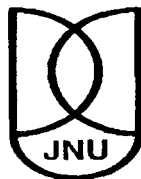


**MILITARIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN STATE
UNDER PUTIN**

*Dissertation Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

IMKONGKUMZUK



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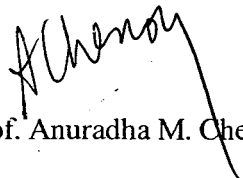
DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "**MILITARIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN STATE UNDER PUTIN**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.


IMKONGKUMZUK

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation


Prof. Anuradha M. Chenoy
(CHAIRPERSON)


Dr. Rajan Kumar
(SUPERVISOR)

Dedicated to Aya and Aba

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List of Abbreviations

CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
FSB	Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
FBGS	Federal Border Card Service
FSNP	Russian Federation Federal Service of Tax Police
G-7	Group of Seven (Finance Ministers of Canada, France, Japan, Italy, United Kingdom, United States, Germany)
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
DOSAAF	Voluntary Society of Assistance to the Army, the Air Force and the Navy
MICEX	Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange
MVD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennih Del (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
MVTU	Moscow Bauman Higher Technical School
NKVD	Narodny Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, former Soviet Union under Stalin)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organizations
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTV	Russian Television Channel
VUZy	Vysshie Uchebnie Zavedeniia (Civilian Higher-educational Establishment)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti
UAC	United Aviation Corporation
USC	United Shipbuilding Company
VTB	Vneshtorgbank (Russian Foreign Trade Bank)
ORT	Olympiaki Radiofonio Teleorassi (Russian Television Channel)
OVR	Fatherland-All Russia Party

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I have the pleasant duty of acknowledging all those who have contributed towards the realization of this dissertation. My advisor, Dr. Rajan Kumar has been immensely supportive throughout the period of writing right from the beginning. I owe my gratitude to him for being so patient and for his encouragement combined with his warmth and friendliness without which this work would not have been completed. Dr. Rajan Kumar took kind interest and provided the much needed guidance and comments promptly. His engaged and informed guidance enabled me to pursue the topic. This dissertation would not have seen the light of day without his enlightened supervision and encouragements. Without his illuminating directions, this dissertation would not have been possible. I am deeply grateful to him.

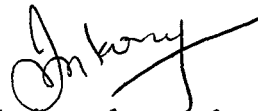
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(Imkongkumzuk)

Chapter 1

Introduction

Russia's resurgence as a strategic actor, both economically and politically, has been accepted internationally. The economic and political stabilization and return to the league of major powers have been acknowledged as key accomplishments of President Vladimir Putin. Most Russian observers agree that Putin's presidency restored Russia to a glorious place in the world. When Putin came to power Russia was undergoing turmoil both politically and economically. The policies adopted by him stabilized the Russian state and even took to greater heights of power. The sudden rise in the crude oil price in the international market and Putin's personality was the reason behind his successes. But all these developments and stabilization did not come without a price to be paid by the Russians. Under Putin, there was an influx of personnel with military and security backgrounds into positions of government and especially in the decision making bodies. Collectively termed *siloviki*, that is, individuals with background of "power agencies" such as the Federal Security Service, Foreign Intelligence Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defense, these individuals are assumed to have a substantial and pernicious influence on contemporary Russian policy making. Because of this influx of the *siloviki* into the state structures, the Russian polity under Putin turned out to be more of an authoritarian rather than a democratic one.

The transfer of power from Yeltsin to a successor from the security apparatus led to fundamental changes in the elites as a whole. The idea of a military-security president was certainly welcomed by the Russian public who were desperate for stability, even if it involved some curtailment of their new post-communist liberties (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 291). The reputation of the armed forces and state security as honest and apolitical professionals who carried out their instructions conscientiously helped to differentiate them from other elite groups, whose image was closely associated with theft and corruption. Under the conditions of a general collapse of state institutions and the disappearance of the Communist Party and its own hierarchy of command, both the armed forces and the state security apparatus continued as organization based on vertical subordination and regional structures that

penetrated the entire society, allowing them to be used as a structure of national government. In the domestic politics, the militarization of the Russian elite has undoubtedly increased the level of support for Kremlin for those of its policies which would curtail freedom of expression and hold back electoral competition that might challenge the president's choice.

The decade of the 1990s witnessed an economy in steep decline accompanied by widespread poverty and human suffering, an epidemic of corruption, organized crime and associated mafia-like violence. The second half of the decade saw the domination of the political life by a group of capitalist tycoons collectively known as the oligarchs. But while analyzing Russia under Putin, these themes had been replaced by stability and a booming economy which was largely a product of record high oil prices. Putin successfully removed the oligarchs from high politics and replaced them with his own people in the new administration and the state's re-nationalization of core components of natural resources sector. This re-nationalization and recentralization policies of the Putin's administration made the Russian society leap towards development and progress. But in doing so the democratic values of the state was compromised and was transformed into a more autocratic state under Putin.

In order to understand the presence of military cohort in Putin's administration we need to look back from the Soviet especially under Gorbachev and Yeltsin which was the transitional phase of the Russian history. According to many scholars, who have done their researches on military in Russian politics, the military has always played a major role in the molding of various state policies both international and domestic. During the Soviet period especially under Lenin and Stalin, the military did not enjoy much political rights as the Communist Party was at the peak of power and controlled all the sections of the state. Thus the military was also under the Party power and did not participate in politics. As the Soviet Union was a superpower, it depended heavily on the military for their prestige and security. This was a reason why the military always received a first priority treatment from the state. In real sense, the military enjoyed a privileged position during the Soviet period and before the coming of Gorbachev. Our study will focus from the time of Gorbachev as it was under his *perestroika* (Restructuring) and *glasnost* (Greater openness) that the privileged position of the military was brought into question. The economic and

political reforms under Gorbachev did not leave out the military which was enjoying enormous rights from the Soviet state. These reforms of Gorbachev sidelined the importance of the Soviet military and emphasis was laid more on the restructuring of the dwindling economy. Moreover the reforms were aimed at bringing the military under the control of the civilians, and not letting them exist as an autonomous body. On the other hand the political reforms also granted freedom to the people which allowed the military to voice out their frustration openly. They also formed officers' group which were very influential in pressurizing the government.

When Yeltsin became the president of the independent Russia, he too was no different from his predecessor when it came to his relation with the military. But with the failed attempt of the coup, Yeltsin's policies became more relaxed towards the military. It was because of the support by the military that he could retain his presidency amidst the pressure. This was a step away from his predecessor's objective to bring the military under the civilian control. The military influence in the Russian politics was insignificant because of the demise of the Soviet Union which led to the deterioration of the military condition. The liberalization of the Russian economy and the emergence of a market oriented economy based on democratic practices led to the collapse of the state controlled economy which again led to the rise of a few oligarchs who were of a great influence under Yeltsin's regime. The liberalization process provided opportunities to these oligarchs to purchase state properties at cheap rates. Thus the decision makers of the Russian state shifted from the Communist Party to a few oligarchs who ran the show for the Russians. The oligarchs had lobby in the parliament through which they initiated reforms and policies which were advantageous for them. This group of people was to stay with Yeltsin till the end of his rule in 1999, when Vladimir Putin took over the presidency of the Russian state. The oligarchic domination was to be replaced by a group of people who had a military background and was affiliated to Putin. They were known as the *siloviki*, who under Putin were the power house of the state administration.

1.1 Change in the composition of the Elites under Putin

In the post-Soviet circumstances, it was particularly important for a new president to be able to develop a support group on whom he could rely for advice and

from which he could recruit officials to the federal agencies of government. The first to be called upon, for understandable reasons, were the people Putin knew personally and trusted as his colleagues and fellow security personnel (KGB) and the “Petersburgers”¹. As a result, the new president became increasingly dependent for immediate support upon these officer corps, leading officials of the law enforcement and force ministries, and managers from the military industrial complex (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 292). This connection of Russian political elites to the military became a prominent characteristic from the late Soviet period. The appointment and election in Russia of *siloviki* to political posts is not unique to the Putin era alone and should not be overemphasized as characteristic of his leadership alone. Brezhnev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin had also brought their compatriots and career associates to work beside them in the central institutions of party and government.

Between the years of *perestroika* and the middle of Putin’s first presidential term, the overall share of military personnel increased almost sevenfold, and within the national leadership, the increase was even more dramatic. Growing numbers of military and security representatives at all levels of government reflected not only an increase in the number of military and security agencies themselves, but also the increasing popularity of military and security officials as deputies or governors (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 292). Not only in the higher posts but also at subordinate layers there an increase. Right after taking the presidential post, Putin rearranged the center and the region relations by dividing the state into seven supranational regions which was to be directly monitored by the president himself. It was to be headed by a presidential envoy appointed by the president himself. These governors who were nominated by the Putin to run the supra regional state had a military background just like Putin himself. This was the beginning of the militarization of the regions during Putin’s regime.

¹Economists and lawyers from St. Petersburg, many of them had career and personal ties to Putin dating back to the early 1990s. Many of the members of the economic reform team, both in the presidential administration and the government, were drawn from the St Petersburg group. They are academically qualified and had significant administrative experience, they are often focused on the technical complexities of the country’s system transformation.

Putin concentrated on establishing what he called, “vertical power” which essentially meant increasing Kremlin’s hold over Russia’s power struggle. This is the literal translation of a Russian term that has been widely used inside and outside Russia to denote Putin’s notion of a top-down system by which a strong central government is able to swiftly and firmly transmit policy and instructions from the Kremlin throughout the various layers of federal, regional and local government, and ensure the prompt enforcement of its decisions. The arrival of the military was especially notable in the regions, where the representation of personnel among heads of subjects of the federation has more than doubled since the Yeltsin era. By expanding the reach of the presidency and making officials accountable to the Kremlin, rather than to their electorates, Putin has effectively narrowed the executive branch’s support base and made it highly dependent on his personal elites. Thus the presidential envoys, in this way, brought together the resources of the central government in each of the federal districts, strengthening their influence over regional structures. At the same time, the regional branches of the military and security agencies moved under the control of presidential envoys, leaving governors with much less influence over the internal affairs of their own regions.

The neo-authoritarianism of the Putin’s militocracy coexists with a pluralism of opinions and with the existence of private property and civil liberties. Democratic institutions continue to operate and democratic freedoms formally exist (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 304). Putin has already established a network of management based on the military and security service that gives him control over virtually all the key social processes, leaving democratic institutions that have an increasingly formal character. Recruiting the military into the elite, the President and his circle has imparted a certain direction to the immediate future of the reforms. The military milieu which Putin pursued was hence authoritarian and undemocratic, thus a question arose whether Russia was heading towards the old soviet system or the democratic system which they proclaimed in 1991.

Though a recent phenomenon, many scholars have done an in depth study on the increase in the number of military personnel within the Russian elites during the time of Putin. The widespread conceptualization of contemporary Russia as a state dominated by *siloviki* has received its greatest thrust from Olga Kryshtanovskaya and

Stephen White's (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 289), seminal research on the demographic composition of the Russian elite since the advent of perestroika. In their research they wrote, "Since his victory in the 2000 presidential election, Vladimir Putin has drawn a stream of people in uniform into Russia's power structures." This claim is then supported with data (collected by the Department of Elite Studies at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences) on the educational and occupational backgrounds of the members of various state institutions at four different points in time i.e. 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2003. Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White's article is the most empirical and rigorous research published on the subject during Putin's first term in office, yet there are other articles on the influx of *siloviki* into the state administration as an element of the Kremlin under Putin. They reported that military and security representatives increased from 6.7% of the Russian elite in 1993 under Yeltsin to 26.6% under Putin.

David W. Rivera and Sharon Werning Rivera (2008) also look into the increase in the militarization of the Russian elites under Putin in their article, "*Militarization of the Russian Elites under Putin: How wide and how deep?*" They analysed the occupational and educational backgrounds of the broad swath of prominent political, economic and societal actors in the Russian Federation over the course of Putin's first seven years in power. They also examine the Russian elites by examining the proportions of their careers spent in both military and civilian employment. They observed that the proportion of the *siloviki* in the broader elite rose monotonically between 2001 and 2006, resulting in an increase of almost twenty five percent. However, Bettina Renz (2006), in her article "*Putin's Militocracy? An alternative interpretation of siloviki in contemporary Russian politics*" challenges the perception of the rising number of *siloviki* in Russian politics as a conscious strategy and expression of a more authoritarian policy direction pursued by president Putin. By studying the framework of the system of elite recruitment during Putin's regime and going in depth study of the micro level study of the *silovikis* she argues that the role of these figures (*Silovikis*) is more modest than often asserted and the possibility of a coordinated "*Siloviki Project*" is unlikely.

1.2 Chapters in the dissertation

The first chapter of the dissertation provides a brief introduction to the problem. It outlines the increase in the presence of military and security personnel under Putin in the state's administration. The outcome of this increase will be also mentioned briefly. The methodology which is used has also been dealt in this chapter. The succeeding chapter will study the military influence during the Soviet period as a background for studying the Putin regime. As the military was under the control of the CPSU, it did not have much of an influence on the political system of the Soviet Union. It was only under Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* that the military as a group began to emerge. Hence the focus will be on the span from Gorbachev till Putin's presidency.

The third chapter will focus on Putin's presidency and his administration. When Putin became the President of Russia, everyone was surprised both internationally and domestically. He took over the presidency from Yeltsin who had his base support among some wealthy oligarchs and his "family" members. As Putin's experience in active politics was very short he did not have a power base of this kind. Thus he had no other option but to rely on some of his trusted colleagues from the security and military servicemen of Russia. There was a complete change in the composition of the members of the decision makers from that of Yeltsin's era. It was the *siloviki* who had a military background who took over the reins of the Russian state under Putin. In the interest of this group of people Putin's policies were adopted which signified a kind of a police or an authoritarian regime. One of the foremost policies of Putin was the attack on the Oligarchs who had the Russian wealth in their hands. The oligarchs were terminated from power in the administration and were replaced by the *siloviki* group. Most of the influential oligarchs were either imprisoned or exiled from the state, sometimes with even false allegations. Again on the pretext of maintaining centre-state relations he divided Russia into seven supra regions, and was to be run by a governor who was directly responsible to the President and also appointed by the president himself. When implementing this, the appointed governors were those from the *siloviki* group mostly. This was a sign of militarization of the regions within Putin's administration. Not only this, but during

the presidency of Putin the business sector was also affected to a great extent by the influx of the *siloviki* in the business realm.

The fourth chapter will be on the challenges of democracy because of the presence of the *siloviki* in the state administration. The nascent Russian democracy has been hijacked by this development, and the democratic process started to take a different turn, which was a more like an autocratic state. In the name of managing the Russian state more smoothly, Putin and his administration went against the very basic tenets of a democratic state. Firstly it went against the freedom of press and media by adopting laws which restricted the rights and freedom of the media centers in criticizing the policies of the state. The media was highly censored by the state and only those materials which did not tarnish the image of the state were publish or aired. The political parties in the Russian political system were also controlled. Putin and his *co-siloviki* tried to dominate the whole of the party system. The pro-Kremlin party, the United Russia was made the dominant party in the Duma. This meant a domination of the legislation of any agendas by the pro-Putin party in the Duma. Decrees were issued and legislations were passed which were aimed at eliminating the smaller political parties. Thus, we see the emergence of a single dominant party in the form of United Russia and also backed by Putin and his fellow *siloviki*. The next step was the attack on the existing NGOs which were considered to be guided by the West and hence was a threat to the national security of the state. The attack on the NGOs is a clear example of Putin and his administration's anti-democratic moves.

The final chapter will summarize the whole preceding chapters and will point out the authoritarian nature of Putin's regime. The transformation towards a more authoritarian nature of the state was a result of the influx of the *siloviki* in the Russian politics. This represents a break away from the Soviet notion of one Party rule and the dominance of the Party on the Russian military. But under the reigns of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Putin different groups of people were brought in by the respective leaders to exercise their control over the state administration. Thus under Yeltsin it was the Oligarchs who took the reins of the state administration and it was the *siloviki* which took control of the state during the time of Vladimir Putin.

1.3 Research Methodology

This research will require scrutiny of available data as well as coalescing new data which may be available through various reports. The data collected by the Elites Department of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences are very useful in this regard. The second stage would require the analysis of this data in the large political context of Russia. What were the imperative of Putin for inordinate reliance on military personnel? This will be seen in a larger context of the Soviet legacy and Putin's personal background. We also need to compare it with the larger international context where the emerging democracies have shown inclinations for relying on military. Finally, we will analyze the way this development has hampered the process of democratization in Russia. For this we need to review the literature on theories of democracies and correlation between militarization and democracy. The case of Russia will be tested against this backdrop. A deductive analysis will be employed here.

This study is both deductive and inductive. It draws from the available theories on democracy and uses this for the Russian context. Contrarily, it may inductively throw some light on the general relationship between military and democracy on the basis of the findings of this case. Both primary and secondary source will be used in this study. The secondary sources will include the books and articles on the subject and the journals and also newspaper articles on the given topic.

Chapter 2

Military during the Soviet Era

2.1 Introduction

The history of military and politics was shaped by the strong leadership of Lenin and Stalin as all the power of the state was centered on them. As a result of the industrialization process, Stalin increased the state expenditure on military force and also increased the number of the force by almost a double. This was also a result of the prospects of a major war in the European arena. But this treat towards the Soviet military was short lived and Stalin began to purge the military elites who for him posed as a threat to his rule over the Soviet Union. Many military officers were exiled or executed during the time of Stalin which greatly undermined the military in the Soviet political system. After Stalin, Khrushchev came to power and initially tried to befriend the military and even included them as a member in the politburo, in the form of Zhukov, who was a hero of the Second World War. This made the Soviet military influence become more powerful and posed as a threat to the government under Khrushchev. This was followed by delineation of the Soviet Army and the dismissal of Zhukov by 1957. Later on Khrushchev concentrated on economic reforms which cut down the military expenses to an all time low. Leonid Brezhnev's years in power marked the height of party-military cooperation as he provided ample resources to the armed forces. In 1973 the minister of defense became a full Politburo member for the first time since 1957. Yet Brezhnev evidently felt threatened by the professional military, and he sought to create an aura of military leadership around himself in an effort to establish his authority over the armed forces. In the early 1980's, party-military relations became strained over the issue of resource allocations to the armed forces. Despite a downturn in economic growth, the armed forces argued, often to no avail, for more resources to develop advanced conventional weapons. Mikhail Gorbachev downgraded the role of the military in state ceremonies, including moving military representatives to the end of the leadership line-up atop Lenin's Mausoleum during the annual Red Square military parade commemorating the October Revolution. Instead, Gorbachev emphasized civilian economic priorities

and reasonable sufficiency in defense over the professional military's perceived requirements.

The CPSU (Communist Party of Soviet Union) as mentioned earlier controlled all the branches of the state's power and even controlled the military force of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party had a number of mechanisms of control over the country's armed forces. First, starting from a certain rank, only a Party member could be a military commander, and was thus subject to Party discipline. Second, the top military leaders had been systematically integrated into the highest echelons of the party. Third, the party placed a network of political officers throughout the armed forces to influence the activities of the military. Like any other states the Soviet Union also faced a threat of military intervention in the state's politics. Military elites controlled most of the coercive capability in a given state and this raises the possibility that they can use this capability to overpower the civilian power. To counter this threat, the Western democracies devised a system which ensured military elites or the officers remained apolitical, with the officer corps legally excluded from an active political role. The Soviet faced a similar problem but the mechanisms they developed to safeguard the political leadership from military intervention were very different from those Democracies.

One part of the Soviet strategy to ensure political control of the military, involved giving the civilians the predominant role in all aspects of the decision making of the state. As there was no legislative body during the Soviet period, it was carried out through the Communist Party Leadership's pre-eminent role in military policy. The top decision making body within the party hierarchy, the Politburo, set overall policy in virtually all areas, including defense. The Politburo generally met about once a week, as did the Central Committee secretariat, which was another decision-making body of the party which focused on overseeing appointments and controlling policy implementation. One of the top bodies in military was the Defense Council, and here too, the civilians had a greater say in the decision making of the defense department. Unlike democratic governments, where the elected representatives reflect public interests, the Soviet system employed both policy making and advisory committees to represent the Party interests. Hence these various committees represented one of the several mechanisms to ensure the party's interests.

Here the military elites had a very insignificant or a secondary role. The defense council was chaired by the general secretary of the Party with various members from other departments. The primary role of the Defense Ministry officials in the decision making process was that of providing expert opinions only. Military officers drafted recommendations, devised alternatives and assembled data. They did not make any decisions even if it was directly related to the armed forces. The civilian politicians and not the military professionals controlled the corridors of power in the Kremlin during most of the Soviet era. Their positions depended on their ability to convince the civilian politicians in achieving various policies related to Soviet armed forces.

Another strategy of the Communist Party in holding over the military was the appointment of the officers in the military. The sole responsibility of the appointment of army officers was in the hands of the Central Committee. Thus to secure a place in the army, they had to go through the selection of the Central Committee. This led to a more abiding tendency from the officers to the civilian authorities which were in the form of the Central Committee. The officer corps was loyal to the Communist Party as it was a prerequisite for their advancement in their career. Though it is said that the civilian completely controlled the military, the top leadership in the Party was aware of the power and capabilities of the military and hence the military issues were given top priority. The Soviet Army was thus the favorite son of the centrally command economy. The Brezhnev era was considered as a golden period for the military in Soviet history as the military was given top priority in the state's policies and even got enormous budget from the state. Thus the history of Soviet military influence in state politics changed with the arrival of Gorbachev who under his *glasnost* and *perestroika*, challenged the Communist Party hold over the society and also brought in a market economy. Not only did these changes undermine the Communist Party but the military privileged position was also shaken from the roots. The old, familiar bureaucratic decision making was replaced by semi-democratic institutions far less congenial to military interests. By December 1991, the Soviet Union itself disappeared and with it, the unified army. These changes led to downsizing and reduced funding for today's Russian military developments which have traumatized and angered the once pampered officer corps of the Soviet Union. Indeed it was downsizing but in reality the Russian military managed to gather more power with these changes in real political terms. An example can be made about the actual deployment of the army

against those who rose against the one in power. Thus slowly the military began to exercise some control on the political situation of the state. This was to worsen with the coming of the former KGB Vladimir Putin into the political arena.

