

Postcommunist Military Democratization Needs: An Assessment of Democratic Political Control in Russia and the Czech Republic

The promotion of democracy is an enduring characteristic of American foreign policy throughout history. The pursuit of this goal has continued in the post–Cold War era in the form of an American foreign policy focused on facilitating the enlargement of the number of democracies in the international system. But recent research argues that enlargement alone is not a sufficient goal. Democratic consolidation of transitioning states must be achieved in order to achieve the benefits of a democratic peace. Accepting indefinite periods of transition runs the dual risk of transitioning states backsliding into autocracies and of the exhibition of war-prone behavior.¹

Concretely, this means that the democratic consolidation of the postcommunist states of the former Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe should be a primary goal accompanied by the specific simultaneous goal of ensuring that military institutions also progress on the path of democratization. While most attention is focused on progress of civilian democratic institutions in the postcommunist states, the compliance of military institutions with democratic norms should not be overlooked. After all, military institutions possess the expertise and force that can be directed either at the preservation of democratic gains or at their destruction.

Chapter 1 laid out the scope of the military democratization problem with the presentation of models of civilian control and military professionalism for both democratic states and for the communist states of the Eastern bloc during the Soviet era. The following three chapters analyze two cases where the democratization of postcommunist military institutions is under way—Russia and the Czech Republic—and the American response to their democratic transitions. This chapter addresses the specific problem of democratic political control of postcommunist militaries.

Democratic political control of the military depends on constitutional provisions outlining the separation of powers, governmental control, parliamentary oversight, and democratic accountability to the society at large. Whether the executive, the legislature, or some combination of the two has primary over-

sight authority over the military, actual control depends upon how well these responsibilities are exercised. Because military institutions tend to change more slowly than other institutions participating in the democratic transition, progress in democratic military reform is largely dependent on the strength of the civilian democratic institutions charged with oversight.

This chapter highlights the weaknesses that persist within the civilian democratic institutions of the transitioning cases that limit full achievement of democratic political control. These weaknesses, which might be called democratic deficits, include political leaders' varying commitments to democracy, weak budgetary control, lack of expertise on defense issues, insufficient confidence concerning oversight authority, limited political will to influence the defense process, poor relationships between the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Parliament, and inadequate openness, or transparency, of the defense policy process. Additionally, democratic deficits within military institutions that exacerbate the ineffectiveness of civilian oversight bodies will be explored.

The evidence presented in this chapter and the next will support a central thesis of this work. It argues that democratic control in transitioning states is largely achieved through the presence of shared democratic values across democratizing institutions. The infusion of democratic values into a previously authoritarian society creates expectations that these values will be reflected in all democratizing institutions, including the armed forces. Resistance within one democratizing institution must be met with the enforcement of standards of democratic accountability in others. The expectations of formal institutions, such as parliamentary bodies and elected executives, are reinforced by other influential elements of the transitioning state to include the media and the expectations of the population at large.

An analysis of the cases will show that there are winners and losers in the democratization process. Whether or not the goal of democratic consolidation is ever achieved depends on many factors: the historic predisposition of the state toward democracy, consensus among societal forces that democracy is a common goal, success in overcoming specific democratic deficits that face each state at the point of transition, and ultimately, the matchup between winners and losers within the transitioning state.

Postcommunist militaries are facing many challenges: the loss of status and prestige, the divergence of societal and military values, the structural and ideological reform of their forces, and the sorting out of old Soviet era patterns of behavior and Western democratic standards for military institutions. The aim of this chapter is to assess the democratization progress of the postcommunist militaries of Russia and the Czech Republic in order to specify their continuing democratization needs. The framework developed in the analysis of these cases can subsequently be applied to other military institutions participating in democratic transitions. Once identified, these democratic deficits can be more

effectively addressed by the established democracies. The response of the United States will subsequently be analyzed in depth in chapter 5.

The Collapse of Communism and the Advent of Democracy in Russia and the Czech Republic

The introduction of perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union during the mid-1980s proved to be an unsuccessful experiment in the controlled democratization of a socialist state. The openness of glasnost revealed the fault lines of a regime tenuously held together by a corrupted communist system. Those indoctrinated within it long knew that the reality of living under communism contrasted sharply with the ideal socialist state. Greater exposure to the Western world also awakened Soviet citizens to the tremendous gap in the standard of living between the communist East and the democratic West.

Mikhail Gorbachev was persuaded that some hybrid of socialism, democracy, and market economics, carefully managed by the leadership of the Communist Party, was a viable path of reform for the Soviet Union. Consequently, his support for the democratization process was limited and sporadic. In the end he would be the last General Secretary of a great superpower doomed to disintegration by the forces he himself unleashed. Boris Yeltsin, the first popularly elected president of the Russian Federation, emerged as the leader of the democratic factions following the August 1991 attempted coup. He faced the task of continuing the process of democratic reform where his predecessor left off.

The liberalization taking place in the Soviet Union spread through the Eastern bloc. In Czechoslovakia, this culminated in the November 1989 “Velvet Revolution” that swept through the country, resulting in an almost bloodless change of power. The speed with which the Communist regime collapsed evidenced its superficiality and lack of legitimacy among the Czech and Slovak peoples. The two main opposition groups to Communist rule—Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, its Slovak counterpart—remained united through the country’s first democratic elections in 1990. By the time Czechoslovakia held its second postcommunist elections in 1992, however, preferences for different paths of economic reform and a resurgence of Czech and Slovak nationalism combined to paralyze the federal government’s capacity to continue the democratic transformation process. On 1 January 1993, the Velvet Revolution culminated in the Velvet Divorce, the birth of the Czech Republic, and the rebirth of Slovakia. The Czech Republic proceeded with its plan for a rapid transition to a market economy while Slovakia chose a slower rate of economic transition that took into account the transformation of its large, outmoded heavy industrial sector and a higher rate of unemployment. However, by the end of 1997 it was becoming increasingly apparent that the “Czech miracle”

had begun to fade as both inflation and unemployment rates inched upward at the end of 1997 to 11 percent and 7.5 percent respectively. Gross domestic product (GDP) growth slowed to a rate of 1.5 percent in 1997, and there was a slight deviation from a balanced budget.²

The resignation of Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus in December 1997 over the revelation of a party slush fund focused world attention on the weaknesses of the Czech transition. Klaus had been the economic architect of the Czech democratic transition since the birth of the republic. His political fall along with sagging economic indicators raised concerns over the country's stability and threatened its ranking as the leader of Central Europe.³ By mid-1998 the basis of the Czech model of economic reform had come into question. Analysts criticized Klaus's quick privatization and overzealous monetary policies for preventing necessary company restructuring, allowing corruption to take root, and ultimately setting the Czech Republic on the course of recession. The Czechs' economic growth has subsequently fallen behind the pack of Central European states and will adversely affect the pace of military reform.⁴

The 10.4 million people of the Czech Republic and the 150 million citizens of the Russian Federation are undergoing a transformation of all aspects of their societies—cultural, political, economic, and military. The Czech Republic's historical experience of liberal democracy between the world wars, however, gives it some national memory about and confidence in democratic institutions. Although the intervening period of Communist rule has left its mark on the national, institutional, and individual psyches of the Czech Republic, the unpopularity of the Communist political system made it easier to reject it when circumstances permitted the re-adoption of democratic values.⁵

In contrast, Russian citizens have yet to fully embrace democracy. Many Russians who were sympathetic to perestroika and who believed Western reformers promising that "all you need is democracy and capitalism and all the problems of the Soviet era will be over" came to the conclusion after trying out democracy and capitalism that their problems were "a hell of a lot worse."⁶ The very formula designated to propel them forward came into question by many, and frustration with the outcome of the introduction of democratic forces into their previously ordered society led others to reject the concept outright.⁷ The cradle of bolshevism is finding it harder to discard its heritage of collectivism, lack of private initiative, and the expectation that the masses will be cared for by the powerful.⁸

With no significant tradition of democratic government or free market economics and an aversion to Western cultural traditions, Russians' opinion of democracy and capitalism is formed primarily from the impact that the introduction of these institutions has had on their individual lives. There are a few prominent new rich who have benefited from the free market, but a middle class

akin to what has formed in their Central European neighbors has yet to develop. Unemployment has not yet reached the high levels that most analysts agree will inevitably occur when Russian enterprises truly succumb to market demands, but many workers are underemployed and sporadically paid.⁹ Organized crime reportedly has infiltrated every aspect of Russian society and is associated by many with the evils of capitalism.¹⁰ Criminals act with impunity without fear of the police or judicial system.¹¹ According to one U.S. embassy observer, “the average Russian doesn’t care what kind of state he lives under. All he knows is that ten years ago a loaf of bread cost a few kopecks and now it is 1,000 rubles. If this is democracy, then who needs it?”¹² An overwhelming majority of Russians believe that reforms have hurt them. For instance, when asked in November 1996 about the most optimal economic system, only 35 percent cited the market, while 42 percent believed that a planned economy was best.¹³ Four years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union a plurality of 48 percent condemned even the launching of perestroika.¹⁴ In 1996, over two-thirds of all Russians still believed that the breakup of the Soviet Union was a tragic event.¹⁵

Western observers agree that the period 1989 through 1991 provided a unique window of opportunity for the embracing of democracy and capitalism, but the system did not deliver any benefits for the absorption of democratic values and individual lives did not improve quickly enough. When asked to name the greatest changes that he observed in Moscow since 1991, Defense Attaché Brigadier General Gary Rubus replied, “First, the initial euphoria about democracy and all things Western followed in short order by the West’s failure to make good on its commitments. Second, the retreat from democracy and all things Western.”¹⁶

No Soviet institution has been less receptive to the advent of democratization than the military. Democracy has meant only increased hardship along with the loss of societal and material status and, ultimately, loss of purpose for the Soviet and post-Soviet military.¹⁷ It has led to the breakup of the Soviet empire, which the military was instrumental in achieving, to a state of chaos and multiple ethnic conflicts within the region and the country, and to the perceived meddling in military affairs by civilians. The Russian military attributes its reduced status and rapid decline in readiness directly to the process of democratic transition.¹⁸ Never an agent of social change, the post-Soviet Russian military has lagged behind society in all respects in terms of its adaptation to democratic values and processes. Receptivity to Western assistance in these areas has also been poor.

Similarly, the Czech military institution has also been burdened by the ideological and bureaucratic legacy of the Soviet era as it attempts to transform itself into an institution serving a democratic state. It is turning toward the West with the help of Western allies and by its own will to establish an identity separate from its Communist legacy.

