

Conflict Studies Research Centre



**Russian Regional
Commands**

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Key Points

- * Russia is establishing a new level of joint forces on a regional basis;
- * Regional commands are to be established facing South, East and West;
- * Defensive measures in the Arctic are also being overhauled, with particular reference to protection of mineral resources;
- * In this way the Russian armed forces are attempting to reposture to meet new threats while faced with much reduced manpower;
- * An underlying assumption is that Russia does not face any major armed conflict in the foreseeable future: yet manning is now said to have reached its minimum admissible level;
- * The new commands are not a replacement for the Military District structure;
- * Domestic and FSU experience in establishing similar structures is not being publicly referred to;
- * A failure of media management has allowed strident opposition to the plans to be heard unchallenged
- * Implementation of Regional Command East is already under way.

Russian Regional Commands

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Russia plans to introduce a new joint command structure at a level between the General Staff and the Military Districts. The key components of the new structure are three Regional Commands, West, South and East, based on integrated command and control of ground and naval forces in the current Military Districts.

The new commands are to be established as follows:

1. Strategic Nuclear Forces Command

To be established by 2010 in Vlasikha, Moscow Region, on the basis of the Strategic Missile Troops Main Staff

2. Air and Space Defence Command

To be formed by 2008, in Balashikha, to replace the current Air Force Main Command

3. Transport Command

To be formed by 2010, on the basis of the 61st Army (Military Transport Aviation)

4. West Command

To face Europe and Scandinavia, based on the Leningrad and Moscow Military Districts

5. South Command

Caucasus and Central Asia, based on the North Caucasus and Volga-Urals Military Districts

6. East Command

To protect the East, based on the Far East and Siberian Military Districts.¹

With the exception of the Northern Fleet, which remains intact, Russian naval entities are to be dissolved into flotillas assigned to the relevant regional command.

The timetable for introduction of the commands is already under way: an “experiment” to create Regional Command East was reported to be “in full swing” by late March 2006.²

Aims and Rationale

The introduction of regional commands integrating all arms of service addresses a number of challenges facing the Russian military that have been spelled out by senior officials over the previous three years.

In May 2005, Sergey Ivanov suggested that with fewer soldiers available, mobility of those units that are on call would be key to countering threats:

“We cannot maintain an army of three or five million as before, and put a regiment, division or army in every constituent part of the Federation. Units are stationed around the country fairly evenly, but taking account of threats not ‘official enemies’. If necessary these permanent-readiness units can be moved anywhere fairly quickly by air transport.”³

Ivanov referred specifically to the Mobility-2004 exercise, practising airlifting troops between European Russia and the Far East. Although hailed by official media as a great success, the exercises were also criticised at the time for their small scale and consequent lack of realism.⁴ But according to the rapidly-promoted First Deputy Defence Minister Col-Gen Aleksandr Belousov, described as Sergey Ivanov’s right-hand man:⁵

“The experience gained during the Mobility exercises is most instructive and deserves further implementation. During these exercises, the training of higher command and control agencies was naturally integrated with practical performance by military units of combat missions assigned to them. The importance of these exercises is that we were able in practice to make a realistic assessment of our ability to carry out an inter-theatre regrouping of forces as an element of strategic manoeuvre.”⁶

Despite the impetus behind contraction of the army, Ivanov signalled clearly at the same time that the process of force reduction must now stop, as the Russian army has reached its minimum acceptable complement:

“Over 15 years the Russian armed forces have decreased from 3.3 million to 1.2 million men, or by almost two-thirds. But if they are further decreased our territory’s national security will be jeopardised... A man can become lean, but then there is a risk of becoming weak.”⁷

Even the million-strong army is only considered adequate for as long as “no large-scale military actions are in the Russian Defence Ministry’s strategic plans”, as Deputy Defence Minister Nikolay Pankov told the Public Chamber in April 2006.⁸ “The Russian Defence Ministry proceeds from the fact that there will be no major war in the near future”, he said: instead, “the country’s armed forces are aimed at thwarting the threats which are knocking at our door”.⁹

Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Yuriy Baluyevskiy used a list of these threats to give a detailed rationale for major change in January 2006. In a lengthy article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* outlining the perceived threats facing Russia and the armed

forces' proposed response, he echoed Ivanov's statements on the impossibility of maintaining former numbers, and said Russia must:

“Give up the principle of ‘symmetry’, i.e. the desire to maintain by all means quantitative parity with the potential adversary, and pursue a design for the armed forces and the military establishment in general based on ‘asymmetry’ with defined priorities that ensure real deterrence of threats;

“Search for maximum effectiveness in the use of arms and military equipment, and military force as a whole, within resource constraints, primarily financial and economic ones.”

