

The Unraveling of Russia's Far Eastern Power

by Felix K. Chang

In the early hours of September 1, 1983, a Soviet Su-15 fighter intercepted and shot down a Korean Airlines Boeing 747 after it had flown over the Kamchatka Peninsula. All 269 passengers and crew perished. While the United States condemned the act as evident villainy and the Soviet Union upheld the act as frontier defense, the act itself underscored the military strength Moscow had assembled in its Far Eastern provinces. Even on the remote fringes of its empire, strong and responsive military forces stood ready. As has been the case for much of the twentieth century, East Asia respected the Soviet Union and Russia largely because of their military might—with the economics and politics of the Russian Far East (RFE) playing important but secondary roles. Hence, the precipitous decline in Russia's Far Eastern forces during the 1990s dealt a serious blow to the country's power and influence in East Asia. At the same time, the regional economy's ability to support its military infrastructure dwindled. The strikes, blockades, and general lawlessness that have coursed through the RFE caused its foreign and domestic trade to plummet. Even natural resource extraction, still thought to be the region's potential savior, fell victim to bureaucratic, financial, and political obstacles. Worse still, food, heat, and electricity have become scarce. In the midst of this economic winter, the soldiers and sailors of Russia's once-formidable Far East contingent now languish in their barracks and ports, members of a frozen force.¹

Political Disaggregation

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the RFE's political landscape has been littered with crippling conflicts between the center and the regions, among the

¹ For the purposes of this article, the area considered to be the Russian Far East will encompass not only the administrative district traditionally known as the Far East, but also those of Eastern Siberia and Western Siberia. The latter two districts are included because the circumstances of the Far East are so integrally linked to those of its immediate western neighbors. See Felix K. Chang, "The Russian Far East's Endless Winter," *Orbis*, Winter 1999, pp. 77–110; "Russia: Russian Far East Faces Fuel Shortages," Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter, FBIS) SOV-98-306, Nov. 2, 1998, Moscow Radio Rossii Network; and Agis Salpukas, "Russian Oil: So Much, Yet So Little," *New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1998.

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regional governments themselves, and between municipal and district authorities over taxes, China policy, political patronage, and an assortment of other issues. Certainly, the collection and distribution of tax revenue has ranked among the most furiously contested issues. During the early 1990s, Moscow was willing to haggle with the country's assorted republics, oblasts (provinces), and krais (territories) over their respective tax burdens as Yeltsin consolidated his position. But even then many oblasts and krais already objected to what they perceived as uneven taxation. By the middle of the decade, when Russian tax authorities desperately needed to boost the federation's tax receipts, Moscow sought to reimpose central controls to siphon off more money for itself and the country's poorer regions. That triggered even greater tensions with the oblasts and krais. Even the republics have not been able to escape the increase in taxes. The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) failed to get Moscow to renew its favorable tax accord when it expired in 1997. As a result, the federal government was able to take a greater percentage of the revenues from mineral exploration in the province to pay off some of its massive foreign and domestic debt.²

The regions have resisted Moscow's moves. In the RFE, Viktor Ishayev, governor of Khabarovsk Krai, and Yevgeny Nazdratenko, governor of Primorsky Krai, have demanded the same "economic rights that the twenty so-called republics within Russia already enjoy," including title to all natural resources within their borders. "The difficulty for the centre is that it is politically impossible to take economic privileges away from the republics, and fiscally ruinous to hand them out to the regions." Meanwhile, regional leaders argue that in such difficult times they cannot afford to subsidize the center and other regions when their own populations are impoverished. Besides, many governors ask, why should their regions pay their full share of taxes if no one else does? In that vein, the governor of the Republic of Kalmykia refused to send tax money to Moscow in September 1998. The action elicited a stern warning from Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, whose words confirmed not only the fact that some regions had not paid their full share of taxes, but also that the possibility of regional secession continued to weigh on the minds of Russian leaders.³

Furthermore, domestic struggles in the RFE have had an impact on Sino-Russian relations. At the national level, Moscow has pursued better relations with Beijing ever since Mikhail Gorbachev's 1989 visit to China. First, Russia hopes to counter the burgeoning influence of the United States and the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe after the Cold War. Secondly, financially strapped Russia needs to generate hard currency and sees in China a buyer for its sophisticated military equipment. Thus, Kilo-class submarines, Sovremenny-class destroyers, Su-27 fighters, Il-76 transports, helicopters, air defense systems, and tanks have all flowed from Russian factories and shipyards to Chinese divisions

² Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Russia, 1st quarter 1998* (London: EIU, 1998); Robert Valliant, "The political dimension," in *Politics and Economics in the Russian Far East*, ed. Tsuneo Akaha (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 6-9.

