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Political Trends in Russia:
Challenges to the Stability
of Yeltsin's Government

by

Natasha Hritzuk

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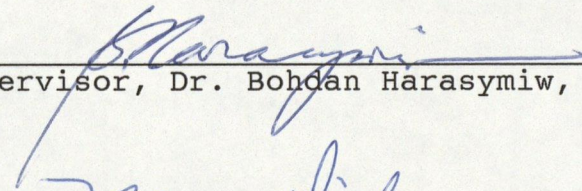
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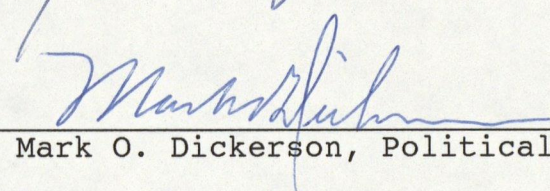


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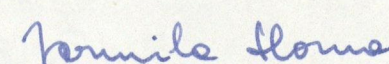
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the potential for the breakdown of Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin's government based on trends observed in 1992. Utilising a framework derived from the literature on the breakdown of the state, the Russian economic situation, elite groups, and the armed forces are explored.

It is determined that, at the beginning of 1993, Yeltsin's government faced a number of threats. The economy continued to decline, an alliance of hostile elite forces dominated the parliament, and the armed forces became increasingly politicised.

Ultimately, Yeltsin and his government may potentially face removal via a revolution or coup unless a democratic constitution is established to regulate and define the operation of the government and legislatures. Furthermore, it is crucial that Yeltsin maintain his current level of public support by gaining more control over the political and economic realms.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In August 1991, the world was shocked by the sudden removal of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev from power by a small, hard-line group which included some top Soviet government officials. The coup, however, proved to be short-lived as Russian President Boris Yeltsin managed to provoke wide-spread defiance and protest against the new ruling body by proclaiming the illegitimacy of the hardliner group's seizure of power. Consequently, the armed forces refused to support the fledgling leadership's authority, and the hardliners were forced to concede. Gorbachev returned to power, and in the following months, the Soviet Union underwent a series of changes as radical as those of 1917.

Under pressure from Boris Yeltsin and the growing number of radical reformers, the Soviet government voted to ban the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, and in December, the entire Soviet Union was voted out of existence. In its place, a loose federation of former republics emerged called the Commonwealth of Independent States. Subsequently, in the latter part of December, Gorbachev resigned from power and

Boris Yeltsin remained as leader of the Russian republic.

Boris Yeltsin immediately launched a radical reform program in Russia; he sought to transform the former totalitarian political system into a democratic state, and to abolish the state-controlled economy in favour of one managed by the market. The reforms were a necessary step in a country suffused with political and economic chaos. As Michel Oksenburg and Bruce Dickson note in their analysis of reforms, reform programs are typically instigated during periods of economic, political, or social disorder: "Revolution and reform are both instances of politically induced change brought on by a perceived crisis."¹ Reforms are pursued with urgency, with the hope that they will restore some order and stability to the crisis situation.

Unfortunately, Yeltsin's reform program has thus far failed to spawn any order or stability to the increasingly troubled Russian political system and economy. This is not unusual, explains Russell Bova, as reforms are very difficult to control: "most efforts to transform authoritarian regimes take on a life and dynamic of their own that quickly sweep away the most carefully laid plans of the architects of reform."² Therefore, taking into account the political and economic crises that typically precede reforms, and the uncertainty of the progress of reforms themselves, it becomes apparent that any government launching an extensive reform program is confronting a major risk. If reforms fail to

induce order and equilibrium to an already shaky political and economic environment, the government along with its reform program may face dissolution.

Currently Yeltsin's government is confronted with a similar situation. Reforms to date have not proved successful, and have even increased the economic chaos and political uncertainty that existed prior to implementation of the reform program. As a result, opposition to both Yeltsin's government as the architect of the reform program, and to the reforms themselves, is escalating. In response to this opposition, Yeltsin is attempting to compromise with various factions of anti-reformers, while continuing to pursue certain aspects of the reform program. Consequently, Yeltsin's policies seem increasingly contradictory, and his leadership appears weak and vacillating. Adam Przeworski describes this particular scenario with great insight:

Since the idea of resolving conflicts by agreement is alluring [the leaders] turn to making bargains when the opposition against reforms mounts . . . they turn back to the technocratic style when the compromises involved . . . imperil reforms. . . . As a result, governments appear to lack a clear conception of reforms. . . . The state begins to be perceived as the principal source of economic instability.³

What remains to be seen then, is whether Yeltsin's compromises with groups opposed to rapid reform will actually compromise his government and the process of democratic and economic transformation.

This thesis examines the state of instability in Russia

in 1992 in order to assess whether there is potential for the Russian government to break down. The regime itself, along with the government, may be swept away by a coup d'etat, revolution, or civil war. Additionally, the government alone may be removed via legal parliamentary means. The focus here is on the breakdown of government specifically, rather than the state, which is a less concrete entity. Government, as it is referred to here, is defined as: "Those institutions which make and implement rules in the form of binding decisions for a political community."⁴ In order to determine the possibility of the collapse of the Russian government, it is necessary to develop a framework to outline clearly the steps or indicators that must be present before such a breakdown is possible. It is the purpose of this first chapter to explore the prominent literature dealing with political change and breakdown in order to define the framework which will serve as the basis for analysis in this thesis.

After examining the wide range of literature on revolution, breakdown of the state and government, and general political change, a number of common themes emerge from the various analyses, specifically with regard to the indicators apparent before a government is bound for collapse. First, most scholars acknowledge that in most cases, governments on the verge of breakdown instigate a series of unsuccessful policies which serve to weaken both their legitimacy as adequate leaders, and create problems economically,

politically, or socially.⁵ Second, scholars of political change and breakdown indicate that a weak government will not collapse on its own.⁶ Rather, they stress that there must be opposition groups or factions, the most powerful being elite resistance, to challenge the weakened government. Finally, some scholars note that the armed forces must refuse to support the government in order for breakdown to occur.⁷ Each of these major themes is discussed and then developed into a relevant framework to facilitate the analysis carried out in the following chapters.

Poor policy decisions and the weakening of government

Inevitably, all governments, during the course of their rule implement assorted unsuccessful and unpopular policy decisions. Usually, abortive or ill-conceived policies, if sporadic, do not weaken the government in power as it is impossible for any government to have a perfect record. However, when a government's policies are consistently fruitless and more damaging to society than beneficial, the government appears weak, is less able to rule authoritatively, and is viewed with general distrust by society. In fact, a number of scholars indicate that a government which continually issues contradictory and unsuccessful policies places itself in danger of collapse.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan examine the role ineffective decision-making plays in the collapse of legitimate ruling bodies. If a government fails to respond to crises in the political, economic or social realms, it risks losing its legitimacy as an effective ruling body. Furthermore, Linz and Stepan indicate, if the previous government in power had a record of successes in using policies to solve problems, the new leadership risks even greater loss of legitimacy: "The problem becomes even more serious when the preceding regime has considerable efficacy to its credit, efficacy to which its remaining supporters can point."⁸ A new government that cannot devise successful policies runs the risk of collapse.

Even if a government manages to maintain efficacy and develop policies to heal the ills of society, it may still lose legitimacy and potentially break down.⁹ Linz and Stepan point out that good policies are meaningless if the government is unable effectively to implement them. The ability of a government to develop viable policies, and then fulfil their policy objectives is crucial. If the leadership fails on either of these levels, it risks both the loss of society's support and its own legitimacy, hence the subsequent ability to retain power. Therefore, from Linz and Stepan's perspective, policy formulation and implementation play crucial roles in a government's success or eventual breakdown.¹⁰

Similarly, Chalmers Johnson examines the role decision-

making plays in either reinforcing or breaking down a government's power. Johnson maintains that when society is in a state of disequilibrium, marked by disharmony between society's values and the environment within which society exists, the potential for conflict rises considerably. He explains:

The problem of social conflict and its resolution cannot be understood unless both the values and environmental sources of conflict are considered and unless the conflict regulating capacity of a system is considered in the context of how its values legitimate the particular way the system adapts to its environment.¹¹

In other words, in a society where values have changed, but the economic, social, and political structures remain the same, conflict will arise unless the government devises policies which will adapt the environment to society's values, or vice-versa. Johnson therefore emphasizes that a government must reequilibrate society through the implementation of specific policies, or risk power deflation, which represents a decrease in the government's actual power to enforce its decisions. Logically, then, power deflation prompts a loss of government authority. If a government faces both a disequilibrated society and power deflation, the capacity for breakdown to occur at both the government and systemic levels is high.¹²

Thus, like Linz and Stepan, Johnson highlights the

importance of a government's policy responses to societal crises. If the government cannot successfully correct the problems in society, it runs the risk of losing both its own power and authority. A government's lack of efficacy and effectiveness in its decision-making capacities appears to be a significant factor contributing to the breakdown of a government.

Ted Robert Gurr similarly examines the effects of a government's inability to effect policies to correct a crisis situation. In particular, Gurr focuses on relative deprivation as the major factor creating the potential conditions for breakdown in society, which he defines as follows:

Relative deprivation . . . is defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping.¹³

Therefore, when a large number of people in a given society feel they are not receiving the economic benefits, security from danger, or political freedoms they believe they have a right to, the government must intervene and prevent a crisis from occurring. By implementing policies to correct the situation, the government can either adjust society's expectations, or give citizens the goods they believe are rightfully theirs. As Gurr explains, the potential for political violence increases if the "regime [lacks]

effectiveness in alleviating Relative Deprivation."¹⁴

Linz, Stepan, and Johnson all examine the potential for breakdown or power deflation within the government, based on government's inability to issue corrective policies in a crisis situation. Likewise, Gurr explores the breakdown of government in the context of political violence generated by society in a crisis situation. Fundamentally, the societal crisis is generated due to government's failure to correct the damage caused by relative deprivation, and, as a result, it must contend with widespread violence and its own possible demise.

Crane Brinton, in his book The Anatomy of Revolution, pinpoints the failure of government to devise effective economic policies as one of the major factors leading to the breakdown of the state. In keeping with Gurr's notion of relative deprivation, Brinton explains that failed economic policies cause groups in society to feel the government is preventing them from attaining what they deserve. As Brinton contends: "[when] governments are chronically short of money . . . groups feel that governmental policies are against their particular economic interests."¹⁵ Subsequently, the government's inability to produce successful economic policies causes both unrest amongst certain groups in society, and also weakens the government itself, by decreasing its money supply. According to Brinton, this is one of the first steps leading towards breakdown of the government.

Jack Goldstone, like Brinton, focuses specifically on government's lack of success in defining and implementing economic policies as a factor leading to the weakening and eventual collapse of government. As he explains in his contribution to the book Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century, regular failure of government generated economic policies will often lead to a decrease in the power of government, as its own economic strength declines. In fact, Goldstone notes that: "The first condition [for revolution] . . . is a decline of state's resources relative to the state's expenses and commitments, and relative to the resources of potential domestic . . . adversaries."¹⁶ The implication, then, is that a government that has failed to instigate successful economic policies will potentially suffer a corresponding loss of resources, and will therefore be more vulnerable to groups with greater economic assets. Thus Goldstone and Brinton both focus specifically on the role of failed economic policies in weakening a government's economic and political strength and authority.

Alexander J. Motyl stresses the importance of the state's resources as the key to continued strength and legitimacy. Motyl, in concert with the scholars discussed above, views failure in government policies as a major factor provoking the weakening and potential collapse of government. Motyl explains how government becomes increasingly vulnerable: "Prolonged economic decline . . . failed policies . . . and

the . . . incompetence of leaders can all reduce a state's capacity to acquire resources and to convert them into sanctions."¹⁷ When a government is no longer effective as a ruling body, or at policy making, it suffers loss in both material resources and authority. Consequently, groups in society that were discouraged from acting against the government in the past, now view the government as too weak to impose negative sanctions for activities and behaviour that directly challenge government's authority. Government in its weakened state is therefore unable to effectively resist these challenges. In summary, the authors all contend that poor policy choices and lack of ability to solve problems leave government weak, and thus increasingly vulnerable to power deflation, loss of authority, and subsequently its own collapse.

Most of the scholars discussed focus on the effects of failed government policies in general, and ineffective economic policies in particular, on the ability of government to remain stable and in power. Russia is currently confronting a severe economic crisis precipitated by a series of government reform policies. In this thesis, which assesses the potential for the breakdown of the Russian government, the initial focus is on economic policies which lead to a decrease in government authority and political strength. Brinton, Goldstone, and Motyl discuss the effects of poor economic decisions on government's ability to retain

power, indicating that there is a correlation between faulty economic policies, loss of state resources, and government's vulnerability to collapse.

David S. Mason specifically discusses the potential effects of failed economic policies within the context of the transitional societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A recurring theme in his book, Revolution in East-Central Europe: The Rise and Fall of Communism and the Cold War, is the significant threat that consistently ineffective economic reforms continue to pose to these fledgling democracies. Traditionally, Communist governments derived a major part of their legitimacy from successful economic performance. When the economies in these former Communist states began to show signs of decline, the governments were implicated: "In the state socialist societies . . . because the government controls the economy, the government gets the blame when the economy falters."¹⁸ Under Communism, however, social unrest was negligible due to the efficiency of the state institutions of repression. But with glasnost, and most significantly the demise of Communism, there has been greater opportunity for people to express their discontent.

Currently, the tradition of government legitimacy derived from economic performance continues to thrive in the former Communist states. Therefore the persistent decline of the economy in Russia, provoked by government directed economic reforms, poses a great threat to the Russia government.

People now have the freedom to condemn the government's failures, and rise in opposition to what they may view as a government incapable of running a country.

Adam Przeworski also emphasizes the connection between floundering economic policies and the weakening of government in post-communist states: "The durability of. . . new democracies will depend . . . not only on their institutional structure, but to a large extent on their economic performance."¹⁹ However, Przeworski goes beyond emphasizing the above connection and precisely outlines and explains the specific indicators of unsuccessful economic reforms.²⁰ These indicators are used in this thesis to evaluate the success or failure of economic reforms in Russia.

Przeworski outlines four major manifestations of failed economic reform policies: inflationary inertia, unemployment, distributional effects, and privatization that is not wholly successful and fails to generate revenue. He acknowledges that during the onset of economic transition, it is inevitable for some inflation, unemployment, and problems with the allocation of resources and privatization, to confront the architects of the reform policy.²¹ What is damaging, however, is if the government cannot correct these problems and they become entrenched or beyond government control.

Inflation, while normal during any given period of major economic reform, should at some point balance out as prices adjust to the demands of the marketplace. However,

inflationary inertia results when inflation continues to rise, and shows no sign of reaching an equilibrium. Przeworski outlines four major factors leading to inertial inflation. The first is the failure of the government to eradicate monopolies. As Przeworski explains: "[the] monopolistic structure of the economy inherited from the pre-reform system is likely to continue to drive prices up."²² When free competition between enterprises does not exist, prices continue to be arbitrarily set by monopolies, thus prohibiting prices from adjusting to their normal levels.

The second factor contributing to inflationary inertia, according to Przeworski, is government deficit. When a government has a lack of revenue, due to an inefficient taxation system, it does not have the necessary capital to maintain critical government programs. In order to finance its expenses, the government typically prints more money for its treasury, leading to increased inflation. As Przeworski articulates it: "the government will find that to fulfil its . . . obligations it must run deficits that exceed planned targets and . . . as a result it . . . must print money."²³

Wage pressures can lead to inflationary inertia as well. As prices continue to rise, workers typically demand more money and threaten to strike if their requirements are not fulfilled. In the interests of keeping production moving, the government often caves in and increases workers' wages, thus leading to inflationary wage and price spirals.

Finally, the fourth factor contributing to inflationary inertia is a lag in supply. Przeworski explains this problem: "If supply declines faster than demand, an inertial mechanism will appear."²⁴ Essentially, a shortage of raw materials available for production prompts the prices for these basic supplies to rise, and subsequently, the cost of the finished product is commensurately greater. Again, these higher prices serve to exacerbate inflation.

In addition to inflationary inertia, Przeworski lists unemployment as another factor which may lead to the breakdown of government in a period of reform. Again, with the implementation of reforms, a degree of unemployment is unavoidable as some industries cannot compete under the new market conditions. When unemployment becomes endemic, however, the obvious consequence is social unrest and a drop in government popularity. This problem is exacerbated when the government is faced with a large deficit and cannot offer any financial safety net for those threatened with unemployment.

Distributional effects are a third major feature indicating the failure of economic reform policy. With the onset of reforms, some groups are adversely affected as they receive less money for their work, or lose prestige as their job becomes superfluous under the new system. The natural consequence is that these individuals become disenchanted with the reform process, particularly if they fared better under

the old system. Przeworski indicates: "the anti-reform coalition is likely to comprise bureaucrats without professional training or private incomes, unskilled workers, and public employees."²⁵ These individuals put pressure on the government to reverse or slow down reforms, especially if they realise the government cannot offer any financial compensation for the losses they have suffered due to the reform process. Consequently, the government is faced with a situation where it must try to push ahead with reforms, but also to contend with growing public dissatisfaction. This can lead to increasingly contradictory reform policies which weaken government authority and its ability to correct problems with clear and decisive policies.

Finally, Przeworski's fourth indicator of failing economic reforms that consequently weaken the government, is a lack of any real progress with respect to privatization. Privatization is important for a government with a large deficit, as it can provide revenue when state-owned properties are sold to private bidders. Once government attains a solid revenue base, it is able to curb inflation, offer compensation to the unemployed, and provide a general safety net to individuals adversely affected by the reforms. As Przeworski indicates, however, privatization is very difficult to initiate in economies that have traditionally been controlled by the state:

Financial markets are not easy to establish when there are no savings; labour markets will not operate when there is no housing market. Credit markets everywhere discriminate against venture entrepreneurs, since they have no collateral.²⁶

Essentially then, privatization is difficult to implement when there are few with the capital to buy property. Thus, if a government is unable to stimulate privatization, it loses an important source of revenue, the market continues to be dominated by often inefficient state-owned monopolies, and the economic reform program becomes stagnant.

Przeworski's analysis of economic reforms provides the indicators needed to pinpoint the specific signs of failing economic reform policies. Generally, the literature examined in this section points to a correlation between ineffectual policies and the subsequent weakening of government. Scholars, such as Brinton, Goldstone, Motyl, and Przeworski deal with economic policies, which are of particular relevance to an analysis of Russia's current state of instability. Therefore, the first indicator in the framework used in this thesis is the failure of government economic policies, which subsequently serves to weaken the government. Combined with Przeworski's other four indicators- inflationary inertia, unemployment, distributional effects, and failed, or nonrevenue generating privatization - the framework provides a means for assessing whether economic reform policies are not

successfully improving the economy, or are, in fact, exacerbating the initial pre-reform crisis.

Elites

Although scholars agree that poor policy decisions can weaken a regime, this factor alone does not cause the breakdown of a government. Many governments, including Canada's, have implemented very unpopular policies that have cost them some loss of support, but not complete collapse. In order for a vulnerable government to be toppled, there must be some group or coalition of groups that challenges government authority. If a group possesses resources and power, it can put enough pressure on government either to cause it to collapse, or prompt it to accede to its demands.

Powerful opposition groups are usually composed of elites who have had to deal with the negative repercussions of the government's poor policy choices. Often, elites are able to secure sufficient resources and power to pressure a government successfully, particularly one that is vulnerable. Disaffected government elites are very powerful due to their knowledge of the workings of government, as well as their access to government revenue. Industrial or business elites and union leaders, in addition, can threaten to halt production through strikes, and can withhold profits or taxes

that the government depends on for revenue.

Jack Goldstone indicates the dominant role elites can play in supporting a vulnerable government and preventing it from collapse:

a resource crisis is not invariably fatal to states. Elites - individuals who are exceptionally influential owing to their wealth, religion, or professional positions, local authority, or celebrity - may, if they are loyal, rally around the government and continue to support it.²⁷

The implication, then, is that if elites are not loyal, they can just as easily provoke the breakdown of a government. Goldstone indicates that if elites feel sufficiently alienated from government, due to regime policies that harm or threaten their position or prestige, they can form a very powerful opposition. In fact, as Goldstone says: "a united elite, opposed to a government weak in resources, can simply stage a coup d'etat."²⁸

Similarly, Chalmers Johnson believes that government elites in particular can lend their support to a vulnerable government and protect it from collapse, or conversely, oppose it and provoke its demise. When government elites, disturbed by the government's consistent failure to issue policies to correct the dissynchronized system, decide to issue their own policy alternatives, they pose a very real threat to the stability of the regime. Johnson explains that:

Elite intransigence . . . always serves as an underlying cause of revolution. In its grossest form, this is a frank, wilful pursuit of reactionary policies by an elite . . . policies that exacerbate rather than rectify a dissynchronized social structure.²⁹

When elites within the government become disloyal and challenge the government, the regime faces a crucial loss of support and finds it must compete with these hostile government elites for society's acceptance and favour. Essentially, the government becomes involved in a power struggle which can potentially lead to its own destruction.

Alexander Motyl also discusses the deleterious effects a powerful opposition can pose to a vulnerable and resource-weak government. Motyl associates loss of resources as a major factor threatening the strength of government. Essentially, when a government no longer has the resources to impose negative sanctions on the anti-governmental elements in society, these groups become free to oppose the regime: "the weakening of the state . . . is the necessary condition for the emergence of opposition activity."³⁰ Thus, like Goldstone and Johnson, Motyl's analysis confirms that if a group, particularly one with influence and access to capital, becomes disaffected with a government's ineffectual performance, it can pose a real risk to the stability of the regime.

Similarly, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan indicate that an alliance of opposition groups directly threatening or

challenging the authority of an ineffective government can potentially provoke it to break down. The opposition, according to Linz and Stepan, is comprised of two groups. First, the disloyal opposition is unequivocally opposed to the government in power and actively seeking to discredit and replace it. The semi-loyal opposition, however, is far more ambivalent, and may support the government or oppose it, depending on the circumstances.³¹ This latter group, based on whom they decide to support, becomes decisive in either prolonging a government's existence or provoking its breakdown. If the semi-loyal opposition allies with the disloyal opposition against the government, the disloyal forces grow significantly and pose a greater threat to government. The disloyal opposition may gain the support of the semi-loyal opposition group by promising them material rewards or incentives for their patronage, or may conversely discredit the government and lead the semi-loyal opposition to believe the government is acting against their best interests.