The real history of military or the Security services influence in the Russian politics started with the coming of the Gorbachev's regime. This was because of the liberalization in economy as well as the political system in the Soviet Russia. Though many scholars criticize Gorbachev for his reforms as incomplete and unfinished, the reforms started by him under *glasnosts* and *perestroika* was to shape the future of the Soviet system which ultimately led to the decline of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new and independent Russia. The military and the various security services of the Soviet Union which existed even in the independent Russia was to have a great influence on the Russian political system under Yeltsin and Putin respectively. Yeltsin coming from a civilian background did not allow much power to the military as well as the security services. But he also did not neglect it completely as it was considered as a vital base for a smooth functioning of the executive. But when Vladimir Putin came to power, he being a former KGB (Soviet Secret Service) officer, the military and the security servicemen began to have a hold over the administration of the Russian state. Hence we should look back into the history of the military in Soviet politics in order to understand or get a better picture of the Russian state under Yeltsin and Putin.

2.2 The KGB (Committee on State Security) before Gorbachev

The KGB was an autonomous force in the Soviet System, implementing their own covert agendas and was often promoted by the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) because they found it expedient to blame the secret police for the regime's more unsavory actions, thereby preserving for themselves some form of legitimacy and credibility (Knight 2003: 72). The Great Terror from 1936-1938 during the time of Stalin was also engineered by the security service of the Soviet system. Khrushchev, though he started the de-Stalinization process he also employed the strategy of scapegoating the security services when it served his purposes.

Discounting his own role in implementing the Great Purges², he made a great show of discrediting and dismantling Lavrentii Beria's Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) in 1953–1954 and established a new service, the KGB, vowing that henceforth the secret police would always adhere to socialist system. A new charter for the KGB was drawn up, new men (with ties to Khrushchev) were brought in to take over its operations, and terror was disavowed as a means of subduing opposition (Knight 2003: 63). Not surprisingly, Khrushchev's high-handed reorganizations of the security services and his open criticism of their past activities eventually created considerable animosity toward him on the part of the KGB. Brezhnev used the KGB to oust Khrushchev from the leadership and was successful in doing so with the help of the security service. Brezhnev rewarded the KGB chairman, Vladimir Semichastnyi, for his support of the move against Khrushchev. He gained full membership on the CPSU Central Committee and Brezhnev automatically increased the powers and functions of the KGB. Brezhnev did not neglect the KGB thereafter, learning from the mistakes of Khrushchev who did not give much importance to them and later on became a victim of their animosity. Indeed, to ensure the continued loyalty of the KGB and prevent it from engaging in anti-party activities, he brought KGB officials into the party leadership at all levels. Semichastnyi's successor Yuri Andropov became the first to be granted a full membership in the CPSU Politburo.

Under Brezhnev the KGB reached greater heights of power within the Soviet political system. The KGB became a separate institution with its own professional and organizational identity. This led to the result in developing their own views on various states' policies, which were sometimes different from the CPSU and even the military. As they were full members in the Politburo of the CPSU their opinions and their views were never sidelined or undermined. Not only in the Politburo but the KGB leaders started to participate in party decision making from the district level itself. This was one of the reasons why the interests of the Party and the KGB always coincided in every policy. The accession of Yuri Andropov to the office of the CPSU General Secretary was nothing but demonstration of the power and the influence of

²The Great Purges was a series of campaigns of political repression and persecution in the Soviet Union orchestrated by Joseph Stalin in 1936–1938. It involved a large-scale purge of the Communist Party and Government officials, repression of peasants, Red Army leadership, and the persecution of unaffiliated persons, characterized by widespread suspicion of "saboteurs", imprisonment and execution

the KGB on the Party politics. Starting from Brezhnev's regime the KGB began to exercise their power in the Party as well as the whole Soviet political system. The fact that Andropov had served as KGB chief for fifteen years in no way detracted from his candidacy to succeed Brezhnev. It was Andropov, ironically, who first fostered the image of the KGB as a proponent of reform, at least in the economic sphere.

2.3 Gorbachev and the KGB

Unsurprisingly Gorbachev also came to the power with the help of the KGB. Significantly, one of Gorbachev's first moves was to elevate KGB chairman Viktor Chebrikov to full Politburo membership. Chebrikov, an old Brezhnevite whose career in the KGB dated back to the 1960s, had never exhibited any liberal or reformist tendencies (Knight 2003: 70). As in the past, the KGB was to be a pillar of the Soviet regime and a loyal protector of the party's interests. In the early stages of the Gorbachev's regime there was no divergence of interests between the CPSU and the KGB. Indeed when Gorbachev talked about his *perestroika* reforms it was widely encouraged by the Party as well as the KGB. Initially Gorbachev was cautious in addressing his reforms and gave little indications that he wanted to go beyond modest reforms that would reinvigorate the current system without changing its essence. As the KGB was like the eyes and ears of the Communist regime, they knew more than anyone else that certain drastic economic measures or reforms were needed to drag the Soviet Union from its economic dilemma. This was the reason why they were ever receptive to the reforms initiated by Gorbachev initially. By 1985 and 1986, when the reforms were generally focused on the economy the KGB officials voiced strong support to the reforms, as they consider themselves to be a guardian of the Soviet system. Chebrikov, who was the chairman of the KGB, began to publicly support the reforms advanced by Gorbachev.

The good understanding between Gorbachev and the KGB ended quickly in late 1986, when the focus of the reforms shifted to the political arena. Until then Gorbachev's program had been similar to that of Andropov, with a strong emphasis on discipline and fighting corruption, and thus compatible with the KGB's interests. But when *glasnost* and democratization were added to the agenda, the KGB lost its enthusiasm for *perestroika*, and understandably so. As part of the new openness, the

hitherto sacrosanct organs of state security were subjected to damaging criticism in the Soviet press. Revelations about the crimes of the KGB's Stalinist predecessor, the NKVD, soon gave way to exposes of current KGB misdeeds (Trimble 1997: 6). The negative press coverage of the KGB gave rise to ominous calls for a strengthening of legal controls over its operations and for a reform of the law enforcement system. *Demokratizatsiya* led to the release of more than 300 dissidents who had been arrested by the KGB on political charges and to the rehabilitation of the KGB's most dreaded, the human rights activist, Andrei Sakharov. An apparent suspension on political arrests deprived KGB officers of their main weapon in fighting opposition, compelling them to make do with threats and harassment (Knight 2003: 71).

The KGB also had to stand by helplessly in the face of mass protest demonstrations and mounting ethnic demands in the national republics fueled by *glasnost*. As the organization chiefly responsible for preserving internal stability, the KGB had good reason to be concerned. Unlike previous Communist leaders, Gorbachev showed little appetite for forceful confrontation with opposition groups. Chebrikov and his deputies began to fight back the reforms and started issuing defiant statements against the *perestroika* and the *glasnost*. They argued that the *glasnost* had made the Soviet Union more vulnerable to the Western intelligence and the people were abusing the *Perestroika*. In remarkably strident terms Chebrikov again warned about the excesses of *perestroika* and urged the KGB to intervene promptly against hostile actions undertaken with the aim of undermining and eliminating the existing system by citizens of anti-Soviet and antisocialist persuasion. Chebrikov clearly intended to warn that Gorbachev's reforms had gone too far (*Pravda*, 2nd September 1988: 3). Within just a few weeks he was removed from his KGB post and made a Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and head of the Central Committee's new Commission on Legal Policy. At the time, this move seemed to be a promotion for Chebrikov. A Central Committee Secretary was a powerful position, and Chebrikov was given oversight responsibilities for the KGB, which meant that he would supervise the new KGB chief, Vladimir Kryuchkov (Knight 2003: 72). But in reality it was the beginning of the end as it would reorganize the Party apparatus and weaken the Secretariat.

Under the chairmanship of Kryuchkov there were a number of incidents within the KGB and also with the Parliament. Many of the retired KGB officers came up with their testimonies which greatly hurt the image of the KGB in front of the general public. The freedoms promised by *glasnost* led to a political upheaval everywhere in the Soviet Union, the regions were the worse of it. The regions began to demand a break away from the Union and within the parliament there was a number of differences among the members. Thus by autumn of 1990, Gorbachev became weary of the *perestroika* and moved towards a stronger state which meant a stronger role to the KGB. Judging from these developments, Gorbachev seemed to be giving his wholehearted endorsement to a stronger KGB and a renewed emphasis on law and order at the expense of democratization. The KGB and its predecessors had always been in the front line between Moscow and the non-Russian nationalities. The idea that any Soviet republic would secede from the union was an onerous prospect for the KGB. For democratic nationalists in these republics the KGB was the symbol of despotic Soviet rule and thus the focal point of all discontent with Moscow. The issue of secession of the Republics from the Soviet Union led to a clash of interests between the KGB and Gorbachev. For the KGB, suppression of the democratic movements by force would enhance their authority but on the other hand Gorbachev thought that by doing so would drain his power away from him. This resulted in a break of relations between the KGB and Gorbachev.

The failure to convince the G-7 to bail out the Soviet economy from the crisis and the continuing regional secessionist movements led Gorbachev to budge in towards these problems. Gorbachev's options were now seriously limited. Although he clearly did not want to preside over the liquidation of the Soviet Union and watch his own powers evaporate, he realized that it would be a political suicide for him personally to authorize the declaration of a state of emergency and the suppression of the democratic movement. With the aid of Yeltsin he came up with a treaty, this was to strip the union government of all but a few powers. But the Union was to be kept intact. It particularly upset the KGB as the provision stipulating the state security would be a prerogative of the individual republics and would no longer be under the KGB. They were supposed to be only a coordinating body. The KGB thus started resenting the treaty and tried their best to convince Gorbachev not to sign the treaty. But he did not back down from his decision and hence the KGB decided to set up a

coup of the government. In the absence of Gorbachev the KGB set up an Emergency Committee which declared the Soviet state to be in a state of emergency. But their plan was not successful which led to the entry of Boris Yeltsin at the helm of Russian politics and became the first president of the independent Russia. In May 1991 Yeltsin had signed an agreement with the KGB creating a Russian Republic KGB. They were to control only the Russian territory and leave the fourteen non-Russian Republics. The KGB and its successor agencies were not happy to see the Soviet Union disintegrate and their personnel and resources remanded to Yeltsin. Nonetheless, there was little they could do to stop the process. Thus the KGB had been dissolved, and its functions were fragmented. Many of its top officials had been fired or had left of their own accord, replaced by a second tier of leaders who owed their jobs to the Yeltsinites. Moreover, it was clear that, for all of Yeltsin's talk about a complete reform of the security services and a total reduction of its powers; he would not destroy the powerful political weapon that was now in his hands. The former KGB officers who remained in the organization would still have a job to do and would be given the resources to do it well.

2.4 Gorbachev and the Soviet Military

The military in the Soviet Union represents a powerful institution as it is responsible for maintaining the external threat and the security of the state. The military also has a big share in the natural resources of the state and the defense industry has priority accesses to the best resources of the country. Thus any reforms politically and economically will definitely run against the interests of the military in the long run. After coming to power Gorbachev started a restructuring of the economy and also a restructuring of the military. He made a number of important changes in the civil-military area that could have important consequences not only for civil-military relations in the Soviet Union but also for broader East-West relations. Gorbachev's relations with the military should be seen against the background of the late Brezhnev's era. During Brezhnev's era the military power had increased significantly and concerns of the armed forces were given precedence and requests for resources were rarely challenged by the civilians. The military also secured a position in the Politburo which was the highest decision making body of the Soviet Union. The Brezhnev pattern of civil-military relations was in many respects congenial to military

interests. By stressing the importance of conflict between states, the Party provided a clear rationale for the armed forces' existence (Holloway 1989-1990: 5). The Brezhnev leadership by and large accepted the military's monopoly of professional expertise in military affairs (or at least in military-technical affairs). Under Brezhnev the Party took pains to enhance the prestige of the military profession, and promoted an extensive program of military-patriotic education. In the Brezhnev years secrecy helped to preserve the priority accorded to defense and to uphold the authority of military professionalism.

These goodwill relations between the State and the military did not last long and in the latter half of Brezhnev's rule as the rate of Soviet economic growth declined from four percent in the 1960's to a little more than two percent in the late 1970's. This slowdown in the economic growth prompted the Soviet leaders to cut back on the rate of growth of defense spending. Whereas Soviet defense spending had increased at a rate of four to five percent in the period 1965-1975, it dropped to two percent from 1977-1983, with investment devoted to the procurement of new weapons showing no growth at all during the same period. During that period, by contrast, U.S. defense spending visibly increased, especially after the election of President Reagan in 1980 (Larrabee 1988: 1003). The slow down in the defense spending was with an intention to generate more growth of the economy as a whole. This state policy towards military led to challenges from the military and during the time of Brezhnev, they pressed the leader hard to get what they used to get like before. This led to the deterioration of the relations between the Party and the military.

Brezhnev died later but his death did not end the tensions between the Party and the military. The military, led by Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the then Soviet General Staff, continued to press for greater defense spending, emphasizing the need to meet the increased threat posed by the American military buildup. But he was ousted as the Chief of the Staff and was replaced by others. Since the ouster of Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov and the emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist party in 1985, the fortunes of the Soviet military appear to have suffered an important reverse. Marshal Ogarkov's transfer to command the Western theater of Military Operations deprived the military of its most vigorous and out-spoken advocate in the upper ranks of the Soviet leadership in Moscow

(Herspring 1987: 42). Gorbachev, meanwhile, has begun to chip away at the privileged status enjoyed by the armed forces in the past. In practical terms this has meant a downgrading of their symbolic status, the appointment of a relatively un-influential military officer as defense minister, the refusal to consider the military's advice on a number of arms-control issues, and the adoption of a public stance toward the defense budget that suggests that the military will have to do more with less spending. The successor of the Marshal Ogarkov's successor was less influential and the military lost its place in the Politburo and became only a candidate member of the Politburo. Thus the military influence in the Soviet politics was waning away with time.

Unlike his predecessors, especially Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Gorbachev came to power with no strings attached to the Soviet military. His political background clearly suggests that he did not have an opportunity to interact with the military. Thus he had little background in defense and military affairs when he became the general secretary. His rise to the position of general secretary coincided with many incidents which influence his attitude towards the military and defense issues. Firstly, it was the deployment of SS-20 missile which was done on the suggestions of the military. The deployment proved to be a serious miscalculation, as rather than enhancing the Soviet security against the West it left open the Soviet Union to the missiles from the NATO. The decision to deploy the missile appears to have been increasingly seen as a mistake by the many in the upper echelons of the Soviet leadership, including Gorbachev himself, and as an example of the dangers of allowing purely military-technical considerations to drive policy and take precedence over broader political objectives. Secondly, the Afghan invasion by the Soviet which did not result in a quick victory as predicted by the military. The invasion proved to be a serious military and diplomatic blunder, which damaged Moscow's relations, not only in the Third World but also with the West. The political costs of the invasion, both at home and abroad, probably underscored to Gorbachev the risks of allowing Soviet policy to be dictated primarily by narrow military considerations. The third incident was the shooting down of a Korean passenger jet by the Soviet air force in September 1983. It showed a weakness in the Soviet air defense, moreover it happened when the U.S-Soviet relations were beginning to turn towards a positive end (Larrabee 1988: 1006-1007). The initial confusion and mishandling of the affair



further damaged Moscow's credibility in the eyes of the world. Taken together with the conflict over defense spending, these three incidents appear to have prompted an effort by the party to reassert greater control over the military and defense matters. It is highly likely that these incidents contributed to Gorbachev's general belief that the military factor had been given disproportionate weight in Soviet affairs, and that Moscow needed a more flexible foreign policy that relied more heavily on political-diplomatic means.

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Under Gorbachev the priority of military power was undercut by the application of the new thinking abroad, and by pressing economic needs at home. Gorbachev has also allowed military policy to become the subject of public debate and the new Supreme Soviet showed signs of wanting to exercise authority over defense policy. Now military *glasnost* has allowed some light to penetrate the veil of secrecy that has hidden military affairs from public gaze. These changes become especially apparent since mid-1988. Gorbachev treated the military carefully in the early years of *perestroika* as he was new to the power and feared the power of the Soviet military. It was only after the January 1987 Plenum of the Central Committee that the armed forces came in for detailed criticism of the kind that other institutions had already been subjected to. After the 19th Party Conference in the summer of 1988, and especially after the September Plenum of that year, a new phase began, with a far-reaching public debate of the military's place in society. By the autumn of 1988 public discussion of the military was touching on themes that even one year earlier had been a taboo. Gorbachev has used *glasnost* and political reform to bring into play new political forces that helped him to transform the Soviet system. By relaxing censorship and instituting competitive elections, he created the opportunity for the public expression of attitudes, opinions and views that hitherto would have had to be uttered in private or would have been considered dissident. Through the process of democratization the Soviet society acquired a voice, and that voice had proved to be highly critical of the main institutions in the Party-state apparatus, including the military.

Indications that the efforts to reassert party control over the military would continue or even intensify were visible almost from the moment Gorbachev took over as general secretary. The Party program adopted at the 27th Party Congress in

February 1986 considerably strengthened the role of the party in the military affairs. The increased role of the party in the military affairs was also emphasized by the armed forces itself. Under Gorbachev, moreover the military continued to be excluded from the top ranks of the Politburo. But within the Central Committee the number of military representatives had remained relatively stable (Larrabee 1988: 1007). Since the summer of 1985 Gorbachev carried out a major reshuffling of the top leadership of the armed forces. Military elites from the Khrushchev and Brezhnev's era, who were staunch supporter of a strong military, were replaced by those who were milder towards Gorbachev's reforms. Initially the military appeared to have regarded the idea of *perestroika* as something that applied to the rest of the society, but not to them. But at the January 1987 Central Committee plenum Gorbachev explicitly made clear that the process included the military as well. Since then the issue of *perestroika* was given increased attention in the military press. While the main emphasis has been on increasing discipline and raising the troop's morale, the military was also called upon to admit previous shortcomings.

Under Gorbachev the military's influence on arms control and security policy has also decreased. The military remained an important player, but in contrast to the Brezhnev period it was no longer able to dominate the policy process. At the same time the role of Foreign Ministry and International Department of the Central Committee has increased in the formulation of national security policies. Many of Gorbachev's arms control initiatives were supposed to be made by some few experts who were from the civilian group rather than the armed forces (Larrabee 1988: 1011). The strengthening of the arms control expertise in the Foreign and International Department was designed to ensure that non-military views were institutionalized into the policy process and has given Gorbachev an independent source of information on defense and security measures. At the same time Gorbachev has sought to enhance policy coordination and break down the rigid compartmentalization between the military and the other bureaucracies involved in national security affairs that existed under his predecessors. In sum, Gorbachev had integrated the military more into the broader policy process, while at the same time strengthening the party's, his personal, control over the whole process. The overall effect of these changes had been to create competing centers of threat assessment and to reduce the military's ability to dominate the formulation of arms control and security policies. Yet while the role of

the civilian officials in the formulation of defense and security policy increased, they did not as yet constitute the type of institutionalized defense and arms control. Their involvement was to a larger extent ad hoc and often depended more on personal relationships rather than on formal channels. To be truly effective and influential players they needed greater access to military information, and their role needed to be deeply institutionalized in the policy process.

Gorbachev also introduced a number of organizational changes which had direct relevance to the military and appear designed to improve scientific-technical progress and facilitate a better integration of the civilian and military sectors of the Soviet economy. He also appointed many officials from the military sector to head the civilian sectors. These appointments were also made from the officials who were from the defense industrial complex. The trend towards putting capable managers who had distinguished themselves in the military-industrial sector into key managerial posts in the civilian economy appeared as a design to increase the performance of the civilian sector and achieve a better integration of military and civilian economies. At the same time, Gorbachev also introduced into the civilian sector a number of practices used in the military sector and program-oriented planning in an effort to break bureaucratic resistance to innovation and ensure a higher standard of goods. Thus Gorbachev tried to undermine the powers of the military, in reality he made some openings for the military personnel to venture towards the civilian sectors. The adoption of military type of rules and institutions also points to the fact that the militarization of the Russian polity and society was gradually happening. It was the initial period of the military influence in Russian politics which was to ripen during the time of Vladimir Putin a decade later.

2.5 Militarization of Education during the Soviet Period

The country has almost 900 civilian higher-educational establishments, or *vysshie uchebnie zavedeniia* (VUZy), as they are known in Russian. The armed forces had their own network of VUZy in the form of academies and higher military schools. The number of these has not been revealed in recent years but must be in excess of 150 (Cooper 1989: 109). Thus, of the total number of VUZy in the country, approximately 15 percent are military. While the VUZy are responsible for a small

proportion of the country's total research effort, part of the R&D is under-taken on a contract basis with organizations of the defense industry and armed forces. Unfortunately, there is no information on the scale of this military component. It is likely that the military share is highest at those elite technical institutes oriented toward particular branches of the defense industry. It is known that such establishments as the MVTU (the Moscow Bauman Higher Technical School) and the Moscow Aviation Institute have long-term research links with enterprises of the military sector. Some higher-educational establishments are well known for having military faculties geared to training officers with special skills. Examples include the Moscow Finance Institute, the Moscow State Conservatory, the Leningrad Institute of Physical Culture, and a number of leading medical schools. But many other VUZy possess military departments providing military training for reserve officers. It has long been a major concern of the Soviet state that the youths of the country should be imbued with values considered appropriate for the defense of the nation in the event of a war. Military service is the rule for almost all young men, and there is particular concern that they enter the forces in a suitable physical and mental state. This applies to students in higher education as much as to other young people, and it involves a range of organizations and activities under the rubric of "military-patriotic education" (*voenno-patrioticheskoe vospitanie*) (Cooper 1989: 112). The principal bodies are the Communist youth organization, the *Komsomol*, and the mass paramilitary Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Aviation and Navy (DOSAAF).

The Soviet Union had a system of conscription requiring all males over age 18 to undergo military training. Until the early 1980s, according to the 1967 Law on Universal Military Obligation regulating the draft system, students in full-time higher education could obtain deferments, postponing military service until after graduation. During their period of study, most students undertook some training in the military departments of their VUZy and then served for a reduced period compared with those entering at the normal age of 18. At the end of this foreshortened military service, the former students became reserve officers. At the end of 1980, under the pressure of unfavorable demographic trends and, probably, also the Afghanistan war, this system was modified. According to the new regulations, which took effect in January 1982, deferments can only be obtained by students at higher-educational establishments considered of national importance. The list of such VUZy was to be approved by the

USSR Council of Ministers on the basis of representations by the Ministry of Defense and the State Planning Committee. This meant that the majority of students had to do their military service on reaching the age of 18, breaking their studies, if necessary, and returning to complete their degrees after the end of the normal term of military service, which is two years, three in the navy. As most students normally begin their higher education at the age of 17, it means in practice that they had to break their studies after their first year. Thus, with few exceptions, principally students with severe physical disabilities or exceptionally difficult family circumstances, military considerations impinge on all male students in the Soviet higher-educational system.

