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The Rule of Law and
Russian Military
Reform: The Role of
Soldiers' Mothers in
Russian Society

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Nobody is going to fight for your rights if you don't.

—A leader of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia

Russian journals and newspapers today are filled with discussions about the need to reform the military, and this issue continues to be a subject debated in elections, headlined in the front pages of leading papers, and addressed in presidential speeches. It is not a new discussion, however, but the continuation of discussions and debates that began as early as 1987. At that time articles increasingly critical of the military began to appear in all types of Soviet journals and newspapers, with both civilian and military experts analyzing what needed to be done to make the military a democratic institution. Yet little progress has been made in military reform. Clearly, the upheavals of a state in transition from communism and the concomitant instability contributed to a basic neglect of the military. At the same time, one would think that the continual call for military reform over the last ten years, often voiced at the highest levels, would have elicited some reform action.¹ Certainly there are people with enough power in Russia today, especially given the strong presidential system, to order military reform. Yet it has not happened. Given this lack of action, the intent of this essay is to ask, Who, finally will reform the Russian military?

Underlying such a question is the assumption that actors are important. In this essay I do assume that there are actors in the Russian political system who have the interest and power to seek military reform. Before proceeding, it will be useful to outline briefly what I mean by military reform. In general, reform of the Russian military would transform it from a corrupted, neotraditionalist institution, characterized by institutionalized clientelism and abuses of power, to an effective, impersonal bureaucracy.² In a democracy (assuming democracy is the current direction of reform in Russia), such a bureaucracy is characterized by its subordination to the rule of law. If such rule of law did exist in the Russian military, the institutional culture would be characterized by merit-based promotions, civilian and independent means of military institutional control and oversight, depoliticization, and the extension of individual rights to military personnel.

Each of these characteristics ideally would be present without any denigration of military professionalism. The term *professionalism* does not mean ending conscription or having a volunteer force, a connotation common in the current Russian use of the word. Rather, as defined by Huntington in his classic work, a professional military is an organization possessing a corporate identity, a monopoly on the expertise associated with military affairs, and a sense of responsibility to the state and its defense.³ The key is to recognize that military

professionalism and the rule of law are not opposed to each other. In fact, many would argue that militaries in Western democracies sustain military professionalism precisely by inculcating rule of law concepts and procedures into their operations.

Unfortunately, the characteristics associated with the rule of law continue to be absent from the Russian military, as reports of official corruption, *dedovshchina*, rights abuses, and the abuse of command authority and the system of unitary command, *edinonachalie*, continue.⁴ The falling status of the military and the conflict in Chechnya have made recruiting impossible. Conscripts continue to evade military service, and those who do end up serving are often unfit physically or mentally. Yet the military accepts them in order to maintain minimum manning. As officers who go unpaid for months at a time turn to illegal part-time jobs to make ends meet, less command attention is directed to military activities and discipline, allowing the senior conscripts more room for abusing those junior to them.⁵

In addition, the "Chechen Syndrome" has increased the hazing and abuse of soldiers in the army. According to a recent report in the *Moscow Times*, veterans of the war in Chechnya take out their anger and frustration on those who have not been through "the fire of battle."⁶ In the current economic situation, material and supplies available to the military are sparse, and shortages in goods such as food and clothing are common. Both the Western and Russian news media have covered stories about malnutrition and starvation among the troops. This situation, too, has led to brutal treatment of conscripts as older soldiers forcibly take goods from them, vent their anger on them, and force them to beg and scrounge for basic goods on their behalf.⁷

The result of this situation is a distressing increase in the number of suicides in the military. In 1996, a reported 500 soldiers in the Russian military committed suicide.⁸ The picture that emerges from this discussion is one in which the basic rule of law has not been applied to the military as an institution, nor to individual soldiers. Reform not only has not been instituted, but the military situation has worsened since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the goal of military reform seems even further away as the institution experiences a breakdown in discipline, morale, and effectiveness.

Civic Associations and Reform

Democratic military reform thus far has been either outside the concern, or beyond the capabilities, of those few military and civilian leaders committed to it. Left to senior military leaders, who are themselves scrambling to maintain their privileged status in society, there has been little impetus to institute democratic methods in the military. Who, then, will act as a catalyst for reform? I will argue that it is society that will serve this reform role. Led by a few tenacious civic associations, it is Russian society that is left the task of placing increased pressure on the government to change the institutional culture of the military and thus transform it into an institution fitted to a

democratic society.

A review of the theoretical literature on civic associations illustrates their significance in building democratic political systems. It also demonstrates that Russian civic associations committed to democratic military reform share characteristics with civic associations found throughout democratic societies.⁹ The literature on civic associations and their role in democracies dates back to Alexis de Tocqueville. In *Democracy in America* he notes that through associations, citizens “learn some habits of acting together in the affairs of daily life.” In addition, associations preclude the need for government to be involved in every aspect of citizens’ lives. In the absence of associations, new ideas are not circulated, compromise and moderation go unlearned, and government expands its agenda to fill the void.¹⁰

In his recent work on institutions in Italy, Robert Putnam uses civic associations to measure the degree to which social and political life approximate the ideal civic community. He finds that networks of civic engagement differentiate the more effective northern Italian government from that of the south. The civic associations of northern Italy, by providing citizens the incentives to work together and solve collective action problems, foster the greater institutional success found in the region, equating to good government. For Putnam, horizontal networks of civic engagement bolster the government’s political and economic performance.¹¹ In a more recent work, Putnam examines the state of civic associations in the United States and laments their decline. While the civic associations of northern Italy indicate a strong society, and therefore a strong state, the weakening of associations in America translates into a weak society and therefore a weak state.¹²

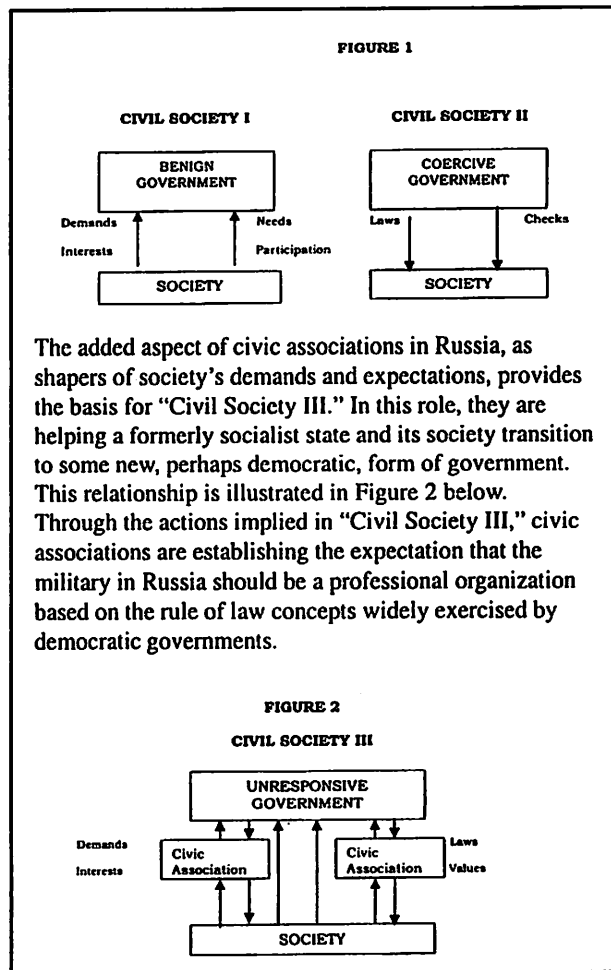
In their critique of Putnam’s work, Foley and Edwards point out that there are two schools of thought on civic associations. The first, which they label “Civil Society I,” finds its roots in Tocqueville. Related to Almond and Verba’s work on the concept of “civic culture,” this school sees civic associations as a tool by which citizens practice democracy, participate in government, and become good citizens in general. For “Civil Society I,” civic associations are mechanisms of participation that support the government. In contrast, “Civil Society II” interprets civic associations as a means through which government is kept in check by serving as a “counterweight to the state.”¹³ Thus, a primary difference between these two models is how each views the role of government. Whereas “Civil Society I” regards government and citizens’ participation in it as good, that is, the government’s role is to serve as an extension of the citizens by protecting their interests and rights, “Civil Society II” views government as a threat to citizens and their rights.

