather that it may spawn new security troubles. Some wonder whether Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov will be able curb separatist aspirations within the territory.

Valeriy Yakov, editor-in-chief of *Novyye Izvestiya*:

The war in Chechnya ended yesterday. The war has knocked on many people's doors and almost everyone has been dreaming of an end to it. But when peace came, practically no-one noticed it. The main thing is that there is no shooting. And there is no war.

Anton Zaritovskiy in daily *Izvestiya*:

Most analysts agree that there is no longer a threat of terrorism in Chechnya. Only the veterans of the Chechen war are voicing concerns. *Izvestiya*'s interviewees have indirectly confirmed that the counter-terrorism operation has been ended partly in order to save budget funds. At the same time the end to the war will provide powerful impetus for the economic development of not only Chechnya, but also its neighbours.

Editorial in daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*:

One of the factors that have prompted this step is the financial situation. Owing to the counter-terrorism operation, officers and soldiers had to be paid more money, which the Defence Ministry can no longer afford because of the crisis, it seems. Separatism is used only to attract attention. The fight between local clans for budget money is another matter. The situation here is much more serious.

Daily Kommersant:

"It has to be admitted that huge money has been spent without good reason on maintaining a huge number of law-enforcement officers in Chechnya," said a source in the Russian Interior Ministry's Internal Troops headquarters.

Daily Trud:

"It was too early to end the counter-terrorism

regime in Chechnya. Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov will undoubtedly cope with terrorist incursions, but there is a big question about his ability to rein in separatist sentiments, which are likely to grow now," said Anatoliy Tsyganok, head of Russia's Centre for Military Forecasting.

Timofey Borisov in daily *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*:

The main Chechen terrorist, Doku Umarov, and his well-armed gang have not been caught yet. Bandit underground organisations in the neighbouring republics have not yet been eliminated either. Terrorist attacks continue in the Caucasus, although they happen less often now. The end to the counter-terrorism operation is not a mere formal declaration. It entails the lifting of all travel restrictions in the republic. Now anyone, even a foreigner, can come to Chechnya and they won't need any special permit, only a visa.

Vadim Rechkalov in daily *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*:

The problem is that since midnight on 16 April someone who cannot be trusted has become the sole master of Chechnya. If he was an enemy, everything would be much simpler. But Ramzan is a Hero of Russia and a personal friend of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. A dangerous friend.

Editorial in business daily *Vedomosti*:

Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov has a special relationship with Moscow. He makes an effort to show his loyalty - they make an effort to show their trust. He has had a lot of success in pacifying and rebuilding the republic. At the same time the special regime was giving Chechnya certain privileges. Many things were being

ignored because of the war. It is time now to make a new pact.

Ivan Sukhov in daily *Vremya Novostey*:

The end of the counter-terrorism operation is another stone in the pedestal of the people's love for Ramzan Kadyrov. It's true that he asked for the operation to be ended on 1 April. But he only had to wait for two weeks before it became clear: the Kremlin is still very attentive to what the Chechen president has to say.

Dmitriy Balburov in daily *Gazeta*:

The counter-terrorism operations will really end when Russia's 'soft power' wins and 'they' themselves will want to join 'us'.

Source: "Chechnya move worries Russian press" *BBC*, April 17, 2009

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Pundit Warns about Kadyrov's 'Rise'
11 April 11 (Excerpt)

FMSO Commentary: *There is an argument that posits that the dictatorial and orderly rule of one man is preferable to the anarchy of many. It stems from the eternal debate between freedom and obedience. The belief is predicated on the notion that, all things considered, most men would choose a full belly (even in a prison) over genuine freedom. This has been the not-so-subtle subtext of the Kremlin endorsement of Chechen strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov. One danger in this strategy, however, is the increasing likelihood that once the "puppet" is strong enough, he will possibly turn on his former master.*

The argument of “bread over freedom” is especially appealing after periods of great social and economic instability. Rather than working with the demos, people, competing interests and working out a compromise position on matters dealing with law and justice, many men are willing to abdicate some measure of their freedom for security.

This process is on full display in Chechnya, where the Kremlin-appointed leader, Ramzan Kadyrov has promised his Russian handlers and the Chechen people that he can deliver security at the expense of some basic human rights.