³ James P. Dorian, "Minerals and mining in the Russian Far East," in *Politics and Economics in the Russian Far East*, p. 97; Jeffrey Lilley, "Bending with the Wind," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Oct. 21, 1993, p. 19; "A world away," *Economist*, Sept. 11, 1993, p. 54.

and fleets. Thirdly, Moscow and Beijing share common concerns over ethnic nationalism and Islamic militancy in Central Asia. They also face similar domestic challenges over “managing deep socioeconomic changes while ensuring political stability, preserving the central government’s authority over outlying provinces, ensuring the military’s loyalty, and maintaining the allegiance of ethnic minorities.” Since formal negotiations began in May 1991, Russia and China have settled many of the disputes along their common eastern border, including the allocation of eight contested islands in the Amur River.⁴

However, amid the goodwill, doubters have emerged, owing if only to the deep historical mistrust between the two countries. Some Russian military officers have expressed the belief that China will become a threat to Central Asia in five to ten years and to the RFE itself within fifteen to twenty years. Others have predicted that eventually “a rising China is likely to prove just as difficult for Russia as it is for the West.” But the greatest reservations about the rapprochement have originated from among the people of Russia’s own Far Eastern provinces, who were conditioned by Soviet propaganda in the 1960s and 1970s to distrust and fear the Chinese to the south.⁵

Early in the twentieth century, the RFE was a diverse community. Both Khabarovsk and Vladivostok were conspicuously Asian cities. Vladivostok’s Chinatown occupied a third of the city’s center, and Koreans lived and worked throughout the region. But in 1937 Stalin, fearing internal opposition, expelled some 180,000 Koreans and 30,000 Chinese from the RFE and purged much of the region’s educated elite. When tensions finally receded in the early 1990s, border controls were loosened and trade between the RFE and China boomed, bringing thousands of Chinese traders and workers back into the region. While many Chinese entered legally, a large number arrived as tourists through “travel agencies” and stayed behind, in violation of visa regulations. Local Russians today estimate the number of illegal aliens at somewhere between 200,000 and 2 million, and also take conscious note that China’s bordering provinces alone contain fourteen times the population of the entire RFE. Observers in Moscow, however, downplay these regional concerns and reason that “the presence of increased numbers of Chinese is a price worth paying for the benefits of expanding economic ties with China and the rest of East Asia.”⁶

⁴ However, the disposition of the islands of Bolshoi Ussuryiskii and Tarabarov, near Khabarovsk, and of Bolshoi and Menkeseliy, on the Argun, has still not been determined. The former were among the territories fought over in the late 1960s. “Still most awkward partners,” *Economist*, May 9, 1998, pp. 21–23; “Russia: Army Reform Leader Rokhlin Warns Against NATO Expansion,” FBIS-SOV-97-351, Dec. 17, 1997, Moscow Interfax; “Why China wants to cuddle,” *Economist*, Nov. 15, 1997, pp. 39–40; “Russia: Russia Helping China Build ‘War Machine,’” FBIS-UMA-97-310, Nov. 6, 1997, Moscow Moskovskiy Novosti; Rajan Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” *Survival*, Summer 1997, pp. 103, 115–16; Gareth Jones, “Russian Far East eyes neighbors with caution, hope,” *Reuters*, May 28, 1997; Bin Yu, “Sino-Russian Military Relations,” *Asian Survey*, Mar. 1993, pp. 302–16.

⁵ “Russia: Arbatov: Military Reform: Doctrine, Troops,” FBIS-UMA-97-136-S, July 17, 1997, Moscow Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya; “Let them be friends,” *Economist*, Apr. 26, 1997, pp. 16–17; “Can a bear love a dragon?” *Economist*, Apr. 26, 1997, pp. 19–21; Matthew Brzezinski, “Sino-Russian Warmth Chills the West,” *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 25, 1997.

⁶ Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” pp. 106–7; Mark M. Nelson, “Russian Hinterland Feels the Lure of Asia,” *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 21, 1994.