The need for “effective and asymmetrical measures” implied, Baluyevskiy said:

“Qualitative modernisation of the armed forces by simultaneous reduction of the mobilisation facilities and further development of the permanent readiness formations and units, and intelligence, signals and electronic warfare units; achieving in those units an optimum ratio between combat and support troops (forces) in order to create self-sufficient groupings in strategic sectors.”¹⁰

This statement by Baluyevskiy was recognised as a radical new departure:

“For the first time in the whole of Soviet and post-Soviet history, the military have openly stated that the ‘sacred cow’ of the state, the mobilisation base, will be cut... This means we can expect cuts in military enlistment offices and conscription commissions, reserve stores, human reserves to be called up in the event of war, business mobilisation capacity and so on. Naturally the public will approve of this.”¹¹

Implicit in these statements is a recognition of the threat posed to the military by Russia's declining demographic trend. There is alarm over rapid depopulation of the Far East in particular, where between Russia's two most recent censuses the population fell by 16.5 per cent: the decline in overall population of working age in Russia is expected to reach a loss of 1m per year in 2007-2010.¹² With vast areas of the Russian East rich in natural resources but poor in actual Russians, it is significant that Yuriy Baluyevskiy added defence of Russia's mineral resources to the list of tasks for the military during an April 2006 press conference on the introduction of regional commands.¹³

The perceived need for protection of economic resources extends offshore: a closed meeting of the Maritime Board in October 2005 heard a report from Sergey Ivanov on defence of offshore oil and gas resources, including extraction facilities already in place:¹⁴ “Russia now needs to think not only about diplomatic, but also about forceful means to safeguard its economic interests,” it was reportedly said,¹⁵ and the Defence Ministry should be in charge of “ensuring military security for offshore operations, and supplying special services during the development and operation of offshore shelf deposits... and also providing navigational security for general seafaring.”¹⁶

This need to refocus on resource protection has been most clearly stated in plans for the protection of the Russian Arctic: “under the conditions of global warming in the Arctic as predicted by scientists, economic activity in the region will increase. As

the situation develops, naval activities aimed at protecting Russia's economic interests and ensuring its military security will acquire increasing significance."¹⁷

With no land borders after Norway, there is little need for a Regional Command North, as this role is already filled by the Northern Fleet. "We expect no more large reorganisations in the fleet's structure in the near future," Northern Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Vladimir Vysotskiy said in December 2005, adding nonetheless that plans were in hand which resemble some aspects of the regional commands being introduced elsewhere:

"Within the framework of specialised research exercises being conducted by the Defence Ministry, the Northern Fleet will participate in an experiment on the comprehensive rear and technical support system. The idea here is simple: all militarised structures stationed within a single territory will be supplied out of, figuratively speaking, one pocket."¹⁸

Russia is also preparing to face non-military threats from the north on land. Border Service chief Vladimir Pronichev visited northern regions in April 2006 promising restoration of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) and that:

"Modern defensive infrastructure will be installed along the NSR. This will include observation points, including space and ground surveillance, and measures connected with operational search activities... to prevent all possible modern threats: terrorism, smuggling of narcotics, illegal migration, arms smuggling and the activities of international crime."

But this in itself is not an argument for establishing a Regional Command North: here too, Pronichev said, "the idea of guarding the border by means of troops is fading into the past".¹⁹

The new perceived threats and challenges facing Russia, and the need for a repositioning to meet them, were therefore clearly stated in the public domain. After much debate and speculation following false starts and misunderstandings in the media (see "Presentation" below), the first detailed public explanation of the new regional commands and the rationale behind them was given by Col-Gen Aleksandr Skvortsov, Deputy CGS, in March 2006.²⁰ Skvortsov said that debate on improving command and control of the Russian armed forces had: "demonstrated the need to create a command and control element (a command) on the territory of several Military Districts that would be responsible for the planning and use of all troops (or forces) stationed within its boundaries".

