

INTRODUCTION

Moscow's Military Power: Russia's Search for Security in an Age of Transition

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“For three decades,” Robert Legvold wrote in 1977, “Soviet power has obsessed American foreign policy. By it we have judged our own; because of it we have committed ourselves far from home and justified our commitment in terms of the menace it represents; around it we have made a world order revolve. For us, Soviet power has been the ultimate measure and the central threat, a seminal idea and a source of orientation.”¹ The hard core of Soviet power was, of course, a formidable military widely regarded for much of the Cold War as superior to the combined defense exertions of a global coalition of industrial democracies. In the Soviet era, the Western security debate was haunted by images of a Soviet military juggernaut. Soviet military power was thought by many to be capable of conquering Europe, dominating Eurasia, and besting the United States in the global competition between East and West. The Soviet Union was a superpower largely because of its ability to generate enormous military power.

The demise of the Soviet Union left behind this vast military machine, now broken into pieces and serving various newly independent masters. From the vantage point of more than a decade beyond the Cold War, we can see now that the political and economic conditions that permitted and sustained the Soviet military establishment did not survive into the post-Soviet period. Rather, a diverse collection of new and unexpectedly independent states struggled in extremely difficult circumstances

¹ Robert Legvold, “On Power: The Nature of Soviet Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 1 (October 1977), pp. 49–71 at p. 49.

to stand alone, orient themselves in the world, and fashion a security posture that provided at least some protection of their interests.

The largest inheritance from the Soviet military juggernaut remained in Moscow's hands, including (in the end) sole possession of the Soviet Union's huge nuclear weapons inventory and complex. Moscow inherited as well whatever residual superpower mind-set was left behind in the rubble of the Soviet Union. Moscow still governed the largest and most powerful state in the territories of the former Soviet Union and the only one of the newly independent states that could have any pretensions to being a great power on the global stage. The fate of Russia's military inheritance, the content of Russia's defense policy, therefore, has enormous implications not only for the security of the Russian state but also for the security order in the post-Soviet space (which encompasses much of Eurasia) and even for global security. True, Russia's power is no longer the center of international concerns, the threat of its military might no longer grips us obsessively, and the global order is no longer defined by alignment with or against Moscow. Nevertheless, Russia's military policy and power remain a major consideration in Eurasia and, in its nuclear component, retains global significance.

The overarching purpose of this volume is to assess the military that Russia now possesses. What sort of military capability has it built for itself? What policies or doctrines have shaped its defense posture? What capacities and constraints have influenced the ability of the new Russian state to generate military power? To a large extent, the answers to these questions are found in the story of the military reforms that Russia has undertaken, or failed to undertake, in the period since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The starting point for any such assessment is an understanding that Russia is literally a new state, one that occupies a very different security situation from that which confronted Moscow during the Soviet period. It is not simply the Soviet Union writ small. Russia is, in terms of population, roughly half the size of the Soviet Union. Its territory is significantly smaller. It has different borders and different neighbors, especially in the south and west. It is shorn of allies. It no longer possesses forward military deployments in the heart of Europe. Its industrial infrastructure, including its defense industrial base, is lacking major elements that are now located in other countries. And, of course, Russia has come to occupy a fundamentally different geostrategic position in the international system: it has generally friendly relations with the United States; it

is in many ways a part of, rather than a threat to, Europe; and it is primarily a regional rather than a global actor. Russia's leaders have had to attempt to fashion security policies and build military capacity that reflect these new realities.

They have also had to do so in the midst of a very difficult transition after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia has experienced political turbulence, social dislocation, and severe economic distress. Above all, Russia's prolonged economic struggles have profoundly affected its ability to preserve, sustain, and afford the military capabilities it inherited from the Soviet Union. Over the course of the 1990s, the capitol that once commanded an apparent military juggernaut witnessed the substantial melting away of much of its military power. The plunge of its economy, the inability of the state to reliably collect taxes, the rampant corruption in both its private and public sectors, all combined to deeply constrain the ability of the Russian government to field military forces. This reality can improve as Russia's domestic scene stabilizes and its economy strengthens, but it has been one of the decisive facts of Russian security policy since the 1990s.

For more than a decade, Russia's leaders have struggled with these new circumstances, seeking to devise a security policy and a defense posture that protects Russia's borders and interests and projects Russia's influence. What answers have they found? What choices have they made? What trade-offs have they confronted? What kind of military policy and posture has resulted so far and where are security trends leading it?

BEFORE AND AFTER: RUSSIA'S MILITARY INHERITANCE

The story of Russian military power inevitably begins with the organizations, concepts, forces, and equipment that Russia inherited from the Soviet Union. That inheritance emerged from a past in which Moscow's assemblage of military capability was as formidable as any in the world. Indeed, at the beginning of the 1980s, a common view in the West held that the Soviet Union had achieved military superiority. In fact, Ronald Reagan and his administration came to power in 1981 firmly believing this view and determined to do better at contesting the rise of Soviet military power. The shadow of the Soviet military produced such fear that some in the new administration assumed their posts while believing that the United States faced a national security emergency. Ironically, by the end of the 1980s, it had become clear that the Soviet Union was a wan-

ing power and the intervening Gorbachev revolution had already begun the process of shrinking and restructuring the Soviet military.² Moreover, the quality of the Soviet military machine was long subject to debate.

Without question, however, by the 1980s the USSR had fashioned a massive military instrument, with huge and steadily modernizing holdings of major categories of combat equipment and an estimated 5 million men under arms in the active duty forces. One standard source, for example, reported that the Soviet Union had 5.3 million men in the armed forces in 1985, before the Gorbachev reductions, and approximately 4 million under arms in 1991, after Gorbachev's reforms.³ Estimating Soviet defense expenditures was always a difficult and much contested exercise (and remains so even in retrospect), but most assessments of Soviet defense spending put it in the range of \$250 billion to \$300 billion in 1980s' dollars (numbers that would be much higher if adjusted for inflation and converted into 2004 dollars).⁴ Buttressing Soviet conventional capabilities, of course, was an enormous nuclear capability, including many thousands of warheads and several thousand delivery systems.

With the rapid and unexpected slide of the Soviet Union toward dissolution in 1991, this accumulation of military investments and assets became both one of the great stakes in the unfolding melodrama of disintegration and one of the great sources of concern as outsiders watched the Soviet empire crumble.⁵ How would this proud and capable military organization respond to the threat, or the fact, of disintegration? Would the military machine itself be broken apart, reflecting the political fractures that appeared as Moscow's grip on its constituent republics was lost? Would the Soviet military be content to stand aside from the politics of the moment and allow its fate to be determined by political forces beyond its control? Would the command and control of nuclear weapons remain in safe and sober hands in the event of a turbulent transition? In the latter months of 1991, questions that were worrying but hypothetical

² The evolution of the Soviet military under Mikhail Gorbachev is treated in detail in Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution: Gorbachev and Soviet Security Policy, 1985–1991* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).

³ International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance, 1992–1993* (London: Brassey's, 1992), p. 218.

⁴ See, for example, the annual IISS *Military Balances* from that period.

⁵ The most extensive account of the fate of the Soviet military during the Gorbachev period and immediately thereafter is William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

rapidly became immediate and practical challenges. The Soviet Union fell apart, dissolving into 15 independent states, and the disposition of the Soviet military became a question that could not be avoided.

Even after the Soviet Union collapsed, there was some hope (in Moscow and in the Soviet military) that a centralized joint military command could be preserved, presiding over a common military organization. The instrument of such hope was the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), created in no small measure to provide an institutional framework within which a centralized military command over a single integrated military might be workable. It soon became apparent, however, that this outcome would not be acceptable to all of the newly independent states. A number of them were insistent that national militaries must be created to reflect and to defend the newfound sovereignty of these states.

The military that Russia inherited, therefore, derived from a rapidly moving and somewhat disorganized process of breaking up the Soviet military and creating national militaries in the 15 newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The non-Russian republics generally championed the principle that they should be able to claim ownership of the forces and equipment on their territory. Moscow hoped to retain both ownership and control of such forces and to perpetuate a military presence in many of its newly independent neighbors. Indeed, it was commonly believed in Moscow that minority Russian populations in the newly independent states would need the protection of Russian forces. The first months after the collapse of the USSR were filled with acrimonious discussion among the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union about how Soviet military power was to be distributed among them.

Facilitating a solution to a problem that might have remained highly contentious was the existence of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty and NATO's strong desire to see that treaty ratified and enter force despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. Under pressure from the West to abide by the Soviet Union's arms control commitments and understanding that the United States and its allies regarded the fate of the CFE agreement as a serious test of their suitability as negotiating partners, the states of the former Soviet Union reached agreement at Tashkent on May 15, 1992, on how to allocate the Soviet allotments of the five categories of Treaty Limited Equipment (TLE) specified in the CFE agreement. Seeking to build good relations with the United States and the West, Russia grudgingly accepted an arrangement that (while

TABLE 1

Russia's Allotment of Soviet Military Equipment, 1992.

Treaty Limited Equipment	Soviet Union	Russia
Tanks	20,725	10,333
Artillery	13,938	7,719
Armored combat vehicles	29,890	16,589
Combat aircraft	6,611	4,161
Helicopters	1,481	1,035
Total TLE equipment	72,645	39,837

Note: This table is adapted from a table in Richard Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe's Military Order: The Origins and Consequences of the CFE Treaty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 150–179 and pp. 190–211.

sidestepping the underlying issue of ownership) suggested the distribution of almost half of the Soviet Union's holdings of major military equipment to the other former Soviet republics. This agreement was negotiated in haste, primarily with an eye to satisfying NATO's concerns rather than according to any coherent military scheme.⁶ As can be seen in Table 1, Russia's own allocations from the Soviet inventory would make it the largest military power in the former Soviet space, in possession of significant quantities of military equipment. But it would be a much smaller military power than the USSR, with holdings of military assets that reflected the strategic priorities and investment decisions of the Soviet Union.