*What looks good in theory, however, does not translate well into reality. Russian political commentator Yuliya Latynina has spoken about the "absolute helplessness" of the Russian authorities in Chechnya and warned about the danger of the "triumphal rise of one powerful ruler in one region" because, according to her, Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov "will never stop." **End of FMSO Commentary.***

Pundit warns about Kadyrov's 'rise' and Kremlin's 'helplessness' in Caucasus

Latynina made these comments on her regular slot, "Access Code", on the editorially independent radio station, Ekho Moskvyy, on 11 April. She was commenting on the attack on 28 March in Dubai on the life of a prominent Chechen figure - the former commander of the Vostok battalion, Sulim Yamadayev. The Dubai authorities have accused Kadyrov's cousin Adam Delimkhanov of the murder. Yamadayev was regarded as Ramzan Kadyrov's arch-enemy.

Latynina also told her listeners not to believe what they were being told by the official Russian authorities about the situation in Georgia.

North Caucasus

Latynina said: "It was not a political murder, it was a political victory. Sorry, but that is what Chechnya is like and so that is what its politics are like, and we have no other Chechnya."

"It is another matter," she continued, "that all this might end badly because we can see the absolute helplessness of the Russian authorities and against the background of this absolute helplessness (we can see) degradation and the triumphal rise of one powerful ruler in one region." "Kadyrov will never stop," she added.

"Many are saying now: give Chechnya independence... and Chechnya will fall away from Russia," Latynina continued. This will never happen, according to her, because Chechnya has "stuck like a leech" to Russia and because Kadyrov is "one of the most powerful players not just inside Chechen politics but also inside Russian politics, and one has to reckon with this".

She also said that all Russian regions had been shaken by the current economic crisis except the Caucasus, "which is calm because it lives on subsidies" from the federal centre.

"This calm is very deceptive because, for example, over the past year in Dagestan, as a result of the weakness of the presidential power, a considerable proportion of businesses and up to two-thirds of the heads of administrations have started paying (protection money) to the Wahhabis, who from being outcasts have turned into an enormous power," Latynina said.

She also said that "as soon as subsidies are cut, the Caucasus will start falling off Russia".

Source: Ekho Moskv Radio, "Pundit warns about Kadyrov's 'rise' and Kremlin's 'helplessness' in Caucasus" *BBC Monitoring*, April 11, 2009

CAUCASUS UPDATE-GEORGIA

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Russian Envoy: Don't Say We Didn't Warn You

6 May

FMSO Commentary: *Tensions continue to percolate between Russia and Georgia, and there are numerous factors involved. The primary Russia opposition revolves around Georgia's stated intent to join the NATO alliance. The flow of hydro-carbons out of the Caspian and Central Asian regions is also a matter of contention. Much of the current Kremlin leadership claims that NATO membership for Georgia would be detrimental to Russia's security.*

Russians interpret this month's NATO exercise in Georgia (though it was planned before the August 2008 conflict) as a deliberate provocation. Underlying this concern is an even greater Russian anxiety over control of fossil fuel exports from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region. Russia continues to stymie attempts for alternate, non-Russian pipeline routes from this region. The Russians interpret US and Western influence (both military and otherwise) as an attempt to limit Kremlin control over the flow of these fossil fuels. In the article below, the

Russian envoy to NATO expresses his country's frustration with this organization and hints that Russia will try to weaken unity among the various NATO members.
End of FMSO Commentary.

Russian Envoy Dmitri Rogozin on Relations with NATO

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has cancelled a visit to Brussels, scheduled for the second half of May. The reasons for calling off a minister-level meeting of the Russia-NATO Council are explained here by Dmitri Rogozin, Russia's permanent envoy at NATO.

Question: Why isn't Sergei Lavrov going to Brussels?

Dmitri Rogozin: There are two basic reasons. Firstly, there's the blatant demarche against our diplomats who are accused of "espionage." And then, of course, there is NATO's determination to hold military exercises in Georgia. The decision to expel Viktor Kochukov and Vasili Chizhov came as a complete surprise for all permanent envoys at NATO Headquarters - even the Secretary-General's inner circle. Everyone in Brussels knows these two diplomats as people with impeccable reputations. Moscow is sure to take retaliatory measures.

Question: What will Russia do, exactly? And how does it plan to continue developing relations with NATO?

Dmitri Rogozin: It's not just about the possibility of any "mirror measures" on our part. In recent months, we have been working carefully to rebuild relations - piece by piece. And we had reached the stage of preparing for a minister-level meeting, followed by considering the possibility of "unfreezing" military contacts. But now this

process has been set back by several months. This demarche by our partners contradicts the decision made at NATO's anniversary summit, where they talked of needing to "press the reset button." It also negates the efforts of many influential politicians in the West, including US President Barack Obama. My impression is that this act of provocation was ultimately aimed not only against Russia, but also against America's new leader. Clearly, NATO members aren't all of the same mind - and some of them see this turbulence, these continual volcanic eruptions, as advantageous for themselves. As we see, a plan to destabilize Moscow-Brussels relations is being implemented successfully.

