

New Russian security doctrine reflects major policy shifts

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

On Jan. 10, Russian acting President Vladimir Putin signed an order (Ukase No. 24) setting forth a new “National Security Conception for the Russian Federation.” The toughly worded text not only reaffirms the “nuclear first use” policy, which *EIR* has reported on several occasions,¹ but it also contains extraordinary formulations—scarcely reported on in the Western press—linking national security with the *indispensable role of the state in reviving the real economy*,² stressing, especially, support for “science-intensive products” and the necessity to revive “research into strategically key areas of scientific and technological development.” The document furthermore hints at possible dirigistic measures for currency control and reorganization of the Russian financial and credit system.

While encompassing significant changes vis-à-vis the earlier, 1997 version, including the extended role given to nuclear weapons, the new national security document is clearly consistent with an entire array of strategic policy shifts which have been in progress for over a year, and which were most recently reflected again in the joint Russian-Chinese policy declaration issued at the time of then-President Boris Yeltsin’s visit to Beijing last December (see *EIR*, Dec. 24, 1999). For this and other reasons, the new document should *not*, in our view, be seen as an ephemeral product of ongoing power struggles on the Russian political scene, nor simply as a personal policy of acting President Putin. Rather, the new doc-

trine embodies an overriding *institutional response* to the existential threat to Russia, posed by the combination of economic collapse and the “Brzezinskian” geopolitical insanity coming from the British-American-Commonwealth (BAC) faction in the West. The decided toughening of the Russian stand, reflected in the document, underscores the warnings of Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche: that the ascendancy of either Al Gore or George W. Bush to the U.S. Presidency would put us on the road to World War III.

Military-strategic elements

The new ukase begins its broad review of Russia’s national security issues, by stressing “dynamic transformations” of the world situation, involving a conflict between attempts of Russia and other nations to form a *multipolar system* of economic, political, and scientific and technological cooperation, on the one side, and the attempt to impose a “domination of international relations by advanced Western nations under the leadership of the U.S.A.” on the other. The latter countries are attempting to enforce “unilateral decisions on key world problems, based especially on military force, and breaking with the basic norms of international law.” Furthermore, “a number of countries” are trying “to weaken the position of Russia in the political, economic, military, and other spheres.” As a result, “*the importance of military force in international relations continues to be very great.*” Among the threats to Russia’s national security, the document repeatedly emphasizes “the problem of terrorism, which has a *transnational character*. . . . International terrorism has launched an open campaign to destabilize the situation in Russia.”

Attempts to ignore Russian interests constitute a danger to world stability, the document declares. “In spite of the complex international situation and internal difficulties, Russia, with its considerable economic, scientific, technological,

1. See, for example, Jonathan Tennenbaum, “Russia, Pressed to the Wall, Moots Use of Nuclear Weapons,” *EIR*, Sept. 17, 1999; Rachel Douglas, “Russian ‘Doctrine’: The Posture of a Big Military Power, Under Attack,” *EIR*, Oct. 29, 1999.

2. The quotations contained in this article were translated from the Russian text of the Ukase, which was reproduced in *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye (Independent Military Review)* on Jan. 14. The emphasis is that of the author.

and military potential, and *unique strategic position in the Eurasian continent*, continues to play an important role in international processes.”

To meet the strategic challenges, major efforts must be made to improve the situation in the Armed Forces, security forces, and domestic and foreign intelligence structures. The document points to a “critically low level of operational and combat preparedness of the Russian Armed Forces . . . and unacceptable cuts in the procurement of modern weapons and specialized military equipment” which must now be reversed.

Nuclear weapons are indispensable to Russia’s national security, the document emphasizes. “The Russian Federation must have nuclear forces capable of inflicting guaranteed massive damage against any aggressor state or coalition of states under any given conditions.” Later it is stated that Russia is prepared “to use all forces and means at its disposal, including *nuclear weapons*, in the event of a need to repulse armed aggression, if all other measures for resolving the crisis have been exhausted or have proven ineffective.”

The ukase also affirms that use of military force *within* the territory of Russia could be authorized, “only in strict adherence to the Constitution and Federal Law,” in case of “threats to the lives of citizens, threats to the territorial integrity, and also threats of the use of force to overturn the constitutional order.”

The new doctrine furthermore recognizes “the necessity of a Russian military presence in some strategically important regions of the world. Stationing of limited contingents (military bases, naval forces), based on agreements and on the principle of partnership, should permit Russia to fulfill its obligations and to contribute to creating a stable balance of forces in these regions, while giving Russia the capability to react to crisis situations in their early stages, and to contribute to realizing the nation’s foreign policy goals.”

Russia’s national security, the document emphasizes, embraces not only the area of military defense per se, but also economics and “the defense of Russia’s cultural and moral-spiritual heritage, its historical traditions and norms of public life.” The document calls for a new government policy for “moral and spiritual education of the population,” including “prohibition of the use of mass media air time for the broadcast of programs which promote violence and acts of degradation.” Government policy should also include action “to counter the negative influence of foreign religious organizations and missionaries.”

