



Chapter 5

Russia

The Post-Putin Issue and Changes in the 1993 Constitutional System

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A military parade to commemorate the 75th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, held on June 24, 2020 in Red Square, Moscow (Xinhua News Agency/Kyodo News Images)

Summary

The Russian Federation, which newly emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union in December 1991, governed the nation with the Federal Constitution established in December 1993. The Boris Yeltsin administration in the 1990s was characterized by chaotic socioeconomic conditions, an unstable political order, and increasingly centrifugal federal-regional relations. On the other hand, the Vladimir Putin administration inaugurated in May 2000 opted for “power vertical,” executed large-scale political reform, including of the federal system, and worked to stabilize the constitutional system. In this context, problems concerning the Rights and Freedoms of Human and Citizen guaranteed in Chapter 2 of the 1993 Constitution have emerged against the backdrop of strengthened measures to combat terrorism and extremism and legal restraints on the mass media. These problems have become the focus of Russian politics, particularly in recent years.

The process of amending the 1993 Constitution, which began in earnest at the beginning of 2020, has built the basic mechanisms for maintaining the Putin regime. On the other hand, voices of citizens calling for change also grew, ushering Russian society into a period of change. The amendments to the Constitution clarified a prohibition on electing a president three times, but because a provision was established stating that previous terms of incumbent or former presidents are not counted, President Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of the Security Council, are able to run in the next presidential election under this system. In this chapter, we focus on Russian Constitutional reforms to derive suggestions about the political regime and the Post-Putin issue.

Issues of arms control between the United States and Russia are attracting international interest. These include the termination of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). Moreover, Russia-Europe relations have entered a more difficult phase due to the attempted murder by poisoning of opposition leader Aleksei Navalny.

Amid the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Russian military has taken on new roles, including, for example, the construction of multifunctional medical centers, disinfection operations by the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops, and emergency assistance to Italy and Serbia. Equipment upgrades and posture strengthening by the military have continued to progress, military cooperation was strengthened through the large-scale exercises Kavkaz 2020, and moves to expand arms exports to African countries were also seen.

1. Transformation of the Constitutional System: The Constitutional Amendment Process and the Inauguration of a New Cabinet

(1) The Essence of the 2020 Amendments and the Post-Putin Issue

In his annual address to the Federal Assembly on January 15, 2020, President Putin proposed major amendments to the 1993 Constitution.¹ During that same day, the Medvedev cabinet resigned *en masse*, and a working group to draft amendments to the Constitution was established by instruction of the president.² In light of the fact that in recent years Viacheslav Volodin, chairman of the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly,³ and other top officials in the administration have offered many statements and comments about constitutional problems, it can be concluded that elaborate scenarios for recent amendments to the Constitution were formulated in the administrative core. As shown in Table 5.1, the amendment process progressed in an extremely short period of time, but it was difficult to conclude that sufficient discussions regarding the constitutional amendments were held among Russian citizens. That said, as will be discussed below, the elaborately prepared scenarios of the constitutional amendments had to be reshaped because COVID-19 directly affected the political situation.

In the 1993 Constitution, there are major differences in the procedures for making amendments (*popravka*) to Chapter 3 to Chapter 8 of the Constitution and making revisions (*peresmotr*) to the other chapters of the Constitution (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 9).⁴ The latter contain provisions stipulating human rights guarantees, the separation of powers, and procedures for amending or revising the Constitution, and their procedural hurdles are higher compared with the former chapters. For example, they include the convening of a Constitutional Assembly and the implementation of a national referendum (*vsenarodnoe golosovanie*). Although this time the amendments to the Constitution do not require implementation of a national referendum, President Putin endeavored to guarantee its legitimacy by seeking the judgment of the Constitutional Court

Table 5.1. The constitutional amendment process (January to July 2020)

January 15	Annual address to the Federal Assembly by the president	President Putin proposed constitutional amendments, including a provision for a prohibition on electing a president three times.
	Resignation <i>en masse</i> of the Medvedev cabinet	Head of the Federal Taxation Service Mishustin was proposed to the State Duma (Lower House) as a candidate to be the next prime minister, and officially took up the position on the following day, January 16. Medvedev took up the position of deputy chairman of the Security Council.
	Establishment of the Working Group to draft proposals for amending the Constitution	Composed of 75 members with Andrey Klishas, chair of the Federation Council Committee on Constitutional Legislation and State Building, Pavel Vladimirovich Krashenninnikov, chair of the State Duma Committee on State Building and Legislation, and Talia Khabrieva, director of the Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law under the Government of the Russian Federation, as the joint representatives. The first meeting was held at a presidential residence the following day, January 16.
January 20	Submission of the constitutional amendments bill to the Lower House by President Putin	In the second reading preparatory stage (from February 14 onwards), major amendments were proposed, including a “presidential terms reset provision” for incumbent or former presidents. After the third reading, the amendments were sent to the Federal Assembly’s Federal Council (Upper House) on March 11 and were passed the same day.
March 11	Sending of the constitutional amendments bill to the Dumas of the federal subjects of Russia	On March 12 and March 13, all of the (regional) Dumas of the federal subjects of Russia approved the constitutional amendments bill.
March 14	Promulgation of the law and judgment of constitutionality by the Constitutional Court	President Putin signed and promulgated the bill, then made an inquiry to the Constitutional Court regarding its constitutionality. Two days later, on March 16, the Constitutional Court recognized its constitutionality.
March 25	The date of the all-Russian vote is postponed due to COVID-19	Initially, April 22 was set as the date of the vote, but due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, it was decided to postpone the date of the vote.
July 1	Implementation of the all-Russian vote	Average voter turnout nationwide was 67.97%, and 77.92% of the people voted in favor of the amendments.

Sources: Compiled by the author based on Prezident Rossii, “Sobytiia”; Gosudarstvennaia Duma RF, “SOZD: Zakonoproekt No. 885214-7”; Konstitutsionnyi sud RF, “16 marta 2020 goda Konstitutsionnyi Sud RF opublikoval Zakliuchenie po zaprosu Prezidenta RF” (March 16, 2020); RBK, July 3, 2020.

regarding its constitutionality and boldly implementing an all-Russian vote (*vsrossiiskoe golosovanie*). Due to the spread of COVID-19 inside Russia, the date of the vote was postponed from April 22 to July 1, and the amendments to the Constitution were established by a majority vote. The essence of the amendments

Table 5.2. Provisions concerning territory and patriotic/conservative aspects in the 2020 constitutional amendments (excerpts)

Chapter 3. Federal structure	
Article 67	<p>Paragraph 2.1</p> <p>The Russian Federation ensures protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Actions (except for delimitation, demarcation, re-demarcation of the state border of the Russian Federation with bordering states) aimed at removing a part of the territory of the Russian Federation and incitement to such actions shall not be permitted.</p>
Article 67.1	<p>Paragraph 2</p> <p>The Russian Federation, united by a thousand years of history, recognizes the historically developed state unity while preserving the memory of ancestors who gave us ideals, belief in God and continuity in the development of the Russian state.</p>
	<p>Paragraph 3</p> <p>The Russian Federation guarantees that it will honor the memory of defenders of the Fatherland and protect historical truth. Diminishing the significance of the people's heroism in defending the Fatherland shall not be permitted.</p>
	<p>Paragraph 4</p> <p>Children are the most important state policy priority in Russia. The state should create conditions that contribute to the comprehensive spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical development of children, fostering patriotism, civic engagement, and respect for elders. The state, giving priority to family-based care, shall undertake the obligations of a parent with respect to children left without guardianship.</p>
Article 72	<p>The matters under the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the federal subjects of Russia are as follows. [Omitted] zh.1) Protection of families, motherhood, fatherhood and children; protection of the institution of marriage as the union of a man and a woman; the creation of conditions for appropriate nurturing of children in the home, and for adult children to fulfil their obligations to look after their parents.</p>

