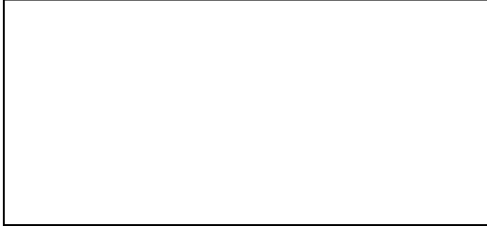


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# Senior Executive Intelligence Brief

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**Friday, 4 June 1999**

**National Security Information**

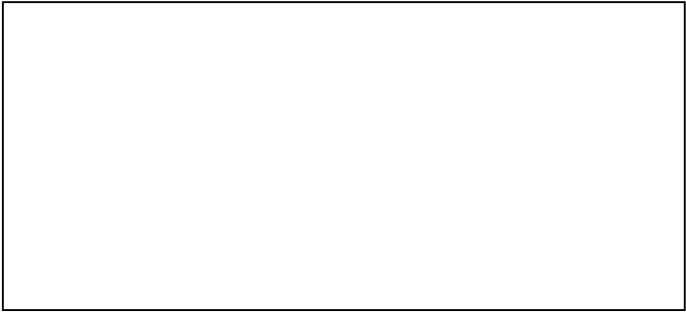
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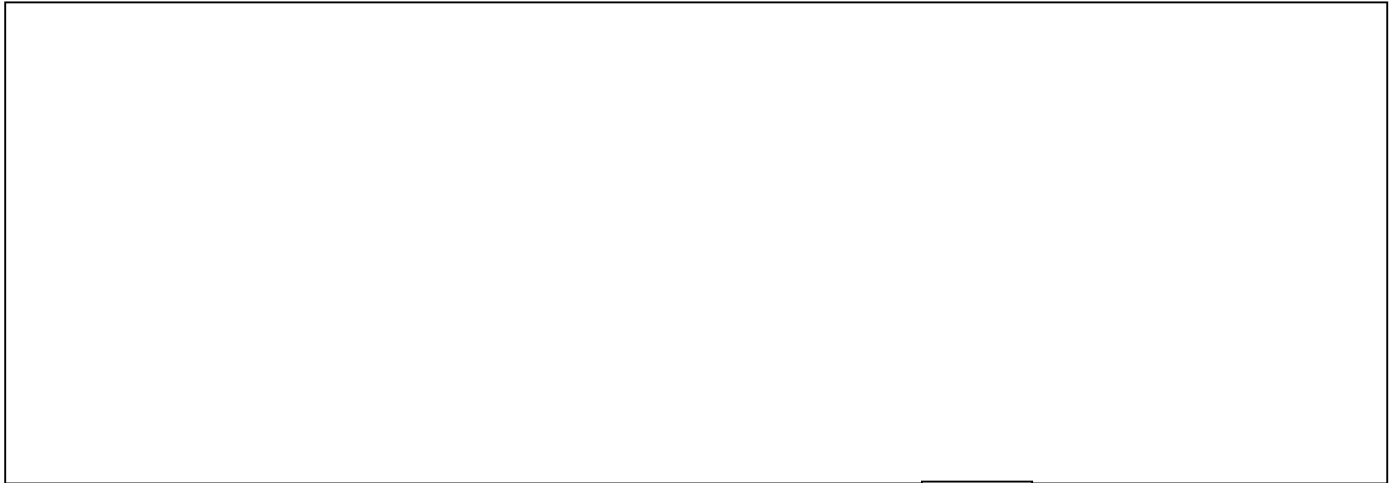
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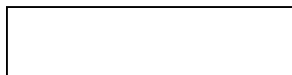
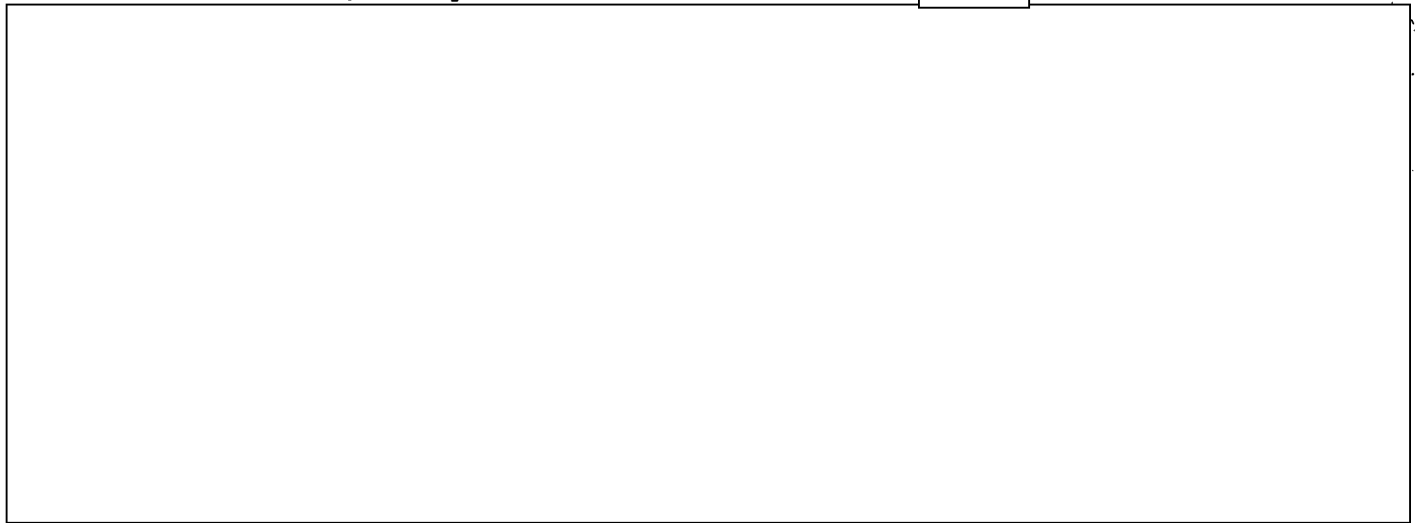
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**Russia: Ambitious Nuclear Test Program This Year**  
*Analytic Perspective*



