

Preface

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The brutality of the Second Chechen War shocked many observers. Few, however, were surprised that Russia felt compelled to launch a second major military operation in Chechnya only three years after the end of the first. The armed forces' conspicuous lack of success in 1994-96 still rankled. The Khasavyurt Agreement which ended the first, modern, phase of a conflict going back at least two centuries, merely postponed a decision on the status of the Chechen Republic until 2001. There was much unfinished business on both sides. Meantime, warlordism and malign economic neglect by Moscow had rapidly made Chechnya ungovernable. Worse, the virus of separatism was becoming endemic in the Russian North Caucasus, and the fever of international political Islam seemed to threaten the Federation's health further. A kill or cure remedy was therefore prescribed.

This collection of essays examines aspects of the diagnosis and treatment and offers a prognosis; all have relevance for Russia's future development and, more importantly perhaps, for her relations with others. Both the recent Chechen wars have had a significant effect on how the Russian government and people perceive the military and their role. Now, with the armed forces and other uniformed structures competing for scarce funds, they have been reminded of the continuing need for credible military forces. For those in uniform, tactical and operational experience and budgetary constraints will together have a major impact on future structures and roles. The primacy of the ground forces has been reinforced over the Internal Troops and other non-military forces, and possibly also at the expense of the strategic deterrent, the nuclear forces.

Moreover, the war has not permanently removed any of the factors which made Russia resort to force. Yet the use or threat of force and other measures highlighted here - including information and economic levers - will continue to be significant options for the Russian leadership both internally and internationally, in dealing with weak neighbours and global opinion. A study of the policies and practices of the past year should be rewarding for those dealing with future relationships.

Our analysis does not attempt a chronological survey of the background to the war or its course; these are available elsewhere. Instead, readers who are familiar with the Centre will find the detailed analysis of trends and behaviour which are the Centre's hallmark. Those who are new to this product will, I hope, find something to tempt them into exploring it further. We are delighted also to include in the collection two papers by Lester Grau and Timothy Thomas from our sister organisation, the US Army's Foreign Military Studies Office. They will welcome, as we do, comments, criticisms and requests for further information on what is inevitably only a selection of views. Please note that the views expressed are the authors' own, and do not represent those of the US Army, Department of Defense, or of the UK Ministry of Defence.

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