Sources: Compiled by the author based on E.Iu. Barkhatova, *Kommentarii k Konstitutsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii novaia redaktsiia s popravkami 3-e izdanie* (Moskva: Prospekt, 2021); *Kommentarii k Konstitutsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2-e izdanie* (Moskva: Prospekt, 2020); Ueno Toshihiko, "Roshia ni okeru 2020 nen no kenpo shusei wo meguru shomondai" [Issues regarding the 2020 constitutional amendments in Russia], *Russia & NIS Business Monthly* 65, no. 5 (2020), 80–105; Mizoguchi Shuhei, "Roshia renpo" [Russian Federation], in *Shin kaisetsu sekai kenposhu dai-gohan* [Constitutions of Nations, 5th Edition], eds. Shiyake Masanori and Tsujimura Miyoko (Tokyo: Sanseido, 2020), 281–341.

is as follows.

Firstly, there is the establishment of new conservative provisions (Table 5.2). In Article 67 of Chapter 3, the chapter which stipulates the federal structure, the transfer of territory and actions directed toward the transfer of territory of the Russian Federation were prohibited in paragraph 2.1. Although boundary delimitation (*delimitatsiya*) and demarcation (*demarkatsiya*) were excluded from

the scope of the prohibition, the very fact that such provisions were newly established strongly shows the diplomatic stance of the Putin administration, and it is difficult to interpret this text only in terms of the domestic political context. Furthermore, Article 67.1, paragraph 3 stipulates that the state "honors the memory of defenders of the Fatherland and protects historical truth," highlighting the issue of historical perception of World War II. Article 67.1, which includes generally conservative content, emphasizes the results of World War II, specifically, "the significance of the people's heroism in defending the Fatherland," against the backdrop of the basic principle in Russia's foreign policy of protecting the country's status as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, one of the guarantors of the post-war international order.⁵ It is likely that patriotic policies will be promoted further going forward, through history education and other methods, based on these kinds of provisions in the Constitution.

Moreover, Article 72, which stipulates the matters under the joint jurisdiction of the federal government and the federal subjects of Russia, such as republics and oblasts, has incorporated the "protection of the institution of marriage as the union of a man and a woman." Starting with the establishment of the so-called Law Prohibiting Homosexual Propaganda of 2013,⁶ the conservative social policies of the Putin administration have aroused criticism from Western countries and international human rights groups. The new provisions include inherent problems pertaining to human rights guarantees, and their consistency with the foundations of the 1993 Constitution that require "constitutional revision" procedures (the provisions in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 9) will undoubtedly be the focus going forward. The conservative tendencies of the administration, which have grown stronger in recent years, are vividly reflected in the new Constitution. In many of the added parts (the amended sections of the Constitution), the new Constitution presents a view of the nation in conflict with the basic principles of the 1993 Constitution, symbolized by human rights protection and political plurality.

Secondly, there are the amendments to the Constitution pertaining to the political regime.⁷ Certain changes have been added to the authority of the

president and the Federal Assembly, while the broad framework of semi-presidentialism is maintained. The president has been granted the right to remove the chairman of the government (the prime minister) from office and the right to command the federal government, while the authority of the Federal Assembly in federal government formation procedures (appointing cabinet ministers, etc.) was also strengthened. Previously, appointment of the deputy prime minister and federal ministers after the appointment of the prime minister was substantially a matter under the exclusive jurisdiction of the president and the prime minister. With the amendments to the Constitution, the system of appointing the deputy prime minister and federal ministers was changed so that the prime minister would propose candidates to the Lower House, and the president would appoint only the candidates that the Lower House has approved. On the other hand, in the case that the Lower House refuses to approve a candidate three times, the president can dissolve the Lower House under certain conditions. Therefore, there is no change to the major structure: the ruling bloc which supports the president defines president–parliament relations.

Furthermore, the system was changed so that the president appoints the heads of the ministries and agencies in charge of national defense, internal affairs, foreign affairs, intelligence, and other aspects of national security policy after consultation with the Federal Council, the upper house of the Federal Assembly.⁸ Previously, the appointment of the directors of paramilitary and intelligence agencies not included in the cabinet, such as the Federal Security Service (Federal'naia Sluzhba Bezopasnosti: FSB) and the Foreign Intelligence Service (Sluzhba Vneshney Razvedki: SVR), was a matter under the exclusive jurisdiction of the president. The recent system change has enabled the Upper House to be involved in the personnel policies of the paramilitary and intelligence agencies, while eliminating the involvement of the Lower House in the appointment of major cabinet ministers such as the defense minister, internal affairs minister, and foreign affairs minister.

Moreover, in the light of the fact that the president's authority to command the federal government is clearly stated in Article 83, the status of the president as

head of the executive body has become clearer. Previously, in the federal constitutional law About Government (hereinafter, "Government Act"), the federal government was positioned as the "supreme executive body."⁹ Due to Government Act revisions arising from the amendments to the Constitution, however, its status has been changed

to an "executive body as a system of public power."¹⁰ As a result, executive power is exercised under the general command of the president. Combined with the authority of the president to remove the prime minister from office, we can conclude that presidential authority has been strengthened.

The presidential term of office has been changed from 12 years consisting of two *consecutive* terms to 12 years consisting of *a total of* two terms, which clarified the prohibition on being elected three times. However, during the deliberation process in the Lower House, a "presidential terms reset provision" that excludes incumbent or former presidents from the scope of this stipulation was introduced while amending the Constitution, thereby enabling President Putin and Deputy Chairman of the Security Council Medvedev to run in the next presidential election under the new system. In addition, the system guaranteeing the status of the president was strengthened, including immunity from arrest after leaving the presidency and status as a senator (Upper House member) for life.¹¹ In summary, while the authority of the Federal Assembly was partially expanded, the authority of the president was also substantially strengthened, thus maintaining Russia's strong presidential system, or so-called "super-presidentialism."

The recent amendments to the Constitution were implemented ahead of the expiration of President Putin's term of office in 2024 and in the context



President Putin visiting a voting station in Moscow (TASS/Kyodo)

of growing interest in the Post-Putin issue, and the aforementioned system changes have further increased the uncertainty in Russian politics. Regarding the prospects for Russian politics from 2024 onwards, under the current system, the following scenarios can be anticipated: (i) a new Putin administration, his fifth term in total, will be inaugurated as a result of Putin running in the next presidential election (this scenario includes Putin resigning partway through his term of office); (ii) Putin will be entitled to a lifetime seat as a senator, a position that also comes with immunity from prosecution; and (iii) Putin will take up a position as the head of another institution, for example, as the prime minister or the chairman of the State Council.

Whereas it is important to pay attention to the moves of core members of the current regime—not only President Putin and Deputy Chairman of the Security Council Medvedev, who are both able to run in the next presidential election, but also powerful local governors—anticipating a scenario in which an unknown figure assumes the position of supreme power is also necessary, as was the case with Putin in the mid-1990s. If the next president inherits the core policies implemented since 2000, important elements of management of the administration will undoubtedly be the ability to manage federal–regional relations, relations with the *siloviki* (officials of the military or security agencies), and strong leadership on the public stage, including summit diplomacy and dialogue with Russian citizens.