Therefore, Linz and Stepan stress that a government must be both weak and threatened by a disloyal and semi-loyal opposition alliance in order for the conditions to exist that lead to a possible collapse:

Unsolvable problems, a disloyal opposition ready to exploit them to challenge the regime . . . and the loss of efficacy and effectiveness . . . all lead to a generalised atmosphere of tension . . . that something has to be done.³²

In such a situation, according to Linz and Stepan, the

government must either have the strength to isolate the disloyal opposition and prevent it from exacerbating the crisis situation, or actively solicit the support of the semi-loyal opposition. Failure to accomplish either will leave the government to contend with both large and hostile opposition seeking to replace it, and the possibility of disintegration.

In his book From Mobilization to Revolution, Charles Tilly deals almost exclusively with the role opposition groups play in the potential collapse of a government or system. In fact, Tilly views society as a conglomeration of groups, which includes the government, contenders of the government both within and outside of the government, and coalitions of these actors. When contenders form a coalition against the government, and collectively decide they have sufficient resources successfully to challenge the relatively frail government, the regime faces potential breakdown.

Like Motyl, Tilly emphasises the importance of resources as a major factor inducing a group to act against the government, and typically, as discussed, elites possess adequate resources and opportunity needed to take on the government. According to Tilly, the government faces collapse when:

contenders, or coalitions of contenders . . .
[appear], advancing exclusive alternative claims
to the control over government . . . [and there is]
the incapacity or unwillingness of the government
to suppress the alternative coalition, and/or the
commitment to its claims.³³

The assumption is that when the government no longer has the power or resources to resist the contenders, it must either give in to their claims, or meet its own demise.

Guiseppe Di Palma looks more specifically at the central role elites played in the demise of Communism, a seemingly indestructible force. As he explains, Communism essentially failed because the elites no longer believed in its viability: "A . . . regime can hardly live when it no longer believes in its virtue."³⁴ Therefore, when elites cannot justify and support the government and its mandate, the government as well as the system is in danger of collapse. This does not bode well for a state such as Russia, in which the elites cannot agree on the path the country should take economically and politically, and are increasingly doubting the viability of economic reform.

In summary, a government weakened by its inability to develop policies to solve a crisis in society, can either survive or collapse depending on the degree of support it maintains. Governments lose support by implementing policies that isolate important groups in society, causing these groups to become disillusioned with, or blatantly opposed to, the government and its general mandate. Typically, groups composed of elites tend to have the greatest access to capital, manpower, and influence, and thus pose the greatest threat when they turn against government. As Linz and Stepan also indicate, a coalition between groups fundamentally

disloyal to the government and those that were formerly ambivalent but have now turned against the government, is particularly potent. When a regime is already susceptible, and loses not only the support of assorted government elites, but also important business or industrial elites, it has a difficult time resisting challenges posed by these powerful opposition elite groups. As indicated by the various authors examined, a struggle for authority between a resource rich elite and a weakened government can potentially lead to a collapse of the regime.

The framework used to analyze the current situation in Russia can now be augmented. A government is potentially heading toward breakdown when it consistently implements ineffective reform policies that fail to correct an economic crisis, and consequently becomes vulnerable itself. Furthermore, the government must also face some form of challenge from a powerful opposition in order to move closer to collapse. For the purposes of this thesis, then, the second factor in the framework is the opposition of disaffected elites against the government. The indicators used to ascertain that elites no longer support and potentially pose a threat to the government include the formation of disloyal elite coalitions within and outside of the government. A disloyal elite typically criticises government policy, seeking to discredit the government, and perhaps even offers itself as an alternative to the current

rulers. Furthermore, the shift of large numbers of formerly loyal and semi-loyal groups towards the disloyal opposition coalitions signifies a general lack of elite support for the government.

The Armed Forces

The final feature indicating that a government is on the verge of collapse is not universally mentioned in the literature discussed, but is important nonetheless. The position the armed forces take when elite coalitions challenge the government is crucial. If a weakened government confronted with hostile elite groups still manages to maintain the support of the armed forces, it is very difficult for any opposition group, regardless of its resources, successfully to topple the government. Unless the elite opposition is supported by a large, armed contingent of the population, the armed forces can still protect the government by virtue of their superior weaponry, disciplined fighting forces, and sheer size.

If the armed forces become politicized, however, they may pose a lethal threat to the government. According to Kenneth Currie, politicization is evident when the armed forces form political organisations, question or challenge government policy, and hold political positions while remaining in the

armed forces.³⁵ As well, a politicized armed forces may also act autonomously, without the government's approval. Politicization can occur when elite groups or disloyal opposition parties manage to infiltrate the armed forces and even secure their partial support, or through regular contact between parts of the armed forces and civilian groups disloyal to the government. In both these situations, anti-government groups can serve to discredit the government in the eyes of the armed forces. Finally, if the armed forces have been adversely affected by various government policies, or perceive the crises society faces as leading to instability which the government appears unable to control, the armed forces will often become politicized and challenge the government.

It is, therefore, crucial for a government to maintain strong control over its armed forces, because an autonomous and politicized military is dangerous, particularly when allied with resource rich and influential elite groups. Thus, when a government has isolated its support due to consistently unsuccessful attempts to solve crises in society, is challenged by strong elite groups, and no longer has the support of the armed forces, it faces the real possibility of disintegration.

In his contingency model of revolution, Chalmers Johnson emphasizes the role of the armed forces in either provoking or preventing the eventual collapse of a regime. In fact, he believes the armed forces are such an integral part of a

regime's stability that a challenge from them, regardless of the presence of a strong opposition coalition, can cause a system to crumble: "When the underlying causes of revolution have been fulfilled, a break in the . . . armed forces . . . discipline, . . . or loyalty . . . will produce a revolution whether a revolutionary party exists or not."³⁶ Perhaps this is somewhat extreme, but Johnson is correct in emphasising that a break in loyalty of the armed forces can lead to government collapse and possibly revolution. The armed forces thus comprise a very dangerous challenger, particularly when the institution being challenged is weak, has very few resources left, and is fragmented.

Linz and Stepan also emphasize the importance of the armed forces and other organizations of coercion remaining under the control of the government: "the monopoly of legitimate force . . . [should be] . . . in the hands of the police and the military under the direction of political authorities."³⁷ If the armed forces and police begin to act alone, the government has no recourse when it is directly challenged by disloyal and semi-loyal opposition forces, and may also find itself the victim of a military coalition with its eye on the leadership of the country.

Nancy Bermeo also concludes that the armed forces play a decisive role in provoking a government's demise. Asserting that elites are essentially powerless when faced with an autonomous and uncooperative armed forces, Bermeo asserts:

"Whatever their dedication to compromise, civilians rule only if armed men allow them to do so."³⁸ Bermeo also discusses the catalysts causing the armed forces to resist and act against the government, and cites such factors as budget cuts, challenges to the military's interests, and any general policies which undermine the armed forces' morale.³⁹ Generally, one can conclude that the government must take care not to isolate or challenge the armed forces through its policies, or it may have to contend with a dangerous, politicized, and disloyal armed forces.

The framework for the breakdown of government must, therefore, be composed of three steps. The government must first be weakened due to a series of failed economic policies, then be challenged by disaffected elite coalitions, and finally, lose the support and protection of the armed forces. The fundamental indication that the armed forces are no longer loyal to the government is their growing politicization prompted by either dissatisfaction with government policies, which may threaten their power and viability, or contact with civilian disloyal opposition groups who are similarly disaffected with the government, or finally, the infiltration of the armed forces by anti-government groups. It is at this crucial point that government faces collapse unless it manages to issue a series of policies which actually lead to an improvement in the economy, or the elite coalitions fragment and begin fighting amongst themselves, or the armed forces

decide not to cooperate with the elite and realign themselves with the government.

The Breakdown of Government

When a government is on the verge of breakdown, the actual removal of government from power can be achieved in four ways. First, a coup d'etat could occur, instigated by a coalition of elites and the armed forces. Second, a revolution may drive the government from power if elite-military forces manage to secure widespread support at the grassroots level. Third, a civil war may erupt between forces supporting the government and those challenging the regime. Notably, coup d'etats, revolutions, and civil wars go beyond displacing the government, but also transform the regime. However, in the last case, the government alone may face removal if opposition elites force the government from power via parliamentary means. Essentially, the elites may coerce the government to dissolve, thereby prompting an election in which the opposition elites hope to secure the majority of votes. These various possibilities are discussed below.

Coup d'Etat

Once the government is weakened due to ineffective economic policies, lack of resources, and strong anti-

government elite and armed forces coalitions have developed, it becomes vulnerable to attack. A coup d'etat provides an effective means for an opposition group, working within the state to appropriate the state machinery. As Edward Luttwak explains: "A coup consists of the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder."⁴⁰

Thus, the disaffected members of the state elite supported by a segment of, or all of the armed forces, is the coalition most likely to provoke a coup. A coup transpires, as these insurgents utilise their familiarity with the workings of the state apparatus in order to capture it. The alignment of the armed forces with the disaffected state elites is crucial, as the former provide protection to coup leaders by preventing a backlash from the displaced government, as well as enforcing order in society.

Once the coup is successful there are no guarantees that the new leaders will be able to implement successful policies and establish control over society. Unless the damage caused by the deposed government is corrected, and the new regime's policies appear to improve the condition of society that prompted the coup in the first place, the new leaders face the threat of forcible removal as well. A counter-coup may occur if the new government itself begins to factionalize, creating a new disaffected elite within the fledgling government. Another possibility is that within society itself, opposition

groups may form in reaction to the coup, creating conditions for revolution. Finally, other nationalities within society, autonomous regions, or regional pockets of opposition, may oppose the policies of the new leadership, and civil or internal war may ensue. It is therefore extremely important for the new regime to improve the condition of society, or at the very least impose such repressive control over society that opposition is discouraged from challenging the government.

Revolution

A revolution, like a coup, provides the opportunity for anti-systemic or anti-governmental forces to forcibly overthrow a government which is on the verge of collapse. As noted, a revolution can grow out of a failed coup, or it may transpire in reaction to unacceptable conditions created by the current government. Essentially, once the armed forces cease to support the government and form factions with the alienated elites, the opportunity for revolution arises. What distinguishes this form of internal political violence from a coup, however, is the presence of mass involvement. As Goldstone emphasizes:

a necessary condition for revolutions is urban or rural popular groups that can be readily mobilised against the state . . . [Typically these groups consist of] peasants or urban workers . . . [who] have grievances against the economic or political regime.⁴¹

While a coup occurs exclusively within the state apparatus, revolution requires the participation of the masses. The masses' dissatisfaction with the regime is manifested through open declarations of animosity towards the government in newspapers, public opinion polls, and so forth; increased frequency of strikes, demonstrations, and displays of street violence; and finally, direct challenges issued to the government. It is the combined forces of the factionalised elites and armed forces, who provide the leadership, force, and the blueprint for revolution, and the masses who provide the manpower, which ensures a revolution will ensue.

If the revolutionary leaders fail to improve the condition of society, as they promised prior to overthrowing the former government, they too may face growing opposition within their own ranks and amongst the populace. Unless the new leaders are able to repress counterrevolutionaries, assuming the armed forces continue to support their efforts, the possibility of a counter-revolution, coup, or civil war arises. It is, therefore, quite common to witness a period of terror after a revolution has occurred, which serves to annihilate potential opposition.

Civil War

Civil War, the third possible outcome after the breakdown of government, usually evolves out of a failed coup or revolution. Generally, Andrew Janos defines civil or internal war as: "a violent conflict between parties subject to a common authority and of such dimensions that its incidence will affect the exercise or structure of authority in society."⁴² In the aftermath of a coup or revolution certain segments of society, perhaps different ethnic groups or regions within the nation, may not be willing to recognise the authority of the new regime. Their primary loyalty lies with a power other than the state, usually a local or regional leader. Consequently, these groups challenge the central authority, leading to an internal war.

Janos describes this specific type of civil war: "The struggle for authority usually takes place in the framework of two competing structures of authority when the conflict involves a new set of . . . objectives."⁴³ The objective in question is typically the control of the government and state apparatus. A civil war, similar to a war between two nation-states, involves a battle for control or power between two groups, both of whom are loyal to different authorities. It ends when one of the forces eventually surrenders or is defeated. Civil war is thus the most extensive and

potentially destructive outcome of the three presented in this model.

Removal Via Parliamentary Means

The final potential outcome that may occur after a government breaks down is the removal of the government from power through legal parliamentary means. The disaffected elite factions must have enough power within the parliament to force the government to dissolve itself, call an election, and then have enough support to gain the majority of votes and become the new legal government. A number of factors must exist for this outcome to be possible. First, there must be solid democratic institutions in place, including a viable parliament and an established voting system. As well, the disaffected elites must have respect for, and the desire to, maintain these democratic institutions. Without this commitment to democracy, the disaffected elites would not bother to remove the government from power via legal parliamentary means, but would exercise one of the other alternatives discussed above. Finally, the disaffected elite coalition must be confident of the support it enjoys within the population at large, or would never risk an election. Due to the number of requirements that must exist for this to occur, it is less probable that disaffected elites will gain

power through legal parliamentary means, but will more likely initiate a coup or revolution.

Summary of Subsequent Chapters

The framework established in this chapter serves as the basis for analysis for the remainder of this thesis. The first step in the framework is the weakening of government due to ineffective and potentially damaging economic policies. Chapter Two examines this initial factor with respect to the current situation in Russia. The economic reforms reshaping the Russian economy for almost a year appear to be largely unsuccessful, and thus, the assessment focuses on the effects of these policy failures on the stability and longevity of the Russian government.

Chapter Three explores the second factor in the framework, namely, the direct challenge that disaffected elites pose to a vulnerable government. When a government loses the support of leading business, industrial, academic, and some government elites, it faces potential dissolution, specifically because these elites possess the resources and influence to successfully challenge the government. The various alignments of disaffected Russian elites and the threat they pose is analyzed in this chapter in order to assess whether Yeltsin's government is moving closer to breakdown.

Finally, Chapter Four looks at the important role the armed forces play in prompting the collapse of government. This third factor in the framework is particularly important, as noted in Chapter One. If the disaffected elites do not possess at least the tacit support of a portion of the armed forces, they will not be able to overthrow the government. The armed forces have the power either to prompt the collapse of government, by joining forces with the opposition elites, or to protect the government, by repressing any group challenging the government through violence, or the threat of force. The focus of this chapter is the position the Russian armed forces is adopting vis-a-vis the government. Specifically discussed are the Russian armed forces' degree of involvement in politics, their grievances with respect to government policies affecting the armed forces and defense, and their involvement with elite factions. If the armed forces in Russia appear to be aligning against the government, the breakdown of the government becomes increasingly probable.

The final chapter assesses, based on the three factors in the framework, whether Yeltsin's government is on the verge of collapse. As well, the possibility of a coup, revolution, civil war, or legal parliamentary removal of the Russian government are examined. The conclusion looks at the implications of each of these courses of action and appraises the future of Russia.

NOTES

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2. Russell Bova, "Political Dynamics of the Post-Communist Transition: A Comparative Perspective", World Politics, Volume 44, October 1991, p. 115.
3. Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 136.
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7. Johnson, Revolutionary Change; Linz and Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes; Kenneth Currie, "Preserving the General Staff Tradition: The Return of the Russian General Staff and the Future of Russian Military Reform", paper presented at the 24th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Phoenix, Arizona, 22 November 1992; Nancy Bermeo, "Surprise, Surprise: Lessons from 1989 and 1991", in Bermeo, Liberalization and Democratization, p. 182.
8. Linz and Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, p. 21.
9. According to Linz and Stepan, efficacy "refers to the capacity of a regime to find solutions to the basic problems facing any political system." Conversely, effectiveness is termed as "the capacity actually to implement the policies formulated, with the desired results." Ibid., pp. 20-22.
10. Ibid., p. 75.
11. Johnson, Revolutionary Change, p. 37.
12. Ibid., p. 93.
13. Gurr, Why Men Rebel, p. 24.
14. Ibid., p. 329.
15. Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution, p. 37.
16. Goldstone et al., Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century, p. 38.
17. Motyl, Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality, pp. 42-43.
18. Mason, Revolution in East-Central Europe, p. 35.
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20. Ibid., pp. 156-61.
21. Ibid., p. 136.
22. Ibid., p. 149.
23. Ibid., p. 150.
24. Ibid., p. 150.
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27. Goldstone et al., Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century, p. 38.
28. Ibid., p. 38.
29. Johnson, Revolutionary Change, p. 97.
30. Motyl, Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality, p. 117.
31. Linz and Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, p. 75.
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33. Charles Tilly, From Mobilization to Revolution, p. 200.
34. Di Palma, "Legitimation From the Top to Civil Society", p. 57.
35. Currie, "Preserving the General Staff Tradition", p. 24.
36. Johnson, Revolutionary Change, p. 201.
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Chapter Two

The Russian Economy in 1992

Economic reform in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev never got off the ground. Perestroika, which began as a tentative remodelling of the command economy, developed into a more comprehensive plan for the revision of the ineffective Soviet centrally controlled economic system. Unfortunately, Gorbachev essentially abandoned the drive for economic reforms after coming under intense pressure from hard-line Communists who felt threatened by the profound changes that perestroika promised.

When Gorbachev lost power in August 1991, perestroika had left a legacy of economic turmoil and chaos in Russia and the other former Soviet republics. As Anders Aslund says: "perestroika has been a miserable economic failure . . . it turned out that the regime steered the national economy into an abyss."¹ Thus when Boris N. Yeltsin took over in December 1991, he inherited a system besieged with economic problems. Contrary to Gorbachev's more tentative strategy, Yeltsin chose to push Russia towards a market economy as swiftly as possible. By means of the shock therapy approach, Yeltsin and his government sought to implement fundamental macroeconomic changes in Russia including the freeing of prices,

demonopolization, reduction of government debt, establishing ruble convertibility, increasing productive output, and generally creating a viable market in Russia. Unfortunately, Yeltsin's economic reform program was not wholly successful in 1992, and the Russian economy was in terrible condition. Inflation was rising almost uncontrollably, the government deficit was entirely unmanageable, production continued to plunge, the ruble became essentially valueless, and significantly, Yeltsin and his government were facing growing opposition from both elites within the Congress and Supreme Soviet, industrialists, and growing numbers of Russian citizens. Yeltsin is faced with the difficult task of compromising with and attempting to accommodate some of the major concerns of opposition forces, while trying to prevent regression back to a state controlled economic system and the abandonment of economic reform.

In this chapter, the problems inherent in the economic reform process in Russia are discussed, with specific focus on the political dilemmas and threats they have generated for Yeltsin and his government. As explained in the previous chapter, Adam Przeworski's indicators of failing economic reforms are used to explore the current situation in Russia. These include the problems of inflationary inertia, unemployment, distributional effects, and privatization. In addition to these important indicators, regional issues are also highlighted as an obstacle to successful economic reform

in Russia. Particular attention is directed to both the manifest political and economic contradictions provoked due to increasing decentralization in Russia. Each of these six indicators represent failures of economic policy in a general sense, which create repercussions beyond the economic realm, in the political and social domains.

INFLATIONARY INERTIA

According to Przeworski, inflationary inertia represents a fundamental failure in the progress of economic reform.² When inflation, which inevitably arises when an economy is in transition and prices are freed, shows no sign of reaching an equilibrium, inflationary inertia is generated. Essentially, inflationary inertia affects all other realms of the economy, reinforcing the decline in production, the government deficit, decreasing the currency's utility, and ultimately fostering social unrest and opposition. In Russia, inflation steadily spiralled upward in 1992, although some figures released by Roskomstat, the Russian government's statistical branch, indicated that it slowed slightly in June and July, with price increases of only 13 per cent and 7 per cent per month respectively.³ There is some debate, however, as to the validity of these, as the I.M.F. has calculated that retail

prices in Russia grew by 875 per cent between January and August of 1992, and more recent statistics indicated an astonishing annual increase in prices of 14,000 per cent for 1992.⁴ Overall, economist Michael Ellman estimates the 1992 Russian rate of inflation to have been 1600-3000 per cent.⁵ Irrespective of variations in these figures, it is apparent that inflationary inertia was a very real threat to the Russian economy at the end of 1992. It is therefore important to examine the major factors which have precipitated this inflationary crisis, including failure to demonopolize, an unmanageable government deficit, wage pressures, and a drop in production.

Monopolies

The first major cause of unchecked inflation, according to Przeworski, is failure to eradicate monopolies.⁶ The fundamental problem precipitated by the persistence of monopolies is generally a lack of competition which inhibits the basic market regulating forces of supply and demand. Inflation results as monopolies typically set arbitrary values for products, thus inhibiting prices from reaching normal levels. A further consequence is a drop in production, which is potentially created by two conditions. Firstly, because consumers may not be able to pay the monopoly's designated prices, the monopoly cuts back on production when goods are

not selling. Secondly, when prices are freed, the monopoly may choose not to sell products until higher prices transpire, again causing a shortage of goods.

In 1992, the Russian government made negligible progress in its drive to demonopolize pervasive state monopolies. According to economist Michael Ellman, the difficulties facing the Russian government's reform program were, in part, due to the continued existence of monopolies:

reasons for the failure of the Russian stabilization program [include] . . . a dominant state sector still run along largely administrative lines . . . [and lack of] a sizable private sector that could respond in a 'normal' way to market signals.⁷

As long as monopolies dominate the economic landscape in Russia, a genuine competitive market will not flourish.

Although private enterprises were not, for the most part, thriving in Russia, the government did make real attempts throughout 1992 to encourage the development of private industries via conversion and privatization. Notably, the program for conversion of military industries into competitive enterprises producing consumer goods was still being promoted, but with only limited success. As Keith Bush indicates in his assessment of the Russian economy at mid-1992, conversion is not as viable as was originally thought:

What could be simpler than switching its production lines from high-grade and competitive machine guns to . . . meat grinders? Only comparatively recently did it become clear that the process would be long, arduous, painful for the workforce, and enormously expensive.⁸

The Russian government simply did not have sufficient capital

to implement wide-spread conversion. As well, the Russian government acknowledged that the military-industrial complex remains one of the principal sources for hard-currency revenue in Russia. It is far more profitable to receive hard-currency payments for arms and weapons from countries abroad, than to sell sub-standard consumer products for rubles domestically. As a result, the Russian government had very little financial incentive to pursue extensive conversion.

