

# Russia's Military Reforms

## Victory after Twenty Years of Failure?

Marcel de Haas

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## Abbreviations

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BMD	Ballistic Missile Defence
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CST	Collective Security Treaty
Dep.	Deputy
DWP	Defence White Paper
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gen.	General
GPV	State Programme of Armaments ( <i>Gosudarstvennaya Programma razvitiya Vooruzheniy</i> )
GS	General Staff
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
MIC	Military Industrial Complex
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OSK	Joint Strategic Command ( <i>operativno-strategicheskoye komandovanie</i> )
PGMs	Precision-guided munitions
R&D	Research and development
RF	Russian Federation
RVSN	Strategic Missile Forces ( <i>Raketnyye Voyska Strategicheskogo Naznacheniya</i> )
SCRF	Security Council of the Russian Federation

SV Ground Forces (*Sukhoputnyye Voyska*)  
UAV Unmanned aerial vehicle  
VMF Naval Forces (*Voyenno-Morskoy Flot*)  
VPVO Air Defence Forces (*Voyska Protivovozdushnoy Oborony*)  
VVS Air Forces (*Voyenno-Vozdushnyye Sily*)

# Introduction

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This work describes twenty years of Russian military restructuring. Since its foundation after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian Federation (RF) has experienced numerous (attempts at) military reforms. Until the restructuring, which was initiated by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in 2008, the previous modernization plans had, to a large extent, been in vain. In the 1990s, during Boris Yeltsin's presidency, military reforms had mainly focused on troop reductions and changes in the format and number of services, and in the first decade of this century, under Vladimir Putin's presidency, the minimalist approach to military restructuring of the previous decade was continued. The only crucial exception was that Putin financially prepared the way for a huge rearmament. Although the Russian–Georgian conflict of August 2008 resulted in a victory for Moscow, it also demonstrated the status of decay of the Russian Armed Forces. Realizing that these shortcomings prevented military power from being a useful tool in Russia's security policy, soon after this conflict President Medvedev announced huge military reforms. The reforms, which were to be implemented by 2020, consisted of two parts: rearmament; and restructuring of the organization and manpower of the forces. Other than those of his predecessors, Medvedev's modernization plans brought about a watershed with the past: a radical change from the traditional large-scale conflict-orientated mobilization army to fully filled, sophisticated, equipped and well-trained permanent combat-ready forces of (Western-style) brigade size, ready for regional power projection.

This paper should be regarded as an addition to two excellent recent works on Russian military reforms by Rod Thornton and Roger McDermott (2011, see Bibliography). Their works may be considered as comprehensive studies on this topic. Since it is not worthwhile to duplicate what others have already written, this paper aims to enlighten some specific aspects that Thornton and McDermott only dealt with briefly and to describe developments that have arisen since their manuscripts were closed. Thornton has used sources up to August 2010 and McDermott up to April 2011. This paper can thus be regarded as a useful addition to the all-inclusive books of McDermott and Thornton. In doing so, the paper will first pay thorough attention to the military reform plans of Medvedev's predecessors, Yeltsin and Putin. Furthermore, this paper will provide a more detailed picture of the present State Programme of Armaments (GPV-2020), the fundament of Russia's arms modernization towards 2020. An attempt will then be made to compare the envisaged 'new outlook' of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces in the year 2020 with the strength and composition of the defence forces at the start of the current military reforms in 2008. Finally, the paper will describe the latest reform developments, which have occurred since publication of the GPV-2020 in February 2011. The direction for analysis and research focus of this work is the following: What will Russia's Armed Forces look like in 2020? What are the chances that military reforms will this time be carried out successfully? If the modernization and restructuring of the Russian Armed Forces are (partly) fruitful, does this have any consequences for military build-up and operations of the West, and NATO in particular?

## Yeltsin's Military Policy (1991–1999)

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After the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Russian Federation became its legal successor state. The Russian military and political leadership was initially of the opinion that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) would develop towards an organization with which Russia could maintain influence over the other former Soviet republics. In the framework of the CIS, a Collective Security Treaty (CST) was signed in May 1992 in Tashkent, thus the so-called 'Tashkent Treaty'. Just as with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), this treaty comprises a military assistance provision, which stated that aggression against one party will be considered as an attack on all parties (CSTO 1992). In 1999 the presidents of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan signed a protocol renewing the Tashkent Treaty for another five-year period. On 7 October 2002 the six members of the CST signed a charter expanding it and renaming it the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The original idea was that the CST would provide the CIS with combined armed forces at its disposal. However, it did not take long before a number of CIS states decided differently. After creating their own armed forces, they subsequently formed independent security policies. In response, Russia too formed its own RF Armed Forces and a Ministry of Defence (MoD) in spring 1992. Although Boris Yeltsin did not show much interest in the Armed Forces, he needed them more than once for his own political survival, especially in his fight against the Supreme Soviet in 1993 and during the First Chechen Conflict (1994–1996).

Russia's military organization consists of two categories: the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, belonging to the MoD; and the 'other troops' of the so-called power ministries—the departments that also have military forces at their disposal. In the 1990s, including the MoD, in total twelve departments and services had military formations at their disposal (Felgenhauer 2000; Khodarenok 2001). Dating back to the Soviet era, the MoD Armed Forces traditionally carried out *external* security: the defence of the state against foreign aggression. The power ministries' troops were meanwhile tasked with *internal* security: to protect the state against domestic threats. During the 1990s, Russia—in particular as a consequence of the Chechen conflicts—was confronted with increasingly violent internal opposition. This made the military and political leadership conclude that assigning internal security tasks to MoD forces had become inevitable (IISS 1990-2002; CFE 1992-2002).<sup>1</sup>

### ***Status of the Armed Forces***

The withdrawal of former Soviet troops from Eastern Europe—following the annulment of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—caused problems such as the relocation of units and the storage or demolition of arms and equipment. But the removal of forces back to Russia also had rigorous social-economic consequences. It brought about the resignation of professional servicemen, lack of living accommodations, as well as shortcomings in educational and medical facilities for military families that had returned to the homeland. These problems occurred at a time when Russia's economic situation was increasingly deplorable. Many of the described problems had not yet been solved at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The insufficient living and working conditions, the declined status of the military profession, and the appalling state of arms and equipment led to an exodus of professional servicemen. According to the Russian General Staff (GS), between 1991 and 2002 some 400,000 officers left the Armed Forces. In 2002 one out of ten positions for middle-management officers was vacant, as well as one out of three positions for warrant officers (Kamalov 2002; '*U ofitserov net*' 2001; Powell 2001; '*Russian Army Suffers*' 2002). The conscript component of the Armed Forces also had to cope with the harsh social-economic situation. During the 1990s, exemption from conscription, which lasted for two years, was only possible on medical grounds or because of studies. The GS publicly recognized that the actual turn-out of conscripts dropped increasingly. In 1994 27 per cent of potential recruits actually fulfilled their conscription; in 1998 this number had fallen to 17 per cent; and in 2002 only 11 per cent put on a uniform. The large number of absentees was caused by postponement for studies but also

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<sup>1</sup>) This paper only describes military reforms of the defence (MoD) forces, because of their dominating size and primary external tasking. The 'other troops' of the power ministries will hence be excluded.

by evasion, medical rejection, family affairs, imprisonment and the demographic aspect that Russia's population had reached a state of decline. In the short term none of these problems in the conscript component was likely to be solved (Rukavishnikov 2000: 163; Suleymanov 2002; Orr 2002: 1, 3). The combination of dreadful social conditions, low morale, conscripts with low levels of education and insufficient state of health, many vacancies in military posts, and lack of means (in terms of fuel, spare parts and maintenance) severely damaged the level of professionalism of Russia's military. On top of this, shortcomings in finances for training and exercises and the obsolete status of arms and equipment decreased the combat readiness of the RF Armed Forces to such a low level that—according to Chief of the General Staff (CGS), Army General Anatoly Kvashnin—it would be irreversible if radical emergency measures were not taken ('Military chief says' 2002; Dick 2000: 19).

### ***Military Reforms***

In 1992 when the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation's MoD were formed, they consisted of five services: Ground; Air; Air Defence; Naval; and Strategic Missile Forces. As a result of unremitting military reforms and reductions in the defence budget, the number of services was diminished to three in 2001: the Air Defence Forces (*Voyska Protivovozdushnoy Oborony*, VPVO) had merged with the Air Forces (*Voyenno-Vozdushnyye Sily*, VVS); and the status of the Strategic Missile Forces (*Raketnyye Voyska Strategicheskogo Naznacheniya*, RVSN) was lowered to that of an independent arm under direct command of the GS. The size of the MoD forces was reduced between 1993 and 2000. CGS Kvashnin focused on improving the combat readiness of the conventional forces and strengthening the position of the GS, at the cost of the MoD and the power ministries. With Minister of Defence (1997–2001) Igor Sergeev, Kvashnin fought a dispute on the primacy of nuclear (Sergeev's opinion) or conventional forces (Kvashnin's point of view), regarding which forces were to receive priority in the allocation of financial means. Probably because of his career in the RSVN, and hence a strong proponent of the nuclear deterrent, Minister of Defence Sergeev managed to achieve the position whereby the nuclear component—the Strategic Missile Forces—survived the cuts on defence without considerable damage. However, the conventional forces and in particular the Ground Forces (*Suchoputnyye Voyska*, SV), which were cut by two-thirds, as well as VVS, VPVO and the Naval Forces (*Voyenno-Morskoy Flot*, VMF), which lost half of their size, suffered rigorously from the cuts (see Table 1; Manilov 2000: 65–66; Malcolm 1996: 266, 320, 326; IISS 1991–1992: 31; 1992–1993: 90–1, 98; 1993–1994: 99). Although many—especially military—policy-makers aimed at restructuring the military, the outcome in the 1990s turned out to be limited and mainly focused on cuts in troop numbers, not on genuine reforms.