Role of the Military in the Transitioning Cases

Perestroika and its foreign policy counterpart, “new political thinking,” resulted in a fundamental shift in the role of the military in the Soviet state that was not immediately obvious. Gorbachev’s emphasis on economic reform as the remedy of the Soviet Union’s societal ills also meant that the role of military power would decrease. It would no longer be the main instrument of state power. Previously, the idea that the Socialist empire was good prevailed; therefore, the armed forces that acquired and defended the empire were good and represented the most esteemed of societal values.¹⁹ Reminiscing on this era, a member of the Russian Security Council staff remarked, “The whole country worked for the Army to be strong. The mission was to free the United States and all other countries of capitalism. The army made up the prestigious main pillar of this ideological goal and money was given to it without a problem. Maybe the people didn’t live very well, but the Army was strong and well-supplied.”²⁰

There is no such consensus on the role of the military in postcommunist Russia. Indeed, there is a side of the debate that does not see a need for an army, while the opposite view argues that the army should be strengthened, though for what purpose is not altogether clear.²¹ Meanwhile, of course, the entire strategic context of maintaining and deploying military forces has changed in the aftermath of the Cold War. The ideological basis of the Soviet armed forces has been scrapped by the political leadership as postcommunist institutions struggle to retool themselves in order to deliver the promises of democratic and capitalist societies.

The USSR ceased to exist, but the Soviet military machine remained with 80 percent of the inheritance flowing to Russia, which inherited only slightly more than half of the Soviet Union’s territory and population.²² Though its role as defender of superpower interests disappeared, massive border changes still left a state that stretches from Europe to Asia. The Russian Federation has significant regional interests that are supported by a wide-ranging security policy. Russian defense policy in the era of independence has been centered on the belief that Russia should fill the security vacuum in Central Asia and exert its influence over the states of the former Soviet Union.²³ The most recent evolution of this doctrine published in connection with a reform plan to significantly restructure the armed forces focuses on the possibility of waging local and regional conflicts or one major war.²⁴ The loss of superpower status has resulted in a psychological need to build a sense of national identity and strength, and to focus on interests in the Russian “near-abroad”—the former Soviet republics that now surround the Russian Federation as independent states.

The starting point for the creation of the armed forces of the Czech Republic is what remains from its predecessor forces, the Czechoslovak People’s Army (CSPA) and the Czechoslovak Army (CSA). While the personnel and

equipment of the ACR are drawn primarily from these previous entities, the whole context of employing defense resources has nevertheless changed dramatically. While Czechoslovakia's neighbors included Ukraine (previously the Soviet Union) and Hungary, the Czech Republic shares borders with four friendly and stable neighbors: Slovakia, Poland, Austria, and Germany. With the division of Czechoslovakia, any threats to internal stability due to the presence of itinerant minorities have also subsided. The democratization of the Czech political system and its continuing transformation to a relatively prosperous market economy mandate that the military's role be rescripted to insure that it supports the overall objectives of the Czech Republic as it cuts its ties to the East and embraces the West.

A point driven home repeatedly in interviews with members of the ACR is that they perceived themselves to be serving in the new armed forces of a new state. A member of the General Staff said that they were in the process of "building an army of the Czech Republic—an entity that has never before existed." He added that both the General Staff and the government understood the importance of presenting the armed forces of the Czech Republic in this new light.²⁵ In reality, however, much of the structure and mindset of the Soviet era remained in the early years of the ACR and remains today. Another military briefer from the Ministry of Defense (MOD), while recounting the achievements of Czech military reform, stressed how the process of reform was made more complex because both the military and the state had to deal with issues that neither had dealt with before, including the formulation of a military strategy specific to the singular needs of the Czech Republic.²⁶

Much of the enthusiasm and optimism sensed earlier in the transition had waned by 1997. Junior officers and cadets still talked about being part of a "new army," but their frustration with senior military leaders and politicians charged with defense oversight was also evident. Junior officers complained that senior officers did not really want to change fundamentally their mode of operating to reflect democratic patterns of leadership. Real change could not be possible until they assumed command positions themselves when senior officers brought up in the Soviet system retired, a process that could take a decade. Meanwhile, by the end of 1998 the government has failed to produce a credible defense concept acceptable to the military and capable of providing adequate guidance for the continued transformation of the ACR. Officers at the unit level were frustrated and paralyzed in their ability to plan for their futures because they lacked adequate guidance from civilian leadership.²⁷

The first strategic concept prepared by the military, though never approved by Parliament, reflected the views of Colonel General Karel Pezl, the first Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. He argued that the security of the Czech Republic depends on its adoption of a comprehensive and integrated concept of defense policy in which the military plays only a part: the defense and protection of the sovereignty and independence of the state and

the safety of all its citizens.²⁸ The *Military Strategy of the Czech Republic*, however, highlights the Czech reliance on European security structures to ensure its ultimate survival in the face of a superior aggressor. While the goal is to build up a “capability to resist by our own military potential an even stronger enemy,” the strategy also states that the Czech Republic will “at the same time seek and use all possibilities of international security structures and prospective allies.”²⁹ This 1993 document was compatible with *The Conception of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic* issued in the same year, which stated, “NATO and the WEU are the only realistic alternatives for gaining security guarantees for the Czech Republic . . . full-fledged membership in NATO is the long-term and immutable aim” of the country.³⁰ Subsequent defense concepts also appeared, including several prepared by the Ministry of Defense, but none were formally approved by Parliament. In 1997, the Defense Ministry submitted a new strategic development plan to replace the 1993 document that expired at the end of 1996; however, by the end of 1998 the “Concept for Developing the Army through the Year 2005” had still not been approved.³¹ A National Defense Strategy required to lay the groundwork for a more specific National Military Strategy was only passed by Parliament in March 1997. The four-page document developed by the government was immediately and roundly criticized by both defense experts and the military for being hastily prepared, ambiguous, and unclear.³² The document, allegedly approved by the government in only five minutes, was produced to satisfy NATO requirements for the existence of National Security Strategy before the convening of the Madrid Summit in June 1997 where formal NATO invitations were issued. According to one expert involved in drawing up the strategy, “It is not so much the content of the document as that fact that it exists which is important.”³³ Consequently, in the first five years of its existence the Czech Republic has yet to produce a credible national military strategy, and whatever documents the MOD produced were developed separately from an overarching strategy that conveyed the political guidance of the government. The institutions charged with exerting democratic oversight over the military and formally administering the military institution have worked independently of each other and so have failed either to produce sufficient political guidance or to execute a military strategy that logically flows from it.

In contrast, as Russian military doctrine has evolved in the post-Soviet era it has taken a more unilateral approach to security. The role of the military in the defense of regional threats and local conflicts has been emphasized. Special attention has also been given to the protection of the rights of Russian citizens in the near-abroad.³⁴ Specifically, the southern periphery remains unstable, especially Tajikistan and potentially Kazakhstan, and Russia will continue to have peacekeeping ambitions in the region.³⁵ Chechnya will also remain a continuing source of tension.

National priorities include regaining some semblance of great power sta-

tus despite the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union effectively weakened its successor state's power capacity. Specific priorities include an increased reliance on nuclear weapons in order to compensate for weaknesses in conventional capabilities.³⁶ Russia perceives that the maintenance of a credible defensive posture is necessary to deter against unacceptable encroachments of its security space through multiple waves of NATO expansion. However, economic and political realities, along with a deepening realization that a serious external threat from another major world power does not exist, has tempered ambitions to retain a Cold War force structure. Indeed, the Russian military is in deep financial, organizational, and ideological crisis, and there is a growing consensus that the greatest threat to Russian security is the failure to carry out reform of the Russian armed forces. "As little as two years may be left to salvage the armed forces before they succumb to one kind of convulsion or another—mutiny, disintegration, regional breakup or some combination of them."³⁷ The war in Chechnya served to highlight the long list of problems present within the Russian military well before the war broke out.

After seven years of drifting without clear guidance from the Russian state, some first steps are being taken to implement critical reforms. In September 1998 Yeltsin signed the framework document that would serve as the foundation for Russian military reform through the year 2005. The document re-emphasizes Russia's continued reliance on nuclear weapons as a deterrent to potential aggressors, focuses conventional capabilities on the suppression of local and regional conflicts, reorganizes the system of national military administrative units, clearly divides functional responsibilities among the various power ministries, outlines priorities for cutbacks and consolidations, and merges the Strategic Rocket Forces with the Air Force.³⁸

These varied approaches in postcommunist military doctrine and strategy indicate the differing roles that these post-Soviet era military institutions are assuming in their respective societies. Both states are still struggling to define themselves as independent postcommunist states. The military, which plays a role in this redefinition, also acts as an instrument of the still-to-be-delineated state's interests. The process of becoming aware of their new statehood and identity has been especially difficult for those in uniform. In the case of Russia, many of these servicemen are now serving in non-Russian, sometimes opposition, forces, which are directed against the Russian Federation.

Though the primary role of each military remains constant—the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state—secondary roles remain unclear. In Russia, although military doctrine has become increasingly clearer through the government's endorsement of specific documents, societal consensus on these choices is still missing. Many reject the current focus on local and regional conflicts and the virtual dismissal of the possibility of a major war.³⁹ The decline in military power is an undisputed fact, but the absorption

of this reality and the consequent societal adjustment has been difficult for the officer corps and the leadership.

Additionally, the universal values of military service and the national priority of army socialization have come under fire in the postcommunist era. The absence of societal consensus on the role of the military in Russia stems from the conflict between reformers, who seek to adapt the Russian military to democratic control and standards of conduct, and conservatives, who do not recognize any need to adapt to the postcommunist realities that have taken root in Russian society. For instance, while the press, the population at large, and various political groups have spoken out against the poor treatment of recruits, policymakers within the defense ministry have turned a deaf ear to these calls for reform. The divisive result leads to further disharmony over the role of the military in post-Soviet Russian society.

There is a greater consensus in the Czech Republic on the overall goals of the state and on the military's role in achieving them. Chief among these is integration into Western European and international institutional structures.⁴⁰ The pursuit of NATO membership was driven by the same motivation that drives the policy goals of EU membership or the active support of UN operations: the desire to be regarded as a contributing member of all "Western clubs." President Havel argued that in modern-day Europe no better democratic defense structure than NATO exists and that all European states subscribing to NATO's values should be given the opportunity to enter the alliance, provided they are politically and technically prepared.⁴¹

This goal affects greatly the overall process of democratization taking place in the country and impacts as well the path of military reform. The military is looking to NATO membership as a much-needed impetus to the government to take the needs of the military seriously.⁴² Without the focused attention on NATO standardization and modernization that membership in the alliance requires, officers and defense analysts alike fear a continued neglect of ACR needs that could eventually spiral into its collapse.⁴³ While many senior officers reluctantly embrace the political ideology that comes with NATO membership, most are in favor of NATO membership for the pragmatic reasons of providing for the security of the Czech Republic and securing financing for the military.⁴⁴

The Czech Legacy of Low Military Prestige

While two roles—defense of the state and support of Czech international prestige—can be cited as the main purposes of the newly defined Army of the Czech Republic, a comprehensive analysis of the role of the military in this particular transitioning case would not be complete without some discussion of the desire of the new Czech state to restore the credibility and prestige of its armed forces.