Foley and Edwards’ primary criticism of both civil society schools and Putnam’s work in this area is that the political variable is missing. The political variable encom-

passes both political associations, such as parties, and political bargaining and compromise. However, they note that when political settlements betray society's trust, civic associations play a critical role by "taking up neglected or repressed demands and pushing the political system to engage in forgotten or marginalized sectors and issues."¹⁴

It is for this reason that civic associations finally may provide the impetus for reform of the Russian military. I propose another model for civic associations and social movements, "Civil Society III." In this model, government is neither benign nor threatening. Rather, it is largely unresponsive to citizens' interests and needs. Russian civic associations not only are pressing reform on a previously unresponsive government and institution, but also are actively helping to formulate society's demands, expectations, and concepts of a military in a democratic society, a role outlined in neither school.¹⁵ Indeed, as figure 1 illustrates, both schools seem to view the relationship between government and society as a black or white issue. Either citizens understand government and demonstrate their acceptance through participation (Civil Society I) or government is to be distrusted and challenged (Civil Society II).

Civic associations in Russia have the additional characteristic of shaping society's demands and expectations. In this role, they are helping a formerly socialist state and its society change to some new, perhaps democratic, form of government. This relationship is illustrated in figure 2. Through the actions implied in "Civil Society III," civic associations are establishing the expectation that the military in Russia should be a



professional organization based on the rule of law concepts widely exercised by democratic governments.

Military Reform and Russian Society

Any student of Soviet society and the military would find a discussion of society's demands for military reform absurd—if it were held fifteen years ago. The Soviet military existed within a social and political system possessing a strong military ethos. It was believed that threats to the Soviet regime, whether real or perceived, could only be defeated by maintaining a strong military arm with trustworthy leaders who shared the value system and goals of the Communist party. As the helpmate of the party, the military was seen as an important instrument of socialization and indoctrination of a population largely distrusted by both organizations. The result of the party-military partnership was “militarized socialism” which emphasized the role of the military in society and accepted the military leadership's dominance over the services as a method of assuring control over this vital socialist institution and servant of the party. Militarized socialism, according to a leading analyst, “was the result of an interpenetration of militarist and socialist values, and among its elements were a bellicist world view and predominance of national security values and military interests in the economic and cultural life of the country.”¹⁶

If one examines the literature on national security decision making in the Soviet Union, it is clear that society had no role in the process. Decision making had evolved through the years from the Stalinist totalitarian model, in which only the Politburo and primarily the general-secretary dominated the process, to a pluralistic model in which other bureaucratic actors such as defense industries participated in decision making by placing demands on the system.¹⁷ Even in the pluralistic model, however, participation in the decision-making process was limited to official organizations and bureaucratic interests, rather than the issue-oriented interest groups and civic associations more familiar in the West. In addition, the concepts of democratic centralism and militarized socialism ensured that debate on national security issues was limited to the officially acceptable as opposed to the universe of alternatives. As Peter Shearman states, when describing this form of pluralism in Soviet policy making, “there were no free, democratic elections, free media, competing parties, or any channels for mass political participation. Any bureaucratic politics that did take place did so largely in secret and needed to be expressed in ideological terms, and although one could clearly be creative in utilizing Marxism-Leninism, there were boundaries that could not be overstepped.”¹⁸

Within the military, the primary actors influencing the decision-making process were the Soviet general staff and the personnel assigned to the Ministry of Defense.

One author labeled this the “brain trust” of the Soviet military.¹⁹ Debate within the ranks of the military over security issues was not encouraged and, again, the search for alternative views and solutions was obviously limited.

As noted above, society had no role in making demands on, or formulating expectations of, the military during the Soviet period. Rather, society was meant to serve the party’s and the military’s needs by producing disciplined, trained citizens ready to serve the state. Based on this distance between the military and society, some would argue that the military should be the last target for citizens’ reform efforts in the post-Communist period. Since the organization for so long had been something that had dominated, rather than served, society, would it not make sense that it now would be seen as something outside of society’s purview?

While it is certainly easy to understand why society might regard the military as “out of bounds” for reform, there are equally good reasons why society and civic associations would see it as a target for their reform efforts. First, as a reaction to the militarized socialism and dominance of the military over society, it is logical that society at large, and civic associations in particular, having found their voice today, would target the military. With Mikhail Gorbachev’s introduction of *glasnost*, various groups began to discuss vital security and defense issues. Today, what was once off-limits can be discussed, with full media coverage of the debates over reform. Like a door for too long locked to outsiders, the military is now a subject of debate, criticism, and scrutiny opened to the populace.

Second, throughout the past nine years since reform began (this includes the Gorbachev period when the rule of law in military affairs was first proposed and discussed) and despite the limited effort at professionalization of the military, universal conscription continues.²⁰ This means that every family with service-age sons, cousins, and nephews has been affected by the military. With the increased scrutiny of the military and the media coverage of military abuses and corruption, the military continues to be a topic of conversation and concern.

The first war in Chechnya added to the interest and concern of average Russian citizens. It was their sons, frequently recent and untrained conscripts, who were sent to Chechnya to fight the war and, for those lucky enough to survive, to return home as war veterans forgotten by their government. When the Russian and foreign media ran stories about the military’s inept prosecution of the war, the atrocities, and the poor treatment of soldiers, Russian citizens began to question the institution’s professionalization and the government’s handling of military reform. Clearly, Chechnya raised military reform even higher on the political agenda.

Finally, there are those who believe it is essential that society participate in debates over national security issues. Whether members of the government and media, or specialists in national security policy who work for institutes and universities, these

people actively encourage society's participation in the government's decision making on these issues. Indeed, Gen. V. N. Lobov, former chief of the general staff of the Soviet armed forces, noted that "the active participation of civil institutions in the process of working out military doctrine and its subsequent implementation is absolutely essential to the success of the reform." Further, he argued that the military in a democratic state must be "controlled by the public."²¹ Clearly, the media's role in discussing significant issues in military reform, in providing wide coverage of the debates over military issues such as budgets and personnel changes, and in maintaining an open forum for debate over reform is a vital element in the public's participation.

Based on these factors, it is not surprising that civic associations would focus on military reform. But if it is not the least likely target for civic associations and their activities, one can argue that it is the most difficult reform to achieve. Again, the distance between the military and society ingrained during the Soviet period, the militarized socialism that permeated Soviet society, would naturally seem to place civic associations at a disadvantage when trying to effect reform. In fact, the success of reform is the most difficult element to measure. Yet by their activities, civic associations have placed military reform on the political agenda, provided a conduit for society's participation in the debate over reform, and aided in establishing society's expectations about what values and ideals a Russian military should encompass.

Military Associations

Keeping track of military reform groups can be an exasperating experience. With the end of the Soviet Union, the freedom of the press and the right to assemble freely saw the advent of all kinds of independent organizations, political parties, trade unions, and associations. Voluntary associations were an important part of *perestroika*, through which Gorbachev hoped to energize the population and thus include them in the effort to improve the economy's performance. As he stated in his 1987 book, "perestroika means mass initiative. It is the comprehensive development of democracy, socialist self-government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavor, improved order and discipline, more glasnost, criticism and self-criticism in all spheres of society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity."²² As a result of this activation of society, grass-roots associations dealing with various issues blossomed. By 1988 there were as many as thirty thousand grass-roots associations.²³

Military and security affairs were affected by the activation of society. Discussions about the conscription of university students, the morality of nuclear weapons, the size of the military budget, and the war in Afghanistan began to appear in the press.²⁴ Heated debates in both military and civilian newspapers and journals introduced Soviet citizens to the primary arguments of reformers and traditionalists in

the military arena.²⁵

In the area of military-related associations, groups interested in both military reform and the maintenance of Soviet military power were quick to form. Some of the groups appearing in the post-Gorbachev period held organizational meetings and announced their existence, but were never heard from again. Others, such as the Shchit (Shield) Union, formed during the Gorbachev era and one of the earliest to advocate change in the military, have suffered from the peccadilloes of their leaders. Table 1 presents a list of some of the groups associated with military reform, servicemen's and veterans' rights, and other military-specific issues, (it does not include region-specific groups, small organizations, and political parties or movements). Of these organizations, several are civic associations within Russia committed to reform of the military, but it is important to note that reform is defined differently by each group. For some, it means a return to the former superpower, or at least great power, status once possessed by the Soviet army. These groups advocate higher defense expenditures, greater attention to weapons acquisition, and a revitalization of the military-industrial complex. Security of the Fatherland is an example of such a group. Others define reform as nationalism, that is, the need to use Russian nationalism as a tool to reformulate the Russian military's institutional culture. Halting NATO enlargement is often a primary issue for these groups. For some groups, reform has a decidedly militaristic, authoritarian flavor, as is true of the Russian Officers' Union. Finally, some groups have adopted a democratic reform agenda. They seek to ensure civil liberties, end corruption and *dedovshchina*, strengthen civilian control over the military, establish workable oversight and inspection mechanisms, and in general restructure the military's policies and organization to better reflect those of an institution in a democracy.²⁶

