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## Regional Aspects of Geostrategic Modality in 21st Century : Russia's Military Strategy Review

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## **REGIONAL ASPECTS OF GEOSTRATEGIC MODALITY IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: RUSSIA’S MILITARY STRATEGY REVIEW**

### ***Summary:***

*Russia’s incumbent government is seeking to prepare the country for permanent warfare conditions and aim at making its Armed Forces at constant readiness level against any foes (for instance, NATO, ISIS, etc.). Transformation of Russian military institutions and structures into level of permanent combat readiness level – creation of National Defence Centre, setting up Special Destination Forces, adoption of new Military Doctrine (December 2014), preparation military planning documents for peaceful time, etc. Russia recently created an Operational-Strategic Command HQs as independent Army Group HQs and its usage as independent Army HQ entities in autonomous regime that make possible to use nuclear strike attack even in convenient warfare operations.*

### ***Key Words:***

*Arab Spring, Military Doctrine, Military Strategy, NATO, CSTO.*

## **Introduction**

Russia is considering to re-shape its defence and security strategies. It picked up a challenge from the West and it endeavours to win the geopolitical competition. President Vladimir Putin, who personally assumed chairman person obligations on State Military Procurement Commission ordered the government to prepare change in provisions of the Military Doctrine in December of 2014<sup>1</sup>. The Military Doctrine of Russia have been changed three times – in 1993, 2000, and in 2010. By Putin’s command the doctrine, last revised in 2010, should be updated to classify the United States and other NATO countries as the "main enemy" of Russia<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Russia, the first time since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, categorizes its nuclear arsenal as a defensive

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<sup>1</sup> *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации* – „Российская Газета” федеральный выпуск No. 6570, 30 декабря 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации* – 5 февраля 2010 года - <<http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>> (01.11.2015).

measure to be used in the event of an imminent attack that threatens the country's existence. If geostrategic situation over the Russia's vital national interest areas is endangered, the Kremlin reserves the right to modify the conditions under which Russia could carry out a pre-emptive strike with the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces. The Military Doctrine is to be revamped in connection to the military threats emanated from and determined by the concrete geopolitical scenarios and developments, notably as follows:

- the Arab Spring – “Colour Revolutions” in the Maghreb and in the Middle East causing political strife and violation in these regions up to global level – “the Islamic Caliphate” threat to the international community is an evident case, including recent direct threat to Russian Federation;
- the Syrian Civil War – the conflict starting in Syria in 2010 drastically shifts all realms of contemporary geopolitics. Russia is in process to lose its military strategic assets in the region, at least to forget about two military bases in Tartus (Syria) and in Tripoli (Libya) and the spread of radical Islam (Salafi) movements from the region to all directions could really harm Russia's interests in Caucasus and Central Asia;
- the Conflict in Ukraine – certainly what is going in Ukraine leads to restoration of New Cold War confrontation. The conflict in Ukraine stirred up geostrategic struggle between NATO and pro-Russian Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – recently the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) joined into this competition to beef up the Russia's capabilities;
- consequences of Russia-Georgia War – the post-conflict situation is in pending, as evidenced by increasing military potency of the ‘South’ tactical-military command and sending reinforcements to the North and South Caucasus as well as Caspian and Black Sea Basins. The Russian incumbent authority considers the regions as crucial/key geopolitical spots to deter, for example, NATO from further expansion, Global Jihad, Migration, etc.
- Domination in Arctic Zone – In the last decade, however, thanks to a combination of accelerating climate change and a rapid increase in energy prices, it has become a key zone of strategic competition among a range of regional actors and outside powers. Russia has become heavily involved in these fledgling efforts to develop the Arctic. Russian leaders now primarily see the Arctic as a potential source of economic growth for the country, both as a strategic resource base for the future and a potential maritime trade route. Russian policy is thus pursued on two divergent tracks. The first track seeks international cooperation to ensure the development of the region's resources. This includes efforts to settle maritime border disputes and other conflicts of interest in the

region. The second track uses bellicose rhetoric to highlight Russia's sovereignty over the largest portion of the Arctic<sup>3</sup>.