In his outline of the chief tasks facing the armed forces of the Czech Republic, General Pezl listed immediately beneath the two roles already discussed the goal of the armed forces achieving “the position which it deserves in a democratic society, and to be further integrated into that society.”⁴⁵ When he served as Minister of Defense, Wilem Holan similarly listed giving “the Army back the honor it deserves” as his tertiary goal behind building it into an effective force and working for integration into NATO.⁴⁶

The yearning of the military for some measure of prestige and recognition from society is a pervasive theme in the Czech military’s evolution as an institution serving a democratic state. Convincing the Czech populace that the military has a role in its new state is an additional task confronting the government, one that most states do not have to address. It is an issue that affects every aspect of military reform and civil-military relations and that shapes as well the popular perception of what the military’s role in the state should be.

Postcommunist Military Democratization Needs: An Assessment of Democratic Political Control

Having explained the general reorientation of the states and their military institutions to the post–Cold War world, the focus now turns to the specific accomplishments of democratic reform. One main objective of this work is to spell out the specific democratization needs of the transitioning militaries. The goal is to explain the specific components involved in postcommunist armed forces’ transitions to democratic political systems. Doing so will enable the assessment of progress along these dimensions and also serve as a means of focusing external assistance efforts aimed at facilitating democratic outcomes among the postcommunist military institutions. This assessment will begin with an analysis of military democratization needs related to the achievement of democratic political control of the armed forces.

In both cases, civilian control of the Soviet era military existed in the form of strict control by the Communist Party, but this was neither democratic nor state control. In the post-Soviet era, respect for civilian authorities and the level of experience of civilians within each MOD is too thin. In Russia the problem is more severe because there is yet to develop a state mechanism for democratic political control over the armed forces.

Constitutional Provisions Required for Democratic Political Control

Enforcement of constitutional provisions for democratic political control of the Russian armed forces is limited by the weakness of the judicial branch, which has yet to institutionalize a legal system to guard against abuses of constitu-

tionally designated authority, and by the general lack of widespread respect for the rule of law within the Soviet system.⁴⁷ Judges remain subject to influence from the armed forces in high-profile cases, and the judiciary's independence is further undermined by the government's inability to fully fund its operations, preventing it from acting as an effective counterweight to the other branches of government.⁴⁸

Yeltsin's dissolution of the Russian parliament in September 1993, followed in short order by the deployment of military forces to attack the "White House,"⁴⁹ illustrated the fragility of constitutional provisions intended to balance authority among the separate branches of government. Indeed, the December 1993 Constitution concentrated more power in the executive. The U.S. government and most of the American mainstream media framed the October 1993 confrontation as a showdown between the lone democrat and several hundred hard-line Communist villains. But Yeltsin's actions raise serious questions regarding the use of violence to prevail over a parliament (composed partially of members opposed to parliamentary government) that was instituted by elections characterized by the same "fair and free" procedures used to elect him in 1991.⁵⁰

Yeltsin's action stripped that particular parliament of any constitutional authority, but some argue that even with the election of a parliament more pleasing to Yeltsin, the separation of powers as outlined in the present constitution is unbalanced because too much strength is given to the executive.⁵¹ These same critics realize, though, that reaching the consensus that would be necessary to change the Constitution is impossible in the short term.

What has evolved in practice is an executive whose decree power vies with parliament's power to pass its own legislation. Parliament does not have formal powers to limit the decrees issued by the president beyond the constitutional requirement of parliamentary confidence in the government.⁵² Some of the balance might be righted by exploiting the powers designated for the legislature, especially budgetary authority. More laws governing the responsibilities of oversight, in particular the process of managing national security policy and foreign policy, are necessary if a balance in democratic political control is to be eventually restored.⁵³ The parliament's influence in these areas is diminished because they have been directly overseen by the president.⁵⁴

As evidenced in the 1994 Laws on Defense and Peacekeeping⁵⁵ and Yeltsin's rejection of the 1997 Draft Law on Defense,⁵⁶ which attempted to give the Russian Parliament greater oversight authority over the military,⁵⁷ the trend is for the Office of the President to propose legislation that consolidates oversight authority in the executive while rejecting parliamentary measures aimed at dividing responsibility between branches of government.

The Russian legislature also has no control over military promotions. Yeltsin established a commission under the Security Council to act as an hon-

est broker to review the names recommended by the MOD, but the commission is ignored when it recommends against a particular promotion. One such promotion involved a returning commander from Germany accused of all sorts of corruption charges, but his friendship with then Defense Minister Pavel Grachev earned him a promotion. For refusing to approve, the head of the commission was fired.⁵⁸ One should keep in mind, however, that the Russian system embodying a strong executive and strong presidential authority is consistent with the Russian preference for centralized rule. Deficiencies in democratic political control arise when responsibility for oversight is not effectively implemented.

In the Czech Republic, postcommunist civil-military reform began by ridding the Constitution of communist clauses and establishing new patterns of control between the military, the executive, Parliament, and the MOD. The Czech Constitution names the president as commander in chief of the armed forces. He is required to secure prime ministerial approval for directing the use of military force and to commission and promote generals;⁵⁹ however, this unclear delineation of emergency powers could lead to confusion in a crisis and should be resolved constitutionally.⁶⁰ Authority for declaring a state of emergency is given to a state body according to legislation dating from 1949, but there is much discussion whether or not such a body is the proper decision-making vehicle in a democracy.⁶¹ During the 1991 coup in the Soviet Union there was no coordinated effort by the relevant ministries in Czechoslovakia to respond to the crisis because the responsibilities of the various state institutions in a time of crisis were undefined.⁶² Even with the passage of the formal National Defense Strategy in 1997 there is still no coordinated process for synchronizing the specific measures of individual ministries in a time of national crisis.⁶³ However, participation in the NATO defense planning process in preparation for alliance accession in 1999 made it clear to Czech government officials that such a crisis management mechanism is needed.⁶⁴ In general, the proper controls are in place in the constitutional sense though some imperfections remain that should be addressed in subsequent legislation.

In Russia, however, democratic political control of the armed forces has proven to be a competitive process among adversarial actors vying for influence. Thus far political crises within the nascent Russian Federation have been characterized by conflict between legislative and executive authorities, partially caused by the executive's ineffective implementation of his more powerful means of control. The action taken by the armed forces in these instances did not reflect constitutional loyalty, but preference for the perceived stronger side.⁶⁵ This is a dangerous tendency because the prevalence of democratic or nondemocratic processes may depend on the preferences of military forces.

The effectiveness of constitutional constraints in each case depends on how constitutional institutions implement their authority. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze the relationships between the military and the executive,

the legislature, and the populace to which it is accountable in a democratic society.

The Quality of Executive/MOD Democratic Control

One of the hallmarks of democratic political control in full-fledged democracies is the delegation of overall executive oversight of the military institution to a civilian defense minister. Russia has not appointed a civilian either to the position of defense minister or to any of the deputy minister positions with the exception of one. This key figure, Andrei Kokoshin, was reassigned in 1997 to head the newly created Military Inspectorate, leaving no significant civilian presence in the Russian MOD.⁶⁶

Subsequently, Kokoshin was appointed Secretary of the Defense Council and then Secretary of the Security Council when the two bodies merged in the spring of 1998. Kokoshin has been credited with being the key figure behind the development of the "Basic Principles" document that outlines military reform through 2005.⁶⁷ However, he was abruptly fired in the midst of Russia's political turmoil in September 1998. No other figure is as well-liked by the president's staff and the opposition has emerged to spearhead the task of military reform.⁶⁸

In the Czech Republic, however, the ACR and its predecessor the CSA have adjusted to a series of six civilian defense ministers. A priority of the Russian Duma is to have a civilian defense minister,⁶⁹ but the military has rejected the idea of creating a civilian Minister of Defense. Legislation was proposed in the 1994–95 time frame calling for the statutory institutionalization of a civilian defense minister. However, this may be no relief to democratic reformers because these proposals also limited the role of the MOD to administrative regulation while vesting the General Staff with operational control of the armed forces. In addition, the General Staff would have been made subordinate to the president effectively removing the armed forces from legislative accountability.⁷⁰ The 1998 "Basic Principles" document gives the General Staff the power to coordinate operational and strategic planning.⁷¹

Currently, civilian control of the military exists purely through Yeltsin's installment of a loyal general to head the Defense Ministry and his control of several independent channels of information about the state of affairs of the Army. Civilian control is not dependent on the performance of the democratic institutions of government, but on Yeltsin's personal control and manipulation of information networks that are directly subordinate to him. One analyst went so far as to define civilian control in Russia as "a monitoring system involving the timely delivery of critical reports to the President, a system guaranteeing that military personnel do not become insubordinate and stage a putsch or some other such outrage."⁷²

The staying power in office of the Russian Federation's first Defense Min-

ister, Pavel Grachev, amidst long-term implication in corruption scandals and evidence of gross incompetence, illustrated by his declaration that the war in Chechnya could be won by airborne forces in two hours, sends the message that what matters most of all to President Yeltsin is loyalty—not the quality of leadership or operating efficiency of the armed forces.⁷³ Grachev was selected on the basis of his political reliability, not his military prowess or expertise.⁷⁴ Under Grachev, corruption, embezzlement, and theft flourished luxuriantly in the army, and the word *general* came to be associated with the construction of dachas at the state treasury's expense, using soldiers as slave labor.⁷⁵ Grachev was universally despised and criticized by his subordinates,⁷⁶ including General Alexander Lebed. It was Lebed's ascension to influence due to his success in the first round of the 1996 presidential election that finally enabled Grachev's ouster as a condition of Lebed's support.⁷⁷

Observers agreed that democratic reform was not possible without changing the leadership at the MOD.⁷⁸ Grachev's replacement, General Igor Rodionov, was regarded as an outsider not engaged in corruption, but he was not a great advocate of democratic reforms in general or of radical reform programs in the military in particular.⁷⁹ He had served less than a year in his post when Yeltsin sacked him in a public rage orchestrated to blame Rodionov for the lack of progress on military reform. The Russian Ministry of Defense had striven first and foremost to keep cuts to its structure and its budget to a minimum, but Yeltsin failed to provide an environment within which anything less than maintaining the present force structure was acceptable. The president neither set priorities nor provided political guidance to facilitate the process of military reform.⁸⁰ In this respect, the sacking of Rodionov was more in the Russian tradition of searching for scapegoats than an accurate designation of accountability. General Igor Sergeev, former head of the Strategic Rocket Forces, appointed as Rodionov's successor in May 1997, has found himself caught between the same forces that stymied the success of his predecessor—a president who demands deep cuts in the Army's strength and a General Staff stubbornly opposed to their implementation.⁸¹ From July 1997 onward, an attempt at military reform began with major organizational changes. However, a key element of military reform—personnel cuts—has stalled due to insufficient funds to pay separating service members.⁸²