A 1996 Russian report from Vladivostok warned that “world experience shows that the formation of Chinese colonies . . . was always accompanied by growing crime and . . . the emergence of purely Chinese ‘mafiosi structures’” and called on the Russian government to counter China’s “silent expansion.” Indeed, phrases such as “quiet expansion” and “peaceful conquest” have become staples in the RFE’s local media. Regional politicians like Nazdratenko and Ishayev have pandered to and aggravated these xenophobic fears by popularizing the danger of “Sinicisation.” In 1994, Russian and Chinese authorities hammered out a more stringent visa regime to restrain unlawful migration. By and large it has been successful. Russian officials have even commended their Chinese counterparts in Beijing and the border areas for adopting aggressive measures to stem the illegal movement. But in an action reminiscent of 1937, Nazdratenko launched “Operation Foreigner,” under which 9,500 Chinese were deported in 1994–95 and at least 2,000 more in 1996. The governor’s popularity soared.⁷

Regional concerns over China briefly threatened to snarl border talks between Moscow and Beijing in 1995. Nazdratenko charged that the “demarcation plan in the eastern regions will transfer land in the Lake Khasan region to China which contains the graves of Russian soldiers; give China an outlet to the sea through the River Tuman, enabling it to build a port that will diminish the freight-hauling revenues of the trans-Siberian railway; require land in the Khankaiski district that is properly Russia’s be surrendered; and that the Russian government has understated the amount of territory it will give up in the Ussuryiski district.” Backing its governor, Primorsky Krai’s legislature challenged the legal validity of the Russian-Chinese border agreement, and even appointed a committee to renegotiate the settlement from scratch. “To bolster their bargaining position, local officials [emphasized] . . . issues with high emotional and symbolic content: resoluteness in defending the national interest; protecting Russian land and patriotic sites; and the constitutional rights of Russia’s federal units to participate in policy-making.”⁸

Compounding Russian fears of a Chinese influx has been the reality of a Russian exodus. The first to leave the region were skilled workers who could more easily find employment elsewhere in Russia. In fact, many had initially been lured to the RFE with Soviet promises of temporary work with higher wages. The deal doled out was simple: “survive the coldest weather in the world, harvest the oil fields, mines, and rivers, and live the communist good

⁷ Emil Pain and Lyudmila Pivovarova, “Chinese Immigration: Is It Good or Bad for Russia?” *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, June 11, 1997, pp. 1–4; Harry Gelman, *Imperial Decline: Russia’s Changing Role in Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 229–31; Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” pp. 106–7; Cheng Li, “Surplus Rural Laborers and Internal Migration in China,” *Asian Survey*, Nov. 1996, pp. 1122–45; James Brooke, “Russia Far East Weighs New Era’s Pros and Cons,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1996; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Russia, 2nd quarter 1996* (London: EIU, 1996); Won Bae Kim, “Migration,” *The Russian Far East in Transition: Opportunities for Regional Economic Cooperation*, ed. Mark J. Valencia (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 65–86.

⁸ Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” pp. 103–4.

life back in the European part of the country forever.” But then the Soviet Union collapsed. Now those highly paid positions are scarce, while problems over adequate housing, electricity, heating, hospitals, and consumer goods are plentiful. Those left in the region were stranded, and lukewarm efforts to resettle the area with Russians from other areas have failed. At the same time, birth rates fell and death rates rose.⁹

Interestingly, the RFE has become more dependent on China for food and consumer products than at any time in the past half-century. About 80 percent of the region’s international trade occurs with China’s northeastern provinces. But within the first year of the 1994 visa regime’s operation, Primorsky Krai’s foreign trade dropped 78 percent from its 1993 levels, while Amur Oblast’s fell 81 percent over the same period. Many Russians were hurt. So while prejudice and apprehension are apparent, it “would be simplistic to see Russian attitudes toward China as driven purely by racial antipathy and fears of engulfment.”¹⁰

Practicing Politics

The RFE’s political struggles have been vociferous and sometimes violent. Some political fights have become decidedly personal in nature, political vendettas are common, and the region as a whole exhibits the characteristics of rough-and-tumble democracy mixed with a strong element of authoritarianism. The politics of Primorsky Krai have been a good example. Appointed by Yeltsin in 1993 to be governor of Primorsky Krai, Nazdratenko has since “cowed the local press, made populist diatribes against neighboring China, and fought the privatizing and restructuring of local firms.” He manipulated utility prices to enrich cronies and middle-men even as coalminers and local power stations went begging, and presided over a level of graft and crime remarkable even for Russia—all the while blaming Moscow for everything from power outages to unpaid wages. Moscow, in turn, has been hesitant to send more money since “transfers have a dismaying record of going astray once they reach the Krai.”¹¹