One of the principal groups with a democratic reform agenda is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia. With fifty chapters nationwide, it is perhaps one of the best-known organizations dealing with military matters, although its efforts frequently receive little recognition outside Russia. Formed in 1989, this group is often labeled a peace or humanitarian organization. This is due to its antiwar stance during the Afghanistan conflict. In fact, the peace initiative of the group continued during the war in Chechnya, and as a result of its efforts, the group won the Sean MacBride Peace Prize in 1995. It was also nominated for the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize and was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, also known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize," that year "for [its] courageous and exemplary initiative in asserting and acting on the common humanity of Russians and Chechens in opposition to the militarism and violence that has uselessly claimed so many lives."²⁷ However, labeling this group as a peace or humanitarian organization neglects its role as an organization committed to the reform of the Russian military.²⁸

The Goals of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia (CSMR)

The following discussion examines the activities of two civic associations seeking democratic reform of the Russian military, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia and the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg (see table 2).²⁹ One of the primary goals of the CSMR is to end the brutal treatment of soldiers in the military. Hazing, or *dedovshchina*, has long been a source of serious, even fatal injury to young servicemen. Soldiers attempting to escape the horrible beatings and personal indignities sometimes go so far as to commit suicide, thinking there is no other solution.³⁰ To end such treatment, the Soldiers' Mothers have pressured the government and the military to fully investigate questionable incidents involving the beating and death of the soldiers and to provide full information on the military's actions in investigating and resolving such incidents.³¹

Calling for the disclosure of information about incidents of hazing raises another issue of significance to the Soldiers' Mothers: the need to make the military an institution which must answer to the public and, therefore, accept the concept of responsiveness in a democratic society. As noted by the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg "the army has to stop being a closed institution, if the necessary changes are ever to take place. In times of peace as in times of war, society has a just claim to information on expenses, on military doctrine and every single casualty or injury of the soldier." According to the group, there is one simple reason for this requirement of openness: the people finance the army with their taxes.³²

Protecting the legal status of soldiers is another significant issue pursued by the Soldiers' Mothers. Both organizations continually call for the military to be a part of the constitutional state, rather than "a state within a state."³³ Ella Mikhailovna Polyakova, of the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, campaigned for the Russian State Duma calling for the need to bring the military justice organs into a structure corresponding to that of civil justice in a democratic society.³⁴ In addition to seeking the legal protection of soldiers, the groups argue for extending individual rights to all soldiers, to include the freedom to practice religion.³⁵

One of the flaws of the current military justice system, beyond the absence of a method of civilian oversight or a complaint or grievances route outside the military, is that the military unit commander largely controls the investigation and adjudication system. This reflects *edinonachalie*, the primary leadership principle that was practiced by the Soviet military and continues to be used by the Russian military.

This principle, intended to enhance the hierarchical command structure of the military, has endured as a principle of absolute power. The commander's subordinates, those without sufficient patronage to protect them, and officers sincerely interested in performing their jobs as professionals, are continually frustrated by the control

and power commanders possess. *Edinonachalie* keeps subordinates completely dependent on their commander for both their personal and professional welfare. Servicemen are bound to follow their superiors' orders, and because they are responsible for their subordinates' welfare, superiors are unlikely to find reasonable grounds for servicemen's complaints. Recognizing the inability of servicemen to reject an unlawful command or to resort to an effective oversight system to deal with complaints, the St. Petersburg organization has campaigned for the end of *edinonachalie* and the formation of legal mechanisms designed to protect servicemen's rights.

Soldiers' Mothers also work for the end of questionable conscription practices, such as drafting young men who do not meet the minimum physical standards for service, and they seek an acceptable alternative to military service. The St. Petersburg Soldiers' Mothers' organization is strongly committed to alternative service in the health or other humanitarian areas for those who do not meet the military's minimum physical and mental requirements. Soldiers' Mothers have worked to protect soldiers who have gone AWOL due to acts of *dedovshchina* and have sought to end the use of minimally trained conscripts in Chechnya.³⁶ They also fought for improvements to military housing, medical services, and supplies of foodstuffs,³⁷ and to end the misuse of soldiers, such as detailing them to construction battalions or other organizations and services outside the military.

Finally the Soldiers' Mothers of Russia have taken an active stand against the Russian actions in Chechnya. It is ironic that many of the goals that these groups pursue would in fact aid in making the military a more effective institution. *Dedovshchina* clearly detracts from the command structure of the military and thus limits its effectiveness. In addition, conscripting mentally and physically unfit soldiers simply fills the ranks with those who can not perform when called upon. Especially in the case of the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, the campaign to reform the military is not an antimilitary effort. This group believes in the state's need to maintain the armed forces for security; however, they believe it should be a force governed by democratic, rule of law concepts.³⁸

Soldiers' Mothers' Actions

In support of their goals, the Soldiers' Mothers organizations pursue a number of activities that parallel those of civic associations in other democratic societies. Typically they seek to educate the public, to influence opinion through direct actions such as picketing, to affect decisions by lobbying, and to pursue action through the courts. In addition, realizing the significance of the media in the pursuit of their goals, they seek to maintain media support for, and attention to, their actions.³⁹

Direct Action

The Soldiers' Mothers are perhaps best known for their protests, demonstrations, and marches against the conflict in Chechnya. In a highly visible peace march known as the Mothers' March for Compassion, hundreds of mothers set out for Chechnya on 8 March 1995. There they worked with local officials to organize POW exchanges with Chechen military authorities.⁴⁰ In addition to peace marches, the mothers gathered evidence about the true number of dead and wounded in the Chechnya conflict, with the intent of taking the evidence to the War Crimes Tribunal of the International Court of Justice and thus forcing Russian officials to halt the "old Soviet practice of keeping casualty totals low by labeling the dead 'missing in action.'"⁴¹

The Soldiers' Mothers have been known to stage hunger strikes and to protest at government buildings in an effort to change the laws on military service, raise the issue of criminal cases against the army, and seek the discharge "of unit commanders in whose units there were deaths of soldiers and sailors."⁴²

The CSMR also has served as an organizing force behind local and frequent protests and demonstrations against war. In 1995, it was instrumental in assembling an antiwar protest of approximately one thousand people in Moscow. Held in Pushkin Square, it coincided with a similar demonstration staged in St. Petersburg.⁴³ Similarly, in March and April 1996, in cooperation with the Memorial Society, a well-known Russian human rights organization, the CSMR planned antiwar protests and rallies for Moscow, Tula, Tver, Vladimir, Ryazan, Kaluga, St. Petersburg, Lipetsk, Yaroslavl, and Kaluga.⁴⁴

Research and Information

One of the most significant tactics used by the Soldiers' Mothers is providing information. Families trying to stop their children's conscription frequently visit the groups' offices to obtain free legal and medical advice.⁴⁵ In one year, approximately one thousand families visited the CSMR headquarters in Moscow in an attempt to help their children.⁴⁶ In addition, the CSMR "claims to have assisted several families whose sons were sold into servitude during their military service." In one case "a Russian soldier serving in the Russian Army in Uzbekistan was allegedly 'sold' by a superior officer to Uzbek inhabitants" and forced to work from December 1992 to April 1993, after which he was hospitalized for psychiatric reasons.⁴⁷

According to the St. Petersburg organization, 100 to 150 people a week participate in public consultation sessions.⁴⁸ Medical and legal advice is provided, and families are encouraged to know their rights under Russian law. Individuals are able to

discuss their particular cases and needs with members of the organization. In addition, soldiers already serving turn to this organization when they have fled service due to harsh treatment and when they believe they are no longer physically able to serve. In one year, approximately 30 percent of those who contacted the St. Petersburg organization were found physically or mentally unfit to serve.⁴⁹