In Czechoslovakia, among the first adjustments that the General Staff had to make was to adapt to being a subordinate department to the MOD, led by a civilian. In the Czechoslovak People's Army (CSPA), the Chairman of the General Staff had been on an equal level with other ministries, and the Defense Ministry was run by military officers. This subordination of the General Staff to the MOD has been achieved, but as one American serving as an adviser to the MOD put it, "it doesn't mean that everyone likes it."⁸³ Officers understand that Czech society is better off with democracy than before, but there is also a general feel-

ing that democrats charged with civilian oversight do not have the experience or interest to perform this task capably.⁸⁴

The first civilian Minister of Defense overseeing the CSA was Lubros Dobrovsky. He succeeded General Miroslav Vacek, who had been implicated in a conspiracy to use the military in counterrevolutionary activity during the critical week of 17–24 November 1989.⁸⁵ Dobrovsky brought in other civilians with him, including some who had been expelled in 1968, but he was perceived as a weak Havel-type humanist overwhelmed by the task of dealing with a huge army apparatus that was psychologically still in the old regime.⁸⁶ The military responded negatively to him and regarded him as a “civilian telling us what to do.”⁸⁷

Dobrovsky eliminated the military counterintelligence service and replaced it with a unit subordinate to him charged with monitoring Army criminal activity. Dobrovsky also took great steps to ease the military’s secrecy laws, enabling such information as the size of the military and the budget to be made public.⁸⁸ In addition, he appointed his defense adviser, Major General Karl Pezl, an officer dismissed during the Prague Spring of 1968, as Chief of the General Staff to begin the shake-up of personnel there. For several months at the end of 1992, a change in cabinets mandated that a Slovak serve as Defense Minister, and Lt. General Imrich Andrejcek presided as the breakup of Czechoslovakia was effected.⁸⁹

The first Defense Minister of the Czech Republic was Antonin Baudys, a civilian mechanical engineer and university professor with no military experience.⁹⁰ In his first week in office Baudys declared that “no major changes have been made in the Army since 1989.”⁹¹ He initiated the process of lustration, or the cleansing of Czech society of Communist hard-liners and informers,⁹² within the military. However, these large-scale political screenings were marred by their lack of objectivity.⁹³ In addition, Baudys had no credibility as the overseer of the process because many believed that Baudys himself had been a collaborator in the Communist era.⁹⁴

Deep organizational reforms, including many personnel cuts, took place on Baudys’s watch and probably gained him many enemies. He also enthusiastically embraced the goal of NATO membership and encouraged movement toward Western military structures and the reorganization of Czech military structures. However, a series of incidents in 1994, including the discharging of a gun on his official plane while it was in flight, the alleged cover-up of a Czech general caught shoplifting while in Sweden, and the public revelation of his own personal policy toward the conflict in Bosnia, became too much of an embarrassment for his party, which subsequently replaced him.⁹⁵

Wilem Holan took office in September 1994 as the third civilian Czech Defense Minister. With this appointment, President Havel tried to quell once and for all any lingering doubts that a civilian could have the necessary expe-

rience to head the MOD. He argued that it is not important that the Defense Minister be a soldier with the same military expertise of the General Staff. "In all democracies the Defense Minister is more a man to supervise the Army on behalf of the public, to make fundamental decisions concerning army life, to care for the authority of the army and of people's confidence in it. In this sense, I think it is good when a politician heads the Defense Ministry."⁹⁶

Holan was a top official at the Foreign Ministry, giving him a background in diplomacy and an appreciation for the importance of negotiating and of quietly making behind-the-scenes progress. He also focused on not making the same mistakes as his predecessor.⁹⁷ Holan listed as his main goals "the completion of the transformation of the Army, improving the efficiency of the armed forces, and taking steps toward the integration of the Czech Republic into NATO."⁹⁸ He took over the reins of the MOD when the first round of the ACR's technical reorganization was almost complete and qualitative internal changes such as military education reform and personnel management reform were about to begin.

Miloslav Vyborny, succeeded Holan in the new cabinet appointed as a result of the June 1996 elections. The Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-CSL), a minor government party, held on to the defense ministry seat in the four-party coalition government. Holan fell out of favor with his party due to the repeated failure of the MOD to develop a defense strategy that was acceptable to the government.⁹⁹ Vyborny, a lawyer and former chairman of the parliamentary legislative and constitutional committee,¹⁰⁰ also tried without success to win governmental approval for a military strategy to guide the ACR's further development through the year 2005.¹⁰¹ In addition he issued warnings that the Czech armed forces would have to be drastically cut unless funding for the ACR significantly improves.¹⁰² However, his plan to cut Army personnel below the 65,000 mark met great resistance within the General Staff and was rejected by Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus.¹⁰³

The June 1998 elections replaced the caretaker government led by Josef Tosovsky and installed the Czech Republic's first leftist government. The Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) formed a minority government after winning the largest number of seats, but is dependent on the support of Klaus's party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS). Many believe that the tenuous marriage of the right wing Civic Democrats and left wing Social Democrats will be short-lived.¹⁰⁴ The CSSD gained the defense ministry and named Vladimir Vetchy, a former professor at the Military Academy in Brno, Defense Minister. Vetchy has identified the lack of national legislation,¹⁰⁵ personnel issues, and quality of life programs as the ACR's most burning problems.¹⁰⁶

Democratic deficits persist across both the Czech and Russian armed forces, although the deficits are more severe in Russia and are pervasive throughout the government. In Russia, secrecy is still the norm. Decrees are

signed but not published, and decision making is shrouded in rumor.¹⁰⁷ The post-Soviet government has proved as adept as its predecessor in hiding military expenditures in civilian portions of the budget.¹⁰⁸ Some complain that specific budget data were more readily available in the late 1980s than they are today.¹⁰⁹ The informational iron curtain made possible such tragedies as draftees dying of emaciation on Russkiy Island and the October 1994 murder of journalist Dmitriy Kholodov, who was investigating corruption within the MOD.¹¹⁰ Misinformation and a lack of information were also obvious during the war in the Chechen republic. It was often impossible for families to find out about servicemen who had been killed or injured.¹¹¹

U.S. defense attachés in Moscow report that the transparency of military capability is still low and that readiness is still an issue internal to the MOD. Furthermore, external inspections of military forces by oversight bodies has not occurred.¹¹² Speculation prevails that it is possible for local commanders to hide low levels of training and other unprofessional behaviors from their superiors.¹¹³ A new extradepartmental State Military Inspectorate was formed in August 1997 with the capacity to oversee all the power-wielding departments,¹¹⁴ but this body was assimilated into the Security Council in May 1998.

Poor transparency within the MOD also makes it impossible to exert control over the ministry. One particularly egregious transgression was the failure of President Yeltsin to halt the bombing of Grozny when he ordered the shellings to cease on 27 December 1994.¹¹⁵ Yeltsin's impotence as commander in chief fueled speculation that a group known as "the party of war" was dictating policy in the Chechen operation according to the preferences of the chiefs of the power ministries.¹¹⁶ This incident raised serious questions about the loyalty of the military to Yeltsin—the very objective that he had been so resolute in pursuing. Some regard the Defense Ministry as a pyramid of purely military staffs and administrations whose inner workings are hidden from the public and beyond the control of the political leadership.¹¹⁷

In the Czech Republic, overall transparency between oversight bodies and the MOD is good. But discomfort with civilians in oversight positions contributes to the lack of coordination and information sharing between the parliament, MOD, and the military. Officers in the field complain of the frequent receipt of conflicting guidance from the General Staff and the MOD due to the absence of coordination between these bodies.¹¹⁸

A 1995 anecdote illustrates this complaint well. A senior officer designated as the leader in the creation of a personnel management reform proposal within the General Staff expressed his frustration at not being allowed to brief his proposals in person to the appropriate people within the MOD. Instead of *presenting* his plan, he was required to *send* it through the mail. This indignity prompted him to say, "We're clerks, not leaders." Once his proposals are received, he added, he is not sure what *they* do with them. "Do they use them to

plot against me? Do they present these materials as their own? What information is ultimately presented to the people at the top?" He was frustrated that someone in his position does not have the answer to such questions.¹¹⁹ These divisions within and between the General Staff and the MOD have been allowed to persist, resulting in stalled reform efforts and generating criticism from Parliament that the ACR is not forthcoming with reform proposals.

There is also a need for consensus among civilian and military Defense Ministry personnel about how duties should be divided between them. A military officer complained while briefing a group of visiting American air force colonels on the development of Czech military strategy that much of the political wording of the document was done by the military because the civilian "politicians" did not understand that this was their role.¹²⁰ While such a statement gives a less than favorable insight into the state of civilian oversight, it also indicates a certain lack of sophistication on the part of the military through its open criticism of these abilities in a public gathering of American and Czech officers. The same charges of poor interagency coordination on defense issues continue to be levied by the American Assistant Secretary of Defense responsible for monitoring Czech progress on NATO interoperability issues.¹²¹

A democratic deficit characteristic of the Russian military is the inability of the MOD and the government to control the behavior of publicly disobedient officers. Chief among these is the former 14th Army Commander, General Aleksandr Lebed, who openly criticized both the Russian Defense Minister and President, describing the latter publicly as "useless."¹²² Lebed resisted a series of attempts by Grachev to remove him from command of the 14th Army and eventually rendered his resignation after Grachev issued an order in April 1995 disbanding the 14th Army's command structure. Lebed argued that his removal and the reduction of forces in the region could result in the loss of the Army's control of weapons in the volatile region.¹²³ Regardless of the truth contained in Lebed's objections to MOD policy, his long history of public disobedience was indicative of the MOD's inability to control its own officers. Numerous other officers refused to carry out orders or to accept commands in the Chechen conflict and went unpunished.¹²⁴

Charges of corruption also plagued both MODs, but corruption charges persist and have gone unaddressed in the Russian case. Under the Soviet system ministries controlled vast areas and their resources. Officers with access to military property have been selling it for personal gain. As much as \$65 million may have been pocketed by Russian generals in such endeavors.¹²⁵ The transition to a market economy and the sale of military assets within a generally unregulated environment has created conditions for rampant corruption. Indeed, a major rise in Russian mafia activity is attributed to the crime rings set up by officers in Germany selling off Russian military assets and ferrying stolen German cars to Russia after the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹²⁶ U.S. Naval attachés

reported corruption involving ship scrapping activities and naval officers who benefit from such sales. Few of the MOD assets sold off in recent years have found their way back to the national treasury.¹²⁷ Indeed, Defense Minister Grachev's dismissal was attributed to a showdown between the haves and have-nots within the military—those who profited hugely from the theft of state property and those who did not. Grachev, himself, was implicated in the misappropriation of at least \$5 million by his brother-in-law, a top MOD general,¹²⁸ as well as in numerous other opportunities for self-enrichment.

