

Russia: NATO May Force Nuclear Strategy Shift

by Rachel Douglas

More than any of the particular disagreements on display when Presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush conferred at Camp David in September, a meeting Putin had with Russia's military leadership upon his return, dramatizes the potential for a global showdown to emerge from the posture and policy of Vice President Dick Cheney's group in Washington.

Guidelines for understanding the significance of Putin's Oct. 2 session with the Russian military appeared in Lyndon LaRouche's Aug. 29 *EIR* article, "McAuliffe's Deadly Delusions: or, How Harry Truman Defeated Himself." LaRouche wrote: "Suppose you were, for example, Russia, China, or India. Suppose you knew that your nation was pre-designated for a medium-term nuclear-warfare attack, or for destruction by other means, if you failed to resist the attacker. . . . How might you react?"

As the Oct. 2 meeting commenced, the Ministry of Defense released a document called "Unclassified Military Doctrine for Modernization of the Armed Forces." Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov's report to the meeting was based on this paper, which talked in terms of changing the rules of use for nuclear weapons, as well as circumstances under which Russia might take pre-emptive armed action.

Izvestia of Oct. 3 reported on the document, under the headline "Russia Is Prepared To Change Its Nuclear Strategy." The newspaper highlighted this section of the paper: "Russia is attentively following the process of NATO's transformation, and counts on the removal of direct and oblique anti-Russian components from both the military planning and the political declarations of NATO members. *If, however, NATO continues to exist as a military alliance with the offensive military doctrine it has today, this will require a fundamental reshaping of Russian military planning, and of the principles of development of the Russian Armed Forces, including a change in Russian nuclear strategy.*"

One measure under consideration, according to the document, would be "a limited combat utilization of individual components of the strategic deterrent forces" (i.e., using the nuclear arsenal) as an element of national military strategy. The strategic deterrent remains committed "to preventing any type of forcible pressure and aggression against Russia or its allies," and is "based on the capability of inflicting retaliatory damage, on a scale that would call into question the achievement of the goals of the possible aggression."



Behind the smiles at Camp David on Sept. 27: Russia not only remains opposed to U.S. "strategies" for the extended occupation of Iraq; President Putin and military leaders have been meeting on possible adoption of Russian "pre-emptive war" doctrine, and nuclear weapons-use doctrine, in response to U.S. imperial war policies.

In its coverage, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* of Oct. 3 stressed a different aspect, under the headline "A Pre-emptive Strike From Ivanov." The defense minister asserted that Russia reserves certain prerogatives: "Current external threats require the Armed Forces to perform various types of missions in various regions of the world. *We do not absolutely exclude the pre-emptive use of force, if required by the interests of Russia or its obligations to allies.*" Relevant threats to Russian interests would include "interference in the internal affairs of the Russian Federation by foreign nations, or organizations supported by foreign nations," as well as "instability in countries adjacent [to Russia], born of the weakness of their central governments."

The agenda of the Oct. 2 conference was the tasks of Russia's Armed Forces in the current strategic situation. Under the heading of "modernization" came matters of armaments and their deployment. As *EIR* reported Sept. 12 ("Russia Reacts To Cheney Nuke-War Policy Threat"), the Russian military-scientific-industrial complex is working to develop an "asymmetric" response to the threat of a war involving U.S. use of nuclear weapons—a threat voiced openly by Cheney's circles in recent months.

President Putin discussed new "nuclear weapons now in the process of development" when he visited the Federal Nuclear Center at Sarov, in July. At this latest meeting, the Russian President continued to emphasize new weapons development, while also turning to upgrades of the combat status of an older component of the strategic arsenal: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. In his remarks, Putin emphasized the need to meet new types of threats, and to conduct "constant military and strategic analysis of the situation." He endorsed Ivanov's report, and underscored that the still powerful Russian ICBM arsenal is "the main foundation of Russia's national security." These forces will be upgraded, Putin

stressed, by phasing onto combat-ready status some of Russia's "reserve supply" of the heavy ICBMs known in by West by the code-name SS-19, currently in storage. As even older Soviet-era missiles are decommissioned, these never-deployed SS-19s will go on duty.

The stored forces comprise dozens of missiles with "hundreds of nuclear warheads," as Chief of Staff Anatoli Kvashnin reminded the gathering; they are equipped with multiple independent re-entry vehicles, or MIRVs. Putin said, "These missiles were produced not yesterday and not today, but in a certain sense they are new products. They still have a quite significant useful lifespan. And their combat capabilities, including overcoming any anti-missile defense systems, are unrivalled." As in his July visit to Sarov, Putin went on to stress the need "to work in a planned fashion, without big leaps, but persistently and in a systematic way, on creating new models of 21st-Century weapons." He said that he would personally oversee the implementation of the work planned in this regard, including in "quite sensitive areas" of anti-missile defense and other projects, discussed with President Bush at Camp David.

Won't Play U.S. Imperial Games

The Sept. 26-27 Camp David talks ended with words about "strategic partnership," but no rapprochement on key issues relating to Iraq. When the Presidents met the press, Putin brought Iraq up first, to say that Russia most of all wants to see the UN play a leading role in solving problems faced by the Iraqi people. As for the commitment of Russian resources to Iraq, Putin said Russia is interested in participating in the normalization of Iraq "as soon as possible." But, "The degree and extent and level of Russia's participation in the restoration of Iraq will be determined after we know the parameters of the resolution—of the new [UN] resolution on Iraq."

Days later, to reporters at a World Economic Forum meeting in Moscow Oct. 3, Putin said of the latest U.S.-drafted resolution on Iraq: "We are not satisfied with the draft by our American partners, though they are trying to find a compromise. . . . I believe that if we are guided by these principles, we can expect to find such a compromise." The UN Security Council Resolution "must give the international community greater responsibility for . . . the rebirth of Iraq. . . . In this way, I believe we can achieve serious progress in the reconstruction of the country." Putin went on at some length about how the Iraqis would place "greater trust in its traditional [economic] allies" than in the coalition forces.

The week of Oct. 6, Putin engaged in diplomacy with the leading European powers, who also oppose the U.S. draft. French Prime Minister Jean Pierre Raffarin and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder were in Russia at the same time, for talks ranging from cooperation within the UN framework to deal with crises around the Middle East, North Korea, Iran and Iraq, to new prospects for bilateral economic cooperation.