2.6 Military in Post-Soviet Russia

During the Soviet period the military was enmeshed in set complex institutions and practices which defined its relationship with society and the country's political leadership on one hand, and ensured the maintenance of civilian control on the other. The Party controlled the armed forces and also the allocation of resources to the military was also under the civilian control. Most of the officers of the arm force joined the Party or the Young Communists to advance their career. All the members of the armed forces were indoctrinated into the ruling ideology through the work of political officers attached to each unit who were given instructions by the ruling Party (CPSU). The Soviet armed forces were deeply involved in politics, but this politicization was tightly controlled and channeled into support for the ruling party. Throughout most of the Soviet period, the armed forces enjoyed high status in society and had access to a disproportionate share of the country's human and material resources.

The tools of the subjective control by the Party over the armed forces were also weakened by Gorbachev's new approach to politics. As part of the move to reinvigorate politics, soldiers attending political education sessions in their units were permitted to debate real political issues rather than simply repeating the Party line. Divisions within the armed forces along political lines became increasingly apparent. Rather than entering the political fray as representatives of the military and as supporters of the regime, during the *perestroika* years, officers began to participate in domestic politics as individuals expressing their own political views. At the same

time, *glasnost* exposed the most unpleasant aspects of military life to public view, casting doubt on the army's right to the privileges and respect it had claimed for years and acting as the catalyst for a crisis of morale and recruitment within the armed forces. The policy of openness also threatened the military's monopoly on defense-related information and on the provision of advice on security issues.

If Gorbachev's era saw the gradual decline of the military power and also the decreasing the power of the Communist Party, then the events in the second half of 1991 dealt it a decisive blow. The group who plotted for the August Coup of 1991 attempted to use the armed forces to support their bid for power. But the officers in the armed forces refused to take sides which led to the failure of the coup and also made a turning point in civil-military relations in Russia. On several occasions the leaders of the armed forces had tipped the balance in Politburo power struggles by supporting one faction or another but in the August 1991 coup the troops were called out on the streets, effectively in order to depose the head of the state. This was qualitatively different kind of military involvement in politics that set a precedent for the use of force to resolve political disputes in Russia. The defeat of the coup attempt was swiftly followed by the collapse of the Communist Party rule. Within days of the coup's failure, Russian President Boris Yeltsin ordered that Communist Party cells in army units in Russia be disbanded. The Soviet Union itself disintegrated by the end of 1991 and in May 1992 the Russian government announced the formation of a separate military for the Russian Federation (Aldis and McDermott 2005: 24).

By the mid 1992 the subjective control of the armed forces was completely gone. As the Communist Party and the armed forces were a hindrance to the development of democratic values and institutions, it was necessary to remove these hindrances. But with the removal of the subjective control the objective control was also getting eroded. The damage done to the reputation of the armed forces by the revelations of *glasnost* was extensive and was compounded by an unrelenting series of allegations of corruption and incompetence affecting every branch of the armed forces. In addition the military budget declined sharply, contributing to a dramatic deterioration in living and working conditions in the armed forces as well as in its ability to wage war. The framework regulating the relationship between civilian authority and military force in the new Russia is slender and insubstantial in

comparison with its predecessor. The loyalty of the armed forces to the state is embodied in its subordination to the president as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, as mentioned in the 1993 constitution and the 1996 law 'on defense', but in practice this loyalty has been based on personal relations between the head of the state and the head of the armed forces. Thus during the time of Yeltsin and Putin the Minister of Defense was always appointed taking into considerations the person's relation with the president. While the armed forces are answerable directly to the president as their commander-in-chief, the Russian parliament is formally responsible for overseeing the actions and especially the budget of the Ministry of Defense. Parliament's ability to hold the Ministry to account however is severely limited by the tendency which has been evident since 1998 towards greater secrecy governing any information relevant to national security. Senior officials from the Defense and Finance Ministries tend to work out the details of the military budget among themselves, with almost no external scrutiny, and only those parliamentary deputies who themselves have military backgrounds have managed to satisfy the high levels of security clearance that are required in order to gain access to these details.

2.7 The rise of Boris Yeltsin

No ruler in Russia's thousand years of history has done so much damage to the country like the way Boris Yeltsin did during his presidency. Nevertheless, the opposition might have protested and whatever acute crises the country might have experienced, Yeltsin escaped without any blame. He got away with everything, the destruction of the Soviet Union, the collapse of industries, a drastic fall in the living standards of the Russian people, the lost in the Chechen war and corruption scandal within his own 'family'³. He further succeeded in crushing the opposition of his former allies and trampled on the first shoots of popular power, while preserving his own image as a fighter for democratic movement. The shelling of the parliament was the peak point of his career and unquestionably represented Yeltsin's greatest victory. The Yeltsin regime pledged to modernize Russia and to instill western values within

³The clan of Yeltsin's relatives and gangster-tycoons that appeared to surround President Boris Yeltsin, including his first daughter Tatyana Dyachenko and her colleagues Valentin Yumashev, Alexander Voloshin, Boris Berezovsky and Roman Abramovich. They controlled and influenced Yeltsin in his decision making.

Russian society, but the political system which turned out was more barbaric and even archaic. In the political formation Yeltsin was supported by the liberal westernizing elites as they saw the power and support of millions of the Russian people who would never have listened to the elites.

Boris Yeltsin was personally chosen by Mikhail Gorbachev to bring down the corruption within the party apparatus and he proved himself to be an eager reformer of the old Soviet system. Yeltsin carried further the process begun by Mikhail Gorbachev and his fumbling reform measures of *glasnost* and *perestroika* which was based on transparency and restructuring of the Soviet state. Gorbachev had become aware that the rule of the bureaucracy could not survive the stagnation that had plagued the USSR. Yeltsin's rise through the ranks went dramatic but he soon grew weary of the pace of *perestroika* and fell out with Gorbachev, eventually quitting the Communist Party at a party's congress in 1990. A year later he emerged as the first elected president of the Russian Federal Republic within the USSR. Yeltsin oversaw the final dissolution of the USSR in December 1991, after subjecting his one-time boss Mikhail Gorbachev to a withering public critique of his presidency and then demanding his resignation. Yeltsin's troubles began almost immediately as he had to transform himself from the most visible and vocal leader of a righteous rebellion to the president of a huge nation in the midst of its own redefinition. Russia under the new president in the form of Yeltsin was attempting to change everything at once. Yeltsin and his team were obliged to attempt four revolutions at once, i.e. creating a free market, democratizing the political regime, liquidating an old empire and also seeking a new geo political role for a country that was once a nuclear power state. The industrially developed world had passed through these phases of nation building, developing capitalism and political democratization in sequence. Russia had to achieve all three in just one leap. Moreover, all successful post-communist transitions began with the establishment of a new political system, whereas in Russia the sequence was different. The Russian transition began with the privatization of property before independent political institutions were introduced. It was shifting from a command economy based almost exclusively on the military-industrial complex to one that could compete effectively with European, Asian, and American markets. Russia under Yeltsin began to change its political system from a single party system (CPSU) to a parliamentary system with a written Constitution. It was also

preparing to take away many of the safety-net features of a socialist country that many of its citizens had come to take for granted. The task was monumental and Yeltsin, with no particular training in economics, law, or ministerial services was singularly unprepared to handle the challenge.

Subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin promoted privatization as a way of spreading ownership of shares in former state enterprises as widely as possible to create political support for his economic reforms. In the West, privatization was viewed as the key to the transition from communism in Russia, ensuring a rapid dismantling of the Soviet-era control economy to make way for free market reforms. In 1995, as Yeltsin managed to finance Russia's growing foreign balance and gain support from the Russian business elite for his bid in the early-1996 presidential elections, the Russian president arranged for a new wave of privatization contributing stock shares in some of Russia's most valuable state enterprises in exchange for bank loans. The program was promoted as a way of speeding up privatization and ensuring the government much-needed cash for its operating needs. However, the deals were effectively giveaways of valuable state assets to a small group of tycoons in finance, industry, energy, telecommunications, and the media who came to be known as oligarchs in the 1990's. By mid-1996, substantial ownership shares over major firms were acquired at very low prices by a handful of people. This is how the Russian business elites rose to greater heights of power within the Russian state. The rise of the oligarchs as an elite class became the pillars upon which Yeltsin relied on to form a strong democratic government. The subsequent emergence and rapid growth of a powerful Russian Mafia (much of which was drawn from the ranks of the defunct KGB) has been a burden on Russian society. Another persistent problem has been the collapse of the taxation system's revenue base and the State's subsequent inability to pay its employees their wages. Yeltsin had led a weak state, which had lost its central authority and integrating feature and suffered from a split in the ruling elite. The political environment under Yeltsin was fragmented and divided between factions and this fragmentation resulted in a critical role for the Russian president, who acted as a supreme referee solving conflicts between competing groups.

2.8 Yeltsin and the Russian Armed Forces

Although the coup attempt of August 1991 actually took place a few months prior to the collapse of the USSR, it seriously affected the development of Russian civil-military relation. The coup was conceived and supported by a group of politicians opposed to democratization and committed to the preservation of the Soviet Union. It was the failure of the plotters to convince the commanders of the Moscow-area military detachments who carried the day by convincing their subordinates of the coup's recklessness. The army's decision not to support the overthrow of Russian President Boris Yeltsin effectively prevented a successful coup. The military's part in the political commotion shook the control of the armed forces by the civilians which had begun under the leadership of Gorbachev. The last Soviet president, under pressure by a number of domestic constituencies, including the army's high command, actually invited serving officers to become politically active in the late 1980's. He encouraged internal debate in the ranks of the military, asking serving officers to voice their views and otherwise participate in politics. Thus the army turned out to be most responsive and soon, independent officers' assemblies sprang to form opinions which began by criticizing the media's disapproving treatment of the armed forces and then proceeded to publicly criticize the government and even Gorbachev himself. In the declining days of the Soviet Union, military elites exploited the weaknesses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU) leadership and acquired a great deal of institutional autonomy and they actively opposed, foiled and publicly criticized state officials and policy more or less with impunity. This was a major departure from Soviet civil-military relations in which the army enjoyed no autonomous political role.

Yeltsin had the opportunity to reverse the trend of the military's growing political presence in Russia. But he could not do so as he knew the power of the military and it was also the military that helped him come out of the coup attempt unscratched. Right after the 1991 coup attempt, he issued a decree that abolished Communist Party organizations in the armed forces, the KGB, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Nonetheless, he did not support laws that would forbid serving officers from standing for election to legislative bodies. Passing such legislation probably would have been difficult because by 1992, officer-politicians had become

well integrated into the Russian legislature. Yeltsin fundamentally consented to the army's increased political presence. A crucial defect of Russian civil-military relations was that the vacuum created by the eradication of party based control was not filled by institutionally balanced civilian supervision. Yeltsin had little understanding of or interest in security issues and, given the catastrophic state of Russia's finances in the early 1990s and the absence of an obvious external security threat, he thoroughly neglected the armed forces. Conditions in the army had quickly become terrible, and the soldiers were made to do things which were totally out of the books of an army life. Though the life in the barracks deteriorated from bad to worse, still the notion of a military coup was considered illegitimate owing to the Russian officer corps' institutional culture.

Yeltsin's face-off with the legislature in the fall of 1993 was a major turning point in Russia's democratization process. To put an end to the prolonged conflict between the Kremlin and the Supreme Soviet (the parliament), he issued Presidential Edict 1400 that disbanded the legislature, called for new elections, and scheduled a constitutional referendum (Barany 2008: 18). This particular issue of the presidential decree also added some power to the Russian military. The Presidential Edict led to an opposition from the hardliners of the members of the Parliament. They came out in the open with an agenda to depose the president and establish a new government under a different leader. Both the party in the conflict sought the aid of the military whose role became so vital. The opposing groups asked the help of the military but it was denied to them. It was only at the call of the then president, Yeltsin that the military sprang into action and stood by the president against the opposing group. This resulted in an improvement in the relations between Yeltsin, and the armed forces. As a reward he allowed the army leadership to draft Russia's military doctrine for coming to his rescue in the fall of 1993. In order to appease the top brass of the military, he permitted them to make decisions directly affecting national security without extra-institutional interference.

Although by and large Yeltsin ignored and neglected the army's rank and file, he repeatedly courted the military leadership at times critical to his own political fortunes and failed to deliver on his promises once the generals agreed to back him. Until his October 1993 clash with the legislature, he was relatively effective in

gaining the armed forces' support with assurances of pay increases, the disbursement of overdue salaries and benefits, and increased military privileges in defense reform. On the eve of the 1996 presidential elections, for instance, Yeltsin found it convenient to pacify the army leadership by ordering payment of overdue wages, increasing salaries, and promoting all five senior commanders to the rank of army general. The 1996 Defense Law further reduced the legislature's powers vis-à-vis the armed forces. Moreover, the law granted the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff fundamentally equal status that virtually ensured that they would compete for decision-making authority. This troubling and confusing situation was only resolved five years later when modifications in the law clearly subordinated the General Staff to the Defense Ministry. Again by the mid 1997 the army organized themselves for the cause to remove the president legally. At this point, Yeltsin once again promised military personnel quick financial relief. In the meantime, the army also succeeded in "forging a new identity as a presidential institution, answerable only to the Commander-in-Chief and relying on his special attention" (Baev 2002: 133). Yeltsin's hands-off approach to the military also allowed the rise of a culture of unprecedented corruption in the military that would have been unimaginable in the Soviet era and, in fact, has become an important characteristic of Russian civil-military relations. Furthermore, the extensive corruption undermined the military's cohesion, as it created a gulf between those who could profit from the careless management and those who could not.

2.9 The Power Ministries under Yeltsin

One of the main reasons for Yeltsin's strong support of the Power Ministries was his disappointing experience with the reluctant backing of the Defense Ministry in October 1993. This experience led him to cultivate more dedicated instruments of power within the government. He removed the paramilitary units of the power ministries from parliamentary supervision directly and brought it under the direct control of the President. In order to build an effectual counterweight to the regular armed forces, Yeltsin selected the commanders of the paramilitary forces based on their personal loyalty to him and rewarded them according to the Kremlin's perception of their usefulness. The President created a system under which the various branches of the regular armed forces (army, air force, navy, strategic rocket forces)

had to compete for resources and conscripts not only with each other but also with the *siloviki*. The *siloviki*, who comprised one of the most privileged social strata in the Soviet era, had the most to lose by democratization. It was not surprising, then, that they were eager to be enticed by Yeltsin and his successor. The numerous paramilitary forces posed a special threat to Russian democratization because the only real civilian control over them had been exercised by the President, and not by the government, and because their use in domestic scenarios had not been clearly regulated. One of the public justifications of building up the power ministries' troops was to allow them to make substantial contributions to fighting in internal contingencies.

2.10 The military elites within Yeltsin's administration

Since the mid 1980's Soviet-Russian military elites have steadily acquired a political presence that is undesirable even by the most generous definition of democratic civil-military relations, which is an important pointer of the degree of democratization process in Russia. Russian military elites have acquired a political role that is incompatible with democratic politics especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Although the army was politically influential in the Communist period, its independent political role was very limited. This picture has changed in the post communist political canvas. Hundreds of active-duty officers have run for political office because there are no legal regulations that prevented them from contesting elections. This increase in the presence of military elites in the Russian politics in the course of time is because of Gorbachev's invitation to officers to actively participate in politics and Yeltsin's compliance to a new institutional environment that did not deny the military's political role. Officers turned out to be most responsive and they soon began to publicly criticize Gorbachev and his policies and stood for election to the Supreme Soviet (the legislature). According to Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White, in the state administration persons with a military or security background (*siloviki*) constituted a mere 4.8% of the Politburo in 1988 and by 1993 they were 33%. Yeltsin's state was relatively weak and competing priorities and lacking interest prevented him from rerouting civil-military relations onto a democratic course, which would have been a thankless political task in any case. His neglect of the military not only practically ensured the army's failure to

obtain desperately needed resources from the state, but it also allowed military elites to increase their autonomy and to continue to get away with unacceptable behavior as long as they did not directly challenge Yeltsin's prerogatives. The political weight of the KGB began to be felt in Russian politics from the time of Yeltsin which was to get more matured during the time of Putin.

In the fading days of the Soviet Union, military elites exploited the weaknesses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) leadership and acquired a great deal of institutional autonomy, they actively opposed, foiled, and publicly criticized state officials and policy more or less with impunity. This was a major exit from Soviet civil-military relations in which the army enjoyed no independent political role. The CPSU also extended memberships to the military generals but were not given an independent political role in the state politics. By 1991 Yeltsin issued a decree that abolished Communist Party organizations in the armed forces, the KGB, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Barany 2003: 17). However, he did not support laws that would forbid serving officers from standing for election to legislative bodies. Passing such legislation probably would have been difficult because, by 1992, officer-politicians had become well integrated into the Russian legislature and three of them had even chaired important parliamentary commissions. The generals backed him vis-à-vis Gorbachev in late 1991 and he had far more important items on his agenda than reforming military politics. Still, Yeltsin fundamentally complied with the army's increased political presence. Yeltsin had little understanding of or interest in security issues and, given the catastrophic state of Russia's finances in the early 1990's and the absence of an obvious external security threat, he thoroughly neglected the armed forces. Yeltsin's increasing political influence in this period was reflected in his ability to gain the personal loyalty of the military establishment. Just as Gorbachev had done in 1987, Yeltsin co-opted, coerced, and manipulated the military elite, while building coalitions with them. The Russian nonconformist politician, for instance, could count on the military vote during the June 1991 Russian Presidential elections when he achieved a first round victory with 57.3 % of the vote (Barany 2003: 98).

All through his tenure, Yeltsin pursued vague policies toward the power ministries. Initially Yeltsin seemed to fear the security services and even went to the

extent of reorganization of the security departments and personal shuffles of the security services. From 1992 to 1999, there were seven different directors of the main domestic intelligence service, the FSB and its predecessors, none of whom served for more than two years. Yeltsin also clearly understood the political value and the necessity of having *siloviki* that he could consider his own. This helps explain the long tenure of former minister of defense Pavel Grachev, who served for more than four years, longer than any other head of the three major power ministries under Yeltsin. Even more important was the enormous political influence of Aleksander Korzhakov, Yeltsin's chief bodyguard and the head of the Presidential Security Service, who between 1993 and 1996 became one of the most powerful men in the country and a major player in Kremlin's decision making, from personnel matters to economic policy. In March 1996, Korzhakov and his close ally, FSB chief Mikhail Barsukov, almost succeeded in persuading Yeltsin to close down the Duma and postpone the impending presidential elections. Only the cooler heads of Yeltsin's political advisers and minister of internal affairs Anatoli Kulikov, a rising *siloviki*, averted another potential violent showdown for power. Yeltsin, in short, had a *siloviki* problem (Taylor 2006: 2). Time and again, the power ministries' importance in sustaining his rule and in coping with key public policy problems (such as Chechnya, crime, and military reform) had become obvious. But Yeltsin also prized loyalty, and he had few links to these structures before becoming president. Throughout his tenure he ended up with people leading these structures who, in his view, were either of questionable loyalty or outright disloyal.

In the broader context, the new Russian elite which emerged after the transition in the 1990's can be conceptualized as three layered system. At the top echelon are politicians and their allies, who compete among themselves for power in the newly established democratic system. The middle layer consists of entrepreneurs, who finance the politicians' electoral campaigns, lobbying, newspapers and television and at the bottom level are the security services which not only maintain order but also act as a means of influence and contract enforcement. Private security forces of this kind have been established very widely by the largest corporations or by their agencies, and have also been established on an independent basis. The periodic reforms of the KGB have had a number of effects, one of which has been to compel many of its staff to leave and find alternative employment in other sectors and it is the

former KGB employees who form the core of the security services of major banks and companies. The significance of a Moscow bank has come to be reflected not in its financial position but in whether its security service is headed by a general or merely a colonel from the KGB. The trend of employing the security personnel began to take shape with the ushering in of the capitalist system in Russia. Not only in the business sectors as security personnel but even in the state's administration they began to have an influence in the day to day working of the state. The military elites in particular began to own companies and hold political positions in and outside the parliament which was a sign of Russia becoming a militarized state as the influence of these military personnel were so great. The influx of the military personnel was to reach its peak with the coming of Vladimir Putin, who himself was KGB agent.

The appointment and election of the *siloviki* in the state administration also happened during the time of Yeltsin but was very insignificant as compared to that of Putin's regime. For example the chief of staff of former Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, was former KGB officer Gennadii Peteline. The appointment of *siloviki* to high level political or administrative posts was relatively common particularly in the second half of Yeltsin's presidency. General Lebed was made secretary of the Security Council in August 1996. Moreover, Yeltsin appointed three Prime Ministers with a force structure background. They were Evgenii Primakov in September 1998, Sergei Stepashin, who had previously served as interior minister and Deputy Prime Minister in Primakov's government, in May 1999 and Vladimir Putin in August 1999 (Renz 2006: 905). A number of former FSB officials were also appointed to key positions in Yeltsin's administration. Various key positions in the administration were occupied by those personnel who had a military background or had a KGB background. Even Vladimir Putin started his political career in the Russian politics under Yeltsin in June 1996 and rose to key positions of first Deputy Head before appointing as the FSB director in July 1998. When compared to the elites under Putin, Yeltsin's elites had less of those with a military background. This can be explained by the fact that Yeltsin, unlike his successor, sought to exclude *siloviki* from the political process as a matter of democratic principle. Yeltsin's regime as compared to Putin's was characterized by a supra party technocratic government of oligarchs and professional subordinated to a strong presidency (Renz 2006: 906). Thus the government formed under Yeltsin was not on the basis of institutionalized

channels of elite recruitment, but were tactical combinations aimed at retaining the balance of power in his favor which included the playing off of groups and institutions against each other. As his popular support eroded at the end of his presidency, Yeltsin relied ever more on the *siloviki*, to the point that his last prime ministers all had a security background. Thus Yeltsin began his presidency with economic liberals, moved to economic statist, and ended up with security officials.

In order to maintain his power, important political appointments were naturally focused on figures and allies of Yeltsin's team or inner circle, the appointment of persons outside this group, including the *siloviki*, to political posts can be seen as a part of Yeltsin's strategy of maintaining power and balancing interests. For instance, the appointment of General Lebed as national security advisor and secretary of the Security Council can be seen as a pay off for Lebed's withdrawal of his candidacy for the presidency in favor of Yeltsin in the second round of the 1996 elections. The appointment of Primakov as Prime Minister in 1998 can be perceived as a compromise in the face of the refusal of the communist dominated Duma to accept the reappointment of Viktor Chernomyrdin to the post (Renz 2006: 906). Both the *siloviki* and the civilian appointees alike were subjected to the same arbitrary of 'hire and fire' strategy that accompanied the highly personalized system of governance of the Yeltsin's regime. Through this we can conclude that the presence of *silovikis* in the Russian politics was already there even during Yeltsin's regime, only it was a little bit lesser than Putin's presidency.