He expanded further on this need for combined operations, and the unsuitability of the Military District structure to deliver them:

"The point is that contemporary military actions are primarily inter-service in nature, while the fragmentation that exists to an extent in the systems of operational, technical and rear support for large units and formations of the branches of the armed forces does not allow their efficient utilisation in a unified group to accomplish the full range of tasks in the sphere of defence.

”Taking these circumstances into account, the most rational way out of the prevailing situation could be to make the transition from a system of District (front) and essentially ground forces organisation of command of troops and forces, to the principle of regional or inter-service command, based on the combination of the troops and forces of the Ground Troops, Air Force, and Navy in a region under unified command.”

Sergey Ivanov also emphasised command and control in public statements during his visit to Chita in late March 2006, which effectively served as the public launch of Regional Command East: “Russia is a huge country. It is not Europe. The scale is different here, and commands of this type are necessary in order effectively to use the armed forces and all their branches.”²¹

Echoing Ivanov and Baluyevskiy, Skvortsov also hinted at the matching of resources to defence needs in his summing up of the main benefits of the restructuring:

“The steps that are being taken to create unified military command and control elements will make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of combat application, seriously simplify the interaction of various branches of the armed forces and other troops, military formations and elements, and reduce the cost of the system of command and control for the troops and forces as a whole, while taking into account the geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation and the principle of defensive sufficiency.”²²

Presentation

This belated explanation of the purpose of the regional commands followed a long period of speculation as to their nature and meaning, brought about by an apparent failure of media management by the Ministry of Defence and the army.

Skvortsov stated that the implementation of the new structure was agreed on at a Security Council meeting on 9th July 2005, where it was decided “to conduct an experiment with the creation of regional commands and examine the result”.²³ There appears to have been no official statement at the time that this was under consideration: yet sporadic low-profile mentions of plans to establish regional commands, some of them quite accurate, began to appear well in advance of any official statement, and even of the December 2005 meeting at which the regional command plan was reportedly presented to senior commanders.²⁴

Official responses by Ivanov or the armed forces to this media reporting were notable for their paucity or complete absence. For example, in his lengthy and detailed interview on armed forces reform in *Krasnaya Zvezda* in December 2005, Yuriy Baluyevskiy appeared to sidestep the issue altogether, reducing the issue of territorial commands to a reference only to air defence integration.²⁵ Even in his article specifically devoted to organisational development in January 2006, there was no mention of the regional command plans which by this stage were being widely discussed.²⁶

The Russian Ministry of Defence web site, a regularly updated and wide-ranging information resource, lists “Main Priorities for Organisational Development of the Russian Armed Forces” – yet at the time of going to press, the establishment of

regional commands still did not feature on the list of seven priorities.²⁷ Given the scale and import of the proposed restructuring, this would seem a curious omission.

Even when Sergey Ivanov was giving briefings on key directions for the armed forces, mention of the introduction of regional commands seemed oddly subdued for such a significant reordering of the command structure. In his address to the annual conference of senior commanders in November 2005, Ivanov devoted a long speech to entirely different tasks, achievements and headline statistics, before sneaking in a brief mention of regional commands right at the end - and only in the number four slot in a list of priorities for restructuring of the armed forces. A bored officer could be forgiven for missing it altogether, or if they did pick up the reference, assuming it was of minor significance.²⁸

The lack of clarity over the restructuring plans was made worse by confusion in terminology – the new bodies had at various times been referred to as territorial, or regional, or even territorial operational commands.

It was only in March 2006 that light began officially to be shed on what was proposed, with Skvortsov's lengthy exposition on the aims of the regional commands at the beginning of the month, and Sergey Ivanov launching Regional Command East in Chita three weeks later. In the meantime, the lack of authoritative statements of intent had allowed media outlets hostile to the plans to prophesy doom unchallenged.

