

**CHECHNYA PROBLEM IN INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT  
IN POST COLD WAR ERA**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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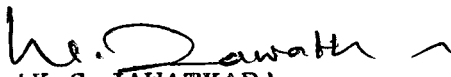
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the Dissertation entitled "CHECHNYA PROBLEM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN POST COLD WAR ERA", submitted by MEETU SINGH for the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
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However the entire responsibility for the correctness of internal details is my own.

*Meetu*

MEETU SINGH

## C O N T E N T S

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This map was prepared by the Nuclear Non-proliferation Project of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace using unclassified CIA data as of November 1993.



## INTRODUCTION

The central concern of the study is International conflict and its management with reference to conflict between Russia and its breakaway Republic Chechnya. This emphasis is not accidental for conflict is inherent in world politics, it is an inevitable consequence of relationship and interaction among group of people who live in a condition of anarchy. But as such conflict is the characteristic of international relations, so too is the management. Indeed these two forms of interaction, conflict and cooperation strifes and harmony, war and peace do not occur in isolation from one another, but are intimately related. [The Russian Chechen conflict can be considered in several narrowing dimensions. (2)

First is the national ideological dimension, which relates to the clash between the various types of old new nationalism. The character of the conflict probably has most to do with Russian aggressive pragmatism and obsession with communism. The present conflict between Russia and Chechnya goes back to the times of Tsars Nicholas in 1894 and Stalin in 1944. After the Chechen resistance was crushed, Nicholas I ordered the lands of Chechens to be deforested and villages leveled. Nearly two third of the

population was killed and many others were driven into exile. But the worst oppression by Russia came during IIInd world war when Stalin ordered the overnight deportation of Chechen population to Kazakistan and Siberia allegedly for collaboration with German occupation forces. The nominally autonomous region was dismantled and distributed between the neighbouring Christian dominated Russian and Georgian territories. But in 1957, Stalin orders were reversed by Soviet rulers and Chechnya was reconstituted and Chechens returned to their homes. For a while they tried to get into the mainstream of Russian life but they lapsed into old ways of extremism self assertation and defiance of Russian rulers. With the declaration of independence in 1991, they brought their country once again to the indirect conflict with Moscow.

The Chechno-Ingush Autonomous Republic was an autonomous region in the Russian Federation, they have their separate identities - Chechnya and Ingushetia. Russia is made up of 89 administrative units - 55 provinces (known as Oblast/Kary in Russia), 2 cities (Moscow and St Petersburg), 32 autonomous areas (the 21 autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and 11 autonomous formations of Soviet era) of this only 17 have nationality basis by the Bolsheviks in 1918,



and influenced regional politics since then. In fact, regional politics since the time of Gorbachev (the President of former Soviet Union) had become very important and there has been a constant struggle for power, control of the State property etc. Since 1991, Russia has been making efforts and has in fact been progressing in its endeavour to build a multinational state by creating a federal system which grants its Republics substantial powers. Soon after the Soviet disintegration it became necessary to reformulate the rights and privileges of the federating units. The Federating units treaty of 1992 was formulated for this purpose. Although most republics were looking for greater political rights.

Chechnya was the only region where Russia had to declare independence. Soon after the failed coup in August 1991, Dzhokhar Dudayev (the rebel leader of Chechnya) declared independence from Russia. Boris Yeltsin, due to the involvement with other problems, could not hold the public attention. The elections that were held that year in Russia's various regions demonstrated that they were not going to accept the Russian Federation Treaty Yeltsin attempted another way to win back the regional's head by conceding them more freedom and large tax concessions.

Tatarstan, which first refused, finally signed the Federation Treaty in February 1994. Yeltsin was able to stall the possible break up of Russia by tilting the powers from the other restive regions to Moscow. This is why the operations in Chechnya is all important to Yeltsin. If Chechens are allowed to secede, then this might start the disintegration of Russia, as other part of Federation might try to follow the suit.

A possible reason for attack on Chechnya is that the crime problem emanating from there has got out of control. During the last few years Chechnya has emerged as the organised crime capital of the former Soviet Union. Now its much feared mafia operates in most Russian cities and is spreading into Western Europe. Strategically, Chechnya is crucial as it is an important link to other former Soviet Republics in Caucasus. An international discussions on how the routes along which the pipeline from Caspian will run was going on. The route from Iran was unacceptable to Western countries whereas the transcaucasian is hindered by the war in Nagorno-Kerabaka. Russia is therefore interested in building this pipeline along the Northern Caucasus towards Noverossisk. But its not the only point, another point is that attack on Grozny is an attempt to reconsoli-

date his position by promoting the national cause. A major Chechen adventure could possibly be a demonstration of and a desire to show the world that Russians are still going strong.

Second is the International reaction to the conflict. Their reaction to the attack on Chechnya was not strong in the beginning. They did not come openly against the Russian heavy handedness on Chechnya. The Western leaders are under pressure to come out more openly against Yeltsin's action. But their dilemma is that if they do that they would be weakening one leader on whom they have faith of Russia eventually becoming a relatively stable democracy. Even the voice of the condemnation of human rights violation came, but not hard. United States and other countries did not give any reason why the aid to Russia should not be continued. They said that Chechnya is Russia's internal affair and they support the Russian leader, in the interest of stability, democracy and economic liberalism.

The Islamic nations also, who always have the reasons for Muslim community to launch holy war against other communities, did not react strongly against Russia as they had been and are of Western countries for their actions against Muslim States.

But the opposition parties in these countries specially the Republican parties of U.S. came heavily on Russia and demanded to stop the US aid to Russia. They also criticised the Clinton administration for supporting Russian President. What disturbs them is not the goal (the preservation of Russia's territorial integrity) but the dangerous unpredictable way in which it is being pursued. But the most important thing is that Chechnya has disrupted reintegration process in the CIS, relation with the near neighbours is Russia's first priority of foreign policy.

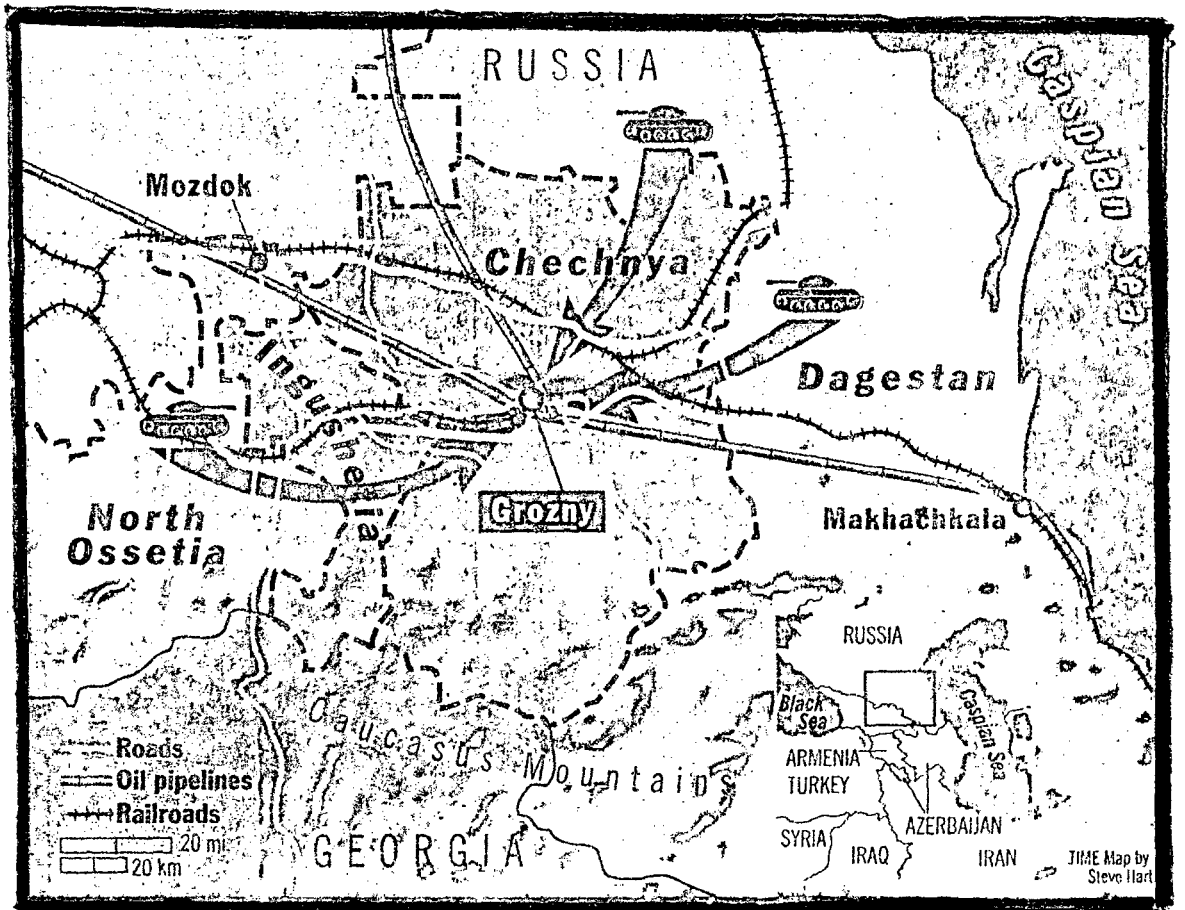
Third is the Russian officials effort to solve the problem through peace negotiations. Thus, what is important about conflict is not its occurrence as such, but how the parties involved attempts to deal with it. The ceasefire was declared twice and negotiations were being continued but both times it broke down. Now, the cease fire declared in January 1996 by Russia and the peace plan announced by Russian President has once again gives the hope of some peaceful purpose. The current peace talks deals with such issues as the exchange of prisoners, new elections, troop pull backs and disarmament. They leave for the future date the all important matter of Chechnya's status, though the Republic continued existence as an autonomous entity has

been assured, Dudayev has accepted, in principle, a relationship like that enjoyed by Tarstan.

Fourthly, the study concludes with telling the Russian democracy is still in its very vulnerable position. After the end of cold war Russia has been trying very hard to save the newly born democratic set up. The war in Chechnya is not an aberration. It has exposed the real nature of Yeltsin regime. This conflict is the real test for Russian democracy and to survive it, would be a great experiment for the world and to lose it, would be the tragic end of one of the greatest empire on the earth. Chechnya is the first real test to the Russian will to sustain the integrity of federation but is not likely to be the last. The Russians are worried that the war could have ominous implications for Russia's long-term stability. Political commentators in Russia are already speaking of some form of a hardline coup in the near future if war in Chechnya is not tackled properly.)

Thus, this study deals with totally the crises starting with backdrop of the crises to the management of the crises. It examines the conflict dynamics as well as the negotiation on the assumption that one must know about nature of violent conflict before one can deal and analyse

effectively with it intellectually, emotionally and behaviourally.



## CHAPTER - 1

### BACKGROUND OF CHECHNYA CRISES

The current war in Chechnya represents only the latest violent episode in the long, tragic and troubled history between the people of Chechnya and a centralising Russian state, whether the Tsarists, Communists or post Soviet. Although Chechnya was a constituent part of Tsarist empire and the Soviet Union, cohabitation or integration with it was never happily accepted, and Chechnya was placed by force of arms in Russia's continental empire. For more than two centuries, ever since Tsarist Russia began its large scale pacification of North Caucasus<sup>1</sup> in the late 18th century, the Chechen people have suffered, forced exile and internal deportation for their resistance to Russian rule.