2.11 Conclusion

The Soviet military and the Party relation during the Soviet was at strain, this was mainly because of the allocation of more resources towards the economic sector. The Soviet economy was in dire needs of resources from the state hence the needs of the military were always sidelined. During the time of Stalin the European continent was heading towards a major war which led to the increase in the Soviet military expenditures. But this favor from the state towards the military did not last long and economic agendas achieved more importance. After Stalin, Khrushchev came to power, but he also gave more importance to the Soviet economy rather than the military. But after Khrushchev, Brezhnev came to power and the relation between

state and the military improved, which resulted in the realization of the importance of Soviet Military in politics. But the honeymoon between the state and the military did not last long. All the leaders of the Soviet period saw the military as a threat to their power and hence were not given much importance and were always undermined. Thus during the Soviet era the military was always under the control of the Communist Party.

When Gorbachev came to power, he initiated reforms which challenged the power of the Communist Party thus the party hold over the military was also loosened and the military was given a more important role in Russian politics. Another reason was that, Gorbachev came to power with the help of the military and hence one of his first moves was the elevation of the KBG Chairman to full membership of the Politburo. Though initially, Gorbachev and the Soviet military were together in the reforms, but when the reforms touched the military sector, the relation between them became bitter. Again the various mishaps brought by the military which tarnished the image of the Soviet state, also aggravated the already strained relation between Gorbachev and the military. The result was the control of the military by the civilian authorities during the time of Gorbachev.

By the end of Gorbachev's reign the military began to look out for more rights and resources from the state. Under pressure from various democratic forces, Gorbachev allowed the participation of military in Russian politics. Thus after the disintegration of Boris Yeltsin, the Communist Party's hold over the armed forces were abolished. Under Yeltsin a rather different elite came to power, recruited from a wide variety of social groups and for the most part without any serious management experience. Many were politically inexperienced academics who soon found that the experience of running a scientific laboratory was "no preparation for the management of a country". They owed their sudden prominence to Yeltsin's determination to appoint ministers who had no career association with his Soviet predecessor (Kostikov 1997: 271). The military under Yeltsin was not given much opportunity in state politics but was time and again used by Yeltsin for his own political fortunes. Thus the military began to hold a position in Russian politics under Yeltsin. His neglect of the military gave the military elites more autonomy in politics

and various security issues. Kryshchanovskaya and White have pointed to an increase of the military elite in state administration from a mere 4.8% in 1988 to 33% in 1993.

Chapter 3

Militarization of the Russian State under Putin

3.1 Vladimir Putin: From Security Service to the President of Russia

The transfer of power from Yeltsin to Putin was considered as one of the most peaceful in the Soviet history of a thousand years. In March 2000, Vladimir Putin cruised to victory in a presidential election which was already an obvious result (Rutland 2000: 313). Russia's unsteady transition to democracy passed a crucial test which was in the form of the first peaceful transfer of power in the presidency since 1991 and the first democratic transfer of power in Russian history. Putin's elevation in less than a year from head of the Federal Security Service to Prime Minister and to acting President took everyone by surprise. Many in the West responded and were confused whether he would be a liberal or another authoritarian figure in the Russian politics. The deeper and more interesting mystery lies not in the character of the president, but in the challenges which he faced. The two main issues in Russia's transition are the introduction of democracy and the introduction of a market based economy from a state planned economy. Other tasks, such as strengthening the state, fighting corruption, building the rule of law, resolving center-region relations, securing the state's borders, tackling poverty, or reviving economic growth, are subordinate to or consequent upon these two mandates. Rather than democratic consolidation, the task facing the Putin presidency was to rebuild the Russian state and build new institutions which would be fit for a new global environment. Putin also had to complete the job of modernizing Russia that Yeltsin had started but left unfinished. Initially he followed the policies of Yeltsin and did not head off towards a completely new direction. He addressed issues that Yeltsin left unresolved, such as state administrative capacity, the legal integrity of the country, and a viable system of political party competition, while leaving relatively untouched areas which had seen radical change under Yeltsin, such as the privatization of industry and a foreign policy based on cooperation with the West. Initially, on fundamental issues of democracy, market economy and relations with the international community, Putin's policies showed an essential continuity with those of his predecessor.

Vladimir Putin was brought in as a symbol of stability, order and strong leadership which was the need of the hour for the Russians who were weary of Yeltsin's unreliable behavior concerning their economy as well as the Russian political instability. When the Yeltsin regime drew to a close, his elites needed to evade responsibility for the failures of the 1990's and to safeguard their personal security and economic interests. The political class as a whole wanted guarantees that their property was secure and it wanted to see an end to the warring between different power blocs in the Russian politics. The public too longed to live in peace and hoped the future would be an improvement over the present day. The ruling elite did not want another charismatic leader or a revolutionary; it neither wanted a political heavyweight with his own power base nor an ambitious politician. The Kremlin's principal need of the hour was for an individual close to the security forces who would be able to rely on their support to defend the regime and protect its interests. It wanted someone who could provide cover for the outgoing team and respect its commitments to it, someone without dictatorial tendencies, and someone who was not a part of the era that was ending but capable of reacting to the new challenges, somebody with the ability to rule the country and who knew how the state machinery worked. Thus Vladimir Putin was the right man, at the right place and at the right time, when he took over as the Russian President.

For the first time in the history of Russia, in the person of Vladimir Putin, an officer from the security service, a professional representation of the KGB's corporate interests and mentality, had come to formally head the regime. His predecessor in the 1980's, Yuri Andropov, although chairman of the KGB had been appointed by the Communist Party to that position to control the state's lethal political weapon, yet he brought none of the mentality of a secret police officer to the tasks of heading the Communist Party and the Supreme Soviet. The conservatism that has prevailed in Russian politics under Putin, which has shown itself in the centralization of power and its reliance on subordination, is related to the fact that the president is a member of the security community and that the nerve center of his regime was staffed by former colleagues. It would be a mistake, however to suppose that he and his associates, dubbed as the *siloviki*, initiated this kind of a security trend. The invitation to the *siloviki* to take power was to be expected of an oligarchic-authoritarian regime that

was losing confidence in itself and had no other means to guarantee its survival. It would never have occurred to Stalin, Khrushchev or Brezhnev to groom an army general or a representative from the security services as their successor. It definitely did not enter the mind of Gorbachev, who in reality reduced the role of the KGB in the Soviet political system. It was Yeltsin who in an attempt to guarantee a peaceful old age for himself and security for his family, handed power to members of a group who he had never been trusted before and against whose aspirations for power, he had defended Russia. Putin's team was called in by Yeltsin's team to safeguard its interests, and it did so by consolidating the undemocratic reflexes of the state authorities but also beginning to realize its own group interests. Under Putin Russia conducted another experiment with itself with members from the military and the security services. Once in power, they extended the scope of the security ministries, the prosecutor's office, the Interior Ministry, the FSB, the Tax Department and other law enforcement agencies which moved beyond public or political accountability.

Time had shown that Vladimir Putin coped brilliantly with the tasks he was entrusted with. He not only ensured the safety of the ruling corporation but also managed to fulfill the hopes of the Russian people. Though not satisfied, Yeltsin's "family" had to give the keys of Kremlin to Putin as he appeared as a guarantor of their security and their ill gotten wealth. During Yeltsin's presidency there was a constant turnover of personnel and a changing of policy that created the illusion of progress, or at least of change. Putin, in contrast, set about building his "pyramid of power", emphasizing subordination, strengthening the role of bureaucracy, bringing members of the security services into the government, centralizing control and eradicating opposition (Shevtsova 2007: 40). Putin's strategy of building a strong state focused primarily on eliminating checks and balances on the presidential power but not on strengthening the effectiveness of state institutions. He used the economic development as a leverage to shut down critical media and to scare off potential political rivals. Putin did not make the media as a base of his power but he controlled most of the media centers and television channels. There have also been cases of using law enforcement agencies to pursue political ends, including selective persecution of oligarchs and media outlets critical to the government. Furthermore, Putin's reform of the Upper House of the Parliament, the Federation Council, has gravely undermined this important check on his presidential power. Having

considerably undermined the parliament and the cabinet, which had enjoyed limited power under Yeltsin, Putin's regime relied instead on the federal bureaucracy with the support of the *siloviki*. Together with his group of associates, he decided that the strategy Yeltsin was pursuing had to be changed. In the Kremlin this was described as 'stopping the revolution'. In other words the pattern of development that had been taking place under Yeltsin was seen by the Russian political class as a revolution (Kryshtanovskaya 2008: 586).

3.2 The Influx of personnel with Military backgrounds in Putin's Administration

Boris Yeltsin's regime was based on political appointments which were centered on the President. Appointments were made to the state administration according to the personal links and loyalty of the candidate to the president or Yeltsin's "family". When Putin became the acting president in 1999 he inherited this political system. Lacking a readymade political base of his own due to his inexperience in federal politics, and not being able to resort to institutionalized channels of recruitment via parliament or political parties, he had no choice but to build his own power base on trusted individuals he had previously worked with. Thus it should not come as a surprise that, especially in the initial stages of his presidency, in addition to retaining key figures of the Yeltsin regime, Putin had to build his own power base on trusted individuals from the military and the security service. During Putin's presidency, about six thousand members of the FSB and other security services had been integrated into the ruling elite. According to Kryshtanovskaya, Russia today is 'militocracy' which means people with a military and intelligence background make up around three quarters of Putin's top officials as against just five percent of Gorbachev's Politburo. Kryshtanovskaya and White together made a similar research together and they concluded that, "If it was only a few generals who had moved into politics there would be no reason to attach a larger significance to their recruitment. But what has been taking place is not a small number of individual movements, but a wholesale migration that now accounts for 15 to 70 percent of the membership of a variety of elite groups" (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 293). They even described the political development under Putin as a "military-president Project" (2003). Petrov again in his work *'Seven Faces of Putin's Russia: Federal Districts and the New Level of State-Territorial Composition'* said that the political

development under Putin represented a “Peaceful military takeover” over the Russian state (Petrov 2002: 88).

According to Kryshtanovskaya and White, the proportion of those with a security, military or other law enforcement agencies in leadership positions rose from 4 percent under Gorbachev to 6.7% per cent under Yeltsin, and then rose to 26.6% per cent by the end of Putin’s first term as president, with the proportion even higher in the national government (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 294). But again scholars like David and Sharon Rivera have challenged the point by saying that while the policy consequences for a rising *siloviki* presence in Russian political life might well be as detrimental as most assume it to be, the number of *siloviki* in important positions is not as great as previously thought. Specifically, it shows that a recalculation of the data from one of the key research papers on the topic as well as the examination of new data lead to the conclusion that claims of a “militocracy” are real but overstated. (Rivera and Rivera 2005: 2). Bettina Renz has also challenged the pre-eminent role of the *siloviki* in the Russian politics under Putin. She questioned whether the growth in *siloviki* numbers is a conscious strategy by Putin to enhance their influence to create a more authoritarian regime, and she argues that there is no common ‘military mindset’ among them advocating relatively a more authoritarian policies. In her view, they are far from dominant in the policy-making process. Only 9 of 47 leading officials in the presidential administration in 2005 had a security background, and none of the nine were in the top echelons of power. Only two of 10 presidential advisors were *siloviki*. Putin simply relied on people with whom he had worked in the past, and in her view, security officials were just one group of many. Most of Putin’s *siloviki* in any case had, like Putin, enjoyed varied careers, and most had worked in other spheres. They certainly did not constitute a coherent clan, she insists, as the concept of ‘militocracy’ implied (Renz 2006: 914).

If Yeltsin’s model can be classified as moderately authoritarian oligarchic regime, then Putin’s rule resembles the bureaucratic authoritarianism. He began by eradicating the political arena of anything resembling opposition to his presidency. His first act was to subjugate the independent television and press owned by the oligarchs, first attacking the most popular channel, NTV, controlled by Vladimir Gusinsky who was close to Yeltsin’s “family”. Next it was the turn of the upper

chamber of parliament, the Federation Council, which was stripped of its independence and regional leaders were deprived of their rights to represent regional interest. The president divided the country into seven districts that, not by coincidence, were the same as the military districts. Finally, the president turned control of region sections of the security ministries which had been reporting to the governors and to Moscow, turning them into the eyes and ears of the sovereign. The combination in the new leader's thinking of soviet provincialism, elements of KGB mentality and his liberal economic views made him a sought-after commodity in a system that maintained a balance of mutually incompatible tendencies (Shevtsova 2007: 44). Putin drew security officials into his team not because he wanted to create a regime of *siloviki* and hand power over to the successors of the KGB. He chose his team, not on the basis of professional allegiances or ideological or political affiliation but simply because these were the people he knew and trusted.

When Putin became acting president on 31st December 1999, he was faced with a political system that has been termed by the British political scientist Richard Sakwa as a "regime system of rule" (Sakwa 2002: 458). One characteristic of this system was that the formation of government was only remotely linked to the outcome of elections, the parliament or political parties represented in the latter. Instead, political appointments were highly personalized and determined by the president's construction of tactical combinations aimed at maintaining a balance focused on him. Within this context, personal links and loyalty were the predominant factor for political appointments under Yeltsin, whose regime centered on the so-called "family", a fluid group of favored Kremlin insiders (Renz 2007: 2). When Putin became acting president in December 1999 he had no political base or a particular group to lean on and the political regime was highly personalized. As such, this system both allowed him to and, to an extent, left him no choice but to rely, at least in part, on representatives of the force structures. Thus Putin formed his government by relying on trusted individuals he had previously worked with. Many important posts in the state administration went to his former colleagues from Leningrad KGB and the FSB officers. Hence Vladimir Putin has drawn a stream of people in uniform into Russia's power structures.

The idea of a president with a military-security background was also wholly supported and welcomed by the Russian public who were desperate for stability, even if it meant some curtailment of their new post-communist liberties. The notion of the armed forces and the security personnel of being honest and apolitical professionals, made to differentiate themselves from the other elite groups who were considered or whose image was closely associated with corruption and mafia like business. Not only this, after the fall of the communist regime there appeared a vacuum which was easily filled up by the armed forces and the state security as they have retained an organization based on vertical subordination and regional structures that penetrated the entire society, allowing them to be used as a structure of national government. They thus became the basis of the new regime under Vladimir Putin. A president with a military background would also regularize the work of the government and draw its staff from the same source, making use of the military inclination to obey superiors and act collectively. Given the circumstance, it became important for the new president to be able to develop a support group on whom he could rely for advice from which he could recruit officials to staff the federal agencies of the government.

For understandable reasons, Putin being in state politics for such a short period, the first to call upon were the people Putin knew personally and trusted as his colleagues and fellow Petersburgers. As a result, the new president became increasingly dependent for immediate support upon the officer corps, leading officials of the law enforcement and force ministries and managers from the military industrial complex. The creation of seven new federal administrative districts only months after Putin's election as president in March 2000, and the appointment of *siloviki* to head five of these regions, contributed much to the interpretation of Putin's reliance on former force structure personnel (Renz 2006: 908). Between the years of *perestroika* and the middle of Putin's first presidential term, the overall share of military personnel increased almost sevenfold; at the very highest level, within the national leadership, the increase was even more dramatic. Growing numbers of military and security representatives at all levels of government reflected an increase in the number of military and security agencies themselves, but also the increasing popularity of military and security officials as deputies or governors. After Putin's election in 2000 they began to move into economic and political life in unprecedented numbers. According to Olga Kryshтанovskaya and Stephen White, *siloviki* composed 58.3 per

cent of the Security Council in 2003, compared to 33.3 per cent in 1993, and a mere 4.8 per cent in the Politburo of 1988. They have also increased as a proportion of the regional elite: of 88 heads of federal sub-units, 2.2 per cent were drawn from military or security circles in 1993, rising to 4.5 per cent in 1999, and then surging to 10.2 per cent in 2003 (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 300).

Over 2001-03, the Elite Studies department at the Sociology Institute has done a survey entitled 'Putin's Elite'. It was headed by Olga Kryshtanovskaya who took 3,500 biographies of Cabinet members, head of the Presidential Administration, and members of both chambers of the Federal Assembly of Russia, the regional elite, and business leaders. The result was that the apparatuses of federal districts suffered the most spontaneous invasion of the military: here, the people with shoulder straps make up to 70% of the personnel. Apparatuses of presidential envoys consolidated forces of federal structures in the regions. If earlier heads of local FSB, Interior Ministry, Federal Border Guard Service (FBGS) and prosecutors had been under real control of governors, presidential envoys have now received this control, which have deprived the local elite of a serious support and weakened the governors. However, serious changes occurred in the camp of governors, representation of the military in this sphere rose by 100% over the past two years. As a result, over three years of Putin's presidency, the elite structure has become more militarized, less intellectual, and more closely linked with business (Kryshtanovskaya 2003: 2). In the early 1990's the elite's strategic group had mainly consisted of economists, but under Putin the military and security officers have begun determining the strategy of social development, which have changed the priorities of state policies. Issues of security, military reform, Russia's geopolitical place in the world have been given more preference. These agents with security background have specific skills in exchange of data and manipulation channels and also among them a spirit of mutual assistance reigns. This kind of power is steadier, especially since the ideology of patriotism, partially diluted by liberal economic ideas, fastens it.

Russia's domestic politics under Putin was being shaped largely by the components of a powerful and complicated social and political trend, which along with the country's best economic growth since the early 90's was responsible for most of President Putin's popularity. Generally speaking, there were three major competing

power groups within the Russian ruling elites when Putin took over the presidential post. But neither of them made a readymade base for Putin, therefore he tried to strike out a balance between them. The first group, dominated by oligarchs, some of whose members were a part of the official Russian Union of Entrepreneurs and industrialists, others have developed clan-like connections largely with the Yeltsin's era "family". The second group or the faction is the so called St. Petersburg group, who were considered as the economic liberals and who were also Putin's colleagues from his hometown, including a few powerful regional governors, as well as some liberals put in charge of key economic posts. The third grouping consists of the *siloviki*, Putin's former colleagues from the FSB and other military, intelligence and security agencies, who tend to value ideology and loyalty over rights and liberties. The *siloviki* clan's core members would be Igor Sechin, deputy head of the presidential administration, Viktor Ivanov, an adviser to the president, and Nikolai Patrushev, Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), more or less fit this profile. Surrounding these powerbrokers, however, is a network of individuals who do not fall under core members. Associates of Sechin, Ivanov, and Patrushev hold top positions not only in the Kremlin and government ministries, but also in the second tier of the bureaucracy, state-owned enterprises, and private companies (Bremmer and Charap 2006-07: 85). Since they were privileged in Soviet times and were above the law, they wanted to return to normalcy of the state affairs, which in their eyes means a strong state that gives them these privileges. These three groupings were responsible for designing the political structure of Putin's presidency with the system of checks and balances. But the conflict was never resolved, and after three years of endless behind the scene fights this conflict ended in the victory of the *siloviki* group which culminated from the Yuko's affair. By attacking the Oligarchs, Putin signaled that the *siloviki* are really in control of the Russian state.

3.3 Putin and the Oligarchs

By the 1990's it was widely understood that Russia was in effect ruled by a group of "oligarchs". These were businessmen who had grown rich during the process of the 1990's market reform. Some of them gained control of companies during the voucher privatization launched in 1992 and others had bought state owned factories at a discount rate during the 'loans-for-shares' auctions of 1995. When president Putin inherited power in Russia, basically most of the economic assets available in the

country were privatized among a handful of tycoons, who seemed to dominate Russian politics during the late 1990s. At the heart of this system was the ‘family’ which was a close associate of Yeltsin and some government officials. It was quite clear for Putin that if their power was not returning to the state then his authority would be much smaller and much more limited than he wanted to re-establish. However, he knew perfectly well that if he had confiscated all the assets from the oligarchs he basically would have gained a large portion of the economy illegally. Thus his policy of attracting foreign investments and integrating with the West would be severely damaged. His second option was to run the Russian economy in a more open and transparent way. But this would again create conditions for foreign investments to come and gradually increase the power of the oligarchy group. This scenario did not suit either because it implied that the role of the state would be diminished if there were a transparent and open economy. Putin essentially came up with a third option where he struck a deal with the oligarchs and various economic groups. The essence of this bargain with the oligarchs was that the oligarchs were to be loyal to the president and in exchange the president grants them various rights to pursue their economic interests. The Oligarchs have learned that while monopolistic practices are still tolerated, political disloyalty was not, thus the Kremlin let the oligarchs enjoy a few freedoms in pursuing their own economic agendas and continue to increase their businesses provided they do not meddle in the state politics.

One of Vladimir Putin’s primary objectives on assuming power was to re-establish the authority of the Russian state, which had been severely weakened from the late 1980’s and in particular, to reinforce the presidency vis-à-vis the other major institutions and actors in the political system. This meant redefining the Kremlin’s relations with the Federal Assembly, the regional elite and, above all, the so-called ‘oligarchs’, the handful of spectacularly wealthy tycoons who had shot to prominence under Boris Yeltsin and who appeared to dominate Russian politics in the late 1990’s. The choice of Putin as protector of interests of Russia’s renewed political class was perceived to have been successful, even though unexpected by Boris Yeltsin. From the very beginning of his rule, Vladimir Putin stated that he was going to wage war on oligarchs, and this agenda won mass support from the Russian people who had never in the nation’s history had a chance to respect private property or experience private ownership. The “oligarchs” abused the Russian common people and a number of

these new owners had also become very wealthy and unresponsive to those who had empowered them. Putin began to show his strong stance on his words with the prosecution of independent oligarchs such as Mr. Brerezovski and Mr. Gusinsky. He forced them to leave Russia and to seek asylum abroad. When Mr. Putin put the richest Russian oligarch, Mr. Khodorkovski, in jail he enjoyed public support and was even praised for it. Not only were these few famous Russian personalities in the economy, more than a hundred rich individuals were also forced into emigration. As a rule, they were accused of crimes, or else investigations were launched that made clear that serious unpleasantness was to be expected from the state. These people, to retain their money, their freedom, and sometimes their very lives, were obliged to leave the country. Hence tackling the Oligarchs was the biggest problem for Putin as the Oligarchs had a mass base support because of their connection with the previous regime and also because of their wealth. Putin wanted the Russian state to remain distant from the oligarchs and also expected the same from them, Putin sought, in the interests of stability, to discipline them rather than to eliminate them, redefining and institutionalizing their relationship with the state.