Nazdratenko’s own relationship with Yeltsin substantially soured by the time of the 1995 regional elections in which Yeltsin’s opponents defeated his supporters “by a 2-1 margin in the Far East, with their votes concentrated in

⁹ Kim, “Migration,” pp. 65–86; Ann C. Helgeson, “Population and Labour Force,” in *The Soviet Far East: Geographical perspectives on development*, ed. Allan Rodgers (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 58–82.

¹⁰ Donald W. Boose, Jr., “Strategic Reading on Northeast Asia: 1997 Update,” *Parameters*, Autumn 1997, pp. 155–59; Menon, “The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China,” p. 106; Michael Specter, “Yeltsin to Oust Foe as Governor in Russia’s Far East,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1997; Sherman Garnett, “The Russian Far East as a Factor in Russian-Chinese Relations,” *SAIS Review*, Summer 1996, pp. 1–19.

¹¹ “Rotten to the core,” *Economist*, Oct. 18, 1997, p. 54; “The Kremlin versus the outpost,” *Economist*, June 14, 1997, p. 58; Jacob W. Kipp, “The Zhirinovskiy Threat,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1994, pp. 84–85; Jeffrey Lilley, “Far Eastern Satraps,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 13, 1994, p. 21; “A world away,” *Economist*, Sept. 11, 1993, p. 54. See also Alexander Dallin, ed., *Political Parties in Russia* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993).

territories that have seen the sharpest declines in industrial production." But backed by local factory bosses, Nazdratenko handily won a second term. By 1996, Yeltsin had become so politically weak that he had to rely on regional and local political bosses for support in the presidential race. The implicit tradeoff, however, was that "local bosses who backed Mr. Yeltsin at election time could count on the freedom to do pretty much as they pleased afterwards." Moreover, Yeltsin lost some of his leverage over the governors of Russia's oblasts and krais when his right to appoint or dismiss them expired. Elected governors quickly found they were untouchable if they could manage local politics and curb opposition. In 1997, Yeltsin's attempt to remove Nazdratenko ended in failure. "Other provincial bosses rallied around to persuade Mr. Yeltsin that it would be unwise and probably unconstitutional to try to sack one of their own, even rotten Mr. Nazdratenko. In any event, a fresh election would merely have brought Mr. Nazdratenko back again."¹²

However caustic his feud with Yeltsin, Nazdratenko's conflict with Viktor Cherepkov, mayor of Vladivostok, has been equally bitter. In March 1994, Nazdratenko had Cherepkov thrown out of Vladivostok's city hall by armed police on charges of bribery. Later that year, several men briefly abducted Cherepkov as he walked down a darkened street. Nonetheless, Cherepkov has survived due in part to his close ties with Moscow patrons. After being removed from office by a decree from Nazdratenko's government, he successfully appealed to a court in Moscow and had a Vladivostok referendum confirm the court's decision. But the battle was far from over. In October 1997, Primorsky Krai's parliament, packed with Nazdratenko loyalists, voted to appoint another mayor to Vladivostok. "Mr. Cherepkov stormed off on sick leave and appointed his own man. The two acting mayors [then] squabbled . . . over who should have the right to mismanage the city." A new election was set for September 1998, but twelve hours before the polls were to open, the regional parliament banned Cherepkov from being a candidate. On hearing the news, roughly half of the voters exercised their right to disavow all the candidates and forced the electoral commission to annul the vote. After a campaign peppered by document theft and marred by occasional bombings, yet another election was scheduled for January 1999.¹³

¹² "Russia's other governments," *Economist*, Jan. 3, 1998, pp. 47–48; Michael Specter, "Yeltsin to Oust a Foe as Governor in Russia's Far East," *New York Times*, June 11, 1997; James Brooke, "The Russian Vote: The Far East," *New York Times*, June 17, 1996; Peter Robison, "The Russian Far East: Prospects for Economic Development," *Stanford Journal of International Affairs*, Spring/Summer 1995, p. 22.