The allocation of Soviet manpower was ungoverned by the CFE and Tashkent agreements and posed a much murkier picture. Many ethnic Russians served in units based in other, now independent republics. Many non-Russians served in units within Russia. Citizenship was an option for ethnic Russians in non-Russian republics, but it was uncertain how many Russian officers and soldiers would opt to remain where they were. The officer corps, heavily Russian in ethnic composition, was widely scattered geographically. It was far from clear how military manpower was to be divided up among the newly independent republics. At issue was the distribution of some 4 million people. It was

⁶ The link between CFE and the distribution of Soviet military assets is treated in detail in Richard A. Falkenrath, *Shaping Europe's Military Order: The Origins and Consequences of the CFE Treaty* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 150–179 and pp. 190–211.

certain, however, that Russia would end up with the largest share of the manpower inheritance from the Soviet Union. Indeed, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that in 1992 the active Russian forces numbered 2,720,000.⁷

While the disposition of Soviet conventional forces was gradually being determined, the world was captivated by a melodrama involving the huge Soviet nuclear arsenal.⁸ Under all circumstances, Russia would have emerged from the wreckage of the Soviet Union as a significant nuclear power. But outside the former Soviet Union, it was almost universally believed that Russia should be the only nuclear power left behind by the Soviet Union. Wider proliferation within the former Soviet Union was deemed highly undesirable, and Western diplomacy made strenuous efforts to promote the consolidation of the entire Soviet nuclear arsenal within Russia. This was no small chore, since Soviet tactical nuclear weapons were deployed throughout most of the 15 republics and Soviet strategic weapons were deployed in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, as well as Russia. Driven by worries that some newly independent states might succumb to the nuclear temptation, officials in Moscow gave high priority in 1992 and 1993 to ensuring the denuclearization of all former Soviet republics other than Russia. With the success of these efforts, Russia became the sole nuclear successor state of the former Soviet Union and retained pretensions to being a nuclear superpower even if it was a superpower in no other respect.

The military that Russia inherited, in short, reflected no reasoned military judgment, no coherent strategic design, no considered calculation of Russia's needs and interests. Rather, it was left with large shards of military capability extracted from the wreckage of the Soviet Union, the misshapen residue of a superpower that no longer existed. In both the conventional and nuclear realms, Russia's inheritance was heavily influenced by Western interests and preferences. Far from starting with a clean slate, the new

⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1992–1993*, p. 92.

⁸ For a detailed overview of this issue, see Steven E. Miller, "Western Diplomacy and the Soviet Nuclear Legacy," *Survival*, vol. 34, no. 3 (autumn 1992), pp. 3–27. The argument that Russia should be the sole nuclear successor state is fully articulated in Ashton Carter, Kurt Campbell, Steven Miller, and Charles Zraket, *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, November 1991).

Russian state commenced its existence in substantial but still only partial possession of a willful military organization designed to advance and defend the interests of an extinct state whose strategic requirements were at best only imperfectly relevant to the new country governed by Moscow. This flawed inheritance represented the raw material out of which Russia would need to fashion for itself a military instrument.

BUILDING RUSSIA'S MILITARY: IMPERATIVES FOR REFORM

There was never any reason to assume that the military Russia inherited from the Soviet Union would be suitable for its needs. On the contrary, almost everything about that military inheritance bore the mark of Soviet conditions that no longer obtained or were irrelevant in the context of a transforming and democratizing Russia. Hence, Russia faced from the beginning an urgent, but daunting, task of military reform. It was widely assumed, both within and outside Russia, that far-reaching reforms would be necessary if Russia were to create a military compatible with the interests and resources of the new Russian state. The imperative for reform derived most pressingly from several realities of the immediate post-Soviet period, realities that were partly practical, partly political, and partly strategic.

Deteriorating Forces

The practical realities for the Russian military started with the poor shape of the forces Russia inherited from the Soviet Union. As British analyst C. J. Dick has written, "The Russian army has been in decline since before it came into existence—that is to say that the Soviet Army, its foundation, was increasingly in a state of disrepair as the Gorbachev era progressed."⁹ Similarly, William Odom writes evocatively that "in a mere six years, the world's largest and arguably most powerful military melted like the spring ice in Russia's arctic rivers as it breaks up, drifts in floes, and slowly disappears."¹⁰ Thus, Russia did not inherit a fit and fine military machine but a deteriorating and already troubled force. As Aleksandr

⁹ C. J. Dick, "Russian Military Reform: Status and Prospects" (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, June 1998), http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/agency/Russian_Mil_Reform_Status_Prospects, p. 1 of web version.

¹⁰ Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*, p. ix.

Golts illustrates in these pages, the decline in these forces persisted after the Soviet collapse, producing terrible problems of desertion, a large exodus from the officer corps, a breakdown of the conscription system, rampant corruption, and widespread ineffectiveness of many units for any meaningful military purpose. Commenting more recently on Russia's military, Dale Herspring writes, "The military, after all, is in disarray. Things are so bad that...it would take years if not decades" to restore Russian military power.¹¹ Likewise, Brian Taylor observed in late 2000 that the Russian military is "inadequately paid and housed, short of qualified junior officers, corrupt, and struggling to maintain a large and outdated technological infrastructure and equipment base."¹² Surely, it has been thought, military reform would result from Russia's efforts to eliminate these problems.

Maldeployed Forces

A second practical reality suggested that military reform was necessary: Russia's military was not merely in decline, but maldeployed. Large numbers of the best Soviet forces had been deployed in Eastern Europe, on the territory of Moscow's Warsaw Treaty Organization allies. At the end of the Soviet period, these forces were withdrawn from these forward deployments in countries where they were no longer welcome but were relocated largely according to logistical rather than strategic criteria. That is, they were moved to locations in Russia where there were bases to house them, not to places where there were threats or where they might be needed. As Pavel Baev notes in his chapter below, in the worst instances forces and equipment were essentially left at railway sidings when there was no place to accommodate them, and top-line units were relocated to remote places where their relatively high capabilities were squandered. Bases and garrisons on the Soviet Union's European frontiers in the west were now in the possession of other newly independent states, such as Ukraine and Belarus. Large portions of Russia's new border followed what had formerly been internal lines of division between Soviet republics, and lacked any defensive infrastructure that would allow

¹¹ Dale R. Herspring, "Putin and Military Reform: Some Hesitant First Steps," *Russia and Eurasia Review*, September 10, 2002, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/222-6.cfm>, p. 1 of web version.

¹² Brian Taylor, "The Duma and Military Reform," PONARS Policy Memo no. 154 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, October 2000), p. 2.

Russia to sensibly base forces in border regions. A disproportionate number of Russia's forces were based north and west when many of Russia's potential security challenges were south and east. Clearly the new Russian state was going to have to rethink and rationalize its pattern of bases and deployments. This, it was believed, would be another goad to reform.

Defense Spending Collapses

Russia's need to address the problems it inherited from the Soviet military and to adapt that military to its own security requirements was heightened by a third compelling (and, it has turned out, protracted) practical reality: after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow simply did not have the financial resources to provide enormous sums to the Russian ministry of defense. Instead, Russia's defense budget experienced a stunning plunge. Reliable statistics are unavailable, and the chaotic conditions that existed in the aftermath of the Soviet disintegration made it even more difficult than usual to estimate Moscow's defense spending. (For a time, some standard sources simply ceased to publish figures for Russian defense spending.¹³) There are significant discrepancies in estimates from one source to the next, but all agree that Moscow's defense spending tumbled sharply in the 1991–92 transition from the Soviet to the post-Soviet period, and it has never come close to recovering to Soviet-era defense spending levels. This is illustrated in Table 2, which offers one estimate of the pattern of Russian defense spending. Other estimates suggest even steeper declines, albeit with open acknowledgment that the margins of error are large.¹⁴

Table 2 shows a rapid, prodigious, and so-far permanent decline in Russian defense spending. According to these data, in 1992, defense expenditures were only 25 percent of the previous year. The military budget then declined still further, to the point that in the late 1990s, Russia was spending less than 10 percent of the levels sustained in the late 1980s. The details of trends in Russian defense spending vary from estimate to estimate, but there is no question that the sums available since

¹³ See, for example, SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook, 1992: World Armaments and Disarmament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 260, which offered no figures on Russian defense spending for the entire period from 1982 onward.

¹⁴ See, for example, SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook, 2003: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 350, which suggests that Russian defense spending was in the range of U.S.\$10–\$15 billion per year from the early 1990s onward.

TABLE 2

Moscow's Military Expenditures

Year	2000 Estimate (constant 2000 bn dollars)	2003 Estimate (constant 1999 bn dollars)
1988	443.3	—
1989	405.9	—
1990	376.2	—
1991	324.5	—
1992	86.9	72.9
1993	74.1	62.2
1994	71.7	60.1
1995	46.6	40.2
1996	42.1	36.3
1997	45.9	40.4
1998	—	28.8

Note: These data are taken from "Russian Military Budget," Global Security.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mo-budget>, p. 2. It provides a table that includes several different estimates of Russian defense spending, two of which are reproduced here. It is notable that the more recent estimates, based on further analysis and the latest data, retroactively reduce the estimated level of spending.