By the end of 2001, it was estimated that 85% of the value of Russia's 64 largest privately owned companies, with aggregate sales of 109 billion dollars in 2000, was controlled by just eight shareholder groups. Another major study found that, in 2002, Russia's ten largest business groupings accounted for 38.7% of industrial output and 31% of exports (Tompson 2004: 2). Though many of the oligarchs sent a helping hand in his presidential election, Putin's distaste for them became apparent in his policies and speeches. His election campaign promise of distancing the state from the oligarchs and the elimination of the oligarchs as a class became so clear. Nevertheless, as Putin did not have a ready made political group of his own, he had to rely on the elites of the Yeltsin's era who had a close relation with the oligarchs. At the same time, Putin also wanted to advance the careers of his long standing associates, many of whom shared his KGB background. This group had its roots in the security services and related structures. Putin could not afford to drive out the "family" from positions of power that soon and in any case he needed their expertise initially. Yet by 2004, he began to sideline their power within the state and the economy, and as members of the "family" were removed from office, it was most often the representatives of the *siloviki* who replaced them.

Putin's attack on the oligarchs began with great caution because a direct attack would have led to falling tax revenues and rising capital flight, putting at risk both the economic recovery that was getting under way and Putin's own consolidation of power. Nevertheless Putin moved rapidly and showed to the oligarchs and the Russian people that the relations between the state and the oligarchs have changed. This was done by giving the oligarchs a demonstration of the state's power and of their vulnerability. Thus in the spring and summer of 2000 the country's most prominent businessmen found themselves, one by one, under official pressure. The first target was the media tycoon Vladimir Gusinski, who had backed Putin's opponents in the elections of 1999/2000. He and his companies were subjected to a series of criminal investigations that were conducted with little regard for due process. Next in line was Boris Berezovski, who had actively aided Putin's rise and helped engineer the Kremlin's Duma election victory in 1999 (Tompson 2004: 3). Thus the picture became clear for other oligarchs that Putin and his administration meant business when he sacked both Gusinski and Berezovski. Some oligarchs tried to intervene on their behalf but could not achieve anything positive and thus had to leave the two men to their own fate. Both Berezovski and Gusinski had accumulated extensive media holdings, which they had used to advance their own political agendas and which the Kremlin now wished to control. Moreover, their political activities had long been more visible and more extensive than those of the other oligarchs. Putin also tightened his hold over key industrial and financial assets such as the gas monopoly which was Gazprom, the oil transport monopoly Transneft and the state savings bank, Sberbank. This was aimed at least partly at shoring up his position vis-à-vis big business. State control over the pipeline infrastructure remains the government's best lever when it comes to managing the powerful oil barons and the authorities have vigorously rejected the idea of allowing private pipelines to be built. Putin's reluctance to restructure the gas monopoly Gazprom also appeared to reflect, at least in part, the requirements of his 'oligarch-management' strategy.

The arrest of the chief of Yukos Oil Company, Mikhail Khodorkovski in October 2003 and the announcement of his resignation from the company by November marked an important landmark in the presidency of Vladimir Putin. The Yukos affair in general and the arrest of Khodorkovski in particular and his dramatic

announcement of resignation as chief of Yukos have created debate and controversy since the issue involved had significance and repercussions both at home and abroad. Some leading political leaders such as Gregory Yavlinsky of the Yabloko party have criticized the Russian government in its handling of Yukos affairs and its arrest of the chairman and the shareholders of the company and termed these actions as a political purge before the elections, targeted at the suppression of political opponents in Russia. There have also been many critical comments from abroad as well. But the Yukos affair was not just this but involved economic, political and social that had wide ranging implications for Russia and for the countries closely associated with Russia.

On the political front, by the spring of 2003, Mikhail Khodorkovski the founder of the Yukos oil company and also the richest man in Russia started showing his interest in a political career. Rumors began circulating that Khodorkovski was planning to contest in the presidential election in 2004 and if not in 2008. Putin's pact with the oligarchs not to meddle in state politics was seriously sidelined by this action. And to support this, Yukos was active in buying the loyalty of Duma deputies, and did not hesitate to use its leverage to block legislation that it disliked, such as higher oil excise taxes and revisions to the 1995 law on production sharing which was an arrangement that allowed approved foreign companies to recoup their investments in oil and gas fields before they started paying taxes. In December 2003 state Duma election, Khodorkovski poured money into parties across the political spectrum of Russia. And lastly Yukos linked analyst were spreading the idea of introducing a parliamentary system of government in which the government would be answerable to the state Duma (which was controlled by the oligarchs) rather than to the President.

Economically Khodorovski tried to strengthen his position by adopting international accounting standards and adding Westerners to the Yukos Board, with a view to offering a large stake in the company to a Western oil major company. This would enable him to cash out some of his share holdings, valued at their peak at 15 billion dollars. Again the selling out of some shares to the foreign investors would make the Russian government powerless in taking legal steps against the company. He also pursued an agreement with China to finance a 3 billion dollars pipeline to carry oil from Angarsk in Siberia to Daqing in China (Rutland 2009: 6). He also

mounted an aggressive international Human Rights campaign, funding international charities, and getting himself appointed to worthy foundation boards, such as that of the International Crisis Group. He thought that these steps would make it too risky for Putin to take him down. But his strategy backfired. The more successful he was, the greater the threat he represented to the Kremlin. In the summer of 2003 Putin gave the green light for the arrest of Khodorovski and his other Yukos executives, and the dismemberment of Yukos Oil Company.

According to Russian official sources, there were also allegations of embezzlement and tax evasion by the shareholders of the Yukos oil company and hence they were interrogated and investigated by the Russian government. The issue of embezzlement and tax evasion were linked to economic issues concerning the privatization policy of Russia. The shortcomings and the implementation of the privatization policy in Russia in the 1990s led to a large scale misappropriation and embezzlement of the state property by vested groups and individuals in Russia. While many political leaders and parties propose to review this privatization policy, there was general consensus that such review would prove counter productive for the economy as a whole. Moreover, such a measure would be interpreted that under Putin there has been a set back for the course of economic reforms initiated during the last decade and thus it would affect the confidence of the western countries for investment in the Russian economy. And at this time, Putin's main policy was to attract the Western investment in the growing Russian economy. To counter such feelings, Putin has stated that there will be no re-nationalization of private property. The results of the Yukos affair included the squeezing the leftovers of the oligarchs out of the political decision making process; an expansion of state control of the economy; the beginning of a redistribution of property in favor of the new ruling elites; the neutralization of political activity by big business and an increase in the Kremlin's interest in the fuel and energy complexes which came to be viewed as an economic base of the regime.

3.4 Militarization in the regions during Putin's regime

Under Yeltsin, regional leaders often ruled supreme, unchecked by Moscow and reliant only upon their local support base. Regional laws often contradicted the

constitution and renegade governors refused to contribute local revenues to the federal budget. Putin worked from the outset to reverse this decentralization of power that had occurred under Yeltsin. Regional politics in Russia has had an impact on the country's internal stability, particularly the cohesiveness of federal policy making, and the ability of the center to implement policy rather than to proclaim it. Internal stability is essential for developing Russia's relationship with the international system and hence is playing a large part in characterizing the system itself. The shift of power from the center to the regions was a part of a broader disintegration of the Russian state. The Yeltsin presidency did little, if anything, to remedy this state of affairs. Instead an undisciplined pluralism emerged, in which regional and financial elites were able to ignore the attempts of the center to enforce law. The federal state's ability to raise taxes shrank from about 25-30% of GDP in 1990 to 11% in 1997. Services such as education and health care were largely dumped in the lap of regional governments, who lacked the resources to keep them going. Profound doubts were being raised about Russia's capacity to emerge from the Soviet collapse as a coherent nation-state, given the lack of congruence between ethnic and political identity and the absence of unified national political elite (Rutland 2000: 28). Reassertion of the central authority over the regions was one of the top priorities of Putin's federal reform, which was the key element in his drive to increase state capacity and integrity.

Upon taking office, after the attack on the oligarchs, one of Putin's major moves was to strengthen the administrative vertical by reducing the powers of the eighty nine regional heads and practically placing them under the authority of seven presidential envoys known as Polpredy, each responsible for a dozen regions or more. Only six days after his inauguration, on May 13, 2000, Putin issued Presidential Decree No. 849, establishing seven supra-regional districts, to be run by presidential appointees. These new super-governors were assigned the task of taking control of all federal agencies in their jurisdictions, many of which had developed affinities if not loyalties to regional governments during the Yeltsin era. These seven representatives of federal executive authority also investigated governors and presidents of republics as a way of undermining their autonomy and threatening them into subjugation. Each polpred was accountable for the implementation of federal laws and budgetary policies in those dozens of regions, and they had the right of veto over federal appointments in their region. They were full members of the national Security

Council, and they meet each other every week in Moscow. According to Putin's decree, the creation of federal districts was aimed at ensuring the primacy of federal law over the laws of republics and regions and the creation of a single legal space within the Russian Federation. These governors of the regions were also conducting a frequent organized insurgency against the federal authority, especially the governors of the rich 'donor' regions, who formed an association to advance their interests in the Federation Council.

According to Kryshtanovskaya and White, the arrival of the military was especially notable in the regions, where the representation of personnel among heads of subjects of the federation has more than doubled since Yeltsin left power. By early 2003, nine of the 88 regional heads (excluding Chechnya) had a military or security background (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 299). In the regions a candidate with military background was considered as an asset for winning the high post as it was considered to have the support of the Kremlin. Thus after the elevation of Putin to the presidency many candidate with a military or a security background won the elections which was not so prior to Putin's presidency. The establishment of presidential representation in the federal districts in 2000-01 not only represented the establishment of an entirely new level of government but also saw the rapid increase in advancement of the military in the regions. Each of the seven federal districts came to be headed by a plenipotentiary representative, with up to ten deputies. In addition, each representative had a staff of about 150, including federal and main federal inspectors and their assistants. The total membership of this new elite group accordingly was about 1500 people. Among their deputies, 70 percent were senior officers in the military or security services. And among the federal inspectors supervising individual's subjects of the federation, more than a third had a military or a security background (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 299). Rivera and Rivera also support this by asserting that, by some calculations, approximately 70% of the staff of the presidential envoys (including their deputies and federal inspectors) hails from the military and security organs (Rivera and Rivera 2005: 3). The super-regions also coincided with the country's military districts and none of these regions were centered in any of the ethnic republics.

Putin's choice of two army generals (Viktor Kazantsev and Konstantin Pulikovskii), two former KGB colleagues (Georgii Poltavchenko and Viktor Cherkesov), and one MVD general (Peter Latyshev) to head five of the seven federal districts set the tone for further appointments to the districts. The other two federal district heads are former prime minister Sergey Kirienko and former diplomat Leonid Drachevskii. One third of the presidential representatives' deputies had power ministry backgrounds. Furthermore, 45 percent of the main federal inspectors appointed by Moscow to oversee relations with the 89 regions were *siloviki*. Most heavily represented among these personnel are the Armed Forces, the FSB, the MVD, and the FSNP (Taylor 2002: 1-2). Though Richard Sakwa agrees to the increase in the presence of the *siloviki* in the regional politics of Russia, he cannot agree on the militarization of the regions under Putin. He says that, "It would be an exaggeration to talk of the 'militarization' of Russian regional politics under Putin, although the presence of *siloviki* undoubtedly increased" (Sakwa 2007: 17).

To strengthen the coordination of the law and force enforcement agencies, councils for security were established in each federal district, with membership drawn from all corresponding institutions. In this way the presidential envoys brought together the resources of the central government in each of the federal districts, strengthening their influence over regional structures. At the same time, the regional branches of the force and security agencies moved under the control of presidential envoys, this led to decrease in the powers of the regional governors over their own region's internal affairs. This kind of changes in the federal structure allowed Kremlin to have a strong hold over various levels throughout the federation and also staffed by military and security personnel. As a result of this, there developed a conflict between the federals and the regional elites. The governors of the regions were stripped off their virtually unlimited powers within their regions. Again, not only the governors but the federal inspectors began to meddle in the internal affairs of the state which again made the governors more infuriated towards Kremlin. The governors themselves were removed from the Federation Council as a result of the insertion of a layer between the governors and the Kremlin. In 2004 they were deprived of the right to be elected by the population, which of course had a very powerful influence on the entire political system. The result was that the heads of the regions lost their

independence and returned to the *nomenklatura*⁴ kind of appointments list but this time of the Kremlin. The governors were also annoyed by the vagueness of the functions of the envoys and inspectors, which allowed them to intervene in any regional issue as they saw fit. This confusion of functions among the governors and the federal agents gave the president more room to maneuver in his management of the regions. Nilkoai Petrov was of the view that the weakness of the society in the regions and the powerlessness of the regional elites, might eventually lead to the disappearance of the Russian Democracy (Petrov 2002: 2).

3.5 The *Siloviki* in the Russian business Sectors

Although Russia's military invasion into its former republic of Georgia was the most dramatic expression of Russia's new nationalism, a similar campaign has been gaining momentum in the realm of Russia's business sectors. Putin and his *siloviki* team have swiftly moved to reassert the governments control over key sectors of the Russian economy, pushing aside, and sometimes punishing, outside investors and many of the so called oligarchs, the flashy entrepreneurs who grew fabulously wealthy when Yeltsin liberalized the Russian economy. The *siloviki* in Putin's administration were convinced that privatization has inflicted great damage on Russia's national interests and take the view that strategic enterprises, especially in the energy sector, should be returned under the state control. It had become conventional during the Yeltsin years for officials of ministerial rank to occupy positions on the boards of state-owned companies. Rather different practices have come to prevail under Putin's presidency; it is no longer ministers but Kremlin *siloviki* and senior officials from the presidential administration who have been

⁴The *nomenklatura* referred to the CPSU's authority to make appointments to key positions throughout the governmental system, as well as throughout the party's own hierarchy. Specifically, the *nomenklatura* consisted of two separate lists: one was for key positions, appointments to which were made by authorities within the party; the other was for persons who were potential candidates for appointment to those positions. The Politburo, as part of its *nomenklatura* authority, maintained a list of ministerial and ambassadorial positions that it had the power to fill as well as a separate list of potential candidates to occupy those positions. Coextensive with the *nomenklatura* were patron-client relations. Officials who had the authority to appoint individuals to certain positions cultivated loyalties among those whom they appointed. The patron (the official making the appointment) promoted the interests of clients in return for their support. Powerful patrons, such as the members of the Politburo, had many clients.

entering the boardrooms of these state owned companies. Indeed, an examination of the trajectories of the new business elite reveals that in 2001, 29 percent had a *nomenklatura* background, which was an increase from 24 percent in 1993, Kryshstanovskaya and White further observe that 'the main source of recruitment of the business elite was from the government ministries' (Kryshstanovskaya and White 2005: 300).

The *siloviki* in the presidential administration turns up on the board of directors of the largest state owned companies. They thus take the initiatives that alter the destiny of Russia politically and economically. Examples can be made of, the head of the presidential staff, Dmitri Medvedev, himself chairs the board of Gazprom, a company with an annual turn over of 30 billion dollars, and Igor Sechin heads the board of the state oil company Rosneft, with an annual turnover of 4 billion dollars. Viktor Ivanov heads the boards of Almaz-Antei, the country's largest producer of anti-aircraft defense equipment, and of Aeroflot. Sechin's counterpart in the presidential administration, Vladislav Surkov, chairs the board of another oil company, Transnefteprodukt, and the President's foreign policy adviser, Sergei Prikhodko, chairs the board of an armament firm. The president's press secretary Aleksei Gromov is a member of the board of the country's most important television company, First Channel, and presidential aide Igor Shuvalov has joined the board of Russian Railways (Kryshstanovskaya and White 2005: 1071-1072). It was also the *siloviki* who initiated the attack and nationalization of Yukos and pushed Russia in the direction of bureaucratic capitalism. It is only natural that they should lobby for increased state expenditure for law enforcement and national security. In 2000-2006 such expenditures rose from nearly 4 billion dollars to 20 billion dollars, and in 2007 the allocation was 25 billion dollars (Shevtsova 2007: 100). At the same time, ministers of a more liberal orientation have been losing their places in these company boardrooms. But a few of Yeltsin's Oligarchs have however maintained their positions by establishing good relations with the *silovikis*.

The *siloviki* control more than ten government agencies and have partial control over several more. Besides the force structures, law enforcement, the intelligence services, and the armed forces, group members head such critical institutions as the Energy Agency and the Customs Service and have considerable

influence within the Federal Property Fund and the Financial Monitoring Service. These institutions have significant regulatory power in key industries and give the group an important say in many areas of policy making. Although the control of Rosneft is under Bogdanchikov as the president, Sechin is chairman which certainly provides the *siloviki* with a huge source of income and their influence is felt in other industries as well. *Siloviki* occupy top positions within Rosoboronexport and Almaz-Antei, two military-industrial giants; Aeroflot, the national airline; and Russian Railroads, the state-owned monopoly. In banking, Vneshekonombank, Mezhprombank, and Rossiya Bank all have links to the *siloviki* group. Even the state-owned company managing the country's ports is run by a former associate of Sechin (Bremmer and Charap 2006-07: 88). Beneath the top level of government bureaucracies and corporate boards, the *siloviki* have penetrated several institutions once considered redoubts of other factions. The lead technocrats, Miller and Medvedev, are respectively the president and chairman of Gazprom, and the company is generally believed to be hostile to *siloviki* interests. Yet, four of the company's vice presidents are tied to Ivanov, Sechin, and Patrushev. The two most powerful "liberals", Gref and Kudrin, have likewise seen their ministries infiltrated by *siloviki*. In both institutions, clan members control sub ministerial agencies, which operate with a high degree of autonomy. The Agency for State Reserves in Gref's Economic Development and Trade Ministry as well as the Service for Financial Monitoring in Kudrin's Finance Ministry was both controlled to some extent by *siloviki*.

The state has taken back from the privately owned business and the oligarchs an estimated 100 billion dollars in the 1990's (Powell 2008: 2). These men (*siloviki*) served in the Soviet era KGB, which comprised of both the foreign intelligence service (of which Putin was an alumnus) and also the dreaded internal security apparatus, which had intimidated and terrorized several generations of the Soviet system. After capturing the state politics, their entry into the economy of the state was spearheaded by the accelerating expansion of the state sector and the formation of new state companies. They played a key role in the re-nationalization of the Russian oil industry since 2001, about 40 percent of the oil sector has returned to state ownership. Much of these processes were quite but it came to international attention with the crackdown and destruction of the major oil company like that of the Yukos in

the early 2004. The primary beneficiary of the dismantling of the Yukos was Rosneft, whose board was headed by deputy presidential chief of staff and *siloviki* clan leader Igor Sechin. Rosneft is now Russia's biggest oil company, with a capital of 78 billion dollars and annual production of about 100 million tons (Yasmann 2007: 1). Renationalization in the oil sector continued apace, with former Rosneft head Mikhail Gutseriyev becoming the latest victim. He has been forced to flee the country to avoid arrest, and the assets of Rosneft, Russia's 7th largest oil company, have been frozen by a court order.

A poll of the leading political and economic experts conducted jointly by the Institute of Situational Analysis and Institute of Social Planning in March 2007 found that the influence of the *siloviki* in politics and the economy is "enormous," while that of the purported oligarch is "negligibly small." The next step in the *siloviki* concentration of economic power was the creation of the state controlled mega corporations that would dominate key sectors of the economy by combining the major companies within them. The goal seemed to be a form of authoritarian capitalism, which can be found in some south East Asian countries. Similarly the United Aviation Corporation and the United Shipbuilding Company was brought under the *siloviki* control as their company was headed by Sergei Ivanov and Naryshkin respectively. Within the banking sectors also after a series of mergers and acquisitions, state controlled Vneshtorgbank (Russian Foreign Trade Bank) (VTB) has emerged as the first major Russian player on global financial market. Two of the bank's vice presidents, former FSB Economic Department head Yury Zaostrovstev and Dimitry Patrushev, son of the current FSB Director, tie this financial giant firmly to the *siloviki* group.

Past behavior suggests that the *siloviki* are intent on controlling major economic resources. Personal enrichment clearly plays some part in this effort, but they also appear to use economic power to further their policy goals and to safeguard their continued dominance of Russian political life. To control as much of Russia's energy revenue as possible, Rosneft and other *siloviki*-controlled companies tried to extend their influence in the energy sector via strategic acquisitions of smaller oil and gas firms. Some *siloviki* have indicated a preference for a single state-controlled energy giant, incorporating all of Russia's major oil, gas, and electricity companies

into one holding. The influx of the *siloviki* in the business sector was affected by the restructuring of the state apparatuses and departments in the 1990's. The military and the security were not spared and this restructuring led to an outflow of thousands of military and security officers from their reserves. Though many of them had not reached their retirement age, they voluntarily left their former service and ventured out into other avenues of income. Many of them found a ready market for their services in the private business sectors, where they were placed in charge of security, economic analysis and intelligence and here they were paid much more higher than their previous service. The values of these former military officers were not only of their education in military but they also had many personal associations with the government and also with the law enforcement agencies. Former KGB officers were particularly welcomed, their intellectual and professional qualities were widely respected, and their special skills in intelligence were especially valued. The military cohort who entered into the business sector managed to keep a close contact with their old colleagues and this led to the drawing of more and more from the security and military service to the business sector. The military cohort inside private business actively sought out associations with their counterparts elsewhere. Retirees working in the commercial world became a kind of fraternity, based on mutual understanding and assistance. They began to meet regularly and to develop a wide range of contacts within government and law enforcement. They also created a whole series of veterans' organizations that have been successful in placing their candidates in elected bodies (Kryshtanovskaya and White 2003: 302). Not only in the taking of the privately own businesses in Russia the military cohort was slowly filling up the business sector from the top to the bottom.

3.6 Conclusion

The coming to power of Vladimir Putin to the presidency of the independent Russia marked a great change in the composition of the decision making bodies of the state. As discussed earlier, we see how under the pressure of liberalization of the newly formed Russian state, the Yeltsin administration was filled by oligarchs and most of the state power was under Yeltsin and his 'family'. The early exit of Yeltsin made these groups of people uncertain of their wealth and power; hence they had to nominate Putin as their presidential candidate, as he seemed like a guarantor of their

power and wealth even if Yeltsin was gone. Putin proved himself worthy by guaranteeing their rights and wealth when he was elected as the president. As he was inexperienced in active politics, Putin had to rely on these groups of people as he did not have a group to call his own. Yeltsin regime was based on political appointments which were centered on the president but Putin had to make appointments based on trust and also those who were known to him personally. This was one of the major reasons why Putin had to call upon his previous colleagues from the security service to aid him in administering the state. Thus the influx of the *siloviki* in the state administration increased with the coming of Putin.

