

Will this be the short millennium?

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The moral cost of the Nato war on Yugoslavia is only beginning to become plain. The material costs were far from negligible, and have revealed considerable weaknesses in the military preparedness of most Alliance members. More than one thousand aircraft flew more than 38,000 sorties, and cost dozens of billions of dollars. Twenty-eight countries have subsequently deployed 38,000 peace keepers, many of who will be needed to stay in place indefinitely in conditions which are highly insecure.

Ethnic violence rages through Kosovo, and even the most robust optimism blanches in the face of such ungovernable turbulence. Murders are commonplace. Former guerrillas, once subject at least to token disarmament, are now commonly armed again. Nato forces suffer continual exchanges of fire, sometimes with minority Serbs and at other times with majority Albanians. The real Government of Kosovo is frequently said to be in the hands of the Kosovo Liberation Army, but its power is not in any way commensurate with the normal tasks of statehood. The Mafia, and the frightening drugs trade, exert their suffocating hold on what passes for civil society in the province.

All this provides the most cursory description of the situation. It is full of horror. The social disintegration, it seems, remains beyond the capacity of the Alliance and its other allies, to influence, leave alone control. Were hostilities to spread out to embrace Montenegro, or to undermine Macedonia, the military costs could put the European allies to the severest of tests, and create a political crisis in the United States itself.

But of course, it is on the institutional level that the Yugoslav war has produced the most intractable problems of all. The decision to move into war from the posing of the Rambouillet ultimatum completely sidelined United Nations procedures. It was felt by the

Americans and the British that recourse to the UN Security Council would invite a veto from the Russian and Chinese permanent members. But that is why the veto was established: to ensure that there must be unanimity between the major powers before this kind of action could be entertained. To smartly step around this inconvenient obstacle was to step around all the carefully established mechanisms which gave institutional shape to great power interrelationships in the whole postwar settlement from 1945 onwards.

The painful result is now apparent. Since the Russians no longer have diplomatic mechanisms through which to deal with international crises, they are pushed into more confrontational power relationships. The result of this decision creates a third phase in postwar history. We had the cold war, and then we had the post-cold war interregnum. Now we have the resumption of forward nuclear deterrence as a primary instrument of military policy, or the post post-cold war period. This does not simply regress to the cold war. Both of the major powers are weaker for different reasons. Popular gut pacifism in the United States prevents military action which might cost soldiers' lives: nowadays no body bags can be repatriated from the new front lines. The Russian conventional forces, too, meet strong pacifist sentiment, and wars are profoundly unpopular, not least among conscripts. But economic debility has also undermined military capacity, on a serious scale.

The Americans had already appreciated the changing balance some years earlier, when they compiled terms of reference (in 1995) for the **'Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence'**. This doctrine was intended to extend nuclear deterrence beyond Russia and China, in order to threaten 'rogue' states armed with weapons of mass destruction. It said:

'For non-Russian states, the penalty for using Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) should not just be military defeat, but the threat of even worse consequences . . . Deterrence should create fear in an opponent's mind of extinction – extinction of either the leaders themselves or their national dependence, or both. Yet there must always appear to be a "door to salvation" open to them should they reverse course. The fear should be compelling, but not paralyzing.'

To accomplish this,

'The United States should have available the full range of responses, conventional weapons, special operations, and nuclear weapons. Unlike chemical or biological weapons, the extreme destruction from a nuclear explosion is immediate, with few if any palliatives to reduce its effect. Although we are not likely to use nuclear weapons in less than matters of the greatest national importance, or in less than extreme circumstances, nuclear weapons always cast a shadow over any crisis or conflict in which the US is engaged. Thus, deterrence through the threat of use of nuclear weapons will continue to be our top military strategy.'

The document continued,

'While it is crucial to explicitly define and communicate the acts or damage that we would find unacceptable, we should not be too specific about our responses. Because of the value that comes from the ambiguity of what the US may do to an adversary if

the acts we seek to deter are carried out, it hurts to portray ourselves as too fully rational and cool-headed. The fact that some elements may appear to be potentially “out of control” can be beneficial to creating and reinforcing fears and doubts within the minds of an adversary’s decision makers. This essential sense of fear is the working force of deterrence.’

Regards obligations under international treaties, it says

‘Putting forward declaratory policies such as the “Negative Security Assurances” under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) creates serious difficulties for US deterrence policy in the post-Cold War era. It is a mistake to single out nuclear weapons from the remainder of other WMD and such piece-meal policies are not in the best interest of US long-term security. Likewise, a no first use policy would undermine deterrence in the post-Cold War era because it would limit US nuclear goals without providing equitable returns.’