‘Serious miscalculations’ in economic reforms are key to national security threat

The most novel and far-reaching feature of the security doctrine signed by Putin is the way it addresses the *link between national security and economics*, and puts forward priorities for *dirigistic state measures* to rebuild the economy. As this part of the new doctrine has been nearly entirely blacked out in Western press commentaries, it is worthwhile to quote here at length from some key passages:

“In the sphere of economics the [national security] threat is many-sided and determined above all by the major drop in the national product; the shrinkage of investment and investment activity, and of scientific and technological potentials; stagnation in the agricultural sector; growth of domestic and foreign debt; the over-predominance of raw materials and energy in the composition of exports, and the predominance of food and consumer goods—including crucial necessities of life—in imports.”

In another place the document refers to “the consequences of the deep social crisis [which] include the sharp decline in the birth rate and in the mean life expectancy in the country.”

Among the economic threats to the nation, the critical situation in the scientific-industrial complex is repeatedly emphasized, including “the decline of research into strategically important directions of scientific and technological development; the outflow of specialists and intellectual property out of the country, threatening Russia with the loss of its leading position in the world; the degradation of science-intensive sectors of production and increased technological dependency of Russia on foreign sources; loss of the defense capability of Russia.”

The document continues by noting that “the negative processes in the economy are the *root cause* of the separatist tendencies among a number of the constituent territories of the Russian Federation. They lead to an *increase in political instability* and the weakening of the unified economic structure of Russia and its main components: the technological-productive and transportation nexuses, and the financial, banking, credit, and tax systems.”

In remarkable contrast to the economic policy article published under Putin’s name at the end of December (see *EIR*, Jan. 7, 2000), which put the blame for Russia’s economic decline nearly exclusively on the failures of the Soviet system and neglected to mention the devastating effects of the International Monetary Fund “shock therapy,” the new ukase points sharply to the national security consequences of “serious miscalculations” in the economic reforms and the “criminal structures” which extend into the government apparatus: “The threat of criminalization of the social relations that took shape in the process of reforming the socio-political system and economic activity, has become especially acute. *Serious miscalculations*, made in the initial stage of reforms in the economic, military, legal, and other areas of government activity; the *weakening of the system of state regulation and control* . . . [and] the decline of the moral-spiritual potential of society are *fundamental factors*, encouraging the growth of crime, especially in its organized form, as well as corruption.” It is further noted that “terrorism and organized crime have grown in scale due to the change in forms of property, which has frequently been accompanied by conflicts, and to the intensification of power struggles on the basis of clan and ethnic interests.”

“The consequences of these miscalculations are expressed in the weakening of legal control over the situation

in the country and *the involvement of certain elements of executive and legislative branches of government in criminal structures*, the penetration of the latter into the sphere of management of the banking business, big industry, trade organizations, and goods-distribution networks. In this connection *the struggle against organized crime has not only a legal, but also a political character.*”

The latter formulation, which had appeared earlier in statements attributed to the new President, is widely interpreted in Russia as an indication that Putin might be preparing to move against Boris Berezovsky and other “Russian oligarchs,” who up to now were counted among his most influential supporters.

Dirigistic economic measures

Besides mooted a possible purge of corrupt “oligarch” influences in the government, the document strongly points to *dirigistic interventions* by the state, to halt the economic collapse and rebuild the productive base of the country. Here are some key excerpts:

“Under conditions of the liberalization of Russia’s foreign trade and the sharpening of international competition in goods and services, it is indispensable to strengthen *protection of the interests of Russia’s goods-producers.*”

“Crucially important is to carry out a balanced financial-credit policy, aiming at gradually *reducing the dependency of Russia on foreign credit.* . . .

“It is indispensable to strengthen the role of the state in regulating the activities of foreign banks, insurance and investment companies, and to introduce certain well-defined and justified limits on the granting to foreign companies of rights to exploit strategic natural resources, telecommunications, transport, and trade networks.

“Effective measures must be taken in the area of *currency regulation and control*, in order to create the conditions for ending foreign currency transactions in the domestic market and *preventing the uncontrolled transfer of capital out of the country.*”

“Basic directions of government action in the domestic economy, for maintaining the national security of the Russian Federation, are:

“. . . Strengthening *state regulation of the economy.* . . .

“Taking necessary steps to overcome the effects of the economic crisis, to preserve and develop the scientific and technological, and production potential. . . .

“. . . Highest priority is the task of eliminating the structural deformation of the Russian economy, by guaranteeing the growth in output of *science-intensive products* and products involving a high degree of processing. . . .

“It is very important to strengthen state support for investment and innovation, and to adopt measures to establish a stable bank system *corresponding to the interests of the real economy*, improving access of enterprises to long-term credits for financing capital investment.”

Finally, in the context of its repeated emphasis on science and technology, the document states: “The scientific-industrial complex plays an important role in realizing the national interests of Russia. The restructuring and conversion of the military-industrial complex must be carried out without damaging the development of new technologies and scientific and technological possibilities, the modernization of armaments . . . and the strengthening of the position of Russian producers on the world arms market.” Also, specific measures should be taken “to *stimulate the transmission of new military technologies into the civilian sector.*” The Russian government intends to take steps “to concentrate financial and material resources in high-priority directions of development of science and technology, giving support to leading scientific schools, accelerating the formation of scientific and technological groups and national technological bases.”

The crucial question, is, of course, what the Putin government will actually do to carry out the economic policy intentions expressed in the document. If decisive action is really in the works, a major struggle will most certainly develop around it in the coming weeks and months.

But without doubt, the new national security doctrine reflects a firm policy consensus within Russian national institutions. It must be taken seriously.

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