The Russian government is also currently implementing a comprehensive privatization program which transfers some former state monopolies and enterprises to employees, managers, and ordinary Russian citizens. As discussed in greater detail in the latter part of this chapter, it is hard to assess the progress of privatization at this time, specifically because the program has barely begun. However, it is important to stress that demonopolization in Russia, both through conversion and privatization, is not going to become easier for the Russian government. In particular, there is increasing pressure from industrialists to slow down the pace of privatization and demonopolization.⁹ Fearful that Russia is going to be relegated to the ranks of an exploited and destitute Third World country, enterprise directors and other industrialists are exhorting the government financially to prop up inefficient enterprises that would face bankruptcy if demonopolized and forced to compete in a market. The government is visibly succumbing to these pressures, as it did

nothing to counteract the Russian Central Bank's actions on September 14, 1992, when the Bank offered 1.386 trillion rubles in credit to troubled enterprises.¹⁰ In fact, one report states that only 6 per cent of this money was issued by the Central Bank alone, while the rest was dispensed on orders from Boris Yeltsin.¹¹ Regardless, the credits were given to the enterprises, further reinforcing the old system of state supported monopolies, and thereby moving away from demonopolization. It is therefore apparent that demonopolization in Russia is going to be a prolonged process, and will continue to foster inflation as long as economic and political pressures force Yeltsin and his government to defer demonopolization in favour of continued financial support of industry.

Government Deficit

A high government deficit is another factor that Przeworski cites as promoting inflationary inertia, which consequently threatens economic reform.¹² A financially strained government budget is a fundamental problem for a government initiating economic reforms. First, a lack of revenue renders the government incapable of offering monetary support to individuals who are adversely affected by the transition, and second, critical government programs, including health care, education, maintenance of the

infrastructure, and payment of wages for government employees, place a further burden on a resource poor government. Typically, a government with an unmanageable deficit prints money in order to finance its spending obligations, which subsequently increases the money supply and inflation.

During 1992, Russia's government deficit became unmanageable. As President Yeltsin conceded in his October speech to the Fifth Session of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet: "The government has said a good deal and has taken measures to eliminate the budget deficit, but it has not managed to overcome it. Under present conditions, this task is unrealistic."¹³ Actual calculations of the budget deficit in Russia have tended to vary, ranging from assessments of the federal budget, the federal budget together with the regional budget, and the federal, regional and municipal budgets combined. Official figures released by Russia's Finance Minister Vasily Barchuk estimated the Russian government's deficit at 1 trillion rubles, potentially having reached 2 trillion rubles by the end of 1992.¹⁴ A number of factors contributed to the government's severe debt; these are discussed here according to whether they have contributed to the drop in government revenue, or have increased pressure for government spending.

The Russian government suffered a serious drop in revenue during 1992, due primarily to a persistently inefficient tax system exacerbated by the financial problems of industry in

general, and a lack of capital from trade, intensified by the plunging ruble. Efforts to establish an effective taxation system in Russia have not been successful. Sergei Vasiliyev, a senior advisor to then Acting Prime Minister Egor Gaidar, emphasized the lack of taxes as a fundamental cause of increasing government debt: "the Russian government's need for credits to finance its operations has . . . been increased because of inflation, poor tax collection, and tax evasion."¹⁵

The lack of tax revenue in Russia is symptomatic of the general economic crisis plaguing Russia as a whole, and consequently the government has faced a number of obstacles in establishing a taxation system. Most Russian enterprises do not even have the capital to purchase the raw materials necessary for production, so can hardly afford to pay taxes. Ultimately, because of the increasing costs of production, fewer goods are being produced and profits are dropping; enterprises are left with very little surplus capital with which to pay taxes. Another obstacle to the Russian taxation system is the lack of government sanctions to effectively punish enterprises which have the capital, but refuse to pay taxes. When profit is hard to come by, enterprise directors are not going to pay taxes voluntarily, but rather keep any excess capital for themselves. Furthermore, many regional governments are neglecting to turn over tax revenue to the Russian government, as they too have budget deficits, and are often not capable or willing to transfer much needed rubles to

the central government's treasury. Finally, industrialists are putting additional pressure on the government to withdraw all taxes from enterprises, asserting that taxes represent another government initiative to destroy Russian productivity. All these obstacles indicate that the government's current taxation system cannot provide a consistent source of revenue.¹⁶

Another key factor that has contributed to the Russian government's loss of revenue is a drop in capital from foreign trade. As Keith Bush explains:

The substantial reduction in foreign trade turnover has . . . accounted for the overwhelming bulk of the shortfall in budgetary revenues during . . . this year . . . The loss of revenue from foreign trade was exacerbated by the government's decision to exempt most of the oil and gas exports from export duties.¹⁷

Again, a lack of foreign trade revenue and the decision to lift export duties from oil and gas exports are symptomatic of the general economic crisis in Russia. Plagued with the same problems as most Russian industries, the oil and gas sectors have decreased productivity, resulting in reduced exports. Hence, the government has been forced to extend benefits such as exemption from export duties to these industries in hopes of boosting trade. Unfortunately, such actions translate into less revenue for the government.

As well, the plunge in the value of the ruble has made it even more difficult for the government to generate revenue from exports. Many enterprises that are actually exporting

products to foreign companies are demanding payments in hard currency and then depositing the capital in foreign bank accounts. Figures indicate that: "firms had stashed away some \$3.5 billion in foreign bank accounts, while an additional \$1.5 billion was outside government control."¹⁸ The government is seeking to repatriate this money, recognising the loss of revenue incurred from these actions, but their strategy for preventing this has not been articulated.

In an action that actually encourages the flight of hard currency, Yeltsin has expressed the need to: "switch to the mandatory sale on the currency exchange of all export receipts."¹⁹ This means that all hard currency earnings must be exchanged into rubles according to a government determined exchange rate. Unfortunately, while the ruble remains weak, companies do not have any incentive to exchange their hard currency and will continue to keep it abroad, collecting interest in foreign banks. Thus, it is apparent that the combination of an ineffective taxation system coupled with a lack of revenue from foreign trade, exacerbated by the financial problems of enterprises and industries as well as the low value of the ruble, combine to make it increasingly difficult for the Russian government to gain substantial revenue.

Although there is an obvious lack of revenue supporting the government budget, the Russian government continues to face growing pressure to spend. There are demands from

powerful industrial groups, most notably the Civic Union, for government to finance the debt of enterprises, and to provide general subsidies to troubled industries. In addition, the government is obliged to augment social programs which cannot be neglected as increasing numbers of Russian people face unemployment and a decline in the standard of living. Finally, as discussed in detail in the next section, there is continual pressure on the government to increase wages in response to growing inflation and rising prices.

The government has been forced to issue credits to financially troubled industries in Russia. As indicated in a New York Times article:

Despite the threat of hyperinflation, the credits have been welcomed by industrialists and the conservative majority in the parliament, who have pressed the government for help to prop up failing state-owned and military enterprises.²⁰

In fact, the Russian government has indeed been increasing support to industries, and in particular, in October 1992, offered an additional 13.2 billion rubles in subsidies to the defense industry.²¹ It is difficult to assess where the government was obtaining the revenue for these subsidies, but ultimately, the 13.2 billion rubles will serve to intensify the government's budget deficit. Thus, in order to accommodate powerful political forces, the Russian government was compromising its economic reforms by continuing financially to support enterprises thereby increasing its spending burden.

The government's commitment to expanding the social support system in Russia places an additional strain on the budget. Yeltsin stressed the need for more spending in this area in his speech to the Fifth Session of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet: "We have not yet succeeded in focusing the provision of social support on the most unprotected strata of the population The protection of these citizens must be put into precise legislative form more quickly."²² Yeltsin is correct in emphasizing the need to protect Russians from the harsh conditions generated by current economic reforms. Many people have been unemployed due to the drop in productivity of many enterprises, and others are finding it difficult to survive as prices rise faster than their wages. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the All-Russia Centre for the Study of Public Opinion confirms that growing numbers of Russians face economic hardship. Of the 2,069 surveyed, 32 per cent agreed that their economic situation was somewhat worse than the previous year, and another 30 per cent asserted they were much worse off.²³ Furthermore, the Social Security Department of the Labour Ministry released figures that place one third of the Russian population below the poverty line as of October 1992.²⁴

The government is compelled to develop a comprehensive social support system regardless of the cost, or it will face growing opposition from the increasingly impoverished Russian population. At the same time, by spending capital that it

essentially does not have and obtaining credits to finance increased expenditures, the government deficit is intensified and inflation persists. Ironically, by investing capital to develop a much needed social support system in Russia, the government is merely exacerbating the inflationary conditions that necessitated social support to begin with. Clearly, Yeltsin is correct in his assessment that the budget deficit cannot be corrected in the foreseeable future. The combination of decreasing revenues and the necessity both politically and socially for increased spending, brought on to a large extent by the crisis generated from economic reform, indicate that the path to a balanced budget is plagued with many problems.

Wage Pressures

Another major factor that Przeworski blames for the onset of inflationary inertia is pressure to raise wages.²⁵ As discussed, the government cannot ignore the growing disparity between wages and prices during periods of inflation, because when prices continue to increase and wages lag behind, social unrest becomes a real threat. Typically, then, government will avert a potential crisis by raising wages. However, this in fact worsens the problem as either the government must increase its spending to augment wages, thereby increasing the

inflation that prompted the need for higher wages initially, or enterprises must raise the price of products in order to accommodate the wage demands of workers, creating a wage-price spiral.

In Russia, the government is caught in the cyclical plight just described. Economist Michael Ellman believes that wage pressures are a major factor creating the government's incapacity to deliver Russia from its current economic crisis: "the inability of the government to control wages . . . was a serious problem for the stabilization policy."²⁶ Nevertheless, throughout 1992, Yeltsin's government was forced to raise workers' wages to avert strikes which would impede further production, because of intense pressure from powerful industrial lobbies, and generally due to price increases. It is therefore not surprising that the Russian Finance Ministry announced in October that the minimum wage would be raised by January 1993 from 900 to 2,250 rubles monthly.²⁷ However, if inflation continues to spiral and the cost of living rises, this wage increase may be meaningless.

It is apparent that the Russian government is committed to spending considerable amounts of money to raise the wages of workers. Unfortunately, boosting wages is only a temporary political solution to an entrenched economic crisis. Yeltsin's government has been forced to raise wages in order to maintain the support of both the Russian population and the powerful industrial lobbies, and ultimately to avoid social

unrest. However, the Russian government cannot afford to shoulder the expense of wage increases, due to a general lack of revenue which continues to be depleted by other spending pressures, as discussed in the previous section. Consequently, inflation is bound to increase along with wages, resulting in the need to raise wages further, forcing the cycle to continue. The inherent contradictions created by the reform process in Russia are a result of the government protecting itself politically by accommodating demands which threaten the viability and success of economic reforms.

Drop in Production

According to Przeworski, a final factor contributing to inflationary inertia is a lag in supply prompted by a drop in production.²⁸ A decline in productive output can result for three reasons, each indicative of a troubled economy. First, when prices are spiralling due to inflation, many enterprises are unable to afford the costs of production as the prices for raw materials rise considerably. Production is forced to slow down or perhaps stop altogether resulting in a lag in supply. Second, inflation can also create the conditions in which an enterprise consciously slows production of goods by withholding products in anticipation of higher prices in the future, ultimately causing another drop in supply. Finally, an unstable or devalued currency presents a further obstacle

to high productive output, as enterprises find they are unable to purchase highly priced imported primary products or tools to produce goods. Again, productive output drops as goods become too expensive to produce.

A lag in supply, created by a drop in production that develops when the costs of producing goods are greater than the value of the product itself, is extremely detrimental to an economy. Inflation inevitably results when production drops, as prices typically rise when producers have to factor the higher costs of production into the value of the product. As well, increasing prices for goods ultimately means greater pressure on the government to raise wages so individuals can afford to purchase products, and as discussed, contributes to the inflationary spiral.

In Russia, production plunged over the course of 1992. The figures depicting the overall decline in Russian production over 1992 are unusually consistent. Egor Gaidar, the acting Prime Minister at the time, targeted the total production decline for 1992 at 20 per cent.²⁹ As well, Economics Minister Andrei Nechaev also projected that overall production would drop by 20 per cent. for 1992.³⁰ The primary reasons for this are the general inflationary state of the economy, the plunge in the ruble's value, and the cut in supplies from former Soviet republics.

As demonstrated, Russia is suffering from high inflation, in turn affecting almost every facet of the economy. In

particular, higher prices for basic raw materials and tools to produce goods are forcing Russian enterprises to drastically cut production. Typical of many Russian enterprises, the Pavlova Pokrovsky Cotton Spinning and Weaving Factory in Pavlovsky Possad is finding prices for raw materials increasing at an unbelievable rate: "Two years ago, they were charging three rubles for each kilogram of raw cotton. In the latest offering from Uzbekistan, the price was 514 rubles a kilogram."³¹

Like most enterprises in this predicament, the Pavlova Pokrovsky factory is forced to increase prices for its commodity in response to the higher costs of production. Unfortunately, the product typically will not sell at the higher prices, and the factory is subsequently compelled to slow down production. Currently, enterprises facing the same financial constraints as the cotton factory are in jeopardy and are either forced to cut back on the costs of production by laying off employees, or face bankruptcy. Inflation is not only creating the conditions for Russia's slump in production by rendering raw materials unaffordable, but it becomes the outcome as well, when prices for products are forced to rise to meet the higher costs of production.

The plummeting value of the ruble both results from and creates a decrease in Russian production: "Contributory factors [in the drop of the ruble] . . . included high inflationary expectations, the continuing decline in output."³²

A drop in currency value, as discussed above, means that Russian enterprises cannot afford the high costs of importing raw materials or tools necessary for production. As well, the inconsistent value and use of the ruble throughout the former U.S.S.R., means that even crucial supplies of primary products from other republics are harder for Russian factories to obtain. As the Pavlovsky Cotton factory found: "The supply problem started getting serious after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Places such as Uzbekistan were desperate for dollars. With price liberalization in Russia . . . rubles were even more useless."³³ Decreasing production is a significant factor prompting the ruble to plunge, but conversely, the devalued ruble means that imported supplies are harder to obtain, and subsequently production falls further.

Thus, inflationary inertia is generated by the failure to demonopolize, the government deficit, wage pressures, and a decline in production. Conversely, it is important to note that inflation and the resulting economic crisis in Russia have intensified these four generators of inflationary inertia as well. The Russian government has now reached a point in its reform process where it seemingly cannot progress without exacerbating the troubled condition of the economy. Inflation seems inescapable as the government is being forced to compromise its stabilization policies in order to correct the damage created by its economic reform program. Ultimately, if

inflation continues to soar and reaches hyperinflation, the Russian economy is in danger of collapse, as economist Anders Aslund notes: "once you hit hyperinflation, it destroys most economic institutions."³⁴ It appears that the Russian government is creating the conditions for economic and political ruin, as inflation continues to increase uncontrollably due to political and economic pressure on the government to spend greater amounts of revenue it does not have.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is the second major factor, according to Przeworski, that economic reforms are in danger of collapse.³⁵ It is difficult to separate unemployment completely from the issue of inflationary inertia, as inflation is a primary factor precipitating the collapse of industries which cannot afford to continue production resulting in unemployment. Unemployment is a particularly threatening feature in a transitional economy, as typically unemployment breeds social unrest, particularly when the government does not have adequate revenue to create a safety net to support the unemployed. While some degree of unemployment is unavoidable in a competitive economy, particularly one in which industries are entering the market for the first time and face the danger

of potential bankruptcy, endemic unemployment creates yet another source of political and economic pressure for government.

While unemployment figures in Russia were not extremely high for 1992, the progress of economic reforms and the continued threat of inflationary inertia created conditions where unemployment could soar. Acting Prime Minister Egor Gaidar indicated that as 1992 drew to a close, unemployment was expected to reach 1.5 million, which translates to 2 per cent of the Russian labour force.³⁶ However, conflicting figures released by the International Labour Office, pegged unemployment in Russia to be at approximately 10-11 million for 1992, a significantly higher and potentially more problematic number.³⁷ Radical differences in figures aside, it is apparent that unemployment is going to develop into a real problem for the Russian government as financial collapse threatens many enterprises. The problem is particularly acute for the numerous towns in Russia that are centred around one industry which provides housing, schooling, health care, and food to workers. If economic conditions continue to threaten such industries, basic services such as those just described will be cut, and the disintegration of entire communities will become a potential hazard.

The Russian government has acknowledged the destructive effects that industrial collapses will create, and made efforts in the latter part of 1992 to offer to ease the

effects of unemployment. As of August 25, 1992, President Yeltsin initiated the formation of a state employment fund: "Enterprises are to contribute 1 per cent of their wage and salary bills to this fund to finance efforts to guarantee employment during the third quarter of this year."³⁸ As well, Egor Gaidar stated that: "the working out and implementation of a system of measures to protect the unemployed [is] . . . a highly important concern of the government."³⁹ Finally, the government's somewhat tacit support, or at least failure to prevent, the distribution of credits to troubled enterprises also ensures that at least workers' salaries will be paid and the threat of unemployment is temporarily eased. Unfortunately, while the government cannot afford to ignore the problems of unemployment, solutions and commitments to prevent or ease the effects of job loss cost a great deal of money the government does not have. By providing financial support to prop up ineffective enterprises and generate unemployment funds, the government drove up inflation, which ironically helped to create the conditions for unemployment to begin with. Again, the political and economic pressures placed upon the government to correct the crises generated by economic reforms, such as unemployment, not only reinforce the problems at hand by

creating even more inflation, but may provoke the ultimate collapse of reforms.

DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS

Distributional effects are the third factor which can threaten the viability of economic reforms.⁴⁰ Similarly to unemployment, distributional effects arise when individuals are threatened with major career changes due to the impact of economic reforms and the transition to a market economy. While unemployment implies general job loss due to the collapse of enterprises unable to cope with inflationary inertia or without state support, distributional effects refer more specifically to bureaucrats, heads of industry, and other elite groups who find their power and prestige in jeopardy. In this thesis, distributional effects are of particular concern in Chapter Three which deals specifically with the role of elites in undermining the viability of government due to their dissatisfaction with government performance and policies. Nonetheless, the threats posed to the power and prestige of various elite groups is discussed briefly in this chapter within the context of the economic reform process.

The most powerful group threatening both the Russian government and the success of economic reforms is the industrialists. The Civic Union is the most representative and best organised of the industrialists and has succeeded in placing sufficient pressure on Yeltsin and his government to

slow down reforms, particularly with respect to demonopolization and privatization. As well, it was instrumental in securing credits to support troubled enterprises. Due to the significant influence the Civic Union enjoys both within the Supreme Soviet and the Congress, Yeltsin has been forced to acknowledge the concerns of industrialists. This is evident in Yeltsin's comments to the parliament on October 7, 1992:

Sensible proposals and useful ideas are now coming constantly from political movements and parties operating in Russia, including Civic Alliance... Some of the proposals are being implemented by the government. But there are a good many valuable ideas that it is overlooking. . . . Don't turn your back because the ideas weren't thought up by Gaidar.⁴¹

The industrialists are therefore managing to pressure the government to address its primary concerns, including preserving Russia's great industries and enterprises. Naturally, it is in the industrialists' best interest to continue gaining profits from production and enjoying the fruits of prosperity. However, reforms such as privatization and demonopolization which force many inefficient industries to adapt to a competitive marketplace without state subsidies, create conditions in which powerful industrialists could lose authority, wealth, and their perquisites. Industrialists therefore feel compelled to secure government financial support and to slow down the pace of reforms, and increasingly, the government is obliging. In fact, it appears the government is even willing to risk reversing economic

reforms in order to pacify this powerful group.

Other groups threatened by the distributional effects of reforms include both former nomenklatura personnel, regional and local officials, and members of the armed forces. These conservative forces make up the majority of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. Like the industrialists, they are interested in slowing down the disruptive effects of economic reforms. Both these groups are discussed in greater detail in the following chapters, but of significance here are the difficulties that Yeltsin's government faces attempting to compromise with political forces which threaten to destroy economic reform. As discussed, elite concerns have been generated by disruptions created by Russian economic reforms, and their desire to slow down the process obviously poses a real threat to the viability of economic progress in Russia. Yeltsin feels compelled to compromise with these politically powerful groups. In the process, he exacerbates inflationary conditions through increased spending to pacify these groups, and is slowly veering off the path towards a market economy.

PRIVATIZATION

According to Przeworski, privatization is the final

factor that can either impede or facilitate the transition to a market economy.⁴² If privatization is a success, demonopolization is also accomplished and the state owned enterprises and industries of the past become privately owned and competitive. With the establishment of significant numbers of private enterprises, a market economy is generated, as prices are set according to the supply and demand for privately produced goods. Ultimately inflation should reach an equilibrium. The failure of privatization essentially inhibits the formation of a market economy as enterprises and industry remain reliant on the state and fail to become competitive and viable. As mentioned earlier, the persistence of monopolies is a major cause of inflationary inertia, as prices are arbitrarily set, and the government continues to be financially responsible for typically inefficient firms. A transitional government serious about developing a market economy must therefore make privatization a fundamental priority.

The Russian government has recently instigated a comprehensive privatization program. Taking into account the lack of surplus and liquid capital in Russia, the government has adopted a voucher system which allows all Russians to invest in formerly state-owned property without depleting their own meagre savings. Beginning October 1, 1992, privatization vouchers worth 10,000 rubles were distributed to all Russian citizens born before September 1, 1992.⁴³ The

10,000 ruble value of the voucher was determined by calculating the total value of the property being privatized, as Yeltsin explained:

The value of the property of Russian enterprises that will be offered for privatization checks . . . is estimated by experts at 1.4 trillion rubles, in January 1, 1992, prices. That works out to approximately 10,000 rubles for each resident of Russia.⁴⁴

As determined by the government, there are approximately 4,500 large enterprises in Russia that must be privatized. Large enterprises have been designated as those that employ over 1000 people and have a value of over 50 million rubles. Medium and small sized enterprises may voluntarily privatize or become joint-stock companies.⁴⁵

There are three privatization options available to enterprises. Each is fairly complex, but explained here as briefly and clearly as possible. The first option permits employees to purchase 25 per cent of preferred shares in their company, which means they do not have voting privileges at stockholders' meetings, but are entitled to dividends. Additionally, employees may purchase up to 10 per cent of common stock, which gives them voting privileges as well. Privatization vouchers may be used to purchase both preferred and common stocks. Management is entitled to invest in only 5 per cent of common stock, and the remaining 60 per cent of shares are open to public bidding.