**Table 1: Cuts in Defence Manpower (USSR and Russia, 1990-2000)**

<b>Year (state)</b>	<b>Total strength of MoD forces</b>	<b>Strategic Missile Forces</b>	<b>Ground Forces</b>	<b>Air Forces (VVS)</b>	<b>Air Defence Forces (VPVO)</b>	<b>Navy</b>
<b>1990 (USSR)</b>	<b>3,988,000</b>	376,000	1,473,000	420,000	500,000	410,000
<b>1991 (USSR)</b>	<b>3,400,000</b>	280,000	1,400,000	420,000	475,000	450,000
<b>1992 (RF)</b>	<b>2,720,000</b>	181,000	1,400,000	300,000	356,000	320,000
<b>1993</b>	<b>2,030,000</b>	194,000	1,000,000	170,000	230,000	300,000
<b>1994</b>	<b>1,714,000</b>	167,000	780,000	170,000	205,000	295,000
<b>1995</b>	<b>1,520,000</b>	149,000	670,000	130,000	200,000	200,000
<b>1996</b>	<b>1,270,000</b>	149,000	460,000	145,000	175,000	190,000
<b>1997</b>	<b>1,240,000</b>	149,000	420,000	130,000	170,000	220,000
<b>1998</b>	<b>1,159,000</b>	149,000	420,000	210,000		180,000
<b>1999</b>	<b>1,004,000</b>	149,000	348,000	184,600		171,500
<b>2000</b>	<b>1,004,000</b>	149,000	348,000	184,600		171,500

*Sources: IISS (1990–2001); CFE (1992–2000).*

## Putin's Military Policy (2000–2008)

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By fulfilling consecutive positions such as Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF), Prime Minister and (earlier) President Vladimir Putin has clearly played a crucial role in the coordination and fine-tuning of Russia's military policy. During his two presidential terms, he conducted a resolute policy against his predecessor Yeltsin's 'divide-and-rule' strategy towards security actors. Putin fulfilled his aspiration to control RF defence and military policy by establishing a strongly centralized monopoly on security affairs, combined with a strict personal command. He was well aware of the clashes of opinion among the security organs, as had been the case throughout the 1990s. In order to prevent unilateral actions, he realized that consistent and strict supervision of these organs was essential. To accomplish this, he 'planted' individuals from his entourage—usually with a background in forces, troops or security services—in the management of security organs and other vital institutions, and used the SCRF—countering the previously dominating influence of the MoD and the General Staff (GS)—as an overall institution of security policy. Although unilateral actions by the security organs still occasionally occurred, these organs no longer had the 'freedom of movement' that they had enjoyed under Yeltsin. By frequently visiting military units—already as Premier at the start of the Second Chechen Conflict in 1999—Vladimir Putin demonstrated his interest in the RF Armed Forces as a vital instrument of Russia's security policy.

## *Status of the Armed Forces*

### *Arms and Equipment*

Much of Russia's weaponry had become obsolete, and the level of investment made in buying new hardware was too low. The number of arms and equipment becoming outdated grew faster than the number of arms and equipment that was meant to replace them. In around 2006, the share of modern military hardware was less than 20 per cent of the total, whereas the weaponry of the NATO countries' Armed Forces was more than 70 per cent modern ('Russian Forces' 2006; Rastopshin 2007). Between 2000 and 2004, the Russian Army received only fifteen new tanks from a total number of tanks of 23,000 (Myasnikov 2006). Similar numbers applied to other conventional weapon systems for ground, air and naval forces. A number of reasons caused this lack of investment in conventional arms. The first explanation was the upkeep of the military industrial complex (MIC), for the inefficient MIC created a burden on the military budget. However, for reasons of employment, the MIC had to be sustained. Second, the size of the Armed Forces—more than one million—demanded a lot of money, not only for (low-level) salaries, but also for other facilities to keep the Armed Forces going. Third, a large share of the actual investments went to the nuclear deterrent instead of conventional forces. This latter reason was a vital reason for lack of investment in conventional forces, also from a conceptual (political) point of view.

### *Personnel*

In October 2004 an announcement was made that the Armed Forces would be downsizing their personnel strength by 100,000 men before January 2005 (Solovyev 2004; Babakin and Myasnikov 2004). Optimistically, this reduction of ten per cent of overall strength would have provided the financial means for upgrading the military for modern warfare. However, the benefits of this reduction might also have been used for different (non-military) purposes. Nevertheless, the social circumstances of the military personnel continued to be deplorable. Even Minister of Defence (2001–2007) Sergei Ivanov admitted that salaries and pensions made living conditions hard and were causing suicides among the military to increase. In addition, Russia's military suffered from severe desertion by conscripts, mainly because of hazing—a traditional problem that had become public on a large scale—a shortage of qualified officers, low levels of motivation, corruption, and a lack of training, resulting in insufficient combat readiness. A shift towards modern warfare and thus to conventional, high-tech, expeditionary forces would also demand a change from the traditional large-sized conscription army to a small-sized professional

army. The period of conscription service was gradually reduced, from the traditional two years to one year of service as of 1 January 2008. Although this was a sound reform—certainly with respect to achieving a lower degree of hazing—it also demanded many more eligible young men from a Russian population that was rapidly decreasing. In March 2006 Ivanov mentioned that in 2008 the Russian military would consist of 70 per cent professional soldiers ('And Discusses the Future' 2006). That benchmark, however, was very doubtful. First, Ivanov made it clear in other statements that the total size of the Armed Forces, around one million soldiers, would not be changed—that is, there would be no radical cuts ('Defense Minister' 2006). Although military salaries were relatively low, paying such a number of professional soldiers would demand much of the defence budget, whereas a Russian conscript received only 100 roubles (US\$ 3) per month in 2006. Second, because of the Russian Army's bad reputation (for example, hazing, Caucasian conflicts and low salaries) and the declining population, the chances were not high that Ivanov would be able to find the required amount of contract soldiers.

### ***Military Reforms***

#### *State Programme of Armaments (GPV)*

The political and military elite recognized the necessity of introducing modern arms to replace the majority of obsolete equipment. However, the aforementioned ambiguity between nuclear and conventional arms was also visible in the State Programme of Armaments, *Gosudarstvennaya Programma razvitiya Vooruzheniy* (GPV). The GPV is a classified document, covering domestic arms procurement, military-related research and development (R&D), and the repair and modernization of arms and other military equipment, and describes a ten-year period, of which the first five years are in detail (IISS 2009: 214–215). Because of the difficult economic situation in the 1990s, the GPV of those years was never fulfilled. The GPV of 1996–2005 only achieved 20 per cent of its aim, because of Russia's 1998 (rouble) crisis and problems in the MIC ('*V Rossii budet prinyata*' 2009). Under President Putin, however, more attention was given to the GPV. In 2002 Putin approved the GPV-2010, which realistically emphasized that rather than buying large quantities of new equipment, the majority of the funds should be directed to extensive R&D and should invest in procurement at a later stage. Implementing this approach, funds would start to shift from R&D into procurement from 2008 onwards, with full-scale procurement resuming from 2010. In 2006 Putin approved the GPV-2015, covering the period from 2007 to 2015. The GPV-2015 stated that by 2025 the Russian Federation's Armed Forces would be fully equipped with modern weapon systems—that is, a ratio of 70 per cent modern versus 30 per cent old weapons—demanding

5.5 per cent replacement per year between 2015 and 2025. However, the actual pace of rearmament turned out to be only two per cent per year (Rastopshin 2007). The GPV-2015 was not fulfilled either, because of an incorrect distribution of financial means, as most of the finances were allocated for the second five years (*‘Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo’* 2011). Some two-thirds of the financial means of the GPV were to be allocated to the procurement of new arms. A central point in the GPV-2015 was emphasis on the nuclear deterrent (FTsP 2008). Russia’s strategic deterrent had shrunk from 1,398 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in 1991 to 430 missiles in 2008 (IISS 2009: 214). According to the GPV-2015, Russia by 2020 was to be equipped with a modern nuclear force, by acquiring *Topol-M* land-based and *Bulava* submarine-launched ICBMs, as well as a number of new strategic bombers and (nuclear) submarines equipped with the *Bulava*. Conventional procurement would entail weapons such as tanks, armoured personnel carriers, fighter aircraft, helicopters and air-defence missile systems. Apparently, the political leadership could or would not decide in which way military reforms were to go, either towards smaller, conventional, professional, high-tech, expeditionary forces—the direction in which Western armed forces had moved—or to continue with large but old-fashioned conventional forces together with modernized, nuclear, strategic-deterrent forces, to emphasize Russia’s vital status in the international arena. An example of this ambiguity in deciding the way ahead was demonstrated by Putin and Ivanov. In March 2006 Putin underlined the nuclear deterrent and corresponding investments, whereas Ivanov two months earlier had argued that greater priority should be given to high-tech conventional arms, instead of the nuclear deterrent, which—according to him—received more than 50 per cent of defence spending (*‘Russia sets’* 2006).

### *Military Restructuring*

#### *More Attention for Asymmetric Warfare?*

In October 2003 Minister of Defence Sergei Ivanov published a security document called ‘The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation’, which, because of its contents, was in fact a defence white paper (DWP, or *Aktual’nyye zadachi* 2003). This DWP dealt with characteristics of current wars and armed conflicts. Analysis of conflicts from the 1970s until 2003 led the Russian military–political establishment to the following conclusions:

- A significant part of all conflicts has an asymmetrical nature. They demonstrate fierce fighting and in a number of cases result in total destruction of a state system;
- The outcome of conflicts is more and more determined in its initial phase. The party that takes the initiative has the advantage;

- Not only military forces, but also political and military command and control systems, (economic) infrastructure, as well as the population have become primary targets;
- Information and electronic warfare nowadays have a great impact in conflicts;
- The use of airborne, air-mobile and special forces has increased;
- Unified command and control, joint warfare and thorough cooperation between ground and air forces in particular has become essential;
- A prominent role in modern warfare, as demonstrated in conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia (1999), Afghanistan (2002) and Iraq (2003), is taken by long-range precision-guided munitions (PGMs) in combination with airpower, once air superiority has been established;
- Massive use of tanks and infantry has to a large extent been replaced by long-range guided weapon systems and massive air raids, although the role of these conventional forces is still important after the initial stages of a conflict;
- The dominating role of airpower in modern warfare requires a well-equipped and electronic warfare-resistant anti-aircraft defence system.