One mechanism for providing information to citizens used by the St. Petersburg organization is the bulletin board. Outside their offices, the group maintains displays of information that are available even when the office is closed. These displays, which are constantly updated, include model letters that can be copied and addressed to various military-related institutions, important addresses, reprints of selected laws dealing with military service, current law projects affecting military service being undertaken by the group, and newspaper excerpts. All this is intended to both inform and serve as an important resource for those seeking to take legal action in protecting their rights.⁵⁰

These organizations also are active in publishing pamphlets and brochures providing information to soldiers and their parents. One of the most important of these, published by the St. Petersburg organization, outlined the regulations addressing medical eligibility for service in the military. As an example, the brochure notes that an examination by an independent doctor that confirms medical ineligibility for service can provide the legal basis for objecting to military registration and call up.⁵¹ This information is particularly important since the health standards in the Russian military are declining significantly, and there have been numerous reports that young men who do not meet the physical and mental standards are being called up in order to meet manning and conscription goals. According to the St. Petersburg Soldiers' Mothers, "the threat of a lawsuit against the army because of disregard of the [medical] evaluation has led to a high rate of success in these cases."⁵² Here we can see the advantage of following the outlined medical procedures and using the law to protect one's rights.

Soldiers' Mothers provide information not only to soldiers and their families, but also to international organizations interested in Russian human rights practices. The U.N. Human Rights Committee used information gathered by the St. Petersburg organization during its July 1995 examination of Russia's human rights status. In cooperation with other Russian human rights organizations, the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg provided extensive information to the U.N. in their report on human rights in the Republic of Chechnya.⁵³ Previously, the St. Petersburg organization provided material to the European Parliament which it used in arriving at its resolution on human rights violations in the Russian army.⁵⁴ Testifying before the Stockholm European Council meeting, CSMR members encouraged European governments to bring Russia into all European political bodies in order to keep the Russians in line and avert a return to Communist practices.⁵⁵

In April 1997 both Soldiers' Mothers' organizations, along with several Russian human rights groups, met in Moscow for Amnesty International's Europeanwide cam-

paign for the right to conscientious objection to military service. During the meeting, the groups not only discussed the central theme of conscientious objection, but also shared information on such issues as the poor treatment of conscripts, the continuation of *dedovshchina*, and the problem with the lack of alternative service.⁵⁶

Just as American special interest groups use information, so too does the CSMR use information to put pressure on government agencies, forcing them to change their policies and react to its demands. By maintaining an awareness of units, their commander's actions, and the general situation in the military, the CSMR has been able to point to specific illegal incidents, instances of abuse, and examples of mistreatment in its efforts to pressure the Duma and individual military leaders for reform. In a 1992 meeting with then Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, CSMR members were able to resolve the fate of two soldiers listed as MIA. It was found that they were hostages being held by Armenian militants, and their release was arranged.⁵⁷ The CSMR carefully tracked those servicemen held hostage by the Chechen fighters, and in order to aid prisoner exchanges, provided a list of 689 names to the Defense Ministry.⁵⁸

In addition to these activities, Soldiers' Mothers' organizations hold conferences and seminars throughout Russia to teach others about their legal rights. As a result of one of its earliest conferences, the CSMR passed a series of resolutions to include ending the use of soldiers for personal ends and mandating criminal liability for officers in the event of the death of a soldier or sailor.⁵⁹ In February 1995 hundreds of participants attended the International Congress for Life and Liberty held in Moscow by the CSMR. The Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg helped organize a special seminar on the war in Chechnya and on "the most basic right, 'The Right to Life'" which again reviewed human rights practices in the Russian military.⁶⁰

The Courts

As the information provided below illustrates, the Soldiers' Mothers have taken their pursuit of military reform and soldiers' rights to the courts. Whether through the legal advice they provide, their actual participation in court cases supporting defendants, or the attempts they have made to achieve military justice reform, these organizations consistently have pursued the battle to extend legal rights as outlined in the constitution to the average soldier and citizen. The slow process of legal reform in Russia has made this route more difficult to pursue, but the groups have met with some success.

Citizen Lobbying

These groups emphasize the importance of influencing Russian politicians. Their efforts to do so extend throughout the executive and legislative branches. Whether

meeting with the minister of defense, the president, or Duma members, the groups seek to reach as many politicians as possible with their message. They continually address letters on human rights violations in the military to the president, prime minister, and both chambers of the parliament. In addition, they both lobbied the Duma in an effort to introduce a moratorium on changes to the military laws and gathered a petition with 11,000 signatures, intended to stop changes in the Law on General Military Duty, which they delivered to the Duma.⁶¹ They have allies among the reform-minded members of the Duma and the Federation Council and work closely with other Russian organizations to maintain influence within these bodies.

Use of the Media

Many of the Soldiers' Mothers' actions are geared to gaining media coverage for their cause. Their highly visible protests and demonstrations are frequently discussed in leading Russian newspapers, such as *Nezavisimaia gazeta* and *Izvestia*. In 1996, an extensive article on crime and brutality in the Russian armed forces was printed in the supplement to *Nezavisimaia gazeta* which covers the military. Filled with anecdotal information about *dedovshchina* and cruelty and brutality displayed by officers, the article accused the military of accepting and even promulgating practices associated with medieval torture. The information for the article was supplied by the St. Petersburg Soldiers' Mothers Organization.⁶² Similarly, during the war in Chechnya, and in cooperation with one of the leading Russian newspapers, the CSMR published a copy of a standard application soldiers could use to apply for conscientious objector status.⁶³

By tracking the treatment of conscripts and making it public, these groups hope to maintain a public focus on the military and its nondemocratic character. An article in the Russian press highlighted this tactic. The Soldiers' Mothers reported that approximately 50 servicemen were shot by fellow soldiers in 1997. In addition, 1,017 servicemen died in accidents or committed suicide in 1995 as a result of the conditions in the military. In 1996, this figure increased to 1,046 and to 1,103 in 1997. Fifty thousand men evaded the draft in 1997 and 12,000 conscripts were absent without leave in their efforts to escape the cruelty of life in the barracks.⁶⁴ Clearly, providing such information to the press is an important part of keeping the public informed and pressuring the government to improve soldiers' treatment.

Such actions as the Mothers' March for Compassion to Chechnya were clearly an attempt to garner extensive media coverage. In addition to these types of actions, the Soldiers' Mothers frequently participate in press conferences with other democratic reform and human rights organizations. As an example, along with representatives of the Memorial Society, a State Duma deputy, and Father Gleb Yakunin of the

Democratic Party of Russia, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers held a press conference to announce a campaign to protest the war in Chechnya. The protest campaign ran from 30 March to 6 April 1996.⁶⁵

External Support and Networking

In addition to influencing the Russian media, these groups seek to build a support network for their cause outside Russia. They have succeeded in obtaining some, although limited, press coverage in the West, as the *Los Angeles Times* article cited below indicates.

The groups also seek to influence international organizations who may in turn put pressure on the Russian government. As already noted, the St. Petersburg group was successful in providing information to the U.N. rapporteur examining human rights in Russia. By being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and winning the Alternative Nobel in 1996, the CSMR has clearly gained the attention of others and forwarded their work on democratic reform and humanitarian treatment. In addition, these groups also work with other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Russia and abroad. These links help the organizations learn from others' experiences; increase their membership, influence, and prestige on issues; and garner valuable monetary and nonmonetary support. As an example, the St. Petersburg organization works closely with the Russian Memorial Society as well as with such international organizations as Amnesty International, the Quakers, and humanitarian organizations in France and Germany.⁶⁶

In addition to influencing formal international organizations, the CSMR has sought to influence the position of foreign governments. Understanding the significance of international pressure on Russia during the Chechen conflict, the CSMR acted to bring out the immorality they believed was displayed by the conflict and by Russian actions in the region. In 1995, a group of CSMR members picketed the U.S. embassy in Moscow to demonstrate their concern over President Bill Clinton's decision to attend the VE Day parade in Moscow. The mothers noted that the celebration was "darkened by the tragic events of Chechnya" and noted that Clinton's planned attendance "virtually spells support of the Russian leadership's policy to solve state problems with the force of arms."⁶⁷

