Politics and the Russian Army

Civil–Military Relations, 1689–2000

Military coups have plagued many countries around the world, but Russia, despite its tumultuous history, has not experienced a successful military coup in more than two centuries. In a series of detailed case studies, Brian Taylor explains the political role of the Russian military. Drawing on a wealth of new material, including archives and interviews, Taylor discusses every case of actual or potential military intervention in Russian politics from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin. Taylor analyzes in particular detail the army’s behavior during the political revolutions that marked the beginning and end of the twentieth century, two periods when the military was, uncharacteristically, heavily involved in domestic politics. He argues that a common thread unites the late-Imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian army: an organizational culture embodying the belief that intervention against the country’s political leadership—whether tsar, general secretary, or president—is fundamentally illegitimate.

Brian D. Taylor is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma.
For Mark
Contents

List of Figures .......................... viii
List of Tables ............................ ix
Preface ................................... xi
List of Abbreviations .................... xv

Introduction ................................ 1
1 Explaining Military Intervention ........ 6
2 Cultural Change in the Imperial Russian Army, 1689–1914 ... 38
3 The Army and the Revolution, 1917 .... 64
4 From Revolution to War, 1917–1941 ..... 138
5 From Victory to Stagnation, 1945–1985 ... 175
6 Gorbachev, Perestroika, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1985–1991 ... 206
7 Yeltsin and the New Russia, 1992–2000 ... 259
8 Organizational Culture and the Future of Russian Civil–Military Relations ... 320

Index .................................... 341
Figures

Map A. Railroads between Stavka and Petrograd  page 85
7.1. Russian Military Personnel  308
7.2. Russian Military Budget  309
8.1. Organizational Culture and Domestic Structure  329
Tables

1.1. Explaining Military Intervention ........................................ page 9
1.2. War-Proneness and Military Coups, Across Region Comparison ........................................ 25
1.3. Strength of the State vis-à-vis Society ........................................ 32
1.4. Case Summary ....................................................................... 36
3.1. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 66
3.2. Distribution of State Budget Expenditures, 1850–1914 .......... 76
4.1. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 139
5.1. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 176
6.1. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 207
7.1. Chapter Summary .................................................................. 261
7.2. Deaths from Political Violence, 1986–1993 .......................... 262
7.3. Approval or Disapproval of Using Armed Forces for Certain Roles ........................................ 311
7.4. Would You Follow Orders to Put Down a Separatist Rebellion? ........................................ 312
8.1. Theory Performance .......................................................... 322
Preface

This book is about the armed forces of one country or three, depending on how one chooses to count. Citizens of contemporary Russia certainly see a common thread uniting their history, and I proceed from a similar assumption: Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation are treated as one country. Thus, despite the annoying fact that for seventy-four years the country had a completely different name (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), for the sake of brevity and simplicity I will often refer to the Russian empire/the Soviet Union/the Russian Federation as Russia. I should perhaps add that my annoyance should not be taken as a political statement, but as a more practical author’s lament.

Not only did the name of the country change after the 1917 Revolution, but also the calendar. Dates in this book are given in the form in which they would have been in Russia at that time. Thus, until February 1, 1918, dates are given in Old Style according to the Julian Calendar used in Imperial Russia. The Julian Calendar lagged twelve days behind the Gregorian Calendar in the nineteenth century and thirteen days behind it in the twentieth century. After February 1, 1918, dates are given in New Style, consistent with the Gregorian Calendar used in the West.

I use the transliteration system of the U.S. Board on Geographic names, which I believe is easier for non-Russian speakers to read than the Library of Congress system (Yakovlev rather than Iakovlev, Milyukov rather than Miliukov, etc.). I also have used the familiar English form for well-known names (Trotsky rather than Trotskiy, Tsar Nicholas rather than Nikolay, etc.).

I follow conventional citation rules for Russian archival sources: the abbreviation for the archive is followed by the fond (f.), opis (op.), delo (d.), and page (l.) number.