So the Americans see nuclear weapons as the ‘centerpiece of US strategic deterrence’. It is in the light of this perception that we need to understand the new Nato Jubilee doctrine which converted the Alliance from its historic defensive posture, into an overt instrument of intervention and offensive action.

Already, the economic difficulties of post-cold war Russia were straining its traditional military organisation. Over the years there had been discussion about the continuing relevance of the Soviet precept that there would be ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons. This doctrine marked a sharp distinction between American and Soviet nuclear policy. But after the war on Yugoslavia, all this was changed. Now, on the 21st April 2000, we have the formal promulgation of a new military doctrine of the Russian Federation (see annexe), which now places nuclear weapons within the operational arsenal of the Russian forces.

The new doctrine has been in gestation for several years. Back in November 1993, the Russian Ministry of Defence published ‘Key Provisions of the Military Doctrine’. In 1997 it was announced that this document was under revision. It is difficult for outsiders to be certain of the influences which necessitated revision: the collapse of the Soviet Union was undoubtedly very strongly influenced, if not actually precipitated, by unbalanced military spending, in which frightening proportions of Soviet Gross Domestic Product were swallowed up by the arms race. Yet it is difficult to calculate how much of Soviet resources were earmarked for military purposes because planning in Soviet society could mobilise vast resources without needing to account in conventional ways for their costs. Land, for instance, would simply be annexed – allocated on demand, and would not figure as a budgetary expenditure. But prices overall also reflected administrative priorities, much more than the pressure of markets, so that Soviet military expenditures were not at all easily comparable with those on Western programmes. The result of this severe imbalance left the collapsed planning system with a military sector, which was, in parts, very advanced indeed. But the imbalance in the civilian economy as a whole, with widespread underdevelopment in key sectors, must have made very big demands on the economy, and rendered arms expenditure and production planning very difficult indeed.

This highly skewed development was bound to encourage a revision of nuclear doctrine, which essentially separated ‘deterrent forces’ from day-to-day operational deployment. More stringent spending limits made this an expensive luxury. Whilst retaining a deterrent function, nuclear weapons came to seem a likely answer to some of the economic problems of the Russian armed forces. An unpublished draft of the new document in 1997 triggered a debate on the toughening of nuclear policies. Initially proposals for a more forward nuclear policy were not accepted: although evidently the debate continued.

It was Kosovo which finally tilted the argument.

In 1993, Russian military doctrine formally ruled out the use of nuclear weapons

‘against any member-state of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1st July 1968 that does not possess nuclear weapons unless

- (a) such a state, if it has an alliance agreement with a nuclear weapons state, engages in an armed attack against the Russian Federation, its territory, armed forces and other troops, or its allies;
- (b) such a state acts jointly with a nuclear weapons state in carrying out or supporting an invasion or armed attack against the Russian Federation . . .’

But after Kosovo, the new document

‘reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction . . . **and also in response to large-scale aggression involving conventional weapons in situations that are critical for the national security of the Russian Federation and its allies.**

The Russian Federation will not use nuclear weapons against member-states of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons . . . **except in the case of an invasion or other attack against the Russian Federation . . . conducted or supported by such a non-nuclear-weapons state together with or under alliance obligations to a nuclear-weapons state.**’

In terms of the post Soviet (post cold war) evolution, this doctrine reflects precisely the weakening of Russian conventional forces to the point at which the Russian Government is no longer certain of their capacity to decide any conflict with non-nuclear states. But this new doctrine moves us into the post post-cold war mode already embraced by the United States government in that it faces up to American smart military technology by escalating to the nuclear dimension at any point when there is a perceived threat to the survival of Russian state security.

None of this repeals the earlier presumptions of deterrence. But it does announce the possibility of more restricted nuclear strikes, or ‘limited nuclear war’. In this respect, the post post-cold war returns us to the argument which was frequently iterated in the last fevered convulsions of the cold war itself.

The new Russian Military Doctrine contains three chapters: one on the Military Political Principles, one on Military Strategic Principles, and one on Military Economic Principles. Within the framework of these chapters it is emphasised that the Russian Federation presumes that the Collective Security

Treaty of the Confederation of Independent States will continue 'to consolidate the efforts to create a single defence area and safeguard collective military security'.