However, the abuse of power within the power structure of postcommunist Russia permeates every aspect of the new *nomenklatura* so that corruption within a specific ministry, such as the defense ministry, doesn't particularly stand out and has come to be expected by the population.¹²⁹ "The old warriors have reappeared with their old customs and traditions. They have their own views of how power should work."¹³⁰

Another underutilized tool for defense oversight in the Russian Office of the Presidency is the Security Council. This body first appeared in the waning years of the Soviet Union, was carried over into the Russian Government, and was enshrined in the new constitution.¹³¹ The main problem with the Security Council as originally conceived was that it defined security so broadly that its responsibilities ranged from management of the economy to environmental and health issues to military affairs. A member of the Security Council staff explained that "before Chechnya the military problem was number ten of ten." The economy was the number one priority and "the military task was our base-ment of priorities."¹³²

Given the broad agenda of the Security Council, one can conclude that it in no way served as a specialized body of national security expertise akin to the U.S. National Security Council. In fact, some accused the Security Council of being sort of a postcommunist Politburo with the only democratic difference being that the Security Council was authorized under the Constitution.¹³³ Members of the Security Council, however, did not seem particularly concerned that their sphere of responsibilities was too large. Even in the midst of the Chechen War one of the Council's staff remarked, "Our number one priority is still economics. If we decide this question we decide everything." He went on to add that ecology and health are also prime concerns due to the declining birth rate. "Russia is slowly dying."¹³⁴ These may certainly be Russia's most pressing problems, but to solve them through the offices of the Security Council meant that more narrowly defined security issues such as the conduct of war and the reorganization of the armed forces continued to receive scant attention.

The Security Council's authority was diluted further by the establishment of parallel bodies. For instance, the Defense Council was established in the wake of the 1996 election to serve as a counterweight to the Security Council headed by Alexander Lebed.¹³⁵ It was given the mandate to coordinate the mil-

itary reform effort. In addition another commission was created to oversee the funding of the security ministries and agencies, including the Defense Ministry.¹³⁶ This commission also excluded Lebed, who later resigned from the government. In March 1998, the Defense Council was abolished and the State Military Inspectorate was combined with the Security Council to form a new Security Council. This move strengthened the Security Council as it became the only body between the President and the power ministries.¹³⁷

The appointment of civilian Defense Ministers does not ensure effective civilian control. The depth of the civilianization of the MOD depends on the ability of lower-ranking civilians to influence the defense structure as well. In the Czech Republic, civilian defense officials have been challenged by their lack of military knowledge, which seriously limits their influence in the policy-making process¹³⁸ and their credibility with military officers.

The Czech Republic nevertheless is progressively giving civilians responsibility for oversight functions with the MOD. Some estimates indicate that 40 percent of the MOD posts were manned by civilians in 1996,¹³⁹ many of whom were retired military officers. Civilians working within the Czech defense ministry, however, are often not sufficiently trained in military subjects to perform adequate oversight.¹⁴⁰ As of yet, the perceived and real lack of civilian expertise is not being sufficiently addressed with appropriate education and training programs. The social stigma of being associated with the military—even as a civilian—also affects the ability of the MOD to recruit young professionals to join its ranks.¹⁴¹

Other problems include the general aversion of the military to civilian “intruders” and the unfamiliarity of civilian and military collaboration. The continued state of underfunding of the military has led many officers to conclude that their civilian oversight is incompetent and even negligent. These concerns were made public in late 1996 when 338 of the Air Force’s 540 pilots signed a letter sent to President Havel and the parliamentary Defense and Security Committee highlighting the Air Force’s desperate state in the wake of three jet crashes in November 1996.¹⁴² The pilots complained about obsolete equipment, limited flying hours, poor public relations, and inadequate personnel policies. They also lamented the lack of any government-provided life insurance to compensate for the risk of their duty.¹⁴³ Referring to the link between chronic underfunding and the fatal crashes, the pilots argued that “recent developments might arouse the impression that this is a deliberate elimination of the Czech air force.”¹⁴⁴

As previously noted, a better consensus must be reached regarding division and coordination of civilian and military duties. But overall, while some democratic deficits remain, much progress has been made in gaining democratic political control through the Defense Minister, who is accountable to the Prime Minister. During the period of democratic transition, MOD and General

Staff responsibilities have begun to be more clearly spelled out and the skills of civilian oversight developed and respected. On-site Western military observers contend that civilian oversight is evident, but an overall pervasive lack of civilian expertise in the MOD limits its effectiveness.

In Russia, however, reaction to the goal of achieving democratic political control directed by civilian leadership has been overwhelmingly negative and appears to be worsening. Sergey Rogov observed that “the MOD and other ‘muscle’ agencies are practically no longer subordinated to the government.”¹⁴⁵ This is a serious deficiency of democratic political control since the only real authority for oversight falls to the executive and those accountable to him. Secrecy still reigns, and corruption continues only slightly abated by the ouster of Grachev and several of his cronies. The lack of a single advisory council focused on addressing military affairs and security issues compounds the problem. Additionally, the weakness of the legislative input to the process of democratic political control of the armed forces means it is unable to counterbalance the situation in a positive way.

The Quality of Parliamentary Control

In both cases parliamentary control is still developing and exists primarily in budgetary control. Again, effective parliamentary control is more critical in the Czech case, since its parliamentary system vests most of the authority for democratic control of the military in the parliament. In the Russian case, the small authority vested in the parliament relative to the executive will be examined to see how effective this dimension of oversight is.

In comparison to the Communist era, there is a significant increase in parliamentary authority because the Soviet era legislatures routinely approved budgets without even reading the budgetary document.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, in both cases oversight quality is poor due to the lack of civilian expertise in defense issues. Each postcommunist military has also been slow in adjusting to the fact that it is just one of many elements participating in the democratic process and lobbying for resources.

In the Czech Republic, the MOD prepares and presents the defense budget to the Defense and Security Committee in Parliament, which can either modify the proposed budget or reject it. The first detailed budget appeared in 1993–94, giving a significant boost to defense oversight. However, observers complain that Parliament has virtually no control over individual budget line items. Vladimir Suman, while serving as head of the parliamentary Defense and Security committee, complained that “the defense budget process isn’t clear enough to know where the money is going. When they finally bring in better accounting techniques, we’d be willing to raise the defense budget. But we want to know how the money is being spent.”¹⁴⁷ Even though a modern defense bud-

getting system used by NATO countries was introduced in early 1993,¹⁴⁸ the MOD has hardly utilized this planning resource.¹⁴⁹ As a result, the Defense Minister defends his proposed budget before members of parliament without sufficient justification. Parliamentarians who have neglected to identify specific risks are also at fault.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the military complains that individuals with little substantive knowledge of military issues are driving the budgeting process. Consequently, effective parliamentary control is still missing, and the military feels left out of the process.

In contrast, budgetary control of the Russian Duma is much weaker. Executive control over writing the budget, the lack of transparency regarding budget items, and executive control over all off-budget expenditures has shifted control of financial policy from the parliament to the executive.¹⁵¹ Specifically, the Ministry of Finance plays a key role in the disbursement of appropriations to the military and has been the primary agency resisting further declassification of the defense budget.¹⁵² Only a relatively few line items are made known to lawmakers. "Any talk of reform is meaningless as long as the MOD's budget request fits onto one page."¹⁵³ For example, the proposal for the 1996 defense budget included only nine vaguely described line items or articles. These were broken down into categories such as: Maintenance and Operations, Procurement, Research and Development, Liquidation of Weapons, and Conversion. However, there was no separate line item for personnel costs. This is remarkable since the material state of personnel is the most dire condition of the Russian military.

Some strides toward greater budgetary transparency were made with the passing of the Law on Amendments and Addenda to the Law on Budget Classification, which called for the budget declassification of 120 line items in the 1997 defense budget.¹⁵⁴ The classified addendum contained another 1,000 items. As a point of comparison the U.S. military budget contains 3,000 to 4,000 declassified line items.¹⁵⁵ As the budget is presented it is impossible for a Duma deputy to know very much about how the appropriations will actually be allocated; therefore, there is little control over actual policy. Proposed spending also is not justified against specific threats.¹⁵⁶ In addition, accusations are rampant regarding the mismanagement of Defense Ministry funds. For instance, the State Comptroller has complained that the number of receipts from the sale of military property is unjustifiably low.¹⁵⁷ The MOD is also unable to account for large amounts of scrapped precious metals.¹⁵⁸ 1998 marked the first time that the defense budget was openly published and made available to Russian citizens.¹⁵⁹ However, actual spending depends on whether or not the government can actually raise the revenue to find the budget items. The chronic Russian economic crisis has meant that the military has consistently received significantly less revenue than the expenditures programmed in the budget document.

Finally, weak civilian control over the other power ministries' extramilitary organizations, which garner a portion of the national budget equal to that allotted in the defense budget, compounds the problem of achieving democratic political control over all of the armed forces. As a result, a system of behind-the-scenes distribution of revenues received and of funds allocated across the defense order is preserved.¹⁶⁰

Overall oversight ability is limited in both cases by lack of civilian expertise in defense issues. In the Czech Republic, Western military observers agree that Parliament has succeeded in achieving a basic level of control, but that it still does not have the sophistication necessary for comprehensive oversight. The results of the June 1996 elections were mixed with regard to defense policy expertise within parliament. On the positive side, some parliamentarians who had gained experience with defense issues moved into positions of general importance. Former Defense Minister Wilem Holan became chairman of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and First Deputy Defense Minister Petr Necas became chairman of the parliamentary Defense and Security Committee.¹⁶¹ However, on the negative side only three of the twenty Defense and Security Committee members were retained from the previous parliament. This meant that the lion's share of expertise built up on this committee was lost.¹⁶²

Although the Social Democrats (CSSD) displaced the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) in the June 1998 elections, the preference among party leaders has been for continuity of committee leadership.¹⁶³ Michael Zantovsky (KDU-CSL) remained as chair of the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Security while Petr Necas (ODS) held on to his post as head of the Chamber of Deputies Defense and Security Committee. However, the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Chamber of Deputies has a new leader, Lubomir Zaoral, a Social Democrat, who displaced Wilem Holan (KDU-CSL).

There are several explanations for the deficient civilian skill level in the Czech Republic. One is that the split of Czechoslovakia affected the overall skill level of all parliamentarians, since the best politicians at the time were in the upper house (Senate), which was not reinstated until November 1996. Many of the new deputies entered the lower house practically "from the streets," with little education.¹⁶⁴ Another explanation, provided by the Secretary of the Defense and Security Committee, is that no committee members have expertise in defense matters because "it was undesirable that such persons should be elected or work in Parliament." Such individuals would be associated with the old Communist regime.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, the low priority of defense matters on Parliament's agenda results in the failure of the party elites to serve on the Defense and Security Committee.