Rightly, this document focused on asymmetric conflicts as being at the forefront nowadays, instead of large-scale conventional wars. Clearly, at that time analysis of recent Western-led conflicts and of Moscow's own experiences in Chechnya convinced at least parts of the Russian security elite to concentrate on irregular warfare. However, carrying out this realistic approach towards modern warfare was a concern. The observation was made that modern, specifically irregular, warfare could only be fought with sophisticated weapon systems, such as PGMs and avionics providing all-weather capability, and by improving the level of personnel training, thus requiring financial means. Reform plans so far had not aimed at fulfilling this requirement.

Although the DWP focused on asymmetric conflicts rather than large-scale conventional wars, its threat conception was not in line with this. It appropriately stated that nuclear and large-scale wars with NATO or other US-led coalitions were no longer probable armed conflicts, and that Russia expected cooperation with the United States and other industrialized countries to grow. Yet elsewhere in the 2003 DWP, this appeasing tone was put aside and replaced by an antagonistic approach, underlining that Russia demanded the anti-Russian entries be removed from NATO's military planning and political declarations. On 25 January 2006, CGS General Yuri Baluyevsky in the MoD's *Red Star* newspaper mentioned modern-day threats as organized crime, drugs and arms trafficking, illegal immigration,

extremism, separatism and terrorism (Baluyevsky 2006). However, at the same time he repeated the traditional ‘Cold War vestiges’ of threat perception, such as: the expansion of military blocs; military presence in traditional regions of Russian interest; ignoring Russia in international security politics; and attempts against the strengthening of Russia as one of the influential centres in the world. Hence, although recognized as the primary warfare for which to prepare, asymmetric threats were not emphasized as the most essential threats. This ambiguity in Russia’s threat perception—emphasis on large-scale conventional and/or nuclear warfare and, conversely, on irregular conflicts—remained.

#### *Decentralization of Military Structures*

Since the end of 2005, more and more details were made public about a change of thinking towards the organization of the RF Armed Forces. Traditionally, Russia’s military had been administratively organized in military districts, for instance those of Moscow, North Caucasus and the Far East. New Russian military thinking that a large-scale conflict was highly unlikely, as stated in the DWP, meant that centralized command and control should be changed. Aiming at decentralization, as of 2006 until 2010, the organizational structure was to be changed from military districts into interdepartmental and inter-service or joint regional operational groupings and strategic directions (Babakin 2006). In the 1990s, another attempt—(although in vain)—had already been made to restructure the military districts’ system into joint strategic commands. Because of the Chechen conflict, in the North Caucasus a joint and interdepartmental command had existed for some years already, comprising the different services of the RF Armed Forces, as well as the so-called ‘other troops’ (military formations of the other power ministries). Russia had allegedly planned to construct a second command of defence forces and internal and security troops in its Far East region (Mukhin 2005). Reform of the administrative military organization would be aimed at changing all of the military districts into joint strategic commands. Joint control and command of defence and other security forces was a justified initiative, considering that Russia had to cope in particular with internal unrest and conflicts.

#### *Conclusions on Putin’s Military Reforms*

In the 2003 DWP, Russia rightly focused on modern high-tech warfare and on asymmetric conflicts, instead of large-scale conventional wars. However, the traditional large-scale structure of the RF Armed Forces was not changed, thus obstructing the adaptation of the defence forces to modern warfare. There were no indications that Russia was moving towards a model of Western-style modern forces. According to the future plans, a large military force was to be maintained, which would largely remain as consisting of

conscripts. Russian military reforms were limited to reducing manpower and an organizational change from five (including strategic missile forces and air defence forces) into a three services structure (air, ground and naval forces). Military exercises—such as the (mainly) Russian–Chinese military manoeuvres of 2005 and 2007—demonstrated that Russia was capable of handling conventional warfare (Haas 2005; Haas 2007). However, this applied to a large extent to deploying forces in a traditional way. Moreover, there were no signs that the Russian Armed Forces were trained and equipped for wide-ranging, complex military operations abroad, as had become the core business of Western armed forces during that decade. Apart from its fifteen mechanized brigades—which were dedicated for peace-support operations, for instance together with NATO—the Russian Armed Forces were not reformed into an army that was capable of executing expeditionary tasking.

Homeland security as a task of a modern army had also become an important topic in Russian security thinking. The experience of the Chechen conflicts—and especially the many blue-on-blue (friendly fire) attacks in the first conflict from 1994–1996—had apparently convinced the leadership of Russia’s defence forces, as well as that of the ‘other troops’, that joint and well-coordinated direction of internal operations was essential. This has resulted in a joint operational command of the area around Chechnya and to the reform plan to install joint and interdepartmental regional/strategic commands. However, the corresponding decentralization of authority from the RF Armed Forces’ commands to regional commands could be detrimental to the effective use of military power. In the West, conversely, a chief of defence (staff) often has joint and centralized command over the armed forces in order to conduct (inter)national complex operations successfully.

During Putin’s presidency, Russia refrained from radically changing the structure of the Armed Forces towards one that was capable of addressing the challenges of modern warfare and current threats. Russia’s global ambitions, resulting from its endeavours to restore its superpower status, demanded the capability of power projection by highly skilled, modern- equipped, expeditionary military forces that could be deployed at short notice anywhere in the world. However, instead of conventional modernization, the nuclear deterrent received priority. At the same time, protracted conflicts in the North Caucasus—Russia’s Achilles heel—demanded armed forces that were capable of conducting asymmetric warfare against an irregular opponent. In spite of the shortcomings in adapting the military towards modern warfare, President Putin—by way of the GPV—rightly did make preparations for a large-scale rearmament in the near future.

## Medvedev's Military Policy (2008–2012)

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Around the beginning of 2008, at the end of Putin's second term as President and start of Medvedev's period in office, the Kremlin, because of the strong energy-based economy, felt powerful enough to take an assertive course in consolidating its interests, with political but if necessary also with military instruments. As the successor state of the Soviet Union, protracted influence in the former Soviet area had been one of the consistent characteristics of Russia's foreign and security policy. During the previous decade, Western actors—especially the United States, NATO and the European Union (EU)—had increasingly paid attention to the South Caucasus and to Georgia in particular. The reasons for this interest were not only political—for example, stability at the borders of the areas of Western organizations—but also energy-related, about finding alternative energy resources and routes to circumvent Russia's dominant position. The Kremlin considered the mounting Western involvement in the South Caucasus as an infringement on its sphere of influence and as an attempt to contain Russia—that is, to prevent its growing strength in the international arena. Moscow had thus consistently rejected NATO enlargement. After the Baltic states, Georgia—another former Soviet republic—would be in line to enter NATO, again bringing NATO military infrastructure closer to Russia. Georgia's membership was therefore seen as a threat to Russian national security. According to the Kremlin, Georgia itself was following a confrontational course similar to the separatist Russian Federation regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As Moscow had been distributing Russian passports among their populations for a number of years, the regions now contained Russian minorities that—as stated in Russia's security documents—would be protected, if necessary by force.

Thus, the Russo-Georgian conflict of August 2008 was part of a consistent assertive stance in Moscow's foreign and security policy, of which military power was one of the major instruments. Around the military campaign in Georgia, President Medvedev launched new security policy concepts, emphasizing Russia's return to a position of strength. However, this assertive stance in external security policy was not matched by a military apparatus that was capable of executing these political ambitions. Much of Russia's weaponry was obsolete. Although a victory for the Kremlin, the Georgian conflict clearly demonstrated shortcomings in the RF Armed Forces' capabilities. After the conflict, the Kremlin concluded that the military should be brought in line with Russia's (regained) status of important actor in the international arena. Medvedev therefore announced ambitious procurement and military reform plans.

### ***Status of the Armed Forces***

The Russian Federation's armed conflict with Georgia revealed a number of shortcomings with the RF Armed Forces. In their operations, Moscow's troops had used massive artillery and aircraft barrages instead of precision targeting, apparently for lack of these sophisticated arms. Furthermore, Russian soldiers were seen sitting on top of their armoured personnel carriers because travelling inside—because of insufficient armour—was more dangerous. Close air support for ground forces was hardly witnessed, probably for lack of means and lack of coordination between the Russian Army and Air Force. Moreover, between four and eight Russian aircraft were shot down by Georgia's air defence, which was not destroyed prior to the offensive. Russian Air Force pilots, especially those of fighters and bombers, were short of sufficient flying hours. As a result of this low level of training, but also because of a disproportional use of force instead of PGMs, much collateral damage was caused. It was also astonishing to see that the Russian military captured all of the Georgian arms and equipment that they could find to transport back to Russia, apparently to use them themselves ('Georgia War' 2008; Ivanov 2008). Russia's warfare in Georgia gave clear evidence of the fact that the units involved were either not equipped with PGMs and other high-tech weapons, or were not capable of using them properly. Furthermore, a lack of combat-ready, trained personnel was obvious. The losses of aircraft were caused by insufficient aerial reconnaissance and other intelligence-gathering. The coordination of action among the services (RF Army, Air Force and Navy) also failed. Although after the fiascos of the Chechen conflicts, conceptual approaches had been launched to increase coordination and to conduct joint warfare—in particular by creating joint-style regional military commands to replace the mainly single-service military districts—military action in the Georgian conflict was still carried out by way

of the long-established structure of command and control. Consequently, Russia's defence forces conducted old-fashioned instead of high-tech and non-contact operations in Georgia. They won the war by using the traditional Russian/Soviet concept of warfare: an overwhelming use of arms and troops ('Absence of Regional Commands' 2008; Tsyganok 2008).

### ***Military Reforms***

#### *State Programme of Armaments*

##### *GPV-2015*

The foundation of Russia's rearmament plans was the State Programme of Armaments, or *Gosudarstvennaya Programma razvitiya Vooruzheniy* (GPV). Under Putin's presidency, the GPV-2015 was developed, covering the period 2007–2015. Just before the start of the Russo-Georgian conflict, in July 2008 Premier Putin announced that the modernization plan was to be speeded up and that around 70 per cent of the defence budget was to be spent on weapons' procurement, repairing existing arms and R&D—two years ahead of the original schedule. Nevertheless, this ambition seemed to be doubtful, considering that this part of the defence budget amounted to only 30 per cent of the 2006 budget (IISS 2009: 214). A sharp reduction in the number of military units and officers was to provide the financial means to establish that the spending on sustainability of the military in 2011 would equal that of investments (procurement and R&D). By 2015 the share of investments was meant to become 70 per cent, as Putin had announced in 2008 (Smigielski 2010).

