

According to the new organizational doctrine each military district will have no more than two Tactical Aviation air bases solely responsible for air defense. The S-400 (SA-21 'Growler') surface-to-air missile (SAM) complex is considered to be the most modern element of the air defense assets. Four battalions are equipped, or soon to be equipped, with the system. The fixed-site S-200 (SA-5 'Gammon') SAM system appears to have been removed from the inventory, together with the S-125 (SA-3 'Goa') formerly operated by the Air Defense Force.

### Long-Range Aviation Command

The former 37th Air Army is re-emerging as Long-Range Aviation Command. The offensive assets employed by Russian Long-Range Aviation, consisting of approximately 170

Fleet). Henceforth, Russian Naval Aviation will no longer have any cruise missile-capable aircraft at its disposal.

The full contingent of heavy bombers is to remain at Engels under the command of the 6950th Air Base. Both Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiments at Engels (121st and 184th TBAPs) and their parent unit, the 22nd Guards Heavy Bomber Aviation Division, are to be deactivated. The Engels inventory of Tu-95MS and Tu-160 bombers will not exceed 35 aircraft, since the delivery of new Tu-160s is highly unlikely.

The 203rd Airborne Refueling Aviation Regiment at Ryazan, which consists of Il-78s, will be re-designated as the 6954th Air Base, but the training activities of the base will not be affected. Four Tu-95MS and four Tu-22M3 bombers of the 43rd TsBP I PLS will remain permanently stationed at Ryazan. Aircrew

200th TBAP at Belaya and the 444th TBAP at Vosdvishenka) as well as an independent air squadron (the 181st OAE at Irkutsk) are being merged into the new structure at Belaya. All in all, up to 40 Tu-22M3/MR, An-12, An-26, An-30B and Tu-134 aircraft will be stationed at Belaya. The 199th Air Base at Tiksi, equipped with four Mi-8s and four An-12s, remains in operation for transport, training and long-range air operations, but after 50 years, the 24th Independent Air Squadron at the same base is to be deactivated.

The oldest aviation hardware is also being decommissioned. At least 40 Tu-22M3s, all built in the first half of the 1980s, will be affected by this measure. A similar number of Tu-22M3s have either been mothballed, have an as yet undetermined status, or are in general overhaul. Should funding for overhaul be forthcoming, the number of bombers in Long-Range Aviation will rise to slightly over 200.

### Military Transport Aviation Command

Under the recent changes, the 61st Air Army of Transport Aviation is being transformed into the Military Transport Aviation Command. Two of the previous seven military air transport regiments, the 110th VTAP at Novgorod and the 103rd

Russia's Tactical Aviation includes 10 squadrons with MiG-29 'Fulcrums'. This MiG-29UB was photographed during training in early 2010. Sergei Krivchikov



VTAP at Smolensk, are to be deactivated. Their hardware will be transferred to other regiments and the remaining regiments and squadrons are to be reorganized under the air base structure. The average regimental strength will be between 25 and 30 transport aircraft. According to plans, the previously modified Il-76Ms are to be completely removed from service, leaving less than 120 Il-76MDs in service as the main equipment of the Command. In addition, a dozen An-12s, An-26s, An-22s and approximately 20 An-124s will be retained. Fixed-wing transport bases will be Ivanovo, Pskov, Seshtsha, Tver, Klin, Taganrog and Orenburg, with around 40 Mi-8, Mi-24 and Mi-26 helicopters stationed at Troitsk and Tshebenki.

### Tactical Aviation

Both Frontal Aviation and former PVO assets are to be absorbed by Tactical Aviation. The Special Mission Command (KspN), which is responsible for the defense of Moscow, will be reorganized as the Strategic Operations Command of Air and Space Defense (OSK VKO). Three Air and Space Defense Brigades (Br VKO) are to be created and will likely be placed under the direct command of the OSK VKO. An Independent Air Defense Corps covers the airspace over Moscow. The radius itself divided into four sectors, each based on a compass direction. Each defensive sector has radar and air defense missile units (deploying SA-10, SA-11, SA-12 and SA-20 systems) and is divided into brigades and regiments. Additionally, an aviation component, originally part of Special Mission Command, has been re-assigned and placed as a direct reporting unit under the Strategic Operations Command of Air and Space Defense.