Though initially Putin relied on the oligarchs, his main objective was to oust the oligarchs from the state politics as they were a threat to his rule. Even those oligarchs who helped him win the election were also not spared. An example can be cited of Vladimir Gusinsky and Mikhail Khodorkovski, who were charged with false accusations and were exiled from the state. Many more of the oligarchs who were close to Yeltsin's 'family were also attacked with similar accusations. This vacuum in the economic sphere was filled up by those people who were close to Putin and more often the *siloviki*. Only a few days after he took over the presidency, Putin also divided the whole state into seven supra-regions which was to be administered directly from the Kremlin. The governors of these regions were to be nominated by the president himself; hence the nominees were mostly those people who had a military or security background. Not only the governors but the subordinates in the regional administration were also filled by the security people. This was a step towards militarization of the Russian regions under Putin.

The business sector also saw the influx of the *siloviki* to a maximum, most of the banking sectors and especially the oil companies were taken over by the *silovikis*. Those personnel with a security and military background found an ever ready market and their experience was highly valued. Under Putin we can observe that the business sectors taken over have been taken over by Putin and his people. Thus we can say that the influx of *silovikis* in the state administration and the business sectors led to the re-nationalization of the state centered on the Kremlin. The excessive power of the President and the Kremlin resulted in a more authoritarian kind of politics under Putin. Many scholars like Kryshnanovskaya and White have done in depth studies on

the militarization of the Russian state under Putin. Their data regarding the increase in the *siloviki* in the state administration under Putin has been supported by many more scholars. The only contesting point between them was whether Putin and his *siloviki* group had a prior intention to restrain the democratic forces and steer an authoritarian form of government under Putin. In the next chapter, we will discuss on how the influx of *siloviki* in the state administration under Putin has led to the hijack of the democratic process in Russia.

Chapter 4

The Russian democracy under Putin

4.1 Introduction

Most theorists and analysts agree that the notion of modern democracy includes the peaceful change of political leadership and the means of power through popular participation in elections. The political powers are also separated and exercised by institutions that acts as checks and balances between each other thus impairing a tyranny of power. In general, democracies have a free market economy which depends upon the rule of law and the right to private properties. This rule of law is again assured through an independent judicial and legal system. The accountability of the government officials to the citizens are assured most importantly through elections which are freely competed and fairly conducted. An informed electorate is assured through the government's obligation to publicize its activities and the citizenry's freedom of expression. In contrast in an authoritarian form of government, the oppositions are strictly suppressed through various means. And the citizens are not able to change leaders by electoral means. Rather than legitimizing its rule by appealing to an elaborate ideology, an authoritarian regime boasts to its citizenry that it provides safety, security, and order. These two ideologies clubbed together makes up a political system which is termed by many theorists as a "managed democracy". In this system of political set up, the leaders use the government resources and manipulation to ensure that they will never be defeated in elections, although they permit democratic institutions and groups to function to a limited extend. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the transition to a democratic form of government, the Russian democratic process has faced great challenges, including former president Boris Yeltsin's violent clash with the legislature in 1993 and the recurring conflict in the breakaway Chechnya region. Such challenges have prevented Russia from becoming a full-fledged or "consolidated" democracy (Nichol 2006: 4). Some analysts have viewed Putin as making decisions that have diverted Russia further away from democracy, but they have also argued that the country is not yet fully authoritarian and may be described as a "managed democracy."

According to Jaun J. Linz, democracy is defined by free and developed civil and political society (including freedom of speech, freedom to organize and free elections), state apparatus (including well-functioning and impartial bureaucracy and rational legal norms), rule of law (including constitutionalism), and economic society (including an institutionalized free market) (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007: 216). The regime under Putin did not fulfill all the above criteria of a democratic system of government in Russia. Robert A. Dahl also defined democracy as made up of two essential things, first the inclusion of a majority of the adult population in political life and contestation among differing points of view in the public sphere. Neither is sufficient to bring forth a democratic outcome in the absence of the other. Without the simultaneous involvement of ordinary people, the openness of the governing elite to competition produces a regime with some internal diversity yet no orderly feedback from popular preferences. Without vigorous intra-elite competition, high rates of grassroots participation breed merely the mute mobilization of compliant subjects in support of officialdom. The Kremlin did not allow Russians to take part in that kind of decision-making process. So far, the Russian people have only experienced a managed or a sovereign democracy, terms that really are Kremlin euphemisms for an authoritarian regime, serving the same function as “proletarian democracy” in Soviet times. The super-presidential system consolidated during Putin’s presidency has nearly eliminated all other existing and potential independent centers of power which are essential checks and balances of a proper democracy.

The Russian Federation is one of the strongest examples of the rollback of democracy within the last two decades. Its post-soviet democratic experiment was shuttered and replaced by discernable shift towards autocracy. Under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, this process accelerated and now Russia’s political system can be best classified as authoritarian with the centralization of power around the executive. According to Thomas Ambrosio, one of the many examples for transformation to an authoritarian system in Russia was that, the Russian elites took seriously the threat that the so called the ‘orange virus’ could spread further in the regions and possibly threaten the stability of the regime. They therefore adopted a number of autocratic policies designed to undermine the democratic forces both at home and abroad. Graeme Gill on the other hand says that it was the nature of the political system of

Russia and the elites which led to the transformation towards authoritarianism under Putin. According to him, “The increasingly authoritarian nature of Russia under Putin is not a radical departure from earlier development, but a logical (although not inevitable) continuation of the dynamic stemming from the collapse of communism and the form it took in Russia. The weakness of institutional channels between political elite and civil society more broadly was thus a direct result of the circumstances of the Russian transition and the scope this gave for political elites to build a system which undercut further the development of such channels”. Some scholars of elite studies have however attributed the reason on the background and personality of Vladimir Putin, whose background was a security serviceman (KGB), who brought his ‘friends’ from the security services (*siloviki*) to run the state administration along with him. It is assumed that they brought with them to their posts both a commitment to the sorts of values which do not sit easily with democratic principles and a certain sense of group solidarity among themselves apart from the other groups (Gill 2006: 59). This line of argument sees authoritarianism as chiefly a result of the nature and personal preferences of Putin and his supporters. The emerging prominence of such people in the corridors of power in Russia cannot be disputed, and the fact that they would carry with them into their new posts particular sorts of mindsets and assumptions about the correct way of acting is also widely accepted. The change of regime from Yeltsin to Putin solidified the autocratic trends in Russia. The potential for abuse of power found in the president-dominant Russian constitution, the declining level of freedom of press exhibited by alliance between the media and the Kremlin, and lack of fair and competitive elections coalesced into a decisive shift toward authoritarianism under Putin. Each of the subsequent reforms enacted under Putin’s presidency could be interpreted as something other than a move away from democracy. Under Putin, the Kremlin systematically eroded independent sources of political power in the country while at the same time, failed to adopt any policies which would have actually fostered democratic development.

When President Vladimir Putin first assumed office, Russian observers were engaged in an interesting debate about the future trajectory of Russia’s political system. There were gloomy signs, as early as the year 2000, that Putin aspired to weaken the checks on presidential power and eliminate sources of political and economic opposition. Yet, at that time, defenders of Putin could speculate that some

of the Kremlin's political reforms were not really anti-democratic, but rather policies aimed at restoring order and stability which were necessary corrections in response to the tumultuous 1990s. By 2008, however, this debate was over, among outside politicians, academics, and pundits following Russian affairs, an overwhelming majority concur that the Russian regime under Putin consolidated power beyond the point of 'true democracy'. The debate now surrounds the causes, severity, and final destination of this autocratic trajectory and only the most stalwart defenders of Putin continue to deny the trend line. Putin also did not inherit a strong democratic state when he became the president in 2000, but Russia remains a freer and more democratic than the then Soviet Union. But the actual democratic content of the formal institutions of Russian democracy has eroded considerably after Putin became the president. It is not just the substance but even the form of the current Russian political system appears authoritarian in nature.

The Soviet system had almost no public contestation though it had a universal suffrage. The great reforms of Gorbachev and Yeltsin were aimed primarily at eliminating the communist party regime and bringing in democracy to the Russian political system. By eliminating the ruling Communist Party's monopoly on representation and allowing a multiplicity of parties, associations, and freelance politicians to take the political stage, thus the authors of the new system rightfully put Russia on the democratizing path. But two decades after Gorbachev so boldly inaugurated the transformation process; Russia has significantly regressed and is by standard measures further removed from being governed democratically than it was at the beginning of the 1990's. We can cite the scores generated by Freedom House, the human rights watchdog group based in New York. It rates countries for political rights and civil liberties on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the most favorable score and 7 the least. In 1991, the year the Soviet Union collapsed and an independent Russian state was born, it assigned Russia 3 points on political rights and 3 on civil liberties but by the final year of Boris Yeltsin, 1999, those indicators had worsened to 4 and 5 respectively. In 2003, several years into the tenure of Vladimir Putin, they stood at 5 and 5. The 1991 scenario of Russia according to Freedom House was a "partly free" country but by 2003 it had slide down to a degree where it was to be a "not free" country (Herspring 2007: 37-38). Thus Putin's regime and his authoritarian policies undermined the development of Russia towards a democratic form of governance.

Russian democracy is best characterized as a “managed democracy”, where the elites pay lip-service to democratic norms while actually undermining them (Stone 2008: 4). Putin has not visibly gone against the democratic values but the constitution has become largely irrelevant, elections are not competitive, and the political opposition has been effectively sidelined. Putin has systematically weakened or destroyed every check on his power, while at the same time strengthening the state’s ability to violate the constitutional rights of the citizens. The Kremlin coined the term ‘managed democracy’ to describe the increasing centralization of power in Moscow, and thus instigated the reforms they argued were crucial to getting Russia back on track as a world super power. This claims of the Kremlin and the economic and social improvement brought by Putin led to the surge in his popularity. Putin’s main centrality of the managed democracy was characterized by a ‘verticality of power’ that ended at the Kremlin’s door.

The ‘managed democracy’ which became a central point with Putin’s presidency in Russia was an omnipotent executive branch, with all real power concentrated in the Kremlin. The configuration of power is highly rigid, with all decisions relegated to the system involving management of actors, institutions and the rule of the game. The placement of Putin’s close associates in the top spots at Russia’s largest enterprises, known internationally as cronyism, has been one of the defining characteristics of a ‘managed democracy’. Most of these bureaucrat-oligarchs are old friends of Putin, having worked with him in the security services or in St. Petersburg, where Putin served as the assistant to Mayor Anatoly Sobchak. Some other basic elements of Putin’s ‘managed democracy’ are, firstly, a strong presidential system of management at the expense of all other institutions and actors, including regional elites, both the houses of parliament and judiciary, secondly, the state control of the media and civil societies, which are used to shape public opinion through dosed and filtered messages, thirdly, controlled elections which no longer function as a mechanism of public participation, but serve to legitimize the decisions made by the elites.

The 1990’s disintegration of the Communist Soviet Union saw the mitigation of the communist system of rule and aspired to transform the Russian state towards a

democratic system. But this early aspirations for democracy in post Soviet Russia have not been realized by the standards of the Western democracy. Despite regular elections for both the parliament and the president this transition has been reversed. The failure is attributed to the personality of the president amongst other things. One of the principal reasons for this is that the elites which dominated the initial post-soviet period constructed a political system which effectively closed off entry to the mass of the population and to the civil society organizations. The instability problem with the system which Yeltsin created was known for its weak legislature, ineffective political parties and also a strong presidency based on a charismatic Yeltsin's presidency. Vladimir Putin tried to remedy this by building a more integrated and coherent power structure with himself as the core of the political system. But this was not more democratic than the one which he inherited from Boris Yeltsin. Thus the post Soviet democratic development of Russia depended on the contribution of the Russian elites. The collapse of the old Soviet Union ushered in new regimes which professed a commitment to democratic development in Russia. The West was also of the opinion that the Communist Soviet political system and the society was transforming towards a democratic system, but a decade later this aspirations were not realized and went the opposite direction.

4.2 Putin and the curbing of the independent Russian Media

The history of media during the time of the Soviet period went through a dark phase under the Communist Party rule. The media or the press was the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and any expression of dissent or opposition to the ruling Communist regime was ruthlessly suppressed. For a majority of Soviet journalists, however, obvious repression or censorship was not required as they came to understand the parameters of their actions and became self-censoring. It was only through Gorbachev's *glasnost* in 1986 that the condition of the media and press transformed into a more transformed and transparent medium of expression. Throughout the Soviet period, the print media dominated the scene with only two major dailies, *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, enjoying enormous circulations. But it decline gradually giving rise to local dailies and also to national television networks. Only two national television networks were in operation during the Soviet period and it was only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union that other channels were given the

right to run their own private networks. ORT and NTV were among the first television channels which were privately owned and which owed its arrival to the liberalization of the Soviet economy. Thus we can observe a booming of media industry during the time of Yeltsin. Alongside the expansion of national television coverage there has been a genuine explosion of local and regional cable stations, some six hundred having emerged since 1991 (Simon 2004: 171). This do not, however, represent a dramatic extension in the variety of popular opinion as most continue the Soviet tradition of self-censorship to avoid falling foul of the local authorities which controlled the distribution of licenses.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Russia has led to the springing up of various media centers both print and television channels. This had led to the enactment of various legal frameworks within the Constitution of the new Russia. The first element of media regulation in the post-communist era was the Law on the Mass Media of December 1991. This prefigured many of the media laws and even articles of the Constitution relating to the mass media. Most importantly it introduced the concept of freedom of the press, closely following the language of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and established the freedom to engage in media business and the right to own mass media. This was reinforced by Article 29 of the Russian Constitution, of December 1993 which guarantees free access to information and prohibits censorship, guarantees freedom of thought and guarantees free access to information by any legal means. There have been other laws since then but attempts to pass a law specifically on broadcasting have failed. Despite constitutional guarantees of media freedom, however, other factors play an influential role in determining whether it exists in practice. Firstly it was unclear on how the regional governors and the regions would have to regulate the media within their own territory. Secondly, the precarious economic levers can and have been used against troublesome media outlets. It is generally held that Yeltsin did not seek to obstruct or close down media which assumed an independent or oppositional stance. This has been attributed to several factors; they are, his conversion to liberal notions of freedom of the press during the perestroika period, the Russian state was weak in the immediate post communist period and hence it was incapable to impose a strict law against the media and finally that Yeltsin came to depend for political support on

precisely those forces which had gained control of much of Russia's television and press media.

Upon taking office in 2000, Putin was already intent upon reigning in Russia's media, of course was motivated by Yeltsin's experience in Chechnya. The media coverage of the first war in Chechnya forced Yeltsin to withdraw the Russian troops, as reports by the privately owned television network NTV helped to shape public opinion in much the same way as American media did during the Vietnam War (Stone 2008: 8). The Chechen war during the time of Yeltsin became so unpopular as a result of media report on the horrors of the war to the Russian people and that his re-election became unpredictable because of the media reports about the war. Having no intention of his policies to be dictated by the public opinion, Putin knew he had to control the media before he even became the president. Putin's aspiration to restrain the media grew during his own presidential campaign. In late 1999, his associate Boris Berezovsky, a businessman, media tycoon, and political operator, used his television channel, ORT, to destroy Putin's political rivals. A sophisticated covering campaign significantly reduced the opposition's popularity, thus clearing Putin's path to the presidency. Although Berezovsky had worked on Putin's behalf, campaigning for his elections, the experience left Putin uneasy and resulted in an increase in, his desire to control the media. The media as a tool was with significant power which would exist under the Kremlin control rather than in the hands of business tycoons with wavering loyalties.

In March 2007, Putin merged the Federal Service for Telecom Supervision (*Rosvyznadzor*) and the Federal Mass Media and Cultural Heritage Oversight Service (*Rosokhrankultura*), into a new Federal Service for Supervision of Mass Media, Telecommunications, and for Protection of Cultural Heritage in order to improve the efficiency of the government's activities for cultural heritage protection and to eliminate the inter-departmental contradictions and administrative barriers en route to an IT advance in Russia and ease the system of their control (Blank 2008: 18-19). The consequences of this new organization's establishment were extremely threatening. Moreover, the service will keep the personal data register of Russia's citizens. So the matter at stake revolves around the creation of a media mega-controller. These steps taken in coordination with increased governmental backing for

hacker attacks, denial of service, and, in general, activities consonant with information warfare against opposition forums of electronic communication raise fears of a general totalitarian crackdown on all media, both traditional and electronic.

The state's relationship with the media was also tightened in 2000 through the adoption of a 'Doctrine of Information Security' by the Security Council, the president's foremost policy-making body. This said that only the state can provide reliable information and that state-owned media should therefore dominate the information market (Simon 2004: 181). Gusinsky's NTV presented the war on Chechnya critical to the government's actions and also presented the picture of 1999 election in a very balanced way. But the NTV had a substantial debt towards the state which attracted the attention of the Kremlin. This particular debt issue provided the leverage for the Gazprom-Media group, linked to the Kremlin and with 46% of NTV's shares, to move to have the station closed. Thus Gusinsky came under the radar of the Kremlin power and was forced to flee the country for his financial irregularities. In April 2001, NTV was closed down which was followed shortly by the closing down of two other parts of Gusinsky's media, the daily newspaper, *Segodnya*, and the weekly magazine, *Itogi*. NTV journalists either stayed on to work for the new pro-government station which replaced NTV or migrated to the Berezovsky funded TV-6 media station.

Despite his early support to Putin, Berezovsky was also forced out of the country as he owned one of the most influential media centers. The NTV journalists transformed the TV-6 station as Russia's only critical national television station. Unsurprisingly, it also soon attracted the attention of the Kremlin and its supporters. As with NTV, the assault when it came was couched in economic terms. The Moscow arbitration court took the decision to liquidate TV-6 in September 2001, ironically just after it became known that the station had made a profit in the previous financial year, which was clearly a political decision. The attention of Kremlin again fell on TV-S which had become critical to the Kremlin as a result of the pouring in of the NTV journalists. In the early months of 2003 there was a battle for control of TV-S between two shareholders' groups led by the oligarchs, privatization architect Anatoly Chubais and aluminum magnate Oleg Deripaska. In June, the media ministry issued a decree pulling the plug on TV-S, claiming that the station owed 8 million dollars to

Moscow's main cable network, had a consequent financial, staffing and management crisis, and that the decision had been taken to protect viewers' interests (Simon 2004: 183) and was immediately replaced by a sports channel. In its haste to remove TV-S from the airwaves, the media ministry appears to have acted outside the law, since the latter requires a court order to close a TV station and that the new contracts for its replacement had to be put out to tender. The damage had, however, been done and Russia no longer has a television station critical of the Kremlin's policies. The Russian regulators have also forced more than 60 radio stations to stop broadcasting news reports produced by *Voice of America* and *Radio Liberty* in 2006 (Gallina 2007: 11). Officials threatened to cancel the renewal of the offending radio stations' broadcasting licenses as a consequence and hence most of the Russian stations stopped re-broadcasting these news reports.

While the television networks have been the centerpiece of the Kremlin campaign against the media, state efforts did not end there. Other media venues, primarily newspapers, but also radio stations, had suffered from state pressure that often involved far uglier tactics than those used against the television networks. Journalists examining prohibited subjects in-depth have found themselves attacked by thugs later shown to have links with the FSB. The Kremlin control and persecution of the press media have resulted in news that is predictably favorable to political elites. Coverage of sensitive issues is thoroughly filtered to ensure that the picture of Russian life delivered to the viewers is not politically disturbing or provocative. An example can be given about the sinking of the Kursk submarine which was the result of defective torpedo explosion. The media in this context tried to expose the government's failures, but Putin lashed out on them blaming them for subverting the Russian army and the navy. Similarly, the Russian press tried to investigate the events surrounding the Nordost hostage crisis. In their attempt, they faced an onslaught of accusations from Putin, implying their sarcastic and ulterior motives for profit; he claimed that they were taking advantage of the tragedy, in order to attract more public attention and thus more advertising money. Shortly afterward, the top manager Boris Jordan of NTV, whose coverage especially enraged Putin, was replaced. His replacement, however, was a loyal director to Putin, to whom the Kremlin's instructions were a much higher priority than the ethics of the journalistic profession

(Stone 2008: 11). Public response to the tragedy of the hostage crisis was thus, as desired by the Kremlin, extremely limited.

In the World Press Freedom Index of 2007 Russia is 144th out of 169 countries. Russia is among the three countries in the world in which press freedom has deteriorated most over the past five years. There are many cases of journalism harassment and since Vladimir Putin became president in March 2000 more than twenty journalists have been killed (Spronken 2007: 1). Under Putin the state openly consolidated its control over the print media. Print media came under attack in 2006 when major newspapers such as *Novaya Gazeta*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and *Komersant* were taken over by Kremlin-friendly companies. A similar trend occurred in cyberspace, with a Kremlin take over of the Russian-language blogging website *Live Journal*. Many Russian journalists are of the opinion that the government control over media is comparable to that of the former Soviet Union, including the use of propaganda techniques similar to those employed under Communism. Another trend illustrates the fact that the Russian media is not free and independent. Being a journalist in Russia is a dangerous job. Every year Russian journalists who investigate and write about topics that expose or compromise the government's policies, such as the war in Chechnya or government-related corruption and crime are threatened, imprisoned, or killed. Anna Politkovskaya, *Novaya Gazeta*'s journalist, a fierce critic of Putin, was forced into exile in Austria in October 2001 after she started receiving death threats related to her reporting on war crimes in Chechnya. A Russian military officer who allegedly was the author of the threats was cleared of all charges. Politkovskaya later courageously returned to Russia to continue her reporting on Chechnya, but still faced unrelenting intimidation. In 2004, on her way to Beslan to investigate the school siege situation, she was poisoned, but survived. But her life was ended when she was assassinated in her house on 7 October 2006 (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007: 216-217).

The reigning over the media can be also seen in the Beslan hostage crisis which is considered as one of the most horrible terrorist attacks. The Beslan hostage crisis claimed more than three hundred people mostly children. The media coverage stopped on the third day when the government's operation ended and there were no accounts of the survivors and even testimonies from those who lost their loved ones.