Relationship with Existing Structures

In the information vacuum that existed between Sergey Ivanov's first public endorsement of the regional command plan and the first detailed explanation by members of the General Staff, speculation was rife that the Military Districts were to be abolished altogether as part of a root and branch upheaval of the command structure. The initial sketchy details of the proposals caused widespread incomprehension, and a general assumption that this meant the end of Military Districts and a severe cull of generals.²⁹

But in later pronouncements, abolition of any existing command elements has been emphatically denied. For example, as early as December 2005, Sergey Ivanov specifically rebutted suggestions that the establishment of regional commands entailed the demise of the Military Districts – while failing completely to give any further elucidation on what was in fact planned.³⁰

At the same time, there are differing suggestions as to precisely what functions of the Military Districts are to be transferred, and to whom. In Aleksandr Skvortsov's interpretation, the command reorganisation “envisions only a redistribution of the individual command and control functions of some structures at the strategic level of the armed forces”, with District and central command elements “delegating a number of their powers to the regional commands, especially in the area of the direct command and control of the troops”.³¹

This element of the regional command proposal reflects an ongoing debate on the separation of administrative and operational functions, where even if there was no direct call for a new operational command structure, admin creep in the Military Districts was identified as a significant hindrance to operational capability.³² This

debate had already given rise to calls for a redistribution of functions between the General Staff, the Ministry of Defence, and the Military Districts.³³

Calls for Reform

Suggestions of a Russia-wide reorganisation of command and control to enable unified command of all services do surface in debate in the military press prior to late 2005, but without explicit references to a supra-District structure - these suggestions usually came in the form of calls for a removal of the distinction between the peacetime and wartime command structure, by carrying out the integration required effectively to fight a war before it became necessary rather than afterwards.³⁴ For example, following the Mobility-2004 exercise it was suggested that:

“Russia’s armed forces are least suited of all to dealing with [new threats to national security]. This is primarily because the Russian army does not at present possess trained commands or command and control centres in the theatres or sectors of presumed local – note, local – conflicts or combat operations. The existing command and control structure, Minister of Defence – enormous General Staff – Military District staffs – Armies – corps – divisions – brigades – regiments, is the archaic command and control structure of the years 1940-1960...”

“In place of the General Staff, a Main Command must be created, with subordinate to it... territorial commands capable of combat operations by combined groupings, whose composition conforms to specific existing and potential threats and missions.”³⁵

The perception that the current system of management by Military District is outdated appears widely shared, with some military academics pointing out that elements of the system remain unchanged not just since the early days of the Red Army, but since the Milyutin reforms of the Tsarist army in the mid-19th Century.³⁶ Other informed commentators called for a system of command to be established:

“which will provide for integration of application of forces and assets right down to the tactical level – to the division, the brigade, or even lower. So that it should not be the senior commander in Moscow, but a commander at a tactical level (as it is with the Americans) who is able to make decisions in real time on the use even of strategic assets – for example, strategic aviation.”³⁷

The need to prepare for joint operations as the norm rather than the exception is stated at the summit of military academia:

“We can theorise and dream as much as we like, but it is important for a scholar vividly to imagine the way it is going to happen in reality. There will be operations, of course, but the forms and methods of conducting them will change substantially. Their main distinction in the future will consist in the fact that action of all components of the armed forces will be planned and carried out in the form of single general strategic operations.”³⁸

These considerations too have been catered for in the concept of the regional commands as explained by Skvortsov.

Role Models and Antecedents

Russia already has at its extremities examples of the kind of unified command structure which is now proposed for the country as a whole. Forces stationed in both Kaliningrad and Kamchatka come under naval command in an integrated structure.