The second option allows employees to purchase 51 per cent of the stock in an enterprise, but only half of the stock

value may be purchased with privatization vouchers. This option is attractive as it allows employees to become the controlling shareholders in their firm, while the remaining 49 per cent of stock is sold to private bidders.

The third option permits workers to restructure their company with the approval of two-thirds of employees. Subsequently they are permitted to purchase 40 per cent of common stock, which can only partially be paid for with privatization vouchers, and must be paid for in full after three months.⁴⁶

The Russian privatization plan is extremely well thought-out, and gives employees the option to actually obtain controlling stocks in their own company. As well, the ordinary Russian citizen is not neglected in favour of employees, as each option offers private Russians 60 per cent, 49 per cent, and 60 per cent respectively of enterprise stock. Furthermore, President Yeltsin issued a decree on October 12, 1992, which expanded the boundaries of property to be privatized to include parcels of land and housing. There has been some debate as to the type of land that may be privatized and some reports indicate that: "parcels of land refers only to land located beneath enterprises that are being privatized."⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Yeltsin has proposed to issue land privatization checks in 1993 which may assumedly be used to purchase more than just land underneath enterprises.

While the Russian privatization program is commendable,

there are some problems with it. The fundamental flaw with the privatization plan is simply that it is difficult to comprehend, particularly for average people who have very little understanding of what stocks actually are and how joint-stock companies operate. Two Russian women interviewed by The New York Times, admitted to being confused about the process for investing their vouchers:

Vera A. Mikhailova, a pensioner, who had picked up her voucher, said that she had no idea what she would do with it, . . . Natalya Filipenko . . . said it was 'too early' to decide whether to keep her voucher, invest it or sell it. 'We're too incompetent to understand how this works,' she said, 'I'll get some good advice from an expert.' Mrs. Filipenko . . . is an economist.⁴⁸

Furthermore, a poll published in Ekonomika i zhizn' indicated that many Russians do not even trust the privatization program, and think that it is merely a political gimmick: "38 per cent of the respondents said they thought the voucher program was just a showpiece, and as such will not change anything."⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the Russian government is attempting to increase public understanding of the privatization plan through a public-wide media campaign. However, the fact that most Russians are proving hesitant to rush out and invest vouchers in ignorance is a positive sign, as it indicates they are taking the program seriously and want to make an educated decision.

As expected, the irrepressible industrialists and conservatives have outlined a series of objections to the privatization program, which are for the most part unfounded.

The first is that the vouchers are steadily declining in value due to inflation and were worth, at the end of 1992, the price of a pair of boots. This may have been technically true, but the value of enterprises being sold were determined according to prices from January 1992 balance sheets.⁵⁰ It is therefore difficult to understand how inflation will have any effect on the purchasing power of the vouchers if the prices for the enterprises are fixed. The second most common concern of these groups, is that the workers themselves should control the enterprises.⁵¹ However, as indicated above, the workers do indeed have the opportunity, under Option Two, to purchase 51 per cent of the stock in their company.

Generally, the most compelling impediments to the success of Russia's privatization program include the general ignorance amongst Russians regarding their investment options, the lack of knowledge or willingness to implement privatization at the regional level in Russia, and the pressure opposition groups are placing on the government to slow the program down. With respect to the second obstacle, in regions that are far removed from Moscow, many local leaders themselves do not understand or are refusing to implement the program, which means that privatization will transpire very slowly, if at all, in Russia's hinterlands. Lastly, industrialists and conservatives are demonstrating their increasing political power. If they gain greater leverage with Yeltsin and his government, they may pressure

Yeltsin into slowing down or altering the privatization program. At this time, however, it is premature to predict the success of the privatization program. Of primary importance is that the Russian people contribute to making the program work, and that Yeltsin does not change the program in mid-stream due to political pressure.

Regional Issues

Regional issues, although not mentioned in Przeworski's more general analysis of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, constitute another considerable obstacle to the success of economic reform in Russia. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, all regions in Russia were subordinate politically and economically to the central government. In effect, the central administration determined the types and amount of production to be developed in the regions of Russia, and then appropriated the goods and materials produced. A colonial relationship was therefore established between the centre and peripheral areas, whereby the centre provided regions with manufactured goods in exchange for raw materials.

Subsequently, with the weakening of central power and the collapse of the Soviet Union, many regions have declared their sovereignty from the Russian government and are pushing for greater political and economic control over their territory.

Yeltsin has demonstrated a willingness to accommodate regional concerns, as indicated in his speech to the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet in October 1992:

I assess the delay in the process of transferring power to the local level as an extremely negative factor. Unless a large part of the rights of the federal government is delegated to the regions, the reforms will not get anywhere. . . . If [regions] have the freedom to manoeuvre, the economy will pick up.⁵²

Furthermore, the Russian government has assured regions, in its Program for Deepening of Economic Reforms, that: "a large share of the tasks of regional policies will be shifted directly to the level of the regions, in keeping with their expanding authority."⁵³

Both political and economic considerations compel the Russian government to recognise regional demands for increased sovereignty. With regions such as Tatarstan already declaring outright independence, permitting these areas greater authority may be the only way to prevent total disintegration of the Russian republic. As well, Siberia and the Far East, whose concerns have long been neglected by the central administration, must be accommodated in their fight for greater economic jurisdiction. According to calculations in RFE/RL Research Report:

western Siberia [alone] . . . accounts for over half of Russia's hard-currency exports. Production from the resource industries of Siberia and the Russian Far East is thus crucial to Russia's ability to finance its foreign debt and purchase hard-currency imports.⁵⁴

If leaders in Siberia and the Far East feel that their concerns are not being considered, they may succumb to emerging separatist forces in their territories and withdraw from Russia politically and economically. Such a move would have devastating economic repercussions for the rest of Russia, as both Siberia and the Far East are the major producers of oil, gas, gold, diamonds, lumber, and other essential resources in Russia.

Unfortunately, increased decentralization is problematic as well, particularly while Russia is attempting a centrally directed transformation of the economic sphere. While Russia cannot afford to neglect the concerns of regions, particularly those that provide the majority of revenue for the country, it can ill afford to relinquish economic control over these regions. Reform programs like privatization and demonopolization both require a certain degree of central direction, as each region should be pursuing reforms at a similar pace. A market economy will never develop in Russia if some regions are encouraging privatization of industries, while other local and regional administrations refuse to give up their control over industries under their jurisdiction. As noted earlier, there are currently Russian regional and local leaders obstructing privatization: "Deputy Prime Minister Anatolii Chubais . . . told ITAR-TASS . . . that the privatization program was being impeded by local officials."⁵⁵ Thus, in order to increase control over the economic reform

process regionally and locally in Russia, the government must somehow find a way to limit decentralization without antagonizing regional administrations.

The Russian government faces a difficult choice with respect to regional relations. If Yeltsin and his government sanction increased regional autonomy and delegate more political and economic authority to regional and local administrations, the prospects for losing complete control over the reform process are greater, particularly in areas where former Communist elites still retain power. However, the government must also acknowledge that increased central control will fuel independence movements in many Russian regions, and it cannot afford to provoke the disintegration of Russia politically or economically. The Russian government is again forced to reckon with the contradictions generated by the economic reform process, as political pressures are forcing the government to make decisions which directly threaten the success of economic reforms.

CONCLUSION

As 1992 drew to a close, it was apparent that Russia's economy had not strengthened over the course of the year, but in many aspects was in worse condition. Primarily, the economic reform program initiated by Yeltsin's government became increasingly inconsistent, subsequently impeding

progress towards a market economy. In particular, political pressure has proved to be a fundamental obstacle to reform, as Yeltsin's government faced growing opposition from industrialists, conservatives, and many Russian citizens, all concerned about the adverse effects generated by economic reform. Yeltsin has been forced to acknowledge the concerns of these groups, as they are becoming integral to the political survival of the Russian government. The industrialists and conservatives dominate both parliaments in Russia, and are only too happy to represent the concerns of discontented Russian citizens.

Consequently, the economic reform process in Russia is becoming increasingly compromised, as pressures on the government to elevate spending are creating the conditions for hyperinflation and the destruction of the Russian economy. Specifically, industrialist and conservatives have impelled the government to financially support troubled Russian enterprises that cannot cope with the effects of economic reform and inflation. As well, the government faces pressure to increase wages and develop a financial support system for the growing numbers of unemployed and impoverished Russians. Yeltsin's government cannot ignore the growing numbers of Russians who, unable to afford the high costs of essential goods, are living below the standard of living. However, escalated government spending, combined with a severe lack of revenue, only serves to exacerbate the inflationary conditions

which prompted the need to financially support industries, increase wages, and develop a safety net in the first place.

The other fundamental threat facing the Russian economic reform program is being generated from regional governments who are calling for increased economic and political sovereignty. These pressures for sovereignty are intensifying the already complex and delicate balancing act Yeltsin must perform to proceed successfully with his economic reforms. If Yeltsin ignores the regional governments' concerns, these areas could declare their independence and provoke the disintegration of Russia. However, the central government cannot afford to relinquish control over the Russian economy, for without strong central coordination, a market economy will not develop. It is critical that the entire country pursue privatization, demonopolization, and other reforms consistently. The Russian government must decide whether regional political demands should take precedence over the development of a market economy in Russia.

In summary, the Russian government faces a number of extremely difficult choices in the months ahead as it tries to balance political, social, and regional concerns with economic reform. One key area offering hope for Russian economic reforms, is the innovative privatization program initiated in October 1992. It appears to be an excellent and comprehensive plan for Russia, and if successful, could be extremely beneficial for the establishment of a Russian market economy.

In general, though, the progress of reforms is faltering as the government must contend with increasing political pressure to slow down the pace of economic transition. The increasingly contradictory policies that are consequently being initiated, may inhibit the transition to a market economy, and bring Russia closer to economic and political destruction. If economic reforms are to be salvaged in Russia, the privatization program must take root despite growing opposition, and the government must find some way of controlling political pressure from industrialists, conservatives, and Russian citizens.

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Chapter Three

Elites

For over seventy years the Soviet Union was dominated by one political party. Unlike most political parties which represent a particular platform, ideology, and group of people within government, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) essentially embodied not only the state, but the ideology governing the lives of all Soviet people. The CPSU was, therefore, much more than a ruling body, as it defined what was true, acceptable, and correct for Soviet society. Consequently, any political movement or party which was not subordinate to the CPSU was suppressed by the leaders of the Soviet Union, making it impossible for political movements to flourish under the totalitarian umbrella of the CPSU.

Conditions changed, however, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. By promoting openness, or glasnost, and the need to reform the controlled economic system through perestroika, Gorbachev encouraged a climate where controlled criticism of the Communist Party became acceptable. This new climate was favourable to the development of political movements, as noted by Vyacheslav Nikonov:

The establishment of protoparty movements began in 1988 and early 1989. They made it their purpose to support the aims of perestroika, but without the previous enthusiasm for the CPSU's official course.¹

These proto-parties, or People's Fronts, tended to be democratic in orientation and by challenging Communism, became increasingly powerful at the expense of the CPSU. The People's Fronts dominated the elections of U.S.S.R. People's Deputies early in 1989, and subsequently prompted the creation of hundreds of political factions across the Soviet Union.²

With a growing number of external challenges to its political monopoly, the monolithic CPSU started to fragment from within as many party members transferred their loyalty to alternative political movements. Nikonov notes that this tendency became especially clear during the 28th Congress, which signalled the end of the CPSU as a unified party:

The Democratic Platform broke off from the Party, and many prominent reformers, including B. Yeltsin, left its ranks. After the repeal of Article 6 of the U.S.S.R. Constitution, the legitimacy of the Communist Party's leading role was undermined.³

Ultimately, the complete destruction of the CPSU as both party and state culminated with the August 1991 coup when a group of Communist government officials failed in their final attempt to preserve the ruling structure of the CPSU. The democrats, led by newly elected Russian President Boris Yeltsin, resisted the Communists' desperate effort to regain dominance over the Soviet Union. Following the failed coup, both the CPSU's

monopoly over power, and the Soviet Union were obliterated. Subsequently, the scene was set for the establishment of democracy and party politics in the former U.S.S.R. as democracy gained legitimacy at the expense of Communism.

Contrary to expectations, however, a working democracy is not flourishing in Russia due, in part, to the undeveloped and regressive nature of Russian political parties. Most notably, the democratic movement has not evolved into a political party. Once the CPSU ceased to exist, the democrats lost the common enemy which had served as their fundamental unifying force, causing the movement to fragment. As well, by directing the bulk of their efforts to opposing Communism, the democrats neglected to develop a concrete program to effectively run the state. As Gavriil Popov, former mayor of Moscow, explains:

When the coup occurred, the democrats were split by numerous schisms and were characterized by organizational weakness Added to [this] . . . was weakness in terms of programs . . . for a long time we had acted on the assumption that we would be only an opposition . . . In all the main areas . . . we lacked concrete programs in versions that were suitable for practical application.⁴

Fragmentation, lack of a clear mandate or program, and weak organization plagued not only the democratic movement, but other fledgling political factions across Russia. The result was a political landscape populated by hundreds of essentially ineffective proto-parties.

In Russia, the lack of real political parties with large

bases of support, comprehensive platforms, and strong representation in state institutions, impeded efforts in 1992 to create a working democracy in Russia. Significantly, neither the President, the government, nor the Supreme Soviet or Congress were represented by an elected majority party. As a result, both the Congress and the Supreme Soviet were composed of numerous factions, and President Yeltsin and his government had no guaranteed bloc of support within either legislature. This constituted a serious problem for the Russian government, as it could not rely on the legislature to approve its policies or proposed legislation, and was constantly faced with the potential of a vote of non-confidence.

Ultimately, the underlying problem facing both the Russian government and Russian democracy at the end of 1992 was the lack of any clear rules or guidelines defining the operation of the new Russian democratic state. As a result, many of the proto-parties, factions, or groups within the Russian parliament and Congress tended to operate according to their own rules. Parliamentary factions regularly issued ultimatums and rejected legislation without adequately allowing the government to defend or debate its position. Rather than attempting to work with government, the factions within the Russian legislative branches consistently challenged the government, while striving to elevate their own power. Consequently, the legislative process in Russia was dominated

by intrigue, political games and conspiracies, and tended to be more disruptive than productive.

Yeltsin's government is currently trying to rectify this situation by pushing for a new constitution. Such a document would clarify and define the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the state, and establish guidelines for the conduct of political parties within the state structure. However, a new constitution must be ratified by Congress, which may be difficult to accomplish. This body is not likely to approve a comprehensive package of guidelines which could seriously weaken its currently powerful position and force it to comply to strict regulations monitoring its behaviour.⁵ Most likely, Yeltsin will have to push a constitutional package through via a national referendum, thus calling on the Russian people rather than the Congress to approve the new constitutional principles. In fact, such a referendum was tentatively scheduled for April, 1993. Until then, however, democracy will not be established in Russia, and Yeltsin's government will continue to face the regular threat of demise at the hands of ambitious elite factions within parliament and Congress.

In this chapter, the three largest political movements in Russia are examined. They are the Civic Union, the national-patriotic movement, or National Salvation Front (as it is referred to here), and the democratic movement. It is difficult to label these movements as parties, as they more

closely resemble loose coalitions. Each is composed of very diverse movements temporarily aligned in their fight for or against Russia's current government and its policies. They have not developed consensus on more fundamental issues beyond those emanating from their views on Yeltsin's government, so have fairly vague platforms and changeable bases of support.

As discussed in Chapter One, it is important to consider the motives and alignments of elite forces when trying to assess if a government is in danger of collapse. A clear indication that elites may pose a threat to government arises when they form disloyal opposition factions. A disloyal opposition group is one which criticises government policy, seeks to discredit the government, and offers itself and its program as an alternative to the current government.⁶ Beyond merely criticising government and offering an alternative within the context of democratic politics, disloyal opposition groups will also "question the existence of the regime and aim at changing it."⁷ A disloyal opposition in Russia would present a particular threat to the government as it would operate within a political landscape essentially devoid of strict democratic rules of operation. Under such circumstances, the disloyal opposition would be free to manipulate the rules to suit its own goals.

It is also important to identify groups that have become increasingly critical and ambivalent toward the government. Such groups are termed by Linz as semiloyal, as they move from

generally supporting the government to tacitly or openly opposing it.⁸ Ultimately, a group clearly becomes semiloyal when it "engage(s) in . . . negotiation to search for [a] basis of cooperation with parties . . . [that are] disloyal."⁹ Such an alliance poses the greatest threat to a government, as groups that were generally supportive of it withdraw their loyalty and begin to side with overtly hostile and disloyal groups.

In Russia during 1992, two of the three groups analyzed, the Civic Union and the National Salvation Front, respectively qualified as semiloyal and disloyal opposition factions. The Civic Union grew increasingly critical of government policy and by the end of 1992, formed an alliance with the disloyal NSF. By doing so, it became more characteristic of a semiloyal opposition group no longer supportive of the government. Conversely, the NSF was more evidently a disloyal opposition group from the start, as indicated by its composition of Communist and Right-wing forces, disregard for government orders, and plans to overthrow Yeltsin's government. Accordingly, the Civic Union, National Salvation Front, and Democratic coalitions are discussed in terms of their origins, composition, base of support, power within Russian parliament and Congress, basic program or mandate, critique of, and degree of influence over the government. Particular attention is directed to an assessment of the potential or real threat that these various coalitions posed

to Yeltsin's government either alone, or as a semiloyal and disloyal opposition faction.

It is also crucial to analyze the role that Ruslan Khasbulatov, Speaker of the Russian parliament and Congress, and the two legislative bodies collectively played in aggravating the already troubled relationship they shared with Yeltsin and the Russian government. During 1992, the disloyal opposition factions in Russia typically used both the parliament and Congress as forums for their challenges to Yeltsin and his government. Both these bodies, under the guidance of Khasbulatov, represented the greatest threat to the Russian executive branch. Ultimately, this chapter examines relations between the various disloyal and loyal opposition groups in Russia and the government in order to assess whether the Russian government was, and is, in danger of collapse.

The Civic Union

In 1992, the Civic Union was the most powerful coalition in Russia due to both the wide variety of groups within its organization, and to its almost exclusive representation of the powerful industrial managers and directors of Russian state-owned industries and enterprises. Originally, the Civic Union grew out of the Russian Union of Industrialists and

Entrepreneurs (RUIE). Under the leadership of Arkady Volsky, the RUIE represented the directors of some of the largest plants and monopolies in Russia, which, according to available statistics, accounted for 65 per cent of the industrial output in 1991.¹⁰ When the Communist system collapsed and the Soviet Union dissolved, the RUIE evolved into a powerful government lobby. Ultimately, it hoped to gain more control over the marketization and privatization process rapidly transforming the Russian economy. The RUIE was concerned that the loss of government financial support to Russian enterprises would result in widespread bankruptcies, as many enterprises were not efficient enough to compete successfully in a market context. Privatization presented an additional threat to the interests of the RUIE, as ownership, hence control over profits and production, would be transferred away from managers and directors to the public.

In order to further strengthen their bargaining position with the government, the RUIE in May 1992 forged ties with the largest and most powerful labour union in Russia, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR).¹¹ With the cooperation of the FNPR, the RUIE threatened the government with a republic-wide production freeze unless their demands were met for a greater voice in the economic reform process. The government could not afford to ignore these threats, which could potentially shut down production in most major industries and enterprises in Russia, thereby

precipitating severe economic repercussions.

By the end of May 1992, the RUIE formed its own political party called the All-Russian Renewal League (ARL) in an effort to politicize its demands and offer formal opposition to the government and its policies.¹² The ARL developed a program incorporating the economic concerns discussed above, and was essentially in opposition to the economic program of the Yeltsin-Gaidar government. Basically, the ARL argued that the government reform plan was leading to the destruction of Russia's production potential and contradicted the interests of industrial directors and managers. Furthermore, it claimed that the government's radical economic program was exacerbating social tension by driving prices up and substantially lowering the standard of living of most Russian people.¹³ The ARL's principal goal was to pressure the government into slowing down the pace of reform, and acknowledging the principal concerns of industrialists.

One month later, with the intent of forming a powerful parliamentary bloc capable of pressuring the government to abandon radical economic reform, Volsky's ARL forged an alliance with the New Generation-New Policy parliamentary faction led by Aleksandr Vladislavlev, Nikolai Travkin's Democratic Party of Russia, and Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi's People's Party of Russia.¹⁴ Christened the Civic Union, this large coalition immediately began to establish an economic program to serve as an alternative to the Russian

government's plan. The Civic Union thus represents a wide and very powerful cross-section of Russia's political and industrial elites constituted to challenge government policy. Like the ARL, the Civic Union wants to ensure that economic reform does not thwart the interests of industrialists.

The Civic Union's platform not surprisingly parallels many of the proposals outlined by the RUIE/ARL. Essentially, the program responds to the undeniable fact that former Acting Prime Minister Gaidar's economic program, in 1992, caused the Russian economy to plunge into an almost irretrievable state of disrepair. Production dropped considerably, economic ties between former Soviet republics faltered, Russian consumers did not have the money to purchase inflated goods, and privatization and conversion threatened the closure of many of Russia's inefficient industries and enterprises which could not compete under market conditions. These issues were of primary concern to the Civic Union, specifically because they prompted a significant loss of profit for industrial managers and directors and made it increasingly difficult to control production. Consequently, the Civic Union's program is exclusively devoted to gaining greater control of the economic reform process, including replacing key government ministers with its own personnel.