(2) Inauguration of the New Mishustin Cabinet and Transformation of the Administrative Core

In January 2020, a new cabinet led by Mikhail Mishustin was inaugurated, replacing former prime minister Medvedev. Prime Minister Mishustin was a 54-year-old Moscow-born expert in economics and taxation who served as the head of the Federal Taxation Service from 2010.¹² In the new cabinet, 14 ministers including the deputy prime ministers, the minister of economic development, and the minister of digital development, communications and mass media were newly appointed, while the heads of the national defense, internal affairs, foreign affairs,

and intelligence ministries/agencies were retained in their posts.¹³ Appointment of *siloviki*, who have supported the Putin administration over many years since 2000, has been characterized by ossification and increasingly elderly appointees.

Along with the resignation *en masse* of the cabinet, the post of deputy chairman of the Security Council was created for Medvedev, allowing him to continue to remain at the core of power. Along with the establishment of the new deputy chairman post, the security legislation was also partially amended. Under the new Security Council regulation, the deputy chairman is granted certain authority, including the power to supervise the implementation of presidential decrees, etc., and power to issue orders in the national security domain.¹⁴ Furthermore, a secretariat consisting of five top officials (one head of the secretariat and four aides) was established under the deputy chairman, which supports the activities of Medvedev. After his appointment, Deputy Chairman Medvedev showed his diplomatic presence by holding meetings on economic and security cooperation with the leader of Kyrgyzstan in February and the leader of Kazakhstan in March. In addition, he is still responsible for practical matters in domestic affairs to some extent, even after resigning as prime minister. For example, he presided over the cabinet-level meetings on COVID-19 countermeasures.¹⁵

Subsequently, in July 2020, the Interdepartmental Commission of the Security Council on Protecting National Interests in the Arctic (hereinafter, “Security Council Arctic Commission”) was established with Deputy Chairman Medvedev as its chair and cabinet-level ministers, including the defense minister and foreign minister, as members.¹⁶ The current Putin administration is advancing policies—and the building of the implementation structures for those policies—in order to accelerate the development of resources and energy as a matter of importance for national security, beginning with the Northern Sea Route and Arctic LNG 2 project. For example, in February 2019, the Ministry for Development of the Russian Far East was reorganized into the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic, and in October 2020, a policy document titled *Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035* was approved.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the State Commission for Arctic Development (hereinafter, “State Commission”), chaired by Yury Trutnev, deputy prime minister and presidential plenipotentiary envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District, and comprised of regional governors and vice-ministers, has been established in the federal government led by the prime minister.¹⁸ The division of roles between the Security Council Arctic Commission and the State Commission is a problem, but given the ranks of the commission members and the fact that Deputy Prime Minister Trutnev has been appointed vice-chair of the Security Council Arctic Commission, it is likely that the Security Council Arctic Commission led by Medvedev exercises leadership in the execution of policy. In the Security Council, in which most of the members are *siloviki* forces, it has yet to be seen whether Deputy Chairman Medvedev, who has served as both president and prime minister, will continue to play the role of propping up the administration or search for ways to expand his political influence. Therefore, we cannot take our eyes off the political trends in the Kremlin when considering the Post-Putin issue.

Furthermore, in the nationwide local elections held on September 13, 2020, the elections for governors of federal subjects of Russia, Duma elections, local government Duma elections, and State Duma (Lower House) by-elections were held, during which measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were taken, including the establishment of two to three days for voting.¹⁹ In the elections for governors of federal subjects of Russia, 18 incumbents and acting governors won (United Russia party: 12; independent: 5; Liberal Democratic Party: 1). In the Duma elections, as well, United Russia came out on top,²⁰ while new political parties also made strides. New People gained seats in Novosibirsk, Kaluga, Ryazan, and Kostroma oblasts. For Truth gained seats in Ryazan oblast, and Green Alternative gained seats in the Komi Republic and Chelyabinsk oblast.²¹ As these political parties gained seats in the Dumas of the federal subjects of Russia, they can participate in the Lower House election planned to be held in September 2021 without collecting signatures, in accordance with federal law.²² With the decline of the administration’s approval ratings, the prolonged protests in Khabarovsk, and other problems, a tough election campaign for the Putin

administration was anticipated. Despite this, the United Russia party put up a solid battle.

(3) The Putin Administration Faces the Need for COVID-19

Countermeasures: Foreign Emergency Aid and Domestic Explosion of Infections

In late March 2020, the COVID-19 situation rapidly worsened in Russia. President Putin responded by giving a televised address to the people calling for their cooperation with infection countermeasures and outlined emergency measures in accordance with Article 80 of the Constitution, which stipulates the wide-ranging authority of the president. These measures included designating the five days from March 30 to April 3 as non-working days with full pay. However, in the early stages of the pandemic at the beginning of 2020, because the number of people confirmed to be infected in Russia was small compared to China and Western countries, the administration’s efforts focused on providing emergency assistance to foreign countries such as Italy, Serbia, and the United States. For example, after the telephone conversation between Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte of Italy and President Putin on March 21,²³ a transport operation by the Russian Aerospace Forces was commenced on the following day, March 22 (see Section 3 for details). The operation was named “From Russia With Love,” and scenes of IL-76 transport aircraft loaded with medical supplies and personnel landing one after another at Pratica di Mare Air Base on the outskirts of Rome were actively publicized through social media and other mediums.²⁴ This had the impact of dispatching Russian military aircraft to a major member country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and demonstrated to Russia and the world the high mobility of overseas operations by the Russian military and Russia’s governing style characterized by rapid decision-making and policy implementation.

On the other hand, from late March 2020 onwards, the number of confirmed cases of infection increased rapidly in Russia, exceeding a cumulative total of three million people as of December, the fourth highest number in the

world.²⁵ Because social policy including public health is basically under the jurisdiction of the federal government (cabinet), and because the authority of the federal government regarding emergency situations was strengthened by the April 1 revision of the Federal Law on the Protection of the Population and Territories from Emergency Situations of Natural and Technogenic Character, Prime Minister Mishustin, Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova, and Mayor of Moscow Sergey Sobyenin have played the central role in developing the COVID-19 countermeasures. On the other hand, the direct involvement of the Kremlin, including President Putin and Deputy Chairman of the Security Council Medvedev, among others, has been seen at critical stages of the pandemic. Given that executive power is divided between the president and the federal government (cabinet) led by the prime minister, the general coordination mechanism for dealing with the situation—as well as federal–regional relations, which have a centrifugal nature—will undoubtedly be the focus of Russia’s long-term COVID-19 countermeasures.

The surge of COVID-19 infections in Russia had significant impact on the political situation, as it happened to coincide with the timing of the establishment of the political calendar for the amendments to the Constitution after the annual address to the Federal Assembly by the president in January 2020 and the inauguration of the new cabinet. The all-Russian vote on amendments to the Constitution planned for April 22 and the military parade to commemorate the 75th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II planned for May 9 were postponed, and a number of cabinet ministers and top government officials, including Prime Minister Mishustin and Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov, were infected. The economy slumped due to a historical fall in crude oil prices, and the administration’s approval rating hit a record low of 59% for the two consecutive months of April and May.²⁶ Due to these and other factors, the Putin administration was forced to greatly revise its scenario for 2020, which had been based on amending or revising the Constitution and commemorating the 75th anniversary of the victory in the war.

In this context, on August 11, the world’s first COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V,

received a registration certificate from the Ministry of Health,²⁷ and the safety and effectiveness of this Russian-produced vaccine was promoted domestically and overseas. For example, images were released of Sergei Shoigu, defense minister, receiving the vaccine in September.²⁸ Moreover, on October 13, a second domestically produced vaccine, EpiVacCorona, received a registration certificate, and it has been reported that distribution of this vaccine commenced in January 2021.²⁹ Russian-produced vaccines are planned to be supplied to more than 10 countries, including India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia.³⁰ Russia is seen to be starting full-scale “vaccine diplomacy” through frameworks on which it places diplomatic importance, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS.