### **Russia's New Military Strategy and Capability for 2015-2020**

Since December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 a new strategic operational centre for managing the Armed Forces – National Centre for Operations it has been starting to operate in Moscow. The Centre was built in 333 days and is ready to work for 24 hours regime. The President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin paid official visit in the above mentioned centre. He was chairing the session of the National Security Council which was held in the new building. Whilst meeting with high-level military officials at the Centre HQ he has outlined and presented new defence priorities for 2015-2020 period of time as well as he revealed novelties endorsed into the Military Doctrine of Russia in conjunction with the Russia's ongoing new Cold War with the USA and its European allies. In his speech he mentioned and identified two main threats from military perspective: deployment of NATO military infrastructure and installations close to the Russian borders and its enlargement to the East as well as the development of the Anti-Ballistic Defence capabilities under the aegis of the USA national program<sup>4</sup>. The Crimean Special Operation was declared as the most "successful story" and considered as pre-emptive measure to cast the above-mentioned threats. In accordance to statements by the Head of the Centre – Lt. General Mikhail Mizintsev – in 2014 the Russian Armed Forces have obtained 4000 new types of armament and 4 submarines that have reinforced steadily national military capabilities. According to Defence Minister Army General Sergey Shoigu, the national arsenal of the Armed Forces has been increased by 7% with new weaponry systems. Shoigu vows that Ministry of Defence will fully begin to utilize the home-made technologies for defence industry. The Russian political leadership set forth concrete geostrategic missions to the Armed Forces Command assigning to prepare for engagement into two low and medium intensity conflicts simultaneously and reiterated to return to pre-emptive nuclear strike principle operated by the Soviet military leadership in the Cold War period<sup>5</sup>.

It is important to stress that in December of 2014 new nuclear submarine named "Vladimir Monomakh" ("Borei" class), armed with 16 ballistic "sea-to-land" cruise missiles "BULAVA-M", joined the Naval Forces putting to sea

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<sup>3</sup> *Russia's New Military Doctrine – On Ukraine's Tail*, "The Georgian Times" #13, 17.09.2014.

<sup>4</sup> *Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly*, 4.12.2014, <<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173>> (01.11.2015).

<sup>5</sup> *A testimony by Heather Conley, Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia and the Arctic Director, Europe Program CSIS "Russian Strategy and Military Operations" before Senate Armed Services Committee*, USA Congress, 8.10.2015.

from Severodvinsk sea-port. The submarine successfully launched the experimental version of the “BULAVA-M” missile from Barents Sea to Kamchatka peninsula. The naval shipyard in Severodvinsk in 2015 will be starting to build another nuclear submarine named “Knyaz Suvorov” (“Borei” class) with the same ballistic cruise missiles on board. The new arms race running since 2010 had already brought its benefits as the arms sale of the national weapon systems increased up to 20% and reached level of \$402 billion from which about 30% was aimed for national defence purposes. The defence expenditures have increased by 30% and in 2015 the national defence budget is estimated at \$90 billion not taking into account several federal level special programs for Research and Development and Armament Technologies. Military spending in Russia increased by 8.1 percent in real terms in 2014 to \$84.5 billion. Modernization of the Russian armed forces has been a major priority since 2011, with the aim of rearming 70 percent of the armed forces with new equipment by 2020. This effort intensified in 2014 with increased deliveries of new equipment. A substantial increase in military spending – around 15 percent in real terms – to \$76 billion is budgeted in 2015. Almost all of the increase is earmarked for procurement, which is set to increase by over 60 percent in 2015 and to remain at this higher level in 2016 and 2017<sup>6</sup>. That is why the President Putin’s speech delivered at the Centre HQ was very important and considerable for modernization and updating the principles of the national military strategy. Having considered the features, it became interesting to declare new priorities of the Russia’s military strategy that implies the following:

- By 2021 completely transfer on modern armament all nuclear land-base forces and modernize strategic nuclear airlift capabilities with introduction fifth generation Air Force jets A-50 and tactical-operation jets SU-37 and MiG-35;
- Completion of creation of new strategic command HQ – Air-Space Forces ready to operate at global levels against any foes;
- Increase and reinforce Russia’s military presence at strategic geopolitical areas, notably in Arctic zone (in that regard, the Ministry of Defence plans to deploy in the area operational Air Defence system “PANTSIR-C”) and in the Caspian-Caucasus region with Black Sea maritime area. Namely for that purposes, it is envisaged to set up new regional Army Command HQ – 48<sup>th</sup> Army HQ in Derbent and creation of special Naval grouping in the Caspian Sea area. Moreover, for purposes of the operational-strategic regional Command “South” 30 entities of combat helicopters Mi-28M “Night Hunter” have been modernized and updated;

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<sup>6</sup> S. Perlo-Freeman, *Expensive Defense*, “Security Times”, Berlin, June, 2015, p. 21 <[https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MS\\_C\\_/2015/CGM\\_Wien/Security\\_Times\\_June\\_2015.pdf](https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MS_C_/2015/CGM_Wien/Security_Times_June_2015.pdf)> (01.11.2015).