The reporters were not allowed to question the government officials on the issue leaving unanswered rumors swirling. To continue the trend of silence, Putin's yearly press conference in late 2004 again avoided the issue of Beslan altogether. And in an extremely recent application of the state's media control, the Kremlin completely covered the state's economic conditions in September 2008; the rapidly spreading global financial crisis crippled Russia's largest stock market, MICEX. The index lost two thirds of its value in just over two weeks. But most Russians had little idea of the extent to which the global financial crisis had affected their nation, since the TV networks had failed to publicize the stock market collapse (Stone 2008: 36). Amazingly, the networks were able to avoid reporting that government officials had halted trading multiple times, in hopeless attempts to prevent panic. Instead, Kremlin-friendly TV commentators focused on America's economic woes, emphasizing Russia's alleged toughness to western financial problems. Thus the future of the media seems bound up with the presentation of favorable images of the president and the securing of compliant majorities in the parliament, and this is not a very happy prospect for Russian democracy.

4.3 Political parties and the emergence of a pro-Putin United Russia Party

Control of the media has served as the most important check on electoral competition, but it has been accompanied by legislative reforms that restricted political parties from participating in national and regional elections. One of the most important constitutional elements of the democratizing reforms in Russia following the breakdown of the communist regime was the effort to enshrine the principle of separation of powers. The bodies of the executive, legislature and the judiciary were separated. The reason this provision is so significant is that, under the Soviet system, constitutional theory held that state power was fused in the Soviets and that there could be no separation of power between the branches of the state power, all powers were vested in the Soviets which meant that the state power was unitary. All state power though exercised through multiple instruments, derived from a single source and served a common purpose. In reality the power was exercised by the Soviets but by the Communist Party in the name of the Soviets. But the party and state officials adhered to the doctrine of the unity of state power, which was in itself a legacy of the Tsarist absolutism. This was the reason why the separation of power was a

revolutionary break in the traditional model of Russian state power. During the time of Yeltsin, the weakness of the central power and in particular the Executive and the weakness and division among the political elites allowed the opposition to exert pressure on the government through the parliament. It also allowed the Constitutional Court a degree of independence in adjudicating disputes arising between the other branches of the state. The media also played a role as an opposition to the Kremlin and its policies.

Theorist of democracy tends to be preoccupied with formal political rights. On this plane, it would be inaccurate to say that political contestation has been systematically curtailed in post-soviet Russia. Legal and institutional curbs on rights to organize and compete have been rare, even on the austere Putin's watch, and have mostly been limited to the rules covering the formation and acceleration of political parties. Informal infringements on the pursuit of political points of view are more troubling. The most damaging have of course, applied to the mass media, national television above all, and to the funding of opposition parties and non-governmental organizations by members of Russia's emerging business elite. When Putin became the president, he achieved to control both the chambers of the Federal Assembly which is made up of, the lower chamber called the State Duma and the upper chamber called the Federation Council. In the lower chamber Putin's political party, the United Russia dominates on the basis of a two-third majority of the seats under them. In the Federation Council, the Kremlin's managers have seen to it that only individuals loyal to the president are selected as members of the chamber and potential opponents are co-opted or intimidated (Remington 2007: 54). Similarly, the independence of the judiciary has been compromised by the overwhelming concentration of administrative power in the hands of the presidential administration, so that no significant measure of the president is blocked by the courts. Indeed, like the parliament, the courts have become instruments for the endorsement of presidential prerogatives and the suppression of political opposition. Thus under Putin the Russian political system evolved from one in which super-presidentialism tended to undermine incentives for politicians to form competing programmatic parties to one in which politicians have a strong incentive to join the dominant pro-Kremlin party, the United Russia. Putin's team created a like situation through a succession of skillful maneuvers. They benefited from an increase in the world oil prices that began almost at the same time

when Putin became president, and by Putin's popularity, which, like the oil prices, rose to and remained at extremely high levels.

When Putin got elected to the Russian presidency, he adopted some measures which ultimately undermined the parliament and the political parties of the state. It also led to the emergence of a single dominant party which sidelined the emergence of other political parties. Putin worked to create a loyal majority in the Duma that would ensure passage of any legislation he proposed. He was relatively successful in the Third Duma (2000-2003), when the pro-Putin parliamentary faction Unity formed an alliance with three other factions, and gained control over the agendas. He was spectacularly successful with the Fourth Duma, which convened following the December 2003 parliamentary election (Remington 2007: 55). He also took control of the Federation Council through a reform which was enacted in the summer of 2000, which removed the regional governors from the chamber and replaced them with permanent representatives appointed by the regional governors and the legislators, which ensured the faithfulness of the new members to the president. Putin also moved to make the United Russia as the dominant party throughout the political system, controlling not only the State Duma in Moscow but regional parliaments as well. He did this through a series of legislative acts making it more difficult for other quasi-party structure to enter the political arena, by pressuring officials at all levels to affiliate with United Russia, and by dividing and diverting the followings of rival parties, such as the Communists. This led to the complete majority of the United Russia in the Duma and did not need any ally to have complete control over the agendas in the Duma. The president also created some parallel parliaments which diverted the policy-making debates from the parliament itself to alternative arenas, which the president can consult at his pleasure. Among these parallel structures are the State Council, the Public Chamber and the Council for the Realization of Priority National Projects.

Putin's early days in office was aimed to institute a more orderly process for developing policy than had been the case under Yeltsin. The loose power of the executive under Yeltsin resulted in many interests, both inside the state's official bodies and outside them, initiated policies. For instance, on occasion well-connected business tycoons pushed through presidential decrees or pieces of legislation, and

often presidential incentives were successfully blocked by powerful anonymous resistance from within the government bureaucracy. But unlike Yeltsin, Putin demanded a more centralized approach to developmental policies and through this he initiated far reaching agendas of economic and institutional reforms. Putin's parliamentary managers tried to make the Unity Party, a dominant party in the Russian political system. The next step was therefore to swallow the Fatherland Party, All Russia Coalition (known as OVR, for its Russian initials), and to become, under the new name the United Russia. Eventually in Sept. 2001, Primakov the leader of the OVR in the Duma was persuaded to step down as the opposition leader. The OVR faction agreed formally to join the Unity Party in a coalition in the Duma, and its external party organization led by Luzkhov agreed to merge into unity to form the electoral party, the United Russia. The desire to create a dominant party, one that would reliably command majorities in legislative voting in the Duma and in regional legislatures and that would not have to fear or negotiate with the opposition parties, led the Kremlin to sponsor a series of legislative measures that made it difficult for governors' machines or big business to sponsor candidates and further squeeze small parties to the margins of electoral system.

Putin's drive to stabilize the Russian system has thus involved measures that have decreased the room for independent political forces to operate. One important measure that may run counter to this is the Law on Political Parties supported by Putin and adopted by the Duma on 21 June 2001. This Law mandated that a party must have at least 10,000 members, have branches in more than 50 percent of members of the federation, and must participate regularly in elections. Parties gaining at least 3 percent of the vote in Duma elections will receive an annual subsidy from the state in line with their share of the vote. Only those parties were allowed to participate in elections, but if a party fails to take part in at least one election each five years, it was to be deregistered. The political parties also come under a wide range of monitoring by state authorities. These provisions created the basis for promoting the development of parties with national constituencies rooted in local regions. However this will also mean a reduction in the number of parties and the demise of purely regional parties. But if enforced properly, such measures should strengthen the party system. Ultimately the effect of this law will depend upon how extensive the monitoring is and whether the payment of a state subsidy has any strings attached. On

both of these grounds, party independence could be undercut. Thus Putin was clearly trying to restructure the system of rule he inherited from Yeltsin and to give a much greater sense of stability and predictability (Gill 2002: 189). Additionally, each regional office of the political parties must have at least 100 members. The law had the effect of disqualifying the vast majority of Russia's 188 political parties that existed at the time from competing in elections (Stone 2008: 26). Therefore, although they reinforce the advantage of larger parties over the smaller ones generally, they will be particularly beneficial for United Russia because it is the party that can dominate elections at both the regional and the federal levels. The effectiveness of the Kremlin's party-building strategy was demonstrated by United Russia's victory in the 2003 electoral campaign of the Duma. The United Russia with an objective to achieve clear majority, the Kremlin put enormous pressure on regional officials to support United Russia and in some cases to join it. The Kremlin ensured a strong showing for United Russia in the single-member district races, where United Russia-affiliated candidates won almost half the seats and many independent candidates joined the party after winning the elections. Ultimately, so strong was United Russia's magnetic attraction in the Duma that more than 80% of the single member district deputies ended up joining the United Russia faction.

In 2003, Putin again signed the federal electoral law 'on fundamental guarantees of electoral rights', this redefined the concept of 'electoral bloc' which meant an alliance of one or several political parties. The legislation restricted the formation of new electoral blocs and prohibited more than three member parties from forming a bloc. This was a stumbling block for the smaller parties which relied heavily on bloc formation for gaining a voice in the Duma. By July 2006, Putin also signed a law banning political parties from nominating non-members to office. The law prohibited any serving State Duma deputy from changing party affiliations once in office. A series of amendments enacted in the same legislation also included the elimination of the options of "against all" on the ballot paper. Before the voters had the option to use this option through which they expressed their dissatisfaction with the elections or candidates. On December 6, the same year, Putin signed another law "On Amendments to the Federal Law on the Basic Guarantees of Russian Federation Civil Procedural Code," which added new laws to prohibit those candidates who were unwanted in the elections. The election commission reacquired the right to eliminate

from the party list those candidates who have provided incomplete or false information about themselves. Additionally, all candidates and parties were restrained from criticizing their opponents through the media. Those candidates who had a criminal record were also barred from running any elective office. The concept of criminal activity is widely defined, allowing for significant latitude on the part of courts and law enforcement agencies to interpret the law. Significantly, the law also abolished the minimum turnout requirement for elections at every level. Previously the standard minimal requirement was 20 percent for local elections and 50 percent for federal races (Stone 2008: 27). By this law it was mentioned that any election result will be considered valid even if no one turns out except the members of the electoral commission.

Russia's lack of political pluralism has inhibited the parliament from taking deep roots in the society. Due to the lack of the attachment of the Russian people with any political parties, except a few communist, the political parties remained weak and vulnerable from the manipulation of the government. Putin's political reforms further deteriorated the condition of the Russian political system. In 2003 election only four political parties (United Russia, the Communist party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Motherland) passed the 5% threshold for party list seats. However, politicians from 8 others parties won 32 seats, and independent politicians won 68, for a total of 100 out of 450 total seats. The abolition of single-member districts dramatically changed the nature of opposition politics. In 2007, the same four parties were the only ones to pass the now 7% threshold for list representation. But this time, there was no room left for any independent or minor party politicians (Stone 2008: 23). This led to the ousting of the parties which were against Putin's party, all parties associated with liberal opponents of Putin, Grigory Yavlinsky's Yabloko, Boris Nemtsov's Union of Right Forces, Garry Kasparov and Mihail Kasyanov's Other Russia, fell short of the 7% threshold and thus, as a result of new Kremlin law, have no voice in today's Duma. Between United Russia and the Kremlin-backed spin-off Just Russia, the Kremlin controls 78% of the seats in the State Duma, giving it a super majority large enough to amend even the constitution (Stone 2008: 36).

4.4 The Civil Societies under Putin

Historically, the strong Russian state has always dominated over a weakly consolidated society. The centralization of the state power throughout Putin's regime is nothing but a continuation of the Russian tradition of a strong state. The state is ubiquitous, encroaching upon public territory and crowding genuine public initiatives uncontrolled by its operatives. Having sidelined the media, big business and political parties, the state under Putin has started to engage in expanding their control over Russia's already weak NGOs and civil societies. In keeping with the objective, the Kremlin first decided to free independent NGOs to the margins of the society by devoting massive resources to the creation of state sponsored and state controlled NGOs. President Putin's regime has been characterized by consolidation of powers in the hands of the federal executive and a growing erosion of democratic checks and balances. Putin's political party, the United Russia dominates the state Duma and routinely passes legislation proposed by the government, while political opposition parties have been marginalized into obscurity. As discussed earlier all the major television channels are controlled by Kremlin, and the circulation of remaining independent newspapers is negligible, as a result of which there is hardly any space for open media debate about the political course of the country. The President and his administration also have a great influence on the judiciary and thus the courts do not provide any effective check on the government's powers regarding the checks on the NGOs.

During the period in office of President Vladimir Putin, NGOs have come under growing attack from the state in Russia, with the government officials exploiting security concerns to challenge the credibility of independent NGOs. In particular, human rights, pro-democracy and environmental groups, which are almost completely dependent on foreign funding, have been accused of undermining the national interests of the state. Security issues were also used to justify the adoption in late 2005 of a new law that introduced significant changes to existing legislation on NGOs, the so called NGO law. Despite strong criticism both at home and abroad, Putin signed this law in January 2006, and three months later, it entered into force. More than eighteen months after the entry into force of the law, it is clear that it has had a far reaching, adverse impact on the working of Russia's civil societies. Since

then in October 2006, the government ordered the closure of the Western-funded Russian-Chechen Friendship Society, which had been documenting cases of war crimes perpetrated against civilians in Chechnya. The government also twice refused to register a Dutch-funded non-governmental organization, Russian Justice Initiative on technical grounds. It appears that Putin is recreating the communist-era totalitarian system, in which only organizations created or tolerated by the state are allowed to exist (Rosefielde and Hlouskova 2007: 217). President Putin set the tone in his 2004 state-of-the nation address, in which he claimed that some NGOs are primarily seeking to please their donors because “they cannot bite the hand that feeds them.” Similar arguments have since been frequently used by government officials and have contributed to growing vulnerability of NGOs to harassment by authorities, such as punitive tax measures, arbitrary searches of office premises, and arrest and prosecution of activists. Again in the words of Putin, the key objective of the law was to prevent foreign-funded NGOs from carrying out “what amounts to political activity” in Russia. Whether these organizations want it or not, they become an instrument in the hands of foreign states that use them to achieve their own political objectives (Weir 2007: 2).

While not all problematic provisions may have been applied so far, the law has proven to be open to arbitrary and selective implementation, and it has been used to impede, restrict and punish legitimate NGO activities. It has seriously constrained the day-to-day work of NGO throughout the country and contributed to growing insecurity and vulnerability. New laws were also formulated to deny NGOs registration as legal entities were introduced. As a result the process of registering a new NGO is now characterized by a greater level of stress and uncertainty than it was previously, and a growing number of organizations have been refused registration on discretionary grounds, such as objections to the wording of their charters! For example, numerous foreign NGOs missed an October 2006 deadline for compulsory re-registration largely because of technical and bureaucratic obstacles created by registration authorities, and several well-known foreign organizations were forced to suspend their activities while their applications were still pending. At the same time as the situation of independent NGOs has gradually worsened up to the point of the adoption of the NGO law, the Putin administration has taken steps towards creating a “managed civil society”. In particular, it has encouraged the growth of pro-Kremlin

youth groups, some of which have aggressively campaigned against opponents to the regime and sought to disturb anti-governmental protests. The initiative of President Putin to create the Public Chamber, a consultant body consisting of appointed members of NGOs that has been described in official expression as the “genuine” representative of Russian civil society, has also been criticized as an attempt to weaken the position of independent NGOs. Its official role was to serve as the oversight consultative body on legislation and the activities of the parliament, and to monitor federal and regional administrative bodies. The Public Chamber had 126 members, all of whom are to be individuals with widely recognizable personalities who are neither politicians nor business people. One third of the members are selected by the president, one third by the civil society organizations and the other third by the already selected members.

According to the new provisions, the NGOs were required to submit lengthy and detailed accounts about their activities and funding to registration authorities. They also had to invest time and money in order to complete their paperwork; this led to the unnecessary draining of wealth from the NGOs. As many as 60% of all officially registered NGOs failed to hand in reports about their activities in 2007 (Report on Human Rights and Russian NGOs by Moscow Helsinki Group and Human Rights without frontiers, 2008). Registration authorities have been granted with great powers to supervise and review the activities of the NGOs which have led to lengthy and intrusive inspections, in the course of which their internal dealings have been closely scrutinized. These inspections go on for months and in some cases these reviews and inspections are taken up just for the specific purpose to put unexpected pressure on the NGOs. Following inspections, NGOs have frequently received warnings for minor, technical violations, which have had an intimidating impact on their activities by placing them at the risk of harsher sanctions in the event of any further violations. The grounds on which NGOs can be sanctioned were significantly expanded, and since the entry into force of the law, registration authorities have made active use of their powers to take disciplinary action against NGOs. In particular, they have warned or brought claims in court requesting termination of the legal status of thousands of NGOs for alleged failures to submit required information regarding their activities. Courts have helped turn de-registration into a repressive mechanism by approving requests to terminate the legal status of NGOs also in cases when

organizations are known to be actively operating and when no evidence has been presented to support allegations of reporting violations. In several cases, de-registration requests have been brought against NGOs critical of official policies, raising concern about politically motivated implementation. Given the increasing misuse of the government's vaguely worded anti-extremism legislation to punish opponents and critics of the regime, this provision further suppresses legitimate NGO activities.

The NGO law significantly expanded the powers of registration authorities to take punitive measures against NGOs, without elaborating on when such powers should be used. Registration authorities may issue warnings to organizations that are found to violate the law or act contrary to their missions and state a timeframe within which violations should be remedied. If the organizations in question do not comply with the warnings they faced suspension of their activities and eventually be closed down. According to new provisions established by the NGO law, registration authorities may also, on their own initiative and without any court order, remove branches and representative offices of foreign NGOs from the register of legally registered organizations for non-compliance with statutory goals. As noted above, the law does not outline any criteria for when an organization should be considered to have acted contrary to its mission, which creates the risk of subjective interpretation. After the entry into force of the NGO law, registration authorities have made active use of their powers to initiate sanctions against NGOs. As noted above, many organizations have been warned for acting contrary to their charters or Russian law in connection with reviews of their activities. Such warnings have had an intimidating impact on the working of NGOs because any further violations found on the part of these organizations may result in harsher sanctions, including closure. The NGO law also prohibits certain categories from joining as well as founding any NGOs, including individuals who have been found by court to be involved in "extremist" activities. These provisions are problematic because the country's anti-extremism law is vaguely worded and open to arbitrary implementation. This has been made to silence the opponents and the critics of official policies.

4.5 Youth Movements in Putin's Russia

About half a dozen government-friendly youth movements have emerged in Russia in the past few years. These groups have managed to bring young people onto the streets in groups and mobilize them for their political ends. Their attraction is remarkable, given that the majority of Russian youth are considered to be politically disinterested and indifferent. The Russian government officials played a critical role in the establishment of *Nashi* (Ours), which replaced the pro-Putin youth group Marching Together. Although nominally 'non-partisan', *Nashi* was explicitly pro-Putin and key government officials were the chief architect of the movement. The leaders of the movement called it a spontaneous outpouring of support for the Kremlin by Russia's patriotic youth but was in reality heavily bankrolled by businesses which were either pro-government or those who were afraid of the onslaughts of the government if they did not sponsor the movement. The movement expanded rapidly and by late 2007 grew to some 100,000 members, holding summer camps to indoctrinate and train members (Ambrosio 2009: 62). It also held series of protests against the supposed enemies of Russia, including opposition groups, Great Britain and other Western countries. Moreover, its members served as de facto election monitors during the Moscow Duma elections in the fall 2005, which was the first election after the success of the Orange Revolution.

To understand the true nature of the movement, it is necessary to understand its aims, how it characterizes its enemies, and how it conceives itself. It stem from the need to organize Russia's young people in defense of the political status quo. Although the government essentially controlled all the levers of the power in the society, institutions, electoral system, army, media, etc. but it did not control 'streets' which was a promising avenue for public protest against the state. Thus any viable opposition to the regime had to come from the streets, in a manner similar to the prior color revolutions. These protests would most likely be led by young people who, as in previous cases, were politically motivated, pro-democratic, and idealistic enough to challenge the government. In effect, whoever controlled the streets potentially controlled the future of Russia. It was therefore imperative that the government have a strong presence amongst the young in order to co-opt them.

Nashi garnered publicity through headline-grabbing events and mass rallies that were staged in a media-friendly format and attended by an average of several tens of thousands of young people. Their activities so far have been directed mainly at the political opposition in Russia, but *Nashi* has not shied away from protests against Western countries either. Considerable evidence suggests that *Nashi* was founded by political strategists advising the then president Putin in response to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in order to foster “anti-orange” sentiment on Russia’s streets and to prevent possible mass mobilization against the political regime ahead of the Duma and presidential elections of 2007/2008. While the first Kremlin-friendly youth organizations had no definable agenda beyond a strong fixation on Putin’s personality, and instead were noted for erratic stunts that were occasionally highly controversial within Russian society, *Nashi* was strongly oriented towards battling the “orange threat” and designed to create, as quickly as possible, an “anti-orange” sentiment among Russia’s younger generation. To this end, the organization was bolstered with a patriotic-nationalist ideology that guides its program. *Nashi* supports Putin’s political goals and regards itself in line with Surkov’s idiom and purpose as a bulwark against all who might conspire against these objectives. In its manifesto, the organization refers to an unpatriotic coalition of oligarchs, anti-Semites, Nazis, and liberals who want Russia to descend into crisis and who must therefore be stopped. While the maneuvering space of groups criticizing the government was successively cut back by the Putin administration, the government-friendly youth organization has evidently been given easy access to state resources.

4.6 Super presidential system under Putin

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of a new state, Russia has become some what like a super presidential authoritarian polity under Yeltsin and more so under Putin. Two reasons can be given for this particular development in the Russian political transition, first, following the elections of 1993 conflict between the legislature and the president, the political trajectory has been characterized by increasing centralization, the growth of executive power, the corresponding decline in the legislature’s influence, and the steady erosion of human and civil rights and freedoms. It was only two years after the collapse that the presidency emerged as the pivotal political institution in Russia with the incumbent

acquiring extraordinary powers. The second reason was the 1996 presidential election which demonstrated the already existing limitations on political competition and the restrictions on the print and especially the broadcast media and, following the contest, the further rise of the presidential administration and the growing influence of oligarchs in it. The nature of this super presidency in the Russian politics emerged with the winning of the presidential election by Yeltsin after the Soviet collapse. From the very beginning Yeltsin recognized the importance of having a political apparatus under his own direct control as a means both of exercising and projecting his power and authority. The president was also intent on consolidating control in his hands and not leaving himself vulnerable to pressure from any direction, including potential opponents in the legislature.