Before the Kamchatka integrated command was created, Boris Yeltsin was quoted as saying that “reform of the armed forces starts here, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, with the creation of territorial commands”.³⁹ But after the grand plans of the mid-1990s ran conclusively aground, it seems this idea of a further roll-out of integrated commands disappeared from view. According to its current Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral Aleksandr Vitko, the combined North-East Group of Forces was established in Kamchatka in 1998 “primarily because of the remoteness of the zone of responsibility in the North-East from the controlling structures, the Far East Military District, and the Pacific Fleet”.⁴⁰

Some of the stated benefits of this integrated structure coincide directly with the aims of the regional commands: for example integration of training and better operational coordination, with efficiency savings through combined rear support.⁴¹ As this is the case, it is perhaps surprising that these groups of forces are not being referred to as a model or even a precursor for the broader restructuring. The answer may lie in the subordination to the navy: in practically all other areas of Russia, even those where naval elements are present, naval control of combined operations would hardly be appropriate.

But in other respects, the current plans are strikingly similar to the very first attempts by Pavel Grachev to plan a suitable structure for turning the rump of the Soviet Army into Russian armed forces. Phase Three of the ambitious 1992 reform plans based on mobile forces called for a “non-district (*bezokruzhnaya*) system” and the creation of territorial commands.⁴² And in 1994, a structure for these commands was proposed which, give or take a slight shift in cardinal points, seems little different today:

“The plan is to create unified territorial commands and territorial groupings of forces. There will be four of these groupings: North (the Northern Fleet and the forces of the Leningrad Military District); South (all forces of the North Caucasus Military District); Urals-Transbaikal and Far East... Creation of a joint unified territorial command for each grouping will allow command and control to be improved and will augment operational capability. Of the four proposed groupings, three (North, South and Far East) must be ready to carry out real combat tasks to defend Russia’s national interests. The fourth (Urals-Transbaikal) will be engaged in training of reserves in the interests of the other groupings.”⁴³

Examples are available of a similar attempt at command restructuring outside Russia. Belarus’s Operational Commands are designed to integrate command not only of all armed forces elements, but also with other “power structures” and with the territorial defence formations.⁴⁴

Yet there has been little visible reference to the experience of Belarus in discussion of the restructuring plans. In fact, counter-intuitively, positive lessons from the experience of Belarus have been cited as an argument for retaining the current command structure of the Ground Troops.⁴⁵ The experience of Kazakhstan, implementing a structural overhaul leading to precisely the same end result specified for Russia, seems not to have been referred to at all.⁴⁶

There is no shortage of references to changes in military posture further afield, however. “The armies of the leading world powers have been changed to meet existing threats,” Skvortsov wrote, “and are able to wage combat operations under contemporary conditions. The armed forces of the Russian Federation, with the reduction in their overall size, are also undergoing appropriate changes.”⁴⁷

Opposition

An overview of Russian media coverage of the gradual revelation of the restructuring plans would suggest at first sight that they have met widespread and well-founded opposition. Yet closer inspection shows that critical media coverage is emanating mostly from a small group of journalists in the same media stable, who have been producing a high volume of virulently hostile reporting on the topic.

When the proposals first surfaced in public, the lack of official detail allowed Aleksandr Babakin, writing in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and its military supplement *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (NVO), to state that generals had declined en masse to implement them, and to suggest that abolition of the Military District structure was part of the plan, bringing in its wake “the collapse of the entire current conscription structure, and the structure of military training, communications, military supply, and much else”.⁴⁸ In particular, the plan had thrown up “evidence of serious differences between the ministry leadership and serving generals, with whom the plans for the radical reorganisation of the armed forces were not cleared”.

Babakin’s broadsides continued, prophesying that regional commands would deal “a crushing blow to the programme to re-equip the armed forces” and that during the transition period the armed forces would be “virtually paralysed. Everywhere the troops will lose their combat capability except for a few elite units. And the restructuring of the infrastructure could cost at least R4-5 trillion.”⁴⁹

Given this violent opposition on the part of Babakin and his colleagues writing for the same papers, it might well be that NVO’s misinterpretation of “territorial commands” as a return to the territorial defence levies proposed by Trotsky shortly after the Civil War was in fact wilful misrepresentation, intended to lend weight to their predictions of “disorganisation and acute problems in all aspects of combat training activities” and a “decline in the level of controllability of subordinate troops and expedition of routine matters”.⁵⁰

Even after nearly all the facts relating to the restructuring plan were already in the public domain, leaving few excuses for speculation or incomprehension, Babakin continued to extrapolate radical consequences from limited premises, stating that force unification would lead to a severe contraction of the General Staff, including losing the Main Operational Directorate.⁵¹