¹³ "Vladivostok poll to be restaged in January," Agence France-Presse (hereafter AFP), Oct. 16, 1998; "An old-fashioned, modern look," *Economist*, June 14, 1997, pp. 57–58; David Satter, "The Wild East," *National Interest*, Summer 1997, pp. 82–86; Dennis Dyomkin, "When Governors Cry—Vladivostok vs. Maritime Territory," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Nov. 27, 1996, pp. 9–10; Stepan Kiselyov, "Cherepkov Takes the Offensive," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Nov. 27, 1996, pp. 8–9; Dennis Dyomkin, "Rehabilitation After Execution," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Oct. 23, 1996, p. 10; Sergei Mulin, "Mayor, Reinstated in Office By Court, Is Returning to Vladivostok," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Sept. 18, 1996, p. 18; N.G.O. Pereira, *White Siberia: The Politics of Civil War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 172–75; "Russia's wild east," *Economist*, Mar. 25, 1995, p. 54; Natalya Ostrovskaya, "Crime," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Aug. 31, 1994, p. 15; Jeffrey Lilley, "Russia: Eastern model," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Apr. 7, 1994, p. 28.

An equally raucous election took place for the governorship of Krasnoyarsk Krai, the strategic and natural resource-rich region that dominates the key transportation arteries to the RFE, in April and May 1998. Amid the acrimonious swirl of strikes and railroad blockades, the former army commander and presidential contender, Aleksandr Lebed, ran against the former economics professor and incumbent governor, Valeriy Zubov. The election, however, proved to be more a local referendum on Yeltsin's government. Lebed campaigned as much against Yeltsin as he did against his opponent, who was identified with the president's camp. Lebed, who had negotiated a cease-fire in Chechnya, actually served in Yeltsin's government for three months as secretary of the Security Council, but was fired in October 1996 when his unyielding political ambition crossed senior Russian leaders. Supporting a strong military, he characterizes himself as an "honest third force" between Yeltsin's floundering liberals and a resurgent Communist opposition.¹⁴

Although Zubov earned the favor of local Communist Party members, Lebed emerged the winner after a second ballot, with 57 percent of the vote compared to only 38 percent for Zubov. In the city of Krasnoyarsk, however, Zubov actually carried 52 percent of the vote to Lebed's 43 percent. Lebed's victory, in a region of 3.1 million people, has been seen as an attempt to build a base from which to launch another bid for the Russian presidency. But in the immediate aftermath of his victory, he declared that he would "work on the region just as long as it takes for it to be prosperous" and would "get into the presidential election only when [he was] sure he [would] come in first."¹⁵

Many voters evidently preferred Lebed's promised clarity to the demonstrated confusion that pervaded Zubov's administration. However, it was not long before Lebed began causing concern. In an open letter to Moscow in July 1998, he threatened to assume control of the nuclear weapons based in his region. "Hungry officers are very angry officers," he warned, and explained that his letter was meant to prompt the Russian government to pay months of unpaid wages to soldiers based in Krasnoyarsk.¹⁶

The chronic political and economic disputes between the RFE and the central government, combined with the latter's inability to assuage local problems and its sheer remoteness from the region, have naturally suggested to some

¹⁴ "Yeltsin congratulates Lebed on Krasnoyarsk victory," AFP, May 20, 1998; "Russia: Lebed, Zubov Interviewed on Election Result," FBIS-SOV-98-138, May 18, 1998, Moscow NTV; Celestine Bohlen, "New Politics in Siberia: Biased Press, Funny Money," *New York Times*, May 17, 1998; "Lebed vows to make Siberian region rich before seeking Kremlin," Reuters, May 15, 1998; "Communists call for anti-Lebed vote in Siberian poll," AFP, May 12, 1998; "Russia: Krasnoyarsk Academics Berate Lebed Backers," FBIS-SOV-98-127, May 7, 1998, Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda; "Lebed runs for governor of Russia's Krasnoyarsk region," AFP, Mar. 5, 1998; "Russia: Lebed Interview on National Security Priorities," FBIS-UMA-241-S, Sept. 1, 1996, Moscow Armeyskiy Sbornik.

¹⁵ "Lebed vows to make Siberian region rich before seeking Kremlin," Reuters, May 15, 1998; "Communists call for anti-Lebed vote in Siberian poll," AFP, May 12, 1998; "Lebed's Siberian election bid hits snag as rival steals words," AFP, Apr. 23, 1998.