In another attempt to appeal to foreign governments and international organizations, a representative from both the CSMR and the St. Petersburg organization participated in a speaking tour of Europe from 27 June to 10 July 1996. During this period, the representatives met with parliamentarians, the media, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations in Holland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Belgium, France, and Britain. During these meetings, they discussed the war in Chechnya and the situation in the Russian military. Organized by the War Resisters International and

Quaker offices in Moscow and Brussels, the tour was intended to focus attention on these problems and influence those who could help bring about peace in Chechnya. The Soldiers' Mothers also hoped to strengthen their links to groups and individuals in these countries.⁶⁸

During the tour, Ella Polyakova, head of the St. Petersburg organization, and the Chechen mother accompanying her met with Elizabeth Schroedter, a member of the European Parliament, who in turn arranged meetings with European committees on human rights and foreign relations, and with the Russian delegation to the parliament. They also addressed a women's conference being held in Brussels and met with journalists from two major Belgian newspapers. In Paris, hosted by the Movement pour une Alternative Nonviolente, they met with journalists, politicians, and members of NGOs. In London their hosts were the National Peace Council, and again they met with members of the press, members of both houses of Parliament, and local NGOs.⁶⁹ Clearly, this tour provided an excellent opportunity to gather international recognition and support of the Soldiers' Mothers' causes and to build links to other NGOs interested in the issues of peace in Chechnya, alternative service, rule of law, and humanitarian treatment of soldiers and civilians.

The Influence of Soldiers' Mothers

Soldiers' Mothers can claim a series of successes in the area of humane, legal treatment of soldiers. As early as the Gorbachev period, they succeeded in pressing for a presidential decree on "Measures to Implement Proposals from the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers." This decree outlined the need to review the objectivity and completeness of investigations of deaths and injuries among servicemen. It also ordered the disbanding of military-construction battalions (known for their brutal conditions), raised the issue of legislative action to protect soldiers' rights, and resulted in a November 1990 All-Union Conference of Junior and Middle-Level Command Personnel to examine questions of preventing mistreatment and other violations of law in connection with the military.⁷⁰ As a tangential benefit of the commission set up to examine these issues, the CSMR received permission to be present during official autopsies on conscripts who may have been killed as a result of *dedovshchina*. They also received permission to conduct inspections at twenty-two military units throughout Russia and further to pressure military commanders to provide acceptable living conditions in some units.⁷¹ Based on the early actions of these groups; "in a country that refused to tolerate grass-roots movements, the mothers' challenge to the Red Army generals and the Soviet system was formidable. In 1989, the Defense Ministry was compelled to open its first public relations department."⁷²

In more recent years, Soldiers' Mothers have influenced legislation by picketing outside the Duma, raising questions about the need to oversee military operations. As a result of one such action, Soldiers' Mothers were able to pass information to Duma deputies about the military's poor treatment of soldiers. According to this information, over two thousand soldiers died in the Russian Army in 1993, and four hundred committed suicide. Faced with this information, one Duma faction proposed that an inquiry be held at the Russian Military Prosecutor's office to determine the facts about Russian military suicides and that this information be regularly submitted to the Duma's Defense Committee. Duma members then invited the military prosecutor to attend a Duma session and "inform lawmakers about the progress if [sic] an investigation into the death and suicide committed by soldiers of the Russian Army."⁷³

By maintaining pressure on military registration offices, especially by providing CSMR members to participate in and witness the registration process, the CSMR has focused attention on the drafting of unhealthy, young people. According to some parents of draftees, the activists' pressure has resulted in registration officers paying closer attention to the law governing draft exemptions and deferment.⁷⁴

It is possible that the Soldiers' Mothers are directly responsible for former Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's decision to withdraw from an election campaign for the Duma. It was rumored that he would run as a candidate in the Saratov electoral district. On hearing of the possibility, the CSMR began to organize protests. Saratov reportedly lost more soldiers in the first Chechen war than any other city in Russia; seventy-two of its soldiers were killed, and an equal number were reported missing. In rallies held in the city, the mothers carried pictures of the soldiers from the city killed and missing. They also lobbied lawyers for the electoral committee in an attempt to halt Grachev's nomination. "Evidently all this made Grachev give up the idea of running in the parliamentary elections."⁷⁵

The Soldiers' Mothers also have seen success in their use of the courts to question the legality of enlistment committee actions and to disprove accusations made by the military against conscripts. The St. Petersburg organization was successful in supporting a number of people defending themselves against unfounded accusations made by the Office of the Military Prosecutor. This is significant because, historically, cases brought by the military prosecutor always resulted in indictment.⁷⁶ Again, through the support of the St. Petersburg organization, a serviceman was able to successfully repeal the unlawful sentence of the Vyborg garrison in 1992. At one point, three criminal cases were being investigated and aided by the St. Petersburg organization.⁷⁷ This group believes that through their assistance, a number of people have won court cases against the military.⁷⁸

The Soldiers' Mothers have influenced organizations outside Russia, bringing external pressure to bear on the Russian government. Through their actions in documenting human rights abuses in the Russian military, the group contributed to material used in the preparation and adoption of a European Parliament resolution condemning

such actions in the Russian military.⁷⁹ The resolution called on the European Commission, during its negotiations with the Russian government, to draw attention to human rights violations in the military. As a result of this action, the European Commission added the question of treatment of Russian soldiers to the agenda of its planned dialogue with Moscow.⁸⁰

The Soldiers' Mothers' actions clearly influenced events in Chechnya. Through their highly visible actions, the CSMR was noted by one analyst as "the only group which has managed to have an impact."⁸¹ As a result of their protests and the pressure they placed on the government, the practice of sending untrained conscripts to fight in Chechnya was ended during the war.⁸² According to one report, Russia's leaders received over 110 appeals from CSMR members, and their rallies and meetings throughout the country helped shape public opinion on the conflict in Chechnya. They forwarded to President Boris Yeltsin 135 statements from parents and conscripts who had gone AWOL rather than fight in Chechnya, demanding that the president exempt such deserters from prosecution.⁸³ These actions earned public respect for the organizations. On the subject of Chechnya, one poll reported that three-quarters of the Russian population agreed with the Soldiers' Mothers actions.⁸⁴

One of the most recent and significant successes achieved by the Soldiers' Mothers was the amnesty for deserters. For some time, these organizations had expressed concern about what would happen to young soldiers deserting the military in order to escape the brutal hazing they received and to avoid service in Chechnya. At one point, the CSMR estimated that forty thousand soldiers had deserted in recent years due to hazing. Military officials claimed that only 20–30 percent deserted for this reason.⁸⁵ According to one report, "until recently, only soldiers' mothers have seriously addressed the problem of protecting deserters from criminal prosecution (in the majority of instances, soldiers are forced to flee their units because of harassment by superiors, poor health or difficult personal circumstances). Until recently, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers . . . was the only place where deserters could escape going to prison."⁸⁶

By focusing on existing legal mechanisms that exempt deserters from criminal liability in certain circumstances, the Soldiers' Mothers were able to argue that an amnesty should be initiated. In addition, the Soldiers' Mothers, in cooperation with the Moscow Military Prosecutor's Office, experimented with a limited amnesty program which was highly successful.⁸⁷ As a result of this successful experiment, the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office announced an amnesty for deserters for the months of April and May 1998. Upon the announcement of the amnesty program, the Soldiers' Mothers were immediately contacted by a number of deserters and their families, who were assured that the organizations "would do their utmost to ensure that no one is arrested." Following the amnesty program, the group intended to ask the State Duma to adopt a special resolution granting amnesty to deserters.⁸⁸

The success of the amnesty program highlights two vital points. First, the military, through pressure from the Soldiers' Mothers and the public, was willing to work with the Soldiers' Mothers in instituting such a program. Second, the reasons for successful amnesty, given to approximately one-third of those who applied, were based on existing Russian laws, thus reinforcing the Soldiers' Mothers' belief that the rule of law should be applied to the military and its members. This does not require changing the law, but rather changing the organization to one dominated by democratic principles.