Question: And what are your counterparts saying?

Dmitri Rogozin: To be honest, many envoys from the countries of Old Europe have been shocked, to put it mildly. But I don't think the countries of New Europe are strong enough to have organized something like this. The situation is indeed very strange. Moreover, NATO has a much greater interest in normalizing contacts with Russia - for reasons including its dependence on Russia for transit to Afghanistan.

Question: NATO has announced that the exercises in Georgia will go ahead despite the military rebellion. And the Georgian authorities have directly accused Russia of being involved in these events.

Dmitri Rogozin: That's not even worthy of a comment. If the Georgian president has indigestion, it's assumed that we slipped something into his food. I've long been saying that what we should send into Georgia is health workers, not troops. NATO, on the other hand - as a large and powerful organization - might have shown

some flexibility, if it heard out our arguments and cancelled the exercises. The most disappointing aspect of this is that NATO is becoming more and more unpredictable. The Alliance just can't manage to behave appropriately, in a stable and decent manner. It just can't manage to be our partner. Even though many in NATO share Russia's concerns. Our priority now is to find out who was behind this demarche. For this purpose, I have requested a meeting at the level of envoys. First, let's find out who is to blame. Then we can consider what is to be done.

Source: Ekaterina Zabrodina, "RUSSIAN ENVOY: NATO is Failing to Behave Appropriately," *Izvestiya*, May 6, 2009, p. <<http://dlib.eastview.com>>

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RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM

A New National Security Strategy

14 May 2009

FMSO Commentary: *Many claim that it is not possible to discern the strategic intent of any country by studying official documents. Indeed, this year will mark the 70th year anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that purportedly promised neutrality between the USSR and Nazi Germany. What is written and proclaimed by government leaders should not be mistaken for reality. While not as obtuse as reading tea leaves, however, these official strategy documents do shine light on what a country's leadership deems as the most serious threat. Russia recently released its new security strategy, where it explicitly states that Russians regard further NATO expansion as a direct threat.*

Moreover, the document states that the current Kremlin leadership does not agree with a unipolar (read U.S.) security system and will employ measures to undermine it.
[End of FMSO Commentary.](#)

***National Security Strategy:
Impoverishment, Separatism and
Underworld No Longer Threaten
Russia***

President Dmitry Medvedev declared a new National Security Strategy necessary in September 2008, soon after the end of the war in the end of the war in South Ossetia. Drafted in 1997 and updated in 2000, the existing concept was clearly obsolete - or so he had decided.

Fundamental threats as listed in the 2000 National Security Concept included stratification of society into a few wealthy and a vast majority of the poor, separatist trends, terrorism, imperfect governance, criminalization of social relations, and organized crime. The document also mentioned a crisis in social welfare and health care spheres.

The National Security Strategy until 2020 does not acknowledge any of these threats. "They are no longer pressing," a source in the Security Council explained. "Terrorism is on the list, as it was in the previous document, but this threat is no longer as serious as it once was. We have the National Counter-Terrorism Committee now, the counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya is over."

Yevgeny Gontmakher of the Social Policy Center (Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences) pointed out meanwhile that stratification of society was still a problem of considerable proportions

and its absence from the list of officially recognized threats was surprising. "Anyway, the crisis under way may give birth to new dangers the document does not mention - marginalization of society, increase of the so called "informal" economy..."

Crisis and its effects would be allowed for, the Security Council source promised. The new Strategy set the criteria for evaluation of the shape of national security starting with the level of unemployment, prices, and so on. "There are no precise parameters in the document for the time being. The government will define them," he added.

The list of domestic threats began with activities of foreign intelligence services in Russia and ended with corruption. According to the same source, "A great deal has been done by way of combating this evil (corruption - Vedomosti). Besides, exact place on the threat list does not really matter. Attention will be paid to all of them."

The 2000 Concept spoke of observance of the Russians' constitutional rights and freedoms, the new Strategy of safe conditions for realization of the constitutional rights. The document even recognized a new priority: promotion of Russians' interests abroad. As far as human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina is concerned, this particular premise is purely political (a corollary of recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as sovereign states).

The new Strategy mentioned energy security and suggested that the attention of the international community would be concentrated now on the reserves of the Middle East, Barents Sea shelf, and Central Asia. As for the Arctic Region, one

of the authors of the document (Aleksei Arbatov of the International Security Center of the Institute of Global Economy and International Relations) said that it was necessary to decide without delay if it was to become an arena of cooperation because a confrontation would make development of the Arctic resources a sheer impossibility.