The Civic Union's alternative economic plan, formulated to a large extent by Volsky, contains thirteen initiatives which seek to limit the impact of economic reform. Generally,

it stresses the need for increased state management of economic reforms, principally to control the pace of change. In effect, the plan emphasises the need to minimise the destructive effects of economic reform by encouraging development of a Chinese-style system which incorporates both a state-controlled and small private sector. As well, the program indicates that production must be stabilized through selective financial support to major industries and enterprises in Russia, particularly those in the scientific-technical field. Additionally, the program highlights the need to slow down privatization and to encourage the transfer of enterprise ownership from the state to the workers. Finally, the Civic Union's program discusses the importance of ensuring continued access to the supplies and markets enjoyed prior to the collapse of the U.S.S.R. through the reestablishment of economic links with the former Soviet republics.¹⁵

In most 1992 interviews, Volsky insisted that he fully supported the concept of economic reform. Nevertheless, after examining Volsky's plan it is apparent that the Civic Union's perception of economic reform is clearly different from that of Gaidar's and Yeltsin's. The government's plan has been devoted to regulating inflation, decreasing the budget deficit, stabilising the ruble, and forcing Russian enterprises into the market place.¹⁶ Conversely, the Civic Union's program supports these reforms only to the extent that

it does not infringe upon the interests of industrialists. Consequently, the Civic Union's alternative economic plan ignores the unavoidable inflationary repercussions of increased financial support to enterprises and continued government involvement in the economic sector. It appears that the majority of their recommendations are essentially the antithesis of economic reform as they are all contingent on continued government regulation of the economy. It is difficult to ascertain how a competitive market economy can be effectively implemented while the state remains the integral player in the economic realm. The Civic Union's economic plan, which is the focus of its program and mandate, therefore presupposes a complete departure from the present course pursued by Yeltsin's government.

In 1992, the Civic Union became increasingly critical of the Russian government and its program, and clearly posed a growing threat. In addition to opposing most aspects of the government's reform program, it also had the numerical and economic strength to pressure the government to accept its recommendations. However, the Civic Union indicated that it did not intend to compromise with the government in any real sense. Rather, the Civic Union regularly asserted that the government must accept all of its recommendations or face the active opposition of the coalition within both parliament and Congress. Many of Volsky's statements in 1992 confirm this all or nothing style of "compromise":

I think that we will ultimately be able to find a common language even with the government. . . . However . . . if we are simply rejected and not understood, then we will have to look for others - for someone who will understand. Then we will have to go into the opposition.¹⁷

Volsky thus insinuated that the Civic Union was prepared to shift from a supportive to an oppositional stance in its relations with the Russia government. More importantly, he also indicated that the Civic Union would also willingly seek alliances with "others - someone who will understand". This statement was particularly meaningful as it foreshadowed the Civic Union's alliance with the disloyal NSF who apparently "understands" the Civic Union's concerns better than the government did. By forming an alliance with the disloyal NSF, the Civic Union established itself as a semiloyal opposition group.

Recognising its power, the government subsequently sought to avoid the loss of the Civic Union's support and prevent its alliance with groups like the NSF by regularly surrendering a great deal to the coalition. Unfortunately, the Civic Union was rarely satisfied with partial concessions, so continually pushed the government to implement its entire program. Accordingly, after the 1992 spring session of Congress, the government strayed off the path of economic reform in order to meet the Civic Union's demands. First, the government issued 200 billion rubles to troubled enterprises, increasing inflationary pressures and prolonging the government's direct

responsibility for, and involvement in, the economic sphere. As well, Yeltsin gave three technocrats ministerial positions, acknowledging the Civic Union's concern that industrialists were not adequately represented in the government. Viktor Shumeiko, director of a defense industry, Georgii Khiza, director of a defense based electronics firm, and Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of the oil and gas industry, were all appointed as Deputy Prime Ministers.¹⁸ Chernomyrdin is now Prime Minister of Russia, thanks to the strident efforts of the Civic Union during the December 1992 Congress.

Yeltsin and his government continued to acquiesce to the Civic Union throughout the summer and autumn of 1992. Notably, in his October speech to the Fifth Session of the Russian Supreme Soviet, Yeltsin commented: "Sensible proposals and useful ideas are now coming constantly from political movements and parties operating in Russia, including Civic Alliance . . ."¹⁹ Echoing the Civic Union's "Thirteen Points", Yeltsin emphasised an immediate need to focus more attention on the requirements of enterprises by offering selective credits to some industries. Additionally, he stressed the importance of protecting scientific-technological enterprises, and suggested the implementation of tax breaks for various industries. These suggestions, while satisfying some of the Civic Union's demands from their alternative economic plan, did not represent prudent economic strategies. In fact, in 1992 the government regularly indulged the seemingly

unquenchable thirst of Russian enterprises for credits and financial aid. Following the granting of 200 billion rubles of credit in the spring, Yeltsin's government did very little to discourage or block the Central Bank's September offer of an additional 1.386 trillion rubles to enterprises.²⁰ As well, the government indicated it would provide defense industries with an additional 13.2 billion rubles.²¹ Regardless of all this financial support, at the end of 1992, enterprises and industries in Russia did not appear to be more efficient, or expanding production. It is therefore questionable whether the government's regular financial aid is ever going to make Russian enterprises more competitive or efficient. In the meantime, the government continues to burden its budget and drive up inflation.

Prior to the December 1992 meeting of the Congress of People's Deputies, the government yielded to another series of Civic Union demands. The December Congress was of particular concern to Yeltsin, as the extraordinary powers of decree which permitted him to implement economic legislation and appoint government personnel without parliamentary support were to expire as of December 1, 1992. With the Civic Union enjoying the support of 30 to 40 per cent of Congress, the government realised that it was crucial to secure the loyalty of the bloc, particularly if it wished to retain its current economic program and ministerial personnel.²² As well, the government was likely trying to prevent an alliance between

the Civic Union and the disloyal NSF because together, they comprised a strong majority within the legislatures. However, Volsky set the tone of the negotiations between the Civic Union, and Yeltsin and his government with the following implicit ultimatum: "We will support the President at Congress, but our economic conception remains unchanged."²³

Ultimately, the government once again conceded a great deal to the Civic Union, promising yet another round of financial support to industry. As Yeltsin stated: "The government has prepared a program for the support of vitally important branches of production. . . . These are fuel, energy, conversion, transportation, public utilities, housing, and the social sphere."²⁴ Furthermore, Acting Prime Minister at the time, Egor Gaidar, who consistently opposed the Civic Union's economic recommendations, surprisingly praised the general strategy of the coalition's plan:

Our list of priorities . . . does not differ from the one Arkady Ivanovich Volsky has . . . A market economy has to be managed. . . . Gaidar [also bowed] in the direction of China's experience [touted by the Civic Union as an excellent model for Russia], and [had] praise for the Civic Union's economic program . . .²⁵

Although they surrendered a great deal, there were some areas where both Yeltsin and Gaidar agreed that the government could not compromise. Although the Civic Union requested a number of personnel changes within the government as a fundamental part of its package, Yeltsin refused to bargain over ministerial positions. Furthermore, both Yeltsin and Gaidar

felt the government could not afford to concede another 1.5 trillion rubles in credits to enterprises, as the Civic Union demanded, but were willing to offer a smaller sum. Finally, Gaidar refused to condone the reestablishment of a state controlled supply and planning system stating that it essentially signalled a return to a controlled economy.²⁶

The government clearly attempted to make significant concessions to the Civic Union but as Volsky indicated prior to the negotiations, a partial commitment to the Civic Union's economic program and request for personnel changes would not be enough to win their support in Congress. Volsky accused the government of betrayal and on behalf of the Civic Union stated that: "The most important thing is that the government program be ours and that the strategic posts in the government be ours too."²⁷ The Civic Union, dissatisfied with the government's lack of total commitment, decided to pursue another more ominous alliance with the disloyal National Salvation Front. This move defined the Civic Union's status as a semiloyal opposition group as, according to Linz's definition, it began to cooperate with a disloyal opposition faction.²⁸ Thus, by forming an alliance with the disloyal NSF, the Civic Union abdicated its support for Yeltsin's government.

Representatives of both coalitions met on 21 November and agreed to proceed with a vote of non-confidence at Congress if the Civic Union's economic plan was not fully implemented and

certain key personnel not removed from government.²⁹ Ironically, both groups publicly denounced one another throughout 1992, and the Civic Union accused the NSF of being radical and regressive, and the NSF labelled the Civic Union as mindless supporters of the government. Beyond these superficial disagreements, however, both groups actually share some fundamental values. Both the Civic Union and the NSF mourn the loss of the Soviet Union and want the empire restored, and both groups are opposed to the Yeltsin-Gaidar economic reform package. Accordingly, both groups apparently agreed to forget past insults and focus instead on consolidating their combined opposition against the government in an ominous alliance of semiloyal and disloyal forces.

Throughout 1992, the Civic Union proved they were the Yeltsin government's nemesis rather than ally. On numerous occasions the government yielded a great deal to the Civic Union, often placing its own reform program in jeopardy without ever winning the loyalty of the coalition. While the Civic Union purported to support the government and its reform programs, the persistent pressures it placed on the government to adopt completely its regressive and virtually anti-reform package, indicated that the Civic Union would not cease its demands until they were met completely. Not surprisingly, when Yeltsin and Gaidar failed to fully adopt the Civic Union's economic reform plan prior to the December Congress, the coalition ceased to support the government and its reform

package.

In 1992 the Civic Union came to pose a substantial threat to Yeltsin and his government. Not only did it regularly criticise and discredit the government, but presented itself as a clear alternative to the Yeltsin government. More significantly, the Civic Union seemed to be willing to acquire power through whatever means it could, and manipulated the unregulated and undeveloped democratic political system to its own advantage. Furthermore, the Civic Union commanded enough support in both Congress and parliament to challenge Yeltsin and his government, particularly once allied with the NSF. In fact, during the December 1992 Congress, Gaidar was not confirmed as Prime Minister, and the technocrat industrialist Viktor Chernomyrdin, actively supported by the Civic Union, became the head of government. Thus the Civic Union also demonstrated its power to change government policy and personnel. Ultimately, the Civic Union evolved into a force threatening to the Russian government specifically because it was operating within the context of a poorly defined democratic state still run according to guidelines established in the old Soviet constitution.

Assessing its actions over 1992, it becomes clear that the Civic Union wished to subordinate the government and control government policy and decision-making. The coalition ceaselessly pressured the government to adopt its economic program in full and replace key ministers with Civic Union

people. While the Civic Union constituted a direct threat to the government, it apparently did not wish to remove Yeltsin and take over the Presidency. Essentially the Civic Union would be happy to control government from the side-lines without having to account for its decisions or policies. This alone would seem to challenge Yeltsin's ability to retain control over his government's program and policies.

More significant, however, is the alliance between the Civic Union and the NSF. This arrangement not only indicated that the powerful Civic Union was not committed to supporting the government, but that it was equally willing to cooperate with a group that was overtly hostile to Yeltsin's government. Consequently, in the next year, Yeltsin's government must continue to be aware of the power and aspirations of the Civic Union. Furthermore, Yeltsin must push persistently for a new Russian constitution to strictly regulate the behaviour of powerful groups like the Civic Union, and to restrict the possibilities for the formation of hostile disloyal factions.

National Salvation Front

The National Salvation Front was officially banned in Russia by a decree issued by President Boris Yeltsin on October 28, 1992.³⁰ Irrespective of the ban, this coalition of the national-patriotic right and communist left had no

intention of dispersing and in 1992, continued to gain followers in Russia. The National Salvation Front represents a coalition between the right and the left which, while seemingly paradoxical, is ultimately founded on the basis of similar values. Both groups are fundamentally conservative and are accordingly opposed to any of the changes occurring in Russia at present. In particular, the NSF refuses to acknowledge the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and, to varying degrees, seeks to restore the former empire.

The NSF represents such a wide range of Russian elites that it is difficult to list all of the individuals involved. Generally, the right and left-wing deputies in parliament aligned to form the Russian Unity bloc, and subsequently co-founded the NSF. Some of the prominent NSF members include M. Astafyev, head of the Russian People's Assembly, Sergei Baburin, leader of the Russian Union of All the People, I.V. Konstantinov, major spokesman of the NSF and leader of the All-Russian Workers conference, and G. Sayenko, head of the Communists of Russia Deputies' Faction.³¹ Other individuals and movements involved include conservative Russian journalists like Aleksandr Prokhanov, editor of the right-wing newspaper Den', as well as armed forces personnel, such as Lieutenant General M. G. Titov, and Rear Admiral R. Chebotarevsky.³²

It is therefore apparent that the NSF is comprised of a wide range of individuals, drawn together by common values and

the desire to oust Yeltsin and his government. According to Ilya Konstantinov, spokesman of the NSF, the left and right must work together to achieve their goals: "[We must] struggle for power, and struggle for power in the near future . . . [we must] be capable of changing the course of history in our country."³³

Ideologically, the NSF has two fundamental convictions which vary according to the specific ideological orientation of the individual NSF members. One of the principal dogmas shared essentially by all NSF members is the imperialist belief that Russia must regain her empire: "[imperialist ideologues] think of the Russian state as a direct continuation of the empire within its old borders, whether prerevolutionary or Soviet."³⁴ Representing the extreme view, the radical imperialists assert that Russia should restore its prerevolutionary borders. This includes areas within the former Soviet Union and parts of Eastern Europe where Russians currently live and areas populated by individuals who wish to be under the protection of the Russian empire. More moderate imperialists merely wish to restore the former Soviet Union, emphasising the cultural, economic, and strategic necessities of doing so.

Both options are untenable in any practical sense, particularly because it would be difficult and dangerous to re-appropriate all territory where Russians currently live, including all of the former Soviet republics. It is highly

improbable that these newly independent republics would submit to a restoration of Russian control. Any concerted attempts to reestablish the Soviet Union would likely lead to civil wars and general prolonged conflicts. Nevertheless, imperialist sentiment is becoming increasingly popular amongst elites and Russian people alike. In fact, in a recent poll, 69 per cent of Muscovites asserted that: "Russia must stay a great world power, even if this leads to worse relations with the outside world."³⁵ Understandably, most Russians are acutely feeling the loss of the Soviet Union and Russia's status, territory, and international prestige. Imperialist dogma, vigorously promoted by the NSF coalition, is therefore appealing as it promises hope for those yearning for the renewal of Russia's former strength and prominence.

In addition to its strong imperialist beliefs, the NSF is also emphatically anti-Western. Not surprisingly, the current state of affairs in Russia is of grave concern to these forces. Insisting that the disintegration of the Soviet empire has made Russia vulnerable to the ambitions of the West, the NSF contends that Yeltsin's government should be avoiding rather than encouraging Western advances. The NSF voiced these concerns to Yeltsin in an open letter reprinted in Pravda on October 21, 1992:

Our economy's orientation to the International Monetary Fund and foreign business is causing deep anxiety. This could lead to a situation in which Russia loses its statehood and turns into a place for ecologically dirty technologies, into a radioactive dump, into a supplier of minerals -- in short, into a backward region of the world that is given to the sole task of serving the developed countries. We grieve for Russia! ³⁶

Thus, the NSF forces are opposed to marketization, true democracy, privatization, and all other "Western ideas" which they believe are being used by the West to subordinate Russia.

It is therefore not surprising that in 1992, the NSF was seriously opposed to Yeltsin and his government which was actively pursuing development of a market economy, democracy, and continuing to solicit support and aid from the West. Furthermore, agreements like the SALT 2 treaty, which will significantly reduce nuclear warheads and missiles, signed at the beginning of 1993 between the United States and Russia, would be viewed as a complete sell-out of Russian security by the NSF coalition. It was the desire to reverse and prevent these trends which prompted the NSF forces to consolidate, and formed the basis of its eight goals which it hoped to accomplish during the December 1992 Congress. Generally, the NSF ultimately wanted to force Yeltsin and the Gaidar government from power and to form a provisional government to restore order and stability to Russia. Once in power, its goals would be to enforce Russian unity and attempt to reestablish the USSR, halt economic reforms and reinstitute former economic links. As well, it would rebuild Russia's

defensive capabilities and raise the standard of living.³⁷

Clearly, in 1992, the National Salvation Front established itself as a disloyal opposition force. As defined by Linz, the disloyal opposition "questions the existence of the regime and aims at changing it."³⁸ Accordingly, the NSF not only rejected all aspects of the Yeltsin government's program, including economic reform and current Russian foreign policy, but sought to overthrow both Yeltsin and the current government and take over the reins of power itself. Once in power, the NSF would likely displace the democratic regime and reestablish a far more centrally-controlled, Communist-style system. Significantly, the NSF's aim of ousting the first democratically elected president of Russia from power indicates that democracy is not an important value to this group. Furthermore, the NSF indicated its willingness to use illegal means to remove Russia's current government: "using parliamentary and extra-parliamentary methods . . . [we intend] to remove the current anti-popular government from power . . . and create a government of national salvation."³⁹ Finally, the primarily Communist and radical right-wing composition of the NSF clearly implies that the aims and program of such a group are not going to be compatible with those of a liberal-democratic government and regime.

Not surprisingly, Yeltsin and his government viewed the NSF's program as threatening and unconstitutional and consequently banned the coalition. The NSF not only

threatened to remove Yeltsin and his government from power, but within its program openly defied a number of agreements including those that protect the sovereignty of new post-Soviet republics. Nevertheless, the NSF declared Yeltsin's ban to be unconstitutional and continued its efforts to organise NSF cells throughout the Russian federation, demonstrating this group's defiance for the President's authority. As Konstantinov stated at the October 31, 1992 conference of the NSF political council (three days after the NSF was banned by Yeltsin): "We are acting, and we will continue to act! Sections of the NSF already exist in 53 republics and provinces of the Russian Federation. . . . Support groups have formed in 253 cities."⁴⁰

In addition to the NSF's refusal to dissolve, is the undeniable fact that banning the NSF will not eradicate the forces that formed the coalition. Within Congress, as of December 1992, the Russian Unity bloc, which founded the NSF, occupied 1/3 of the seats.⁴¹ Furthermore, the NSF continued to be politically active during the weeks before Congress, engaging in negotiations with Civic Union leaders and reaching a number of agreements with them. Although the Civic Union did not go so far as to endorse the NSF suggestion that Yeltsin be impeached, both coalitions felt the economic reform package developed by the Civic Union must be implemented and government personnel should be overhauled. Ultimately, they formed a threatening alliance on this basis and decided that

if the government failed to implement either of these demands, it should be forced out of office through a vote of non-confidence. Within the context of a parliamentary system, this would not seem radical or threatening. However, it becomes far more threatening within the Russian context, as the Russian state continues to be guided by the old Soviet constitution.

As a disloyal opposition force alone, the National Salvation Front poses a challenge to Yeltsin and his government. However, the NSF alliance with the Civic Union is even more threatening. As Linz explains: "To approach breakdown . . . parties must act . . . as a disloyal opposition, and those flanking them must act as semiloyal parties."⁴² Notably, in Russia, this disloyal-semiloyal opposition faction controls a powerful majority within the parliament and Congress (approximately 80 to 85 per cent), providing them with a suitable arena within which to challenge and perhaps oust Yeltsin and his government. Although a disloyal opposition is typically willing to use illegal means to remove a government from power, there is very little need for the NSF-Civic Union alliance to act extralegally when they have numerical control within the legislatures. Additionally, the clear lack of guidelines regulating activity in these institutions permits groups to make up the rules as they go along, thereby making it simple and effective to challenge the President and government within a legal, parliamentary

context.

Not only are the Civic Union and National Salvation Front a combined threat, but Yeltsin is essentially forced to confront them with a very weak support base of his own. Accordingly, Yeltsin does not even have a cohesive party or faction which represents the concerns of the executive within the legislative setting. This factor represents a major stumbling bloc inhibiting Yeltsin from gaining support for his programs, and also facilitates the disloyal-semiloyal opposition factions' ability to use the legislatures to isolate and weaken the executive.

As emphasised throughout this chapter, it is therefore crucial for Yeltsin to proceed quickly with the development of a new Russian constitution. Such a document would severely restrict the behaviour of disloyal opposition groups and prevent them from manipulating institutions like the Russian legislatures into vehicles with which to challenge Yeltsin and his government.

Such restrictions are crucial as Yeltsin and his government clearly face their greatest challenge within the two legislative branches of the Russian state. A new constitution would not only ensure that a disloyal-semiloyal opposition alliance could not impeach the President or overthrow the government within a parliamentary context, but it would also sanction the immediate dissolution of both legislative branches and force new elections. Until a new

constitution is ratified, however, Yeltsin and his government will continue to face formidable opposition as the disloyal NSF and Civic Union continue to use the legislatures as forums for challenging and defying the government.

Democratic Movement

The democratic movement in Russia is easily the weakest of the three groups discussed in this chapter. It does not have the power or organisation of the Civic Union, nor the grass-roots support that the NSF ideology increasingly enjoys. The democrats have been unable fully to consolidate themselves as an effective movement since their failure to take advantage of their popularity following the collapse of the Communist coup in August 1991. After Communism dissolved, the democrats were not prepared to acquire power and had not developed a comprehensive economic and political program. Furthermore, the democratic movement became seriously fragmented when its common enemy and unifying force, Communism, ceased to exist. It could no longer endure merely as an opposition party but had to move beyond criticising the failures of Communism and work toward establishing a new ideology and plan for Russia. As democrat and former mayor of Moscow Gavriil Popov explains: "We, the democratic forces, broke the C.P.S.U.'s back. But we

are not in power. We are not ready for it. But we are ready to function actively in the role of an opposition."⁴³

Currently, the democratic movement continues its struggle to become a force in Russian politics. Officially, the democratic movement is unified under the coalition of Democratic Russia. The main proto-parties aligned under the banner of Democratic Russia include the Republican Party of the Russian Federation, the Social Democratic Party of Russia, the Left Centre parliamentary faction, and the New Russia.⁴⁴ At best, however, the democrats only command approximately 15 to 20 percent support within Congress and parliament.⁴⁵ Without an alliance with either the Civic Union or National Salvation Front, the democrats do not possess the strength within parliament to protect or assert their interests. As well, the democrats are unlikely to gain the support of either group due to fundamental differences in their values and programs. In fact, the Civic Union and NSF have been working together against many of the ideals promoted by the democrats.