Furthermore, in July 2020, *On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation through 2030* (hereinafter, “July Decree”), a policy document stipulating the basic policy for Russia’s long-term social and economic policies, was approved by a presidential decree.³¹ This document examines the outcomes of the previous version, *On National Goals and Strategic Objectives of the Russian Federation through to 2024* (hereinafter, “May Decree”),³² which was approved in May 2018, and aims for a course correction given the present social and economic situations. It quantifies the priority goals of social and economic policy based on five pillars, including preservation of the population, the health and welfare of the people, a comfortable and safe environment, and digital transformation. At the time of the inauguration of his administration in 2018, President Putin issued the May Decree to strongly promote the “modernization” of the economic structure, a long-standing issue, with a strong sense of crisis over lagging economic development. Nonetheless, the prolonged economic sanctions on Russia imposed by Western countries, combined with lockdowns due to the coronavirus catastrophe and the historical slump in crude oil prices, have made the road to achieving the goals set out by the July Decree steep. Even in the three-year federal budget law for 2021–2023 approved in December 2020, national defense expenditure is expected to remain at three trillion rubles for the single fiscal year of 2021 (2.7% of GDP) and maintained in the 2% to 3% range of GDP

in the 2022 and 2023 planned budgets,³³ trending toward restraint.

2. Foreign Policies: The Strategic Environment Surrounding Russia

(1) Approval of the *Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence and Arms Control*

Since the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, a pattern of opposition has become entrenched in relations between Russia and the West over issues such as the unstable situation in eastern Ukraine and economic sanctions. In recent years, the wavering of the arms control and disarmament regime has become the focus. With the expiration of the INF Treaty in August 2019 and the declaration by the United States in May 2020 that it would withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty, the symbols of the arms control and disarmament regime constructed from the end of the Cold War period to the post-Cold War period are being lost.

In the U.S.-Russia Strategic Security Dialogue held in Vienna on June 22, 2020 with the participation of Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov and Marshall Billingslea, the U.S. special presidential envoy for arms control, agreement was reached to establish a working group on strategic stability issues.³⁴ The main themes of the working group meeting held at the end of July were reported to be space, nuclear doctrine and warheads, and transparency and inspections.³⁵ In a series of negotiations, the delegation of the United States strongly called for the participation of China in the arms control regime, and also raised issues with subjecting new strategic weapons such as the hypersonic glide vehicle to new treaty restrictions and flaws in the current inspection system.

In 1979, during the Cold War, then senator Joseph Biden of the United States made a visit to Moscow for talks on arms control. President Biden has been involved in diplomacy with Russia for many years since the Cold War period, first as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman and then as vice-president during the Barack Obama administration. The new Biden administration has

presented a policy agenda that places importance on multilateral cooperation and alliances,³⁶ and diplomacy with Russia concerning the problem of extending the New START treaty became their first policy issue. The process rapidly progressed, and it was announced that agreement on extending the treaty was reached in a telephone conversation between the leaders of the United States and Russia on January 26, 2021.³⁷ Although the expiration of the treaty has been avoided, there is an urgent need to construct a multilateral arms control regime that puts the brakes on the arms race from a long-term perspective.

Regarding all other aspects of U.S.-Russia relations, if the Biden administration strongly deploys value-based diplomacy that emphasizes human rights and democracy, it will undoubtedly be difficult to build substantial relations with the Putin administration, as it has been strengthening its conservative tendencies after the 2020 amendments to the Constitution.

In this context, on June 2, 2020, the *Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence* were approved by a presidential decree.³⁸ This document is thought to be the successor document to the non-disclosed document *Principles of State Policy in the Sphere of Nuclear Deterrence Until 2020*³⁹ approved together with the Military Doctrine on February 5, 2010. The timing of the approval of the document by the president and the document's disclosure may be related to the stalling of the U.S.-Russia arms control and disarmament regime.

This document comprises four chapters: (I) General Provisions; (II) Essence of nuclear deterrence; (III) Conditions for the use of nuclear weapons; and (IV) Tasks and functions of federal government authorities, other government bodies and organizations for implementing state policy on nuclear deterrence. It states that the legal foundation of these Basic Principles is the Federal Constitution and international treaties on defense and arms control ratified by the federation (paragraph 6), but it also states that these Basic Principles may be further specified depending on the external and internal factors that influence defense implementation (paragraph 8).

The conditions for the use of nuclear weapons presented in (III) mainly

anticipate four scenarios.⁴⁰ Firstly, Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies (paragraph 17). The second scenario is the use of nuclear weapons in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy (paragraph 19(b) and 19(g)). The third scenario is the use of nuclear weapons in the event of the arrival of reliable data on a launch of ballistic missiles attacking the territory of the Russian Federation and/or its allies (paragraph 19(a)), the so-called launch on warning. The fourth scenario is the use of nuclear weapons in the event of an attack by an adversary against critical governmental or military sites of the Russian Federation, disruption of which would undermine nuclear forces response actions (paragraph 19(v)).

Furthermore, the division of duties is clearly laid out in (IV). The chapter stipulates that the president is the supreme commander of nuclear deterrence policy, and that the federal government led by the prime minister implements measures to carry out the economic policy aimed at maintaining and developing nuclear deterrence assets and shapes and exercises the foreign and information policy in the area of nuclear deterrence, while the Security Council chaired by the president shapes the basic principles of military policy in the area of nuclear deterrence and coordinates the activities of the related bodies. In addition, the defense minister, acting through the chief of the General Staff, directly plans and carries out organizational and military measures in the area of nuclear deterrence.

What caught the attention of the strategy community inside and outside Russia were the third and fourth scenarios, which had not been stated previously in other key policy documents such as the Military Doctrine, as well as the affirmation of the escalate to de-escalate (E2DE) policy.⁴¹ Regarding E2DE, the (I) General Provisions chapter in this document states as one state policy for nuclear deterrence that “in the event of a military conflict, this Policy provides for the prevention of an escalation of military actions and their termination on conditions that are acceptable for the Russian Federation and/or its allies,” but as discussed above, this point was not included in the conditions for the use of

nuclear weapons presented in (III). This lack of consistency within the policy document and the remaining ambiguity in its interpretation has not settled the debate concerning Russia’s nuclear deterrence policy, particularly the E2DE policy which is frequently raised.⁴² The nuclear forces have occupied a particularly vital position in the national security policy of modern Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union, and so the release of this document has had a large impact. On the other hand, Russia’s policy documents originally formed a hierarchical structure with the National Security Strategy at the top. The Russian Security Council is working toward revising the strategy,⁴³ and consistency among policy documents, including the Military Doctrine which the Putin administration is also planning to revise, will attract attention.

(2) The Poisoning of Alexey Navalny and Russia-Europe Relations

The attempted murder by poisoning of Russian opposition leader Navalny had a major impact on relations between Russia and the West due to concerns about democracy and political plurality in Russia and the use of chemical weapons prohibited under international treaties. In mid-August 2020, Navalny was visiting Novosibirsk and Tomsk in Siberia to engage in political activities for the nationwide local elections (held on September 13). His “smart vote strategy,” whose primary goal was to prevent the ruling bloc from winning elections, had some degree of success in the 2019 nationwide local elections, and the main purpose of his visit to the cities in Siberia was to roll out the strategy.⁴⁴ On the morning of August 20, a civilian aircraft bound for Moscow that had flown out of Tomsk Airport made an emergency landing at nearby Omsk Airport when Navalny suddenly became ill. Navalny was taken to an emergency hospital near the airport, but he remained in a coma, and on August 22, he was transported to Berlin, Germany for treatment.

