

## **Russia's Grand Strategy Accordingly to the 2014 Military Doctrine**

*Dr. oec. Jānis Bērziņš, Dr. pol. sc. Ieva Bērziņa*

### **National Defence Academy of Latvia, Latvia**

*janis.berzins01@mil.lv, ieva.berzina@mil.lv*

The Military doctrine of the Russian Federation is a system of officially accepted views on the preparation for armed defense and armed protection of the Russian. The first military doctrine in Russia after the breakdown of the Soviet Union was adopted in 1993. It was a transitional period document that stated that Russia has no potential enemies, and it did not even mention NATO. The military doctrine of 2000 was adopted in response to the first wave of NATO enlargement, and the war in Yugoslavia. This document marked increasing criticism towards these processes, although it did not use the name "NATO". It rather reflects Russia's reactions to NATO's development of strategic offensive arms, global missile defense system, including the West's support for Georgia in the 2008 military conflict, and other factors. With the adoption of the new version of the Russian military in December 26, 2014, many Western analysts rushed to say that there are only minor changes in relation to the 2010 Doctrine. This is far from reality. The 2014 version of the Russian military doctrine not only has many new components, as it is perceived differently by West and Russia itself, with a wide range of interpretations.

The Russian are convinced that most NATO experts and analytics purposefully misjudged the Russian military doctrine. The aim is to distort Russia's military policy, to justify the offensive nature of military and nuclear doctrines of the NATO states, the new NATO strategic conception, the global deployment of missile defense, and the militarization of space. The Security Council of the Russian Federation indicates that the amended military doctrine keeps the defensive nature, stressing Russia's commitment to the use of military force only after exhausting the possibilities of application of non-violent action. Therefore, the doctrine is purely defensive, although Russia shall be ready to defend its security consistently and in a tough. This gives the basis for grounding such antipodal views as "Russia becomes increasingly aggressive" and "Russia has intentions for peace". The general trend is that Russian experts highlight the defensive aspect of the military doctrine, whereas the Western analytics focus on the means how Russia implements its aggressive intentions. This is a typical "security dilemma" when an effort of one side to maximize its security increases threats for the other thus escalating tension in international relations.

For the Russian, the need to amend the military doctrine of 2010 arose in response to the changes in the global security environment:

- 1) New threats to the Russian Federation, which appeared in the situation in Ukraine and around it, as well as the events in North Africa, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan;
- 2) The increasing implementation of the interests of leading nations with 'indirect actions' by using the protest potential of the population, radical and extremist organizations, private military companies;
- 3) Increase of offensive NATO potential on the borders of Russia, and deployment of global missile system;
- 4) It was also necessary to take into account the normative legal acts, which came into force after the approval of the previous doctrine, and changes in the organizational structure of Russian Armed Forces.

The main novelties of the amended doctrine are:

- 1) It specifies the basic formulations of major external and internal military dangers, the

peculiarities of military conflicts, as well as the application of the Armed Forces. Some of the main innovative elements in this respect are:

- a) foreign private military companies;
- b) increasing threat of terrorism;
- c) activities of persons and organizations directed against sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the state;
- d) the trend of shifting of military dangers and threats in information space and inner sphere of a country;
- 2) The concept of non-nuclear deterrence;
- 3) The concept of mobilization readiness;
- 4) The need to improve the effectiveness of military-patriotic education of citizens;
- 5) Providing aerospace defence;
- 6) Ensuring Russia's national interests in the Arctic;
- 7) Creation, development and modernization of military infrastructure objects;
- 8) Improving the quality and competitiveness of military products, the creation of a system for managing the total life cycle of weapons, military and special equipment;
- 9) Expanding cooperation with the BRICS countries, the development of relations with the republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
- 10) The need to maintain an equal dialogue with the EU and NATO;
- 11) The need for a new security model in the Asia-Pacific region.

The doctrine also admits the increasing ideological confrontation between Russia and the West, although Russia lacks a clearly defined system of values that is the main prerequisite in the information confrontation. It includes the internal military danger destructive activities of foreign intelligence services and non-profit organizations working for them in the information and socio-political spheres; non-nuclear deterrence system and mobilization readiness; the creation of special formations for the transmission to the Armed Forces or for the usage in the interests of the economy of the Russian Federation when the mobilization is being declared; the Arctic question, among others. At the same time, there is an important question if the doctrine is declarative and to what extent it is consistent with the actual military activities of the Russian Federation, since the doctrine can be used for purposeful deception.

Despite the critique, the changes in the military doctrine give a hint of the Russian strategic thinking. Therefore a wider analysis of the main new accents in the military doctrine can provide a better understanding of Russia's grand strategy.