It is intended to dissolve the 116th IAP PVO in Dorokhovo. The unit's inventory, consisting predominantly of Su-27s, will be transferred to the 790th IAP PVO in Khotilovo, where the 6968th Air Base will be commissioned. This will be a mixed unit

consisting of two squadrons of MiG-31s and one of Su-27s. The last remaining MiG-25PU trainers will be mothballed before the changes. The 14th IAP in Kursk will continue to fly the MiG-29SMT, all of which have been through a general overhaul, and will be re-designated as the 6963rd Air Base.

According to available sources, the three previously mentioned Air and Space Defense Brigades that are stationed in Dolgoprudnyy, Petrovskoye and Dorotshovo (or Rzhev) will be placed under the control of the 1st Air and Air Defense Forces Command in St Petersburg.

The most radical force reductions will affect the 6th and 16th Air Armies of the Air and Air Defense Forces in St Petersburg and Kubinka. These air armies will be merged under the control of the aforementioned 1st Air and Air Defense Forces Command and restructured in a brigade format. No less than eight airfields will be closed down. The air regiments stationed there will be deactivated and their hardware transferred to other bases, some of it moving to other military districts.

Mixed air bases are also being created, resulting in the direct co-ordination of PVO Su-27 and MiG-31 fighters. The previous Northern Fleet air base at Olenya will be re-designated as the 6959th Air Base.

Concurrently the 9th IAP PVO at Kilp-Yavr (Su-27) and the 458th IAP PVO at Kotlas (MiG-31) will be transferred to Olenya. The contingent in Olenya will then consist of one squadron of Su-27s and two of MiG-31s.

A combined reconnaissance and frontal bomber base, equipped with Su-24s, will be commissioned at Montshegorsk, as the 6964th Air Base. The 98th Independent Reconnaissance Air Regiment stationed here is in the process of deactivating a squadron of MiG-25RBs. It will retain a squadron of Su-24MRs and take over both Su-24M squadrons of the 67th BAP at Siverski.

While the military airfields along Russia's western border — especially those in proximity to the Baltic region — are being closed down one after another, a quantitative increase in the aviation assets in the Kaliningrad Special Defense Region can be expected. This is the remaining Russian sector of the former Baltic Military District, and plans foresee reinforcement of the 6967th and the 6962nd Air Bases (Su-27s at Chkalovsk and Su-24s in Tshernyakhovsk respectively) from a current strength of two to three squadrons each. For this reason the 177th IAP at Lodeynoye Pole (Su-27) and the 1st BAP at Lebyashe (Su-24 and Su-24MR) are to be deactivated. This also affects the 722nd BAP in Smuravevo, and its complement of Su-24s

Around three Yak-130 advanced jet trainers remain in testing and development at Lipetsk. Sergei Krivchikov



Tu-22M3, Tu-95MS and Tu-160 bombers, are now based at four locations: Engels, Shaikovka, Belaya and Ukrainka. Their primary armament consists of several hundred Kh-15, Kh-22 and Kh-55 cruise missiles, each of which can carry a nuclear warhead, these being stored in depots near each base.

The only two Tu-22M3 regiments remaining in the European region of Russia are to merge together at the 6951st Air Base at Shaikovka. Up until now, Shaikovka has been home to the 52nd Heavy Bomber Regiment. The days of the 840th Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiment in Solts'y are numbered, even though the unit has taken over the Tu-22M3s of the former 924th Naval Missile Carrier Regiment (from the Northern

training for Long-Range Aviation is to continue in Tambov. Now known as the 1449th Air Base, this facility hosts several training versions of the Tu-134, several An-26s and a single Il-18D.

Long-Range Aviation assets stationed east of the Ural Mountains are to be reduced by 50 per cent. The 6952nd Air Base in Ukrainka is to be activated to supplement the 6950th Air Base at Engels. Ukrainka's Tu-95MS aircraft are to be reassigned to the 79th TBAP and the 182nd Guards Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiment. The 326th Heavy Bomber Aviation Division, also stationed at Ukrainka, is to be deactivated. Finally, the 6953rd Air Base is to be formed at Belaya. The personnel, hardware and traditions of no less than six Tu-16 and Tu-22M units (including the

The 7000th Air Base at Voronezh is set to become the first home of the Su-34. The second operator is rumored to be the 6970th Air Base at Morosovsk. Dimitriy Pichugin



The Russian AF currently operates around 50 upgraded Su-27SM long-range fighters. The SM sub-type modification can be identified by the electro-optical sensor ahead of the canopy, offset to starboard, and the absence of Sirena radar warning antennae on both sides of the intakes. Alexander Golz