Because of the military's monopolization of defense matters in the Soviet era, Russian Duma deputies charged with parliamentary oversight are also ham-

pered by a lack of expertise. A shortage of adequately trained staff available to support the parliamentary defense committees exacerbates the problem. In the Czech Republic, the only staff assigned specifically to the Defense and Security Committee is the Secretary, who performs mostly organizational and administrative work for the Committee. The Secretary said that he tries to be an informed adviser for Committee members as well, but that this is difficult because Committee members sometimes withhold information from him. Upon further probing he admitted that there were no legal obstacles blocking disclosure of information to him, but that this practice had developed in reality.¹⁶⁶

The lack of staff and methods of analyzing complex budget data mean that decisions are often made on political grounds. For example, in the debate in early 1995 over whether or not to buy new Czech L-159 fighter jets or to modernize the MiG-21s already in the inventory, it was difficult for Parliament to do an accurate cost comparison to see if one solution was more affordable than another. Without the resources to crunch these numbers, budgetary oversight in this matter was driven purely by political factors.¹⁶⁷

In Russia, deputies have staffers, but they receive no formal training on how to work in either their regional or Moscow offices. The size of a deputy's staff also varies because the government will allow each deputy to have either five staffers who are each paid a small salary, one staffer who is paid five salaries, or any variation in between. It is also not uncommon for one staffer to work for more than one member of Parliament. A former staff member of the Duma Defense Committee remarked that teamwork among the staffs of different deputies is not an understandable concept. She added that committees have little communication with each other, making it difficult to know what is happening in other committees.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, deputies are limited in their ability to forge common strategies on legislation or to form alliances between parties with similar interests.

Additionally, the combination of lack of confidence in defense committees' oversight authority and their timidity toward the MOD affects the degree of oversight that is rightfully in parliamentary purview. For instance, in the Czech case, when asked whether or not the Committee has a role in military personnel matters such as the size of the armed forces, pay and conditions, housing, and education, or in the organization of the MOD, or in the deployment of troops abroad, the Secretary responded that members of parliament (MPs) and the Committee voice their opinions on all these issues but these problems are exclusively under the authority of the Defense Secretary. He added, however, that the approval of Parliament is required to dispatch armed forces abroad.¹⁶⁹ The ACR has been reasonable about asking for money and has accepted and implemented vast reductions in troop levels, the General Staff, and the MOD.¹⁷⁰

In Russia, "some in the Duma say the military doesn't want to be con-

trolled, but the Duma doesn't use the power it has to control the budget. They talk blindly about various amounts—forty trillion rubles or sixty trillion rubles. But no one speaks in terms of concrete problems or priorities. To have control means having the responsibility to solve problems. Nobody really wants that control."¹⁷¹ The same is true of the power to influence the course of military reform. "They can do it if they choose to fund one program over another. But the deputies escape from this."¹⁷² Instead a standoff between the Parliament and the MOD has been the norm with the MOD claiming that reform is not possible without the allocation of more rubles. In contrast, as previously noted, the ACR's requests and implementation have been much more realistic.¹⁷³

A former staff member of the Duma Defense Committee remarked about the post-December 1993 parliament, "This Duma was more about agreement with them [the military]."¹⁷⁴ She added that even the most obvious of reforms were avoided. "My deputy tried to pass a Law on Realization and Utilization of Military Production which would have regulated the sales of excess military equipment. The impetus of this law was the sale of tanks and scrap metal from Germany by the military with no controls over where the money went. The bill passed on the first reading but the military stopped the law on the second reading. So the situation remains that what is bought new comes out of the federal budget and what is old is kept by the military."¹⁷⁵ Sergey Rogov added, "Moreover, it looks as if they remember well how the previous conflict between the executive and legislative branches ended, and so they do not want to turn a deaf ear to the military's requests."¹⁷⁶

Parliamentary oversight is made more difficult by the inability to forge a comfortable working relationship between it and the military. The American attaché in Prague explained that the Czech military does not have much of a direct relationship with the Parliament, and this is compounded by communication problems within the military. "In general, the General Staff and the Parliament could both use a course on diplomacy."¹⁷⁷

He elaborated further with an anecdote. General Jiri Nekvasil, Chief of the General Staff, insisted on briefing the Parliament himself, and Vladimir Suman, while Chair of the Defense and Security Committee, had to accept the general's briefings. At times, the personality conflict between the two eliminated the possibility of such testimony. Parliament preferred to make up its mind with limited information rather than have personal interaction with people they did not like. Indeed, the first time that General Nekvasil met the Chair of the Parliament was when he escorted the American Vice Chairman of the JCS, Admiral William Owens, on the occasion of the U.S. Admiral's speech before the body.¹⁷⁸

In the Czech case, all contacts between the military and the Parliament are controlled through the MOD. An officer on the General Staff responsible for reforming the personnel department complained that the only time he has been able to talk with a member of the Committee has been at a course arranged by

the United States, which was jointly attended by people from the General Staff, the MOD, and Parliament. At one of these meetings some MPs offered to meet with him directly, although such interaction is not allowed without approval from the MOD.¹⁷⁹

In Russia the inability of the MOD to control the activities of all of its officers and the direct participation in politics by some officers makes it impossible to regulate the interaction of all officers and Parliament. But the relationship between the MOD and Parliament has been generally conflictual and the military is more motivated to answer to the President than to answer to Parliament.¹⁸⁰ Grachev's attitude was that the legislature could pass all the laws it wanted, but if they conflicted with any of Yeltsin's decrees, he did not follow them. Grachev repeatedly waffled on whether or not he would support the Constitution or the President if the two had come into conflict again.¹⁸¹

There are some signs, however, that the legislative role may be increasing somewhat. In the fall 1994 session the Duma showed some willingness to ask questions and called in generals to testify at hearings. At the same time, the military is becoming more attuned to the fact that the legislature approves its funds and that it is in the military's best interests to defend its requests. Cooperative behavior on the part of the generals has led to some spending increases on their own behalf. Generals from the MOD, however, still insist on testifying before closed committees.¹⁸²

Meanwhile, other interest groups are also seeking allies in the Duma to achieve their specific defense-related goals. The most significant of these is the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers formed in 1988 in response to the increased number of deaths from hazing and other forms of mistreatment in military service. In early 1995 the Duma Committee on Health held hearings and required MOD officials to respond to the allegations of the Mothers' Committee. However, no significant change in policy seems to have arisen from this process.¹⁸³

The parliaments' abilities to access information from other government departments differ significantly between the cases. The Czech Parliament has much more access to defense information than the Russian Duma. In the Czech Parliament, MPs can ask for information from any ministry, and it must be provided even if it is classified.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, the defense acquisitions process is regulated in the Czech Republic as a result of a law passed in 1995 that makes the bidding process more open, or transparent, by limiting the inappropriate influence of political parties and government officials. However, observers say the Czech Republic still falls short of practices that ensure that it gets the best product for the best price, although these changes have left less room for corruption.¹⁸⁵ Irregularities in the acquisition process still persist, and transparency is not uniform. Several pending acquisitions have been canceled due to the MOD's inability to prove that it followed the procedures laid down in the legislation.¹⁸⁶

In November 1996, the Senate, or upper chamber of Parliament, was seated in the Czech Republic. Although the Czech Constitution made provisions for a Senate four years earlier, the procedures for its implementation could not be worked out until 1996. As of this writing it remains to be seen what influence the Senate will wield in Parliamentary oversight of the military. It is significant to note, however, that it has no power for budgetary oversight and that its intent is to serve mainly as a legislative filter for poor decisions made by the lower chamber, or the Chamber of Deputies.¹⁸⁷ The Senate may propose laws, amend those that the Chamber of Deputies refers to it, and reject laws sent to it by the lower chamber, although such a law may ultimately be approved if the Chamber of Deputies approves it on the second reading.¹⁸⁸ Unlike the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate has one combined committee with responsibility for foreign policy, defense, and security. The current Chairman of the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Security, Michael Zantovsky, who is a former Czech Ambassador to the United States, in his brief tenure has been an outspoken critic of the MOD.¹⁸⁹ The Senator lashed out at Defense Minister Vyborny for his slow implementation of NATO accession tasks, for an alleged conflict of interest in the sale of military equipment, and for his inability to carry out personnel reductions.

The inability to address severe problems within the ACR has led to serious morale problems in the ACR. Officers long for a "career concept" that will correct the inverted pyramid of the rank-heavy officer corps and outline the potential for advancement of younger officers. Military education reform has been discussed since 1994, and it is at the top of Defense Minister Vetchy's agenda in the new Zeman government, but no legislation has addressed it. Prime Minister Klaus, whose Civic Democratic Party governed the Czech Republic for most of its transition, was perceived to be focused almost exclusively on economic matters.¹⁹⁰ Long-term investments in the Czech military were avoided, and many politicians took the view that the military was a nuisance "that eats money."¹⁹¹ Indeed, Prime Minister Klaus's almost total disinterest in defense matters left Havel's presidential authority in military affairs unchallenged.¹⁹²

As a result, the military leadership has filled the oversight vacuum with its own policies and priorities. Alternatively, many areas simply go unattended for long periods of time. For instance, there has been a shortage of military family housing in the areas near Czech bases since the base realignment process began in the early 1990s. Many officers have been commuting for years between their bases and their families on weekends because legislation releasing funds to correct the housing shortage has never been passed. As such problems continue, morale inevitably falls, and officers begin to wonder about the competence and concern of their civilian overseers.

The Western democracies could place a greater emphasis on developing civilian expertise in the Czech Republic through Partnership for Peace outreach

efforts. The current approach focuses on training military personnel to meet NATO standards, while civilian defense officials have few opportunities to participate in such programs. Nevertheless, this could help Czech society achieve democratic political control of the armed forces.¹⁹³ Continued civilian incompetence in military affairs will only exacerbate the gap between the civilian and military sectors of Czech society.¹⁹⁴

Parliamentary control in Russia is at the stage of development where it is possible to lodge complaints and conduct inquiries, but the body being investigated does not really have to respond in a substantive way. Many observers regard the Parliament as largely irrelevant to the political process as a whole, and in a country that is largely being run by presidential decree, many allege that the Parliament is little more than a national debating club. This is especially true in the national security arena. Parliament was not consulted about the decision to use force in Chechnya¹⁹⁵ and does not have the designated authority to confirm the Minister of Defense.