#### THE CHECHENS

While the Chechens have been associated with Russia for the past two centuries they do not consider themselves

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1. Checheas refer to themselves as *Nakhchiov* or *Nakncho* and to Chechenya as the *Nokhchij Republika Ichkeriy*.



slaves<sup>2</sup> and the language they speak has no connection at all ✓  
with any Slavic language. An indigenous Caucasian mountain  
people, the Chechens belong to the eastern branch of Veinakh  
people and are closely connected and related to the Ingush.<sup>3</sup>  
They have adopted the practise of Sunni Islam, which the  
Sufi Naqshbandyi brotherhood brought to the region at the  
end of the 18th century; hitherto Chechens had been largely -  
animist.<sup>4</sup> The first official partition between Ingush and  
Chechens came during Russian conquest of the regions of  
Caucasus in mid 19th century, when the western part of the  
Chechens (*Galgai and Feappi*) did not take part in revolu-  
tions against Russian empire while the eastern parts of (the  
Chechens) did.

The relations of various regions still play a large  
role in relations among Chechens because a hereditary nobil-

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2. The Caucasus are in large part defined by their Russian Colonises. The West has accepted this terminology. The Russians divided the Caucasus into North Caucasus i.e. foothills and plains north of the Caucasus mountains namely Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.
3. Ronald Wireman, "The People of USSR", An Ethnographic Hand Book (Armonk, NY:ME), 1984, p. 43-44.
4. Chartal Lemercier, "Cooperation of the Elites of Kaharda and Dagistan in Sixteenth, Century in North Cacasus Barrier", The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World (London: Hurst and Company), 1992, p. 35.

ity was absent in Chechnya. Two or three villages claiming descent from a common ancestor for the basis of a clan.<sup>5</sup> The leader of the break away Chechennya Dudayev comes from 'Melkhi', a smaller clan situated in the mountains along the border with Ingushetiya. 'Some claim that he is of mixed Ingush Chechen heritage.'<sup>6</sup>

Chechens living in Chechnya are basically rural people engaged in agriculture. Cities and important oil industry were dominated largely by Russians, though this changed after Dudyan's coming in power as many Russians left the Republic of Chechenya.

According to the 1989 census, the last one conducted before the collapse of Soviet Union, 1.27 million people lived in Chechen-Ingush ASSR, of whom 58 per cent were Chechen, 23 per cent Russian and 13 per cent Ingush.<sup>7</sup>

### The Caucasus

When seen from the point of Caucasus and its history,

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5. "Chechnia: A Report", International Alert, November 1992, p.3.
6. Christopher Panico, "Conflict in Caucasus: Russia's war in Chechnya", Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Studies, July 1995, p. 1.
7. Ibid., p.3

the Chechen war seemed perfectly natural, if not inevitable, and its suffering and brutality were sadly familiar to the specialist.

The Caucasus always seems to have been involved in war. Fifty ethnic groups live along the 900 mile long mountain range that gives this region its name. To the South are the newly emerging nation-state of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The first two have roots in ancient Orthodox Christian cultures and kingdoms, while the third is home to the Turkified and Islamicized descendants of Caucasian Alkania. At the same time, four distinct forms of civilization intersect and overlap that of the Turkic steps, the Middle East, eastern Europe, and the Caucasus itself.

Events of the previous two centuries set the stage of two different kinds of war. The people along the Black Sea coast of the Western Caucasus - the West Circassians (now called Adyags and Cherkess by Russian sources), the Ubyka, and Abknaz - had links with Ottoman Empire and tended to view Moscow as an enemy. The myriad only those in the center, the East circossians (now Kabardians), the mountain Jurks (now Karachays and Balkars), the Iranian-speaking Ossetians (the last) descendants of the ancient scythian Sarmatians and Alan), and the western Vainakhs (now Ingush),

all of whom had suffered prolonged raids during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the Krim Tatars - turned to Moscow as an ally.<sup>8</sup> This tradition continues today.

The war in eastern Caucasus ended in 1859 and in western Caucasus it ended in 1864, which was followed by the forcible expulsion of the majority of the Circassians and Abkhaz and all the Tatars to the Ottoman Empire. Expulsions and voluntary immigration took place from Chechnya and Dagestan as well, so that there are roughly six million people of North Caucasian descent in Turkey; another half million people are scattered in Syria, Jordan and Israel, and smaller communities can be found in Europe and North America.

As mentioned earlier, unlike the Caucasians, the Vainakh people lack hierarchical social structures and thus they organized themselves into clans, and when Russia tried to rule the Chechen there were no leaders to co-opt, which required outside governors to be brought in.

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8. John Colarusso, "Chechnya: The War without winners," Current History, October, 1995, p. 329.

### Russian Conquest of Chechnya

In 1783 Tsarist Russia commences a major military intrusion in North Caucasus that lasted for more than 80 years and ended in Russia's systematic subjugation and colonisation of the area. After that Russia sought to link itself with Georgia, part of which had become protectorate under treaty of Georgievsk in 1783.<sup>9</sup>

Two major rebellions against the Russian intervention of the region was led by Chechens but, both, were eventually suppressed by the superior and mighty Russian forces and weaponry and an utter ruthlessness in their application. Sheikh Mansur, a Chechen and Sufi Mansur Naqshebandyi Sheikh, led an uprising that stretched from north Dagestan to the Kuban and lasted from 1785-79. But he was finally captured and died in Russian prison in 1793. Imam Shamil led a second revolt (1834-59) which was more dangerous and posed a serious threat to Russian domination as it was based on Sufi Islamic brotherhoods (Tariquat) that enjoyed widespread popular support at the time. The crushing of Shamil's revolt 'officially' marked the end of Russian's Cauca-

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9. Ronald Grigor Suny, The making of the Georgian Nation (Indiana: Indiana University Press) 1988, p. 58.

sian wars, but Tsarist rule was tenuous. Another serious uprising broke out in 1877-78 during the Russian-Turkish war - 1984 Russian Chechen study of the Chechen stated that they were not 'fully pacified'.<sup>10</sup>

The Chechen's innocent population as a whole suffered violent retribution in Tsarist 'counter-insurgency' campaigns against rebels General Aleksei Yermolov, Governor of Georgia and Caucasus (1816-26) commented that, 'I desire that terror of my name should guard our frontiers more potently than our chains or fortress, that my words should be for the natives a law more inevitable than death.'<sup>11</sup> The 'Yermolov System', which consisted of building system of forts, forcing native people out of lines of communications and settling cossacks in their place, and then resettling natives in easily controlled areas, was named in his honour.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Paul Henze, "Circassian Resistance to Russia", The North Caucasus Barrier: Russians advance towards the Muslim World (London Hurst and Company), 1992, p. 62-111.

11. Moshe Gammer, "Russian Strategies in the Conquest of Chechnya and Dagistan 1825-59), The North Caucasus Barrier: Russians advance towards the Muslim World (London: Hurst and Company), 1992, p. 121.

12. Ibid.

Yermolov's chief of staff, Veliaminov, argued for even harsher measures. He narrated that, 'The gradual occupation of the hostile territory by means of forts and Cossack settlements would, of itself, little bring about the exhaustion of the mountaineers, who would be cramped in their movements and deprived of the means of carrying out raids. But this alone would take too long, 30 years, and another means at hand. The enemy is absolutely dependent on his crops for the means of sustaining life. Let the standing corn be destroyed each autumn as it reopens, and in five years they would be starved into submission.'<sup>13</sup> A scholar of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus writes: "As a rule, these clearing operations were accompanied by the systematic destructions of hamlets, supplies and gardens, the stampeding and burning of fields, and seizure of livestock."<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the conquest, hundred of thousands of North Caucasian Muslim peoples fled to the Ottoman empire. In 1865, an estimated 39,000 Chechens escaped to Turkey, one-fifth of the Chechen population.

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13. John F Baddelley, The Russian Conquest of Caucasus (New York N.Y.: Russell and Russel), 1969, p. 121-122.

14. Grammer, p. 55.

### Deportation of Chechens

Another major rebellion shook Chechnya from 1920-21, which was harshly crushed by Soviet forces. In 1922, the Bolsheviks created a Chechen Autonomous Oblast, which was merged in 1934 with the Ingush Autonomous Oblast in 1936, this territory was raised to the status of an autonomous republic, with its capital in Grozny.

On Red Army Day, 23 February, 1944, all Chechens and Ingush were forcibly deported to Central Asia. The Chechen Ingush ASSR was dissolved, and its territory parcelled out among its neighbours. During the first five years exile approximately 25 per cent of departed Chechens and Ingush perished; and not one exactly knows how many died in transit.<sup>15</sup>

Ostensibly, the deportation was punishment for alleged collaboration with the invading German armies, a charge that was not made public until two years later. On 25 June 1946, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR passed a decree abolishing the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. It charged that "during the Great Patriotic War, when the people of the USSR were heroically

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15. "Punished Peoples" of Soviet Union: The continuing legacy of Soviet Stalin's Deportation, A Helsinki Watch Report, September 1991, p. 23.



defending the honour and independence of the fatherland ----  
Many Chechens ---- at the instigation of German  
agents, joined volunteer units organised by the units and,  
together with German troops, engaged in armed struggle  
against units of the Red Army. ,16

Stalin ordered the deportation as retaliation for yet  
another uprising that erupted in the hill country of south-  
eastern Chechnya in 1940, a time when Soviet Union and Nazi  
Germany were basking in the friendship of Molotov-  
Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939.<sup>17</sup> While the rebels stated  
that they would welcome the Germans if they recognised their  
independence, of there seemed to have been little interac-  
tion. 'Stalinist Purges, collectivisation, and an anti-Islam  
campaign proved ready cause for revolt.'<sup>18</sup>

In late 1956 - early 1957, the Chechens along with  
other Soviet minorities deported during the second world  
war, were allowed to return to their native homeland in

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16. Alexander M. Nekrich, The Punished Peoples (New York, NT: Norton and Company), 1978, p. 21.
17. Abdurahman Avturkhanov, "The Chechen and Ingush during the Soviet period and its Antecedents", The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian advanced towards Muslim World (London: Hurst and Company), 1992, m p. 146-194.
18. Panico, p. 5

newly administrative units.<sup>19</sup> There were opposition within Communist party to return of Chenchens and Ingush, and they received a very hostile welcome. The foremost scolar on the deported people Alexander Nekrich writes that 'Individual party members took anti party positions on national question, tried to argue that it was impossible for the Russian and Chechen Ingush population ... to live side by side on the territory of republic and adopted a negative attitude towards the restoration of autonomy'.<sup>20</sup> In 1958 a fight broke between an Ingush and Russian sailor errupted into several days of anti-Chechen violence that could only be quelled by the introduction of troops.

Job employment and educational discrimination against Chechens and Ingush had been common. The practice of under-employment of Chechens in skilled traders - especially in the oil industry - continued up until the collapse of the

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19. On 24 November 1956, the Central Committee of the CPSU passed a decree, 'On the Restoration of the National Autonomy of Kalmyk, Karachai, Balkar, Chechen and Ingush Peoples'. Two months later the Presidium of the USSR supreme Soviet passed another edict, 'On the Restoration of Chechen Ingush ASSR as part of RSFSR'. Chechens and Ingush would be allowed to return over a period of four years from 1957 to 1960.

20. Nekrich, p. 151.

Soviet Union, and many Chechens became the 'Gastar beiter' of the Soviet Union, working as seas and agriculture labourers in Southern Russia and in Central Asia.<sup>21</sup> Thus, as whole the Chechen Republic - especially its rural area - was underdeveloped as compared to the other Republics of the Russian Federation.