After the conflict against Georgia, President Medvedev ordered an acceleration of the modernization plans for the defence forces. Although already well known, the conflict had once more confirmed that much of the RF Armed Forces' weaponry was obsolete, which hampered successful operations. According to the GPV-2015, as of 2011–2012, the military would receive new weapon systems on a large scale. The Georgian conflict had revealed that the status of the existing arms was even worse than assumed until then, thus convincing the political and military elite that the pace of modernization should be enhanced—that is, that new weapon systems should be introduced sooner. The GPV-2015 was maintained, but the schedule for modernization was advanced. After the Russo-Georgian conflict—and in spite of its nature as purely conventional warfare—emphasis was remarkably again laid on the modernization of nuclear forces as the guarantee for Russia's national security. Prioritization of the nuclear deterrent was justified by the assumption that no state would dare to attack a nuclear power. In October 2008 the Kremlin intended to allocate extra financial means for the enhanced modernization of the military (Denisov 2008). Again, priority for

procurement of nuclear weapons—amounting to 25 per cent of the expenditure on armaments—was stressed.

However, it was already uncertain whether the MIC was able to supply the military with new arms according to the original GPV-2015 schedule, and even more so with its acceleration. In addition to inefficiency and mismanagement of the MIC, as well as its priority for arms' exports, expectations were also dimmed because of uncertainties over inflation and the corresponding costs of materials. Another reason for doubt about speedier arms' deliveries was that on 30 December 2008 the international financial crisis had already forced the Kremlin to give financial support of US\$ 1.7 billion to keep the MIC intact. Nevertheless, the policy of extra means for military modernization was continued in 2009, stressing that the GPV-2015 would not be affected by the financial crisis. Subsequently, the next State Programme of Armaments—the GPV-2020—included the condition that from 2011 to 2020 the RF government would annually allocate an extra US\$ 3.4 billion for restructuring the MIC, in order to ensure accomplishment of the GPV (Litovkin 2009a and 2009b; McDermott 2010; Herspring and McDermott 2010: 299).

#### *GPV-2020*

In February 2010 Premier Putin discussed the directions of the upcoming GPV 2011–2020 with the RF government, emphasizing the need for modern nuclear weapons, space and air defence, communications, command and control and intelligence means, and fifth generation fighters and war ships (*'Nakanune pozdno vecherom'* 2010). President Medvedev then announced in May 2010 that the total spending on armaments during the next ten years would be 13 trillion roubles (US\$ 425 billion). In September 2010 Minister of Defence (2007–present) Serdyukov stated a further increase of this ten-year budget on procurement. He mentioned 22 trillion roubles in total, of which 19 trillion were for the MoD and 3 trillion were for the other power ministries and the so-called 'other troops' (Gorenburg 2010). Subsequently, on 13 December 2010 Putin provided further details of the GPV-2020. He explained that the RF Armed Forces would receive over 1,300 pieces of weaponry. According to Putin, more than 20 trillion roubles would be earmarked for weapons' procurement. The new programme was to upgrade up to 11 per cent of military equipment annually, and would increase the share of modern weaponry to 70 per cent by 2020. An allocation of 4.7 trillion roubles (US\$ 150.7 billion)—almost one-quarter of the total budget—would go towards modernization of the Russian Navy (*'Russian Military to Receive 1,300 Types'* 2010). In his annual speech to the State Duma of 20 April 2011, Premier Putin reiterated the importance of the Russian Navy by allocating one-quarter of the GPV-2020 budget to this service (Putin 2011).

On 31 December 2010 President Medvedev signed the decree on the GPV-2020 (*‘Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo’* 2011). However, not earlier than 24 February 2011 Deputy Defence Minister Vladimir Popovkin formally launched GPV-2020, comprising a rearmament plan of 19 trillion roubles (473 billion, or US\$ 650 billion)—nearly four times as much as the GPV-2015 (5 trillion roubles). The exact amount of financial means for the GPV-2020 was apparently somewhere between 19 and 20 trillion roubles, since Minister of Defence Serdyukov and President Medvedev, respectively, used these numbers at a meeting of the Board of the MoD in March 2011 (Kremlin 2011; Serdyukov 2011). In July 2011 Popovkin announced a further increase of the allocations for GPV-2020: up to 20 trillion roubles (US\$ 656 billion) (*‘Russian State Arms’* 2011). Some 80 per cent of the funds would be spent on buying weapons and 10 per cent on scientific research (R&D)—that is, on developing new weapon systems (Zaks 2011; *‘Russia to Buy’* 2011). The massive introduction of new arms, which had already been planned in the GPV-2015, would now be carried out in the GPV-2020. Modernization was highly necessary, as only 20 per cent of the RF’s nuclear weapons were modern and merely 10 per cent of its conventional arms. Already in 2015, 30 per cent of Russian weaponry was to be modern and in 2020 Russia’s armament was to comprise 70 per cent modern weapons (*‘Nakanune pozdno vecherom’* 2010; *‘V ramkakh gosprogrammy’* 2011). To ensure that the new weaponry would be delivered, the Kremlin would allocate some 17 billion (700 billion roubles) to the MIC until 2015 (*‘Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo’* 2011; *‘Russia Plans \$650bn’* 2011). According to Popovkin, nuclear arms would once again receive first priority. After Popovkin’s statement to that extent, the primacy of nuclear rearmament was again repeated by President Medvedev and Minister of Defence Serdyukov at a meeting of the Board of the MoD on 18 March 2011, and by Premier Putin in his ‘State of the Union’ address to the Duma of 20 April 2011 (Kremlin 2011; Serdyukov 2011; Putin 2011). A full 10 per cent of the GPV-2010 arms modernization budget was to be allocated to nuclear weapons, by way of modernizing land missiles, introducing new nuclear submarines with ICBMs and upgrading strategic bombers. The second priority, according to Popovkin, would be strategic (missile) defence. President Medvedev and Premier Putin also stressed the importance of a unified air and space defence system, also in relation to the European (NATO/US) ballistic missile defence (BMD) system (Kremlin 2011; Putin 2011). Furthermore, Popovkin stated that another vital task would be allotted to the *Iskander* tactical missile systems, of which ten brigades were to be formed (*‘V ramkakh gosprogrammy’* 2011; *‘Rossiyskaya armiya zakupit’* 2011).

The GPV procurement package of 2011–2020 consisted of the following components (Zaks 2011; *‘Russia Plans \$650bn’* 2011; *‘Russia to Buy’* 2011; *‘Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo’* 2011; *‘Minoborony RF zakupit’* 2011; *‘V ramkakh gosprogrammy’* 2011; *‘Rossiyskiye voyennyye obeshchayut’* 2011;

'*Rossiyskaya armiya zakupit*' 2011; 'Russian State Arms' 2011; Gorenburg 2010; Litovkin 2011b):

- **Nuclear:** Eight strategic nuclear submarines with the new *Bulava* (RSM-56 or SS-NX-30) ballistic missile; new heavy ballistic nuclear ground missiles *Topol-M* (SS-27) and RS-24 (replacing Soviet-era SS-18 *Satan*, SS-19 *Stiletto* and SS-20 *Saber* ICBMs); upgrading the Tu-160 *Blackjack* and the T-95 *Bear* strategic bombers; construction of a new generation of long-range bombers.
- **Air Force and Air Defence:** More than 600 aircraft (including Su-34; Su-35 and MiG-35 fighters; T-50 fifth generation fighters); 1,000 helicopters (including Mi-26 *Halo* heavy transport helicopters, Mi-8 *Hip*, Mi-28 *Havoc* and Ka-52 *Alligator* attack helicopters); An-70 tactical medium-range and An-124 *Ruslan* (Condor) heavy transport aircraft; 100 pieces of the S-500 air defence system and 56 pieces of the S-400 system.
- **Navy:** Twenty conventional submarines; 100 ships (including fifteen frigates, 35 corvettes, landing ships and destroyers); four French *Mistral*-type amphibious assault helicopter carriers (two built in Russia).
- **Army:** T-90 tanks; light armoured vehicles (from the Italian firm Iveco); *Iskander* tactical ballistic missile systems (replacing the *Tochka* or SS-21 *Scarab* systems); a new multiple rocket launcher system (replacing the BM-30 *Smerch*); anti-tank missile systems; mechanized artillery; improving communication capabilities by upgrading the GLONASS satellite system and by procuring new digital communications and command and control systems; night vision equipment; and a future soldier package.

#### *Military Restructuring*

Soon after the Georgian conflict, in September 2008 President Medvedev made a first statement on the necessity of modernizing the RF Armed Forces, with regard to weapon systems as well as to organizational structures and personnel. After this first statement, a number of detailed military reform plans were to follow at a rapid pace, not only announced by President Medvedev, but also by Premier Putin, First Vice-Premier Ivanov, Defence Minister Serdyukov and CGS Makarov. The 2003 DWP had been the first Russian security document to express the need for restructuring the RF's defence forces into Western-style expeditionary forces, comprising well-equipped and well-trained (largely) professional troops with strategic air and sea-lift capacities, which could be deployed rapidly in irregular operations and far away from the motherland. However, such structural modernization of the military had not yet been undertaken under Putin.

Analysing the military reform plans that have been announced since September 2008, the following features dominate in the intended

restructuring and modernization of the military (Haas 2010: 92-95; 'Russia Announces Rearmament Plan' 2009; Felgenhauer 2010a and 2010b; Litovkin 2009c):

- Improving the combat readiness of the RF Armed Forces; all military units must become permanently combat ready;
- Replacing the six mainly ground force-orientated military districts by four joint strategic commands;
- Brigades as the standard combat unit after abolishing divisions and regiments;
- Forming an airborne brigade in each of the military districts/joint strategic commands, as a quick-reaction operational-level unit;
- Reducing the number of senior officers but increasing that of junior officers and creating a new category of professional non-commissioned officers (NCOs);
- Reduction of ministerial and headquarters staff positions;
- Preferring nuclear weapons above conventional arms, in improving combat readiness as well as in priority of procurement.