The “*Nezavisimyye*” titles do also feature more sober and reasoned arguments against change from “military experts”, for example questioning whether the plans

replicate attempts to create “commands in strategic sectors” in the 1970s and 1980s, plans which were later reversed.⁵² While drawing attention to the earlier reorganisation attempt under Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, a military academic writing for NVO did at least take the time to rebut Aleksandr Babakin’s suggestion that this was a return to the Trotsky proposals of the 1920s.⁵³

Adverse comment on the restructuring plans by media sources other than those contributed to by Babakin has been strikingly absent.

Implementation and Future Development

The establishment of Regional Command East is consistently described as an “experiment”, on the basis of which decisions will be made on whether to proceed with the restructuring as a whole. “If the results are positive,” Skvortsov writes, “regional commands will be formed on a permanent basis in 2008-2010 within the framework of military administrative divisions of Russia, and the appropriate formations of the branches of the armed forces subordinated to them.”⁵⁴ He emphasised that this in itself would not lead to any further reduction in the manpower size of the armed forces: “a slight reduction in size is planned, but it is not associated in any way with the creation of the regional commands”.

A pattern has been set for testing the theory of the regional commands, and beginning their implementation, by way of an air and air defence exercise – perhaps the least challenging of all arms of service to use for a demonstration of integrated command. Before the official announcement of the restructuring plans, command and staff exercises in October 2005 tested an integrated air force and air defence command in the North-West, based on assets of the Leningrad Military District and the Sixth Air Force Army.⁵⁵ And the first stage of the “experiment” in establishing Regional Command East has been a similar exercise but on a much grander scale: a major integrated inter-service aviation and air defence exercise, commanded by a Ground Forces officer, Col-Gen Oleg Salyukov.⁵⁶ Deputy Air Force C-in-C Col-Gen Anatoliy Nogovitsyn said this was valuable preparation for the introduction of the regional command for real:

“The exercise was of a test nature. Its objectives and missions were assigned... within the scope of an experiment being conducted in the armed forces under a Defence Ministry plan. While the regional command is forming, the Air Force got the idea of trying out the joint implementation of air defence and aviation forces and assets within the scope of an integrated grouping. Telemba Range was the most suitable for the event, especially as the command integration experiment is taking place specifically in the Siberian and Far East Military Districts. It can now be said confidently that the experiment was a success.”⁵⁷

Viewed in this light, the schedule of similar exercises at the Ashuluk range in southern Astrakhan Region, which seems to be developing into a rolling programme, becomes even more significant. At the time of writing, the range has been in apparently constant use since early March, with aviation, air defence and other units from across European Russia rotating in and out to exercise against each other,⁵⁸ under the supervision of Aleksandr Belousov.⁵⁹

Nogovitsyn also commented on the exercises being held at Ashuluk, in terms which support the suggestion that the purpose of these exercises is similar to the concept in the Far East:

“[The Ashuluk range] allows other forces, in addition to aviation and airborne materiel, to be used. Groups of forces are represented here. It allows for cooperation among the combat arms and forces to be mastered, against a single tactical and operational background.”⁶⁰

The exercises include unscheduled snap redeployment of units to southern Russia, in a manner similar to that proposed by Ivanov as the basis of the new mobility concept for the forces as a whole.⁶¹ Although there is no stated link with the eastern “experiment”, the training aims as stated by Ground Troops C-in-C Col-Gen Aleksey Maslov coincide precisely: “In 2006 the number of exercises and live firing exercises held as groups of forces will considerably increase. They will also be held together with units and combined units of the air force and navy, according to a single combined-arms plan.”⁶²

The terms in which the future development of the regional command programme is described in most sources admit little of the conditional: there appears to be a strong assumption that the Far East “experiment” as a whole will be a success, and the timetable for introduction of the new structure will roll on.⁶³ In fact, the timetable allows little time for any results of the “experiment” to be digested before the introduction of the next regional command is due. It seems reasonable to assume, then, that it would take a serious upset in the Far East to derail attempts to introduce the new command element in the other regions specified.