The German government determined that Navalny had been attacked using a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok family,⁴⁵ and in response to this, the European Union (EU), NATO and the G7 each issued their own statements. The G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement, dated September 9, 2020, called on the Russian

government to bring the perpetrators to justice under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and stated that the Navalny incident “is another grave blow against democracy and political plurality in Russia.”⁴⁶

Amidst the deepening opposition between Russia and Western countries since the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, German chancellor Angela Merkel has maintained a certain level of economic relations with Russia, most notably the construction of the gas pipeline Nord Stream 2, which directly connects Russia and Germany. On the other hand, against the backdrop of Europe’s concerns about increasing its dependence on Russian-produced energy resources, in December 2019, U.S. president Donald Trump signed a bill imposing sanctions on companies that participate in the installation of Nord Stream 2.⁴⁷ Chancellor Merkel strongly opposed this, and there have frequently been other gaps in perception among Western countries with regards to economic relations with Russia after the annexation. In response to the Navalny incident, the United States announced further strengthening of sanctions in relation to Nord Stream 2, and further diplomatic maneuvering with Germany is predicted.

(3) Japan-Russia Relations at a Time of Transition

With the transition from the Abe Shinzo administration to the Suga Yoshihide administration in September 2020, attention in Russia has turned to the direction of Japan’s policy toward Russia. Under the second Abe administration inaugurated in December 2012, active diplomacy toward Russia was developed with Japan’s National Security Strategy approved in December 2013 as the basis of policy. Regarding Japan-Russia relations, the National Security Strategy mentions that “under the increasingly severe security environment in East Asia, it is critical for Japan to advance cooperation with Russia in all areas, including security and energy, thereby enhancing bilateral relations as a whole, in order to ensure its security,”⁴⁸ advancing Japan’s approach to Russia on the security front.

Under the second Abe administration, there was a deepening of Japan-Russia defense and security cooperation, beginning with the Summit Meeting in April 2013. In the joint statement issued as a result of the meeting, the two leaders

welcomed the launch of the Japan-Russia 2+2 Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultation and the memorandum between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Apparatus of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, which was signed under the Democratic Party of Japan administration, and

agreed to hold regular consultations based on the memorandum.⁴⁹ Under the second Abe administration, the Japan-Russia 2+2 Ministerial Meeting was held a total of four times, and consultations between the foreign affairs and defense authorities, unit-to-unit exchanges between the Self-Defense Forces and the Russian military, and joint training were continuously conducted. Exchanges between Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) and the Russian Navy were particularly active. In addition to the regular holding of joint Japan-Russia Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX), most recently, in January 2020, the second Joint Exercise in Counter Piracy activities was held in the Gulf of Aden with the participation of Japan’s MSDF destroyer *Harusame*, the Russian Navy frigate *Yaroslav Mudryi*, and other ships.⁵⁰

Furthermore, with the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) in Japan in December 2013, the National Security Secretariat (NSS) was established in the Cabinet Secretariat the following month, January 2014, which functioned as the counterpart to the Apparatus of the Security Council in the Russian Federation. Consultations on security began to be regularly held between Yachi Shotaro, the first secretary general of the NSS, and Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Security Council. As relations between Russia and Western countries rapidly deteriorated due to the Ukraine conflict and annexation of Crimea at the



Japan’s MSDF destroyer *Harusame* carrying out tactical maneuvers with Russian Navy ships (Japan Joint Staff official website)

beginning of 2014, Secretary General Yachi visited Moscow twice in rapid succession, on March 14 and May 5 of the same year, to hold consultations with Secretary Patrushev.⁵¹ During Secretary General Yachi's term of office, consultations were held eight times. This diplomatic channel was inherited by his successor as Secretary General Kitamura Shigeru. On September 17, 2019, shortly after Secretary General Kitamura took up the post, Secretary Patrushev visited Japan to pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Abe and hold an exchange of views with Secretary General Kitamura regarding all aspects of Japan-Russia relations and the security policies of the two countries.⁵² Moreover, in January 2020, as the process of making amendments to the Constitution began in earnest in Russia, Secretary General Kitamura visited Moscow to hold consultations with Secretary Patrushev and pay a courtesy call to President Putin at his presidential residence.⁵³

With the institutionalization of the 2+2 Ministerial Meeting between Japan and Russia and NSC diplomacy, diplomatic channels between Japan and Russia diversified during the second Abe administration. Many actors are involved in the foreign policies and military security policies of the Putin administration, including the Presidential Administration, Defense Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SVR and FSB. However, it is likely that the Security



Secretary General Kitamura of the National Security Secretariat paying a courtesy call on President Putin (TASS/Kyodo)

Council and meeting body comprised of the heads of each department, as well as the Apparatus of the Security Council which supports it, play a core role in the policy mechanism. Under the 2020 Security Council reforms, previous prime minister Medvedev took up the position of deputy chairman of the Security Council.

Going forward, it will be necessary to carefully monitor what kinds of diplomatic channels Russia uses for what purposes in its policies toward Japan, including the personnel policies and reorganization of the governing structure by the administration core. Furthermore, as mentioned in Section 1, new conservative provisions concerning territory and historical perceptions were established by the amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in July 2020. As Japan-Russia relations enter a new phase with the inauguration of the Suga administration in September 2020, there is a need to adequately evaluate the impact that Russia's domestic political developments regarding the amendments to the Constitution and the Post-Putin issue have on Japan-Russia relations.

3. Response to COVID-19 and Capability Improvement Efforts of the Russian Military

(1) Response to COVID-19 and the Role of the Russian Military

The spread of COVID-19 has also been serious in Russia, and the Russian military has been busy with preventing the disease's outbreak and spread. According to a report regularly published by the Defense Ministry on the status of COVID-19 infections within the Defense Ministry and military, the total number of people who had been infected by the novel coronavirus and subsequently recovered as of December 24, 2020 was 22,979 soldiers and 3,312 civil servants. Furthermore, 4,228 soldiers and 571 civil servants had tested positive and were receiving treatment as of December 24.⁵⁴ Defense Minister Shoigu has maintained that the status of novel coronavirus infections within the military is not having any substantial impact on the Russian military.⁵⁵

Countermeasures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have been taken since March 2020. On March 12, an operational headquarters headed by Ruslan Tsalikov, first deputy defense minister, was established in the Defense Ministry, which decided to strengthen the inspection structures in each Russian military unit, each military educational institution, and various organizations in the

Defense Ministry. In addition, other countermeasures that were taken include the suspension of military delegations to and from foreign countries, the cancellation of large-scale events by military units, the implementation of military conscription according to plan with strict COVID-19 countermeasures in effect, the establishment of special sections for responding to COVID-19 in 32 military hospitals, and various measures pertaining to strengthening the posture of the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops in order to enhance quarantine and disinfection operations.⁵⁶