The Chechen State and Rise of Dzhokhar Dudayev:

The first round of present Russian-Chechen conflict occurred as a result of the policy of the then President of erstwhile Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev's regime, Soviet authorities embarked on an enlightened range policies for the North Caucasus in 1991. In Dagestan three languages were elevated to literary status, and the Chechen and Ingush were given native administrators for the first time. The three Circassian regions, Adygea Karachay - Cherkessoa, and Kabarde -Balkaria were made republics.<sup>22</sup>

By early 1991, however, the South Caucasus had begun to breakaway from the Soviet Union and expression of nationalist sentiment were emerging across the North Caucasus. War broke out in South Ossetia district of Georgia when its

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21. Panico, p. 4

22. Ibid.

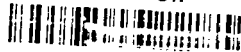
people voted to secede and join their Kinsmen in North Ossetia.

Similar secessionist sympathies were also emerging in Baltic States. In response, Gorbachev sent troops and Interior Ministry forces into Lithuania and Latvia. They failed to reach Estonia, however, because of the startling actions of the local air-base commander, a brilliant air force general named Dzhokhar Dudayev. He refused landing rights to the troop planes, saying that he would not allow the forced overthrow of a democratically elected government. Chechen democratic-national forces, led by Chechen Pan-National Congress<sup>23</sup> and its Chairman Dzhokhar Dudayev, condemned the Yeltsin, while the Republic's communist leaders waffled. Yeltsin and Russian authorities tactly supported Dudayev's ousting of local communists, but then overwhelmed by Chechnya's presidential elections on 27 October 1991 (which Dudayev won) and subsequent declaration

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23. The Congress in Russia is called *Obshchenatsional nyhi Kongress Che ch en skogo Naroda.*

of independence.<sup>24</sup> Yeltsin imposed a State of emergency on Chechnya in early November, which only served to mobilise Chechnya behind Dudayev.

Born in Chechnya in February 1944, Dudayev had been carried in his mother's arm into exile in Karakhstan. Returning to his homeland at 13, he later embarked on a military career, serving with distinction in Soviet air force in the Afghan war. Eventually he became the commander of a nuclear bomber wing, a level of military distinction achieved by few other Caucasians.

Prior to his action as air base commander, Dudayev had shown little sign of insubordination of democratic sympathies. He had, however, attended the All National Congress of the Chechen People in November in 1990 and has been elected as its chief.

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24. The Ingush regions of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, namely the Malgobek, Nazrah, and Sunzhenskii regions, decided to remain part of the Russian Federation, mostly because of their desire to regain the Pirigerodnyi regions of North Ossetia, which until the deportation of 1944 had been largely Ingush and a constituent part of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. 2nd June 1992, the Russian Government created the Ingush republic with in the Russian Federation but without defined borders. In October 1992, fighting broke out between Ingush and Ossetians and all the Ingush were violently expelled.

Originally a reformer, Doku Zavgayev, the head of the Chechen-Ingush Communist party apparatus, adopting a waiting position regarding the coup and only condemned the revolt against Gorbachev after it became clear that the army would not storm the Russian President's bastion, the White House', seat of the Supreme Soviet. After coming to power in 1989, Zavgayev, the first Chechen to head the party structure in a region that Russia traditionally feared, initially allowed a 'localised thaw' some independent newspapers and journals began publishing; so called informal groups, like the Pan-National Chechen Congress<sup>25</sup> and the Veinakh Democrat Party appeared; reformed communists were appointed.<sup>26</sup> In November 1990, under pressure from pan-National Chechen Congress, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR had declared its sovereignty. But eventually the thaw brought little real improvement, especially in economic terms, and Zavagayev began to stack key positions in the party and bureaucracy with individuals from

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25. Marie Bennivgson Broxup, "After the Putsch 1991", The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance towards the Muslim World (London: Hurst and Company), 1992, p. 231-234.

26. Oliga Vasileva, "Stars lit by Dudayev", Novoye Uremya (Moscow), September 1994, No. 37, p.11.

his native Nadterechnyi region in Western Chechnya.<sup>27</sup>

The Chechen Pan-National Congress immediately supported Russian President Boris Yeltsin's resistance to the coup and attacked Zavgayev's attitude. On 19 August 1991, a decree of the Chechen Pan-National Congress issued the very day of the coup called on Chechen people to obey Russian President Yeltsin's decree condemning the coup and to consider illegal any action by authorities in support of it.<sup>28</sup> Contact, with Yeltsin's command post and with two of his key supporters, was set up. Ruslan Khasbulatov the then Deputy Chairman of Russian Supreme Soviet and General Aslanbek Aslankhanov, whose units defended the White House, both incidentally are Chechens. On 22 August, democratic groups held rallies in the main square in Grozny calling for, among other things, the resignation of Doku Zavgayev and the transfer of power to the Pan-National Chechen Congress. On 6 September, Dudayev's national guard units stormed the pro-communist Supreme Soviet and closed down its operations.

Yeltsin and his supporters quietly supported the moves to oust Zavgayev, whom they considered as a supporter of the

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27. Ibid.

28. Benningsen Broxup, p. 219-222.

coup leaders and thus a traitor. Boris Yeltsin had been favourably disposed towards Russia's minorities and their ethnically based territorial units in his struggle against central Soviet authorities and the President Gorbachev. At one point of time he told the minorities 'to take as much sovereignty as you want'.<sup>29</sup> General Aslankhanov and Deputy Chair of council of Ministers of RSFSR, Inga Grebersha, told Zavgayev that it was not permissible to use force to end the demonstrations when the presidium of republican Supreme Soviet decided to institute a state of emergency.<sup>30</sup> On 7 September, a day after the Chechen Ingush ASSR Supreme Soviet was forcibly disbanded, Khasbulatov stated on main news programme *Vedsti* that he was glad that Zavgayev, who had mismanaged the republic and was subservient to central Soviet Union authorities, had fallen.

The Russian authorities had never expected that Dudaev consolidate his power, hold elections and declare independence within the span of two months. On Russian Political commentator wrote that "The one sidedness of our

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29. Michael Dobbs, "Yeltsin Cracks Down on Russian Region", Washington Post (Washington), 9 November, 1991.
30. Tatyana Nedash Kouskaya, "Russian Chechen discussion on the road to Harmony", Novoye Vremya (Moscow), Vol.20, 1994, p.12



actions, the absence of any political sense, an over-abundance of self confidence --- led in 1991-92 to the clear under valuation of Dudayev as an individual and showed a misunderstanding of the specific of Chechnya as a whole".<sup>31</sup> Zavgyev, who presently serves as an adviser in the Russian presidential administration, argues that Ruslan Khasbulatov hoped to use Dudayev to oust him and then get rid of Dudayev with someone loyal to Khasbulatov.

Sergei Shakrai, former Russian Deputy Prime Minister and former Nationalities Minister who had been unofficially involved in Russian-Chechen negotiations, commented that, 'I have never hid the fact that Khasbulatov himself brought General Dudayev to power. It's a well known fact.'<sup>32</sup> Dudayev and his supporters in Pan-National Chechen Congress quickly moved to consolidate power. On 15 September, the Checheno-Ingush parliament held its last session, and power was transferred to a provisional council headed by a former deputy with close ties to the council, Husein Akhonadov.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Vladimir Kostko, "Chechenya, Russia; Union, Moskovskii Komsomolets (Moscow), 8 August 1994, p.3.

32. Panico, p.6

33. Benningsen Broxup, p. 227.

Election was set for 19 and 27 October respectively for a new parliament. But then the Provincial Council split into a radical faction supported by Dudayev and the Pan Chechen National Congress and a conservative wing. The pro-congress group supported the dates initially set for election to prompt any Russian moves, while the conservatives wanted a postponement until 17 November, to help them to regroup. Much of Grozny's intelligentsia supported November elections as well as a referendum on whether Chechnya should have a president.<sup>34</sup>

Russian officials, alarmed, went on a propaganda offensive against Dudayev, who only used their threats to discredit internal opposition and rally Chechnya against a traditional enemy, of a fact finding group from Chechnya the group of Dudayev and his followers were branded 'a gang terrorising the population'. On the advice of Russkoi, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium passed a resolution on 8 October 1991, that sought the region in the Chechen national movement. Dudayev counter attacked, charging that 'Destructive forces, primarily Russian parliament members who in

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34. "Chechen-Ingushetiya: Violence Continues Amid Hopes For Agreement" *Rodeyo Rossii*, 12 and 13 October, in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts RSFSR, SO/1203/B/1, 15 October, 1991.

fact evaded talks --- and the Russian Interior Ministry leadership are trying to break our movement, but they are sure to flop'.<sup>35</sup>

On 27 October 1991, Dzhokhar Dudayev was elected Chechen President with 85 per cent of vote, though the opposition within the Republic contested the validity of the elections. On November 2, Chechnya declared independence from Soviet Union. But Russia neither recognised Dudayev's election nor the declaration of Chechnya's independence. On November 9, Russian President Yeltsin instituted a state of emergency decree to protect 'constitutional order' in the Chechen Ingush ASSR. This decree had two immediate effects: first, it allowed Dudayev to mobilise the nationalist feeling, against Russia, in Chechnya and secondly, it weakened the anti Dudayev feelings within the country. On the same day Dudayev cancelled emergency decree posed by Yeltsin and imposed martial law in his own Republic. He ordered a general mobilisation, 30,000 demonstrators rallied and set up blockades throughout Grozny. Chechen activists even hijacked a plane in Mineralnye Vody in southern Russia and

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35. "Chechen Leader Redpublic Dissolving Issues without Moscow's Inference". TASS World Service, 8 October 1991, In BBC Summary of World Broadcast, RFSR, Supreme Soviet, SU/1199/C1/1, 10 October, 1991.

flew to Ankara, Turkey before ordering the plane land in Grozny.

But the most important thing was his appeal to all Chechen and Caucasian muslims to declare a 'holy war' on Russia. On Dudayev aide commented that, 'We are grateful to Yeltsin for this decree, as it has solved all our inner contradictions.'<sup>36</sup> Two days later, after the Russian parliament voted 177 to four to implement emergency rule, Yeltsin was forced to back down. Later, the parliament ordered negotiations with Dudayev.

#### DUDAYEV IN POWER: 1992-93

Once the immediate threat from Russia lessened, Dudayev still did not alter his highly nationalist, 'Chechen independence or death' slogan.' Although he was not particularly popular, he managed to win himself slightly more public support than his rivals with his defeat nationalism. He consistently pointed to Russia as Chechnya's greatest threat. When unrest struck the Republic, such as a coup attempt on 31 March 1992, Dudayev rightly or wrongly had a ready target that immediately found a response in the popu-

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36. Alaxender Snopart, "High lander's judgement: ;Yelltsin's Whipping up Second Caucasus War", Komersant (Moscow), No. 43, p.23.

lation and made people forget that they had not received salaries for several months. After the failed coup of March 1992, Dudayev rightly or wrongly had a ready target that immediately found a response in the population and made people forget that they had not received salaries for several months.<sup>37</sup> Dudayev stated after the failed coup of 1992. "The Russian Empire is trying to keep its grip on the colonial people in its dying agony .... There is no going back to the stable of Russian serfdom".<sup>38</sup> In November 1992, after Russia dispatched troops to the Chechen Ingush border to quell fighting in the Prigorodnyi region of Northern Ossetia, Dudayev ralled again, public opinion against traditional threat. he appointed himself as commander-in-chief and ordered the general mobilisation of people and giving them a call 'to rise up in defence of the Chechen independence'.<sup>39</sup>

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37. "The Eighth Storming of Grozny", Mosko Vskii International, 1 April, 1992.