Side by side, the post post-cold war foundations in both the United States and Russia do show a certain weakening of the bases of military confrontation earlier established during the cold war itself. Both powers are in some respects weaker than they were before, not so much because of agreements on disarmament: but because of the advance of public opinion, which is profoundly reluctant to indulge warlike activities in both states.

It is true that wars can be fomented, but only under the strong pretext of defence of human rights, opposition to terrorism, or direct threat, real or imagined. In this sense, public propaganda has assumed a military role which is vastly greater than was once the case. But military weakness is no guarantee of peaceful evolution. In the days of the cold war we were repeatedly advised that weakness invited aggression. Today, the perceived weakness of Russia has already invited forward deployment, not only by United States agencies, and by Nato itself and its offshoot, the Partnership for Peace, but by a very wide range of economic concerns. Some of these may indeed be welcome in the Caucasus, or throughout Central Asia: but some of them are clearly not. It is quite clear that the Russian doctrine is concerned to recover effective overall conventional political control over the territories of the Confederation of Independent States, and to render the Confederation, as it says, 'a single defence area'.

The third age of nuclear confrontation, the post post-cold war, surely invites a renewed movement for peace, nuclear disarmament, and human rights. Human rights must be on our agenda, because they cannot be left to the militarists. Military intervention is the most twisted and partial form of governance, clearly ill-designed to uphold even the most elementary justice. In an age of renewed nuclear confrontation, the nuclear issue is no longer dormant, if ever it was. Today, the military strategy governing both the most important powers explicitly informs us that nuclear weapons are seen as an active part of war-making capacity. These strategies are currently in place, so that the time to challenge them is with us now. And the struggle for peace is clearly an imperative, because we could not have seen the disruption of the post-cold war balance if anything like a just society had been shaping itself. Widely advertised as the end of history, the post-cold war turned out to be the beginning of cut-throat competition and the liberation of ever more avaricious instincts. The poor became poorer, and the rich unimaginably richer. Now political power, already careless of the rights of its subjects, claims to 'defend' itself by integrating the ultimate weapon into its front line artillery.

If all this shows us that history has not ended yet, it also shows us a distinct and uncomfortable possibility that it might end soon. That is why we must match the decline into warlike confrontation with a determined resurgence of international humanity, crossing all frontiers to defend and advance human rights, justice, and peace and ending the nuclear threat for the new generation over which today it hangs.

It is time to call on Europeans to reopen the proposal for a European nuclear-free zone, and to combine to exert every possible pressure on the nuclear powers to begin joint moves towards comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The alternative, to watch and wait while threats and mutually destructive strategic doctrines fester, is to guarantee that we have just entered what will be a very short Millennium indeed.

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ANNEXE

There follows an excerpt from the new Russian Military Doctrine, concerning its 'military-political principles':

'Military-political situation

1. The state of and prospects for the development of the present-day military-political situation are determined by the qualitative improvement in the means, forms and methods of military conflict, by the increase in its reach and the severity of its consequences, and by its spread to new spheres. The possibility of achieving military-political goals through indirect, non-close-quarter operations predetermines the particular danger of modern wars and armed conflicts for peoples and states and for preserving international stability and peace, and makes it vitally necessary to take exhaustive measures to prevent them and to achieve a peaceful settlement of differences at early stages of their emergence and development.

2. The military-political situation is determined by the following main factors:

- a decline in the threat of large-scale war, including nuclear war;
- the shaping and strengthening of regional power centres; the strengthening of national, ethnic and religious extremism; the rise in separatism;
- the spread of local wars and armed conflicts; an increase in the regional arms race;
- the spread of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems; the exacerbation of information confrontation.

3. A destabilizing impact on the military-political situation is exerted by:

- attempts to weaken the existing mechanism for safeguarding international security (primarily, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]);
- the use of coercive military actions as a means of 'humanitarian intervention' without the sanction of the UN Security Council, in circumvention of the generally accepted principles and norms of international law;
- the violation by certain states of international treaties and agreements in the sphere of arms control and disarmament;

- the utilization by entities in international relations of information and other (including nontraditional) means and technologies for aggressive (expansionist) purposes;
- the activities of extremist nationalist, religious, separatist and terrorist movements, organizations and structures;
- the expansion of the scale of organized crime, terrorism and weapons and drug trafficking, and the multinational nature of these activities.

The main threats to military security

4. Under present-day conditions the threat of direct military aggression in the traditional forms against the Russian Federation and its allies has declined thanks to positive changes in the international situation, the implementation of an active peace-loving foreign-policy course by our country and the maintenance of Russia's military potential, primarily its nuclear deterrent potential, at an adequate level.