The 2000 Concept elaborated on equal conditions for businesses and companies regardless of the form of ownership. The new Strategy merely reiterated the importance of upping competitive capacities of Russian businesses and improving efficiency of state regulation.

Yevgeny Gavrilin of Troika-Dialog said that priorities should include a low inflation allowing for equality of businesses and gradual reduction of the part played by the state in economic affairs.

Economic objectives as listed by the new document included making Russia the country with the 5th largest GDP (it is the 8th largest, these days).

The United States and NATO were recognized as the major external threats to Russia, frequently mentioned in the document as they were. Arbatov explained that it was their actions rather than anything else that posed a threat: expansion of the Alliance to the Russian borders and plans to install American ballistic missile defense system in Europe.

"Since the army is supposed to be ready to repel an aggression, NATO as the world's strongest military organization approaching the Russian borders is viewed as a challenge to military security," a Defense Ministry officer said.

The Security Council source meanwhile

objected and pointed out that the document did not regard the United States and NATO as threats. On the contrary, it identified the United States as a strategic partner in global security maintenance.

The new Strategy acknowledged the danger posed by an increase of the number of nuclear powers. It specifically mentioned Iraq and Afghanistan but failed to mention Iran. "Russia does not regard Iran and its nuclear program as a threat," Arbatov explained.

Source: Vera Kholmogorova, Natalia Portyakova "EXTERNAL THREAT: The new National Security Strategy seems to be somewhat controversial," *Vedomosti*, May 14, 2009

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New Airborne Commander

27 May

FMSO Commentary: *Restructuring continues apace in the Russian armed forces. How fast and how deep these reforms are progressing is difficult to accurately ascertain. The broad outlines are built around reducing the massive conventional structure from the Soviet-Warsaw Pact era (built on the concept of a skeletal force being filled out by massive WW II-like mobilization), into something smaller, more flexible and combat ready. If the plans are carried out, then at one end of the Russian defense spectrum will remain a modern and credible nuclear deterrent, while at the conventional end will be combat-ready, highly mobile and efficient brigades prepared to deploy on short-notice.*

Not surprisingly, these reform plans have met some stiff resistance from those most familiar with the Soviet method of war that

was predicated on massive firepower, redundancy, and numerical superiority. Much of this opposition has less to do with realistic military strategy, than with the various perks and possibilities for promotion that went along with this bloated Soviet model. There are, however, genuine concerns that the reduction of senior and mid-level officers will be carried out without first providing these officers the most important military benefit of adequate housing. There are a number of related concerns dealing with pension payments, medical care and related benefits.

The events of August 2008 revealed some of the problems with this ongoing military restructuring. The few units that were combat-ready for operations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia belonged to the airborne or special forces. Some of these elite units have also expressed concern at the proposed military reforms. Kremlin leaders may have heard some of the growing rumbling within the ranks. In a surprising personnel move, Lt. Gen. Vladimir Shamanov was recently appointed as commander of Russia's airborne troops.

There is considerable conjecture as to what prompted this decision. Shamanov is known as a "hardliner" who had spoken out against some of the proposed military reforms. He gained national fame during the recent conflict in Chechnya, where he was known for his brutal tactics and aggressiveness. After defending Colonel Budanov during the infamous kidnap/murder war-crime trial, Shamanov went into politics and served a term as governor of the Krasnoyarsk region. His political performance was rated as mediocre. Since leaving politics, he's remained affiliated with the MoD and reportedly advised or possibly even

commanded Russian units in Abkhazia in August 2008.

Some of the early analysis behind this appointment points to possible renewed intimidation of Georgia or possibly as a counterweight to the growing power and authority of Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya. As in all things Russian, there may be more convoluted or sinister motives. The appointment may reflect an attempt on the part of hardliners within the Kremlin to regain greater influence over the course of military reform and/or the general direction of Russian foreign policy. It may also be an attempt to co-opt those forces most dangerous to Kremlin interests. [End of FMSO Commentary.](#)

New Commander Outlines Future for Russian Airborne Troops

The newly-appointed commander of Russia's Airborne Troops, Lt. Gen. Vladimir Shamanov said on Wednesday his personnel remained the core of the Russian army, but modern equipment was needed. Shamanov, a Hero of Russia and commander of the 76th Airborne Division during the second Chechen War, has replaced Lt. Gen. Valery Yevtukhovich, who was discharged on May 6 after reaching the retirement age of 55.

"The Airborne troops proved during the five-day war [with Georgia] that they...remain the backbone of Russia's conventional forces," the general said at a first meeting with his staff.

However, like the Russian Ground Forces in general, the Airborne Troops are also experiencing problems with outdated hardware and weaponry, he said.