38. Jeff Berliner, "Breakaway Chechen Republic wreaked by Pro-tister in Southern Russia", United Press International, 1 April, 1992.

39. Brian Killen, "Rebel Chechen Leader Threatens war with Russia", Reuters, 10 November, 1992.

Chechnya's relationship with Russia was not regularised and Russia imposed an economic blockade. On internal parliamentary opposition arose favouring normalised relations with Russia while maintaining Chechnya's sovereign status. But it was crushed by Dudayev and his supporter later on. All of those events were played out against the backdrop of struggles among the ruling elite for a share in oil revenues and weapon trading. Two major phenomena marked this period. The economic situation in the republic became critical as a result of economic blockade imposed by Russia, corruption and general post-Soviet dislocation. Dudayev's rule became anti-democratic, and in June 1993 his national guard violently dispersed the parliament and demonstrators calling for a referendum. By the end of 1993, many of the leaders who supported Dudayev left him and became his opponents.

Chechnya was hit hard by economic dislocation and misery. The most economic ill was non-payment of salaries and pensions, which in past was distributed by local branch of Russian Central Bank. When Dudayev came in power he nationalised the bank and renamed it as the 'Chechen National Bank', where upon the Russian Central Bank stopped sup-

plying it with cash.<sup>40</sup> The shortage of cash hit hard the urbanised Russian speaking population since it did not had the rural support network of relations that many urban Chechen enjoyed. Many people were not payed the salaries or pensions for months. unemployment hit 80 per cent in some areas. In the spring of 1993, the Chechen parliament and the Grozny city council began organised opposition to Dudayev. It ended in violence, when Government forces stormed the city council and dispersed anti-Dudayev demonstrators, killing as many as 50 people on 4 June 1994. Tensions between Dudayev and Parliament initially heated up in January, when Yusup Soslambekov and Parliamentary speaker Husein Akhamadov favoured negotiations for a treaty regularising Chechen-Russian relations while defending Chechen sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> A month later, Dudayev proposed changing the constitution and reorganising parliament, which legislations interpreted as a threat to their power.

After street protests broke out urging his resignation, Dudayev issued a decree dessolving parliament and instating

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40. "Rebel Chechnya Moves to Mend Ties with Moscow", Reuters, 22 May, 1993.

41. Sharip A Suyev, "Chechen President Blasts Charges of Usurpation of Power," I tar-Tass, 17 February, 1993.

a curfew on 7 April 1993. Parliament quickly struck back, and on the following day started an impeachment process against Chechen President. Over next two months pro-Dudayev demonstrations were held in front of presidential palace, while supporters of the parliament held non-stop meetings in 'Theater square' in central Grozny. While most of the anti-Dudayev demonstrators were unarmed, police detachments dispatched by Grantenirov protected them. It seemed that mostly the city dwellers and inhabitants of lowland villages supported parliament, while highland rural villages, were behind Dudayev and his nationalistic rhetoric.

One of the main opposition demands was for a referendum, which Parliament decided to hold on 5 June 1993. Lichi Vsmanov, head of the movement 'Daimokh' and part of the anti-Dudayev opposition, stated that, 'Our demands were not just raises. They were in our programme from the start, through a referendum and through democratic elections. The most important of them - to change the situation in the republic after Dudayev came to power. The following three questions would be put to voters: 'Is the institute of Presidency needs in Chechnya? Do you have confidence in



President? Do you have confidence in the Parliament?' 42

Dudayev wanted the referendum set at a later date. Early elections for both the executive and legislative branches were also planned.

On the eve of the referendum i.e., on 4 June, government forces stormed the opposition Headquarters and dispersed demonstrators. Dudayev's forces also closed down the Grozny city council. Initial reports put the number of dead demonstrators at 14; later estimates ran high as 50.<sup>43</sup> On June 3, Dudayev shut down Chechnya's constitutional court in retaliation for its ruling of 19 April that his proroguing parliament had been unconstitutional.

Although it was not clear what support Russia had given to the opposition of Dudayev, he immediately singled out Russia as the main force behind the threat to the Republic. ✓

#### PRELUDE TO WAR

After the dissolution of parliament, Dudayev tried to strengthen his position by renewing Western contacts. Con-

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42. Suyev, "Opposition to Dudayev on Refrendum, Itar-Tass, 24 May, 1993.

43. Initial Estimates put the number of demonstrators killed by Dudayev forces as fourteen, though later accounts went as high as fifty.

ferences were began to held and various Westerners were invited. In response Turkish, Iraqies and other interested groups stepped up their efforts to isolate Dudayev and Chechens from Western contacts and to bring Chechnya ever more into the fold of radical Muslim interest.

Meanwhile the President of Russia tried to strengthen his position over North Caucasus by appointing Yuri Kalmapov, the head of the World Circassian Congress, to the simultaneous position of minister of justice for the Russian Federation in March 1993 and by allowing the Circassians to hold a world congress in the republic of Adygia in North West Caucasus in July.<sup>44</sup>

Negotiations with Chechnya proceeded from 1993 into 1994, but made little progress. Dudayev's political base had narrowed and his position had hardened. He insisted on speaking with Yeltsin directly, which Yeltsin refused to do. To complicate the matters Dudayev had come to face such problems in Chechnya that he was unable to fulfill the commitments his negotiators had made at the bargaining table thus inadvertently lending a dimension of unreliability and

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44. Colarusso, p. 432-33.

bad faith to the Chechen side. A serious assassination attempt against Dudayev in May 1994 soured all further negotiations, and set a message both to him and to those people who sought peace that war party would not be tampered with lightly. Three other developments, however, unfolded in the course of 1994 that set the course for war and its timing.

First, Yeltsin's popularity began to decline as the shock of the assault on Parliament began to sink into populace and as the economy continued its decline. And it became clear to Yeltsin, if the event continued like that it would be difficult for him to win the Presidential election of 1996. ✓

Second, the oil consortium that had ploughed \$ 8 billions into Azerbaijani oil field, and Chevron, which had invested \$ 22 billion in the Tengiz fields of Kazakhstan, seemed to be growing into a powerful commercial block willing to discuss Russian equity and licensing fees while remaining indifferent to Russian hegemony. Chechnya lay directly on the Russian pipeline routes for both Azerbaijani and Kazakh oil and gas, and the Chechen wanted not only licensing fees of their own, but also the right to add their own oil and gas to international deal. By June 1994 negoti

ations between the Russians and the Chechens had broken off. ✓

Third and crucial, Dudayev seemed to be growing disheartened at the course of events. He now seemed willing to accept a treaty such as that was between Tatarstan and Russia, and he even spoke of reconvening parliament in the fall or winter and stepping down. If Yeltsin did not act quickly, he soon might not have an enemy.<sup>45</sup>

Yeltsin travelled to Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, delivering a speech there on May 28, that strengthened his position in North West Caucasus. In this remarkable speech he admitted Russian responsibility for the Russian conquest of Caucasus. He concluded, however, with a thinly veiled warning that the war of the last century had been great tragedy for the region, but that a new war in this century would be an even great catastrophe.

On August 3, Russians met American officials to discuss the need to invade Chechnya and the possibility of linking this action with America's projected invasion of Haiti by means of reciprocal and relements at US. Doubts were expressed by Bill Clinton to Yeltsin at a summit. Yeltsin's reply was harsh: "You watch your backyard and we will watch

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45. Ibid., p. 434

ours." The ensuing silence was taken as acknowledgement that Chechnya was Russia's internal affair and that Yeltsin could take whatever measures necessary to subdue it.

Sergei Stepashin, the director of counter intelligence of Russia, set about organizing a large scale assault on Grozny. The raid of November 28, 1994 was a great Russian humiliatia. A large column of tanks, armoured personnel carriers and amunitation trucks rolled in Grozny. The media depicted this as a 'bungled attack' but soldiers merely intended to scare Dudayev's supporter. The Russian army expected the Chechen people to rise in support of Russians and finish off Dudayev and his supporters. But it did not transpire and these opposition fighters and Russians mercenaries who could not free wee captured along with their weapons. On December 1, Grachev voted at a cabinet meeting to use full force against Chechnya. ✓

On December 11, three armed column rumbled into Chechnya. From the start invasion did not go well. Two columns passing Dagestan and Ingushetia were harrashed by locals, with soldiers in Dagestan taken prisoner, and with tanks burnt in Ingushetia. The third column that had entered Chechnya directly from the north was met by lines of women and old men blocking their routes. The response was unprec-

edented. The field commanders stopped their advance and announced before television that they would not attack.

Back in Moscow a united protest erupted not only from the parliament and the public but from the high military command. Deputy Secretary Defense General Boris Gromov openly and harshly criticized the invasion of Chechnya.

The war is a total disaster as far as President Yeltsin is concerned. This assault on the region is a political military and moral disaster for Boris Yeltsin. It has gravely stained his presidency and damaged his reputation. A miscalculation on the part of Yeltsin has pulled him into a quagmire. The extent to which this operation has harmed the economy, the army, national cohesiveness and image is not yet completely assessed, but one thing is certain that it is not going to be easy to repair the damage it has caused nationally and internationally.

If Yeltsin's intention was to control Chechnya through military assault one wonders why he acted so late when the Chechen insurrection has been going on for so long. De facto, Chechnya declared independence in October 1991. Russia largely ignored the result and imposed only a loose financial and trade blockade on renegade Republic. A possible reason for attack on Chechnya is that the crime problem

emanating from these has gone out of control. During the last few years Chechnya has emerged as the organised crime capital of former Soviet Union. According to some observers Yeltsin was trying to solve crises by creating another.

One particular theory is that his defence minister Pavel Gravchev has been advising him that a 'small victory' will bring about a boost to his going down popularity and that Chechens could be crushed easily. Others claim that Russian attack has been driven by its fear of Islamic influence in south. Strategically Chechnya is as crucial as it is an important link to other Soviet Republics in Chechnya. But a major interest in Chechen adventure could possibly be the demonstration and desire to show the world that Russia still has enough strength. The war has already become a terribleness and it is difficult to envisage any lasting solution. To keep Chechnya with Russian federation is not going to be easy. As Marget light, a professor in London school of Economics points out, "The fire power of Russia army may drive the rebels away from the towns and villages, but they will continue to fight their battle from mountains and hills". The seizure of Grozny will not put an end to it but will only distance prospects of the solution. The Chechens may never get the international support as in the

case of Afghanistan and Bosnia. But the Muslim nations in and around the area may render support to make it a long drawn out battle, as there are reports of foreign mercenaries involved in the battle one. Only hopes that this does not end up in another Bosnia in Caucasus. The Caucasus formed over centuries as a single political, economic and cultural organism, and to split the Caucasus means to inflict irreparable damage to each ethnic group inhabiting the Caucasus.



## CHAPTER 2

### INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO CHECHNYA CRISIS

As Chechnya's declaration of independence has neither been accepted in Russia nor in other capitals, it still belongs to Russia under international law. In this respect, the conflict over this territory is an internal Russian affair. The fact that other states are not indifferent towards the conflict is not only due to the impression that the Russian war in Chechnya violates human rights. In accordance with international documents signed by the Russian side, such rights are not exclusively an inner-state matter. The concern that Russian actions makes the delicate moves towards the country's democratic or at least reform oriented inner challenge, an illusion and could make the start of a renewed, generally violent, approach is equally disquietning.

It should have been natural that Chechen operation should have caused great concern and apprehension among the members of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) whom Russia described as the nearabroad and treats it as natural sphere of influence. The feelings are not shared by former

USSR allies and the Baltic nations in Eastern Europe. They bound to see in the Chechen operation 'The reemergence of aggressive arrogant and expansionist Russia'. Russia's neighbours recognize that Chechnya problem is the internal affair but they also indirectly suggest that even in its border Russia should not have handled a political problem with brutal force.