The Soldiers' Mothers succeeded in bringing their agenda to the public's attention. They have, through their various actions, gained media coverage and have become a household name in Russia. Even the U.S. State Department recognizes them as an organization that, through their "considerable exposure and recognition both at home and abroad," has influenced the course of events in Chechnya.⁸⁹ In the words of Boris Altshuler, former chairman of the board of the Moscow Research Center on Human Rights, "the longest lines to our Human Rights Center are to the Soldiers' Mothers' group. Such non-governmental organizations are the only bodies that are now capable of protecting people and implementing the rule of law in the Russian armed forces."⁹⁰

While the Russian military as an institution has clearly lost respect in society today, it is impossible to say how much of this loss is due to actions by groups such as the CSMR.⁹¹ From the anecdotal information provided here there is reason to believe that these groups are affecting societal attitudes toward the military. In doing this, they are helping society define what it expects from the institutions in today's government, what changes must occur in these institutions to transform them from socialist institutions to democratic institutions, and how the leaders of such institutions should address their role in society. As demonstrated in this essay, civic associations dealing with military reform are playing a significant role in all these areas, serving as both a means to practice democracy and as a counterweight to the state. They also are working to frame society's expectations about the military in a democracy, and it is this role which perhaps is their most important contribution to the transformation of Russian society.

Conclusion

Civic associations, as Tocqueville noted when observing American democracy, play an important role in society. Through their participation in associations, citizens learn to cooperate and moderate their demands. As Putnam discovered in his study of Italian democracy, civic associations create a healthy and active society, fostering institutional success and, in turn, a strong government. Clearly, civic associations and an active civic community are a vital part of a democratic society. Through their actions, civic associations in Russia are creating an atmosphere of popular participation

in government, placing demands on institutions and helping society to formulate its expectations.

There are several important conclusions to be reached about Russian organizations such as the Soldiers' Mothers. The first is that civic associations are alive and well in Russia. This statement has significant implications for a society in transition from socialism. It means that civil society is taking a role in governing; ordinary people are participating in the governing process, placing demands on government and expecting responses from elected officials. A civil society that participates in the governing process is an important element in forming a democratic society. It is important, too, that these are voluntary organizations that seek the participation of citizens. In contrast to Soviet-style associations, which were used to contain and limit citizen participation, these are independent organizations, run by citizens who are free to influence government and society without government-imposed boundaries.

Second, through their actions, these associations are in fact bringing about changes in government institutions. They are forcing officials to consider reform in light of the expectations and demands of civil society. Although Russian government officials remain largely unconcerned with their constituents' wishes, demands, and interests, the vocal, public actions of associations like the CSMR, widely covered by the media, are impossible to ignore. Yeltsin's appeal to voters by announcing the future end of mandatory conscription acknowledged the growing recognition of the need to pursue constituents' interests in order to maintain political power. And Russian politicians are learning that neglect of these organizations' demands only goads them to greater activity, broader media coverage, and a more demanding and confrontational style.

These groups also provide an important link to the international community, creating a conduit for the exchange of information about human rights and democratization. Through these associations, NGOs acquire greater influence in Russian society and can promote the establishment of basic human rights. Such contacts also help to reinforce the international norms of behavior that Russia is expected to uphold in order to be accepted into the international community (in particular, those organizations such as the European Council, which it views as vital to its existence). Groups outside Russia can offer their Russian counterparts suggestions and support in their actions in pursuit of democratic reform, while the groups within Russia provide important information on the progress of democratic reform to those outside.

It is important to note that political scientists who studied the Soviet Union's defense policy process had to base their conclusions on the analysis of only a limited number of actors: by examining the positions held by senior political and military elites, one could derive a parsimonious explanation for Soviet defense policy. Russia's civic associations may fundamentally alter this analysis. As these groups come to influence policy, they add new actors into the policy process which Western analysts cannot

afford to ignore. Through their existence and their ability to influence Russian policymakers and society, civic associations now complicate the Western analysts' task of understanding security policy making.

Finally, the Soldiers' Mothers are helping to formulate society's expectations about the military in a democracy. Through their activities and the media coverage of them, they have become visible to a broad spectrum of society. Organizations such as the CSMR also touch a multitude of individual families to whom they provide significant services; families willingly turn to them in an effort to protect their rights. What a contrast with the Soviet period, when bribery was the only mechanism of obtaining an exemption from military service. Now, soldiers and families actually talk about rights!

Table 1. Military-Oriented Organizations in Russia

Name	Chairman/Leader	Type	Comments
All-Russian Officers' Union	Col. Gen. (Ret.) Vladislav Achalov	NR	Dominated by senior officer corps
All-Russian Union of Armed Forces' Veterans	Grigorii P. Yashkin	SR	Focuses on veterans' social welfare; jobs for veterans
Association "Army and Society"	Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Nikolai Chaldymov	DR	Associated with the Military Academy tasked to train replacements for political officers
Association of Servicemen's Wives	Ludmilla I. Chernis	SR	
Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia	Mariya Kirbasova	DR	Press Secretary: Valentina Melnikova
For Military Reform	Col. Gen. (Ret.) Eduard Arkadyevich Vorobyev	DR	
Honor and Fatherland	Gen. (Ret.) Alexander Lebed	DR	Subsumed by Gen. Lebed's political movement
Independent Trade Union of Servicemen	Mikhail I. Kolchev	SR	Particularly concerned about servicemen's social welfare
Military Personnel for Democracy	Col. Gen. (Res.) Vladimir Sergeyvich Smirnov	DR	Focuses on Democratic Reform
Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg	Ella Polyakova	DR	Local, independent
Russian Military Brotherhood	Col. Gen. (Res.) Vitalii Ia. Kremlev	DR	Combines veterans' and public organizations. Also emphasizes participation.
Russian Officers' Union	Lt. Col. (Ret.) Stanislav Terekhov	NR	Right-Wing Tendencies
Security of the Fatherland	Col. Yuri Ivanovich Deryugin	NR	Anti-NATO enlargement and arms control
Shchit [Shield] [Union for the Social Protection of Servicemen]	Georgii Getman	NR	Extremely nationalist; known for anti-Semitic stance
Soldiers' Mothers of Russia Movement	Lyubov Lymar	CR	Frequently referred to as Soldiers' Mothers, causing confusion among reporters
Union of Veterans and Officers	Yuri G. Tyurin	SR	
Union of Veterans--International	Col. Gen. (Ret.) Boris Gromov	DR	

Sources: Information gathered while conducting interviews and attending discussions in Moscow and St. Petersburg in July 1994 and May-June 1996. Also, "Mid-Level Officer's Views on Military Reform," JPRS-UMA-95, 20 June 1995; "Russia: Round-table on Failure of Military Reform," FBIS-UMA-96-100-S, 22 May 1996; "Russia: Leader of 'Security of the Fatherland' Society on Decline of Military," FBIS-UMA-96-114-S, 12 June 1996; Robert Ortung, "Lebed Holds First Congress," OMRI Daily Digest, 3 Jan. 1997; Richard Staar, *The New Military in Russia: Ten Myths That Shape the Image* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 71.

Notes:

1. The categories listed below are broad typologies. Even within these are differences in the groups' commitments and approaches to achieving their goals.

NR: Nationalist Reform-seeks to reestablish Russia's power through nationalistic rhetoric, a buildup of the military, restoring the Russian military to the status in society in which it existed during the Soviet period.

DR: Democratic Reform-seeks to establish the rule of law in the military; concerned with human rights and works for legal reform in the military and subordinating the military to Russian society.

CR: Conservative Reform-in some goals similar to Nationalist Reform, but tends to parallel the goals as outlined by Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

SR: Social Reform-particularly interested in the social status and fair treatment of soldiers, officers, and veterans.

2. The author would appreciate additional information about these organizations.

Table 2. Information on Soldiers' Mothers' Organizations

Name	President	Address	Phone Number	WWW URL	Notes
Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia	Mariya Kirbasova	Moscow 4, Luchnikov Pereulok, room 6	928-25-06	http://www.hro.org/ngo.usm	
Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg	Ella Polyakova	St. Petersburg, 8 Izmailovskii prospekt room 16	259-49-68	http://www.openweb.ru/smo/smo.htm	Assistant: Nikolai Semenov

Sources: Interviews and information gathered during the the author's visit to St. Petersburg and Moscow during July 1994 and May-June 1996. Also, "Press Conference with the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers Regarding Anti-War Actions in Russia," Official Kremlin International News Broadcast, 25 Mar. 1996 [Nexis].