"For instance, the BMD-1, the main armored troop carrier, entered service more than 30 years ago, and the BMD-2 more than 20 years ago," Shamanov said, adding that communications and battlefield intelligence systems also needed upgrading.

The commander said the transition in Russia's Armed Forces to a brigade-level structure, which is currently being carried out as part of military reforms, would not affect the Airborne Troops as their organizational structure will remain division-based.

"The division-level structure is optimal and will remain the basis of the Airborne Troops, which have their own characteristics," Shamanov said. The central point of the current reforms is the reorganization of the military command and control system from a four-tier (military district - army - division - regiment) to a three-tier structure (military district - operational command - brigade). The general also said additional airborne units would be deployed in the Moscow and the Leningrad military districts. "At present, all military districts in Russia, except the Moscow and the Leningrad military districts, have their own air assault units. Therefore, we are planning to deploy an air assault brigade in the Moscow district, and the 3rd Airborne Regiment from the 76th Airborne Division based in Pskov to the Leningrad district," he said.

Russia's Ground Forces are deployed in six military districts: Moscow, Leningrad, North Caucasus, Urals, Siberian, and Far Eastern. The Airborne Troops are considered the most capable mobile assault forces in Russia. Various estimates put the current personnel at about 48,000 troops deployed in four divisions and a brigade.

According to Russia's military reform plans, the Airborne Troops will be fully manned with professional soldiers by 2011.

Source: RIA Novosti, May 27 2009

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An Army of One? Who Wants to Serve in the Russian Army?

6 April

FMSO Commentary: *In what has become an all too familiar refrain, Russia is again in the midst of trying to draft enough soldiers into its military, while at the same time, developing major military reforms. The result? A confused, contradictory picture and a fighting force with severe limitations.*

Despite all the rhetoric about Russia moving toward a professional, volunteer army over the past two decades, Russia continues to rely upon forced conscription to man its soldierly ranks. There are three major problems associated with drafting an adequate number of young men (women are exempt) into the military. First and foremost are the simple demographics. The total available pool of eligible young 18-year old Russian men continues to decline. These lower numbers are aggravated by the physical and mental qualities of the recruit pool. The second and third problems are related. For a certain amount of money, a young man can arrange to buy some sort of deferment. Their unwillingness to serve their country for just one year is largely predicated on the awful reputation the military enjoys with how it handles new recruits. Young men and their families are willing to pay corrupt enlistment officials thousands of dollars to avoid having to serve in this

often lawless institution. **End of FMSO Commentary.**

Conscription 2009: Mission Impossible

[Conscription plans may have to be revised.]

CENTRAL MEDICAL COMMISSION SAYS ALMOST 38% DRAFTEES CANNOT BE ENLISTED ON HEALTH GROUNDS

The plans stand for the conscription of 305,000 young Russians into the Armed Forces. The figure amounts to nearly triple what was drafted into the military service last spring. Can army enlistment and recruitment offices meet the quotas? Russia does not have that many healthy young men of conscription age, and this is the truth.

Orders are given to be carried out. As far as the military is concerned, however, no excuses are accepted. Once the order is given, it must be carried out. Media outlets report that army enlistment and recruitment offices no longer accept medical documents confirming would-be servicemen's poor state of health. The police prepared themselves to open a hunting season for whoever looks like a prospective draftee.

The mothers of soldiers are in shock. All young Russians aged 18-27 are in trouble. Only whoever has already served in the army is safe. Nothing else matters. The sick, the near bachelors or magisters, advanced students - everyone is eligible. Nobody knows or cares what the army itself will do with this motley crew.

Dismissal of officers from the Armed Forces currently under way offers no solution. Whatever is left of the officer corps after the

reduction-in-force will need subordinates to command.

Even the Central Medical Commission admits that almost 38% youths of draft-age cannot be enlisted for health reasons. Whenever doctors are unsure of the draftee's state of health, they are supposed to earmark him for an additional checkup. As matters stand, however, it is not always done. Moreover, lots of military medics are not even cleared for serving as experts. All they have to do is verify draftees' fitness for military service whether the latter are fit or not.

"They will draft absolutely everyone," Valentina Melnikova of the Union of Committees of Mothers of Soldiers said, "even the sick."

According to Melnikova, neither does the tangled wording of the law "On military duty and military service" make things any easier for students of colleges and universities. Army enlistment and recruitment offices consider absolutely every situation from their own standpoint and to their own advantage - even ones where young men must be deferred. The law is so vague that understanding what reference to what paragraph guarantees a deferment to whom is next to impossible. As a result, young men are drawn into military service without distinction.