¹⁶ "Lebed's party to meet to plan election campaign," AFP, July 27, 1998; "Lebed threatens to take over Krasnoyarsk's nuclear arms," AFP, July 24, 1998.

the wisdom of seceding from Russia altogether. There has also been historical precedent for independence: in 1920, a Bolshevik group not controlled by Moscow founded a Far Eastern Republic that did not become part of the Soviet Union until 1922. Most Far Eastern regions from Yakutia to Primorsky Krai discussed the possibility of secession during the early 1990s, but various fears have helped to preclude any such move. "Without Russia, we would be overwhelmed by the Chinese," said Olga Drosdova, an executive at Vostokin-vestbank, Vladivostok's largest bank. Others see threats of secession as merely a political ploy. "Separatism is only a way to get the central government to pay attention to our problems," explains Vladimir Stegny, Primorsky Krai's vice governor for foreign trade.¹⁷

While surveys of Russians on the Pacific have revealed strong support for a new Far Eastern Republic, most think of "republic" in the same manner that the "Republic of Sakha" exists within the Russian Federation. Moreover, true independence is thwarted by disunity within the RFE. Regions often battle one another for economic as well as political advantage. Indeed, decades of Soviet rule purposely aimed at submerging regional identities and strengthening the connection between each city and the center have left their imprint. "The result is a large number of isolated mining towns, industrial outposts, [and] military bases, linked only by a common bond with the center."¹⁸

Ground and Air Forces

The bedrock of Russian power in East Asia and final arbiter of security in the RFE has always been the military. It was the army under the dynamic leadership of Nikolai Muraviev that first occupied what became the Pacific maritime provinces in the 1850s and founded Vladivostok in 1860. By the dawn of the twentieth century, the RFE was connected to European Russia by the Trans-Siberian Railroad, allowing Russia to transport and supply sizeable armies in East Asia and compete with Japan for control of Manchuria and Korea. But when war broke out in 1904, Japan deftly neutralized the Russian Pacific Squadron and landed its troops in Manchuria, cutting off the Russian base at Port Arthur. When the Baltic Squadron failed to break through Japanese lines by sea, the Trans-Siberian Railroad became even more important. But since that tenuous lifeline was not yet double-tracked and did not yet reach the Pacific, Russia was unable to "bring the full weight of its military forces into play," and suffered its final defeat in the Battle of Mukden. Back in St. Petersburg revolutions flared, and in January 1905 Cossacks killed seventy demonstrators

¹⁷ Michael Specter, "Siberia: 5 Million Miles of Frozen Dreams," *New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1994; Jeffrey Lilley, "Bending With the Wind," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Oct. 21, 1993, p. 19; "A world away," *Economist*, Sept. 11, 1993, p. 54. See also Henry Kittredge Norton, *The Far Eastern Republic of Siberia* (New York: John Day Company, 1927).

¹⁸ Robert Valliant, "The political dimension," in *Politics and Economics in the Russian Far East*, pp. 15–20; Katya Burns, "The Elections in Primorsky Kray," unpublished manuscript, Harvard Conference, Apr. 8–9, 1994, p. 5.

and wounded 240 more outside the Winter Palace. Workers in the RFE rose in sympathy for their fallen comrades, and railroad workers in Amur District went on strike. After the war ended, disaffected Russian irregulars commandeered westward bound trains and insurgents seized temporary control of Vladivostok and Chita. It was not until 1906 that Russian troops loyal to the crown were able to arrive in numbers necessary to quash the region's unrest.¹⁹

Of course, many factors, military and nonmilitary, contributed to the lost war and subsequent civil disorder. Imperial Russia was "unprepared, disorganized, troubled at home, and handicapped by a lack of popular support and even by some defeatism . . . and diplomatically isolated." But the operational lesson was clear. A strategy reliant on reinforcement from European Russia could not ensure battlefield success unless the RFE's logistical network could be secured.²⁰

That painful lesson was not forgotten during World War II. In the waning days of that global conflict, the Soviet Union launched a major invasion of Japanese-held Manchuria. Unwilling to risk a repeat of their predecessors' experience in the Russo-Japanese War, Soviet commanders carefully managed the Trans-Siberian Railroad to bring the maximum amount of men and materiel to the Far East. The Soviet army in the region was strengthened from forty to ninety divisions. By the time the offensive began in "early August, some 1,600,000 men, 5,000 aircraft, and 4,000 tanks were deployed from Mongolia to Kamchatka."²¹