- Development and modernize all capabilities of the national nuclear “Triads” (Air-Land-Sea);
- Russia will continue practice to launch and run in massive scope drills and trains and “sudden inspection” modalities to reinforce Armed Forces readiness level;
- In modern version of Military Doctrine draft emerged new definition “territorial defence” in sake for total mobilization purposes. The missions are dispatched to Governors and local regional authorities. It means that Russia is seeking to militarize its society and nation but for what purpose – it is a puzzle<sup>7</sup>.

All these factors are indicating that Russia will be reinforcing its pressure toward Georgia and by doing so, aggressive military measures are to be foreseen in nearest future.

### **Russia Reinforces Anti-NATO Military Rhetoric and Activity**

On September 26, 2013 President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko and President of Russia Vladimir Putin were observing the final phase of the army exercise West 2013 at the firing range Gozhsky, Belarus<sup>8</sup>. The Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that his country is going, in the near future, to launch a joint anti-air defence system with Armenia and Kazakhstan. Putin is said to believe that cooperation in such a format essentially increases the defence potentials of Russia and its allies, contributing to the strengthening of peace and stability in the Eurasian region. “We will expand the mutual cooperation with our partners and allies, focusing first of all on the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Commonwealth of Independent States,” he was quoted as saying<sup>9</sup>. In addition to that, the Russian president stressed that the Russian-Belarus international strategic exercises “West-2013” were held successfully in 2013 and it was turn to create regional army groupings with participation of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Moscow and Minsk signed an agreement on the joint protection of the Russia-Belarus Union State’s airspace and the creation of an integrated regional air defence network in February 2009. Moreover, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the creation of a joint regional air defence system in January 2013, and the agreement was

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<sup>7</sup> V. Maisaia, *Russia’s New Military Strategy and Capability for 2015-2020*, “The Georgian Times”#1, 01.19.2015.

<sup>8</sup> *Lukashenko, Putin observing final phase of West army exercise*, <[http://www.belarus.by/en/press-center/news/lukashenko-putin-observing-final-phase-of-west-2013-army-exercise\\_i\\_7691.html](http://www.belarus.by/en/press-center/news/lukashenko-putin-observing-final-phase-of-west-2013-army-exercise_i_7691.html)> (01.11.2015).

<sup>9</sup> *Russia to launch joint anti-air defense system with Armenia, Kazakshtan*, “Armenian News”, 19.11.2013, <<http://http://www.tert.am/en/news/2013/11/19/putin-armenia/925270>> (01.11.2015).

ratified by the State Duma for ratification and signed up by the President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin<sup>10</sup>. The agreement has created a basis for ensuring the airspace security of the two countries' border. Due to the agreement implementation, the two sides has started also to exchange secret information on air defence issues. The agreement included the supply of ten S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia to Kazakhstan pro bono in a move that strengthens common air defence between the two countries. Signing a similar agreement with Armenia was also planned, but, the system can only have the status of a unified system due to the lack of a common border between Armenia and Russia. Russia also intends to establish similar systems with Kazakhstan. The common Air Defence network reportedly comprises five Air Force units, ten air defence units, five technical service and support units, and one electronic warfare unit. It is part of the integrated air defence network of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Russia announced plans to set up regional air defence networks with members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a regional security bloc that also includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Russia is also seeking to hold on its strategic military partnership with its allied nation Belarus. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said in April of 2015 that a number of Su-27SM3 fighter jets will be put on alert duty at the Lida airbase in Belarus. Russia will also deliver four battalions of S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Belarus next year in addition to Tor-M2 air defence batteries earlier deployed in the country.