Conclusion

The proposal to institute an integrated command structure on a regional basis appears a well-reasoned response to well-documented challenges. While some of the challenges perceived by Russia have emerged more recently, other issues remain unchanged: part of the rationale for the Grachev plans for immediate-action and rapid-deployment forces precisely presaged Ivanov’s comments more than a decade later on not being able to “line the border”.⁶⁴

The Grachev plans foundered on the inability to create the highly effective mobile forces which were the essential element of the proposed new Russian army. In 2006, the concept of regional commands still relies on the availability of highly mobile permanent-readiness units. While the financial challenge to creating these units is much less acute for Ivanov than it was for Grachev, all other obstacles – social, cultural and especially demographic – have become more intense.

Sergey Ivanov is pursuing a number of simultaneous programmes with the aim of creating a functional army 1.1 million strong, with a high-quality professional head and an effective conscript tail. The initiatives to develop contract service further, to establish a strong and professional corps of junior leaders, and to maintain conscript manning despite severe demographic and social challenges, are all essential precursors to the meaningful implementation of the new command structure. Without them, the regional command plan will bring no benefit: if the other concurrent efforts are not successful, regional commands will simply be another layer of generals continuing to manage “not an army, but a reservation into which conscripts are herded”.⁶⁵

Endnotes

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- ² Vladimir Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 24 March 2006, "Reforma armii nachnetsya s vostoka. Sergey Ivanov proinspektiroval voyska, v kotorykh startuyet eksperiment po sozdaniyu regional'nogo komandovaniya"
- ³ FBIS: *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 04 May 2005, "Victory Remains Ours. Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov in Interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta"
- ⁴ Tsyganok, Anatoliy, *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 02 July 2004, "Takticheskaya putanitsa v operativno-strategicheskikh umakh"
- ⁵ FBIS: *Kommersant*, 20 July 2004, "Kommersant Views Russian Top Brass Reshuffle"
- ⁶ FBIS: *Military Thought*, 30 June 2005, "Belousov – Experience of the Great Patriotic War and Current National Defence Problems"
- ⁷ FBIS: *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 04 May 2005, "Victory Remains Ours..."
- ⁸ FBIS: ITAR-TASS news agency, 15 April 2006, "Deputy DM Says 1 Million Strong Armed Forces Able To Avert Military Threat"
- ⁹ BBC Monitoring: *RIA Novosti*, 15 April 2006, "Russian deputy defence minister downplays threat of major war"
- ¹⁰ Yuriy Baluyevskiy, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 January 2006, "General'nyy shtab i zadachi voyennogo stroitel'stva"
- ¹¹ Academician Vladimir Popov, quoted in Mukhin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 02 February 2006
- ¹² *Izvestiya*, 20 December 2005, "Naskol'ko real'na dlya Rossii 'kitayskaya ugroza'?"
- ¹³ Vladimir Ivanov, Igor Plugatarev, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 04 April 2006, "Genshtab vzyalsya za nedry. Vneocherednoye preobrazovaniye Vooruzhennykh sil nachinayetsya s razvedki"
- ¹⁴ FBIS: *Kommersant*, 31 October 2005, "Russia: Cabinet Collegium Discusses Oil, Gas Facilities' Security"
- ¹⁵ FBIS: *Vremya Novostey*, 09 November 2005, "Fishing Dispute with Norway Reveals Importance of Russian Navy"
- ¹⁶ BBC Monitoring: ITAR-TASS news agency, 28 October 2005, "Russian defence minister urges use of military to protect offshore rigs"
- ¹⁷ Interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 December 2005, "Arkticheskii bastion"
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ BBC Monitoring: *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey*, 13 April 2006, "Russian looks to beef up border defences for Arctic sea route"
- ²⁰ Aleksandr Skvortsov, *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer*, 01 March 2006, "V otvet na novyye ugrozy"
- ²¹ BBC Monitoring: ITAR-TASS news agency, 21 March 2006, "Russian defence minister favours setting up regional commands"
- ²² Skvortsov, *ibid.*
- ²³ Skvortsov, *ibid.*
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