Unfortunately for Yeltsin and his government, Democratic Russia is the only political movement in Russia that almost unequivocally supports radical reform and the government's program. The democrats' principal objectives include replacing the apparatus which the democrats believe still has control of the state, ensuring the preservation of democracy, adopting a new constitution, promoting private ownership of property, and fighting the conservative forces who want to

reverse reforms and challenge democracy.⁴⁶

Ironically, prior to the December 1, 1992 Congress, a large portion of the democratic movement led by Popov began pushing for the blatantly undemocratic establishment of Presidential Rule in Russia. As Popov explains:

[we] have come to the conclusion that at present it would be a promising move to establish presidential rule for two and a half years, during which time the present Constitution would not be in effect, the President would become the head of state, and real power would be concentrated in the hands of executive agencies, while the Soviets and the parliament would become consultative bodies until their term expired.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the democrats asserted that Presidential Rule was not undemocratic but necessary, as no force in Russia could ensure that reforms would proceed unchallenged. Realistically, the democrats also realised the lack of support for both the government and reforms within parliament and Congress as well as their own inability within Congress or parliament to protect adequately the government and its programs. They most likely felt that concentrating all power in the hands of Yeltsin and essentially dissolving both legislative bodies was the only means of preserving economic reform and democracy.

Ultimately, in 1992, the democratic movement in Russia was too weak to serve as a counterbalance to the Civic Union and NSF, thereby placing the government in an extremely vulnerable position. Essentially, Yeltsin and his government were forced to compromise with opposition forces due to the

ineffectual nature of its democratic base of support. However, by doing so, the government only served to alienate its democratic supporters, who accused Yeltsin and his government of selling out to the conservatives. It is therefore crucial for Yeltsin to develop and consolidate a solid base of support. With the democratic movement fractured and ineffective, it is difficult to know when or how the democrats will ever provide Yeltsin with the support he so desperately needs. In the meantime, Yeltsin and his government must rely on compromises, alliances, and political bargaining to remain in power, all within the context of a system without rules and in constant flux.

Ruslan Khasbulatov, Parliament, and Congress

Finally, it is important to discuss the roles that Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and parliamentary Speaker, and the parliament and Congress played in challenging Yeltsin and his government. The Civic Union and National Salvation Front coalitions are unlikely to overthrow the government in an armed uprising. Accordingly, in 1992, these opposition groups tended to use the Supreme Soviet and Congress as the forum for challenging the government and forcing it to concede to their demands. As mentioned, at the end of 1992, both the Civic Union and NSF together commanded

almost 80 per cent support within both legislative bodies and thus had the power constitutionally to challenge the government within the legislative setting. The current Russian constitution accords a great deal of power to the Congress. As well as possessing the prerogative to propose amendments to the constitution, this extremely powerful body can not only impeach the President with a two-thirds majority, but must confirm any government appointments, including that of Prime Minister. The Congress provides a very powerful device for opposition forces to oust the Russian government and President from power, all within the bounds of legality.

In 1992, Ruslan Khasbulatov, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and Speaker of the Russian parliament and Congress, while not specifically aligned with either the Civic Union and National Salvation Front forces, similarly aspired to subordinate the President and the government to the legislative branches. The Civic Union and NSF typically supported Khasbulatov in his quest. As both coalitions comprised (and assumedly still do) a majority within both the Congress and Russian parliament, they would gain a significant amount of control over policy if the government became subservient to the legislatures. Khasbulatov, however, merely yearns to subordinate government to the parliament and Congress because as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, he would subsequently become the most powerful individual in Russia. Thus, in 1992 both the Civic Union and NSF, working within the

context of parliament and Congress, together with the ambitious Khasbulatov, constituted a substantial threat to Yeltsin and his government.

Throughout 1992, but most notably during the December Congress, Khasbulatov and the forces within the legislative branches frequently attempted to strip Yeltsin and his government of power. Prior to the autumn session of the Supreme Soviet, Khasbulatov issued a series of official directives designed to increase his absolute control over the Russian legislative branches while diluting the influence of government. In addition to appointing Yuri Voronin, a known anti-reformer, as the parliamentary liaison to the government on economic affairs, Khasbulatov also significantly decreased the power of Vice-Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Sergei Filatov, who supported Yeltsin and his government.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Khasbulatov accorded himself greater power to control the decisions and activities of parliamentary committees and the apparatus. Some democratic deputies asserted that Khasbulatov was becoming increasingly authoritarian, hence a threat to Yeltsin and the executive branch. But their concerns were largely ignored.

Again, in October 1992, Khasbulatov issued perhaps his most serious challenge to Yeltsin and his government. Under orders from Khasbulatov, the parliamentary guard, composed of 5000 soldiers who officially guard the parliamentary buildings, seized the offices of the Russian liberal newspaper

Izvestiia.⁴⁹ Khasbulatov declared that traditionally Izvestiia had been the organ of the Russian parliament and should therefore serve the legislature again. Yeltsin immediately banned the parliamentary guard, claiming that any armed body not under the direct control of the President was illegal. Subsequently, it was disclosed that prior to the ban, Khasbulatov's parliamentary guard patrolled 75 of Moscow's principal buildings, such as the foreign ministry, justice ministry, high court, and prosecutor's office.⁵⁰

It would seem that Khasbulatov was preparing for a parliamentary coup before his efforts were cut short by Yeltsin. There does not appear to be any other conceivable reason why Khasbulatov would order armed units to guard every strategically important building in Russia's capital, except that he had some plan of capturing power himself. Although four of Yeltsin's ministers, M. Poltoranin, A. Kozyrev, G. Burbulis, and A. Chubais, held a press conference warning of an impending parliamentary coup led by Khasbulatov, their concerns were dismissed as reactionary. In fact, Khasbulatov appeared the wounded party, and the ministers were discredited by many deputies within the Supreme Soviet. As well, their accusations served to exacerbate the already troubled relations between the government and parliament. Nevertheless, based on his actions during the autumn of 1992, it does not seem improbable that Khasbulatov was making some initial preparations to challenge Yeltsin's authority.

However, this possibility has not been seriously considered within the Russian government and legislatures, and so Khasbulatov still remains in his powerful position, albeit without his armed guards.

A third indication of hostile opposition within the Russian parliament to Yeltsin and his government occurred during the autumn parliamentary session. As mentioned, in December 1992, Yeltsin's special powers enabling him to implement legislation and to appoint government ministers without the legislature's authorization, were to expire. In an attempt to prolong his extraordinary presidential powers, Yeltsin asked the parliament to postpone the December Congress until the Spring of 1993, expecting that Congress would fail to renew his additional powers. Not surprisingly, parliament denied Yeltsin's request 114 to 59, signalling a challenge to Yeltsin and his government.⁵¹ Clearly, the majority in the parliament were not prepared to support Yeltsin, indicating that both Yeltsin and his government would have a difficult time surviving the December Congress intact.

As discussed earlier, the Civic Union decided prior to Congress to cast its lot with the national-patriotic National Salvation Front when Yeltsin and former Acting Prime Minister Egor Gaidar failed to adopt completely both the Civic Union's economic program and suggestions for government personnel changes. As expected, Yeltsin and his government faced a hostile Congress in December 1992, which appeared unwilling to

support anything that Yeltsin proposed. Significantly, Congress voted to reject Egor Gaidar's confirmation as Prime Minister, even after Yeltsin promised Congress the right to approve appointments to the Foreign, Defense, Security, and Interior Ministries.⁵² Yeltsin reacted strongly to this blatant disregard of his authority, calling for a national referendum to decide who the public wanted in power: the President and his government, or the Congress.

Ultimately, after the furore died down, the Congress and the President managed to compromise on a number of issues and Yeltsin and his government for the most part remained intact. Viktor Chernomyrdin, a former technocrat who has the support of the Civic Union, replaced Egor Gaidar as Prime Minister, but the essential nucleus of the reform government was preserved. As well, Yeltsin managed to secure a date in April for a national referendum on a new Russian constitution, signifying another important gain. Nonetheless, these compromises do not suggest that the Congress and parliament have been successfully bridled by Yeltsin, and that they will not pose a threat to the Russian government in the future. It is only through Yeltsin's political maneuvering, and to some extent luck, that his government survived Congress.

Congress and parliament, dominated by the conservative and disloyal Civic Union and NSF forces, will continue to threaten Yeltsin and his government until new elections are called or a new constitution restricts the power of the

legislative branches. In fact, Khasbulatov recently launched a campaign to delay the constitutional referendum until June, and to hold another Congress in April.⁵³ Once again, Yeltsin must enter into combat with Khasbulatov and override his plan.

In 1992, Yeltsin confronted serious threats from hostile elites acting within the legislatures. The numerically and economically powerful Civic Union became a semiloyal opposition force as it clearly transferred its loyalty from the government to the disloyal National Salvation Front. This move represented a menace to Yeltsin and his government as the disloyal National Salvation Front's power was significantly bolstered by its alliance with the Civic Union. Furthermore, Yeltsin and his government were forced to face this hostile opposition without a solid base of support. The Democratic Movement, which advocated both political and economic reform, was far too weak and fractured to offer any substantial backing for Yeltsin's government within the legislatures. This posed a significant problem for the government as Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov permitted the hostile opposition forces to dominate and manipulate the legislative arena in order to challenge the executive. Khasbulatov's actions were driven by a desire to attain power himself by bolstering the parliament's authority at the expense of the government.

Unfortunately, the ongoing battle for supremacy between Khasbulatov and the legislative branches and the executive branch, is also preventing Russia from attaining a working

democracy and market economy. While it is imperative that Yeltsin continue to fight the disloyal opposition formations that threaten him and his government, it is far more important for him to deal with Russia's immediate concerns. Unless a constitution is established very soon, and the specific roles of the executive and legislative branches of the government are regulated and defined, Russia will continue to stagnate politically and economically. Yeltsin and his government cannot afford continually to focus the bulk of their energy on political disputes, particularly at the expense of far more fundamental economic concerns. Ultimately, a functioning democratic government regulated by a constitution is necessary for both the economic survival of Russia and the political survival of Yeltsin and his government.

NOTES

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28. Linz and Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, p. 33.
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44. All of these groups are small, fractured, democratically oriented proto-parties supportive of economic reform and the democratization of the Russian political system. Nikonov, "The Spectrum of Russia's Proto-Parties", p. 19.
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Chapter Four

Civil-Military Relations in Russia

According to Timothy Colton, civil-military relations in the post-Khrushchev Soviet era were marked by both tension and cooperation. It is important, he says, to view this period from a standpoint which "stresses interaction between military and civilian elites, in which neither side attains complete domination but the party's sovereign power is accepted."¹ However, near the end of Brezhnev's leadership, tension rather than cooperation began to dominate civil-military relations. Armed forces' hostility towards the central leadership intensified in reaction to Brezhnev's sudden emphasis on economic and agricultural reform at the expense of military concerns, promotion of detente with the West, and plans to cut defence spending.²

Discord rather than cooperation continued to govern relations between the Soviet armed forces and civilian government during Andropov's and Chernenko's short reigns, and into the Gorbachev era. All of the policies initiated by Brezhnev which proved very unsettling for the Soviet armed forces were expanded upon and pursued with vigour by Gorbachev. In addition to stressing the need for internal

armed forces reform, Gorbachev continued to place economic reform ahead of military concerns. Furthermore, Gorbachev encouraged cooperative relations with the West, focused on a defensive rather than offensive strategy for Soviet foreign relations, and sought to limit armed forces influence in higher government institutions.³ Ultimately, the Gorbachev era heralded "a cultural offensive against the values that had long undergirded the militarization of Soviet foreign policy and the preferential standing of the armed forces within the Soviet system."⁴ Not surprisingly, the Soviet armed forces regarded these changes with hostility and fear and their relations with the government continued to degenerate.

Tensions reached a climax in August 1991 when some of the most prominent members of Gorbachev's government, strongly represented by the defense and security ministries, attempted to oust Gorbachev from power. Major factors precipitating the crisis included the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and planned withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, and the centrifugal tendencies threatening to break the Soviet Union apart and destroy the predominance of the central government.⁵ Ultimately, the coup did very little to improve civil-military relations in the long-term. In fact, issues of concern to the Soviet armed forces prior to the coup, like decreases in defense spending, the incipient disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the attempts to forge closer ties with the West, intensified in the post-coup environment. As Stephen Foye

concludes: "the coup represented less a sudden change of course than a radical acceleration of processes that were already well under way."⁶

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and Boris Yeltsin's ascendancy to President of Russia in the post-Soviet era, civil-military relations have continued to decline. Following the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet army also splintered into a number of independent, republic based units. On May 7, 1992, Yeltsin followed suit and established an independent Russian armed forces.⁷ However, the same issues that arose in both the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras continued to be of central concern to the Russian military, but within an environment of increasing political chaos, serious economic degeneration, high crime rates and corruption. The situation in 1992 was thus far more acute than in the Soviet era. In particular, Russian democracy, such as it is, created an environment dominated by unregulated political competition whereby opposition forces focused primarily on influencing and challenging the government. Accordingly, the armed forces had increased opportunity to challenge and pressure the government within an anarchic political realm, and thus became more involved in the wider political process.

This chapter analyses the increasingly troubled relationship between the armed forces and Yeltsin's government. An armed forces that is discontented with the

government can represent a threat to national stability. In particular, a government confronting both a troubled economy and a disloyal elite which has the tacit or open support of sectors of the armed forces, faces the real possibility of collapse. The armed forces are an important part of this equation, as they possesses the weapons, manpower, and superior organization to challenge successfully a weakened government that has very little support. It is therefore important to define and assess the causes and characteristics of a discontented armed forces.

Politicization is one of the clearest indications of a frustrated armed forces. Timothy Colton defines politicization as a situation when: "Officers intervene against civilian authorities when their perceived interests are being denied or threatened by civilian policy."⁸ According to Colton, some of the most fundamental issues which may drive the armed forces into the political realm include ideological concerns, material concerns, status interests, and professional interests. Ideologically, the armed forces prefer a strong unifying orientation. The collapse of, or failure to generate, such an ideology complicates the means by which the armed forces motivates and organises itself.⁹ Material concerns, such as living conditions and salary, retirement benefits, and security after discharge, are also of prime concern to the armed forces. If the material well-being of the armed forces is compromised, politicization becomes a

real possibility.¹⁰ Finally, the armed forces wants to protect both its status within society at large, as well as its resources and organisation.¹¹

When any or all of these interests are threatened, the armed forces will become politicised and exhibit greater involvement in, and/or intervene in the political process. Colton identifies greater military involvement as a situation in which the scope of issues concerning the armed forces extends beyond merely internal matters to institutional, intermediate, and societal issues. Institutional issues are those which "bear directly upon officers' ideological self-image, material well-being, status, and professional concerns but can be decided only with the participation of civilian elites."¹² Intermediate and societal issues affect the military to a certain extent, but tend to be broader society-wide concerns.¹³ Thus, military involvement is evident when the armed forces ceases to be interested in just military related issues, but becomes concerned with matters facing society as a whole.

Military intervention occurs when the armed forces use increasingly forceful means to deal with their concerns. These include: official prerogative, in which armed forces personnel deal internally with limited institutional concerns; expert advice to the civilian government on various issues; political bargaining between the government and military over issues of concern to armed forces; and force, which is the

most violent and extreme means of settling concerns. Occasionally, a politicised armed forces may both intervene in, and become increasingly involved in, the political process. Kenneth Currie outlines some specific indications of both military involvement and intervention in politics:

overt political activity on the part of military personnel, open questioning of state policy by senior military leaders, and . . . active duty military officers . . . [serving] as members of legislative bodies.¹⁴

An armed forces which is overtly engaged in political activities is seeking greater means with which to intervene in the political process. Instead of dealing with merely internal military concerns, the armed forces seeks to improve its political bargaining position with the government by organising itself along political lines. As well, active military personnel who hold political positions are also intervening in the political process by placing themselves directly in the political realm in order to more effectively deal with their concerns.

Moreover, questioning of government policy by armed forces personnel demonstrates greater military involvement in the political process. By openly criticising and challenging government policy, the armed forces moves beyond the narrow scope of internal military matters and begins to overtly concern itself with broader government policy issues. Lastly, another sign of a politicised armed forces which Currie does not mention, is when the armed forces supersedes government

command and acts autonomously according to its own agenda.¹⁵ Autonomous action is a sign of increased military intervention, as the armed forces relies on its own and unauthorized means of dealing with matters of concern.

This chapter examines Russian civil-military relations in 1992 based on the four specific indicators discussed above, and determines that the Russian armed forces were becoming politicised during 1992. This conclusion is based on evidence of military intervention in Russian politics, including signs of political activity within the armed forces and active duty military officers holding political office. As well, there was both a combination of military involvement and intervention in Russia, exhibited by open armed forces opposition to state policy, which in some cases prompted autonomous action by the military.

Along with politicization of the armed forces, there has been another sign of increasingly strained relations between the Russian military and government. Over 1992, the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs were in regular conflict ideologically and over foreign policy. The Russian Ministry of Defense is a conservative body which both directs and reflects the dominant orientation of the Russian armed forces. Conversely, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a moderately liberal body which is more representative of the position of Yeltsin and his government. The disagreements between these two ministries paralleled, to a large extent,

the contentious issues that confronted the armed forces and Yeltsin's government.

Essentially, there were two fundamental conflicts between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. First, there was disagreement over the appropriate role that the Russian armed forces should play in protecting Russian minorities in the post-Soviet republics. As well, the two ministries had different views of the new international political landscape which resulted in clashes over each organisation's perceptions of Russia's relations with the West. During 1992, each of these views became part of the larger debate in Russia between the Conservatives, who wanted to restore the former Soviet Union and revive Russia's superpower status, and the Democrats, who were seeking closer relations with the West, democracy, and a market economy. Ultimately, each issue represented a major stumbling block preventing the government from gaining the complete support of the armed forces. The eventual resolution of these issues not only affects the stability of Yeltsin's government, but also the success of democratization and marketization in Russia, and the relationship between Russia and the West.

Politicization of the Armed Forces

Armed forces will typically intervene in the domestic political process when government decisions and policies

undermine their strength, morale, and stability. Politicisation of the armed forces occurs in two ways. The armed forces become more politically involved as the scope of issues concerning them expand, and increasingly they intervene in the political process utilising more forceful means to deal with these concerns. In 1992, the Russian armed forces became increasingly politicized as its status, material, and professional interests were threatened. Generally, these problems arose following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Soviet armed forces, as well as from the economic crisis generated by the reforms of the Russian government.

The fragmentation of the U.S.S.R. into independent republics significantly weakened the strength and threatened the status of the armed forces. No longer a unified, massive, all-union body, the armed forces became splintered into a number of smaller nationally based units. Subsequently, one of the most powerful armed forces in the world was forced to acknowledge its internal degeneration and loss of status internationally. This was a particularly bitter pill to swallow for the newly independent Russian army which had, under communism, been the most powerful component of the Soviet armed forces. Additionally, economic reforms, first initiated by Gorbachev in the mid-1980's and then pursued with vigour by Yeltsin, served to further undermine the material and professional well-being of the armed forces. Facing

massive government debt, Gorbachev first pursued a number of measures aimed at cutting the uncontrollable Soviet defense expenditures. Soviet troops were removed from Afghanistan and then gradually out of Eastern Europe, and production of arms was significantly reduced due to a series of arms reduction treaties with the United States.

Following Gorbachev's removal from power, President Yeltsin continued to pursue these initiatives on a large scale. Defense spending was cut further, as Yeltsin's government continued to face a large government deficit and a subsequent lack of revenue with which to fuel the insatiable appetites of defense industries. Additionally, large numbers of soldiers continued to return to Russian soil as more troops were removed from Eastern Europe, and with the collapse of the U.S.S.R., from former Soviet republics as well. Ultimately, as 1992 progressed, the Russian economy deteriorated further as inflation spiralled along with the government deficit, causing Yeltsin's government to become increasingly impotent financially. The armed forces continued to suffer the repercussions as the government was unable to raise armed forces salaries which were increasingly inadequate due to spiralling inflation. Furthermore, the government did not have sufficient revenue to finance the building of new homes for soldiers returning from abroad, or to support defense industries.

During 1992, the Russian armed forces thus faced a number

of serious problems precipitated for the most part from failed government economic policy. Some of the most pressing issues confronting the Russian armed forces included a serious drop in the number of military draftees, lack of adequate housing, deficient equipment, and subsequently, a serious loss of morale. First, there was a major drop in armed forces personnel over 1992, due to both unfavourable perceptions of the armed forces amongst Russia's youth and growing numbers of draft deferments. This posed a direct threat to the armed forces professional interests, namely, the ability to organise itself as an effective fighting force. According to figures released by the collegium of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense, in the spring of 1992 alone, 17,800 young men evaded the draft.¹⁶ This increase is particularly startling when one examines past figures. Notably, in 1988, draft evasions for the entire Soviet army totalled a mere 1000.¹⁷ Additionally, due to draft deferments permitted for reasons ranging from academic study to prominence in athletics, only 70 out of 100 men were eligible for military service in Russia, and in Moscow, a mere 9 out of 100.¹⁸ This did not bode well for the Russian army which is composed primarily of conscripted personnel.

Another major problem challenging the Russian armed forces in 1992 was the serious lack of adequate housing for soldiers returning from both Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. By the end of the year, over 200,000

officers were forced to live with their families in tents or decaying barracks.¹⁹ Furthermore, the returning officers faced growing hostility from civilians who blamed them for placing additional strain on the competitive housing situation. These appalling living conditions confronting returning armed forces personnel only served to exacerbate plunging morale. As the armed forces material interests were directly threatened, hostility towards Yeltsin's government subsequently increased. Recognising this situation, President Yeltsin addressed the collegium of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense in November 1992, asserting that: "It is impermissible to discharge officers without providing housing for them."²⁰ Nonetheless, given the terrible state of the Russian economy and the corresponding lack of revenue available to the government, it was difficult to know how Yeltsin intended to finance this housing.

A third problem facing the Russian armed forces over 1992 was a lack of high-technology, functional equipment. Fundamentally, this threatened the professional interests of the armed forces, as the lack of necessary weapons and other combat equipment threatened to decrease the efficiency of the Russian armed forces in its current form. As well, this created a serious obstacle to the Defense Ministry's goal of transforming the Russian army into a small, efficient, highly mobile, and well-equipped fighting force. The lack of adequate equipment stemmed from a number of factors, including

the loss of weapons incurred by the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to recent figures:

large numbers of MIG-29 and SU-27 fighters, the overwhelming majority of military transport planes and almost all of the TU-160 state-of-the-art strategic bombers were left outside of Russia - mainly in Ukraine, with some in Belarus. . . . In general, the proportion of equipment that truly meets today's requirements does not exceed 20 per cent of the Russian arsenal.²¹

Furthermore, in 1992, construction of new weapons and equipment in Russia, including ships and submarines, slowed significantly or ground to a halt. The supplies needed to produce military hardware were both expensive and difficult to access, and the government could not afford to offer sufficient financial assistance to defense industries. Consequently, the shortage of effective weapons and arms forced the Russian armed forces to contend with both a loss of strength, and a decrease in combat readiness.