1992 are significantly less than was true in the Soviet period. What this means is that since the emergence of an independent Russia, Moscow has been spending only a fraction of what was necessary to maintain its inheritance of armed forces as an effective military capability. According to the data in Table 2, Russia has been trying to run the largest fraction of a military once accustomed to \$450 billion per year on a budget of \$40 billion.

Since the early 1990s, this budgetary reality has been regarded as a powerful motivating force for reform. On its face, it seemed simply untenable to retain anything like the inherited military force while spending anything like the amounts that Russia was able to devote to defense. Viewed in this context, Russian military reforms seemed not simply imperative, but inevitable. And indeed, these severe budget constraints have had a significant impact by compelling large reductions in Russia's armed forces—but without provoking the thoroughgoing reforms many thought (and still think) necessary.

Unaffordable Defense Industry

Russia's need for reform was compounded by a fourth practical reality: the new Russian state inherited most of the Soviet Union's vast and voracious

cious defense industrial sector.¹⁵ As Viktor Shlykov demonstrates vividly in his chapter in this volume, in the Soviet Union the defense industry occupied a remarkably privileged position in which its nearly insatiable appetite for resources was accorded unrivaled priority by the Soviet government. The Soviet defense industry, wrote Julian Cooper in a 1991 assessment, was “the privileged heart of the state-dominated economy” and “the principal beneficiary of the centralized system of non-market, administrative allocation of resources.”¹⁶ The result, as the U.S. Department of Defense reported ominously in the late 1980s, was “the world’s largest military-industrial complex,” with massive productive capacity, maintained at “immense cost.”¹⁷ This complex represented a huge investment of the national wealth—some 15–30 percent of the Soviet gross domestic product, depending on the estimate. It employed many millions of people. And it produced huge quantities of military equipment for an enormous, very well funded, rapidly modernizing military that, after the Soviet collapse, was no longer either well funded or rapidly modernizing. Indeed, in the turbulent and crisis-prone economic circumstances that existed in Russia in the early 1990s, there was very little demand for or ability to purchase new weapons systems. As one 1996 assessment concluded, “the former Soviet military-industrial complex has virtually ground to a halt. Plants that once rolled out thousands of tanks are now standing idle.”¹⁸ Russia inherited the capacity to manufacture large numbers of weapons that it did not need and could not afford.

Ironically, the problem of coping with the Soviet defense industrial legacy was exacerbated by Russia’s inheritance of most, but not all, of the Soviet military-industrial complex. After the dissolution of the USSR, some 25 percent of that highly centralized and tightly integrated complex was in the hands of other newly independent states.¹⁹ Thus, though the

¹⁵ For an overview of this inheritance and its implications, see Julian Cooper, “The Soviet Defence Industry Heritage and Economic Restructuring in Russia,” in Lars Wallin, ed., *The Post-Soviet Military-Industrial Complex* (Stockholm: Swedish National Defence Research Establishment, 1994), pp. 29–48.

¹⁶ Julian Cooper, *The Soviet Defense Industry: Conversion and Economic Reform* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991), pp. 1, 5.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power: An Assessment of the Threat, 1988* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 1988), p. 32.

¹⁸ Steve Macko, “Russia’s Crumbling Military,” EmergencyNet News Daily Report, September 1, 1996, <http://www.emergency.com/russ-mil>.

¹⁹ See *SIPRI Yearbook, 1992*, p. 205, which estimates that Russia possessed 75.1

Russian military-industrial inheritance was too big to be affordable or appropriate, it was also too small to be comprehensive or completely coherent.

Here, then, was another potent factor that seemed to demand military reform. Indeed, because of the prominence of the military sector in economic terms, reform in the defense industrial sector was clearly an important component of, if not a prerequisite for, Russia's much needed economic reform. Conversion of the Russian military-industrial complex was thought to be a critical necessity, one that would both motivate and accompany wider military reforms.²⁰

These practical realities together constituted what seemed to be an overwhelming case for military reform. The armed forces inherited by Russia were oversized, deteriorating, maldeployed, severely underfunded, and linked to a bloated and unaffordable defense industry. The ability of this inheritance to generate effective combat power or perform other significant missions was in doubt and declining. In the early 1990s, it was common to say that Russian military power was simply wasting away. Clearly, from a practical point of view, something would need to be done to transform the Russian military into an effective instrument for the Russian government.

An Obsolete Strategic Concept

The case for military reform was further reinforced by fundamental strategic and political considerations. In terms of broad strategy, the most basic challenge for Russia has been to define itself—its national identity—and its place in the world.²¹ As was the case with military capabilities (the

percent of Soviet defense enterprises.

²⁰ On the conversion of Russia's defense industrial inheritance, see Kevin O'Prey, *A Farewell to Arms? Russia's Struggles with Defense Conversion* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1995).

²¹ Thoughtful discussions of Russia's place in the world include Fiona Hill, "The Borderlands of Power: Territory and Great Power Status in Russia at the Beginning and at the End of the 20th Century," in Zvi Gitelman, Lubomyr Hajda, John-Paul Himka, and Roman Solchanyk, eds., *Cultures and Nations of Central and Eastern Europe: Essays in Honor of Roman Szporluk* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 2000); and Sergei Medvedev, "Russia at the End of Modernity: Foreign Policy, Security, Identity," in Sergei Medvedev, Alexander Kononov, and Sergei Oznobishchev, eds., *Russia and the West at the Millennium: Global*

hardware of military power), the Soviet Union passed on to Russia a conceptual inheritance of geostrategic calculations and military doctrine (the software of military power) that fit awkwardly with the realities of the new Russian state. Russia is now a smaller state with different geography. It is not a global superpower. It is not locked in mortal antagonism with the United States. It has a completely different relationship with the states of Western Europe. It has different states along most of its periphery. The Soviet military of the 1980s reflected the threat perceptions, ambitions, strategies, and political rivalries of a wholly different state playing a wholly different role on the world stage.

Russia would need to find its own place in the world, and its choices would (or should) have large implications for shaping the military that Russia would need. Basic issues were and are in play. Does Russia see itself as a European or an Asian power? Does it envision integration or uneasiness with its former adversaries in Western Europe? What sort of relationship is desirable and possible with Washington and Beijing? How is Russia going to relate to what was, for a time at least, called the near abroad—the vast expanse of territory immediately beyond Russia's frontiers, now governed by more than a dozen independent, and in many cases troubled, states?

Most broadly, of course, the newly born Russia needed to tackle for the first time what ought to be the basic building blocks of any state's security policy: to define its interests, to identify the threats to those interests, and to choose the military means available and appropriate for addressing those threats. In the early 1990s, it seemed inevitable that Russia would need to redefine itself and that this redefinition would lead to the embrace of strategic concepts reflecting the new circumstances of the state now governed from Moscow. This redefinition of Russia and choice of an appropriate strategic doctrine could have huge implications for the Russian military. Indeed, ideally the reform of Russia's military would be governed by a strategic concept that spelled out interests, threats, and requirements.

As indicated in the pages that follow, Russia has in fact struggled since

Imperatives and Domestic Policies (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, August 2002), pp. 33–54. Also relevant here are a number of the essays in Celeste A. Wallender, ed., *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press for the John M. Olin Critical Issues Series, 1996).

its birth in 1991 to fashion a strategic concept—a national security doctrine—that was consistent with its new international position, realistic in its appraisal of potential threats and defense requirements, compatible with the resources it has available for defense, and able to command wide domestic support. Importantly, to be meaningful in a practical sense, such a strategic concept would need to govern the perceptions and behavior of the Russian ministry of defense and would need to be genuinely influential in the establishment of defense spending priorities and in the shaping and deployment of forces. In the period since 1991, there have been a number of efforts to articulate and codify a new Russian national security doctrine—including the draft National Security Concept of 1992, the National Security Concept of 1997, the National Security Concept of 2000, and yet another articulated in 2003.²² The substantive content and evolution of these concepts are spelled out in the chapters that follow, particularly in Pavel Baev’s account of the ebb and flow of Russian national security policy during the 1990s.

Thus, the expectation that Russia would seek to define a new strategic concept was proven correct. As it turned out, however, Russia’s sequence of articulated strategic concepts has had little impact in terms of military reform. They have variously embraced unrealistic threat assessments, or lacked requisite internal support, or ignored severe resource constraints, or otherwise failed to meet the test of practicality. They have never provided a template for military reform that was regarded by civilian and military leaders as governing future military policy. Indeed, as Mark Kramer wrote about the National Security Concept of January 2000, “Many documents that take effect in Russia are almost immediately forgotten and end up having no influence on policy. Few people remember what the earlier [strategic] Concept said or even that there was such a Concept. It may well be that the latest document, too, will amount to very little.”²³ In addition, it has turned out that many Russians, including in the political elite and the military, have been reluctant to abandon the aspiration of great power status, preferring instead “sustained efforts” aimed at

²² A concise overview of these efforts up to 2000 can be found in Celeste A. Wallender, “Russian National Security Policy in 2000,” PONARS Policy Memo no. 102 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, January 2000).

²³ Mark Kramer, “What Is Driving Russia’s New Strategic Concept?” PONARS Policy Memo no. 103 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, January 2000), p. 3.

“upholding Russia’s greatness.”²⁴ But at the outset of the new Russian state it was believed that, as Moscow defined its new international role and adopted a new strategic concept, military reform would follow inexorably. Only thus would Russia end up with a military capability compatible with its requirements. This, it was widely believed, would be another significant motive for military reform.

