

**Russia's nuclear policy** by Alla Yaroshinskaya, Former Advisor to President Boris Yeltsin, Moscow, Russia. **Abstract:** Russia's nuclear policy is formed under the impact of global geopolitical and military-political developments occurring in the world at large. One can identify the basics of Russia's nuclear policy, its transformations and development by studying the military doctrines of the Russian Federation. Over the post-Soviet period there have been three such doctrines endorsed in Russia; one in 1993, one in 1997, and the latest in 2000, after Vladimir Putin took over as president. The wording of each new edition of the doctrine regarding Russia's nuclear policy became more clear-cut and tough. In 2000, along with Russia's new military doctrine, a new national security concept of the Russian Federation was approved, stating that use of nuclear weapons became legitimate and necessary "for rebuffing armed aggression, provided all other means of defusing the crisis have been exhausted or proved ineffectual." The previous version of the document envisaged resorting to nuclear weapons only if "there is a threat to the very existence of the Russian Federation as a sovereign state." The commentaries by the Defense Ministry specify that "deterrence will be based on their [nuclear force's] ability to inflict enough damage to place in doubt the achievement of the goals of potential aggression." In global terms, Russia's nuclear policy continues to focus, just as in the Cold War years, on the nuclear deterrence principle despite the fact that the geopolitical and military-political changes have naturally altered the very essence of nuclear deterrence. A new military doctrine of the Russian Federation is in the making, intended to keep up with rapid geopolitical, military-political and economic changes in the world and to provide a more adequate response to the current challenges facing Russia.