On March 25, Defense Minister Shoigu, in a report on the current situation of the Russian military to the Federation Council of Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, revealed that the Defense Ministry was constructing 16 multifunctional medical centers for the response to COVID-19 in 15 regions of Russia.⁵⁷ The construction of the multifunctional medical centers proceeded in two stages, with the first eight centers constructed by April 30, 2020, and the remaining eight centers constructed by May 15. The reserve fund of the Russian government contributed 8.8 billion rubles to the construction, and approximately 12,000 staff in the construction section of Defense Ministry worked around the clock. Russia's engineer troops were also mobilized in the construction.⁵⁸ According to Timur Ivanov, deputy defense minister, who was in charge of the construction of the centers, the centers were equipped with cutting-edge medical equipment and the 16 facilities contained a total of 1,600 hospital beds. In addition, treatment in the centers is provided by approximately 2,300 medical staff who have received pre-training at the Military-Medical Academy. Moreover, the centers accept not only military workers, but also COVID-19 patients from among the general public.⁵⁹ As of December 24, the centers had treated a total of 13,325 patients, 4,442 of whom were members of the general public. Also, as of December 24, 30 multifunctional medical centers had ultimately been constructed, including centers constructed to strengthen the COVID-19 countermeasures of the federal subjects of Russia.⁶⁰

The quarantine and disinfection operations by the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have also been

strengthened. As of December 24, for the various units stationed in Moscow, they have carried out the disinfection of facilities with a total area of approximately 1,026,000 square meters, including approximately 38,000 pieces of equipment and the buildings of each unit, military educational institution, and national defense industry. In each military district and the Northern Fleet, disinfection of approximately 1,900 facilities has been carried out, covering a total area of approximately 200,000 square meters.⁶¹

The Russian military has not only responded to the novel coronavirus domestically as mentioned above; it has also provided support to foreign countries for responding to the novel coronavirus, including testing and treatment support for medical staff in partner countries, as well as disinfection operations for military and civilian facilities. In March 2020, in response to a request from the Italian government, the Russian Defense Ministry dispatched to Italy an expert team comprising Russian military physicians with abundant experience in infectious diseases and prevention of epidemics and experts from the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops. This team carried out support activities at 83 locations in Lombardy. The same kind of support was provided to Serbia, with teams dispatched by Russia working in 28 cities in Serbia.⁶² Moreover, Russia dispatched medical expert teams to Kyrgyzstan in July 2020 and to Kazakhstan in August of the same year to support the COVID-19 countermeasures of those two countries.⁶³ Behind this support for Italy, Russia's desire to gain an opportunity to improve deteriorating relations with Western countries can be observed.⁶⁴ Furthermore, behind the support for the two Central Asian countries and Serbia, Russia likely aimed to increase its influence by further strengthening its relations with allies and partners. These dispatches were carried out with the cooperation of the Aerospace Forces' long-range aero-transport forces, the Main Military-Medical Directorate in the Defense Ministry, and the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops, and their activities were constantly monitored and controlled by the operational headquarters within the Defense Ministry.⁶⁵

The Russian military demonstrated its high capabilities through its response to COVID-19. The following three points in particular are worth noting from

the perspective of improving the operation executing capabilities of the Russian military. The first is the growing role of the engineer troops. It is notable that the engineer troops demonstrated a high level of capability in completing the construction of the multifunctional medical centers in regions throughout Russia in a short period. Defense Minister Shoigu has also recognized the growing importance of deploying the engineer troops to solve a variety of problems that arise in the execution of special operations by the Russian military and in the process of conducting exercises.⁶⁶

The second is the growing role of the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops. The high level of capability demonstrated by these units both in Russia and in foreign countries in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is notable. The role of these troops is becoming increasingly important, especially as there are particular concerns about terrorism using nuclear materials, chemical weapons, or biological weapons. In 2020, the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops participated in a greater number of exercises. In August of the same year, in Sakhalin in the Eastern Military District, the anti-terrorist troops from this military district conducted a joint exercise with the nuclear, chemical and biological protection troops.⁶⁷

The third is the growing role of the long-range aero-transport forces. In February 2020, when the COVID-19 situation became more serious in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, the Aerospace Forces, under the instructions of President Putin, sent two IL-76 transport aircraft to bring home 144 Russian citizens who had been staying in that province.⁶⁸ In addition to this, they demonstrated a high level of capability regarding the transportation of personnel and equipment when providing the aforementioned support to foreign countries.

(2) Ongoing Military Reform and the Strengthening of the Military

Posture

In the May 2020 meeting of the Defense Ministry Board, Defense Minister Shoigu expressed the perception that Russia continued to face the most serious military threat in the western strategic front. In order to respond to this threat, he

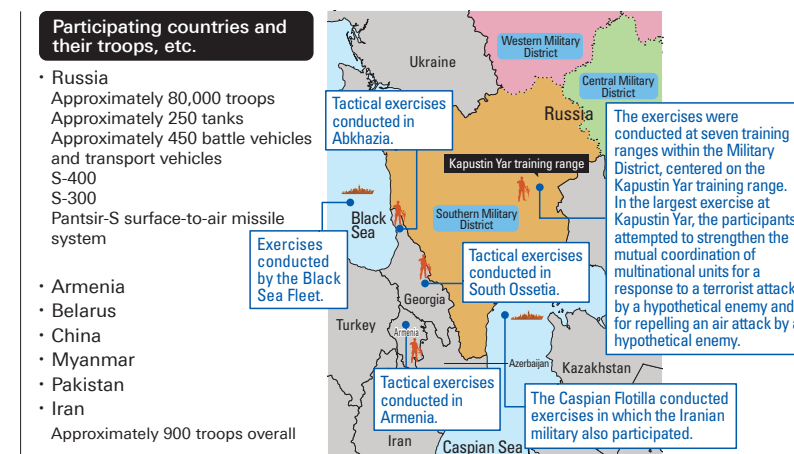
pointed out that it was necessary to steadily execute the various measures from 2019 to 2025 stipulated in the activity plan of Western Military District. Thanks to 28 organizational measures executed in 2020, including the formation of a new motorized sniper division, missile brigade, and artillery brigade, in order to establish the combat-readiness of the units commensurate with the introduction of the latest armaments, Defense Minister Shoigu presented the outlook that overall possession of the latest armaments for the Western Military District would increase to 65% with the introduction of approximately 2,000 of the latest armaments. Moreover, he pointed out that there were approximately 320 exercises in the Western Military District in 2020, 10 of which were large-scale exercises.⁶⁹

Coinciding with reinforcement of the military posture of the Western Military District, moves to strengthen the posture of the Northern Fleet (Northern Joint Strategic Command), which is responsible for the Arctic region, have become more notable. In June 2020, President Putin issued the Ukaz on military-administrative division of the Russian Federation, which divided Russia's military districts into the Western, Southern, Central, and Eastern military districts and the Northern Fleet from January 1, 2021.⁷⁰ Because of this, the Northern Fleet gained jurisdiction over the regions of the Komi Republic, Arkhangelsk oblast, Murmansk oblast, and Nenets autonomous district, which previously belonged to the Western Military District. Under a December 2020 presidential decree, the Northern Fleet was designated a Joint Strategic Command that executes the tasks of a military district.⁷¹ Efforts are also being made to strengthen the Northern Fleet in terms of equipment. During 2020, six battle ships and more than 180 new pieces of equipment were introduced, including two nuclear submarines and a new model of landing ship. Likewise, many exercises for the improvement of operational capability have been conducted. In June 2020, exercises were performed in the Barents Sea and Norwegian Sea, and from August to September, the Arctic group of troops carried out a long-distance ocean navigation to Crest Bay in the Bering Sea. Along the way, they conducted tactical exercises for the protection of important industrial facilities on Taymyr Peninsula, Chukchi Peninsula, and Yakutia.⁷²