(For more details, see Annexe A: Chronology of Military Reforms since 2008).

#### *Administrative and Unit Structures*

As to the administrative command of the RF Armed Forces, it was formally announced in April 2010 that Russia's six military districts, dating from the Soviet era, would be downsized into four joint strategic commands (*operativno-strategicheskoye komandovanie*, or OSK). These four new OSKs—West, East, South and Central—were to replace the Moscow, Leningrad, Siberia, Far East, Volga-Urals and North Caucasus military districts. The OSKs would provide better command and control over the military units, not only those of the ground forces, but also of the RF Navy and Air Force, and including units of the so-called 'other troops' of the power ministries, such as internal and border-guard troops. However, for obvious reasons, the nuclear deterrent, the strategic missile troops and the space troops would remain under direct command from Moscow.

By merging military districts, four OSKs were to be formed on strategic axes: OSK West (with headquarters [HQ] in St Petersburg); OSK East (HQ in Khabarovsk); OSK Central (HQ in Yekaterinburg); and OSK South (HQ in Rostov-on-Don). OSK West was an amalgamation of the Moscow and Leningrad military districts, together with the Baltic and Northern Fleets. OSK East was to consist of the Far East military district and the eastern part of the Siberian military district as well as the Pacific Fleet. OSK Central would include the western part of the Siberian military district and the Volga-Urals military district. Finally, OSK South would comprise the North

Caucasus military district, the Black Sea and the Caspian Fleet (Khranchikhin 2010b; Litovkin 2010a; Vladykin 2010; Litovkin and Mukhin 2010; *‘Na chetyrekh vetrakh’* 2010; Khranchikhin 2010c).

The need to cope with organizational deficiencies was also applicable to the level of units of the RF Armed Forces. As for the unit structures, after the end of the Cold War, Western armed forces had deleted obsolete unit levels, such as divisions and army corps. Furthermore, they had changed their organizational structure from a considerable amount of mobilization formations to permanently ready units (filled with personnel and arms) exclusively. In deployments overseas, Western armies used much smaller, mobile and independent brigades (with around 3,000 military personnel) and battalions (around 700 military personnel) as standard units. Russian restructuring plans intended to follow similar lines of reorganization. The number of military units would be reduced from 1,890 in 2008 to 172 units in 2012, each consisting of 80 combat brigades, all permanently ready. These self-contained modular brigades would be capable of conducting operations independently of other units. The restructuring to a brigade structure was executed at a fast pace; in June 2009, 50 brigades had already been formed, and in December 2009 the full 80 combat brigades had been accomplished (*‘Brigadnomu’* 2009; Nikol’skiy 2009). Additionally, if Moscow was to apply power projection more successfully than during the Georgian conflict, rapid-reaction forces would be required, capable of conducting operations at short notice. For this purpose, airborne brigades would be formed in each military district/OSK. With regard to combat readiness, in 2008 only 20 per cent of the military units were in permanent readiness status. According to the reform plans, most largely unfilled framework units would be dissolved in favour of establishing permanently ready units. The restructuring measures dictated that in 2011 all (remaining) units were to be combat ready.

#### *Arms and Equipment*

With regard to the status of weaponry, the usual ratio in armed forces between new and obsolete weapons is 80 per cent versus 20 per cent; in the RF Armed Forces, however, this figure was 20 per cent modern versus 80 per cent outdated. To solve this shortcoming, a large-scale rearmament of the defence forces was to start in 2011 (*‘Russian Forces’* 2006; Rastopshin 2007). In December 2008 the reform plans still insisted that by 2020 the figure of modern weapons and equipment would be raised to 80–100 per cent of the total. However, in March 2009 the modernization aim was lowered to 70 per cent advanced weapons by 2020 (McDermott 2009b). It was not so much budgetary restraints as a result of the global financial crisis, but more so the inefficiency and insufficient output capability of the MIC to deliver the requested amount of modern weapons, that were the grounds for lowering the target for weapon modernization. To solve the shortcomings of its own MIC, the Kremlin started to look for the first time to the West for weapon

purchases. Deputy Defence Minister Popovkin and Premier Putin still insisted, however, that procurement would first be conducted domestically, from Russia's own MIC (Putin 2011).

Russia's interest in foreign procurement included French *Mistral* amphibious helicopter carrier ships and night visibility equipment for tanks, Israeli unmanned planes and Italian small arms and infantry vehicles. The Russian–Georgian conflict of August 2008 had demonstrated the need to increase reconnaissance and related modern means, for instance by introducing drones (Litovkin 2009b). In September 2010 the Russian and Israeli MoDs signed a military cooperation agreement, with an emphasis on the sale and training of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and on setting up a joint drone production unit in Russia ('Russia/Israel' 2010). As for the French *Mistral*, before this deal was finalized, also the Netherlands, Spain and South Korea were nominated for delivering such vessels if France was not to provide these amphibious landing ships (Brouwers 2009; Socor 2010; Felgenhauer 2010c). However, after long negotiations, France and Russia signed the *Mistral* contract in St Petersburg on 17 June 2011 (Litovkin 2011a). In addition to the *Mistral*, Moscow was also interested in buying the *Felin* future soldier package from Paris. Meanwhile, from Italy, an armoured vehicle from Iveco—to be manufactured in Russia—was the focus ('*Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo*' 2011; '*Minoborony RF zakupit*' 2011), and in July 2011 Minister of Defence Serdyukov made public that the German firm *Rheinmetall* had been contracted to deliver a high-tech combat-simulating training centre where brigades and smaller units could be trained. Serdyukov was also interested in the armoured fighting vehicle *Boxer*, which could be delivered by another German firm, Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (Litovkin 2011c). Thus, although domestic procurement was stressed in public, in reality much attention was given to buying weapons abroad, as a result of the shortcoming of Russia's own military industry. The Kremlin clearly considered the interests of the RF Armed Forces as more important than those of the Russian military industry. The Russian MIC, meanwhile, was not amused with Moscow's purchasing approaches to the West.

#### *Personnel*

In 2008 the status of the military personnel was miserable. Officers, who constituted a large part of the total military, suffered from relatively low wages and bad medical, education and housing provisions, resulting in low morale. As to salaries, lieutenants' wages were two-thirds of the average national pay. In 2011 conscripts received only US\$ 18 per month (Felgenhauer 2011). The reform plans thus also aimed to end the discrepancy of the overload of officers compared to regular soldiers and to organize a professional NCO corps. This would enhance the number of available combat troops and increase the combat readiness of the military. In 2008 about one-third to one-half of the RF Armed Forces consisted of (warrant) officers, a typical case of 'many

chiefs and too few Indians'. In December 2009 the envisaged number of officers was a reduction from 355,000 to 150,000, although this number was later revised and brought back to 220,000. The category of warrant officers—some 142,000 servicemen—was completely abolished (*'Brigadnomu'* 2009; *'Genshtab vystroil'* 2009). The personnel restructuring was to bring about realization of the following categories of military manpower—with a prolonged total strength of approximately one million: 80,000 professional soldiers; 650,000 conscript soldiers; 105,000 professional NCOs; and 220,000 (professional) officers (Yuzbashev 2009). Conversely, in March 2011 Minister of Defence Serdyukov, and in July 2011 CGS Makarov, adjusted these numbers to the following: 425,000 contract soldiers and NCOs; and 220,000 officers—making up 645,000 or 70 per cent of the total personnel strength—and, consequently, 276,500 conscript soldiers. The total strength of the RF Armed Forces would then be 921,500 (Serdyukov 2011; Gavrilov 2011). However, Makarov did not mention when this manpower status would be accomplished.

Given that until 2008 approximately one-half of the Russian military consisted of officers, many of them fulfilled positions that in Western armies were carried out by NCOs. Therefore, while cutting deep into the officer corps, the Kremlin decided to create a professional category of NCOs. Russia had never kept a professional NCO corps; until then, NCO positions were taken by conscripts. The Kremlin hence decided to install a professional NCO corps, for which six universities as of February 2010, and another 48 universities from September 2010, would start courses for NCOs where 15,000 NCOs would be trained annually, in order to accomplish a 250,000-member NCO corps in the future (*'NCOs in Russian Armed Forces'* 2009). This objective of the MoD was implemented, but as a result of similar appalling social-economic conditions such as those for the officers, the inexperience with this military category and the very limited zest for joining, the prospects of a successful build-up of a NCO corps were rather gloomy (McDermott 2009c). Forming a NCO corps was also hampered by the low quality of contract soldiers, who were intended to form the pool of this new category. Other problems were the low level of payment and an insufficient and inexperienced educational system for this category of military personnel (Herspring and McDermott 2010: 288–290). Furthermore, the MoD did not have a recruiting system that was capable of finding good contract soldiers and sergeants (Felgenhauer 2010d). In March 2011 Minister of Defence Serdyukov only referred to the intended training facilities—not the formerly announced number of 54 schools but only twenty institutions—but was not able (or willing) to mention any number of delivered NCOs (Serdyukov 2011).

Finally, to the rank and file. Traditionally, these soldiers suffered from *dedovshchina*—hazing—resulting in injuries or even death. Many potential

conscripts thus evaded the draft. Furthermore, many eligible young men were declared unfit for health reasons. These circumstances, together with the longstanding drop in population size, caused too few conscripts to be available to fill all of the open positions (McDermott 2009b). Considering the Russian Federation's demographic problems and the fact that the RF Armed Forces depended on conscripts for about half of its size, it was doubtful whether the military would ever be at full strength. A change to all-volunteer forces thus seemed inevitable. However, lack of financing and unsuccessful recruiting raised doubts about such a change, even if such an option would be acceptable for the political and military leadership.