An analysis of the Czech and Russian cases indicates that weak budgetary control, lack of expertise on defense issues, insufficient confidence concerning oversight authority, limited political will to influence the defense process, poor relationships between the MOD and Parliament, and inadequate openness in the defense structures characterize the struggle to achieve democratic accountability over military institutions. While much has been learned by both civilians and military personnel, much remains to be done.

Relationship of the Military to Society

Another strained relationship crucial to the legitimacy and support of a military institution in a democratic state is the bond between society and the armed forces that protect it. In democratic states it is essential that tensions between society and the military remain low and that the military be perceived as the protector of the state's democratic values and ultimately as the territorial defender of the cradle of those values—the sovereign state itself. The attitude of the society is shaped by such factors as the congruence of military and societal values, the historical role of the military in the state, and the prevalence of outside threats. These factors strain the relationship of postcommunist armed forces with their societies. In the Russian case, the relationship has become characterized by an increasingly poor perception of the military institution while the Czechs face the challenge of improving a historically poor relationship.

Russia

In the Soviet era “the Army and the people were one. The military filled all vic-tories and the disappointments of society.”¹⁹⁶ But glasnost coincided with mil-

itary failure in Afghanistan followed in short order by the domestic use of military forces in Tblisi, Baku, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Vilnius in the waning days of the Soviet Union. Increasingly objective press scrutiny, which began in the Afghan War, combined with a series of unpopular military missions to spur the downward spiral of respect that culminated in the war in Chechnya. A brief look at present day Russian civil-military relations through the lens of the Chechen War will reveal some valuable insights into the Russian military's potential to defend democratic values within the transitioning state.

The impact of the events in Chechnya on relations between the military and the population at large in Russia are varied and differ depending on the point of view of observers. On-site American personnel who analyzed the conflict from the U.S. embassy regarded the war as a huge mistake that revealed the superficiality of the progress of democracy in Russia. As one U.S. army attaché put it, "What civilized country would do this to its own people and then declare that it's a humane country because it rebuilt the destroyed cities and villages?"¹⁹⁷ Observers from this school of thought argue that the war in Chechnya set back democracy in Russia significantly.¹⁹⁸ The events in Chechnya boded poorly for the government's commitment to democratic principles such as the protection of civil liberties and individual human rights and consultation among democratic institutions before committing armed forces.

The absence of such democratic processes resulted in critical public discourse in the press. Questions were also raised about the potential of the government to deal with the real problems of the country given that so much of its limited financial resources was expended in the war. Some Russian citizens asked, "If we had the money to spend in Chechnya, then why didn't we have it to address some of our pressing social needs?"¹⁹⁹ Among these social needs is improving the living standards of the officer corps. With half of the year's military budget having been spent on the war, no strides were made in improving the salaries and living conditions of the officer corps during the war or its immediate aftermath.

The Russian people overall, though, did not initially protest the need to intervene in Chechnya. There is evidence of some disappointment over the decision-making process leading up to the commitment of forces, but, by and large, the Russian people accepted the initial rationalization of the intervention presented by the government. This is interesting because the case for intervention was presented so poorly.

Indeed, in an interview with a Security Council staff member, it was explained to me how Russia in the post-Cold War era was dedicated to relying more on its instruments of political and economic power with the use of force being a last resort. But when I asked him to apply this logic to Chechnya he said that this was a unique case and went on to lecture me how Russians living there had been oppressed for the past three and a half years, but the government was reluctant to intervene for fear of making the oppression worse.²⁰⁰ Somehow,

then, it was logical to start a war in which many of these Russian citizens that the government was trying to protect would be killed along with many Chechen civilians, who were also citizens of the Russian Federation, and thousands of servicemen, many of them teenage conscripts. Generally, though, the Russian population accepted the government's argument about the need for some military action. No doubt their cultural predisposition to scapegoat minorities for internal problems and their specific historical regard for Chechens as a criminal race figured into their calculations.²⁰¹

However, as the war progressed and the Russian military's disastrous performance became evident, popular unrest grew. Democrats and human rights activists opposed the war on legal and moral grounds. Nationalists spoke out against the killing of Russian civilians. The Army resisted the war due to the extraordinary toll it had taken on men and equipment, morale, and its public image.²⁰² A primary cause of the rift between the population and the government in the war was the decision to use virtually untrained conscripts in combat. When the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers organized a protest in Red Square in March 1995, their main complaint was not that the war was unjust or that the intervention should not have taken place, but that the military was sending untrained conscripts into combat.²⁰³ The women escalated their protest of military policy with an attempted march on Grozny in early April to demonstrate for an end to the war and to plead for the release of their sons held as prisoners.²⁰⁴ Some mothers even pulled their sons, including officers, from the ranks and took them home.²⁰⁵

Management of the crisis indicated a mentality at the top of the decision-making apparatus that "people should accept what we say without question. Moscow should decide all problems because there are wise people there." Even democrats take the view that once they come to power they can decide what is best for the country with little or no further consultation with those who elected them.²⁰⁶ The decision to launch the Chechen War revealed a return to Soviet era predemocratic practices evidenced by the complete ignorance of public opinion and democratic structures.²⁰⁷

However, the unflappable grit of the press in its coverage of the war ensured that Chechnya would go down in history as the first publicly reported and open to the press military operation. Television coverage enabled people to see the negative impact of government policy for the first time and to draw their own conclusions about the wisdom of their leaders who promulgated such an ill-founded policy.²⁰⁸ The influence of the press as an instrument of accountability to the people increased as its efforts to expose corruption and report objectively from Chechnya continued unabated. With Chechnya, the greatest level of criticism ever was found in the press. Media coverage that splashed uncensored scenes of gore and suffering helped to shape public opinion against the war.²⁰⁹ This occurred despite the fact, according to the Russian human rights

commissioner, Sergei Kovalyov, that the Russian government made its best effort to generate lies through its propaganda machine in order to control the news from Chechnya.²¹⁰ But the accurate accounts reported in many newspapers and in news broadcasts “shredded the official fabrications”²¹¹ and by the midpoint of the war reporters agreed that the military had become more accepting of the press’s role and lifted the policy of harassment that characterized the relationship of the press and the military at the onset of the conflict.²¹²

The war in Chechnya also marked the first time that the population refused to accept passively the implementation of forces in a conflict. In the previous use of force in a questionable theater, such as in Ingushetia, the population remained silent. This earlier silence may have been attributed to the smaller scale of earlier operations. But, in Chechnya, many for the first time began to ask, “Why?” In a joint press conference with the Chair of the State Duma Committee for Defense in September 1995 the Press Secretary of the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers declared that if the will of the people was not heard an active campaign to frustrate all subsequent call-ups for military service would begin.²¹³ One Russian analyst predicted that the social conflict between the Army and civilians paralleled the U.S. student movement in the 1960s. “In Russia, though, these tensions may be more dangerous.”²¹⁴

The general effect of the war in Chechnya on the relationship of the post-communist Russian military with society at large was to expose the inadequacies of the Army and to illustrate the expectations for accountability and the protection of civil liberties and human rights that the infusion of democratic values into Russian society has prompted. The result was public outrage.²¹⁵ The poor performance of the military highlighted the need for radical reform. The problem is that military reform will not be effective unless it is driven from the top, but the necessary personnel cuts and industrial closures have not been embraced by either Parliament or the military.

The people were able to separate their negative feelings about the military leadership, which came off as extremely incompetent in the execution of the war, from their feelings of sympathy toward the soldiers who were fighting. As a reporter from the military newspaper *Red Star* (*Krasnaya Zvezda*) put it, “The soldiers and officers fighting are like some kind of super-heroes. Many of them have fought in earlier hot spots such as Ingushetia and Tajikistan and they continue to follow orders despite the lack of virtually any material incentives. All this hard work and for what?”²¹⁶ The respect for the post-Soviet fighting man endures among the population, but so does the realization that the military leadership is incompetent and incapable of reforming itself.

So where does all this leave the state of civil-military relations and, in particular, the state of democratic political control in Russia as a result of Chechnya? First, the moral authority of the government was severely damaged if not lost.²¹⁷ This chapter has presented evidence that democratic control seems to

have weakened with the lack of parliamentary consultation, poor preparation of the population for the intervention, and the somewhat widespread disobedience of orders by military personnel and local officials who refused to send troops to Chechnya. Some elements of the civil society, though, seem to have been emboldened, including the press in the forefront and the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, whose increased politicization and effectiveness helped to shape public opinion against the war. More significant, though, are the sustained political apathy of most of the population over the matter, the reluctance of the Parliament to use its authority vis-à-vis the military, and, of course, the reluctance of the military itself to face its own reform and requisite reorganization.

The Czech Republic

Both external and internal observers agree that the last time Czechs believed in their armed forces was during the Thirty Years War of 1618–48. Many also associate this date with the last time the Czech Army put up a fight.²¹⁸ The aversion of Czech society to anyone in uniform dates to their participation in the Austrian Empire from 1620 through 1918. In this era of the militarized empire all important Austrians wore uniforms. Since the Czechs were not regarded as one of the leading groups in society they did not hold important positions. Hence they tended not to wear uniforms and came to regard those who did with hostility.²¹⁹

There was a brief respite in this negative attitude toward people in uniform from 1918 to 1938 in appreciation of those Czechs who fought for independence. Negative feelings toward the Czechoslovak military recurred with the 1938 occupation by the Germans after the politicians ordered the military to remain in its barracks without a fight. Faced with the abandonment of its democratic allies, Czechoslovak political leaders succumbed to the terms of the Munich Agreement and fled to Britain. The population rejected the German occupation, but could not muster an armed resistance to it.²²⁰ Most officers either fled and fought for the Allies or stayed behind and retired from military duty.²²¹ Despite the political nature of decisions ruling out armed resistance to the Germans, the people blamed the military for their fate and experienced renewed hatred for uniforms while living under Nazi rule. The successes of Czechs who fought in the Red Army and helped to liberate the homeland at the end of the war may have mitigated this to some extent. Particularly noteworthy was the Czechs' performance in the 18 October 1944 Battle for Dukla Pass in which 6,500 Czechs were killed in the defeat of German forces there.²²²

Official histories of the development of the CSPA call the period from 1945 to 1948 the era of "the struggle for the democratization of the armed forces."²²³ The goals of officers who had served with the democratic allies, primarily with Britain, conflicted with those who had come under Communist influence while serving with the Red Army. The interwar officer corps was drawn

mainly from the Czechoslovak Legion formed in 1918 that gained world renown for its five thousand mile march across Siberia fighting the Bolsheviks.²²⁴ These officers held the highest positions in the interwar period and upon their return from Britain expected high postwar positions.²²⁵