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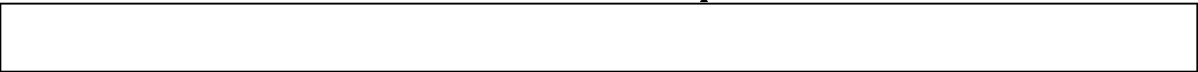
**Russia: Results of Nuclear Test Program Last Year**



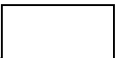
First Deputy Minister of Atomic Energy Ryabev in a *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* article on 12 May said five nuclear experiments were conducted last year at the Novaya Zemlya test site between 14 September and 13 December.



Ryabev is quoted as saying the tests were conducted in special containers cemented into rock.



— Ryabev says the experiments were carried out “in strict accordance with the requirements of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.”



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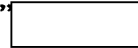
Russia:  
*Analytic Perspective*

**Ambitious Nuclear Test Program This Year**

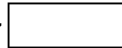


The Russian Security Council in April approved a nuclear test program at Novaya Zemlya more extensive than the one conducted last year, according to press reports. One of several probable objectives of the tests is the development of low-yield warheads.

- According to an article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, informed sources say “far more money” will be spent on experiments this year and the new tests will be conducted “on a completely different qualitative level and as a matter of priority.”



The Security Council secretary told reporters after the meeting in April that Russia needs to conduct additional nuclear experiments, implying that the Council agreed to a test plan. Increased resources would permit Russia to carry out more than the five experiments it conducted last year and to broaden the objectives of the tests.



The development of low-yield warheads that could be used on high-precision tactical weapons systems—long advocated by former Minister and now First Deputy Minister of Atomic Energy Mikhaylov—would be consistent with Russia’s increasing reliance on nuclear weapons to deter conventional as well as nuclear aggression, especially given the widespread perception of a heightened threat from NATO.

- In addition, defense officials would be interested in low-yield warheads because of fears that a future battlefield could emerge on Russian soil.
- For the new weapons to achieve maximum effectiveness, the Russians would have to produce and deploy newer, more accurate delivery systems, including the air-launched cruise missile in development and the SS-X-26 SRBM, which the Army may begin to procure in limited quantities this year.