From the outset Yeltsin was seen as having a central role to play in the implementation of the reforms, with his legitimacy being vital for the passage of those reforms against possible popular oppositions. Utilizing this perception, Yeltsin set about strengthening the position of the presidency. By the end of 1991 Yeltsin gained assent from the Supreme Soviet for extraordinary powers for a year to appoint ministers and issue decrees designed to speed the transition to a market economy. He was also able to appoint provincial heads of administration, in theory responsible to the president, which promised to sideline the provincial soviets and thereby create a vertical power structure under presidential control. But most important was the way in which he sought to build up the presidential office and to concentrate under its control the principal arms of the security apparatus. For this end Yeltsin initiated in December 1991 to create by a presidential decree a single Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs which would encompass all of the existing police and security agencies, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Gill 2002: 175) . However this measure was invalidated by the Constitutional Court. Yeltsin then moved to re-establish the Security Council and it gained considerable unlimited rights over the executive agencies and its decisions became mandatory. The broad question of security and its supervision by the presidential administration was effectively delivered into the hands of the President. This means the power of coercion was in the hands of the president and therefore was used as a means for the suppression of any opposition. Thus the parameters of politics which were laid out in the initial period of post-Soviet independence were followed by the authoritarian politics of Boris Yeltsin. He

continued to project a role for himself as being above politics, the president for all of Russia with no partisan entanglements.

In a move that had direct implications for the type of presidency he was to establish, Yeltsin sought to rest upon charismatic notions of authority from the time he became President of Russia in June 1991. He sought to generate a charismatic tie between himself and the Russian people, claiming to rule on their behalf and in their interests, and to be able to interact with them directly rather than being mediated through any intervening institutions. In reality, the attempt to create a charismatic sense of legitimacy for the president was anti-institutional and antithetical to any attempt to restrain the president through civil society-based organization. The charismatic relationship implied that the supposed followers, in this case the Russian people, should sink their capacity for independent judgment into commitment to the leader, accepting what he said and doing as he instructed (Gill 2010: 67). The charismatic presidency left no room for the notions of responsibility to the people. Indeed, while encouraging some types of popular mobilization, Yeltsin also acted consistently to structure and restrict access into that system for autonomous political organization. The insulation from popular control that such a notion of the presidency involved was reinforced institutionally by the growth of the presidential administration. From the time he became president of Russia, Yeltsin was intent on building a personal apparatus staffed by people who were personally loyal to him. In a situation where the president wanted to expand his power and where neither the bureaucracy nor the legislature was able to exercise effective power, the scope and power of the presidential administration expanded rapidly and it expanded so much that by early 1992 there were public fears that it might even displace the government. Although such fears were unfounded, the presidential administration became an important instrument of presidential power, in practice unrestrained by either the constitution or any other organ of the state. As the main executor of the president's will and a principal institution sustaining him, the administration was a major pillar of the presidency and gave him significant practical autonomy from the other parts of the political system and from the electorate.

The constitution of the Russian state also gives vast powers to the presidents which are approved by the Constitutional Courts. The provisions of the presidency in

the constitution were partly formulated in response to the needs and interests of President Yeltsin. One of the most important powers of the Russian president is that it can veto any legislative acts and has a vaguely defined right to adopt his own legislative measures. The powers of the Russian president rest on a formally strong democratic legitimation; he is elected for a four-year term by the people, and has the right to be re-elected for a second time. The role of the president in the newly independent Russian state is quite controversial, but in constitutional practice it seems to have two fold; the first role is that of the head of state, as personification of the nation and as guardian of the constitution. As such, the president stands above the triad of legislative, executive and judicial power and has a coordinating and controlling power. Acting in this sense as head of the state, he or she is the guarantor of basic human rights and liberties, but also of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state (Art. 80, Parts II and III) (Fogelklou 2008: 188). The president can also dismiss the prime minister at any given time (Art, 117, Part II). President Yeltsin dismissed four prime ministers in less than two years. All other members of the government besides the prime minister are appointed by the president on proposal from the Prime Minister (Art, 111, Part I).

The ministries and institutions which involve the use of security and the armed forces are also directly under the supervision of the president. In order to fulfill the numerous functions of the president, a large presidential administration has been established. Putin has already made some changes in the relevant legislation which is based on decrees from the president and his predecessor but with a tiny constitutional support. The officials of the Security Council are included in the presidential administration. The Security Council, as an independent consultative body with coordinating and controlling functions, conducts a uniform security policy, domestic and foreign policy and emergency situations are under its control. This body is only mentioned in the constitution, and has been established through presidential decrees. Thus given the above normative and organizational power to the government and in particular of the prime minister, the government seems to enjoy a lesser power as compared to the president.

The changes in the Russian constitutional order implemented by president Vladimir Putin, which have aroused mixed feelings in Russia and abroad, must be

seen against the background of the lack of effectiveness of the federal norms in various regions and republics and the lack of effectiveness of the state in general. His attempts to curtail the powers of financial oligarchs, although partially selective, must be understood as a way of dealing with lobbying groups and with a few important corrupt officials. The term *diktatura zakona* (dictatorship of law) which Putin used, perhaps as a paradox, shows the ambiguity of the situation. Putin's implementation of his ideas made the state emerge as the main instrument for his strategies. In reality he changed the constitution, without changing it formally, and the constitution did not consequently form a constraint for his activities. Without feeling any checks from the constitution, he thus established through presidential decrees a new federal organ, the State Council, and has created seven presidential districts as representatives of his administration. He has also made several other centralizing measures, which would make it possible for him to dismiss governors when they have committed grave violations of the legal order (Fogelklou 2008: 193).

Another pillar upon which the super-presidential system rested was the manipulation of the electoral process by the people in power. Elections were not prevented from taking place at the national level and Yeltsin also rejected the pressure to cancel the presidential election of 1996, but when the election proceeded it was certainly not a fair one. A heavily biased media in the 1995 election and the 1996 presidential election, and the massive overspending by Yeltsin's supporters in the latter, undermined the fairness of both the polls. Similarly, in the 1990 legislative election and the 2000 presidential poll, the wave was obviously favorable to the incumbent. Yeltsin's surprise resignation which propelled Putin into the acting presidency, thereby giving him the advantage of incumbency, and the bringing forward of the election date, thereby disadvantaging the opposition forces was a classic case of manipulating the electoral process. The opposition's capacity to bring about a change in the government was destroyed as the integrity of the presidential poll was violated. Given the subordinate constitutional position occupied by the legislature, even if the opposition parties had been able to consolidate a majority in the state Duma, their role could only have been an attempted blocking one. Such manipulation of the electoral process was one of the reasons for the failure of the emergence of strong civil societies as in a democratic government. Thus political parties remained weak, in part because of actions taken by the president and those

around him. Yeltsin's refusal to associate himself with a political party also undermined the prospects for party building in the new Russia.

The capacity for parties to develop as powerful entities was undermined further by the conflict between Yeltsin and the legislature in 1993. By rejecting the popular mandate possessed by the members of the Soviet-era legislature, by refusing to involve the general public at large in the resolution of the dispute with the Supreme Soviet through the mechanism of a referendum with a question that would have resolved the issue, Yeltsin effectively sought to sideline the main institutional form through which civil society normally exercises control over its rulers. The effect of this was reinforced by the constitutionally inferior position given to the new legislative structure in the Constitution introduced in 1993. The most important party during the 1990's was the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the leading lineal descendant of the old ruling Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Gill 2006: 70). However, this party was the body against which much of the electoral manipulation noted above was chiefly directed. All kinds of political barriers were put in the party's endeavor to become a major political party.

4.7 The vertical power under Putin

The death of the Russian federation was accompanied by the systematic destruction of all the checks and balances on the executive power from other branches of the government. Putin made such legislation which curtailed the opposition parties and independent politicians from winning the seats in the state Duma. The state Duma was like a rubber stamp for the executive decrees. The judiciary was also undermined as an independent political force which did not raised any objections to Putin's objective of raising a political system centered on him. By December 2002, Putin passed the law "On the Election of Deputies of the State Duma", which was the second installment in Putin's reform package after weakening the Federation Council, the upper house of the parliament. The new law altered the manner in which the deputies would be elected to the lower house of the parliament, which had served as the last mainstay for the opposition parties and candidates. Before the passing of the law, all the 450 members of the state Duma had been elected from single-member districts, but the new law made half of the deputies i.e. 225, would be voted on via

proportional representation from the party lists. Proportional representation became the only form of election to the legislature in 2005, this was the result of the law which Putin passed in order to do away with the single-member districts. During the 2007 State Duma election all the seats were awarded on the basis of the party standing in the election. The same legislation also prohibited unregistered parties from winning seats in the Duma and increased the voting threshold for representation from five to seven percent. Putin explained these changes as a means to strengthen the party system in Russia but consolidation was the underlying aim of his laws and reforms.

The concentration of power within the president under Putin was also completed with the taking over of the judicial system. During the Soviet times the judicial system was influenced by the Communist Party and they interfered in the decisions of some particular cases. Many scholars have done in depth studies of the soviet judicial system and have concluded the state intervention in certain important cases. During the presidency of Putin, the condition of the judicial system is more or less the same. In order to avoid the challenges of the courts if it exists independently, Putin had to control the judicial system like he did with other means of democratic challenges. Thus Putin reformed the judicial system of Russia for his own advantages, his primary target has been the Judicial Qualification College, the body that approves judicial appointments, oversees promotions and possesses the power to override the lifetime tenure which most Russian judges enjoyed. Since, 1993, the college had been solely consisted of judges but in 2001, Putin broadened the membership to include one member from the general public, with a legal training, for every two judges. In addition to that the president had the authority to appoint a direct member. Initially right after taking over office as the President, Putin tried to reduce the tenure of the judges to only fifteen years from the lifetime service, but this was turned down because of huge criticisms from the general public.

In 2004, the composition of the College was changed to further reduce the influence of judges, pitting ten judges against ten members of the public and one presidential representative. For the first time, judges comprised a minority, allowing for a meeting of the College to dismiss a sitting judge without the consent of any judges. Furthermore, both judges and members of the public are no longer chosen by the judicial community, but rather by the President, pending the approval of the

Federation Council. In general, the Kremlin has been extremely secretive about all plans regarding judicial reform, in many cases failing to include judges in discussions of court re-organization. The failure of Russia's Constitutional Court to prevent or even object to Putin's rollback of political rights, which constitute clear challenges to the constitution, contradicts the court's powerlessness as a political check on the executive. However, judicial reforms under Putin have also obstructed the delivery of justice outside the political arena. According to Russian legal scholars, the Supreme Court overturns between 25% and 50% of the not-guilty verdicts delivered by juries. Prosecutors' ability to retry defendants until they are eventually found guilty undermines the core of a challenging legal system.

4.8 Conclusion

Thus Putin and the *siloviki*, whose interests were met only by an autocratic set-up, did not hesitate to curb the various rights of a democratic polity. The *siloviki* notion of state's security was centered on a strong Russian state. Their interests were to be achieved only under a strong state without any checks from democratic means. The undermining of the NGOs, both domestic and international, was one of many reasons to achieve their objectives. The *siloviki* dominated or controlled the United Russia, also emerged as the most dominant party in the Duma. The domination of the Duma by the United Russia Party resulted in the passing of legislations which yielded to the *siloviki* interests. The media centers in Russia were also taken by the state, which in reality was taken over by the *siloviki* clan in the name of the state. The Russian media was not allowed to air or publish any information which would bring out the true image of the *siloviki* to the Public. The super-presidential system which came about under Yeltsin was strengthened under the presidency of Putin, through which more and more rights were given to the *siloviki* group. Hence under Putin and his *siloviki* team, Russia's transition to democracy was being hijacked and was transforming towards a more autocratic form of government. Though democracy was proclaimed, but in reality, under Putin's presidency the state was more authoritarian rather than a democratic one.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The 1917 Bolshevik saw the defeat of the age old autocratic regime of the Tsar in the Soviet Union. The immediate political transformation was the taking over of the state's apparatuses by a handful of Bolsheviks who led the Revolution. The Communist Party ruled over the whole of the Soviet Union which was a change from the past and the people also accepted the Communist rule openly as it was a better alternative than the autocratic Tsarist regime. The period from 1917-1920 was the period of civil war in the Soviet Union; this implied that the main events of the period was determined by military activities. The Bolsheviks were trying to bring the whole population under their banner as they were divided among the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. Thus the Communist regime needed a strong army to integrate the whole of the Soviet Union under their control. This was one of the reasons for the creation of the Red Army by the Communist leaders of that period. The Red Army was the Soviet government's revolutionary militia beginning in the Russian Civil War of 1918-1922. It grew into the national army of the Soviet Union. By the 1930s the Red Army was among the largest armies in history. The need to create a strong standing army during the Communist party regime led to the growing importance of the Soviet military in politics and later on they were to play a vital role in the molding of Russian politics in future.

The overall control of the Soviet system by the Communist Party did not leave the military and thus the Soviet military was very much under the control of the CPSU. They no doubt enjoyed enormous privileges as they were considered as the main base for the Soviet defense both external and internal. The Communist Party had a number of mechanisms of control over the country's armed forces. First, starting from a certain rank, only a Party member could be a military commander, and was thus subject to Party discipline. Second, the top military leaders had been systematically integrated into the highest echelons of the party. Third, the party placed a network of political officers throughout the armed forces to influence the activities of the military. A deputy political commander (*zampolit*) served as a political commissar of the armed forces. A *zampolit* supervised party organizations and

conducted party political work within a military unit. He lectured troops on Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet view of international affairs, and the party's tasks for the armed forces. Following World War II, the *zampolit* lost all command authority but retained the power to report to the next highest political officer or organization on the political attitudes and performance of the unit's commander. In 1989 over 20% of all armed forces personnel were party members or *Komsomol*⁵ members. Over 90% of all officers in the armed forces were party or *Komsomol* members.

The Soviet military and the Party relations had different faces depending on the leader of the Communist Party. During the time of Stalin, his industrialization and Five years Plan built the base for a modernized army. This was because of the likelihood of a major war in Europe; the Soviet Union tripled its military expenditures and doubled the size of its military in order to face its potential enemy in the war. But by late 1930's Stalin's policy towards the military shifted and began to persecute the military officers and also executing them. Stalin's sudden shift in his policy was the result of his fear that the military might stand as a threat to his rule. The undermined position of the military continued till the arrival of Khrushchev after the death of Stalin. Khrushchev's regime made a watermark in the military relation with the Communist Party and also their influence in the Soviet politics. The minister of defense was made a member of the Politburo which was the highest decision making body under the Communist rule. But later on, fearing that the Soviet military might become too powerful, Khrushchev cut back heavily on the defense expenditures. Khrushchev later alienated the armed forces by cutting defense expenditures on conventional forces in order to carry out his plans for economic reform. Leonid Brezhnev's years in power marked the height of party-military cooperation as he provided abundant resources to the armed forces like never before. Brezhnev evidently felt threatened by the professional military, and he sought to create an aura of military leadership around himself in an effort to establish his authority over the armed forces. In the early 1980s, party-military relations became strained over the issue of resource allocations to the armed forces. Despite a downturn in economic

⁵The Communist Union of Youth, usually called Komsomol, was the youth wing of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Komsomol played an important role as a mechanism for teaching the values of the CPSU in the young, and as an organ for introducing the young to the political domain. Along with these purposes, the organization served as a highly mobile pool of labor and political activism, with the ability to move to areas of high-priority at short notice

growth, the armed forces argued, often to no avail, for more resources to develop advanced conventional weapons. But Mikhail Gorbachev downgraded the role of the military in state politics and focused more on democratic values. Gorbachev emphasized civilian economic priorities and reasonable sufficiency in defense over the professional military's perceived requirements.

The political and economic chaos of the late 1980s and early 1990s soon erupted into the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The political confusion and rapid economic liberalization in Russia had an enormously negative impact on the strength and funding of the military. In 1985, the Soviet military had about 5.3 million men; by 1990 the number declined to about four million. At that time the Soviet Union disintegrated, and the residual forces belonging to the Russian Federation was only 2.7 million strong. Almost this entire drop occurred in a three-year period between 1989 and 1991. The first contribution to this was a large unilateral reduction which began with an announcement by Gorbachev in December 1988; these reductions continued as a result of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and in accordance with Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaties. The second reason for the decline was the widespread resistance to conscription which developed as the policy of *glasnost* revealed to the public the true conditions inside the Soviet army and the widespread abuse of conscript soldiers. As the Soviet Union moved towards disintegration in 1991, the huge Soviet military played a surprisingly feeble and ineffective role in sustaining the dying Soviet system.

Thus the military influence in the Russian politics was there right from the time of the Soviet era but after Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*, their importance were sidelined to the periphery. It was not just Gorbachev's democratic revolution but it was also the end of the cold war which undermined the military in the Soviet affairs. The disintegration of the Soviet Union also led to the demise of the military influence in the Russian polity. The reins of political power thus shifted from the military and the Communist Party to different interest groups according to the change in leaderships in the Russian Federation. The Yeltsinian era experienced the emergence of the Oligarchs as a group of people who controlled the political and the economic system of the Russian state. This was a result of the liberalization of the Russian economy and the adoption of a market base economy rather than the state

controlled economy of the Soviet era. Hence the elites in the decision making bodies of the state change in their composition and their backgrounds. A strong presidential system was also established with the emergence of the new and independent Russia. This led to appointment of decision making elites by the Russian president with arbitrary power. Therefore the elites or the person who controlled and influenced the decision making of the Russian state was determined by their closeness to the president himself. During the time of Boris Yeltsin it was the oligarchs who were the closest to the presidency. The “family”- a fluid group of favored Kremlin insiders were the most influential under Yeltsin. These included powerful oligarchs like Boris Berezovskii and Roman Abramovich, but also less prominent figures, such as the head of Yeltsin’s presidential administration, Aleksandr Voloshin and Yeltsin’s daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko. They controlled most of the state’s administrative apparatuses and also the nascent Russian market economy. Thus when Vladimir Putin became the Russian president, he inherited this setup from the Yeltsin regime.

Vladimir Putin better known for his security service background took the Russian people by surprise when he became the President after Yeltsin early exit. As he was not in active politics prior to his presidency, Putin did not enjoy a readymade political base in the Russian political system. Thus keeping the political elites of the Yeltsin era Putin had to rely on some of his friends with whom he worked with in the Security apparatus. Several high-profile posts went to his former colleagues from the Leningrad KGB and to other FSB officers, some of whom had served under his directorship from July 1998 until 1999. Former Russian Defense Minister and current First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov and presidential aide Viktor Ivanov were prominent examples of high-profile officials of Putin’s early KGB years. Initially he relied on the elites of the Yeltsinian era, but this reliance did not last long as Putin knew that the Russian people were tired of the oligarchs over exercise of power during the Yeltsin regime. Thus, in order to stay in power he had to move away from the clutches of the oligarchic control and win the hearts of the Russian people. Putin’s succession was blessed by the growing crude oil prices in the international market which led to heavy revenue inputs into the crumbling Russian economy. Putin’s personality and his affiliation to the security service was an image which gave the Russian people hope for a more stabilized economy and of the political system. The immediate stabilization to the Russian economy gave hopes to the Russians for

stability and progress under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. But the reign of Putin does not stop here, but goes on which manifested in a more autocratic form of government and oppose to democratic values.

Since Vladimir Putin came to power, a dramatic influx into government of *siloviki*, people from the military, the former Soviet KGB, and other security services bringing with them statist ideology, authoritarian methods, and a drill-sergeant's contempt for civilian sensibilities. Whereas in the past people from security backgrounds generally did jobs connected with state security functions, Kryshtanovskaya says, you now find them holding high office in just about every ministry and government agency (Kryshtanovskaya 2003: 1). While many experts are concerned at the Putin-era invasion of *siloviki* into the corridors of power, Kryshtanovskaya has generated hard data. By her tally, about 60 percent of the inner circle around Putin, himself a former KGB officer, are ex-military and from the security people. About a third of government functionaries are *siloviki*, and also 70 percent of the staffs working for Kremlin's seven regional emissaries. Moreover, Kryshtanovskaya says that security men are deliberately brought into high government posts in a manner that resembles the Stalinist system of assigning commissars, or party watchdogs, to keep a check on professional managers whose political loyalties may be suspected. This influx of *siloviki* into the state administration has resulted in the emergence of tough authoritarian politics under Putin. The policeman's hand is already being felt in the tightening grip on the media, the massive deployment of administrative resources to back pro-Kremlin parties in elections, and the recent arrest of disloyal oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovski. These are people who feel that democratic rules and transparency interfere with their mission to restore order. They believe the country needs stability, which to them means fewer elections, less interference into state affairs from parliament and the media, and an end to divisive debates in society.

Thus the influx of the *siloviki* into the state administration and the economy under Putin has hijacked the transition of the Russian state towards democracy. The interest of the *siloviki* lies in strengthening the state power and centralization of power with the executive. There is a great debate among scholars regarding the actual reason behind the increase in the state administration under Putin. Some scholars are of the

opinion that, it was the unstable political and economic conditions which Putin inherited from Yeltsin that prompted him to adopt a more authoritarian policy to bring Russia to stability. This objective was realized with the ushering in of the *siloviki* in the state administration and adopting a police state in the name of stability. Other scholars point out that the bringing in of the *siloviki* and transforming into an authoritarian state was a preconceived agenda of Putin and his *siloviki* colleagues. Critics of such a view might justifiably suggest that even if the rising numbers of *siloviki* under Putin were not the result of a strategic plan, the insight does not change the fact that their presence might push Russia into a generally more authoritarian policy direction. Indeed, analysts including Kryshchanovskaya and White have been concerned particularly with the anticipation of more undemocratic or authoritarian politics resulting from the military mindset of the setting *siloviki* apart from their civilian counterparts. Again another explanation was that the 1990's saw the demise of the immortal KGB, which made the agents to move out of their cocoon and seek service in other sectors. As they were qualified workers and even demanded in the market, they move to the civilian government sectors and also into purely commercial structure as well. This resulted in the increase of the *siloviki* in the civilian infrastructure.

We can thus conclude that the authoritarian nature of the Putin's regime as a result of the influx of the *siloviki* into the state administration was not a preconceived agenda of Putin. The instability of the Russian state both economically and politically impelled Putin to adopt those measures which were similar to an autocratic state. The policies adopted by Putin were indeed authoritarian in nature, but without it the Russian was falling into pieces when he took over as the president. The over exercise of power by the Yeltsin's oligarchs in business and the parliament, the degrading federal system, the mafia problem, the decreasing Ruble value in the international market, the unstable multiparty system, the ever declining standard of living of the Russian population, the untamed media which was under the control of the oligarchs and the overall economic decline could not be met without an authoritarian kind of policy by the state. Again Putin's inexperience in politics and his close association with his former security service colleagues made him to depend on them in running the Russian administration. The *silovikis* when they step into the administration indeed brought their traits which had a deep impact on the policies of the state. The

authoritarian nature of Putin's administration was a direct consequence of the presence of the *siloviki* in the state administration.

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