A Totalitarian Military

To these practical and strategic pressures for military reform must be added a profound political factor: Russia is not simply a new state; it is a state in the midst of fundamental political and social transformations aiming at democracy, an open and transparent society, and a market economy. Russia would need to construct a military apparatus that was consistent with its new domestic political realities. Certainly the Soviet-style defense bureaucracy and military organization that Moscow inherited would not be appropriate in a democratizing Russia. That leaden administrative legacy reflected a totalitarian past that most Russians wished to leave behind. The Soviet defense establishment had been a largely autonomous structure accustomed to having state and society serve its needs, rather than the other way around. It was allowed to function in a largely unaccountable way, exempt from public scrutiny and political oversight. This pattern would not be acceptable in a democratic Russia. Hence, if and as Russia’s political reforms progressed and succeeded, this suggested once again that military reform would be necessary and inevitable.

Further, it was commonly believed that democratic reform of the military was essential to the entire military reform project. So long as the Russian military, entirely comfortable in its Soviet ways, remained unanswerable to political authority, the prospects for achieving needed large-scale reforms were greatly diminished. A democratic Russia would require a military it could control and shape. Accordingly, the democratization of the Russian defense establishment was arguably the critical first step in the military reform project. As Jacob Kipp has written, the initial phase of Russian military reform should be “overcoming the Soviet legacy of a militarized state, society, and economy. This requires the

²⁴ Pavel Baev, “Putin Reconstitutes Russia’s Great Power Status,” PONARS Policy Memo no. 318 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, November 2003), p. 1.

creation of an effective system of civilian control over the military.”²⁵ It seemed reasonable to assume that a Russian military that was subordinated to civilian authority, subjected to legislative accountability, and required to meet the standards of a more open and transparent society would, as a matter of course, be a different and much reformed military. A politically transformed Russia would produce a reformed Russian military. Or so it seemed.²⁶

Disaster in Chechnya

As if there were not already reasons enough to think that Russian military reform was essential, by 1994 Russia found itself embroiled in a tragic and ill-fated military misadventure in Chechnya that dramatically displayed the inadequacies and deficiencies of the Russian military.²⁷ In Chechnya, Russia’s armed forces proved incapable of dealing with even a relative minor challenge from a small force engaged in low-intensity insurgency operations. Russian forces were unquestionably revealed to be poorly trained, poorly motivated, poorly led, poorly armed, and poorly supported.²⁸ As Roy Allison discusses in his chapter, Russia’s primitive approach to the first Chechen war, including the massive, gruesome, and largely indiscriminate use of firepower, reflected a near-total failure on the part of the Russian military to adapt to low-intensity conflicts and insurgencies that it was most likely to face along its troubled southern periphery.

²⁵ Jacob Kipp, “Russian Military Reform: Status and Prospects” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, June 1998), <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/agency/rusreform>, p. 3 of web version.

²⁶ For an early, quite pessimistic, and unfortunately rather accurate assessment of Russian efforts to democratize the military, see Stephen J. Blank, *Russian Defense Legislation and Russian Democracy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, August 17, 1995). Blank concludes that “Russia is regressing in civil-military affairs and democracy” (p. 32).

²⁷ A detailed account of Russia’s experience in Chechnya may be found in Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). The story is brought up to date in Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2003).

²⁸ The revealed inadequacies of Russia’s military are discussed, for example, in Olga Olikier and Tanya Charlick-Paley, *Assessing Russia’s Decline: Trends and Implications for the United States and the U.S. Air Force* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), pp. 70–72.

Russia has fared somewhat better in the second Chechen War, which commenced in 1999. But it still has yet to achieve clear victory.²⁹ And overall, Russia's military experience in Chechnya demonstrated that Russia's armed forces were deeply troubled and surprisingly ineffective. After Chechnya, it could hardly be clearer that Russia did not possess a military instrument capable of addressing the security challenges that it was most likely to face. What more definitive illustration of the need for reform could there be?³⁰

Viewed overall, there appear to be a compelling set of factors pushing for military reform in Russia. Indeed, many have recurrently argued that Russia faces a crisis in its military that makes military reform urgent and essential.³¹

²⁹ On Russia's continuing military difficulties in Chechnya, see Aleksandr Golts, "Putin and the Chechen War: Together Forever," *Moscow Times*, February 11, 2004.

³⁰ In the literature on military innovation, defeat is identified as a potentially powerful goad to reform. But there exists a lively debate in this literature on the causes of successful military innovation, in which a variety of causal forces contend, including international, organizational, cultural, technological, and strategic factors. Russia's military reform efforts fall within this broader context and represent an interesting case in which the sources and barriers to military innovation contest with one another. For a sample of the literature on military innovation, see Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), which examines international and organizational causes of innovation; Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), which particularly explores the sources of innovation within military establishments; Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), which emphasizes strategic cultural explanations for military policy outcomes; and Michael O'Hanlon, *Technological Change and the Future of Warfare* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2000), which assesses the impact of technology on military doctrine.

³¹ A good example is Stephen J. Blank, *Russia's Armed Forces on the Brink of Reform* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, March 16, 1998). Blank suggested at that time that the Russian military was "fast approaching a point of no return" (p. v).

OPTIONS FOR RUSSIAN MILITARY REFORM

In view of the powerful arguments for pursuing military reform in Russia, it is not surprising that this subject has been on the policy agenda in Moscow ever since the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. Indeed, if anything is surprising, it is that military reform has not been more frequently and more prominently at the top of the policy agenda. There has been a persistent debate about military reform, but its public visibility and political salience has fluctuated significantly.

The greatest fault line in Russia's military reform debate lies between those powerful forces—notably the Russian defense establishment—that oppose reform (for the most part, so far successfully) and those who advocate significant reforms. This schism existed even within the Russian government, as in the friction during the late 1990s between Boris Yeltsin's reform-oriented Defense Council and the ministry of defense.³² But there are also debates among the reformers about the character and content of needed reforms, the proper sequence of reforms, priorities among reforms, the appropriate level of defense spending to support reforms, and so on. These disagreements may weaken the reformers in their battle with the opponents of reform, but in truth the differences among reformers are small compared to the vast gap between proponents and opponents of reform. Indeed, though various Russian parties and defense analysts offer their distinctive versions of a reform program, the differences in detail matter less than the substantial common ground found in the reformist community concerning the main direction of needed reform.

What reforms are being proposed by some and resisted by others? The military reform agenda in Russia flows directly from the imperatives to reform as outlined above. The complicated and unsettled political circumstances in Russia sometimes produce a messy and disorganized reform debate, in which specific issues are addressed out of logical order or in isolation from closely related questions. Sometimes a particular issue (such as how to recruit manpower for the Russian military) takes on a symbolic role as the battleground between reformers and opponents of reform. But it is possible to lay out Russia's options for military reform in

³² See, for example, Alexander Konovalov and Sergei Oznobishev, "Russian Armed Forces: Perspectives of Military Reform and Evolution of Military Doctrine" (Moscow: Institute for Strategic Assessments, June 1999), especially pp. 18–24, which survey a number of military reform proposals and describe the tension between the Defense Council and the ministry of defense.

an orderly and analytical fashion (while recognizing that the debate in Russia does not follow this orderly pattern).

According to Russia's military reformers, what does Russia need?

A More Democratic Military

The defense organization inherited from the Soviet Union was an artifact of a deeply totalitarian political order. Russia needs a military establishment compatible with a democratic system. Above all, this implies a virtual revolution in civil-military relations, leading to a situation in which the military is subordinate to civilian authorities. This broad objective in turn leads to a series of desired reforms. Civilians ought to play a much larger role in the Russian ministry of defense, including at the highest levels. The Russian military establishment should be much more transparent, so that its policies and activities are more visible to and more debatable by Russia's burgeoning civil society. Russia's military needs to be more accountable to political authorities and should be routinely subjected to legislative oversight by lawmakers in possession of enough information to render informed judgments. And, importantly, Russia's civilian authorities should possess ultimate control of the purse strings; the Russian military alone should not determine how Russia's defense dollars are spent.

A More Realistic and Appropriate Strategic Concept

The Russian military has been reluctant to abandon the familiar and congenial strategic concepts left over from the Soviet period. In particular, as noted especially in the chapters by Pavel Baev and Alexei Arbatov, the Russian military has continued to persevere in the belief that a large-scale armored war with the industrial West represents the most important planning contingency. Russia's military does not want to abandon the NATO threat, despite the vast international changes that have occurred since the end of the Soviet Union. This continued embrace of the centerpiece of Soviet geostrategic thought reflects a desire by the Russian military to retain its privileged status, to command enormous resources, and to justify huge forces organized largely along Soviet lines. It also forms the basis for hopes that Russia's military may one day be restored to its superpower status. Not only Russia's military but also some in the Russian political elite continue to covet great power status or at least to desire an assertive foreign policy, including expectations of regional dominance.³³

³³ See, for example, Stefan Wagstyl and Andrew Jack, "West Watches Nervously

Russia's military reformers reject this mentality as both unrealistic and inappropriate. It is unrealistic because Russia simply does not have the resources to compete militarily with the West, nor does it need to do so in the new international circumstances. Arguably, Russia is more likely to join NATO than to fight it. What sense does it make, then, to base defense policy on the premise of a large war in Europe? Moreover, this old Soviet mentality is inappropriate because it pays little heed to the security threats and challenges that Russia actually needs to address. For most reformers, Russia's defense policy needs especially to focus on the threats and problems that emanate from its southern periphery (including in borderlands of Russia itself, such as Chechnya). Russia's real security challenges bear little resemblance to the requirements associated with the massive threat from the West. They involve instead various low-intensity operations, including peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, anti-guerrilla campaigns, and counterterrorism. Because Russia's military has been governed by a different strategic concept, its forces have proven to be ill suited for and often not terribly effective in these roles. As Baev argues in his chapter, the Russian military has been unwilling and unable to perform needed missions because it has focused on preparations for contingencies that are unrealistic and unnecessary. According to Russia's military reformers, the Russian military needs to be governed by a new strategic concept, one that more realistically assesses and addresses the security situation of the new Russian state. If such a concept were both adopted and enforced, this would have powerful repercussions for the entire broad military reform effort.