Based on above-mentioned materials, actually the Russian side is going to set up a new modern collective defence system at regional and global levels. Presumably it fences on Eurasian geopolitical identity and promotes new pattern – the Eurasian Community. The components of the system are to include three key geopolitical institutions:

- the Collective Security Treaty Organization – military alliance of the Eurasian nations and create so-called “Forward Defence” strategy. By doing so, Russia announced plans to set up regional air defence networks with members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a regional security bloc that also includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The agreement on the creation of such unified defence system was sealed back in 1995 and brings together Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine;
- the Shanghai Cooperation Organization – collective security organization including the Eurasian nations+China. The collective security ar-

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<sup>10</sup> *Russia and Kazakhstan establish Unified Missile Defense System*, <[http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/30-12-2013/126514-russia\\_kazakhstan-0/](http://english.pravda.ru/news/russia/30-12-2013/126514-russia_kazakhstan-0/)> (01.11.2015).

rangement is based on thwarting common threat – terrorism harassing all member-states and cyber-terrorism;

- the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)- the old version of the Eurasian integration version endorsed by the Russian Federation for post-Soviet nations for transition period, premature of the Eurasian common space. Georgia left the CIS due to the Russia-Georgia 2008 war-game but is/was pressed by the Kremlin to return to the area.

By and large, the common Air Defence System under the aegis of the Eurasian geopolitical entity aims to deter a possible threat perceived by the Russian Federation from the Euro-Atlantic community with its analogical Air-Defence Collective Shield. A Missile defence Feasibility Study was launched after the 2002 Prague Summit. In April 2007, NATO's European allies called for a NATO missile defence system, which would complement the American national missile defence system, to protect Europe from missile attacks and NATO's decision-making North Atlantic Council held consultations on missile defence in the first meeting raising this problem at such a senior level. During 2012 Chicago Summit NATO leaders declared that the NATO missile defence system has reached interim capability<sup>11</sup>. Interim capability means that a basic command and control capability has been tested and installed at NATO's Headquarters Allied Air Command in Ramstein, Germany, while NATO Allies provide sensors and interceptors to connect to the system<sup>12</sup>. It also means that the U.S. ships with anti-missile interceptors in the Mediterranean Sea and a Turkey-based radar system have been put under NATO command in the German base. In addition to that, the U.S. National Missile Defence intended to shield an entire country against incoming missiles, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) or other ballistic missiles. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama announced that the planned deployment of the long-range missile defence interceptors and equipment in Poland and the Czech Republic was not to go forward, and that a defence against short- and medium-range missiles using AEGIS warships would be deployed instead of the long-range distance missiles<sup>13</sup>.

In the two cases mentioned above – Eurasian and Euro-Atlantic approaches have seen realm of new wave of confrontation that has already started. Namely, this cleavage was real context and not the formal pretext for suspension of the Associate Membership acceptance to the EU from Ukraine and Armenia. The military confrontation between CSTO and NATO in deployment of

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<sup>11</sup> *Chicago Summit Declaration (2012)*, <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_87593.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87593.htm?selectedLocale=en)> (01.11.2015).

<sup>12</sup> *Ramstein Dust exercises NATO deployable command and control system*, <<http://www.airn.nato.int/page5931922/ramstein-dust-exercises-nato-deployable-command-and-control-system.aspx>> (01.11.2015).

<sup>13</sup> *Obama Abandons Missile Defense Shield In Europe*, "The Guardian", 17.09.2009.



their own anti-missile defence systems is a real story for further clash of the EU and possible Post-Soviet nation members, which has transformed into battle between Russia and EU.

### **Corporate Warriors in Russia: New Kremlin Strategy???**

In order to promote further its national geostrategic interests, the Russian authorities are seeking to introduce new mechanisms for increasing military interventionism strategy abroad. According to some sources, the Russian Parliament members and Defence Ministry representatives are working hard on elaborating a draft law on “Private Military Companies” whose main purpose is to promote the idea of legal mercenaries usage abroad in sake for the Russian national interests<sup>14</sup>. The relevant concept classified as “Top Secret” has been already worked out by the Defence Ministry and as partial novelty it was expressed in 2012 renewed “Military Doctrine” document. Using the concept, military organizations break down into three broad types of units linked to their location in the battle space: those that operate within the general theatre, those in the theatre of war, and those in the actual area of operations, that is, the tactical battlefield. The concept is a copy of the similar strategic document adopted by the U.S. Defence Department in 1999.