### ***Outlook on the RF Armed Forces in 2020***

Table 2 below provides a comparison between the strength of the RF Armed Forces in 2008 (at the time of the Russo–Georgian conflict) and the envisaged situation of the so-called ‘new outlook’ of the defence forces in 2020 (after implementation of the GPV-2020 modernization plan). Analysis of the offered data leads to a number of conclusions. The deductions are based on the hypothetical situation that all of the anticipated reform and modernization plans will be carried out. However, as explained in the subsequent assessment, this is not likely to be the case. Nevertheless, this paper's conclusions for the foreseen RF Armed Forces of 2020 are as follows.

Although a little late—after some twenty years of insignificant military reforms that were mainly aimed at maintaining Soviet-style armed forces—the Kremlin has at last taken a different stance. The 2003 DWP had already made some careful suggestions for adapting the RF Armed Forces to modern-day threats—that is, irregular and expeditionary warfare instead of a large-scale conflict against NATO in Europe. Moreover, the conflicts in and around Chechnya in the 1990s, as well as the short war against Georgia in August 2008, had convinced the security elite that the RF Armed Forces' capabilities had become quite limited and too inadequate to serve as a security policy instrument for Russia's comeback as a great power. Although never stated as such, the planned restructuring and modernization of the RF Armed Forces is largely similar to what Western armed forces had implemented earlier, after the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, it makes sense to rebuild the forces from a mobilization to a permanently combat-ready type. It also makes sense to diminish the number of command levels and the different types of units. Moreover, the Kremlin in the meantime had learned from the first Chechen conflict (1994–1996) that joint (army, air force and navy) and interdepartmental (including the so-called ‘other troops’ from the power ministries) operations are nowadays inevitable. During the second Chechen conflict (1999–2001), Russia had already formed an ad-hoc joint command for this region. Replacing generally ground forces-led military

districts with joint strategic commands was a logical and justified step in that direction. Another major discrepancy was the overload of officers in the Russian Armed Forces, together with the absence of a professional NCO corps. Both matters are dealt with in the new personnel structure. An additional huge problem was the lack of military capabilities because of the large amount of obsolete weapons and equipment, resulting from decades of non-investment in procurement and R&D.

The envisaged modernization is hopeful, but the fact that priority is given to nuclear arms is disappointing. The continuous emphasis on the nuclear deterrent demonstrates that at least part of the security elite still adheres to the 'conventional' concept of large-scale warfare, contrary to the demanding irregular warfare of today. The emphasis on prolonging personnel strength of around one million is likewise related to this old thinking. Taking into account the lack of (able) conscripts and of volunteers to become contract military, and the current demand for a high-tech, professional army, sticking to the one million number is detrimental to successful reform of the military. Nevertheless, the proposed structure and contents of the RF Armed Forces for 2020 gives evidence overall of a matured understanding in Russia's leadership of the kind of forces that the Russian Federation needs in order to counter contemporary and future challenges.

**Table 2: Comparison of the RF Armed Forces: 2008 vs. 2020**

Category of Comparison	RF Armed Forces 2008	RF Armed Forces 2020	Differences
Command & control (C <sup>2</sup> ) tiers	Military Districts – armies – divisions – regiments	Joint Strategic Commands – army corps – brigades	Decrease in levels of command
Administrative organization	6 Military Districts	4 Joint Strategic Commands (OSKs)	Decrease in number of administrative organs and increase in joint control
Types of units	Regiments and divisions	Regiments and divisions converted into 80 brigades	Decrease in types of units
Combat readiness	Low: 20% of units in permanent readiness	High: all units in permanent readiness	Increase in combat readiness by 80%
Number of units	1,890	172	Decrease in number of units of more than 90%
<b>Personnel</b>			
Total number	1.2 million	921,500	Minus 278,500
Number of officers	355,000	220,000	Minus 135,500
Number of warrant officers	142,000	--	Minus 142,000
Number of contract soldiers and NCOs	80,000	425,000	Plus 345,000
Number of conscripts	423,000	276,500	Minus 146,500
<b>Arms / Equipment</b>			
Share of modern conventional arms	10%	70%	Plus 60%
Share of modern nuclear arms	20%	70%	Plus 50%

Sources: Gavrilov 2011; Felgenhauer 2011; 'Brigadnomu' 2009; 'Genshtab vystroil' 2009; Yuzbashev 2009; Zaks 2011; 'Russia Plans \$650bn' 2011; 'Russia to Buy' 2011, 'Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo' 2011; 'Minoborony RF zakupit' 2011; 'V ramkakh gosprogrammy' 2011; 'Rossiyskiye voyennyye obeshchayut' 2011; 'Rossiyskaya armiya zakupit' 2011; Khramchikhin 2010c; Haas 2010: 92–95; 'Russia Announces Rearmament Plan' 2009; Felgenhauer 2010a and 2010b; Litovkin, 2009c; Nikol'skiy 2009. See also Annexe A: Chronology of Military Reforms since 2008).

# Assessment of Russia's Future Military Power

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Military reform became inevitable for Moscow, considering the obsolete conditions of the RF Armed Forces, domestic violence in North Caucasus, China's rise as a military power and the desire for nuclear arms' parity with the United States, to underline Russia's international position. Lower staff levels and a lesser burden of command and control (by deleting armies, divisions and regiments), having more troops available for combat action (by creating a more balanced ratio of officers versus soldiers and lowering the average age), as well as concentrating on modern-equipped permanently ready and rapid-reaction units, were all intended to improve decision-taking and the usability of the military, and to provide the Kremlin with power projection capabilities in support of its foreign security policy. These were President Medvedev's main objectives in modernizing Russia's military power.

In autumn 2010, two years after the start of the military reform campaign, the situation of the RF Armed Forces had not yet considerably improved (Khranchikhin 2010a). The Russian Army had already undergone radical changes, from a mobilization to a permanently ready status, from army (corps), division and regiment to a brigade structure, and from military districts into joint strategic commands. Of course, the long-time shortcomings within the Russian Army could not easily or swiftly be solved. Technological deficiencies, such as those in communications, command and control systems and reconnaissance (for example, drones), lack of fuel, insufficient armour of

the fighting vehicles and the increasing number of obsolete arms were all still there. Moreover, in combination with the manpower cuts of officers and the reduction of obsolete equipment, as yet without replacement by a newly introduced NCO corps and sophisticated weaponry, the military's combat readiness had further deteriorated. For instance, a suicide bombing attack on a military base in Dagestan in early September 2010 demonstrated the lack of medical officers, caused by reducing the number of military medics by a factor of four.

For a number of reasons it is doubtful whether the Russian military reform plans for 2020 will be fully carried out and will be successful in enhancing the capabilities of the military. First, as described earlier in this paper in the parts on the presidential terms of Yeltsin and Putin, the RF Armed Forces have for many years been faced with military reforms that were not carried out, because of obstruction of the military leadership and lack of will within the security elite. Furthermore, down at the operational level, money often disappeared into the pockets of corrupt officers or was used inefficiently. Defence Minister Serdyukov, a former tax official, was appointed to this post by former President Putin especially to counter corruption and obstruction by the military leadership. Serdyukov faced a lot of opposition from the military leadership against his reform plans, because of the intended deep cuts in the officer corps and the central staff. Serdyukov crushed the opposition by sending generals on retirement. Additionally, he filled his department with tax inspectors in order to keep accountancy under strict control. Serdyukov thus energetically implemented a policy at the central level but nevertheless with uncertainty of implementation on the local/unit level, which could affect the aimed improvement of combat readiness.

Second, although Russia's defence budget had risen rapidly under Putin, it did not result in a considerable visible improvement of the combat readiness of the RF Armed Forces. Defence expenditures increased tenfold, from some US\$ 5 billion in 2000 to some US\$ 50 billion in 2009 (IISS 2000: 116; IISS 2009: 216; Pukhov 2007; 'The Russian Military Expenditure Budget' 2008; Felgenhauer 2008a). However, in spite of the sharp boost of the defence budget, the average annual inflation during this period was more than 10 per cent, thus lowering the effectiveness of more financial means. Although defence expenditures under Putin increased, as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) they actually went down, for instance from 4.29 per cent in 2000 to 3.9 per cent in 2007 (IISS 2009: 213). In 2009 defence spending further increased, but—because of the global financial crisis—by only 12.6 per cent instead of the foreseen 24 per cent. During the following

years the defence budget was to grow further, from 2.9 per cent of GDP in 2010 to 3.2 per cent of GDP in 2013 (Smigielski 2010).<sup>2</sup>

Third, Russia suffered heavily from the international financial crises, to an extent that the financial reserves that had been built up by oil and natural gas revenues were fainting away rapidly, although they were not fully depleted. As a result, the number of people living in poverty increased. Further raises of the defence budget could possibly cause social unrest as significant parts of the population were hit by the financial crisis. An indication of the financial problems occurred in March 2009 with the announcement that the defence budgets for 2009, 2010 and 2011 were cut by 8 per cent (Haas 2004a: 75–84; Lowe 2008; Charap and Kuchins 2008; Zarakhovitch 2008; ‘Russia/Defence’ 2009).

Fourth, although aiming to reform its military into Western-style expeditionary forces, Russia’s security elite continued to consider combat readiness and modernization of nuclear arms as its first priority, which was not consistent with the overall reform plans and could prove to be counter-productive to conventional arms’ reforms. Russian independent defence specialists also warned that the nuclear priority thwarted conventional modernization (Rastopshin 2011).

Fifth, because of the MIC’s inefficiency and its contracts for arms’ exports—meaning crucial revenues for the upkeep of the MIC—the output capability of the military industries was likely to be insufficient to deliver the requested amount of modern weapons for the RF Armed Forces, some 70 per cent by 2020. That the problems of corruption in the MIC and defence industry-related government agencies were serious was recurrently discussed in public by President Medvedev. In March 2011 he referred to this as ‘parasitism’ (Kremlin 2011). Furthermore, and in contrast with Western military modernization, the majority of the GPV-2020 procurement is an upgrade of Soviet-generation weapon systems. Hence, even if the MIC was able to deliver the requested arms, the anticipated 70 per cent modern arms of 2020 would to a large extent only be upgrades of old-fashioned weapons (Rastopshin 2011).