This project began as a dissertation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Inevitably I cut some of the details found in the prior version during the transition to a book. Hardcore specialists on particular topics or
Preface

periods may wish to consult the thesis, *The Russian Military in Politics* (MIT, 1998), for more complete documentation and discussion of some aspects of the story. Alternatively, of course, you are welcome to contact me directly.

A very large number of individuals and organizations contributed to making this book possible. Given the amount of time I have spent on this project, and the many people who assisted me, it is almost inevitable that someone will be forgotten here. If you are in that category, please accept my apologies and thanks.

While at MIT I received financial and institutional support from multiple organizations, including the MIT Department of Political Science, the Security Studies Program of MIT (formerly DACS), the Center for International Studies at MIT (through a fellowship program supported by the MacArthur Foundation), the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Office of Net Assessment of the Department of Defense, a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Title VI Grant, and the Institute for the Study of World Politics.

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) provided support for a year in Moscow, during which most of the archival research for this book was conducted, as well as many of the interviews. I thank the IREX Moscow staff for their support. While in Moscow in 1992 and 1993–1994 I was based at the Institute of USA and Canada, Russian Academy of Sciences. I particularly thank Andrey Kortunov for his help and guidance. I also thank the staffs of the following libraries and archives for their assistance: the Russian State Military Archive, the Russian State Military History Archive, the Russian Center for the Storage and Study of Documents of Recent History, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Library, the Institute of Scientific Information for the Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INION), and the Russian-American Press Information Center.

Subsequent research trips to Moscow in 1997, 1999, 2000, and 2001 allowed me to supplement the material in the dissertation, particularly with additional interviews. Institutional support in 1999 and 2000 was provided by the Carnegie Moscow Center; I thank all of their staff, particularly Alan Rousso and Olga Chernova, for its help. The staff of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, and especially Aleksandr Belkin, have also been of great help during several visits. I am also grateful to many Russian military officers, politicians, scholars, and journalists for their time and assistance.

Much of the dissertation was written while on fellowship at the John M. Olin Institute at Harvard University and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (BCSIA), Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. My thanks to Samuel Huntington, Steve Rosen, and Michael Desch of the Olin Institute, as well as to Graham Allison, Steven Miller, and Michael Brown of BCSIA, for their support and contributions.
Preface

A grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation provided crucial support in the final stages of completing the book. This work was conducted at the University of Oklahoma (OU) and the University of Chicago. I particularly thank my chair at OU, Ron Peters, and Charles Glaser and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago for making my stay there both enjoyable and productive. Two research assistants who provided important assistance during this period were Olesia Jefferson and Tatyana Vinichenko.

Various forms of financial, institutional, and personal support have also been provided over the last several years by the Program on New Approaches to Russian Security (PONARS). Especially important in this respect has been Celeste Wallander, who created and shaped a scholarly community that is a model of erudition and collegiality.

Portions of this book appeared previously in somewhat different form in other places. I thank the publishers for permission to use this material here:


None of the above organizations, of course, is responsible for the contents of this book.

The list of individuals to whom I am grateful is even longer than the list of organizations that provided financial and institutional support. First of all I thank my dissertation committee, Don Blackmer, Barry Posen, and Steve Meyer for their enormous assistance while I was at MIT and subsequently.

I thank my many colleagues from MIT, DACS, IREX, Olin, BCSIA, PONARS, OU, the University of Chicago, and elsewhere. At the risk of leaving someone out, I thank the following individuals for their suggestions, comments, or support at various phases of this project: Golfo Alexopoulos, Graham Allison, Oksana Antonenko, Pavel Baev, Debbie Ball, Karen Ballentine, Aaron Belkin, Aleksandr Belkin, Andy Bennett, Eva Busza, Jeff Checkel, Tim Colton, Robert Cox, Kurt Dassel, James Davis, Georgi Derlugian, Mike Desch, Colin Elman, Mimi Elman, Matt Evangelista,
Preface


Lewis Bateman of Cambridge University Press oversaw the transition from manuscript to book with great efficiency and was always a pleasure to deal with. Also essential to the production were Lauren Levin, Louise Calabro, Marielle Poss, Bob Golden, and Nancy Peterson.