An Appropriately Funded Military

The Soviet military was the beneficiary of enormous budgets and huge commitments of economic resources. For the post-Soviet Russian military, the story has been very nearly the opposite. Its existence has been dominated by the reality of severe budgetary constraints. Russia's internal instabilities and economic difficulties have greatly limited the resources available to be allocated to the ministry of defense. As Arbatov suggests in his chapter, Russia must live with an acute tension between the desirable and the affordable.

as the Kremlin Raises Its Flags," *Financial Times*, March 3, 2004, which describes the growing aggressiveness of Russian external policy and suggests that Moscow is increasingly domineering toward its neighbors, especially those of the former Soviet Union.

The annual budget process within the Duma provides a political context within which military reform issues are raised. But it also provides a financial context within which military reforms must be considered if they are to be realistic. What reforms are possible within existing financial constraints? What additional capabilities would be possible if additional funding were available?

As Arbatov's chapter illustrates, many of Russia's military reformers believe that defense spending is too low, that it has fallen below the level necessary to provide Russia with the military it needs to advance its interests. Hence, reformers tend to favor increases in defense spending—though the extent of the proposed increases is relatively modest, given the continuing financial problems of the Russian government. But the issue is not simply one of spending more. Military reformers believe that Russia must spend differently, that it cannot continue to allow Russia's defense establishment to spend as if it were the Soviet military writ small. This is a major reason why reformers are concerned about civil-military relations (so that civilian authorities can compel different and more suitable spending priorities). And it explains why Russia's military reformers champion a different sort of military.

A More Professional Military

One key element of the different military sought by the reformers is a shift to a professional, all-volunteer force (often referred to, in the Russian context, as a contract manpower system). This approach stands in stark contrast to the mass mobilization army, built by universal conscription, which is preferred by the Russian defense establishment. The conscription system can, of course, produce a much larger military than is possible with a professional army. Even the United States, with all its wealth, moved to a smaller force when conscription was ended during the Vietnam War. But to Russia's military reformers, reliance on mass conscription results in large numbers of dispirited, poorly trained soldiers, who are formed into units that do not provide useful increments of effective military power. Indeed, many units in the Russian military are regarded as ineffective and undeployable in any serious contingency, but they nevertheless consume resources that might otherwise be spent more meaningfully. Further, the mass mobilization military associated with ongoing conscription is inextricably linked to the Soviet obsession with war against NATO in Europe—a strategic notion the reformers regard as anachronistic and wish to jettison.

Russia would be better off, argue the reformers, with a considerably

smaller but fully professional force, one that was much better trained and composed of units that are reliable and truly useful to decision makers when military power must be deployed. With a smaller force, Russia would need to eliminate the large surplus of officers that it inherited from the Soviet Union. Necessary and justified in a mobilization-based military, these officers represent costly redundancies in a professional force. Rather than emphasize the limited training of large numbers of conscripts, a professional force would focus on the creation of considerably smaller numbers of well-trained personnel. Such a force, the reformers believe, would provide more usable military capability than the ramshackle conscript force that Russia presently possesses.

This question of how to recruit military manpower has been one of the fierce battlegrounds in Russia's military reform debate. Moving to a contract system that resulted in a small professional force would, once and for all, mean the end of the mass Soviet army. It would mean the end of hopes for military resurrection along Soviet lines. It would mean the end of planning for large wars against NATO. It would mean the end of the military careers of many now-surplus military officers. For these reasons, military reformers see the professionalization of the Russian military as a key to success, while the opponents of reform are absolutely determined to resist moves in this direction. These lines of contention are clearly reflected in the Arbatov chapter below.

A More Modern and More Ready Military

With the end of the Soviet Union, modernization of Russia's military came to a screeching halt. Few new weapons systems were procured. Even fewer were designed and developed. For Russia's defense establishment, the 1990s were a lost decade in terms of modernization. For Russia's military reformers, this reality is flatly contrary to the plain lessons of the period. From the 1991 Gulf War onward, it was apparent that the exploitation of advanced technology was hugely advantageous in terms of military effectiveness. Breathtaking displays of high-technology military prowess, especially by U.S. forces in Kosovo and during the second Gulf War, only reinforced the conclusion that Russia's security would not be well served by a military relying on obsolescent and technologically backward equipment. To Russia's military reformers, these realities have huge implications for Russia's defense policy.

Reformers argue, for example, that the Russian military needs to change the balance of effort between current subsistence and investment in future capabilities. In their view, the future is being shortchanged as

the Russian defense establishment devotes a large portion of its resources simply to sustaining the current large conscription-based force. Reformers are particularly concerned about the deteriorating technological level of the Russian military. They urge that priority be given to military research and development and to qualitative enhancements of equipment. As Arbatov argues in his chapter, a “massive rearmament” of the Russian military is necessary to make up for the lost decade of modernization.

A closely related issue concerns the readiness of Russia's military forces. Many of the units in Russia's military are held at low levels of readiness and are not usefully deployable in most conceivable contingencies. It would be much better, argue the reformers, to have a considerably smaller force that maintained higher levels of readiness. Such forces would actually have utility in scenarios in which Russia's leaders wanted or needed to use force, and would be deployable rapidly instead of requiring a period of mobilization and training before being available.

To many reformers, questions of modernization and readiness are linked to the manpower recruitment question. Presently, the Russian defense establishment expends a considerable fraction of its resources simply sustaining the manpower, retaining the units, and preserving the weaponry for the conscription-based mass mobilization army inherited from the Soviet Union. A much smaller professional force, though more costly on a per capita basis, would be easier to refit with modernized equipment, would almost inherently be capable of higher levels of readiness, and if sized wisely could even free up budgetary resources that could be shifted to investment and modernization accounts (as the calculations in Arbatov's chapter suggest.)

An Operationally Relevant Military

Russia's military leaders face an array of security challenges, especially along Russia's southern periphery, that involve low-intensity conflicts and challenges (ranging from terrorism and guerrilla campaigns to peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations). In tackling these challenges, they must rely on a military instrument that is not at all optimized for these now-common contingencies. As noted, the Russian military retains strong preoccupations left over from the Soviet period, centered on visions of large-scale armored warfare. In a reformed military, advocates insist, there would exist a substantial capability trained, armed, and oriented toward the scenarios in which the Russian military now frequently operates.

IMPEDIMENTS TO REFORM

The Russian state was born into circumstances in which there existed compelling, powerful, seemingly inexorable imperatives for military reform. Within the new Russia, as we have seen, there has arisen a sensible, comprehensive, coherent agenda of military reform aimed at addressing the various problems and deficiencies that would seem to demand reform. And yet, the striking conclusion to be drawn from the evidence since 1991 (and the arresting theme of the chapters that follow) is that remarkably little reform has been achieved. To be sure, there have been many notable changes in the Russian military—most visibly, the reductions compelled by financial exigencies. But the result has been not a new Russian military, but a smaller and deformed version of the Soviet military. As Stephen Blank has concluded, Russia has comprehensively failed to respond to most of the imperatives for reform: “Russia has failed to develop a coherent governmental structure to make and implement effective or sensible defense policy. It has not built effective, civilian, democratic control of its multiple militaries and the burgeoning number of paramilitary and privately controlled armed forces. It has neither developed nor upheld a concept of Russian national interest or a strategy for defending them commensurate with Russia’s real potential and forces. It has neither created forces that can counter threats to Russia’s national interests nor defined either the threats or those interests.”³⁴ Neither political transformation at home nor fundamental international realignment, neither catastrophic budget declines nor defeat in war, has sufficed to produce fundamental military reform in Russia. This suggests that however strong the imperatives to reform may seem, they are insufficient to overcome the powerful impediments to reform that exist in Russia.

Obviously, a willful Russian military staunchly resisting change is at the heart of the explanation for the failure of Russian military reform to date. As one assessment observed, the Russian military has been “mired

³⁴ Blank, *Russia’s Armed Forces on the Brink of Reform*, p. 1. See also Stephen Blank, “This Time We Really Mean It: Russian Military Reform,” *Russia and Eurasia Review*, January 7, 2003, p. 5, where he similarly concludes, “Despite seventeen years of calls for military reform, dating back to Mikhail Gorbachev, nothing substantial has come to pass. Instead, Russia’s multiple military organizations have obstructed all efforts to create a professional, democratically accountable, or technologically capable army adapted to today’s real threats and able to fight a war against them.”

in efforts to preserve the past” and has “wished to preserve a Soviet-style army, retaining as much of the Soviet system as possible.”³⁵ But the opposition of the Russian military to reform does not in itself provide a satisfactory explanation for the largely abortive character of the military reform effort. Why has the Russian military succeeded in thwarting reform? Why has it been able to triumph over both the factors that seemed to compel reform and the articulate advocates of reform? More than a dozen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, why has the Russian military been permitted to limp along in a deficient and demoralized condition while defeating all serious efforts to reform it? How can it be that the Russian military’s only meaningful victories have been at the expense of domestic advocates of reform?

The potential obstacles to reform turn out to be numerous and powerful (as might be expected given that they have stymied the various potent factors promoting reform). At least ten explanations are evident in the debate on this issue—explanations that are almost surely cumulative rather than mutually exclusive. The following considerations contribute to an understanding of the failure of reform despite the imperative to reform.

One cluster of explanations for the failure of military reform in Russia focuses on domestic political considerations and emphasizes the shortcomings and incapacities of the political authorities and political elites who have proven unable to muster a winning internal coalition on this set of issues.