Armed and sentenced

"Army enlistment and recruitment offices could barely keep up with their job even in the past and now... Now they are as good as decapitated," to quote Alexander Kanshin, Chairman of the Commission for the Affairs of Veterans, Servicemen, and their Families of the Public House. "It's one thing to have army enlistment and recruitment offices

commanded by officers. Give one the order and he will work round the clock. Having army enlistment and recruitment offices managed by civilians is a different matter.

They are not officers and cannot be ordered around. Besides, salaries paid at army enlistment and recruitment offices are below criticism. Some employees there are paid 4,000 or 5,000 rubles now, after the recent pay-rise! In a word, we diminish their status on the one hand and force army enlistment and recruitment offices to work harder on the other."

Kanshin suggested that the resolve to draft the impossible 305,000 young men into the Army and Navy may compel army enlistment and recruitment offices to start enlisting former prisoners. In fact, some media outlets already reported these episodes as happening. With former prisoners in the Armed Forces, the war on cruelty in the barracks will be as good as lost.

Criminalization of the army is nothing to sneer at. Stalin's labor camps were a vivid example of how a bunch of criminals forced those vastly outnumbering them masses to submit to their will.

And how can the state solve the problem then? The Defense Ministry optimistically counted on contract servicemen several years ago. Unfortunately, contract service was never properly introduced in the Russian Armed Forces.

Deputy Defense Minister General of the Army Nikolai Pankov recently promised to have 250,000 professional sergeants in the Russian army soon. "Six military colleges will start training professional sergeants on February 1, and 48 more on September 1," Pankov said.

This undertaking became another fiasco. Military colleges encountered a noticeable lack of interest in the idea and therefore a lack of volunteers for approximately the same reasons army enlistment and recruitment offices couldn't muster enough draftees - due to the low level of education and candidates' poor state of health. The beginning of sergeant training scheduled at six colleges for February 1 was postponed until September 1.

Pankov admitted before journalists on March 26 that the plans to draw 305,000 into the Armed Forces might be reduced after all.

"Even winding up with the Armed Forces under complement will be fine," Pankov said. "As long as it is healthy conscripts that we have."

Does it mean that whoever is not eligible for conscription may relax now?

Source: Mikhail Rabinovich, "Conscription 2009: Mission Impossible," *Moskovskaya Pravda*, April 6, 2009, p. 3, <http://dlib.eastview.com/>

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Military Parade: Pride and Perturbation

8 May

FMSO Commentary: *In the past ten years, Russian military observers have observed an inverse correlation between the patriotic rhetoric and the actual willingness of young men to serve their country. The Victory Day 2009 parade in Red Square was by far the grandest display of Russian military power (albeit, mostly an elaborate façade) since the collapse of the USSR. It*

remains to be seen, however, whether these official displays of patriotism will be translated into a greater willingness among young Russian men to serve in the military.
[End of FMSO Commentary.](#)

Pride and perturbation

Passing spectators gave their opinions of the Victory Day street rehearsal, how they feel about this event and why it is needed.

Denis, unemployed: Sixty-four years have passed from the moment of that great victory. And every damn year it is necessary to rehearse the parade. In these 64 times haven't they learnt how to do it? They need a week to rehearse the tanks driving down Tverskaya. That's what our brave army is busy doing. My girlfriend and I spent half an hour rehearsing how to drive a car on May 9. And those ritual ribbons. It's cynical to tie them on some Peugeot. It's better to get far away from the city.

Ilya, lawyer: The tanks. Just saw them up close. Impressive as hell! If I have to describe it all in one word, POWER would be the word - in capital letters.

Alexander, lawyer: I can't describe my feelings. Delight? Too simple. Surprise? That is only a tiny part of it. Reverent trembling? Close, but not exactly correct. Probably all of these things and I would still need to add a few more words. It needs to be felt. I stood agape and rejoiced as a child. Probably not everyone would understand my delight and share my pleasure, but as a person who couldn't serve in the army because of health problems it was very interesting to see the might of our Russian army. Who cares about a traffic jam? The victory parade and May 9 are sacred to our country.

Yekaterina, manager: I'm very embarrassed and upset by young people wearing St. George Ribbon everywhere at this parade. It's a special symbol. People shouldn't be allowed to profane it. Semi-drunk youths wear this symbol of honor in the most inconceivable of places - as laces, as bows, in trousers. The coolest, probably, is to tie on 10 ribbons at once. Is that patriotism? This is a mockery of veterans. It is as if you were stealing an award from a war hero. I don't think it is right for old men to see these ribbons on everyone. And especially in an awful condition, dirty, ragged or hanging from car antennas. As for the parade itself, I specially cancel all my plans to see it. This day is the peak of patriotism and pride among the Russian people.