Sixth, regarding the status of the Armed Forces’ personnel, there are problems in decreasing the required number of officers, increasing the number of NCOs and contract soldiers, as well as maintaining the required number of conscripts. As to the (as yet) unsuccessful building of a NCO corps, in March 2011 Minister of Defence Serdyukov could do little more than to restate at a MoD Board session that NCO training received a lot of

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<sup>2</sup>) These numbers are derived from the chapter on ‘National Defence’ of Russia’s state budget. However, this is no more than 80 per cent of the MoD budget, since budget lines such as housing and military pensions are included in other chapters (Smigielski 2010).

his attention. He remained silent about the output of NCOs so far (Serdyukov 2011). All of these shortcomings in the realm of human resources made it clear that a partly filled army would not be able to conduct power projection to its full extent.

Consequently, a variety of political, financial, industrial, human resources and conceptual obstacles affect the upgrading of the military, making it uncertain whether Russia is able and willing to carry out the military reforms from top to bottom. It is hence doubtful whether Moscow will by 2020 possess fully modernized armed forces, skilled for power projection, to accomplish the political–strategic objectives of the Kremlin’s foreign security policy.

### ***Are Modernized Russian Armed Forces a Threat to the West?***

What will happen if Russia persists in carrying out the foreseen rearmament plans and other military reforms, and—in spite of all the aforementioned obstacles—is able to realize them to a large extent around 2020? To start with, it is surprising that the sale of Western-made sophisticated and offensive weapon systems to Russia does not lead to serious discussions in NATO or the EU, even though Moscow can also use these means against partners of the West, such as Georgia or Azerbaijan. Obviously, economic interests weigh heavier than those of security for most Western countries.

Furthermore, even with RF Armed Forces that are partly equipped and thus modernized by the West, this does not mean a return to a situation similar to that of the Cold War, in which the West was confronted by the Soviet Union’s threatening, strong, conventional military supremacy. Around 2020, although it will have more sophisticated RF Armed Forces at its disposal, Moscow will still to a large extent be inferior militarily to the West, both in numbers of troops as well as in quality of weapons. On the other hand, the Kremlin might then possess a capacity to launch military action regionally, which could be detrimental to Western security interests. The military capabilities that are currently planned would provide Russia with regional power projection: to act where Moscow feels its interests are threatened or where it wants to reinforce them. The Russian military and political leadership concluded that the Russian–Georgian conflict of 2008 had only become a victory for Moscow because of its superiority in numbers, because of the considerable shortcomings in the conduct of its operations and failing arms and equipment. With the anticipated build-up of the RF Armed Forces of 2020, those shortcomings will mostly be overcome, providing Russia with a military apparatus that is capable of making difficult neighbours such as Georgia toe the line, or enabling it to exercise power projection in other ways.

Additionally, the fact that one-quarter of the GPV-2020 budget is allocated to the Russian Navy—including being used to procure four *Mistral*-type amphibious assault ships—demonstrates that maritime supremacy will be at the heart of Russia's future power projection intentions. Besides Georgia, Russian military action could possibly be expected against Azerbaijan or Ukraine, if the latter returns to a pro-Western stance. The reason for this is that the Caucasus region and its surroundings are of economic (energy) and strategic importance for the West (Haas 2006). The same applies to the Arctic region, where a military build-up is already taking place between Russia and Western countries (Haas 2009). In the aforementioned regions, sea power would play a major role in any clashes, which might explain the emphasis on maritime procurement in the GPV-2020. Related to this, the Baltic states have expressed their concerns about Russia's Baltic Fleet, which will be equipped with an amphibious assault ship, even more so given the fact that since the 2008 Georgian conflict, the Baltic states are no longer so convinced of NATO's military assistance (Socor 2009).

The modernized Russian Armed Forces will consequently certainly not mean a return to the days of (Soviet) Russian military superiority over the West. However, they might become a nuisance for neighbouring countries and regions, and hence also for NATO. It is therefore not unthinkable that as a result of Russia's planned military power for 2020, collective defence will move up as a topic on the allied (NATO) agenda. To a certain extent such a development was already noticeable in NATO's New Strategic Concept of 2010. This might cause NATO's contingency plans and exercises on military assistance and conflicts against modern, regular, opposing forces to obtain a higher priority. However, let us first see whether and how Russia is able to execute its ambitious military reforms.

## Annexe A: Chronology of Military Reforms since 2008

<i>Date and Source</i>	<i>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Arms</i>
<i>11 Sep 08 President Medvedev</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing modern Armed Forces.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>The August 2008 Russian–Georgian conflict as catalyst for reforms.</li> </ul>		New weapons needed.
<i>26 Sep 08 President Medvedev</i>	<p>Five points for development of Armed Forces until 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All military units must change to become permanently combat ready.</li> <li>Improving command and control over the RF Armed Forces.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2009 defence budget: US\$ 40 bn, 20% more than in 2007.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving the system of personnel training, military education and science.</li> <li>Raising social circumstances of the military: wages, housing conditions, and everyday living.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipped with sophisticated weapons.</li> </ol> <p>By 2020 new weapon systems introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guaranteed nuclear deterrent system.</li> <li>Superiority in the air, capable of conducting high-precision strikes on land and sea targets, as well as rapidly transferring troops.</li> <li>New warships: nuclear submarine cruisers with cruise missiles and multi-purpose submarines.</li> <li>Establish an air-space defence system.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup>) The citations are mostly not derived literally from the sources, but are adapted by the author. The grouping of related entries as used here is for the purpose of clarity and does not necessarily correspond with the original documents.

<i>Date and Source</i>	<b>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Arms</b>
<i>14 Oct 08 MoD Serdyukov</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Command and control structures reformed: from military districts, armies, divisions and regiments into military districts, operational command units and brigades.</li> <li>• In each of the six military districts, an airborne brigade as a quick-reaction operational-level unit, to accomplish operations with high precision and in a matter of several hours.</li> <li>• In 2012 reduction of army units from 1,890 to 172 units.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2012 reduction from 1.2 million personnel to 1 million.</li> <li>• From 355,000 officers (30% of the manpower) to 150,000 officers (15%).</li> <li>• Reduction of ministry and headquarters and high-level command structures from 28,000 to 8,500 by 2012.</li> <li>• Number of senior officers reduced; and junior officers and NCOs increased.</li> </ul>	

<i>Date and Source</i>	<i>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Arms</i>
<p><i>19 Nov 08</i></p> <p><i>11 Dec 08</i></p> <p><i>05 Jan 09</i></p> <p><i>CGS Makarov</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concluding from the Chechen campaigns and the August 08 Caucasus conflict, regiments and divisions will be converted into brigades.</li> <li>• Now only 20% of military units in permanent readiness; in 2011 all units permanently ready.</li> <li>• Each military district with strategic command functions, controlling all local Army, Navy and Air Force units, fighting small conflicts in its zone.</li> <li>• Brigades are better balanced, organized, and efficient battlefield formations: form 80 brigades, including 40 general-purpose brigades, all permanently ready.</li> <li>• The self-contained modular brigades can fight independently of other units in preset sectors.</li> <li>• Airborne and strategic missile divisions remain.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usual ratio between new and obsolete arms is 80% to 20%; in the Russian Armed Forces it is 20% versus 80%.</li> <li>• In the next 3–5 years, equip 30% of the Armed Forces with advanced weapons and equipment.</li> <li>• By 2018–2020, raise this figure to 80–100% of the Armed Forces.</li> <li>• Brigades will use a variety of weapons and military equipment: radio–electronic warfare systems; nuclear, chemical and biological (NBC) protection units; combat-engineer and logistics-support units; and air support of attack and transport helicopters.</li> </ul>
<p><i>21 Jan 09</i></p> <p><i>Dep. MoD</i></p> <p><i>Gen. Pankov</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing a professional NCO corps.</li> <li>• Six universities from February 2010 and another 48 universities from September 2010 will start courses for NCOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intention of having 250,000 NCOs in the future</li> <li>• 15,000 NCOs trained per year</li> </ul>	

<i>Date and Source</i>	<i>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Arms</i>
<p><b>02 March 09</b> <i>Dep. PM</i> <i>Ivanov</i></p> <p><b>04 March 09</b> <i>Min. Finance</i> <i>Kudelina</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Deputy Premier Sergei Ivanov: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○No reduction in defence procurement plans, despite problems in the MIC.</li> <li>○As to military reforms, some economizing is possible, by pushing back the time-frame.</li> <li>○The new national arms programme will be adopted for the period from 2011–2020.</li> <li>○Strategic nuclear forces will be re-equipped by 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Deputy MoD for Finance and Economic Affairs Kudelina: some cuts in the overall defence budget but not damaging the reform and modernization of the Armed Forces.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Deputy Premier Sergei Ivanov: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○Order of priorities in procurement is: strategic nuclear forces; Air Force and Navy, and precision weapons for the ground forces.</li> <li>○Despite the financial crisis, modernizing over the next three years to procure more than 70 strategic missiles, 30 <i>Iskander</i> operational-tactical missile systems; 48 combat aircraft; more than 60 helicopters; six unmanned aerial vehicles; 14 ships; 300 tanks; and more than 2,000 vehicles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>17 March 09</b> <i>President</i> <i>Medvedev</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, well-trained army equipped with modern weapons is the key to the RF's defence.</li> <li>• The conflict in South Ossetia has led to certain conclusions revealing the RF's weaknesses, problems with weapons and communications.</li> </ul> <p>Despite the current financial difficulties, focus will be on five priorities/challenges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving the combat readiness of RF troops, most importantly in our strategic nuclear forces; transfer of all combat units and formations to permanent readiness.</li> <li>2. Optimizing the structure and the headcount of the Army.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Further improvement in military education, science &amp; technology.</li> <li>4. Resolving the social problems of servicemen, especially housing.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Equip RF troops with advanced weapons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large-scale rearmament as of 2011;</li> <li>• In 2020 70% new arms;</li> <li>• Russia will spend nearly US\$ 140 billion on buying arms until 2011.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<b>Date and Source</b>	<b>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Arms</b>
<b>17 March 09</b> <b>MoD</b> <b>Serdyukov</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First priority is modernizing nuclear deterrent, then conventional forces.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Now only 10% of weapons are modern.</li> <li>By 2015 up to 30% modern arms; and by 2020 up to 70% modern weapons.</li> </ul>
<b>20 March 09</b> <b>Dep.</b> CGS <b>Smirnov</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of new brigades in place by 1 July 2009;</li> <li>Entire brigade process completed by 1 Dec 2009.</li> </ul>		
<b>Different sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downsizing the number of military educational institutions from 65 to three.</li> <li>Restructuring of the (non-MoD) Railway Troops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military intelligence service reduced by more than 40%.</li> <li>Special Forces also cut by 40%.</li> <li>Military lawyers cut by 80%.</li> </ul>	
<b>May 2009</b> <b>Gen. Fisum</b> <b>Medical</b> <b>Department</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 military hospitals to be closed.</li> <li>As of 1 December 2009, thirteen central and district military hospitals left.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10,000 medical officer positions reduced.</li> <li>30% of the medical officers' posts replaced by civilians.</li> </ul>	
<b>10 July 09</b> <b>RF press</b> <b>agencies</b>			The number of main battle tanks of the Army and Navy (coastal defence) will be reduced from 23,000 to 2,000.
<b>1 December 2009</b>	Opening of a NCO training centre at the Ryazan higher airborne school.		