The Islamic states too, for all their talks of Muslim community and a *Jihad*, are not vocal in their criticism of Russia as they have been in case of Iraq and Bosnia. This may be because of Russia, still having a broadly 'pro-Third World image'. In fact, no Islamic state has even supported Chechens the right to secede from Russia, although all of them are 'saddened and angered by the heavy loss of life and limb in the conflict and the virtual razing of Grozny to the ground'.<sup>1</sup>

**Western Dilemma:**

( The Western countries find themselves in dilemma while it considers that Chechnya is a part of Russian federation, it finds report of war disconcerting. The western leaders

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1. A.S. Abraham, "Yeltsin on Trial: Defining roles for the future", Times of India, (New Delhi), 7 February 1994, p. 7.

are under pressure to come more openly against Russian action. If they do, they would be weakening the one leader, Boris Yeltsin, on whom they have pinned their faith for Russia to eventually become a relatively stable democracy, after the end of the cold war.)

As New York Times put it:

"others have been shocked by the silent west not that west have been altogether silent, even if the US where official reaction has tended to be somewhat muted, and the crises in Chechnya has been viewed as purely domestic affairs."<sup>2</sup>

{ During his visit to Moscow on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebration of D. Day U.S. President Bill Clinton told his Russian counterpart that 'Chechnya is Russia's internal affair' } His deputy, vice President Al Gore, stressed this point further in his discussion with Russian leaders during his visit to Moscow. However, Clinton's initial reaction was based on another element, one that his counterparts picked up that seemingly escaped their attention - A hope that bloodshed would be minimal.<sup>3</sup>

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2. A Stanislav Kondrashov, "As Internal Affair with International Repercussion", Current Digest (Moscow Izvestia Staff), Vol. XL VI, No. 512, 17 December 1994, p. 15.

3. Ibid, p. 16

[In the eyes of the foreign politicians and international community, Chechnya is the test for the New Russia a test of the ability of both its territory and its democracy to resist rapture.] Two quotations from editorials in two British News Papers, which have unexcelled experience in covering military campaigns in multinational states and empire deserve special mention. According to The Times

"A Nation cannot accept the threat of an armed conflict within its country. Negotiation backed by threat of force would have been the best choice. But there is no turning back now. If force is used it must be coordinated. Half measures will only increase resistance and lead to bloodshed. But the current political confusion in Moscow and the unsuccessful military operations in Chechnya make a quick and effective operation increasingly unlikely."<sup>4</sup>

Daily Telegraph said:

"Although no foreign state will come to the rebels aid, the Russians behaviour in Chechnya is a matter of concern to the West. Based on the way force is used and the extent to which the Chechens are permitted to exercise their democratic rights, it will be possible to judge the character of Russian state. And this approach will be an important factor determining the West stance on such issue as the future of Ukraine and the Balatic republics...."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

In the United States the Congress leaders have been more harsh and outspoken regarding the Chechen invasion. Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of Senate foreign Relation Committee, has threatened a resentment of American aid to Russia and has raised a question over the ratification of START II, which provides for the subsequent number of ICBMs in nuclear arsenals of the two countries. The Republicans are calling for the hard line approach. The U.S. media has come down heavily on Russia for its military action in Chechnya and criticised US President for supporting Russian President. As New York Times, put it:

"Russia's predemocracy was outraged as Moscow's troops tightened their grip around Grozny last week. But Clinton administration, which says it shares the goals of democracy, all but blessed president's Boris Yeltsin's effort to bring the breakaway Chechen Republic to heal." <sup>6</sup>

The use of force in Chechnya is regarded in US as a result of lack of vital power on the part of Democrats in Moscow. According to one newspaper Yeltsin is suffering not only at the hands of Chechen militiamen but also at the

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6. Melor Sturva, "Washington as losing faith in Russian President and his ability to Govern the country, Current Digest (Moscow: Izvestea Staff), Vol. XLVII, No. 1, 5 January, 1995, p. 10.

hands of the ultranationalists and neo-communists in Russia. One of the US senator McCain has expressed doubt as whether the Russian President is in control of events. Let alone of the country. The whole western press is painting him as 'a prisoner of the Kremlin manipulated by the military and secret police.'<sup>7</sup>

(The Chechen question is Russia's internal affair is still not being doubted. In the opinion of many western politicians, however, the means that are being used to Chechnya are obviously at variance with international law.) In particular Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs Lena Hjelmwallen called Russian authoritarian actions in Chechnya 'unacceptable'. In Stockholm's opinion, 'civilized society does not resolve conflicts in ways that leads to human sufferings, death and material damage.' (Western capitals have recalled the existence of the principles of the Organisation for security and cooperation in Europe, which include renunciation of the use of force, respect for the rights of national minorities and observance of human rights,) as far as the Washington is concerned. So far as the voice of

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7. Vladimir, Barinov, "The West Recall the existence of OSCE Principles", Current Digest (Moscow: Izvestea Staff), Vol. XLVII, No. 1, 1995, p. 1.

condemnation are being heard there only from Republican's camp. At the same time, a spokesman said that on December 30, 1994 the US has expressed its concern to Moscow over the tactics that the Russian troops are employing in Chechnya' according to news agency reports.<sup>8</sup>

(The cautious neutrality in western capitals with to the war in Chechnya has gradually been replaced by concern and then by down right condemnation of the Russian leadership) At the same time experts are not concealing their surprise a string of flagrant military mistakes made by the Russian strategists who, at the price of considerable blood, are unsuccessfully trying to suppress the insurgents.

The voices from western countries are coming demanding that Moscow provide explanation regarding the use of the millions of dollars in credits the West has provided peaceful purpose.<sup>9</sup> (One of the first Western figure to criticise Yeltsin for using military force in Chechnya was the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Tuppe. He has also

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8. Yury Kovalenko, "In response to the fighting in Chechnya", Current Digest, (Moscow: Izvestia Staff), Vol. XLVII, No. 1, 16 January, 1995, p. 4.
9. Konstantin Eggert, "Islamic World reacts to events in Chechnya", Current Digest (Moscow: Izvestia Staff), Vol. XLVI, No. 51, 15 December 1994, p. 3.

called on the explanations from the Russian President. In France, all political parties, from right to left are condemning the continuing military intervention in Chechnya.)

(The international committee of the Red Cross has also condemned the Russian bombing strikes. The pragmatic west is not only showing concern in connection with war's countless casualties and with human rights violation in Chechnya in general but also in exhibiting growing alarm over the fate of millions it has invested in Russian economy.) They say that these investments, as well as Moscow's claims to a special role in Europe give West, grounds to demand the Moscow provide an accounting of the sums it received. In analysing the military blunders of the Russian command, western experts are perhaps the most alarmed by the lack of discipline in the Russian army and the scope of its demoralization. In the unending succession of the Chechnya adventure's negative foreign policy consequences for Russia, commentators in Paris are singling out, besides the possible loss of very much needed credits, the discrediting of Russia in the eyes of world public, the risk of political isolation, and the hasty admission of East European countries in North American Treaty Organisation (NATO).



### Reaction of Islamic States

(Chechnya is mainly a muslim region and the leaders of the Chechen region have called on Islamic states to launch a *Jehad* against Russia.)<sup>10</sup> 'And to encourage it to secede would be to inflame muslim regions bordering breakaway Chechnya, but has failed to stop regions from infiltrating supplies and men into Grozny, the leading religious and political figures in Russia says.

(The Saudi Arabian council of ministers expressed regret in connection with the Russian armed intervention in Chechen republic and urged the states of Islamic world and all friendly, peace loving states to help bring about an end to Russian armed actions against Chechnya and prevent bloodshed.<sup>11</sup>) This statement was issued by cabinet king Fahd, the guardian of muslim holy places at Mecca and Medina, has for some reason caused a commotion in Russia, even though something like this was expected from Saudi Arabia. Other

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10. Stanislav Kondrashov, "Internatinal Response to Russian Intervention", Current Digest (Moscow: ;Izvdestia Staff), Vol.XIVI, No. 51, 17 December 1994, p. 16)
  11. "CIS Response to Russian Intervention: Battle Lost on the field of Public debate", Current Digest (Moscow: Izvedstia Staff), Vol. XLVI, No. 512, 17 December, 1994, p. 14.

Muslim nations reacted the same, Bosnia, Karabaka, Chechnya. More and more often the muslim countries are taking common stands on events in various trouble spots. Volunteers from Iran and Afghanistan are already fighting from the side of Bosnin muslim and the question which is arising in the minds of Russian officials is 'will something similar happens in Chechnya?'.

On the one hand it does appear the 'Islamic factors' will manifest itself with full force, because the individual muslim capitals attach greater importance to their actual relations with Europe or Russia, for example, than to ephemeral brotherhood with the improvised Chechens or Bosians. In most instances rich countries like Pursion Gulf monarchies limit themselves to monetary payments. As for Iran, the most consistent champion of Pan Islamic ideas, it don't have that much money and moreover they doñt want to react subtely in places far from middle east. It must not be, however, forgotten that the developments in enormous territory stretching from Moscow to Afganistan are heading towards inevitable appreance of some idea that will invite the region's state. These ideas could be the values of Islamic civilization. In that event, if conflict like that arise in Chechnya in future, the voice of the Islamic nation would be

much louder than it is today.<sup>12</sup>

### CIS Response

The proximity of one or another region to the potential tensions of the inter ethnic tension noticeably affects the assessments of what is happening in Chechnya. For example, the decision of the Orenburg provincial public chamber, which did not support the statement by representative of Russia's democratic choice condemning the president's policy, was undoubtedly influenced by the proximity of Khazakhstan. Another example is the result of the opinion polls among residents of cities located at various distance from Chechnya. Whereas in St Petersburg, 37 per cent of those polled approved the forcible methods and 51 per cent of them condemned them. In Strayropol and Krasnodor the majority supports the use of force and expressed readiness to help the army.<sup>13</sup>

Reports from CIS countries reflected a very characteristic bifurcation in perception and assessment of the

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12. Ibid.

13. Bruce W. Nelan, "Looking for the Next Step", Time, 23 Jan. 1995, p. 18.

Chechen crises, whereas the republic authorities, for the most part, unequivocally viewed the events in and around Chechnya as an exclusively Russian internal affair. While advocating, however, that the conflict be settled by political means, the political parties vigorously condemned the violent way i.e., the 'tanks and bombs course' chosen by Russian leadership.

For majority of opposition political forces in the CIS countries, the military operation in North Caucasus has provided ground for revival of thesis 'Russia is by nature an imperialist'. The actions of Russian authorities appear to have done noticeable damage to the supporters of 'new integration' within the CIS and to strengthening of ties with federation at the same time, they have brought new element of destabilization into the state of those states.<sup>14</sup>

In Ukraine, who condemned the use of force are seconded by the leaders of Ukrainian's people movement, who detect in Chechen events, an attempt by Moscow to 'revive its former Empire'. The Belorussian People's front has also attacked the authorities from the 'Chechen flank'.

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14. Julian Mayon, "On the Scene: Vendetta," National Review, 20 February 1995, p. 25-26.