These ambitions collided with those of Czechs who served during World War II with the Red Army, however. The service record of these forces and their association with the Soviet “liberators” of Czechoslovakia, along with the political clout of Communists immediately following the war, resulted in the dominance of the Communist faction of the Czechoslovak armed forces after World War II. The Czechoslovak air forces, which had served with distinction with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the war, returned home to heroes’ welcomes. Once the Communists came to power, however, many of these officers were stripped of their wings, sent to forced labor camps, and harassed throughout the rest of their careers because of suspicions that they were pro-Western.²²⁶

The postwar Czechoslovak army drew its ranks from workers who received military educations and became faithful to Marxist-Leninist ideals. However, the Soviet Union did not consistently hold the CSPA in high esteem. The 1950s had been the “golden years” of the CSPA. During this decade it developed into a force that was both “red and expert,” and it became the Soviet Union’s junior ally in the Third World.²²⁷ Tensions increased in the 1960s, however, as CSPA leaders began to question whether or not they were being offered as sacrificial lambs to the Soviet cause. As the Prague Spring developed, Czechoslovak officers became more outspoken and threatened to protect the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia.²²⁸ When the Soviets invaded in 1968, presidential orders confined the military to the barracks, although the Soviet Union’s view of the CSPA’s reliability was nevertheless severely damaged. As a result, the CSPA came to lag behind other Warsaw Pact states in modernization of weapons, and it lost its role in the Third World. In addition, Soviet troops remained stationed in Czechoslovakia.²²⁹

The Czechoslovak people, however, again blamed the military for not resisting the Soviet invasion and since 1968 have held the military institution in low esteem. The military in the Soviet era, consequently, became associated with oppressive Communism, and it is this image that persisted through the Velvet Revolution and still persists today.²³⁰ It was reinforced in the Soviet era by the military’s neutrality in the 1948 Communist coup, its passivity in the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, and its apparent supporting role in counterrevolutionary activities in 1989.²³¹ On 23 November 1989 the Defense Minister, Milan Vaclavik, drew up orders for the possible use of force and the CSPA issued a statement asserting that it would “defend Communism [and the] achievements of socialism.”²³² Fortunately, the orders were never issued.

The Czechoslovak, and now the Czech, military also suffered and still suffers from a dismal competency image. Czechs generally portray the military in caricature form, and most would have a difficult time putting the words *mili-*

tary and *professionalism* together in the same sentence. People who approve of the military come predominantly from military family backgrounds.²³³ The bumbling image of the Czech soldier portrayed in *The Good Soldier Schwejk* of Czech literary fame prevails. Czechs for the most part have traditionally believed that the Army is unnecessary and that the security of the country depends upon the will of the great powers.²³⁴ Public support for the military increases when the military is viewed as a means of facilitating the Czech Republic's integration into Western institutions through NATO expansion.²³⁵ However, society is still divided on the issue of NATO membership. In a 1996 opinion poll, one-third of citizens were unequivocally in favor of entry into NATO, one-third did not know, and one-third were opposed.²³⁶ On the eve of the issuance of the formal invitations for NATO membership in July 1997, 63 percent of the Czechs surveyed said they would vote for NATO membership in a referendum.²³⁷ In October 1998, six months prior to the Czech Republic's entry into NATO, 55 percent of the Czech population supported NATO entry.²³⁸ However, the common perception remains that officers are incapable of holding real jobs and that mandatory conscription is a waste of time.²³⁹

At the birth of the Czech Republic in January 1993, 51 percent of the population expressed confidence in the army's capacity to defend the republic against an assault from another country. By December 1994 the number had fallen to 30 percent.²⁴⁰ A U.S. Information Agency (USIA) poll conducted in September 1994 placed the Czech Republic twelfth of twelve European states surveyed, with a 41 percent confidence rating in its military.²⁴¹ Most recently, a 1997 poll found that only 24.5 percent of the population is convinced that the Czech Republic has a quality self-defense force.²⁴²

A series of incidents marred the image of the ACR from its inception. One of the most embarrassing for the MOD was a burglary committed in the MOD building by off-duty conscripts while conscripts on duty slept. This incident, on the heels of several others, prompted a Czech daily to note that "the fact that weapons are being stolen from the Czech Army arsenals and are being traded is known even to babies. Citizens concerned ask whether the Army whose headquarters are easily burglarized is capable of action or not and they want to hear a clear answer. Minor scandals indicate what is going on in the armed forces."²⁴³ More recently 1996 Air Force crashes have had a negative impact on the Air Force's public image of competency, even though most objective observers attribute the accidents to lack of sufficient funding for maintenance and flight hours.²⁴⁴

An American military attaché compared the ACR's image problem to U.S. service members "trying to wear a uniform in the Vietnam era. The difference, though, is that the U.S. officer corps knew that it had to earn its respect back. Czechs think that they should just get respect."²⁴⁵ This attitude is slowly changing, though, as the MOD seeks ways to send a signal to the ranks that disciplinary infractions and violations of internal laws and regulations will be punished.

Community relations have also improved as local political leaders begin to understand the economic benefits of being supportive of local military garrisons. A Czech major related how shortly after the revolution a mayor came to a meeting about closing the local military base and said, "I hate the military." The mayor then proceeded to decide to close the base not on logical grounds, but on his negative personal feelings. Later when he realized how many local jobs would be affected he went back to the base and said that he wanted it to stay, but it was too late because the base had already been slated to close.²⁴⁶

An expert on Czech politics at the U.S. embassy confirmed that in the early days after the revolution, municipal governments had the authority to eliminate local bases. This practice continued until federal authorities realized that such unbridled authority could affect national security. For instance, of the dozens of military airports in operation before the revolution, only four or five remain. Some of the airports hastily closed may have to reopen to meet the needs of the air force. By 1997 the MOD had become strong enough to outweigh the desires of local authorities, who themselves have become more pragmatic, and security factors carry more weight than personal animosity and public opinion do.²⁴⁷

President Havel, Prime Minister Klaus, and other popular democrats led a campaign for public support of the idea that the Czech Republic needs a competent military supported by its people. "At present, nobody is directly threatening our state, our freedom, and the democratic values adopted by our society. This is why many people tend to consider the army to be an unnecessary luxury, to consider the money to be spent on it to be wasted, national service to be a waste of time, and military training to be folly." He added that real dangers do exist and that such an attitude can be suicidal.²⁴⁸ However, public support of the ACR suffered from the army's well-publicized support of leftist political parties in the June 1996 election.²⁴⁹ The 50 percent of soldiers who voted for leftist candidates are ostensibly representative of elements of the ACR that are resistant to change.

While national leaders can lend their support and make resources available, as they have in the Czech Republic, there is much that only the military institution can improve by focusing on issues of internal reform. Closing the gap between Soviet-style military professionalism and the type of military professionalism characteristic of democracies would do much to enhance the public image and the competency of both the Czech and Russian militaries. This issue will be the focus of the following chapter.

Conclusion

An analysis of the Russian and Czech cases has illustrated two variant levels of progress in the task of democratization. A steady advance toward democratic consolidation has characterized the Czech case. The result has been the devel-

opment of normalized election procedures, the continued maturation of democratic institutions that effectively balance political power, and a clear shift toward democratic ideological goals and Western institutions. Although the task of democratic consolidation is not yet complete, such progress has earned the Czech Republic a respected place among the market democracies of the international system²⁵⁰ and membership in NATO.

The specific task of democratic political control of the military has consequently fared better than in most of its neighboring postcommunist states. However, significant problems remain in each of the dimensions of democratic political control presented in this chapter. While basic mechanisms exist by which the democratic government can control national security policy and ensure compliance with oversight bodies,²⁵¹ much work remains to be done to deepen the process of democratization in Czech civil-military relations. Established democracies should continue to encourage the further democratic consolidation of the Czech Republic to ensure that it does not backslide toward authoritarianism and a propensity for aggressive behavior.²⁵²

The Russian case, in contrast, has sequentially moved forward and backward in its democratic transition. "In Russia today almost none of the major institutions of representative government work in a reliable way: constitutional rules change to fit the needs of the moment; constitutional courts take sides on transparently political grounds; elections are postponed or announced on short notice; and political parties are transitory elite cliques, not stable organizations for mobilizing a mass coalition."²⁵³ Russia remains indefinitely stuck as a transitional state that runs the risk of further democratic backsliding into political chaos and economic decline.²⁵⁴ The democratization theorist, Guillermo O'Donnell, has argued that a new species of democracy has come into existence characterized by the failure to consolidate the regime through mature democratic institutions. He calls this phenomenon delegative democracy because they have some elements of representative democracy and are enduring. Such states are mired in economic crisis and have inherited corrupt patterns of political authority that limit the advance toward representative democracy. However, such cases may not show signs of authoritarian regression.²⁵⁵

In both cases, the degree of prevalence of democratic values and expectations (as evidenced in the oversight capability of developing democratic institutions, the media, and the society at large) has determined the extent of democratic political control of the armed forces. In the Czech Republic, there is greater national consensus in society supporting democratic values and the achievement of Western democratic standards of behavior within all democratizing institutions, including the armed forces. In Russia, the pervasiveness of democratic values and expectations within its democratizing institutions and society at large has not been as great. But the clash between elements of Russian society that hold democratic expectations and those who resist meeting them is growing more evident.

My main impression after the conclusion of my field research in Moscow was one of pessimism for the very continuation of democratization in Russia. The coalition of political forces is mired in its own self-interest and the pursuit of the greatest allocation of resources to their lobby to the detriment of the possibility of the reprioritization of resources that could result in the increased democratic and economic health of the Russian Federation as a whole. The case has borne out Mansfield and Snyder's hypothesis that losers in the process of full-fledged democratization will fight to resist it. Such actors continue to thwart the development of democratic institutions that threaten their power; and they ultimately contributed to reckless policymaking that led to the war in Chechnya and the further weakening of democratic accountability.²⁵⁶

Among the big losers in the Russian democratization venture have been the military and its associated industrial allies. The weakness of democratic institutions charged with ensuring democratic political control of the armed forces has allowed the post-Soviet military establishment to resist attempts to subordinate it to the oversight of legitimate democratic bodies. Democratic deficits across every dimension of democratic political control analyzed are severe and persistent, with the singular exception of the press. In this case, established democracies should be wary of assuming that states with the characteristics of delegative democracies pose no threat to the stability of the international system. Any external action or lever that can facilitate the strengthening of democratic institutions and encourage the adoption of international democratic norms should be taken.

This chapter has focused on presenting the democratic deficits that exist in the Russian and Czech cases in terms of democratic political control of the armed forces. The dimensions of constitutional, executive, parliamentary, and societal control of postcommunist militaries were analyzed in depth and problem areas highlighted. The hope is that such an analysis will serve to target assistance efforts so that specific democratization needs are met and the task of democratic consolidation is advanced. The past history of transitional states has shown that anything less than the achievement of democratic consolidation may result in belligerent behavior and the disruption of the stability of the international system. Much work remains to be done, but an awareness of which efforts bear more fruit will enhance the potential for success.