The Weakness of Russia’s Political Authorities

Surmounting the opposition of Russia’s military will require forceful intervention from Russia’s political leadership. Only this will compel Russia’s reluctant military high command to embrace changes that they despise and that will destroy the military they wish to preserve. But in the turbulent and uncertain political conditions that have existed in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union, no leader has wanted to confront the Russian military. In this argument, Russia’s political leaders have been too weak, and Russia’s military has been too strong politically, to allow

³⁵ Colin Robinson, “Russian Armed Forces: Reaching Fitfully toward a Professional Force” (Washington, DC: Military Reform Project, Center for Defense Information, July 26, 2002), <http://www.cdi.org/mrp/russian-mr>, p. 1 of web version.

for the kind of civilian intervention in military affairs that would produce fundamental reform. As one expert has concluded, “The failure of Russian defense reform could be traced back, through the defects of civilian control, to the shortcomings of Russia’s democratization process.”³⁶

Because the internal political variable is so important in determining the fortunes of military reform in Russia, changes of leadership and fluctuations in the standing and influence of key figures are major considerations in assessing the state of the reform debate. Thus, when Vladimir Putin arose suddenly and unexpectedly to the heights of power in Russia (first as prime minister and then as president), the implications of this development for the Russian military became a subject of discussion and debate in the military reform literature. Some argued that Putin would be strong and determined enough to move forward with reforms. Herspring has suggested, for example, that “Putin is moving ahead to reform the military....He is now focusing his attention on the kind of fundamental military reform so critical to Russia’s future.”³⁷ Others noted Putin’s affinity for the Russian military and his desire for good relations with the high command (not least because of his desire to prosecute the second Chechen War, which made the military crucial to his policy); this suggested that he was unlikely, at least in the short run, to force major reforms on the Russian military. On the contrary, Putin and the military were in the midst of a “honeymoon.”³⁸ But on balance the tendency is to emphasize the powerful factors that make it unlikely for Putin to proceed successfully with a military reform policy. Whatever Putin’s predispositions, Kimberly Zisk argues, there are “brakes on the reform process.”³⁹ Similarly, Brian Taylor concludes that “the multiple and severe obstacles to Russian military resurgence have not disappeared.”⁴⁰

One large barrier to the assertion of civilian control lay in the occasional need of Russia’s political leaders to rely on the Russian military to face down their internal challengers, as was the case with President Yeltsin

³⁶ Zoltan Barany, “Defense Reform, Russian Style: Obstacles, Options, Opposition,” University of Texas, Austin, February 2004, p. 4.

³⁷ Herspring, “Putin and Military Reform,” p. 1.

³⁸ The “honeymoon” image is employed, for example, in Brian Taylor, “Putin and the Military: How Long Will the Honeymoon Last?” PONARS Policy Memo no. 116 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, April 2000).

³⁹ Kimberly Marten Zisk, “Putin and the Russian Military,” PONARS Policy Memo no. 155 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, October 2000), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Taylor, “Putin and the Military,” p. 5.

in the early 1990s. Another such barrier derived from the potential fear that acting vigorously against the military's interests could provoke military intervention in Russia's domestic politics, with possibly fateful consequences. As Taylor notes, throughout the Yeltsin decade "the possibility of a [military] coup was...a hot topic."⁴¹ And at a minimum, the military (especially in its broadest manifestations, including the defense industry) represented an interest group numbering in the millions—a group too large to be easily antagonized by democratically accountable politicians. In short, in domestic political terms, there was simply nothing to be gained, and potentially much to be lost, for a political leader to engage in a frontal confrontation with the Russian military over reform.

Uncertain Commitment to Democracy

Moscow's Soviet-style military was thought to be incompatible with a genuine democratic transformation in Russia. Hence, political reform would lead necessarily to military reform. However, Russia's move toward genuine democracy has been halting, uncertain, and incomplete. As one set of experts at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has concluded, "Russia's political system is neither a full-blown dictatorship nor a consolidated democracy, but something in between."⁴² Hence, the winds of democracy have never blown powerfully enough to compel military reform. Further, recent trends in Russia, especially under President Putin's increasingly powerful tenure in office, appear to be headed in the opposite direction. Writes James Goldgeier, for example, "Russia has become increasingly authoritarian under President Vladimir Putin."⁴³ The Carnegie group similarly states unconditionally that "Russia is moving in an autocratic direction."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Brian D. Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1689–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 318. Taylor argues that the long-established organizational culture of the Russian military militated strongly against a military coup, but this did not prevent the fear of such a coup from shadowing Russia's domestic politics.

⁴² Michael McFaul, Nilolai Petrov, and Andrei Ryabov, *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), p. 1.

⁴³ James Goldgeier, "A New European Divide," *Washington Post*, March 28, 2004. On the same theme, see Alex Rodriguez, "Russia's Putin: Monarch in All But Name," *Chicago Tribune*, March 28, 2004.

⁴⁴ McFaul, Petrov, and Ryabov, *Between Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 2.

In the aftermath of Russia's 2004 presidential election, in which President Putin was not seriously challenged, his grip on power appears firm and unshakeable. As Alexei Arbatov intimates in his chapter below, there appears to be a growing priority to build up internal security forces to control dissent and opposition, even at the expense of needed national security capabilities. As Arbatov also points out, the transparency, accountability, and public debate on military policy that are commonplace in democratic settings have yet to truly materialize in Russia—undoubtedly because progress toward democratic reform has been so circumscribed. In short, the failure to move steadily and progressively in the direction of democratic transformation has undercut one of the expected pressures for military reform. An undemocratic military may be compatible with the more autocratic regime that could be emerging in Russia.

Other Priorities on a Crowded Policy Agenda

If Russia's leaders had only to worry about military reform, then something substantial might have been accomplished by now. But instead they have been preoccupied with other major concerns of massive proportions. This has been a period of thoroughgoing transition in which Russia's elite has had to contend with political upheaval, widespread social dislocation, acute economic problems and occasional economic crises, and a revolution in foreign policy, not to mention a brutal and intractable civil war. Military reform has not been the only priority—indeed, far from it—and it has rarely if ever been the highest priority. In this wider context, it is not at all surprising that Russia's leaders have been distracted from the task of military reform. They have had many other urgent concerns on their minds.

The Indifference of the Political Class to Military Reform

If Russia's political elite regarded military reform as an issue of the highest order and urgency, then reform would figure more prominently in the hierarchy of priorities, and more serious exertions would have been undertaken to push forward needed innovations. Instead, Russia's elite has grown substantially indifferent to military issues.⁴⁵ In part this is due to the overcrowded agenda of policy issues of wider or more immediate implications. In part it is due to the perception that the Soviet Union's

⁴⁵ I owe this point to Dmitri Trenin, who offered this proposition at our London workshop in May 2003.

vast investment in military power did not protect it from decline and collapse; indeed, the Soviet preoccupation with military power may have hastened the collapse of the Soviet Union. In part it may be due to a perception that for the foreseeable future Russia faces no major security threat (Russia's security challenges along the southern periphery are real and troublesome, but involve minor powers and relatively small-scale contingencies). In part it may be due to a (potentially self-fulfilling) belief that meaningful large-scale military reform is not possible in the current political and economic environment in Russia. Whatever the explanation, military issues have not gripped the wider political elite in Russia, and this has circumscribed the political support and momentum for military reform.

Absence of Consensus about Military Reform

Another political factor that has vitiated momentum toward military reform has been the failure of any reformist vision to inspire wide consensus across the relevant portions of Russian opinion. As noted, the most profound schism exists between a deeply conservative military hoping to preserve as much as possible the legacies of the past and civilian reformers hoping to build a new military for a new Russia. This has resulted in endless intense disputation about doctrine, preconditions for reform, objectives of reform, and so on. These bitter disputes have produced not progress but "deadlock," with reform stalemated and disagreements unresolved.⁴⁶ Further, while there are many common elements in the reformist agenda, there is no single reform plan to which any Russian government has been wholeheartedly committed nor any single program around which the reformist elements, of varying parties and persuasions, have coalesced. Hence, the unalterable resolve of the Russian military is pitted against pro-reform forces that are less united, less committed to a common agenda, and less able to dominate and prevail in the security policy debate.

Juxtaposed against this set of political factors suggesting the narrow, weak, and unfocused character of support for military reform is a cluster of explanations that emphasize the advantages that the Russian military establishment brings to this battle over the future of Russian security policy.

⁴⁶ Tonya Putnam and Alexander Golts, "The Vestiges of State Militarism: Why Military Reform Has Failed in Russia," Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, October 27, 2003. Putnam and Golts use the word "deadlock" to describe this situation, but conclude that this factor is not a wholly satisfactory explanation for the failure of reform.

The Tradition of Deference to the Military

To these domestic political calculations can be added a more fundamental factor: the long tradition in Russia, dating to deep into the czarist period, of treating the Russian military with deference and regarding it as outside the realm of legitimate civilian control. From the time of Peter the Great and Russia's rise as a great power, the military had been regarded as "the cornerstone of the Russian state." This notion of the military as the foundation is powerfully embedded in Russian history and political culture, and has persisted across several centuries despite the political convulsions that replaced czarist rule with the Soviet regime and replaced the Soviet system with the present postcommunist order. This "state militarism," as Tonya Putnam and Aleksandr Golts put it, involves a deeply rooted pattern of high authority and broad autonomy for the Russian military that makes it extremely effective at resisting unwanted reform efforts.⁴⁷

No Reform While Fighting in Chechnya?