Notes

1. See Gen. I. N. Rodionov's comments made before his selection to the position of minister of defense. "Rodionov Urges Legal Framework for Military Reform," Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), FBIS-UMA-95-234-S, 6 Dec. 1995, 3-9, and "Russia! Rodionov! Military's Future Organization," FBIS-UMA-96-145-S, 26 July 1996, 11-12. The reforms introduced by Gen. I. D. Sergeev since becoming minister of defense are centered on a basic reorganization and realigning of the military, to include personnel cuts. However, they have had little to no effect on the rule of law and democratic procedures discussed in this essay.
2. Andrew G. Walder, *Communist Neo-Traditionalism: Work and Authority in Chinese Industry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 8. See also Ken Jowitt, "Soviet Neotraditionalism: The Corruption of a Leninist Regime," *Soviet Studies*, 35, 3 (July 1983), for a complete discussion of neotraditionalism.
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 8-18. The existence of what may be referred to as "multiple militaries" in Russia presents a challenge to the professionalism of the traditional Russian armed forces, i.e., those subordinated to the minister of defense. This challenge will not be discussed in this essay, but its existence could represent a formidable barrier to the democratization of the military as an institution and to Russian political democratization in general. I am indebted to Jacob Kipp for the term "multiple militaries."
4. *Dedovshchina*, euphemistically labeled "non-regulation relations," is a system of control through the hazing of new recruits. Such hazing is increasingly violent, with permanent damage and death often resulting from actions taken by older soldiers. "Older" in this case can mean those who have as little as six months experience beyond the junior soldiers they abuse.
Edinonachalie, "one-man command," or "unitary command," was the Soviet principle of military leadership "by which commanders [superiors] have full administrative authority in relations toward subordinates, have full responsibility for all parts of life and activities of troops. It is expressed in the right of commanders to personally make decisions, issue orders, regulations and to guarantee they are fulfilled." Col. N. Beliakov, "Imet pravo" . . . [To have the right . . .] *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, 6 (Mar. 1990), 27. The system of one-man command led to a series of abuses which continue today. See Brenda J. Vallance, "Corruption and Reform in the Soviet Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 7, 4 (Dec. 1994), for a complete discussion of these abuses.
5. The dismal military situation has been well documented by both Russian and Western sources. See as an example, Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Russia's Wounded Military," *Foreign Affairs*, 74, 2 (Mar./Apr. 1995); Sergei V. Ianin, "Factors of Tension in the Army Environment," translated in *Russia Social Science Review* 36, 1 (Jan./Feb. 1995); and a report by Christiane Amanpour on "The Russian Army," *60 Minutes*, CBS, 16 Feb. 1997.
6. Carlotta Gall, "'Chechen Syndrome' Takes Grim Toll," *Moscow Times*, 23 Nov. 1996. In its annual Russian Human Rights report, the State Department notes that officers of the armed forces not only allow, but sometimes encourage the hazing of young recruits. U.S. Department of State, *Russia, Human Rights Practices, 1995*, Mar. 1996, Part C. Officers frequently see such treatment as a means of maintaining discipline and ensuring total subordination through fear. A

lengthy discussion of the psychological effects of the Chechen Syndrome can be found in Sergei Pavlenko, "Eshche raz o sindrome 'goriachikh tochek'" [Another time about the syndrome 'flash point'] *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 Mar. 1997, 2.

7. As an example, see Mikhail Zolotonosov, "Ordinary Sadism: Torture in the Russian Army," *Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye*, translated in "Report on Crimes, Brutality in Russian Armed Forces," FBIS-UMA-96-016-S, 24 Jan. 1996.

8. Amanpour, "The Russian Army." See also Genine Babakian "Minister Points to Suicide in Plea for Defense Funds, *Moscow Times*, 6 Sept. 1996. Gen. Lev Rokhlin, then chairman of the Russian Federation State Duma's Committee on Defense, reported that suicide "committed off duty was up by 20% overall" as of August 1996. "The Explosive Situation in the Army," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 48, 34 (18 Sept. 1996), 21.

9. In a recent work on the problems and potential for sustaining democracy in newly democratizing countries, the contributors note that civil society in such countries frequently is weak and fragmented. While this is certainly true in Russia, I will argue that the organizations studied in this essay have succeeded in focusing their efforts on a particular issue to such an extent that they have maintained a clear identity in society, rather than becoming lost in the fragmented nature of Russian political parties and movements. In addition, their early entry into the civic movement provided them an opportunity to become an established and recognized civic association with a well-known agenda. See Adam Przeworski, ed., *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 53-64, for a discussion of societal fragmentation in democratizing countries.

10. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1969), 514, 515-16.

11. Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 91, 171-76.

12. Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (Jan. 1995): 65-78. For Linz and Stepan, an active civil society made up of autonomous groups, movements, and individuals is a condition which must exist for democracy to be consolidated. Jaun J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, "Toward Consolidated Democracies" *Journal of Democracy* 7, 2 (Apr. 1996): 17.

13. For discussion of both of these schools, see Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 3 (July 1996): 39.

14. *Ibid.*, 47.

15. John Dryzek notes that through its actions civil society may effect cultural change which will, in turn, affect power relations within society. This is similar to the idea in this essay, although I emphasize not only a cultural change, but also a change in the demands and expectations society places on government and institutions. John S. Dryzek, "Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratization," *American Political Science Review* 90, 1 (Sept. 1996): 482.

16. Mark von Hagen, *Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 331.
17. See Dimitri K. Simes, "The Politics of Defense in the Soviet Union: Brezhnev's Era," in *Soviet Decisionmaking for National Security*, ed. Jiri Valenta and William Potter, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1984), chap. 3, for a discussion of this evolution.
18. Peter Shearman, "Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1991," in *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1995), 14–15.
19. Kenneth M. Currie, "The Soviet General Staff: Its Impact on Military Professionalism and National Security Decisionmaking," Ph.D. diss., (George Washington University), 1987, 6–18.
20. One of Yeltsin's campaign actions while running in the last presidential election was to announce the end of mandatory military service, although the target date of 2000 has been delayed until 2005 or beyond.
21. V. N. Lobov, "Military Reform: The New Army," in *Russian Security After the Cold War: Seven Views from Moscow*, ed. Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E. Miller, Center for Science and International Affairs, Studies in International Security 3 (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1994), 77.
22. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 34.
23. Gail W. Lapidus, "State and Society: Toward the Emergence of Civil Society in the Soviet Union," in *The Soviet System in Crisis: A Reader of Western and Soviet Views*, ed. Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), 142. See also Victoria E. Bonnell, "Voluntary Associations in Gorbachev's Reform Program," in the same volume.
24. Lapidus, "State and Society," 141.
25. See as an example Marshal S. F. Akhromeev, "Kakie vooruzhennyye sily nuzhny sovetskoyu soiuзу?" [What kind of armed forces does the Soviet Union need?], *Ogonek*, 50 (Dec. 1989), 8, and Maj. Vladimir N. Lopatin and Col. A. Tsalko in the discussion group covered by "Kakaya armiya nam nuzhna?" [What kind of army do we need?] *Ogonek*, 9 (Feb. 1990), 29. Lopatin's name during this time was closely associated with the reform movement in the military. He continues to discuss this issue in occasional Russian press reports.
26. An excellent source on Russian military reform is Richard F. Staar, *The New Military in Russia: Ten Myths That Shape the Image* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996). Staar mentions several groups in his chapter on military reform. See esp. p. 71.
27. Press release, "1996 Right Livelihood Awards Honour Pioneers in Economics, Health, Peace and Development," <http://www.shss.montclair.edu/authro/rlawrd.html>.
28. "A Prize to the Mothers," *Transitions*, 2, 22 (1 Nov. 1996), 2.