### Violation of Human Rights

(The implication of human rights violation in Chechnya are being felt all over the world.) The people, media, Congress of U.S. are wondering if the hopes, the US expressed for democracy, reform and Yeltsin might be going to flop. The officials have conducted several secret reviews of their Russian policy since early last year (1994), asking if the present President would survive. There were negative reverberations from Washington where politicians were speaking out criticising the Kremlin. The Chairman of Senate Foreign Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Mitch McConnell, said Clinton should tell Yeltsin that 'US will not continue to give tax dollars to them if they continue to treat their citizen this way'.<sup>15</sup>

The US state department also took a sterner tone. (US Spokesperson Christine Shelly charged that, 'Moscow has violated two commitments to the organisation of security and cooperation in Europe ; firstly, failing to notify its partners of large scale movements of troops, arms and artillery as required; and secondly, violating the organization's code

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15. Vlademir Abarinov, "Isolation as a forced doctrine," Sevodnya (Moscow), 10 Jan 1995, p. 1.

of conduct, which calls on members to respect civilians population and work for peaceful solution to dispute.) Once in a speech, the US President Bill Clinton, at Cleveland Ohio, called on combats 'to stop spilling blood and start making peace'. At the same time he cautioned against using the war as an excuse do stop backing the reform effort in Russia.

Russian administration is reluctant to dwell on the fact because it believes US interests still lie in helping Yeltsin out of trouble and not in the righteous practicing against it. (US Secretary of States Warren Christopher explained, US policy is based on two points: Russia has right to defend its territory against insurrection and secession, and Russia must <sup>live</sup> leave up to its agreements to respect human rights.) The idea is to reconcile the two points through 'a peaceful solution'. While until now the administration has been reluctant to talk about human rights in public, officials say they have repeatedly raised the issues with the Russians privately. President Clinton in a letter sent to Yeltsin asked him to find a way to hold down civilian casualties in Chechnya. But Clinton never gave the indication to denounce Yeltsin and to withdraw US support.

US has the view that any negative part on their side would push president Yeltsin into the hands of hard line generals and security men of Russia, who have never trusted western countries. US long term goal is a stable Russian democracy. (Chechnya, says a senior US official, is the first test for Russian's ability to hold together as a multi ethnic democracy.) When Warren Christopher arrived in Geneva in January 1995, for two days long schedule of talks with his Russian counterpart Andre Kozyrev, He said that the Russian leadership knows they have a problem. The Chechen crises had put the Clinton administration in an exceedingly uncomfortable position. It was already under the fire at home for its uncritical embrace of the 'Russian bear'.<sup>16</sup> Then the geopolitical and human rights implication of Boris Yeltsin's violent crack down in Chechnya only further described its Russian policy.

The US administration's initial reaction to Chechnya to dismiss it and excuse it as an internal affair of Russia, only made things difficult. Gradually, the administration began making tougher sounding statements calling for military restraint or an end to the fighting.

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16. Ibid.

The West finds it hard to understand Yeltsin's motives for stubbornly refusing to hold talks with Grozny. A country that lays claim to an exclusive peacemaking role in the vast post Soviet space should behave with extreme caution in a conflict that it has termed itself an internal one. On the contrary, however, it is taking an extremely tough approach.

There is no doubt that a protracted military operation in Chechnya could entail serious complication for Russia. The question is whether Moscow is willing to sacrifice its foreign policy interest for the sake of an illusory victory over Dudayev. The events of last year force one to answer in affirmative. For a long time now, Russia has felt no need for external encouragement of its action. Of course, one could claim that Russia was driven into this corner against its will. But the fact is that Russia is not uncomfortable. For a normal state, Isolationism can be deliberate choice. For authoritarian regime which many believe is now a reality in Russia - there is simply no other choice. Such a regime feels comfortable only behind an iron curtain. In the context of human rights rhetoric on



the part of foreign leaders is unlikely to be effective.<sup>17</sup>

Supporting Yeltsin, for the Western countries, has meant and continues to mean supporting him not as an individual, but the orientation for Russia's development. But Yeltsin surrounded by 'Power-wielding' ministers no longer produces the impression of a democrat acceptable to west. On the contrary, in western eyes he appears to belong to the misanthropic, old communist or neo imperialist Russia that untill recently, Yeltsin himself and his foreign minister used as a 'bug bear to frighten new partners'. Such a Yeltsin cannot be supported, nor can be accused.<sup>18</sup> But failing to support him, writing him off as Mikhaiel Gorbachev, the president of former Soviet Union, was written off three years ago, would mean surrendering the Russia president once and for all to the other camp, to the other Russia that possess nuclear weapons and find itself in a

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17. Staneslav Kondrashov, "Strategy of Containment of Russia: A response to Chechen War" (Moscow: Izvestia Staff), 12 January 1995, p. 3.

18. Valdamer Abrinov, "The War's mounting International repercussion" The Current Digest (Moscow: Izvedstia Staff), Vol XLVII, No.1, January 1995, p. 20.

stage of partial paralysis could pose a mortal danger.<sup>19</sup>

The West's main strategic conclusion from Chechen affair will probably be implemented around the periphery of Russian border. First, Moscow's argument against NATO expansion have lost count as Russia's overall prestige has declined and this means that the process of bringing in Russia's former allies under a different umbrella will be accelerated. Second, US will pay less heed to Russia as it seeks to increase its influence in other CIS states, which in turn, will more actively seek its intercession in view of what was done in and on the Chechnya.

Third, the break up of Russia and the huge new round of chaos that would ensure are not a part of Western plans. But the intagification of centrifugal tendencies and a push towards confederal arrangements will be there as a natural consequences of Chechen affair, especially since after Chechnya, the Russian parliament is hardly likely to repeat the tested military scenario.

(Today, the biggest threat facing Russian government is that the war launched to preserve the territorial integrity

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19. Vladimis Kostko, "Chechnyha, Russia Union", Moskovskii Komsomolets (Moscow), 8 August, 1994, p. 36.

of Russian federation, will end up spilling it. The enormous territory designated on map as quiet, no more than 89 republics and regions with some kind of pretension to autonomy. Many even among those populated largely by ethnic Russians have grievances of some sort against Russia. A successful Chechen secession or a long war making Moscow look increasingly like a dictatorial oppression, would promote more attempts to split off. Already the fighting in Chechnya has spilled over into Dagistan and Ingushetia. Tartsan in February 1994 negotiated a kind of great autonomy with in the deal that many analyst think Yeltsin should have offered Chechnya. But now Tartsan is not happy with the on going war.

The trouble is that once a disintegration momentum set in, it would be difficult to stop, and even harder to contain peacefully what they see as Russian aggression, in Chechnya, is already frightening Ukrainan may well causes Poland, Hungry the Czech republic and Slovakia to ask for immediate outright inclusion in NATO as protection against Russia. But the greater threat to the world stability would seen to a dictatorial Russia, that is yet too weak to keep control of a vast territory.

The Chechnya war is one of these terrible problem for which a happy outcome seems almost in convienciable and a descent into more blood shed chaos and dictatorship all too likely.)

## CHAPTER - 3

### RUSSIAN CHECHEN PEACE NEGOTIATION

In general, both Russia government and Dudayev became prisoners of their own rhetoric. In spite of a seeming thaw in early 1994, neither side moved away from its fundamental demands. As Dudayev stated upon coming in power in 1991 "We will build an equal relations with Russia and only equal relations".<sup>1</sup> Since Dudayev has invested so much capital in creating his image as the defender of Chechen sovereignty against a Russian threat and tarring his enemies as Russian pawns, he could not oppose cooperation with Russia as an equal partner in CIS, but membership of the Russian Federation was clearly unacceptable. In March 1994, he told Itar Tass that he was willing to meet Russian leaders, but would not move 'one iota from the idea of state of independence of the republic.'<sup>2</sup> In a letter Dudayev sent to Russian Prime Minister Chernomyrlin, he stated that, "We believe that at

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1. "Perspective on solving the Russia Chechen crises", Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Moscow), 25 June 1994, p.3
2. Natalya Gorodetskya, "Russian military leaders welcome the President's decision not to extend moratorium", Segodnya (Moscow), 13 May 1995. p. 1.

present all the necessary condition have coalesced for the resumption and successful conduct of talks with the government of Russia on a whole set of issues... on a strategic level, we don't see the Chechen republic outside of a single economic political or legal framework that encompasses the present CIS".

Russia was as equally unwilling to move away from its fundamental set demands. Further more both Russian government and media had painted Chechnya as a lawless state seen by mafia, which further limited the parameters for concessions to Dudayev government. The Russian government's bargaining position was based on *quid pro quo* that Dudayev could not accept : Chechnya would sign the federation treaty, thereby acknowledging its membership in the Russian federation, hold elections for Duma and Federation Council ('Soviet Federastsei') and cease anti Russian propaganda in turn for Russia's recognition of Dudayev's legitimacy as president.<sup>3</sup>

Russian government wanted no settlement with Dudayev short of the disarmament of units normally under his con-

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3. "Chechnya : Peace Talks", SWB Summary of World Broadcasts BBC minotoring, (Moscow) SU/2370/B/1, 1 August 1225, p.3.

trol. For his part, Dudayev began to call for negotiations with Russia as his forces started to retreat in late winter (1995), but still demanded that all Russian forces leave Chechnya before talks could resume. On 28th April, 1995, President Yeltsin issued a decree commencing a unilateral ceasefire to avoid 'unpleasentries for visiting heads of state in Moscow for 50th anniversary VE day celebration. Chechen forces rejected the ceasefire and did everything possible to disrupt it, staging several raids in Grozny itself. The ceasefire was not renewed, which Russian field commanders welcomed. One, commander that ceasefire from a military pint of view was incorrect as it allowed the fighters to regroup and restore the destroyed lines of communication and supply to prepare military equipment. On 25th May the talks brokered by OSCE (The **O**rganisation for **S**ecurity and **C**ooperation in **E**urope) between Russian authorities and Chechen rebels, first to be held, collapsed after four hours of negotiations. The leader of the Chechen delegation at the talks Usman Imayev said after the meeting at the headquarters of OSCE in Chechen capital that Russian side was not ready for peace talks, adding Chechen side would return to the negotiation table after Russia stoped its military action in the region. Despite the promises by

both sides to observe a cease fire from midnight on 24th May, there was fierce fighting in suburbs of Grozny until the early hours of next day. The OSCE said that the basic purpose of talks was to bring the two sides closer. The talks brought few results with both sides restoring to the old sides. The Russians had demanded the unconditional surrender of arms by the Chechen fighters. The Chechen leadership on the other hand was making the withdrawal of the Russian troops from region as a pre-condition for any settlement of the crisis.<sup>4</sup>

On June 23, 1995, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomydrin said that he was personally involved in talks to end six month old war in Chechaya. He said in remarks reported by the Itar Tass News agency "we will not stop. We now need to reach the point of local-rule elections in Chechnya." Chernomydrin's comments appeared to aim at bolstering talks between Russian and Chechen rebel negotiator who agreed tentatively earlier to organise elections and extended a shaky ceasefire.

Earlier, talks began on Monday the 17th of June 1995,

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4. Ibid, p.5.



at the demand of rebel commander Shanel Basayev, leader of a group of gunman who attacked a Southern Russian city, on June 14 and captured about 2000 hostages. The gunmen released the hostages and went into Chechen hills on Tuesday, 18th June, into the Chechen hills after winning Russian concessions. Scores of people were killed and wounded in the raid on Budyonnovsk and attempts by troupes to storm the hospital where the hostages were held. Chermomyrdin negotiated personally with the rebels, appearing on the national television as he spoke with them by telephone.