At the same time, external and internal threats to the military security of the Russian Federation and its allies persist, and in certain areas are increasing.

5. The main external threats are:

- territorial claims against the Russian Federation; interference in the Russian Federation's internal affairs;
- attempts to infringe the Russia Federation's interests in resolving international security problems, and to oppose its strengthening as one influential centre in a multipolar world;
- the existence of seats of armed conflict, primarily close to the Russian Federation's state border and the borders of its allies;
- the build-up of groups of troops leading to the violation of the existing balance of forces, close to the Russian Federation's state border and the borders of its allies or on the seas adjoining their territories;
- the expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the Russian Federation's military security;
- the introduction of foreign troops in violation of the UN Charter on the territory of friendly states adjoining the Russian Federation;
- the creation, equipping and training on other states' territories of armed formations and groups with a view to transferring them for operations on the territory of the Russian Federation and its allies;
- attacks (armed provocations) on Russian Federation military installations located on the territory of foreign states, as well as on installations and facilities on the Russian Federation's state border, the borders of its allies or the high seas;
- actions aimed at undermining global and regional stability, not least by hampering the work of Russian systems of state and military rule, or at disrupting the functioning of strategic nuclear forces, missile-attack early-warning, antimissile defence, and space monitoring systems and systems for ensuring their

combat stability, nuclear munition storage facilities, nuclear power generation, the nuclear and chemical industries and other potentially dangerous installations;

- hostile information (information-technical, information-psychological) operations that damage the military security of the Russian Federation and its allies;

- discrimination and the suppression of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of the citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states;

- international terrorism.

6. The main internal threats are:

- an attempted violent overthrow of the constitutional order;

- illegal activities by extremist nationalist, religious, separatist and terrorist movements organizations and structures aimed at violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and destabilizing the domestic political situation in the country;

- the planning, preparation and implementation of operations aimed at disrupting the functioning of federal bodies of state power and attacking state economic or military facilities, or facilities related to vital services or the information infrastructure;

- the creation, equipping, training and functioning of illegal armed formations;

- the illegal dissemination (circulation) on Russian Federation territory of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other means which could be used to carry out sabotage, acts of terrorism or other illegal operations;

- organized crime, terrorism, smuggling and other illegal activities on a scale threatening the Russian Federation's military security.

Safeguarding military security

7. Safeguarding the Russian Federation's military security is the most important area of the state's activity.

The main goals of safeguarding military security are to prevent, localize and neutralize military threats to the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation views the safeguarding of its military security within the context of building a democratic law-governed state, implementing socioeconomic reform, asserting the principles of equal partnership, mutually advantageous cooperation and good-neighbourliness in international relations, consistently shaping an overall and comprehensive international security system, and preserving and strengthening universal peace.

The Russian Federation:

- proceeds on the basis of the abiding importance of the fundamental principles and norms of international law, which are organically intertwined and supplement each other;

- maintains the status of nuclear power to deter (prevent) aggression against it and (or) its allies;

- implements a joint defence policy together with the Republic of Belarus, coordinates with it activities in the sphere of military organizational development, the development of the armed forces of the Union State's [reference to the Union State of Russia and Belarus] member states and the utilization of military infrastructure, and takes other measures to maintain the Union State's defence capability;

- attaches priority importance to strengthening the collective security system with the CIS framework on the basis of developing and strengthening the [CIS] Collective Security Treaty;

- views as partners all states whose policies do not damage its national interests and security and do not contravene the UN Charter;

- gives preference to political, diplomatic and other nonmilitary means of preventing localizing and neutralizing military threats at regional and global levels;

- strictly observes the Russian Federation's international treaties in the sphere of arms control, reduction and disarmament, and promotes their implementation and the safeguarding of the arrangements they define;

- punctiliously implements the Russian Federation's international treaties as regards strategic offensive arms and antimissile defence, and is ready for further reductions in its nuclear weapons, on a bilateral basis with the United States as well as on a multilateral basis with other nuclear states to minimal levels meeting the requirements of strategic stability;

- advocates making universal the regime covering the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, resolutely enhancing the effectiveness of that regime through a combination of prohibitive, monitoring and technological measures, and ending and comprehensively banning nuclear testing;

- promotes the expansion of confidence-building measures between states in the military sphere, including reciprocal exchanges of information of a military nature and the coordination of military doctrines, plans, military organizational development measures and military activity.'