<b>Date and Source</b>	<b>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Arms</b>
<b>25 Dec 09</b> <b>CGS</b> <b>Makarov</b>	<p>By 1 Dec 2009 the following measures were accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All remaining military units fully filled with arms and personnel and with permanent readiness status.</li> <li>All intended 80 brigades formed.</li> <li>Joint Strategic Commands (OSKs) formed on the basis of the military districts.</li> <li>All Air Force air regiments and divisions annulled; replaced by air bases with squadrons.</li> <li>Founding of a Submarine Command with the Navy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 1 Dec 2009 the number of officers was reduced from 355,000 to 150,000; and the category of warrant officers (142,000 servicemen) was annulled.</li> <li>In 2010 one-third of all officers will receive higher wages.</li> </ul>	<p>Rearmament plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2016 the Armed Forces will have 30% modern weapons.</li> <li>In 2020 70% of the weaponry will be modern.</li> </ul>
<b>05 March 2010</b> <b>Medvedev</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensive reform of the military education system for officers and sergeants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of military cut from 1.13 to 1.00 million.</li> <li>Overall pay boost for officers.</li> <li>Free housing for officers in 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2020 the Armed Forces will have no less than 70% new weapons.</li> <li>No need to expand nuclear arsenal.</li> </ul>
<b>05 March 2010</b> <b>MoD Serdyukov</b> <b>CGS Makarov</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conscription will remain; only the Navy will become all-volunteer.</li> <li>The number of conscripts will increase, while the number of contract soldiers (<i>kontraktniki</i>) will decrease.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the total number of 355,000 officers, 65,000 were retired in 2009.</li> <li>135,000 officers must still be fired to reach the planned level of 150,000 officers.</li> </ul>	

<b>Date and Source</b>	<b>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Arms</b>
<b>24 May 2010</b> <i>Medvedev</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2015, all military units will be in a state of permanent readiness.</li> <li>70% of the defence budget must be spent on procurement in the future.</li> </ul>		By 2015 the arms of the permanent-readiness units must be 30% modern.
<b>22 Sep 2010</b>  <i>Dep. Premier Ivanov</i>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new 10-year GPV will allocate US\$ 710 bn (US\$ 613 bn for the MoD) to new weapons.</li> <li>This sum is divided into 20% for R&amp;D and 80% for procurement.</li> </ul>
<b>Sep 2010</b> <i>Medvedev</i>	The RF President signed a decree by which six military districts would be replaced by four OSKs on 1 December 2010.		
<b>Feb/Dec 2010</b> <i>Premier Putin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcements on the upcoming GPV-2011–2020.</li> <li>More than 20 trillion roubles (US\$ 640.7 billion) earmarked for weapons' procurement.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,300 pieces of weaponry.</li> <li>11% new arms annually; 70% in 2020.</li> <li>One-quarter of the GPV budget for the RF Navy.</li> </ul>
<b>24 Feb 2011</b> <i>Dep. MoD Popovkin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch of the GPV 2011–2020 State Programme of Armaments.</li> <li>Rearmament budget of 19 trillion roubles (473 or US\$ 650 bn).</li> <li>Some 80% for procurement, 10% on R&amp;D.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% of the Russian weaponry modernized by 2015; by 2020 70% modern arms.</li> <li>1<sup>st</sup> priority is nuclear weapons (10% of the GPV budget); 2<sup>nd</sup> priority is strategic (missile) defence; 3<sup>rd</sup> vital task is <i>Iskander</i> missiles.</li> </ul>

<b>Date and Source</b>	<b>Defence / Armed Forces Structure</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Arms</b>
<b>18 March 2011</b> <b>MoD Serdyukov and Medvedev</b>	Medvedev mentions five priority tasks of military reforms: 1. Defence procurement obligations; 2. Joint and combined command and control; 3. A unified air defence and space (BMD) system; 4. Border protection/defence, especially in Far East; 5. Improving the officer corps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended 220,000 officers and 425,000 contract NCOs/soldiers.</li> <li>Priority for NCO training.</li> <li>Triple wages as per January 2012.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between 19 and 20 trillion roubles for GPV-2020.</li> <li>30% modern arms by 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>20 April 2010</b> <b>Putin</b>	Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Force and air defence systems.</li> <li>One-quarter of GPV-2020 allocated to the Navy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher wages as per January 2012.</li> <li>Providing housing for officers and retired military.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of S-400 and S-500 air defence surface-to-air missile systems.</li> <li>Priority for domestic MIC procurement.</li> </ul>
<b>07 July 2011</b> <b>CGS Makarov</b>	Intended strength of 645,000 <u>professional</u> military personnel (= 70% of the total personnel).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>425,000 contract soldiers and NCOs (currently 184,000).</li> <li>220,000 officers.</li> </ul>	
<b>19 July 2011</b> <b>Dep. MoD Popovkin</b>	Further increase of the allocations for GPV-2020, up to 20 trillion roubles (US\$ 656 billion).		

Sources: Felgenhauer 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009a, 2009b, 2010d, 2010e; 'Russia to Downsize' 2008; Naumov 2008; 'Russia's General Staff Vows' 2008; 'Russian Military to be Fully Rearmed' 2008; Litovkin 2008, 2009b, 2009c; 'Medvedev Orders' 2008; Lowe 2008; Kramchik 2008; Petrov 2009; Solovyev 2009; McDermott 2009c; Kremlin 2008a, 2008b, 2009; 'Russia Announces Rearmament Plan' 2009; Herspring and McDermott 2010; 'Nakanune pozdno vecherom' 2010; Zaks 2011; 'Russia Plans \$650bn' 2011; 'Russia to Buy' 2011; 'Ministerstvo oborony pristupilo' 2011; 'Minoborony RF zakupit' 2011; 'V ramkakh gosprogrammy' 2011; 'Rossiyskiye voyennoye obeshchayut' 2011; 'Rossiyskaya armiya zakupit' 2011; 'Russian State Arms' 2011; Khramchikhin 2010b; Litovkin 2010a; Vladykin 2010; 'Na chetyrekh vetrakh' 2010; Khramchikhin 2010c; 'NCOs in Russian' 2009; Serdyukov 2011; Putin 2011; Gavrilov 2011.

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CFE	–	Conventional Forces in Europe, annual exchange of information
CSRC	–	Conflict Studies Research Centre
CSTO	–	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EDD	–	<i>Europe Diplomacy &amp; Defence</i>
EDM	–	<i>Eurasia Daily Monitor</i>
FT	–	<i>Financial Times</i>
IHT	–	<i>International Herald Tribune</i>
IISS	–	International Institute of Strategic Studies
JDW	–	<i>Jane's Defence Weekly</i>
JIR	–	<i>Jane's Intelligence Review</i>
KZ	–	<i>Krasnaya Zvezda</i>
NG	–	<i>Nezavisimaya Gazeta</i>
NVO	–	<i>Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye</i>
RFE/RL	–	<i>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty</i>
RG	–	<i>Rossiyskaya Gazeta</i>
RIAN	–	Russian Information Agency <i>Novosti</i>

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# Clingendael Paper No. 5

Russia's army has been in decay since 1991. Moscow is currently making a comeback, by way of an assertive foreign security policy that is supported by modernized and restructured armed forces. Since Russia is an important and influential security actor in and around Europe, and a nuclear competitor of the United States, it is worthwhile to analyse Russia's regaining military power and to envisage its consequences for the West.

This Clingendael Paper describes twenty years of Russian military restructuring and offers an outlook on the future stance of Moscow's military power. Previous modernization plans were to a large extent in vain. Although the Russian–Georgian conflict of August 2008 resulted in a victory for Moscow, it also demonstrated the status of decay of the Russian Armed Forces. Realizing that these shortcomings prevented military power from being a useful tool in Russia's security policy, soon after this conflict Russian President Medvedev announced huge military reforms. This restructuring, to be implemented by 2020, consists of rearming and reforming the organization and the manpower of the Russian Armed Forces. Unlike earlier restructuring, the current modernization plans to bring about a watershed: from the traditional large-scale conflict-orientated mobilization army to fully filled, sophisticated, equipped and well-trained permanently combat-ready forces, ready for regional power projection. Will the military reforms be successful this time? What will Russia's Armed Forces look like in 2020? If the restructuring of Moscow's army is fruitful, does this have any consequences for the West and NATO in particular?

Marcel de Haas is Research Associate on Russian defence policy at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in The Hague. A Lieutenant Colonel, he is lecturer in International Security Studies at the Netherlands Defence College. He is also Assistant Professor in the Conflict Studies Department of the Royal Belgium Military Academy, as well as Senior Researcher at the Russian Studies Centre of the University of Groningen. A Russian studies scholar, he holds a Ph.D. from the University of Amsterdam (2004) and a MA in Soviet Studies from Leiden University (1987). His most recent book is *Russia's Foreign Security Policy in the 21st Century: Putin, Medvedev and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2010).



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