Ultimately, the morale of the Russian armed forces plunged in 1992 for two reasons. First, as discussed, the economic crisis in Russia generated both a plunge in living conditions and lack of equipment for the armed forces. Poor morale was further exacerbated by shortages of personnel.²² Additionally, the Russian armed forces continued to find it difficult to accept the independence of the post-Soviet republics and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.²³ The dissolution of the USSR triggered a corresponding loss of prestige for the Russian armed forces, as they previously had preferential status within the Soviet armed forces and a great

deal of influence in the Soviet republics.

Not surprisingly, the Russian armed forces became increasingly politicised during 1992 in reaction to both the loss of Russian control in the Soviet republics and the problems generated by economic reform. So, using Kenneth Currie's specific indicators of politicization based on Colton's broader depictions of both military involvement and intervention, there were a number of incidents demonstrating the politicisation of the Russian armed forces in 1992. These included the armed forces involvement in political activities, the presence of armed forces personnel in political positions, and the open questioning of government policy by contingents of the Russian armed forces which, on some occasions, led to autonomous action.

One of the earliest examples of the Russian armed forces involvement in political activities was on January 17, 1992 when 5000 officers met at the first All-Army Officers' Assembly.²⁴ Their fundamental concerns were centred around the break-up of the Soviet armed forces, and the officers asserted that the unity of the army must be preserved at all costs. Yeltsin was unable to respond to their concerns, as the Soviet armed forces had already begun to fragment into a number of national-based armies. This process was ultimately beyond the Russian government's control. Inevitably, this had an impact on the relationship between the armed forces and the government early on, as the officers felt that Yeltsin and the

Russian government were largely to blame for the collapse of the Soviet Union and Soviet army.²⁵ One could surmise that, to a certain extent, the formation of the Russian independent armed forces in May 1992 restored some hope amongst these officers. However, the Russian armed forces are considerably less effective and powerful than the Soviet army was, and this likely would have caused many armed forces personnel to yearn for the restoration of the Soviet empire. Ultimately armed forces' discontent persisted as armed forces political organisations continued to germinate throughout the remainder of 1992, indicating that the armed forces were increasingly intervening in the political process.

One particularly conspicuous organisation was Colonel Stanislav Terekhov's Officers' Union with a self-declared 10,000 strong membership.²⁶ Fundamentally opposed to Yeltsin's democratically oriented government, the Officers' Union, allied with the National Salvation Front (NSF), represented one of the more conservative and national-patriotic Russian armed forces organisations. As Terekhov noted: "Let the Americans entertain themselves with democracy. . . . We don't need it. We need a dictatorship of law."²⁷ Blatantly anti-Yeltsin, anti-democratic, and anti-capitalist, the Officers' Union seemed to represent some degree of threat to Yeltsin's government. However, the actual amount of support for the Officers' Union was hard to discern. Most likely, the numbers were fairly limited as only the most extreme elements

in the conservative armed forces would be drawn to Terekhov's reactionary platform. The Officer's Union was weakened further when Colonel Terekhov, the Union's leader, was discharged from the armed forces following the ban on the NSF. Terekhov thus became one of the many Russian civilian political activists.

Perhaps the most significant and threatening political armed forces organisations in 1992 were those that appeared in the Baltic region of the former Soviet Union. Composed of both retired and active Russian soldiers stationed in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, groups like the Council of Officers' Assemblies, the Union of Communists, the Association for the Defense of Veterans' Rights, with the support of Russian national-patriot groups, gained a large degree of sympathy from the Russian forces stationed in the Baltics.²⁸ These various political/armed forces organizations ostensibly formed to protect the rights of both Russian minorities and Russian troops living and stationed in the Baltics. However, according to Dzintra Bungs, these groups were interested in a lot more than human rights: "these organisations . . . want the restoration of the Soviet Union in a new guise, they oppose the reforms of Boris Yeltsin, and the independence of the former republics of the U.S.S.R."²⁹

Ultimately, the Baltic armed forces political organisations proved to be quite powerful during 1992. Yeltsin capitulated to their demands for Russian troops to

remain in the Baltics to protect Russian minority rights, and called for a halt to the withdrawal of Russian troops from the region. In fact, Yeltsin even supported the claims of these nationalist groups, explaining that his actions were a just response to the: "human rights violations against ethnic Russians in the Baltic countries."³⁰ It became apparent that the conservative politicised armed forces movements in the Baltics, bolstered by groups like the NSF and Civic Union, had enough power to force Yeltsin to acknowledge their demands.

A second major indicator that the Russian armed forces were politicised throughout 1992 through greater intervention in the political realm, was the presence of military personnel in political positions. As Kenneth Currie explains: "[in Russia] active duty military officers still sit on local and national level legislative bodies where they are free to openly question the policies of the government and their senior officers."³¹ Many of these politically involved armed forces personnel, including individuals like Lieutenant M.G. Titov, and Rear Admiral R. Z. Chebotarevsky, were also involved with nationalist groups like the National Salvation Front.³² Accordingly, these highly conservative and nationalist military personnel with political positions presented a challenge to Yeltsin and his government.

However, as Currie notes, the Russian government issued a directive near the end of 1992, stating that deputies to the Supreme Soviet could not simultaneously serve in parliament

and hold another civil office.³³ Nevertheless, it is questionable whether this policy would eradicate the Russian armed forces' involvement in political institutions. Even if these individuals were forced to resign from the armed forces in order to remain politically active, it is doubtful whether their connections with, and the influence of, their former armed force colleagues would cease to exist. It would appear that the government's directive would merely limit the armed forces' direct presence in the Russian legislatures while doing very little to restrict their strong indirect influence.

The final indicator of politicisation of the armed forces involves both involvement and intervention in politics. Certain sectors of the armed forces increase their involvement politically by openly questioning and challenging government policy, and then, in some cases, intervene in the political process by acting autonomously to settle these concerns. In Russia, throughout 1992, there were a number of cases where armed forces personnel openly questioned state policy. In some of these situations, these groups subsequently defied the government and acted autonomously according to their own agenda. The first incident in which the armed forces intervened in and questioned government policy was prompted by the struggle between Ukraine and Russia over the Black Sea fleet. Initially, Yeltsin approached negotiations with Ukraine willing to reach mutually agreeable compromise. However, military and nationalist forces were adamant that

Russia should not relinquish control over the fleet and pressured Yeltsin into taking a hard-line stance in his negotiations with Ukraine.³⁴ The conservative armed forces seemed to presume that Russia should have supremacy over the post-Soviet republics militarily, thereby giving Russia automatic possession of the Soviet army's military equipment.

A second and more vivid example of both open defiance of government policy by the armed forces and subsequent autonomous action, occurred with the Fourteenth Army in Moldova. Since the autumn of 1991, ethnic Russians residing in Eastern Moldova had been fighting to prevent Moldovan independence from Moscow.³⁵ Although the Russians are a minority, comprising only 25.5 per cent of the population of this area on the left bank of the Dniester, they are the most politically powerful group in the region. Working with nationalist organisations from Russia, the separatist Russians in Moldova staged a number of aggressive military confrontations against Moldovans in order to gain control of what is known as the "Dniester Republic", and prevent the complete independence of Moldova from Russia.³⁶

Throughout 1992, there was increasing evidence that "Dniester" forces (or Russian insurgents) were enjoying the tacit, and in some cases active, support of the Russian Fourteenth Army stationed in Moldova. Significantly, the Fourteenth Army was supplying the Dniester forces with high technology weapons such as machine guns, grenade throwers,

armoured personnel carriers, Alazan and Grad rocket launchers, and T-64 tanks, which led the Russian insurgency forces to gain the upper hand in their battle for control over the left bank of the Dniester.³⁷

Beyond supplying weapons, the Russian Fourteenth Army also aided the Dniester forces in a number of combat initiatives. In both May and June 1992, the army supported the Dniester forces in two major direct attacks on Moldovan defense detachments, as well as participating in an assault on the left bank Moldovan city of Bendery.³⁸ While Moldovan authorities complained bitterly to the Russian government about the increased aggression of the Fourteenth Army, the government seemed able to do very little to prevent the army's regular involvement in the Russian insurgents' offensives. In fact, Yeltsin's government acknowledged it had never authorized the transfer of arms nor the combative activities of the Fourteenth Army. Nevertheless, even after the Russian government became fully aware of the Fourteenth Army's blatantly autonomous activities, they did very little to punish or discipline them.

Ultimately, the Fourteenth Army not only ignored the Russian government's moderate and non-aggressive policy towards newly independent post-Soviet republics, but chose to act autonomously according to its own assessment of the Moldovan situation. As indicated, the conservative Russian armed forces continued to be fundamentally concerned about the

disintegration of the Soviet Union during 1992, and did not want to relinquish control over many of these post-Soviet republics. Under the guise of protecting the rights of Russian minorities within Moldova, the Fourteenth Army continued to assert control in this region. The Fourteenth Army's autonomous activities, motivated by its commitment to preserve Russian dominance in Moldova, represented a major trend in armed forces behaviour during 1992.

A third example in which the Russian armed forces clearly contested government policy occurred during Russia's dispute with Japan over the Kuril Islands chain. During the autumn of 1992, Yeltsin's government began negotiations with the Japanese government over the ownership of the Kuril Islands which were conferred to Russia following World War II. Aware that Japan would not offer any financial assistance while Russia retained complete control over the Kuril Islands, Yeltsin pursued a compromise with the Japanese government in which Japan would possibly regain partial ownership over the islands. This conciliatory approach reflected the general tone of Yeltsin's policy towards the West, which stressed cooperation and good relations.

Conversely, most conservative groups, including the General Staff of the armed forces, were not as committed to friendly relations with the West. In fact, these groups voiced strong opposition to the transfer of any part of the Kuril Islands chain to Japan. Furthermore, they remained

unconcerned about the implications this hardline stance would have for relations between Russia and the West. Notably, the General Staff of the Russian armed forces, in a written evaluation of the situation, openly condemned the Yeltsin government's attempts to compromise with Japan:

Among the report's conclusions were the following: that any concessions made by Russia on territorial issues would undermine the principle of the inviolability of post-war borders, that concessions to Japan now would give Japan cause to make larger territorial demands of Russia . . . [and] in particular China, would make similar demands, and that handing the southern Kurils over to Japan would lead to instability in the east of the country.³⁹

Indicative of their growing politicization, the armed forces openly challenged the Russian government's policy on the Kuril Islands.⁴⁰ The armed forces seemed convinced that the islands remained an important buffer against potential Asian aggression, and that by relinquishing this territory to Japan, Russia would appear weak and vulnerable.

On a broader level, armed forces criticism of the government's approach to the Kuril Islands dispute represented a wider conflict over Russia's foreign policy. The Russian General Staff, as evidenced in their report on the Kuril Islands question, continued to view the West with suspicion and some level of hostility. While Yeltsin's government openly pursued cooperation and close relations with the West throughout 1992, the armed forces seemed to believe that ties with the West were dangerous and would only lead to Russia's subordination by countries like the United States and Japan.

This disagreement further exacerbated the tenuous relationship between the armed forces and the Russian government. While Yeltsin's government continued to pursue closer ties with the West, the armed forces correspondingly became increasingly vocal against government policies and subsequently more politicized.

A final example of an open challenge to government policy by the armed forces occurred over the question of Russian minorities in the Baltics. Following the collapse of the August coup, the independence of the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was recognised by Moscow. While Russian troops continued to remain stationed in the Baltics during the early part of 1992, Yeltsin's government assured Baltic leaders that the troops would begin to be slowly withdrawn from the region within the year.⁴¹ Indeed, by October 1992, 40 per cent of the Russian troops had been withdrawn from the Baltics.⁴²

Meanwhile, amongst the armed forces, particularly those stationed in the Baltics, there was very little support for either Baltic independence or removal of Russian detachments from Baltic territories. As mentioned, during 1992, a number of conservative armed forces political organizations began emerging in the Baltic with strong ties to the national-patriotic movement in Russia. Openly opposing the complete removal of Russian military influence in the region, they began to lobby Yeltsin's government to retain Russian armed

forces in this region in order to protect the "oppressed" Russian minorities living there. Fundamentally, they claimed that in Latvia and Estonia in particular, the governments were disregarding the human rights of the Russian minorities living in the regions. As Dzintra Bungs indicates:

These organizations have made it one of their principal tasks to publicize what they perceive as abuses, actual and potential, of the rights of Russians, as well as the rights of serving members of the Russian armed forces and retired members of the Soviet military. They tend to formulate their claims as violations of human rights.⁴³

Ultimately, the Russian armed forces were less concerned about the Russian minorities' rights within the Baltics, and more fearful of the waning Russian dominance in this region. Yeltsin, feeling the pressure of the armed forces and other conservative groups, eased their anxieties, and halted troop withdrawals from the Baltics. In fact, Yeltsin borrowed the rhetoric of these groups in justifying this apparent reversal in the Russian government's policy: "Discriminatory policies and practices of the authorities of Latvia and Estonia with respect to this population group [composed of Russian minorities] run contrary to the fundamental principles of the United Nations."⁴⁴ Thus, both the politicization and the power of the Russian armed forces was clearly demonstrated by the Baltic example. Not only did various contingents of the armed forces oppose Russian government policy in the Baltics, they also succeeded in pressuring the government to change its policy.

The politicization of the armed forces by involvement and intervention in the political process is bound to become increasingly prevalent in Russia. So far, the armed forces have generally been successful in getting their demands met by the Russian government and this can only encourage continued armed forces participation in the political realm. In hopes of curtailing this trend, Defense Minister Grachev issued a report in September 1992 stating that "harsh actions would be taken against officers who participated in political protests . . . [and] that he would depoliticize all military organizations".⁴⁵ However, the four examples discussed above clearly demonstrate that the government's anti-politicization strategy towards the armed forces was either enforced half-heartedly, or seriously ineffective.

Tension Between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs

On a different level, the increasingly tense relations between the Russian armed forces and the government were, during 1992, reflected in the ongoing clashes between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. Robert Arnett has identified a number of contentious issues between these two organisations: in particular, Russia's role in the former Soviet Union and the protection of Russian minorities in these

areas, and relations between Russia and the West.⁴⁶ As clearly demonstrated above, a primary concern of the armed forces during 1992 centred around the role Russia should play in the former U.S.S.R. Ultimately, there seemed to be a basic consensus amongst the military that Russia should continue to play a strong role in these newly independent regions. As early as January 1992, the armed forces openly voiced its rejection of the C.I.S., and bemoaned the disintegration of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ As well, there was evidence of apprehension within the armed forces over Russia's closer relationship with the West. The Kuril Islands incident clearly indicated that the armed forces viewed the West as a potentially hostile force, in much the same way as they did under communism.

During 1992, the Russian Ministry of Defense, for the most part, shared these concerns with the armed forces. While the liberal elements within the government, exemplified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, generally promoted a moderate approach in dealings with the former Soviet republics: "the Russian Ministry of Defense [has] advocated a much more activist, potentially violent stance on the issue of protecting Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics."⁴⁸ The Ministry of Defense had the support of conservative and national-patriotic groups like the Civic Union and National Salvation Front, as well as the armed forces on this issue. Likely, it was this broad level of

support which influenced the Russian government to shift its policy towards the "near abroad" (former Soviet Union). As discussed, the Russian government decided to adopt a more confrontational approach and sanctioned a halt to withdrawal of troops from the Baltics and did very little to prevent the aggression of the Fourteenth Army in Moldova. In this instance, it appeared that in 1992, the conservative Ministry of Defense won a victory over the more liberal-moderate Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Policy towards the former Soviet republics clearly became more conservative and militant, and by the end of 1992 even liberal ministers like Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev asserted the importance of protecting Russian minorities in the "near abroad".⁴⁹

A second major area of disagreement between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs concerned Russia's relationship with the West. Typically, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev pursued closer ties with the West. To a certain extent, Kozyrev's rationale for cooperation with the West was motivated by economic interests, based on the fact that the West remains a source of financial aid to Russia. Continued cooperation and compliance with such western-based international organisations as the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Seven was essential for Russia if it hoped to continue receiving financial aid and credits from the West. On a broader level however, Kozyrev's desire to increase ties

with the West during 1992 stemmed from his view that cooperation and agreement are a fundamental part of current international relations:

Kozyrev sees the present international system as . . . a system in which the majority of great powers are united by a common system of values centred on market economics and pluralism . . . [and] economic interdependence [has] led to a situation in which relations between states are no longer at each other's expense.⁵⁰

Ultimately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as directed by Kozyrev, had both ideological and economic reasons for maintaining a good and cooperative relationship with the West.

Conversely, in 1992, the Ministry of Defense led by Minister Pavel Grachev viewed Russian-Western relations with a great deal of caution. As mentioned, the Ministry of Defense is a very conservative body and supported a different conception of international relations than that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

the Ministry of Defense . . . carries an image of international politics more in keeping with the past. . . [and] strongly expresses doubts that the world has changed as much as policy makers such as Yeltsin and Kozyrev suggest.⁵¹

It follows then, that the Ministry of Defense would not accept a world view in which all developed nations are compelled to cooperate on the basis of economic independence, friendly market competition, and similarity of values. Essentially, the Ministry of Defense viewed the West as still primarily motivated by its own self-interest. Consequently, this Ministry espoused the need to approach relations with the West

with restraint, and to evaluate closely the West's motives in forging closer ties with Russia.

Ultimately, the Ministry of Defense seemed to be more concerned with relations between Russia and the former Soviet Republics than with those between Russia and the West. It is interesting to note that, to a certain extent, the Russian armed forces and Ministry of Defense even went so far as to view a loss of control over the former Soviet republics as a threat to Russian security:

In a speech to the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy in Moscow, [Colonel General Mikhail] Kolesnikov warned that disputes between the former Soviet republics contained the danger of degenerating into the Yugoslav precedent which could in turn lead to direct intervention by the West under the guise of ensuring international control over the nuclear potential of the former U.S.S.R.⁵²

This comment demonstrates that the armed forces/Ministry of Defense had found another justification for Russian interference in the former Soviet republics. In their view, the Russian armed forces must be charged both with protecting Russian minorities from the hostilities of other nationalities in the former U.S.S.R. and defending the former Soviet Union from Western aggression.

During 1992, the Ministry of Defense influenced Russian policy with respect to relations with former Soviet republics while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a dominant role in defining Russia's wider foreign policy. Although the conservative forces in Russia, including the armed forces,

were not supportive of closer relations with the West, the Russian government continued to cooperate with the West on a number of levels throughout 1992. Significantly, Yeltsin and Kozyrev signed a major arms reduction treaty with the United States in early 1993, demonstrating that they did not share the Ministry of Defense/armed forces' view of a latently aggressive West intent on destroying Russia's nuclear potential. Nevertheless, the growing strength and influence of the conservative movement in Russia, spearheaded by groups like the Civic Union, National Salvation Front, and supported by the armed forces and Ministry of Defense, will undoubtedly continue to pressure Yeltsin's government to modify its moderate-liberal approach to foreign affairs.

Over 1992, there were clear indications that relations between the armed forces and Yeltsin's government were troubled. Beyond the squabbling over foreign policy strategies between the Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, the armed forces themselves became increasingly involved in the political realm. The broad number of grievances advanced by the armed forces, ranging from protection of minorities in the former Soviet Union to the lack of adequate housing for military personnel, drove the armed forces to become politicised. As well as forming political organisations ranging from officer's unions to veterans groups, sectors of the armed forces also forged ties with groups like the National Salvation Front on the basis of

their shared condemnation of the breakup of the Soviet Union and opposition to Yeltsin's government.

While the Russian armed forces are not likely to pose a threat on their own, the growing alliance of various armed forces organisations with nationalist/conservative groups like the Civic Union and NSF, does not bode well for Yeltsin's government.⁵³ Over 1992, there was evidence of the growing power of the conservative forces in Russia. Various policies of grave concern to the armed forces and conservative groups alike, such as the protection of Russian minorities in the near abroad, were revised in their favour by the Russian government.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the armed forces made tangible gains resulting from this involvement in the political process, which will no doubt encourage its greater politicisation in the future.

It is difficult to understand clearly whether the armed forces are opposed to democracy in addition to radical economic reforms and Russian foreign policy. The affiliation of certain segments of the armed forces with national-patriotic groups like the NSF may indicate that perhaps there are groups within the armed forces that are right-wing/fascist or communist. However, there is very little data on the levels of armed forces' support for democracy. Perhaps, it could be inferred that due to its essentially conservative character, the armed forces would tend to be less supportive of any system which necessitates great change and threatens

order and stability. Nonetheless, the armed forces have demonstrated that it is more than willing to play the Russian democratic game, such as it is, by criticising and challenging government policy. In fact, the currently unregulated state of Russian democracy provides a better forum for armed force involvement in the political process than ever before. Ultimately, the armed forces seem to be concerned first and foremost about getting their concerns acknowledged by the Russian government. Moreover, they appear to be more than willing to manipulate the democratic system in order to get their concerns heard, regardless of their support for, or opposition to, democracy.

It is therefore crucial for Yeltsin to increase the power of the government over the armed forces in the future by, most importantly, dealing with the autonomous activities and politicisation of the armed forces far more decisively than he did in 1992. If Yeltsin does not gain control over the armed forces, groups like the NSF and Civic Union will continue to win increasing support from the armed forces on the basis of their shared distrust of Yeltsin's government and nationalist ideology. These sorts of developments must be prevented at all costs, or Yeltsin and his government may face the prospect of expulsion by a conservative coup initiated by disaffected elites and hostile contingents of the armed forces.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

According to the framework developed in the introductory chapter, a government faces the potential for breakdown when it has initiated a series of seriously damaging policies, particularly in the economic realm, and consequently encounters the hostility of both disloyal elite groups and a disaffected armed forces. After exploring the situation in Russia, it is apparent that each of these three indicators were significant features in the Russian political, economic, and social landscape in 1992. Economically, this was a difficult year in Russia as inflation spiralled towards hyperinflation. In fact, near the end of January 1993, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told members of the World Economic Forum that inflation had risen to 50 per cent a month effectively qualifying as hyperinflation.¹ Hyperinflation is seriously debilitating as it destroys most economic institutions, and subsequently kindles both political and social turmoil.² In addition, by the end of 1992, it was clear that the government deficit was unmanageable, production had plunged, unemployment was continuing to grow, and privatization was meeting with confusion and opposition.