I thank all of my friends in Russia – and particularly Dmitriy Babich, Boris Bednikov, Andrei and Larissa Berkenblit, Olga Dmitriyeva, Irina Dmitriyevich, Zhanna Gumennyuk, Olga Kharchenko, Nikolay Kulikovskiy, Irina Kurenkova, Vladimir Merkushev, Tatyana Nikitin, Pavel Podvig, Tatyana Vinichenko, and Aleksandr Voronin – for their friendship.

Some individuals merit special mention. Mark Kramer was of great help with many new sources on Soviet history. Kevin O’Prey has been a source of excellent advice, unwavering friendship, and tremendous personal support since the very beginning of this project. Sharon Weiner also has been extremely generous with her time, advice, and friendship for many years.

I especially thank my family, particularly my parents and my brother and sister-in-law, for their love and support over the years.

Renée de Nevers has contributed so much to this project, in countless ways big and small, that she should probably be listed as a co-author. She read every chapter on multiple occasions and provided innumerable insights and suggestions. Most of all she gave me her love, friendship, and support, for which I warmly and affectionately thank her. Anatol and Lucian should be thanked for the excellent timing of their arrival and for the many joys and distractions they provided during the final stages of this project.

Finally, it is a source of great regret and sadness that my dear friend Mark Schmoll did not live to see the completion of this book. I thank his wife Jennifer Miller and their daughter Emma for their inspiration. I miss Mark greatly, and I dedicate this book to him.

Brian D. Taylor
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABM</td>
<td>Anti-Ballistic Missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARR</td>
<td>Arkhiv russkoy revolyutsii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Central Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSB</td>
<td>Federal Security Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARF</td>
<td>State Archive of the Russian Federation (Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKChP</td>
<td>State Committee on the Emergency Situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPU</td>
<td>State Political Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUO</td>
<td>Main Guards Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>Intermediate Nuclear Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIR</td>
<td>Jane's Intelligence Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KA</td>
<td>Krasnyy arkhiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KD</td>
<td>Kommersant” daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGB</td>
<td>Committee on State Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>Komsomol’skaya pravda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KVS</td>
<td>Kommunist vooruzhenikh sil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZ</td>
<td>Krasnaya zvezda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MK</td>
<td>Moskovskiy komsomolets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN</td>
<td>Moskovskie novosti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>Main Political Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Military Revolutionary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Moscow Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVD</td>
<td>Ministry of Internal Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Abbreviations

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO Non-Commissioned Officer
NEG Novaya ezhednevnaya gazeta
NG Nezavisimaya gazeta
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NKO People’s Commissariat of Defense
NKVD People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs
NVO Nezavisimoye voyennoye obozreniye
OG Obshchaya gazeta
OO Special Sections
ORA Oktyabr’skaya revolyutsiynaya i armiya
PDPA People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PMR Transdniester Republic
PUR Political Administration of the RKKA
PVO Air Defense Forces
RDRA Revolyutsionnoye dvizheniye v russkoy armii
RGVA Russian State Military Archive (Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy voyennyy arkhiv)
RGVIA Russian State Military History Archive (Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy voyenno-istoricheskyy arkhiv)
RKKA Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army
RPG The Russian Provisional Government 1917: Documents
RTsKhIDNI Russian Center for the Storage and Study of Documents of Recent History (Rossiyskiy tsentr khraneniya i izucheniya dokumentov noveyshey istorii)
SALT Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SBP Presidential Security Service
Stavka Supreme Headquarters of the Russian Army (World War I)
TsAMO Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (Tsentralnyy arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony)
TsKhSD Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (Tsentr khraneniya sovremennoy dokumentatsii)
USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VDV Airborne Forces
VIZh Voyenno-istoricheskii zhurnal
VOSR Velikaya oktyabr’skaya sotsialisticheskaya revolyutsiya
VV Internal Troops
VV Voyenniy vestnik
Politics and the Russian Army

*Civil–Military Relations, 1689–2000*