Yelena, dancer: I don't understand this excess. All this money on a parade would be better given to old people, veterans. It's silly to spend millions, especially in these tough times.

Source: Elena Kirillova, "Pride and perturbation," *Moscow News*, No.17, May 08, 2009.

ARMS SALES

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Russian Advanced Air Defense to Belarus

9 April

FMSO Commentary: *Russia remains adamantly against US plans to deploy portions of an ABM system in Poland and the Czech Republic (to purportedly defend against a growing Iranian missile threat). Besides the rhetoric, however, the Russians are continuing to strengthen and improve their own air defense (and possibly ABM)*

capabilities. There are a number of other factors besides air superiority involved with the upgrading and deploying the S-400 air defense system into Belarus (i.e. employment, R&D, political leverage with President Lukashenko, etc...). There are concerns in the west that these types of advanced air defense systems could be transferred to other countries. End of FMSO Commentary

Russia plans to deliver advanced air defense missiles to Belarus

Russia will supply advanced S-400 air defense systems to Belarus under a recent agreement to create an integrated air defense network, a senior Air Force official said on Thursday.

"One of the provisions of the agreement is to upgrade the network. It must be equipped with the most advanced weaponry," first deputy Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Vadim Volkovitsky said.

The S-400 Triumf (SA-21 Growler) is designed to intercept and destroy airborne targets at a distance of up to 400 kilometers (250 miles), twice the range of the U.S. MIM-104 Patriot, and 2 1/2 times that of the S-300PMU-2.

The system is also believed to be able to destroy stealth aircraft, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles, and is effective at ranges up to 3,500 kilometers (2,200 miles) and speeds up to 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) per second.

The general did not specify the schedule for the deliveries, but said the ongoing talks on the issue would certainly bring positive results.

"We are still discussing the dates for delivery of the S-400 systems, but I am certain that it will happen as part of our efforts to develop an integrated air defense network," Volkovitsky said.

Moscow and Minsk signed an agreement in February on the joint protection of the Russia-Belarus Union State's airspace and the creation of an integrated regional air defense network. It will comprise five Air Force units, 10 anti-aircraft units, five technical service and support units and one electronic warfare unit, and will be placed under the command of a Russian or Belarusian Air Force or Air Defense Force senior commander.

Belarus has several Russian-made S-300 air defense battalions on combat duty, and has long been negotiating the purchase of advanced S-400 systems from Russia, which should be available in 2010.

Source: *RIA Novosti* April 9 2009,
<<http://rian.ru/russia/20090409/121038766.html>>

FOREIGN RELATIONS

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Will New START Talks Lead Anywhere?

15 May

FMSO Commentary: *It took a couple of decades before leaders in the US and the USSR realized that an over-abundance of nuclear weapons did not necessarily translate into greater national security. After years of negotiations, both sides agreed to limit their nuclear arsenals. Besides reducing the probability of nuclear Armageddon, these arms reduction talks*

opened dialogue in other areas of cooperation.

One key arms control treaty (START) is set to expire in December 2009. While both sides recognize the need to maintain and reduce the total number of nuclear weapons, there are a number of serious obstacles to renewing or extending this treaty. First and foremost (and whether real or imaginary), Russia feels threatened by what it increasingly perceives to be a hostile West (i.e. the plan to install elements of an ABM system in Poland and the Czech Republic). Secondly, the balance of power structure that provided the basis for earlier arms control treaties no longer exists, and much of the Russian security establishment resents the uni-polar U.S model.

Aggravating these concerns are the continued problems with reforming Russia's conventional and nuclear military forces. Finally, Russians tend to (perhaps rightly so) regard the tools of war in a more holistic sense. They will likely insist that any new arms agreement touch upon the issues of NATO enlargement, the CFE treaty and other defense-related issues.

While never stated openly, Soviet (and later, Russian) military doctrine posited that victory was indeed possible in a war gone nuclear. How much of this was mere rhetoric and how much actual military planning is impossible to discern.

Remnants of this belief, however, remain today, especially when planning for a conflict with a technologically advanced (read 'Western') opponent. Given these concerns, it is no wonder that Russia may be unwilling to further major cuts in their nuclear forces. [End of FMSO](#)

[Commentary.](#)

Russia, U.S. to Open START Talks May 19 in Moscow.

MOSCOW, May 15 (RIA Novosti) - The first round of full-format Russia-U.S. talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty will be held on May 19-21 in Moscow, a Russian Foreign Ministry official said Friday. He said they would be "the first substantive discussion" of a new treaty, not "simply an exchange of opinions."

The Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START 1), signed in 1991, makes it incumbent on Russia and the United States to reduce nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. The treaty expires on December 5 this year. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said last month that any new deal to replace START 1 must also cover delivery systems. Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed at their first meeting in London in April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

Source: *Ria Novosti*, May 15, 2009

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MISCELLANEOUS

An Unpredictable Past and Future

24 March

FMSO Commentary: *Whether grounded in myth, fact, or both, throughout history, the Russian leadership has harbored an ambiguous regard toward the countries along their western border. Some of it is envy and admiration of the better form of governance and advanced technology often found in the West; and some of it is fear of these same attributes when used for*

purposes of war. There have been times when these fears were genuine, while in others, the Kremlin leaders inflated these fears to better legitimize their hold on power.

For the past five years, the Putin government has explicitly stated that it views the possible NATO expansion into Georgia and Ukraine as direct threats to its national security. Moscow maintains that both of these countries fall into, for want of a better term, their “sphere of influence.” Though the motives behind the August 2008 war with Georgia are infinitely complex, this belief, combined with their traditional wariness of the West, provided the backdrop to this conflict.

Employing military force is not always the best way to persuade others to submit. The current Kremlin leadership considers the pro-Western/NATO among some Ukrainian leaders as misguided and potentially dangerous. As part of the battle to win the hearts and minds of the Ukrainian people (30% of which are ethnic Russians), the Kremlin is increasingly becoming more sophisticated. Consider the release of the new Russian-funded movie “Taras Bulba,” based on a story by Nikolai Gogol. Not only is Ukraine portrayed as the soul and integral part of Russia, but predictably, the enemy (in this case, the Poles) is from the West. [End of FMSO Commentary](#)

An Unpredictable Past and Future

On Sunday, Russia's "Vesti Nedeli" television program dedicated a segment to the film “Taras Bulba.” This recent movie was based on Nikolai Gogol's novella of the same name, a classic work of 19th-century Russian literature with ethnic Ukrainian

origins. The film's director, Vladimir Bortko, a Russian citizen with a Ukrainian surname, said in an interview, "Gogol's story is dedicated to the common history of the Russian people." But Bogdan Stupka, a Ukrainian who played the film's leading role, disagreed. "Gogol wrote about the history of the Ukrainian people," he said. "And the word 'Russian' in Ukrainian has a different meaning than in Russian."

Also on Sunday, Patriarch Kirill chimed in with his take on history. He proposed introducing a national holiday on June 12 commemorating the birthday of Alexander Nevsky, the 13th-century Grand Prince of Novgorod. According to the results of "The Name of Russia" 2008 Internet survey, Nevsky received the most votes as the figure who best symbolizes Russia. During his lifetime, Nevsky was probably no more than a regional figure, but most modern Russians know of Nevsky from Sergei Eisenstein's famous film about him, which was made almost 70 years ago and is still shown periodically on television. The story behind the making of that Soviet-era film is truly bizarre. The film portrayed Nevsky's victory over the Teutons and was made on Stalin's order in 1938, just when the Soviet Union was trying to reach an agreement with Britain and France in their joint struggle against Hitler. Authorities banned the film after the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact with Germany in 1939. They then resumed screenings of the film after the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union in 1941. The Russian Orthodox Church reveres Nevsky for having resisted Catholic expansion and canonized him for the feat.

It is strange that on the same day an actor points out the subtleties of the Ukrainian translation of the original Russian text, while the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox

Church lobbies for Nevsky - a favorite of Stalin - as a symbol for Russia because of his anti-Catholic achievements.

Source: Alexei Pankin, "An Unpredictable Past and Future," *The Moscow Times*, 24 March 2009. <<http://dlib.eastview.com>.>

By another twist of fate, on that same day I was with a prominent historian who told me how historians from the Commonwealth of Independent States are attempting to formulate a common approach to the histories of the former Soviet republics. He said the historians, who all grew up and received their educations in the same country, the Soviet Union, gather with pleasure at conferences and freely admit to each other that the work they do often bears a closer resemblance to state-sponsored propaganda than true academic research.

All of the former Soviet republics, with their current borders, are new creations, products of the national policies of Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev. The historians in those countries are faced with the task of creating national mythologies.

My acquaintance told me that after admissions of this sort, the historians enjoy sitting around a banquet table together and raising a toast to the friendship of all peoples and against politics in general. For some reason, that made me wonder if Bortko and Stupka were the same: Having given their politically correct statements to the press, they probably went off to have a drink together.

During perestroika, Russians loved to repeat the joke that the Soviet Union is a country with an unpredictable past. Now the past has become even more unpredictable than ever.

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