The Russian military continues to make progress in its equipment upgrades. At the end of June 2020, a meeting of the Defense Ministry Board was held to consider the outcomes of the military reforms in the first half of 2020. According to the report by Defense Minister Shoigu at this meeting, 776 major pieces of the latest armaments were introduced to the Russian military in the first half of 2020. This number includes 58 airplanes and helicopters, more than 140 battle armored vehicles, 510 multipurpose vehicles, one strategic nuclear ballistic missile submarine (Borei-A class), and two replenishment ships. As a result, overall possession of the latest armaments by the Russian military rose to 68.5%, with the prospect of reaching 72% by the end of 2020.⁷³ A total of 1,200 small and large-scale exercises were conducted as planned in the winter training season, without being interrupted by the impact of the spread of COVID-19.⁷⁴

During the summer training season that began on June 1, 15,500 exercises of a variety of types had been planned, and they were conducted as planned. The largest of these exercises was the large-scale exercises Kavkaz 2020 carried out from September 21 to September 26, 2020, primarily in the Southern Military District. Kavkaz 2020 was one of the strategic exercises that are performed by a different military district every year. It was a large-scale exercise that mobilized approximately 80,000 troops (including air defense troops), a maximum of 250 tanks, and a maximum of 450 infantry battle vehicles and armored transport vehicles. The related tactical exercises were conducted not only at the seven training ranges of the Southern Military District, the Black Sea, and the Caspian Sea, but also in Armenia, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. The major stages of the exercises took the form of multilateral exercises, with the participation of military units from Armenia, Belarus, China, Myanmar, and Pakistan. Moreover, units of the Iranian military participated in the exercises of the Caspian Flotilla in the Caspian Sea.⁷⁵ The exercises were carried out in two stages: in the first stage, they considered the problem of how to best coordinate the multinational units in a fight against terrorist forces supported by a hypothetical enemy and how to repel an air attack by the hypothetical enemy. In the second stage, they worked to solve the issues arising when directly commanding multinational units

Figure 5.1. Large-scale exercises Kavkaz 2020 centered on the Southern Military District



Sources: Compiled by the author based on *Krasnaia Zvezda*, September 28, October 12 and October 14, 2020.

in the process of executing actual combat operations. Although Kavkaz 2020 anticipated a scenario of a fight with terrorist forces supported by a hypothetical enemy, the fact that the stopping of an air attack was the important issue, and that the participating air defense troops deployed the S-400 and S-300 surface-to-air missile systems and the surface-to-air missile system Pantsir-S for anti-cruise missile defense, suggests that defense against an air attack by a state possessing high-tech weapons was the key issue in the exercises.⁷⁶

Moves to strengthen the military posture of the Eastern Military District have also continued to make progress. In August 2020, Defense Minister Shoigu visited Kamchatka krai and Khabarovsk krai in the Eastern Military District and Irkutsk oblast in eastern Siberia to inspect the development of military facilities and the current condition of the national defense industries. In Kamchatka krai, Defense Minister Shoigu visited Vilyuchinsk Base, a major base for the strategic nuclear ballistic missile submarines of the Pacific Fleet, and inspected the construction of new facilities for the Borei-A class and Yasen-M class

strategic nuclear ballistic missile submarines, which Russia plans to introduce to the Pacific Fleet going forward. Defense Minister Shoigu confirmed that the construction work was progressing as planned and gave instructions for the work to be completed by the end of 2020.⁷⁷ Furthermore, moves to improve the capabilities of units deployed in the Northern Territories and Kuril Islands have continued. For example, deployment of the surface-to-air missile S-300 V4 was newly announced,⁷⁸ and deployment of the flagship tank T-72B3 was reported.⁷⁹

In Khabarovsk krai, Defense Minister Shoigu inspected the Amur Shipbuilding Company and Komsomolsk-na-Amure Aircraft Company. The Amur Shipbuilding Company is currently building four small missile ships (Project 22800) and two corvettes (Project 20380), but Defense Minister Shoigu announced that the Defense Ministry was prepared to conclude contracts for the building of a further six of the same model of corvette.⁸⁰ The Komsomolsk-na-Amure Aircraft Company is a branch office of Aircraft Building Company Sukhoi, and it is producing the multipurpose fighter Su-35 and the state-of-the-art fifth generation fighter Su-57. Iliya Tarasenko, general director of Company Sukhoi, explained in a report to Defense Minister Shoigu that delivery of the Su-35 and Su-35S aircraft to the Aerospace Forces in 2020 was progressing as planned. In response to this, Defense Minister Shoigu announced that the Defense Ministry was planning additional procurement of the Su-35S aircraft, the total value of which was on the scale of 70 billion rubles. Moreover, General Director Tarasenko mentioned a contract that requires the company to manufacture 76 Su-57s by 2028, stating that the company was currently advancing preparations for an assembly-line production facility for Su-57 manufacturing that was expected to be completed by the end of the year.⁸¹

In Irkutsk oblast, Defense Minister Shoigu visited the Irkutsk Aircraft Building Company Irkut. The Irkut company manufactures and repairs the multipurpose fighter Su-30SM and the battle training aircraft Yak-130. At this company, Defense Minister Shoigu announced that the Defense Ministry had decided to conclude additional contracts for 21 Su-30SM fighters and 25 Yak-130 aircraft (with a total value on the scale of 100 billion rubles).⁸²

Russia is also aiming to strengthen the capabilities of the Eastern Military District units through tactical exercises. Exercises to improve coastal defense and the deployment capability to far-sea areas stood out in particular. In June 2020, two coastal defense exercises were carried out in Kamchatka. These were an exercise using a Ka-29 combat/transport helicopter to attack the maritime targets of a hypothetical enemy on the coast, and an exercise using the surface-to-air missile system Pantsir-S to repel the air attack of a hypothetical enemy.⁸³ In September 2020, an exercise to stop a landing by a hypothetical enemy was conducted in the Northern Territories and Kuril Islands.⁸⁴ Moreover, in the same month, the air regiment of the Pacific Fleet located in Primorsky krai participated in an exercise to defend Russian ships from the sky in open-sea areas, and aircraft belonging to this regiment were deployed to the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan.⁸⁵

(3) Strengthening of Military Cooperation and Arms Exports Aimed at Expansion

Russia is continuing to strengthen military cooperation through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). In March 2020, a meeting was held by the CSTO Joint Staff concerning the strengthening of mutual collaboration between the Crisis Reaction Center established within the Joint Staff and each of the CSTO member countries. At the meeting, they considered the best approach to mutual collaboration between the military command institutions of each member country and the Crisis Reaction Center in the event of a crisis situation, and discussed in particular future directions for the development of a communications system to expand the possibilities of the mutual cooperation system in the area of information. They also confirmed that an education program for training the human resources essential to the Crisis Reaction Center would be offered at the Russian Military Academy of the General Staff. Furthermore, prior to this meeting, there were moves to expand the number of countries participating in the multilateral exercises carried out by the CSTO. Specifically, it was agreed that Serbia and Uzbekistan would participate as observers in the joint exercise

Nerushimoe Bratstvo (Unbreakable Brotherhood) 2020 and the joint exercise Rubezh (Border) 2020, respectively.⁸⁶

In addition, a joint meeting of defense ministers of the three frameworks of the CSTO, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the SCO was held in September 2020 in Moscow, and was attended by the defense ministers of 12 countries. Russia hoped to use this meeting as a foundation for promoting international military cooperation. The actual outcomes obtained at this meeting are as follows. Firstly, the defense ministers of all of the countries agreed to expand cooperation in the fight against terrorism. Secondly, they exchanged the experiences of each country in dealing with the spread of COVID-19 and discussed the problem of mutual support for the building of infectious disease response capabilities. Thirdly, a statement was incorporated into the joint statement of the meeting which said that it would be unacceptable to allow the collapse of the treaty-based system in the area of arms control, including control of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, there were outcomes in the individual frameworks of the CSTO and the CIS. In the CSTO, it was decided that the working group on electronic warfare of Defense Ministers' Council would be established. In the CIS, the activity plan of Defense Ministers' Council for 2021 was approved, and based on it, the budget for the development of a joint air defense system was decided.⁸⁷