Consequently, diverse groups ranging from ordinary Russian citizens to industrial and political elites began to openly express opposition to the reform process.

In particular, powerful industrial elites, including heads of former state-owned enterprises and industries, felt seriously threatened by the economic reform process in Russia. Faced with a sharp drop in government financial support, loss of guaranteed supplies, increases in the costs of production, internal operational inefficiencies impeding ability to compete in a market, and potential loss of ownership privileges due to privatization, the industrial elites were spurred into action. Forming powerful political lobby groups, such as the Russian Union of Industrial Employees/Civic Union, industrial elites pressured Yeltsin's government to soften economic reforms. As a result, economic reforms were not consistently implemented by Yeltsin as he lapsed from his tough monetary control policy and granted credits to enterprises, raised wages, and promised increased social assistance for workers, thereby fuelling inflation and intensifying the government deficit.

Unfortunately, by succumbing to pressures to slow down economic reform, Yeltsin actually aggravated the conditions that initially prompted opposition to the economic reforms. Temporarily reversing certain aspects of the economic reform program only served to inhibit progress towards demonopolization, currency stabilization, and the ultimate

marketization of Russia's economy. Economic conditions over 1992 therefore did not improve, and in some cases became worse. As the year drew to a close, industrial elites and other opposition groups persistently challenged the government and its economic reform program and, ironically, continued to pressure Yeltsin's government to adopt policies further exacerbating the economic chaos which they condemned.

Not surprisingly, the second major problem facing Yeltsin's government in 1992 was the growth of semiloyal and disloyal elite movements. Groups like the Civic Union, representing the interests of Russia's industrial elites, and national-patriotic movements such as the National Salvation Front openly challenged Yeltsin's government and sought to reverse economic reform. Possessing numerical strength within the Russian legislatures and, in the case of the Civic Union, economic strength based on control of most major Russian industries, each group posed a considerable threat to Yeltsin and his government.

In order to survive politically, Yeltsin was forced on a number of occasions in 1992 to accommodate the concerns and suggestions of the Civic Union. The Civic Union, however, did not appear willing to compromise with Yeltsin's government. Instead, it demanded complete fulfilment of its economic and political strategies. Irrespective of concessions such as increased credits to enterprises, raised wages, and relaxation of industry taxes, the Civic Union continued to criticize and

attempted to further influence government policy. Ultimately, on the eve of the December 1992 Congress of People's Deputies, which had become the forum for deciding the fate of both economic reform and Yeltsin's government, the Civic Union chose to confront the government and joined forces with the national-patriotic National Salvation Front. This move confirmed the Civic Union's status as a semiloyal opposition force as it transferred its allegiance from the government to cooperate with a disloyal opposition group.³

The National Salvation Front was clearly a disloyal opposition group as it sought the removal of the Russian government, an end to Yeltsin's economic reform program, and also called for Yeltsin's impeachment. Consequently, Yeltsin was compelled to ban the movement as this group posed a direct challenge to both the presidency and government. Nevertheless, prior to the ruling, the National Salvation Front did not disband, but continued to operate as a disloyal opposition group within both Russian legislatures. This act blatantly demonstrated the NSF's lack of respect for the President's democratically sanctioned, legitimate authority. Furthermore, the National Salvation Front continued to organise and seek support at the grass-roots level. Its patriotic, pro-Russian platform appealed to many Russians disillusioned with the economic chaos and Russia's loss of international power and prestige precipitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Ostensibly, the existence of fledgling proto-parties should have been favourable to the development of democracy in Russia. In the case of the Civic Union and NSF, this has not occurred. Neither group has exhibited the characteristics of loyal opposition committed to the role of an opposition party seeking power only by legitimate election. The Civic Union openly rescinded its support for Yeltsin's government prior to the December, 1992 Congress when the government refused to fully adopt its package of demands. Subsequently, the Civic Union became a semiloyal opposition force, as it chose to ally with the Communist and Right-Wing National Salvation Front. The NSF, as a disloyal opposition group, clearly voiced its major goals as impeaching President Yeltsin, ousting the Russian government, and capturing power itself.⁴ The NSF's goals were clearly more radical than those of the Civic Union. Nonetheless, both factions, who together comprised an 80 to 85 percent majority in the legislatures, were willing to use their combined muscle to pressure Yeltsin's government to reverse economic reforms or face removal.

The legislatures provided a good forum whereby the disloyal-semiloyal NSF and Civic Union alliance could achieve their respective goals. First, the lack of rules governing these institutions facilitated the factions' abilities to challenge Yeltsin within a legal and legitimate context. Additionally, Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov was more than willing to allow hostile factions like the NSF and the Civic Union to

use the parliament as an arena to challenge and perhaps dispose of Yeltsin and his government. Fundamentally, Khasbulatov aspired to bolster his own power by increasing that of the legislatures and thereby weakening the government's power. Consequently, the Russian legislatures, encouraged by Khasbulatov, became the focus of the battle between hostile opposition forces and the Yeltsin government.

Clearly, one of the fundamental failures of Yeltsin's government, affecting both the establishment of democracy and a market economy in Russia, was the lack of a democratic constitution to regulate institutional and party behaviour. Ultimately, this deficiency meant that in 1992 the legislatures actually impeded progress towards the development of a market and democracy, and essentially became dominated by political battles. Consequently, Yeltsin and his government had to devote disproportionate amounts of time to offset the challenges of the disloyal-semiloyal opposition at the expense of the troubled Russian economy. Yeltsin, recognising that without a new constitution Russian political institutions would continue to be ruled by conspiracy, anarchy, and political warfare, proposed that a referendum for a new constitution be held in April, 1993. However, as 1993 progresses, it seems less likely that Khasbulatov will be willing to work with Yeltsin to clearly divide power between the executive and legislative branches. The referendum to decide the division of power in Russia continues to be put

off, and the political struggle continues.⁵ Until a constitution is established, Yeltsin will have to continue to squander increasing amounts of time and attention on his political survival and mediating battles between his government and disloyal opposition forces.

Another major factor threatening Yeltsin's government in 1992 was the disaffected Russian armed forces. In addition to a loss of power and prestige as a result of the collapse of both the Soviet Union and the Soviet armed forces, the Russian armed forces also had to contend with personnel shortages, lack of adequate housing and equipment, loss of morale, and generally poor living conditions. Consequently, the Russian army became visibly politicised in 1992. This was evidenced by increased armed forces' intervention in the political realm. In particular, armed forces' political organisations proliferated, various armed forces personnel held political positions, and, on some occasions, components of the armed forces acted autonomously. Furthermore, the scope of issues concerning the armed forces broadened as they regularly challenged and criticised government policy.

One of the principal areas of concern for the Russian armed forces centred around the loss of Russian influence in the former Soviet republics. Accordingly, the Russian armed forces lobbied the government to recognise the need to protect Russian minorities in the newly independent republics. Aimed at retaining the presence of Russian armed forces in these

regions, this strategy ultimately won the approval of Yeltsin and his government, but only under pressure from the armed forces and conservative groups in the legislatures. Visibly, the armed forces did exert a certain degree of power over the Russian government in 1992. However, its success in pressuring the government to change certain policies was largely due to the combined strength of the armed forces and the disloyal-semiloyal alliance of the National Salvation Front and the Civic Union. Their affiliation was founded, to a large extent, on dislike of the economic reforms and resentment over the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, this alliance of conservative forces posed a considerable threat to Yeltsin in 1992, and will continue to be a potential source of instability in 1993.

Yeltsin managed to stave off his government's collapse in 1992 due to a combination of astute political manoeuvres, threats to opposition forces, and luck. However, the disloyal elite groups that challenged Yeltsin in 1992 still exist and will continue to fight for power in 1993. If the Russian economy continues to decline, and society remains plagued by disorder and crime, Yeltsin's government will continue to face the possibility of removal. Conservative groups like the Civic Union, the National Salvation Front, and the various armed forces organisations will only grow stronger through the failures of Yeltsin's government. If these power struggles continue and the economy declines further, society will

possibly become less tolerant of government-induced chaos and may increasingly turn to disloyal elites who offer alternatives to the government.

A government is therefore on the verge of breakdown when its policies have generated an economic crisis which, in turn, breeds increased opposition from both powerful elites and the armed forces. Ultimately, a government in this position may meet its demise in a number of ways. First, a civil war may erupt between forces that are loyal and disloyal to the government. Accordingly, the government faces collapse when it is unable to quell the conflict, and thereby loses authority. A revolution is the second means by which a government may be removed from power. Typically, revolutions occur when the masses, led by an elite group, overthrow the government. Finally, a coup d'etat is an exclusively elite driven manoeuvre which occurs within the state apparatus, and is supported by the armed forces. It is important, therefore, to assess whether there is the possibility of civil war, revolution, or a coup occurring in Russia in the near future.

A civil war is unlikely to occur in Russia at this time, specifically because there are no discernable consolidated forces in Russia to precipitate such a crisis. Andrew Janos defines civil war as: "a violent conflict between parties subject to a common authority and of such dimensions that its incidence will affect the exercise or structure of authority

in society."⁶ Furthermore, a civil war implies not only a breakdown of government, but also a change in regime. Typically, by the time civil war ensues, the government has already lost a certain degree of control and authority over the country and is thus unable to prevent fighting between warring parties. While there are regional leaders in Russia hostile towards the central government, Yeltsin made concerted efforts in 1992 to relegate more power to the regions and was more sensitive to regional concerns.⁷ While Yeltsin's government will undoubtedly have to contend with occasional independence movements from separatist groups in discontented regions, it is unlikely that these regional activists would wage war with the centre. In fact, in areas like North Ossetia where interethnic, regional warfare is raging, Yeltsin has intervened directly and ordered the Russian armed forces to intercede and mediate the conflict. As well, violent fighting, such as that occurring in Chechenya, remains localised and has not spread through-out Russia. If regional warfare proliferated, Yeltsin would be forced to call in Russian troops in large numbers to control the spread of fighting. Thus, so long as Yeltsin continues to take a strong stand in regional conflicts, while at the same time trying to maintain good relations with Russia's outlying regions, civil war will remain a remote possibility.

Revolution is a second more plausible threat that could both force Yeltsin and his government from power, as well as

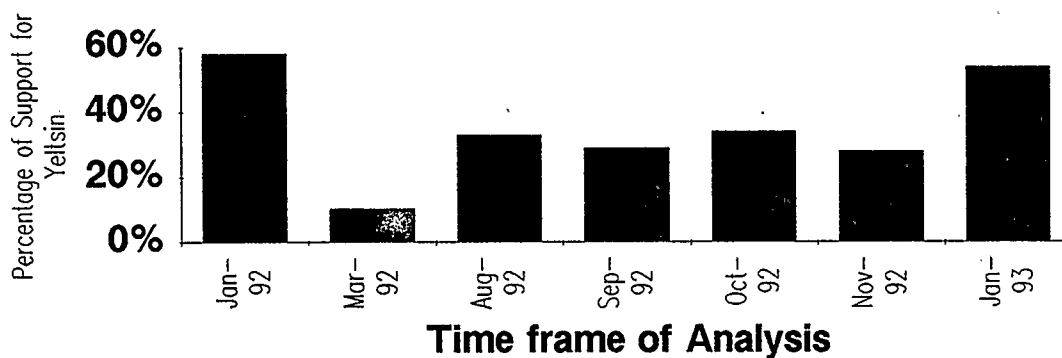
potentially replacing the current democratic regime. According to Jack Goldstone, revolution is a grass roots movement:

a necessary condition for revolution is urban or rural popular groups that can be readily mobilised against the state . . . [they must, however, consist of] peasants or urban workers who have grievances against the . . . political regime.⁸

Revolution typically occurs when the masses, under the guidance of a mobilising group, overthrow the government as they believe it no longer has authority to rule. In Russia to date, the fundamental threats to Yeltsin and his government have primarily originated at the elite level amongst political opposition groups and the armed forces. Furthermore, Russian citizens, although visibly suffering from spiralling inflation, lack of order, and growing crime in Russia, still continue to support Yeltsin.

Analysis of a series of public opinion polls from January, 1991 to January, 1993 in which various groups of Russians were asked if they supported Yeltsin, indicates that support for Yeltsin was fairly consistent in the latter half of 1992 (see figure 5.1).⁹ In January 1991, 60 per cent of Russians felt Yeltsin was a superior leader. While his popularity plunged to 10.4 per cent in March 1992 shortly after prices were freed in Russia, it actually grew to 35 per cent in August, 1992, and remained steady until January, 1993,

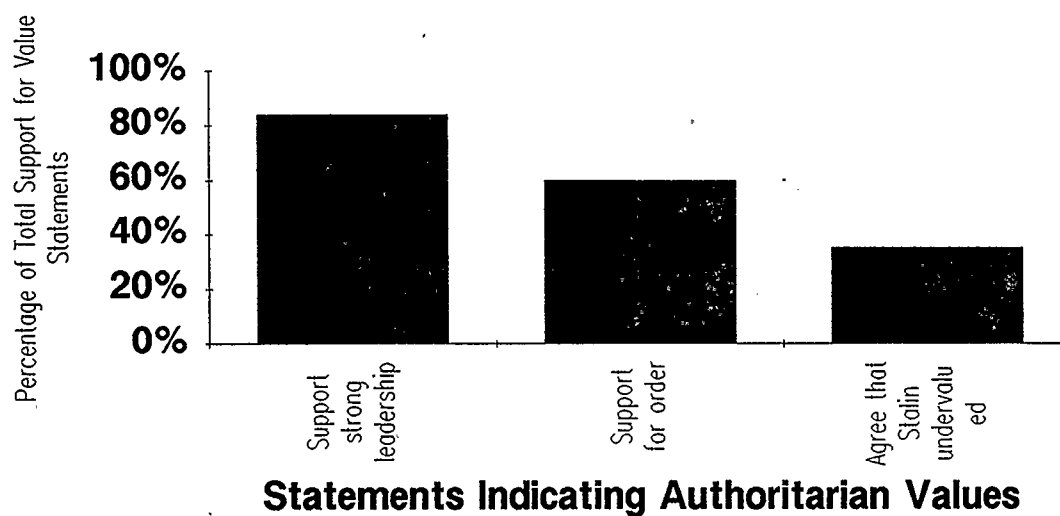
Figure 5.1
Levels of Support Among Russian Public
for President Boris Yeltsin, January 1992 - January 1993



Sources: The Calgary Herald, 27 March 1991; The Calgary Herald, 12 September 1992; The Globe and Mail, 28 September 1992; The New York Times, 22 October 1992; The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 4 November 1992; The Globe and Mail, 27 January 1993.

when it soared to slightly over 50 per cent. Although it is difficult to rely completely on these statistics as they come from a variety of sources and are not part of a consistent study of the same test group, they do indicate that in 1992, Yeltsin still enjoyed a satisfactory level of support in Russia. In fact, in early 1993 his support increased to the highest level in a year. As long as Yeltsin manages to maintain public support, he and his government will likely avoid removal by revolution. However, it will remain an ongoing challenge for Yeltsin to retain his popularity and legitimacy while economic conditions and societal order continue to decline.

It is interesting to note that Yeltsin's popularity may be based on his ability to rule authoritatively rather than on his democratic orientation. In the 1992 University of Iowa New Soviet Citizen Survey, Russians were asked a series of questions to determine their levels of support for various facets of authoritarianism (see figure 5.2).¹⁰ These items included support for strong leadership, support for order, and agreement that Stalin is undervalued. Notably, over 80 per cent of those surveyed favoured strong leadership in Russia, implying that Russians would likely prefer a strong authoritarian leader to a weak and ineffectual democratic government. Additionally, 60 per cent of this group also indicated that they value order in society. This correlates with the respondent's overwhelming support for a strong leader

Figure 5.2**Authoritarian Values in Russia in 1992**

Sources: William M. Reisinger, Vicki L. Hesli, Arthur H. Miller, and Kristen Hill Maher, "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania: Evaluating Prospects for Democracy", paper presented at the 24th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Phoenix, Arizona, 20 November 1992.

as presumably, such a ruler would guarantee and restore order and stability in society. Finally, 33 per cent of Russians surveyed also felt that Stalin was currently undervalued, again reinforcing these individuals' desire for strong leadership and societal order. Accordingly, Yeltsin banned the National Salvation Front, hinted that he would establish Presidential rule. He also retained control over Russian television and fought to maintain his extraordinary powers to oversee economic policy. These actions may have been perceived by the Russian public as evidence of strong leadership and an attempt to impose order on society. Ultimately, in order to maintain public support, Yeltsin must retain control over the Russian political realm and society. If he fails to do so, he will likely face increased opposition from Russian citizens who, unable to cope with dismal economic conditions and societal disorder, may be driven to revolution.

A coup attempt originating at the centre is another possible and perhaps more immediate threat which Yeltsin and his government must contend. Edward Luttwak defines a coup as: "the infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control of the remainder."¹¹ A coup may therefore be initiated by the President, the government, or the parliament, and may ultimately cause a change in regime as well as in government. In Russia, the legislative branches of the state are dominated by the semiloyal Civic Union and the

disloyal NSF. In 1992 these two groups allied with one another in order to more effectively challenge and pressure Yeltsin's government within the legislatures. This alliance was and is, particularly ominous because the NSF has clearly indicated that it does not support either Yeltsin's government or his democratic, market-oriented regime. The Civic Union's cooperation with such a faction represented a direct rejection of the government and its current program. Consequently, the Russian legislatures are dominated by a hostile opposition alliance.

The Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov's attempts to weaken the executive's power in order to bolster his own authority contribute to the threat to Yeltsin and his government. Ultimately, the Russian legislatures have been infiltrated, in Luttwak's terms, by a hostile opposition group which is capable of using these institutions to unseat the government. The Russian legislatures, therefore, appear to provide a particularly useful context for a coup as neither are bound by specific rules of operation. What few rules exist are manipulated and interpreted by Khasbulatov in the government's disfavour. As well, the disloyal opposition groups have also secured at least tacit support from some of the more conservative sections of the Russian armed forces, giving them the muscle to force the government from power. Theoretically, the potential for coup remains strong. It is questionable, however, whether a coup attempt at the parliamentary level

would ever succeed.

The bond between the NSF, Civic Union, and Khasbulatov is by no means indissoluble, and is potentially subject to serious internal strains. Fundamentally, each has the same incompatible goal - to gain exclusive power or influence over the government. Khasbulatov is willing to use the parliament as a means to increase his own authority, but would likely be unwilling to share power with the Civic Union or NSF if Yeltsin and his government were deposed. Similarly, the NSF aspires to power itself in order to halt economic reforms, limit democracy, and essentially return to the past. Accordingly, its goals tend to be more radical than those of either Khasbulatov or the Civic Union. Finally, the Civic Union is principally seeking economic change and influence over the government. It would sanction the Yeltsin government's removal only if its concerns were neglected and economic conditions continued to degenerate. Therefore, if these three actors managed to oust Yeltsin's government, they would then have to decide who would rule and what sort of system to establish. Based on their differences, it is doubtful whether these fundamental issues could be settled amicably.

While it is difficult to predict what 1993 holds for Yeltsin and his government, it is clear that they face a number of threats. If the economy continues to deteriorate and semiloyal and disloyal opposition groups persistently

challenge the executive from within the legislative context, Yeltsin and his government will have to fight hard to remain in power. Ultimately, the most viable way for Yeltsin and his government to avoid political demise is through the implementation of a democratically oriented Russian constitution. Such a document would clearly delineate the power of the executive and legislative branches and define appropriate rules by which these institutions should operate. By establishing a constitution and thereby decreasing the potential for power struggles within the legislatures, Yeltsin and his government would be able to focus more attention on repairing the economy. Stabilising the economy is of fundamental importance for Yeltsin and it is the only means by which he will retain public support, which at this point remains his primary source of legitimacy.

It is, however, difficult to know if the development of a constitution is feasible within the next year as the Congress must legally approve such a document. Not surprisingly, in the first quarter of 1993, it appears that Ruslan Khasbulatov and disloyal opposition elites within the legislatures are already making attempts to delay the establishment of a new constitution. Thus, Yeltsin and his government will have a difficult year ahead with challenges confronting them from the elites, economic realm, and potentially the Russian public. Yeltsin will have to consolidate his authority over the next year, and, at the very

least, try to maintain public support in order to survive the political battles that lie ahead.

NOTES

1. Roger Cohen, "Hyperinflation Looms in Russia, Premier Tells Economic", The New York Times, 31 January 1993. A more recent article states that perhaps Prime Minister Chernomyrdin exaggerated his claim of Russian hyperinflation (Steven Erlanger, "Leader Said to Have Exaggerated Runaway Inflation Risk in Russia", The New York Times, 3 March 1993). Nevertheless, Russian inflation levels remain extremely high in the first quarter of 1993.
2. Steven Erlanger, "Russian Aide Faults the Central Bank", The New York Times, 15 September 1992, p. A7.
3. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 32.
4. "Reformers Battle Opponents: The Pace quickens", The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 25 November 1992, p. 7.
5. John Gray, "Yeltsin Calls for Congress to End Row", The Globe and Mail, 17 February 1993, p. A8.
6. Andrew Janos, "Authority and Violence: The Political Force of Internal War", in Harry Eckstein, ed., Internal War (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 130.
7. Boris Yeltsin, Speech to the Fifth Session of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet, The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 4 November 1992, p. 3.
8. Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, and Farrokh Moshin, Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century (Colorado: Westview Press), p. 40.
9. The sources for Figure 5.1 and all the information pertaining to this graph include The Calgary Herald, 27 March 1992; The Calgary Herald, 12 September 1992; The Globe and Mail, 28 September 1992; The New York Times, 22 October 1992; The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, 4 November 1992; The Globe and Mail, 27 January 1993.
10. William M. Reisinger, Vicki L. Hesli, Arthur H. Miller, and Kristen Hill Maher, "Political Values in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania: Evaluating Prospects for

Democracy", paper presented at the 24th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Phoenix, Arizona, 20 November 1992.

11. Edward Luttwak, Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 26.

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