The deficiencies and failures of the Russian military in Chechnya have been offered as strong evidence of the need for reform. In a bitter irony for reformers, however, the war in Chechnya is frequently adduced as a rationale for at least postponing reform. How wise is it, critics ask, to undertake fundamental reform of a military in the middle of a war? How can the Russian military be expected to focus its energies on reform when it is bogged down in a protracted conflict? And how can Russia's political leadership be expected to compel military reform against the preferences of a reluctant high command when it needs that military organization to fight, die, and succeed in Chechnya? "The slog and humiliation of the first Chechen war," Brian Taylor argues, "ruined any chances for more serious military reforms."⁴⁸ Similarly, Dmitri Trenin has written, "As long as the war continues, the High Command will have a powerful argument and political clout against a radical military reform.... The divisive and corrosive effect of the Chechen war on Russian society as a whole becomes a massive roadblock on the way to Russia's moderniza-

⁴⁷ Ibid. The brief treatment here is a summary of the argument offered by Putnam and Golts as the most fundamental explanation for the failure of Russian military reform. The first quotation is found at p. 25 of their manuscript.

⁴⁸ Taylor, "The Duma and Military Reform," p. 1.

tion and transformation. Military reform gets stalled.”⁴⁹ Thus, both supporters and opponents of reform make use of the war in Chechnya when arguing their cause, and it is by no means certain that, so long as fighting persists, the reformers have the better of the argument. A perverse implication of this point, however, is that the Russian military has little incentive to settle the Chechen conflict while it serves as a potent barrier to reforms that the military regards as deeply undesirable.

Western Policies Buttress the Russian Military

The Russian debate on military reform is, of course, influenced by relevant events and developments in the international arena. In particular, the Russian military's argument that it must retain a capability for dealing with a potential threat from the West—from NATO and the United States—has gained reinforcement from an array of U.S. and Western policies that many in Moscow view as hostile or significantly contrary to Russian interests. In American security policy, for example, there has been a persistent theme of preserving capabilities that provide a “hedge” against the possible resurgence of a Russian threat. This leads to the perpetuation of a nuclear posture that continues to be substantially oriented toward Russia, to offer just one prominent illustration. Similarly, the collision of Western and Russian policies in the Balkans led many Russians to conclude that NATO was prepared to act with disregard for Russian preferences and interests and that NATO was capable of undertaking “aggression” (at it seemed to Russian eyes) in Europe. Particularly poisonous, in this context, was the NATO policy of expansion into Eastern Europe, moving NATO's frontiers closer to Russia's borders. Such policies have had a discernible impact on Russian perceptions and on Russian security thinking. The National Security Concept of 2000, for example, was notably harsher toward and more suspicious of the West, and restored the scenario of repelling aggression from the West to articulated Russian doctrine. This evolution was, as Mark Kramer has written, provoked by such events as “the Kosovo crisis, proposals for the further

⁴⁹ Dmitri V. Trenin, *The Forgotten War: Chechnya and Russia's Future*, Policy Brief no. 28 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2003), p. 5. Also suggesting that Chechnya has become a major asset for the Russian military in the battle against reform is Pavel Baev, “The Russian Army and Chechnya: Victory Instead of Reform?” in Stephen Cimbala, ed., *The Russian Military into the Twenty-first Century* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 75–96.

expansion of NATO, disagreements about nuclear arms control.”⁵⁰ Similarly, Taylor has more generally concluded that “U.S. policies on the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Kosovo, and national missile defense have undermined voices in Russia calling for more significant military reform.”⁵¹ In short, in championing its arguments and preferred policies, the Russian military has found some ammunition in the behavior of outside powers. This fact has influenced the course of the reform debate in Russia.

The picture so far portrays a weakly motivated and highly distracted civilian leadership and a highly motivated and variously advantaged Russian military. This explains, to a considerable extent, the political dynamic associated with military reform in Russia over the past dozen years. But there remain at least two additional considerations that are significant in understanding the lack of progress toward meaningful military reform—one a significant constraint, one a significant alternative.

Lack of Financial Resources

The constraint is related to Russia’s ongoing fiscal difficulties. Ironically, the same severe lack of financial resources that makes military reform seem imperative simultaneously makes it seem impossible. As one analyst has concluded, “A major barrier to any sensible reform has been the lack of money.”⁵² Alexander Konovalov and Sergei Oznobishev conclude that financial constraints are “the main obstacle to military reform.”⁵³ This is true because while military reform is a route to a very different Russian military establishment, it is not necessarily a cheaper one. Indeed, some elements of the military reform agenda—professionalizing manpower, exploiting advanced technology, modernizing equipment, rationalizing infrastructure—are potentially quite costly. Moreover, there are large transitional costs that Russia will struggle to afford. Moving to a much smaller professional force, for example, will result in the retirement of large numbers of surplus officers whose retirement costs will be considerable. Opponents of military reform suggest, on the basis of such considerations, that reform is simply infeasible given existing and

⁵⁰ Kramer, “What Is Driving Russia’s New Strategic Concept?” p. 1.

⁵¹ Taylor, “Putin and the Military,” p. 5.

⁵² Frank Umbach, “Dilemmas of Russian Military Modernization,” *Transatlantic International Politik*, January 2002, p. 26.

⁵³ Konovalov and Oznobishev, “Russian Armed Forces,” p. 29.

expected budget levels. Proponents of reforms attempt to articulate visions of reforms that Russia can afford even within the current budget realities (as illustrated in the Arbatov chapter below). There seems to be wide agreement, however, that Russia's fiscal constraints represent a significant impediment to military reform.

The Nuclear Alternative

For all of its post-Soviet troubles, Russia remains a nuclear superpower. (Indeed, this is the one respect in which Russia possesses any claim to continued superpower status.) This means that Russia has the alternative to rest its security ultimately on nuclear threats and nuclear options. In any large-scale contingency, Russia's nuclear capabilities would inevitably be a significant factor and would provide Russia with very serious escalatory potentials. Thus, one answer to the inadequacies of Russia's conventional forces is to embrace a security concept heavily reliant on nuclear weapons. And indeed, to a considerable extent this is what Russia has done, as indicated in Rose Gottemoeller's chapter. It explicitly repudiated the no-first-use doctrine that had been promulgated by the Soviet Union—on the grounds that conventional weakness makes it possible that Russia would need to use nuclear weapons first against large conventional attacks. It has openly echoed the doctrine once associated with NATO, in which nuclear weapons are regarded as the equalizer that makes up for conventional inferiority. It has judged that financial exigencies compel a significant reliance on nuclear weapons (though maintaining Russia's nuclear forces is not cheap and can force painful trade-offs with conventional force maintenance and modernization).⁵⁴ Indeed, Gottemoeller describes an extensive nuclearization of Russian policy. As Frank Umbach has observed, "Many Russian security and defense experts advocated placing a greater reliance on nuclear weapons to compensate for the deficiencies of the country's conventional forces. Not only strategic, but also tactical nuclear weapons played a much more important role in Russia's defense posture, and particularly in the Far East opposite

⁵⁴ See, for example, Nikolai Sokov, "Kosovo Syndrome and the Great Nuclear Debate of 2000," PONARS Policy Memo no. 181 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, December 2000), which discusses the intense debate in Russia between those within the military promoting a nuclear emphasis and those urging conventional modernization. Sokov concludes, however, that economic considerations "cause greater reliance on nuclear weapons" (p. 5).

China... This new emphasis... suggested an excessive reliance on nuclear forces for virtually any military-political contingency.⁵⁵

The availability of this nuclear alternative vitiates the momentum for military reform. The many deficiencies of Russia's conventional forces are more tolerable because there exists the option to rely on nuclear weapons. The urgency associated with military reform is undermined because there is an ultimate nuclear guarantee of Russia's security.

In sum, there are an array of explanations that have been offered to account for that failure of military reform in Russia. These nine explanations are not all equally embraced by experts seeking to explain the course of military reform in the period since 1991. Indeed, some specialists reject the explanatory power of this or that explanation. The aim here has not been to assess the relative explanatory power of these explanations but to accumulate the explanations that are evident in the discussion of this issue—none of which are mutually exclusive. What is incontrovertible is that in combination this collection of factors has sufficed to block major progress toward significant military reform in Russia. The imperative to reform seemed powerful. The impediments to reform have so far proven more powerful still.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

The foregoing discussion has sought to sketch in broad terms the contours of the military reform issue in Russia. This framework is intended to provide background to the more detailed chapters that follow. In this volume, six experts examine six key features of Russia's military, seeking to illuminate the responses of Russia's government and military to these challenges and the policies and capabilities that have resulted from their perceptions and decisions.

The Evolution of Russian National Security Policy

In chapter 1, Pavel Baev describes and assesses the evolution of Russian national security policy since 1992. This overview lays out a series of phases in Moscow's approach to handling its military establishments and

⁵⁵ Frank Umbach, *Future Military Reform: Russia's Nuclear and Conventional Forces*, no. D65 (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, August 2002), pp. 13–14. Umbach provides an extensive discussion of this “excessive reliance” on nuclear weapons.

assesses the interactions between civilian and military in shaping the course of military policy in Russia. Baev portrays a grim picture of Russian military capabilities and offers his explanation for the failure to undertake needed improvements and innovations. After years of stagnation, Baev concludes, the Russian military is now desperately in need of “radical modernization.”

The Social and Political Condition of the Russian Military

In chapter 2, Aleksandr Golts addresses the social and political condition of the Russian military. Russia inherited a large mass army filled with literally millions of conscripts. In the conditions that existed at the time the Soviet Union collapsed, these conscripts were poorly paid, when paid at all, and experienced an unpleasant and impoverished quality of life. It is hardly surprising that there were large numbers of dispirited, poorly motivated troops in the Russian military. How was Russia to recruit and retain the motivated and well-trained personnel that are essential to a modern military? How could Moscow render military service attractive and socially valued? Golts describes the serious breakdown of the manpower recruitment system in Russia.