On 1st July the head of Chechen separatist delegation at peace talks with Russian official promised to destroy part of the rebels heavy weapons as a sign of their trust in Russian government. "This step demonstrates our support for the realistic course and policies of the Russian government headed by Viktor Chernomyrdin," said Vsman Imayev. During this talks the team focused on procedural matters linked to organising free elections in Chechnya. They also agreed that all arguments will be resolved by political methods and without the use of force. The sides agreed that international monitors should observe the elections and that no groups should be barred from participating. It was decided during their talks to set aside the question of Chechen

independence until after elections and it was also assured by the Russian official that Chechen rebels who participated in fightings would not be prosecuted.

#### **RUSSIAN CHECHEN ACCORD**

On July 29, 1995 Russian and Chechen negotiator signed the agreement calling for an end to war but the critical question of the Republic's future political status remained unresolved. The two sides signed 'a package of military documents' early that morning after all night talks. But, the vital question of Chechnya's constitutional standing in relation to Russian federation was still the sticking point. The Chechen side wanted to be recognised as independent state while Russia insisted on some control over that region.

The main points of the agreement which was signed were to halt to hostilities, a gradual withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, disarmament of Chechen separatists and a prisoner exchange. It called for both sides to immediately pull back two-three kilometers from the conflict zone to be followed by the phased withdrawal of Russian troops and the gradual disarmament of Chechen fighters. The agreement envisaged Russia being allowed to keep two brigades in Chechnya, one from the army and one from the interior minis-

try. The two sides also agreed to release all the prisoners of war. "The war in Chechnya is ending"<sup>5</sup>, Chief negotiation Usman Imayev told journalists in Grozny during the talks.

The Chief negotiation Mikhaylov on his return to Moscow was very optimistic about the deal. "The signing of the agreement on a set of military issues is the beginning of what we call the unity of Russia",<sup>6</sup> said Vyacheslav Mikhaylov head of the delegation, told *Izvestia* upon arrival. Speaking about political issues, he stressed that their resolution would require a lot of time and effort in principle, by agreeing that there would be no more war, they solved political question also. Asked about who will act as a guarantor of the military accords signed in Grozny, Mikhaylov said, "the signed documents mention various guarantors, but I think the major guarantor will be the conscience of the people who believed in this document bearing our signatures."<sup>7</sup>

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5. Andrey Shtorkh, "Chechnya: Reaction to the agreement", SWB Summary of World Broadcasts BBC monitoring (Moscow), SU/2370/B 2, 30 July 1995, p. 2.
  6. Ibid, p. 3.
  7. Yevgeniy Kiselev, "Chechnya Reaction to the Agreement", SWB summary of World Broadcasts BBC monitoring (Moscow), SU/2370/B7, 30 July, 1995, p.7.

According to him the first steps in putting into effect would depend on this success in disarming preventing provocations and combat actions, and finding guarantors for the agreement - the people to organize and carry out the work, who would assume an enormous responsibility. This means an authorized representative in Chechen republic of Russian Federation, and a special observer's commission formed on consensual basis and including representatives of military command, the military themselves representatives of the Clergy, of the committee of National Accord, the territorial authorities.

He reaffirmed commitment to Chechen peace deal. He was convinced that however the situation in Chechnya might develop, the agreement on military issues signed in Grozny on 30th July would exert a positive impact in settling the Chechnya crises and achieving national reconciliation in North Caucasus republic. He stressed that the agreement opened a realistic way to peace in Chechnya. At the same time, he did not ruled out possible provocation aimed at undermining the agreements reached.

## REACTIONS ON AGREEMENTS

### Dudayev's Reaction

The leaders of both delegations (at the peace talks) did not rule out the possibility of provocations and attempts to disrupt the peace process. It seemed that the first such attempt came from Dzhokhar Dudayev. Speaking for himself, he disvowed the documents signed in Grozny. In a telephone interview with 'Radio liberty', which was recorded few hours after the agreement was signed, he said that the Russian side had resorted to blackmail and threat to force the Chechen representatives to sign the agreements on military issues. He said that the delegation authorized by himself was essentially spending their days under arrest today. In this connection he said that any document signed in such a situation cannot have legal validity.<sup>8</sup>

The rebel general's interview for 'Radio liberty' showed that not only Dudayev was out of touch with parties to the talks, he didn't even knew of their movements because of his delegation simply could not have been isolated in Grozny for even few days. Another thesis of Dudayev's inter-

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8. Ibid, p.8

view gave rise to doubt as to the general inconsistency. Commenting on the signed agreement on the desire of the Chechen side to help find Shamil Basayev, the person who held 2000 hostage in hospital of Budyonnovsk on 17th June Dudayev said, --- and, Basayev is a Chechen national hero and will be encouraged accordingly."<sup>9</sup> One would remember, when Basayev's fighter were killing the civilians of that area, Dudayev categorically denied his involvement with the terrorists and described them as agents provocatives who had discredited the national liberation struggle of the Chechen people. Now, it seemed that the agents provocations of yesterdays have become national heroes of today. Dudayev also accused the Russians and the OSCE mission of staging provocation against the Chechen delegation and said that any agreement signed by head Chechen negotiator Usman Imayev was invalid unless endorsed by the President of Chechnya.

President Boris Yeltsin's expert said agreement was the best of all possible solution. The agreement on military issues did not mean immediate peace in Chechnya but was the best possible option in the present situation, according to

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9. Ibid.

Emil Pain an 'analytical expert' close to President.<sup>10</sup> The agreement meant that some of Dudayev's supporters could emerge from the war without losing prestige. He said that the sign agreement mean that the "most active illegal armed formation" could be disarmed, inspite of misgivings by Dudayev himself.

But not everybody was happy with the agreement between Russia and Chechnya. Anatoliy Kulikov, the Russian Interior Minister and Aslan Maskhadev, the Chief of Staff of Chechen armed formations had reservation on the success of agreement. In Kulikov's view, there are forces which are interested in keeping the fire of war smouldring if not burning.' The Federation Council's deputy Yevgnyy Pavlov, also criticized the Chechen accord. He said, "It is impossible to speak about peace in Chechnya as a whole as long as arbitrariness reigns in Chechnya and Dudayev's men at large." He said that the talks in Grozny overlooked the question of confiscating the property of active Dudayev's supporters and compensation for R3,000 on which had been transferred from

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10. A Sharip Asuyev and Alkesandr Kharchenko, "Cheches threaten voters with war time punishment" Itar Tass, SWB (Moscow) SU/2467/B/5, 20 November, 1995, p.5.

Russian banks by falsified documents.

### Chechen Elections

During the negotiation between Russian officials and Chechen representatives, the Prime Minister of Russia Chernomyrdin tentatively agreed to organise elections and extended a ceasefire. They fixed 7th December for election. But it should be remembered that election was not supported by the rebel leader Dudayev but the Russian backed Chechen representative Doku Zavgayev. In fact, Dudayev's supporters threatened the voters with 'war time' punishment if they go for vote. "No decent Chechen should take part in the elections," Khozh-Ahmed Yarikhanov, the rebel said. He described the Chechen Supreme Soviet's decision of supreme court of Chechnya to hold elections as, "Provocation aimed at kindling civil war" He ruled out the possibility of the participation of Chechen separatist leader Bzhokhar Dudayev's representatives in the polls. On 7th Russian December backed elections in Chechnya was won by Chechen representative Zavgayev with 23 percent of vote. But it should be kept in mind that only Russian controlled area went under



polls. It received 20 per cent of votes.<sup>11</sup>. But Russia still has to deal with the part of Chechnya which is not under its control about 10-15 percent of villages that are located in the Caucasus mountains. After the election the elected Prime Minister said that in its activities the Government of Chechenya, of which he became head, intended to be guided by the laws of the Russian Federation and the constitution of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. He was the first secretary of the Central Committee of latter's communist party before Dudayev came to power.

Meanwhile the fierce fighting between Chechen rebels and Russian troops continued in Chechnya. And events took a shaky turn when the Chechen rebels took nearly 3,000 people hostage in a Dagestan hospital on January 9, 1996. According to the Moscow Radio, Raduyev (the son-in law) of Dudayev contacted the local police and threatened to kill hostages unless Russian troops immediately withdrew from Chechnya. On January 10 the rebels freed up to 3,000 hostages but it

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11. \_\_\_\_\_, "Chechnya : Yeltsin's Peace Plan" Itar-tass, SWB (Moscow) SSU/2575/B/1, 1 March, 1996, p. 1.

was not clear why they decided to drop their demands and left for the safe passage. Meanwhile the entire cabinet of Moscow backed Chechen National revival government announced its resignation on January 10 to take responsibility for the Kizlyar hostage crises. Prime Minister Zavgayev announced the collective resignation owing responsibility for the crises. It should be noted that the rebels loyal to Dzhokhar Dudayev refused to recognise the elections of December 25.

Meanwhile, the fierce battle between the two sides continued which has resulted in thousands of killing from both sides.

#### NEW ACTION PLAN OF RUSSIA

On 1st April, 1996 the military officials halted the combat operations in Chechnya as it was ordered by President Yeltsin.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin's plan for a settlement in Chechnya contained three key points: ending troop operations from 2000 GMT on 31st March, holding free and democratic elections to the Chechen parliament and determining the status of the Republic. He said that the Russian side was prepared to hold talks on Chechnya's status with Dzhokhar Dudayev's separatist rebels 'through intermediaries'.

Other measures envisaged in the plan included phased withdrawal of Russian troops, a gradual devolution of power from federal to republican power bodies, stricter controls on the distribution of material and financial resources and the formation of a state commission headed by Premier Chernomyrdin to coordinate the work of all federal bodies in controlling the situation in Chechnya.

According to him the status of Chechnya is the 'main stumbling block'.<sup>12</sup> He said that the issue should be the subject of business like and constructive dialogue between the federal authorities and plenipotentiary representatives of the people of Chechen republic, especially since the Russian constitution stipulates that status might be changed by mutual agreement between Russia and the constituent parts of the federation themselves. "The normalization of the situation in Republic and the establishment of peace, tranquillity and stability there."<sup>13</sup> he said.

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12. \_\_\_\_\_, "Reactions to Yeltsin's Peace Plan" SWB, (Moscow), S.U. 2576/B/8, 2 April, 1996, p. 8.

13. Ibid.

### Chernomyrdin as Head State of Commission on Chechnya

Cooperation between all branches of federal power is an important condition for a settlement of the Chechen crises. To this effect, the government of the Russian Federation has been instructed to form, jointly with the chambers of the Federal Assembly, a State Commission, for control over the situation in Chechen Republic. This commission, is to be chaired by Prime Minister Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin. As a means of speedily achieving peace in Chechnya, it has been proposed that the state Duma considers an amnesty for participants in the armed actions in the Republic, with the exception of those who have committed grave crimes.

The programme envisages a radical change in the practical and material resources sent to the Chechen republic. The government has been strictly instructed to investigate the abuses and to ensure that the assistance reaches without fail, those in the Chechen Republic, for whom intended. The programme contains specific steps aimed at stopping the armed confrontation and at moving away from conflict towards peaceful dialogue on the status of Chechnya.

### **REACTION TO YELTIN'S PEACE PLAN**

### Cautious Reaction of Pradidaya group

Supporters of Dzhokar Dudayev reacted 'with caution' to the programme for settling the conflict in Chechnya which was put forward by Russian President. A member of Dudayev's leadership, Khasan Khazuyev said that this was not the first occasion that Moscow had put forward peace initiatives on Chechnya; how ever things subsequently "in practice turn out in quite the opposite way.' He said that proof of this was the fact that in spite of the announcement of the cessation of hostilities at midnight few days before.<sup>14</sup>

The fighting between Dudayev's formations and the federal troops continued in South-east of the Republic. Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the group of federal forces in Chechnya, declared that it was impossible to stop combat actions immediately after the president's statement. To judge by all accounts, the military command has not managed to carry out fully the president's order to destroy the fighters.