Hence, the Russians are seeking to keep pace with the Americans in that area of activities with annual market turnover of \$100 billion and where the Americans and British national private companies are champions. The draft is to be debated and adopted by the lower chamber of the Russian Parliament – State Council in autumn session and in rapid manner is to be taken into force due to the Syrian crisis as well as situation in Ukraine. The law draft is an additional package to already adopted by the same Parliament in 2006 law on “Para-military formations for the Russian Mergers” upon to which the national mergers, including “Rosneft”, “Gazprom”, “RAO EES”, “LuKoil”, “RENOVA” (frequently the company is operated by the Foreign Intelligence Service as its roof to perform special type secret operations) and “Transneft” are allowed to run their own para-military formations to protect their foreign assets and communications as well as provide security to their infrastructure in liable operational zones, by the way, including Georgia where are operating some companies of the Russian origin (at least, “LuKoil” and “RAO EES”).

On top of that, the mergers are given permission to establish private special services with proper technical operations capabilities and human resources to arrange business contracts with active cadres of the Russian special services, for example, FSB, GRU, Foreign Intelligence Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc. The law prescribes to arrange special contracts with ex-special servicemen working as consultants and advisors. The law on private military com-

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<sup>14</sup> A. Eeremenko, *Blackwater.ru: The Future of Russian Private Military Companies*, “The Moscow Times”, 12.11.2014.

panies is to be additional legal provision to expand Russia's geopolitical code at global level and promote further national interests whatsoever. The practice has already picked up by the China where the proper special decree was issued in 2010 on creation of the private military units separated from the governmental military formations in order to provide full-fledged security for the personnel of China's private corporations and national mergers owned by the government.

Due to the fact that the decree was implemented in 2010, in Sudan where the Chinese oil and gas state company owns and runs several energy fields there are 40000 Chinese private soldiers who are dressed in military uniforms but without any national signs. Formally, China has no military units stationing in Sudan, but in reality there are quite a lot military servicemen in the country providing full military protection of the business assets.

Regarding the Russian version of the draft it regulates the following missions and purposes that are pursuing concrete national interests of the Russian authority at time being:

- to provide physical protection and hard security to industrial infrastructure and communication network operated by the Russian mergers abroad;
- to provide training capabilities and recruitment provisions of the private ex-military servicemen who are hiring to pursuit relevant missions, including combat operations;
- to carry out psychological-information warfare strategy and tactics in range of the mission of the companies;
- to provide consulting services in a way of information-analytical activity framework in relevant operated zones at abroad;
- to perform any type of combat missions – protection of convoy, provide security of arm stockpiles, reconnaissance and surveillance, etc.
- to provide legal and political analysis and provide cyber-warfare tactics for the Russian merger-operator companies at abroad<sup>15</sup>.

As evidenced by the above-mentioned missions, The Russian authority precludes demonstrating its own direct military might and instead of that with adoption of the law Moscow will be trying to pursue its concrete geopolitical goals under covert operations, like it occurs at time being in Lugansk and Donetsk separatist regions of the South-East Ukraine. The Georgian government should take into account the fact very seriously and start to consider how the nation could secure itself from such contingencies.

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<sup>15</sup> V. Maisaia, *Corporate Warriors in Russia: A New Kremlin Strategy?*, "The Georgian Times", 10, 31.07.2014.

## Conclusion

At large, the Russian Federation tries to identify new Geostrategic Areas – as for the Caucasus Geostrategic Area (North Caucasus Military District and South Caucasus Russian Military Army Group HG, plus operated in autonomous regime 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Bases) to create so-called “Strategic-Operational Triangle” Line Modality. In order to draw up a common strife line between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Military bases in the South Caucasus – in conjunction to 102<sup>nd</sup> Military Base “linkage” with creation of independently acted Army-Operational HQ to operate very independently and its usage against concrete military foes (for example, against 9<sup>th</sup> Army Corp HQ of 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Army of Turkish Armed Forces, or against NATO South-Eastern Army Command, USA European Strategic Command, etc.), Russia will set up proper strategic defence space to promote “forward defence” strategy to cope with threats and challenges, how the Kremlin authority perceives them, from the NATO and the USA analogous strategy implementation.

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