Russia also inherited a huge professional officer corps, accustomed to privileged status, lifelong employment, relatively abundant resources, and unquestioned obedience from those below in the chain of command. But Moscow neither needed, nor could afford, this surplus of officers. But encouraging or compelling retirement produced painful burdens in terms of pensions, housing, and reemployment. And for those officers who remained within the military, there was the shock of adjustment to a new environment for the military, in which status was lacking, resources were scarce, the troops were troublesome, and career prospects uncertain. What sort of officer corps did Russia need and how could it create such a corps? Golts outlines the high levels of dissatisfaction in Russia's officer corps and suggests that their plight can be regarded as akin to serfdom.

Russia also inherited a uniformed defense ministry and a high command accustomed to a totalitarian system of civil-military relations, to almost unquestioned claim on the nation's resources, to high levels of political influence, and to social distinction and public acclaim. This military establishment suddenly found itself in the midst of a messy democracy-in-the-making. Its authority was questioned, its resources were slashed, its social standing declined, and it found itself answering to civilian authorities, including civilians appointed to high positions in the ministry of defense. How did Russia bridge this transition and construct a

new role for the military in its internal politics and a new, more democratic, mode of civil-military relations? Golts, like Baev, emphasizes the high command's success in preserving its political clout and winning policy battles, and highlights the paradoxical contrast between the poor condition of the Russian military and the strong influence of Russia's military leadership.

Military Reform

In chapter 3, Alexei Arbatov provides a perspective on the current state of the military reform debate in Russia. Writing as both analyst of and long-time participant in this debate (having been for many years a prominent Duma member), Arbatov conveys the perceptions of a strong advocate of reform. Arbatov believes that thoroughgoing reform is necessary if Russia is to obtain the military that it requires. He urges that Russia rethink its defense requirements, reduce the number of forces to affordable levels, reconsider the balance among the services, reconfigure the way that it acquires military manpower, recalculate its weapons acquisition needs, and so on. As he put it in an essay written in 1997, military reform "includes comprehensive reorganization of troops and formations, defense industries and war mobilization assets, the recruitment system and social security for the military, the division of power and authority among the branches of government on military matters, the financial system for funding defense and security, the organization of the executive branch and MOD itself for implementing defense policy, military buildup (or build-down) and force employment." As noted above, however, though the need for reform was urgent, the obstacles to reform were considerable. Indeed, Arbatov concluded in 1997 that the Russian military establishment had "remained static in a society that has otherwise changed profoundly."⁵⁶ In chapter 4, Arbatov returns to the questions of Russia's military reform, identifying problems in the Russian debate, suggesting reasons for the failure of reform, considering economic constraints on reform, and pressing for reforms that he still feels are urgently needed.

⁵⁶ Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," CSIA Discussion Paper no. 97-01 (Cambridge, MA: Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, September 1997), pp. 4, 1. A later, somewhat revised version of this paper appeared as Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia: Dilemmas, Obstacles, and Prospects," *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 4 (spring 1998), pp. 83-134.

Russia, Regional Conflict, and the Use of Military Power

Beyond the periphery of Russia's borders, and on the periphery of Russia itself (in Chechnya), various conflicts burn and various perceived challenges to Russia's security arise. This reality raises a series of immediate policy challenges. How does Moscow view these conflicts? What interests does the Russian government believe are at stake in those situations? What are the implications of these conflicts for Russia's security policy? What capability does Russia have to intervene militarily and what doctrine of intervention does it employ? And, far from least, what is the record of Russian intervention in these conflicts and what are the consequences and implications of those interventions? In chapter 4, Roy Allison examines Russia, regional conflict, and the use of military power. He notes in particular that the Russian military is poorly suited for the missions that are now regularly asked of it, and he highlights the failure of the Russian military to adapt effectively to the new challenges that it faces. He identifies another paradoxical gap between the obvious need for reform and the failure to undertake reform.

The Economics of Defense in Russia

The Soviet Union famously possessed the world's largest and most productive (though not the most technologically advanced) defense industrial complex. It was sometimes said that producing large quantities of military equipment was the only thing that the Soviet system did well. Russia inherited the largest share of that defense industrial base. Hence, it came into possession of an enormous state-owned, state-run, state-funded defense industry that routinely produced vast numbers of tanks, aircraft, guns, and other military equipment that Russia did not need and could not afford. Its defense complex included thousands of workers who were housed, fed, schooled, and otherwise cared for by the enterprises. In the Soviet period, these enterprises were favored institutions blessed with a customer—the Soviet government—that had an insatiable appetite for its products. When the USSR collapsed, the market for defense industrial products collapsed as well. How has the Russian government and defense sector adapted to the new realities of the post-Soviet period?

In chapter 5, Vitaly Shlykov examines the defense industrial sector in Russia. He suggests that the extent to which the Soviet Union's economy was devoted to and deformed by the military sector has not been sufficiently appreciated. He characterizes that situation as the "structural militarization" of the Soviet economy, and explains why the Russian defense

industrial inheritance has posed and still poses such acute problems. The Russian defense industrial complex has staggered through the past decade by exploiting stockpiles of materials accumulated during the Soviet period and by pursuing arms exports as much as possible. But neither of these approaches is sufficient for the long run, and neither represents an adequate adaption of the defenses industrial complex to new conditions. But here too, Shlykov details the poverty of reform ideas for the defense sector and bemoans the lack of political leadership in moving the defense sector in the direction of needed reforms. At stake is Russia's ability to arm and modernize its future forces.

Nuclear Weapons in Current Russian Policy

It was the enormous Soviet nuclear threat that, above all else, haunted Western fears and gripped Western attention. Once the dust had settled after the implosion of the USSR, the world's largest nuclear arsenal was in Russia's hands. It represents Moscow's primary claim to great power status. Furthermore, the economically induced erosion of Russia's conventional capabilities was so severe that nuclear weapons figure prominently in Russian thinking about providing security for itself. In chapter 6, Rose Gottemoeller discusses the absolute centrality of nuclear weapons in Russia's military reform debate and shows how nuclear weapons moved to the center of Russian thinking about security even as nuclear issues faded from public view.

On the other hand, the great nuclear rivalry with the United States dissipated, and Washington, for its part, grew more concerned about the weaknesses in Russia's nuclear complex—especially fears of nuclear leakage to terrorists and rogue states—than about the threat posed by the Russian nuclear inventory. This gave rise to unprecedented new forms of nuclear cooperation between the United States and Russia, as the two powers found ways of working together to enhance the safety and security of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in an era when a new political relationship between East and West seemed to promise great new opportunities for nuclear arms control and restraint, the more traditional arms control process played an important role at times but often sputtered and produced surprisingly modest results, while the nuclear postures of the two powers proved surprisingly resistant to major changes.

How have nuclear weapons figured in Moscow's security thinking? What role do they play in Russia's plans to defend itself? What have been

the results of U.S.-Russian nuclear cooperation and what possibilities exist for the future? And what role does nuclear arms control play in Moscow's concept for managing the nuclear balance in the 21st century? These questions are addressed by Rose Gottemoeller in her chapter on nuclear weapons and arms control in Russian security policy.

CONCLUSION

It appears that Russia is still in the early stages of a long journey from the military it inherited to a military suitable to Russia's internal and external realities. The present volume represents a stocktaking of the journey so far—a journey that has been difficult, contentious, politically demanding, and more fruitless than not. We have sought to address important aspects of this experience, looking at the military establishment as it now exists and the reforms that are thought necessary if that establishment is to become an instrument more appropriate to Russia's needs, more relevant to Russia's strategic environment, and more compatible with Russia's constraints. Pavel Baev shows vividly how Russia's military policy has failed to adapt adequately to Russia's new realities. Aleksandr Golts portrays a demoralized and dissolute Russian military struggling to create an effective military organization with discontented officers and unhappy, unmotivated recruits. Alexei Arbatov depicts a flawed and unsuccessful reform debate and outlines the reforms that still ought to be pursued if Russia's military is to move in the right direction. Roy Allison describes the unsuitability of Russia's existing military forces for effectively addressing Russia's existing security challenges and puzzles over the failure of the Russian military to adapt despite disappointment and defeat. Vitaly Shlykov conveys how the Soviet Union's massive defense industrial sector deformed the entire national economy and sketches Russia's so far inadequate efforts to cope with the ponderous legacy of that sector. And Rose Gottemoeller highlights the centrality of nuclear weapons in Russian security policy and in Russia's military reform debate, suggesting that Moscow's nuclear crutch has enabled it to ignore or deny both the extensive deficiencies of and the substantial reforms needed in the Russian military.

Thus, though some changes have been made and some progress has been achieved, the conclusion that military reform is imperative seems as inescapable today as it did when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. And yet the paradox associated with military reform in Russia also continues: it is imperative but impossible, inevitable but avoidable, urgent but

deferrable. While Russia's military reformers argue passionately that the crisis in Russia's military is more acute than ever, President Vladimir Putin proclaimed in the fall of 2003 that for the Russian military, "The period of radical reform is over."⁵⁷ As indicated repeatedly in the pages that follow, it is precisely this collision between the substantive analysis of military requirements and the politics of security policy in Russia that accounts for much of the dynamic witnessed since the Soviet Union's demise in 1991—and that ensures that military reform will remain on the agenda in Russia for years to come.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Zoltan Barany, "Defense Reform, Russian Style: Obstacles, Options, and Opposition," University of Texas, Austin, February 2004, p. 1.