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14. \_\_\_\_\_, "Chechnya : Elections" Itar Tass, SWB, (Moscow), SU/2490B/1, 19 December, 1995,p.1.

### Federal operations to disarm Chechen rebels to continue

The commander of the joint group of federal troops in Chechnya at a meeting of Chechen government that the possibility of holding talks with Dudayev's entourage through mediators, which was announced by Russian President of Russia, did not mean that federal troops would make concessions to the rebels. The commander of the troops confirmed that he had ordered the troops to halt all combat operations in the Chechen Republic as of midnight on 31st March. "However, the cessation of combat operations by federal troops does not mean that they will halt their special operation to disarm illegal armed formations", Gen. Tikhomirov said.

### Yeltsen's Peace Plan 'too late':

The Communist Party of Russian Federation would support all actions aimed at a peaceful settlement in Chechnya, from whatever source, but it believes that the measures set out in President's address should have been taken much earlier, it was stated by Zyuganov. "In point of fact, all this (Yeltsin's peace plan) has been said many times by supporters of a peaceful settlement, but unfortunately none of the decisions was adopted at the right time," he stated. Nevertheless he added it suits the communists that "the

dialogue is being transferred on to a political plane, although this could have been done most earlier."

According to him, with the support of the CPRF faction, the Duma has already adopted five resolutions aimed at establishing a political dialogue in Chechnya, but those factled to bring any positive results.

Criticism of Yeltsin's Peace Plan:

Gen. Aleksandi Lebed, a deputy of state Duma, the lower house of parliament, as one of the candidates for the post of Russian President, had blasted the settlement plan for the Chechen conflict. The plan is "a propogation on the threshold of the (16 June) presidential election. He said that, as a "military professional", he was sure "it is impossible to stop hostilities after year and a half of massed aerial bombings. The question arises why this war was needed anyway", he said.

Today, the Russian government faces three choices, all frought with problems. First, Yeltsin can negotiate with chechen rebel directly to bring an end to the fighting. While this would stop the killing, it seems the least likely option given the government's demonisation of Dudayev, assist the destruction of large areas of Chechnya, the political capital expanded on the war, and the inability ever

to hold series discussions with the Chechen leader. Second, Russia can launch an all-out, extended assault into the mountains, which would be costly not only for them, but for the large displaced population located there and for the local people. Third Russian forces could build a 'cordon sanitaire' at the food hills of the Caucasus and hope to starve the rebels. But this would not only be embarrassing politically, it also might not be effective while at the same time exposing the civilian population to a great privation.

Most likely the Russian government will implement a policy using all three strategies. It will hold election to gather legitimacy, while at the same time trying to defeat the rebels militarily.



## CONCLUSIONS

Russian's war in Chechnya has ostensibly come to an end with declaration of ceasefire in Chechnya by Russian President and announcement of Peace Plan on April 1, 1996.

The significance of this bloody more than 17 months long war cannot be overestimated. For the Chechens, it has been a period of intense suffering that they will long remember. They have suffered great losses, not only in terms of lives but also in terms of cultural institutions that were destroyed with Grozny. They will need substantial help. For Russia, war has revealed the deep seated weakness in Boris Yeltsin's vision of government and in the capabilities and intensions of this ruling circle. Further, the effectiveness and leadership of Russian military and related power ministries have been exacerbated.

The economic and political cost of the war have been exorbitant. An expensive and protracted war means that Russia will not be able to hold the nation's budget subject to less than ~~percent~~ of gross GDP, which happens to be the IMF conditions for receiving loans. After long delay the trade partners and foreign companies in Russia, who are already irritated with the mafia and corruption, will turn away. Such reactions have already started. The European Union

(EU) announced that it would hold up an interim trade report. There is a wide resentment from the Republicans in the USA and they have already expressed their desire to temporarily stop aid. War is bound to set back Russia's economic reform policy, and a protracted war is bound to delay the democratic process from taking firm rest. Only a firm and coherent commitment to market reforms could lead to a revival of economic growth and stability that would enable democracy to take hold over the long run. Yeltsin has so far reiterated his commitment to reform, although it is not clear where he will find the political support.

The Ministry of Economics has made an attempt to estimate the possible expenditures involved in restoring what has been destroyed and what probably will be destroyed in Chechnya war.

According to the Economic Ministry's estimates, expenditures on rebuilding the housing stock, engineering structures and other facilities could total 2.3 trillion to 2.7 trillion rubles till last year (1995), depending on the intensity of military operations. Probable expenditures on restoring the petroleum and gas complex were assessed separately, they came to at least 700 billion to 800 billion rubles. But the most serious economic losses may now be in

store for Russia not on military groups or operations but in peaceful Moscow offices. Because of the war in Chechnya the Russian Federation Ministry of Social Protection for the population has frozen implementation of regional health programme under which it had been planned to provide assistance to disabled children afflicted with cerebral palsy.

The Chechen operation has erased Yeltsin's support among liberals and Russian public in general. As he cannot rely on the people for the support he needs, he might turn to the state structure to make himself stronger. This is one reason why liberals in Russia feel that in near future the prospects for democracy are very slim. The present condition of the army is also a threat to building democracy. The Russian army is already bitter about the loss of stature and resources and so he may not be able to retain control over army for long. History suggests that 'a hungry and humiliated army is not likely to be building block of democracy.'

Russia will lose billions of dollars by way of oil revenues. Besides the Chechen oil, Chechnya basin and the oil pipelines to foreign markets runs through Chechnya. Important oil and natural gas pipelines have already damaged. Former Soviet Republics and other restive regions

within the Russian Federation will become more apprehensive about Russia's intention. Even if Russia manages to negotiate a compromise so that Chechnya stays within Russian Federation, long run success does not appear to be a possibility. Yeltsin is bound to lose the trust of International Community. Conduct has its own consequences and Yeltsin cannot expect trust and cooperation from the democratic countries of the world when he attempts to settle internal problems with military attack. True, no one doubts Russia's claim on Chechnya, but to use military might on one's own subjects is quite another matter. Russia's military weakness has been amply exposed and therefore is less of a threat to its international neighbours. For many western military specialists, the failure of Russian assault came as shock. Reforming the Russian army and rebuilding it on the Soviet model is going to be the next call from the conservatives a step that is sure to drain roubles from the exhausted Russian treasury. The Chechen debacle is pointer to the Russian government that they cannot put off the job of reforming the army inspite of Russia's diminished resources. Yeltsin's prospects for re-election in 1996 which appeared not very bright then, and his victory in June election raises some hope. However, public resentment in Russia has never

been so strong as it is. Over the past couple of years Yeltsin has been criticised for his various policies and has been attacked for the crime, corruption, high inflation, falling industrial output and high dependence on the West.

When President Boris Yeltsin called on Russian troops in December 94 to quell the uprising in Chechnya, he could not have expected the operation to last as long as it has. Nor could he have anticipated the enormous political and international fall-out it has had.

(Chechnya has been the catalyst of Russian intentions and capabilities. The objectives were clear and simple, Chechnya was a part of Russian federation and its efforts after collapse of Soviet Union to become an independent republic had to be squashed, the sooner the better. As soon as some of the turmoil settled down, which had been taking place from last few years, and President emerged as the leader who was determined to lead it into democracy, the Russian state proceeded to tackle Chechnya in traditional way. This meant using the methods employed by Tsars and also of Stalinism, since Stalinism ultimately did not advocate different means from those used in Tsarist Russia. Both Tsarist Nicholas 1 in 1800s and Stalin 100 years later used savage repression against the perennially rebellions

Chechens but with temporary results.

The new Russia followed suit even though experience, caution and a healthy regard for the democratic spirit ought to have restrained it. It should have tried dialogue, compromise, negotiation and conciliation as it is now trying after hostage crises. Unfortunately, the Russia that embarked on the same course as its earlier non-libertarian incarnations was democratic. As a result Russian parliamentarians and the people including those living in Chechnya and especially the Russian defence forces have become deeply divided by the war in Chechnya.

President Yeltsin has continuously refused to have direct talks with the Chechen rebel leaders in whom he has no faith and dismissing as naive those in Russia who call for a negotiated resolution of the conflict. For a while, when Chechnya's capital Grozny fell to Russian military attack, President Yeltsin seemed to be vindicated. But he should have remembered that Chechens cannot be vanquished quite so easily. And they proved this by staging an attack and taking some 2000 hostages far away from Chechnya, inside Russia only. President Yeltsin has been left with no choice but to talk to Chechens. But the credit goes to the Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin. It is he who represents the

moderate face of Russia, who has helped to end the hostage crises and for many in Russia and outside not least the west, who stands for Russia reborn as a democratic state in better and spirit. Boris Yeltsin who still remains the most powerful in Russia cannot be unaware of this.

All this shows that Russia is still torn between, on the one hand, being the autocratic, heavy handed state the symbolised the former Soviet Union and, on the other, aspiring to be democratic country to which its leaders are committed. In this process of transition, it is by no means certain that democracy will emerge. The winner Chechnya has shown how forces of reaction are still deeply entrenched in the Russian leadership and establishment and that those of democracy are as yet new, untested and inexperienced.

The Russian official reaction to the Chechnya is the fear that if the Chechens are allowed to get away with it, the urge for independence or at least genuine autonomy will grow among the various other people the Ingushetias, for example, and lead eventually to a break-up of the Russian federation, when these other people happen to non-slavic, Muslim in the case of Chechnya, the Russian fear assumes paranoic dimension.

As Russian authorities are dealing with the situation, there are increasing challenges to Russia's central authority that has created a confusion and can result either in unproductive repression in Chechnya or in fruitless experimentation with bizarre forms of democracy. In the short run there can only be periodic test of Russian will and tenacity with the possibility that could well be a return to autocracy negating all that has been achieved so far by the way of democracy. In the long run the building of popular representative, democratic institutions is the only answer. At present Russia either lacks these or they are too new to hold together in a crisis. Most of the existing institutions like the bureaucracy, the army and the state government are too backward to be of any use in the new, democratic Russia that is sought to be built. They are geared essentially to decayed Communist state.

Thus, they have to be replaced with more popular, elective, representative bodies in which people can have a say and which they can eventually regard as their own. Genuine decentralization of political social and economic power appears to be the best way forwards. The new Russia is committed to free market and to economic reform. These must be the underpinnings of true democracy. So far, given



Russia's size, heterogeneity and traditions, . . . traditions<sup>2</sup> reform has been at best an indifferent process which could bring as many disadvantages as benefits. For instance, the recent rouble crises in Russia has shaken up the system and the people. This is a task which the new economists and their political leaders must address urgently. They must come up with a virtually new kind of economy that is radically free and different from what the Russian people were used to in Tsarist or more recently in communist times.

Russia's present problems spring largely from its role as the successor state of the Soviet Union and its self-perception as the only other super power. Its role in Chechnya does not speak very highly of its records on this court. Its entry into North American Treaty Organisation (NATO), its ambivalence vis-a-vis the West, its desire to prevent NATO from expanding eastwards to incorporate the countries of eastern Europe, its new found friendship with China, its view on sanctions against raw, all these are signs that it is confused and therefore sending contradictory signals. Nothing brought this out more clearly than the handling of the situation in Chechnya.

But Chechnya may well have done Russia some good. By opening up fissures as part of nation wide debate over

country's future, what it wants to be and the policies it wants to pursue, it has provided Russian with the first real test and test of democracy as long as its leaders are committed to this ideal, there is every chance that democracy will indeed take root Chechnya may yet spell the end of Communist style autocracy and mark the beginning of a new liberation in Russia.

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