Russia has continued to strengthen military cooperation with China. Approximately 100 soldiers from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) participated in the aforementioned large-scale exercises Kavkaz 2020.⁸⁸ Moreover, on December 22, 2020, the militaries of China and Russia carried out a joint air patrol from the East China Sea to the Sea of Japan, which was the second such patrol after the patrol carried out in July 2019. A formation including two of Russia's Tu-95MS strategic bombers and four of China's H-6K strategic bombers flew from the East China Sea over the Sea of Japan. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the objectives of this flight were to deepen and develop the comprehensive partnership of China and Russia, further improve the level of mutual collaboration between the two militaries, improve the joint

operation executing capability of the two militaries, and strengthen global strategic stability.⁸⁹

Russia has been strengthening military cooperation with its CSTO allies across the board, but some problems have been occurring that are difficult for Russia to respond to, such as the intensification of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the political turmoil in Kyrgyzstan. Military cooperation between Russia and Armenia has been strengthened; for example, Armenia participated in Kavkaz 2020 and related tactical exercises were conducted in the country. However, in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which was reignited in September 2020, Russia's response was limited to leading the parties to a ceasefire agreement and dispatching peacekeeping units, rather than militarily supporting its ally Armenia. This might have negative implications on the credibility of the CSTO as a collective defense system. Behind this response by Russia is the recognition that good relations with Azerbaijan are also important for the stability of the Caucasus region. Regarding the political turmoil that occurred in October 2020 in Kyrgyzstan, where Russia is attempting to strengthen military cooperation including counter-terrorism cooperation, Russia has taken a wait-and-see stance without deploying any forces. This is due to the fact that Russia thinks that Kyrgyzstan, which is strongly dependent on Russia economically and militarily, will be forced to adopt a pro-Russia policy direction regardless of which forces are in charge of the administration.⁹⁰ Military cooperation with Belarus, which has formed the Union State with Russia, is one of the most important issues for Russia to manage its relations with allied countries. Belarus participated in Kavkaz 2020, and in August 2020, the joint exercise Slavyanskoe Bratstvo (Slavic Brotherhood) 2020 was carried out in Belarus by the airborne units of both Russia and Belarus.⁹¹

There have also been moves to diversify partner countries in military cooperation. One of those partner countries is Pakistan, which also participated in Kavkaz 2020. On September 5, 2020, Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff met Nadeem Raza, chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan Armed Forces, and they agreed to strengthen joint exercises between

their two militaries and strengthen the hotline between the chief of the General Staff and the chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.⁹² The strengthening of military cooperation between the two countries is likely against the backdrop of the Russian military leadership's perception that military cooperation with Pakistan, which is adjacent to Afghanistan, is essential in order to suppress the threats that the destabilization of Afghanistan and spread of Islamic extremist forces pose to Central Asia overall.

In 2020, Russia's arms exports to African countries showed a new trend. In April 2020, Russia's arms export company Rosoboronexport revealed that it had concluded a contract to supply assault ships to a certain country in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. It stated that this was the first time in 20 years of the arms trade with African countries that finished Russian-made navy equipment would be exported to this region. Russia has been attempting to take the opportunity presented by this kind of trade to build a foothold for exports to Africa and subsequently expand its export market. In the past 20 years, Russia has been the largest supplier of arms to African countries, and it has been indicated that Russia accounts for 49% of total arms exports to African countries.⁹³ Going forward, it will be necessary to closely monitor Russia's moves regarding arms exports to this region.

NOTES

- 1) For the text and previous Japanese translations of the 1993 Constitution (before and after the amendments), the following literature was referenced unless otherwise noted: E.Iu. Barkhatova, *Kommentarii k Konstitutsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii novaia redaktsiia s popravkami 3-e izdanie* (Moskva: Prospekt, 2021); *Kommentarii k Konstitutsii Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2-e izdanie* (Moskva: Prospekt, 2020); Ueno Toshihiko, "Roshia ni okeru 2020 nen no kenpo shusei wo meguru shomondai" [Issues regarding the 2020 constitutional amendments in Russia], *Russia & NIS Business Monthly* 65, no. 5 (2020): 80–105; Mizoguchi Shuhei, "Roshia renpo" [Russian Federation], in *Shin kaisetsu sekai kenposhu dai-gohan* [Constitutions of Nations, 5th Edition], eds. Shiyake Masanori and Tsujimura Miyoko (Tokyo: Sanseido, 2020), 281–341; Shibuya Kenjiro, "Roshia" [Russia],

in *Shinpan sekai kenposhu dai-nihan* [New edition of the constitutions of nations, 2nd Edition], ed. Takahashi Kazuyuki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012), 457–517. The text of the Constitution in the footnotes is the text after the amendments unless otherwise noted.

- 2) Raspriazhenie Prezidenta RF ot 15.01.2020g., no. 5-rp, "O rabochei gruppe po podgotovke predlozhenii o vnesenii popravok v Konstitutsiiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Sobranie zakonodatel'stva Rossiiskoi Federatsii (SZRF)*, January 20, 2020, no. 3, art. 251.
- 3) Hasegawa Takeyuki, "Russian Presidential Power in the Putin Era and the Recent Discussion on Constitutional Revisions," *Briefing Memo*, National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) (January 2020).
- 4) Stat'i 135 i 136, Konstitutsii RF.
- 5) Punkt 87, Strategii natsional'noi bezopasnosti RF, Ukaz Prezidenta RF ot 31.12.2015g., no. 683, *SZRF*, January 4, 2016, no. 1 (chast' II), art. 212.
- 6) *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, July 2, 2013.
- 7) «a», «b», «b'», «d» stat'i 83, «a'» stat'i 103, chast' 1 stat'i 110, i chasti 3 i 4 stat'i 112, Konstitutsii RF.
- 8) «d'» stat'i 83, Konstitutsii RF.
- 9) Stat'ia 1, Federal'nyi konstitutsionnyi zakon ot 17.12.1997g., no. 2-FKZ (red. ot 28.12.2016g.), "O Pravitel'stve Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *SZRF*, December 22, 1997, no. 51, art. 5712.
- 10) Stat'ia 1, Federal'nyi konstitutsionnyi zakon ot 06.11.2020g., no. 4-FKZ, "O Pravitel'stve Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *SZRF*, November 9, 2020, no. 45, art. 7061.
- 11) Stat'i 81, 92', i «b» chasti 2 stat'i 95, Konstitutsii RF.
- 12) *Kommersant*, January 15, 2020.
- 13) *RBK*, January 21, 2020.
- 14) «zh» i «o», Punkta 23, "Polozhenie o Sovete Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii," Ukaz Prezidenta RF ot 07.13.2020g., no. 175, "O nekotorykh voprosakh Soveta Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *SZRF*, March 9, 2020, no. 10, art. 1323.
- 15) Hasegawa Takeyuki, "Dai niji puuchin seiken ni okeru anzen hosho hosei no henyō: Anzen hosho kaigi fukugicho secchi to sono hoteki shomondai wo chushin to shite" [The development of the Russian security legislation under the second Putin administration: The institutional reform of the Security Council], *Russian Eurasian Society*, no. 1052 (2020): 21–35.
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