29. I am including throughout this discussion some of the points specifically made by the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg. This local, independent organization has existed since 1991 and shares many of the views held by the larger Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia. Throughout the paper, I refer to the two groups as soldiers' mother, however, when the groups' beliefs, goals, or accomplishment diverge, I discuss them individually to signify the differences.
30. In 1993, 2,572 soldiers "died under non-combat conditions," and 462 reportedly committed suicide. Abraham Brumberg, "Human Rights in Russia," *Moscow Times*, 20 Aug. 1994 [Nexis]. The U.S. Department of State reported that, according to the Russian Ministry of Defense, 1,222 servicemen died during the first eight months of 1993, with a reported 25 percent having committed suicide. Department of State, *Russia, Human Rights Practices, 1993*, Feb. 1994, Part C.
31. "Statement of Coordinating Committee of the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg," 16 Jan. 1994. This statement was obtained by the author during interviews with members of the Soldiers' Mothers' organization, July 1994.
32. "Soldiers' Mothers," <http://ns.openweb.ru/windows/smo/smo.htm>, 10 Sept. 1996, hereafter cited as Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, online.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Campaign material for Ella Mikhailovna Polyakova. Interview in St. Petersburg, July 1994.
35. The freedom to practice religion is a particularly significant issue for the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg.
36. Natash Alova, "Soldiers' Mothers Fight Against War with Russia—Chechnya," AP Worldstream, 13 Jan. 1995 [Nexis].
37. This action was particularly pronounced after the reported starvation of several sailors on Russkiy Island. See "Russkiy Island Returning to Normal," BBC, 27 Mar. 1993 [Nexis].
38. Interview, July 1994. Despite their belief in the need for military forces, these groups are often seen as antimilitary, and their actions are frequently criticized by others, including higher ranking Russian military officers and particularly those groups seeking the return of military power to the status held during the Soviet period. As a result, the St. Petersburg organization has been threatened with the loss of the offices they now lease. Correspondence with the Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, 22 Jan. 1997. Hereafter cited as correspondence.
39. See Katherine Issac, *Ralph Nader Presents Practicing Democracy: A Guide to Student Action* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995).
40. The Rafto-Award 1995 Is Given to the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in Russia," <http://rafisk.nhh.no/siv941379/rafto/mothers/html>, 9 Sept. 1996.

41. Olivia Ward, "Irate Russian Mothers Fight Chechen War; Want 'Culprits' Responsible for Military Action to be Prosecuted," *Toronto Star*, 16 Feb. 1995, A2 [Nexis].
42. "Soldiers' Mothers Protest Outside Parliament," BBC, 14 Mar. 1992 [Nexis].
43. Agence France Presse, 15 Jan. 1995 [Nexis].
44. "Press Conference with the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers Regarding Anti-war Actions in Russia," Official Kremlin International News Broadcast, 25 Mar. 1996 [Nexis].
45. See "Soldatskiye materi derzhat krugovuyu oboronu. Ot kovo i pochemu?" [Soldiers' mothers circle the defenses. From whom and why?] *Chas Pik*, 23 Mar. 1994.
46. Matt Bivens, "Troubled Water," *Moscow Times*, 23 Mar. 1996 [Nexis]. The Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg reports that more than forty thousand people have contacted the organization and sought their assistance since the autumn of 1991. Correspondence, 7 Oct. 1996.
47. Department of State, *Russia, Human Rights Practices, 1994*, Mar. 1995, Part C.
48. Correspondence, 7 Oct. 1996.
49. Interviews with members of the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, July 1994.
50. Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, online.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. United Nations, Economic and Security Council, "The Situation of Human Rights in the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation: Report of the Secretary-General," E/CN.4/1996/13 (26 Mar. 1996).
54. Correspondence, 7 Oct. 1996.
55. "Soldiers' Mothers Seek Help Against Russian Government," AP Worldstream, 27 Feb. 1995 [Nexis].
56. "Concerns in Europe: January–June 1997," Amnesty International Report EUR 01/06/97, Sept. 1997, <http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/aipub/1997/EUR.htm>
57. Victor Litovkin, "Russian Defense Minister Liberates Two Sergeants of His Army from Captivity," *Russian Press Digest*, 2 July 1992 [Nexis].
58. "Soldiers' Mothers Give Defense Ministry List of Russian POWs in Chechnya," BBC, 14 July 1995 [Nexis].

59. Maj. A. Vorobyov, "Military Reform: A Start, But Too Late," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 42, 36 (10 Oct. 1990), 7-8.
60. Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of St. Petersburg, online, 10 Sept. 1996.
61. Ida Kuklina, "The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers," *Peace and Humanitarian Newsletter* 1, Mar. 1996.
62. See Mikhail Zolonosov, "Ordinary Sadism: Torture in the Russian Army," *Nezavisimoye voiennoye obozreniye*, 14 Dec. 1996, 8; FBIS-UMA-016-S, 24 Jan. 1996, 1.
63. The application appeared in *Argumenty i Fakty*. Kuklina, "The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers."
64. *Argumenty i Fakty*, 6, Feb. 1998, as reported in the *Monitor—A Daily Briefing on the Post-Soviet States*, 14 May 1998.
65. "Press Conference," Official Kremlin International News Broadcast, 25 Mar. 1996.
66. Correspondence, 22 Jan. 1997. The St. Petersburg organization also works with some of the journalists associated with the Glasnost Foundation in Moscow.
67. BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 8 May 1995 [Nexis].
68. A complete account of this tour can be found in Chris Hunter, "Tour of Europe by Chechen Women and Soldiers Mothers of Russia," *Peace and Humanitarian Newsletter*, 3, Aug. 1996, <http://www.pgs.ca/pages/jna96-3htm>.
69. *Ibid.*
70. "Gorbachev Fields Military Complaints," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 42, 47 (26 Dec. 1990), 8-10.
71. Kathleen Hunt, "Mothers and Sons: When Thousands of Recruits Come Home in Sealed Coffins, the Russian Army Blamed 'Accidents', but the Mothers Call It Murder," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Apr. 1992, magazine insert, 24. On 8 August 1997, two members of the St. Petersburg organization visited a military unit and its associated hospital in the Leningrad military district. They discussed human rights violations and the condition of the hospital with military officials. Organization of Soldiers' Mother of St. Petersburg, Press Release, 11 Aug. 1997.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Pavel Kuznetsov, "Soldiers' Mothers Stage Pickets Outside Duma," TASS, 18 May 1994.
74. "Don't Draft Kids Who Are Skin and Bones!," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 50, 11 (15 Apr. 1998), 21.

75. Yulia Kalinina, "Poor Is a General Who Doesn't Wish to Become a Parliament Member," *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, in Russian Press Digest, 22 Oct. 1995 [Nexis].
76. Correspondence, 7 Oct. 1996.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Correspondence, 22 Jan. 1997.
79. Correspondence, 7 Oct. 1996.
80. "EU: EP Calls on Commission to Tackle Human Rights Abuses in Russian Armed Forces," Agence Europe/Reuter, 21 Jan. 1994 [Nexis].
81. Jonathon Steele, "The Gorbachev Era: On the Trail with Russia's Comeback Kid," *The Guardian*, 8 Mar. 1995, T2.
82. "Events in Russia Linked with Chechen Conflict," TASS, 21 Mar. 1995 [Nexis].
83. "Emotionalism of Soldiers' Mothers Is Being Used for Political Purposes," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 47, 5 (1 Mar. 1995), 21.
84. Dmitry Chuberkov, "Democracy Tested in Battle," *Moscow News*, 24 Feb. 1995 [Nexis].
85. "Soldiers' Mothers Want Amnesty for Deserters," *RFE/RL Newswire*, 2, 44, pt. 1, 5 Mar. 1998. That the military representative argued that only 20–30 percent of servicemen desert due to hazing still reflects a significant number!
86. Dmitry Zharkov, *Kommersant-Daily*, 24 Feb. 1998, 3. Translated and condensed in "Surrendering Deserters Awaited," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 50, 8 (25 Mar. 1998): 16.
87. Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network, 32 May 1998. Translated in "Russia: TV Reports Success of Amnesty for Russian Army Deserters," FBIS-UMA-98-152, 1 June 1998.
88. Zharkov, "Surrendering Deserters Awaited." Approximately one-third of those cases examined were exempted from prosecution, indicating that in fact, these desertions were tied to hazing and brutal treatment. See FBIS-UMA-98-152.
89. U. S. Department of State, *Russia, Human Rights Practices, 1994*, 39.
90. Boris Altshuler, "Fight for Human Rights," *Moscow Times*, 30 Dec. 1995.
91. A thorough search of polling and survey data did not reveal information related to the public's attitude toward the Soldiers' Mothers. A search of online resources in addition to the resources of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Information Agency, and the Lawrence

Livermore Laboratory did not find opinion polls dealing with the subject. In one recent poll, when asked "If someone were to violate your legal rights, to whom or to what agency would you turn for assistance and protection?" 1 percent of the respondents answered that they would turn to political parties and associations. See "Polls Show Public Distrusts Politicians," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 50, 4 (25 Feb. 1998): 7. Had this question asked specifically about the violation of rights within the military, the results would have provided more information about the public's attitude toward the Soldiers' Mothers' organizations.