Japanese strategists also focused on the Soviet army's logistical capabilities, divining that no Soviet attack would be forthcoming until spring 1946. In the event of an early Soviet offensive, Japanese divisions were instructed to "draw Soviet forces into Manchuria and then destroy them as they reached the end of their logistical tether," near the Yalu River. But Soviet preparation precluded such a maneuver. Equipped with amphibious units, Soviet forces flanked Japanese defenders by landing on the Korean coast at Ch'ongjin. As at Nomonhan in 1939, Soviet commanders demonstrated that the Red Army, if properly prepared and forward deployed, could prevail in battle in the Far East.²²

¹⁹ Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Authority Restored* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 21–22; Felix Gilbert and David Clay Large, *The End of the European Era, 1890 to the present*, 4th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), pp. 97–98.

²⁰ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 403.

²¹ John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 241; Russell D. Buhite, *Decisions at Yalta: An Appraisal of Summit Diplomacy* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1986), pp. 85–104.

²² David M. Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995), p. 278; Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985), pp. 1033–74; David M. Glantz, *August Storm: The Soviet 1945 Strategic Offensive in Manchuria* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Combat Studies Institute, 1983), pp. 1–3; N. V. Eronin, *Strategicheskaya peregruppirovka sovetских vooruzhennikh sil (pri podgotovke Dal'nevostochnoi kampanii 1945 goda)* (Strategic regrouping of the Soviet armed forces [during preparations for the 1945 Far Eastern campaign]) (Moscow: Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff, 1980).

The Cold War drew Soviet attention once again to East Asia. Until the late 1950s, Moscow could rely on its Communist Chinese allies for support, but the Sino-Soviet split a decade later underlined the RFE's continued vulnerability. As early as 1916, Russian General Kuropatkin had "pointed to the danger from a newly modernized China, which could strike through the Dzhungar Basin

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and . . . cut the Russian Empire in half." Now that China was no longer friendly, the seventeen to twenty Soviet divisions based in the RFE clearly would not suffice to counter both American and Chinese forces arrayed in Northeast Asia. The Red Army thus shifted from a posture primarily reliant on reinforcement from European Russia to one based on forward deployment. Following two border clashes with Chinese troops on the Ussuri River in March 1969, Moscow raised its strength in the RFE to forty divisions. By the mid-1970s, improved border security and the hope of a dialogue with Beijing after Mao Zedong's death slowed the Soviet buildup. But that only lasted until hostilities erupted between China and Soviet-backed Vietnam, when more Soviet forces arrived in the RFE. By 1983, the Soviet army could field some fifty-three divisions of all categories across the region. Moscow's buildup was intended "to inhibit the Chinese from challenging the Soviet version of the Sino-Soviet frontier . . . to ensure that the USSR would overmatch the Chinese at every step up the escalation ladder and to ensure Chinese recognition that they would be overmatched." The cost of achieving that goal was substantial. Since most of the food and supplies for these heavy ground formations still had to be hauled over the Trans-Siberian Railroad, the cost of maintaining a division in the RFE was three times that of maintaining one in Eastern Europe.²³

When President Mikhail Gorbachev first announced the unilateral reduction of Soviet forces in the RFE, few people at the time imagined how low Russian strength there would eventually become. Driven partly by diminished tensions with China and partly by economic stresses at home, Russia began border negotiations with Beijing. By December 1992, both sides had agreed to confidence-building measures and, later, to move their military forces one hundred kilometers (sixty-two miles) from the border. In practice, the redeployment disproportionately affected the Russians, since the majority of Chinese forces were already located outside the limit. Arrayed in forward positions, Russian units had to move further to the rear, requiring costly new infrastructure.

By the end of the 1990s, the Russian military in the Far East has become a shadow of its former self. Though some observers thought that Moscow's

²³ Harry Gelman, "The Siberian Military Buildup and the Sino-Soviet-U.S. Triangle," in *Siberia and the Soviet Far East: Strategic Dimensions in Multinational Perspective*, ed. Rodger Swearingen (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), pp. 179–225; John Erikson, "Military and Strategic Factors," in *Siberia: Problems and Prospects for Regional Development*, ed. Alan Wood (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 171–92; Neville Maxwell, "A Note on the Amur/Ussuri Sector of the Sino-Soviet Boundaries," *Modern China*, Jan. 1975, pp. 116–26; Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background, Development, and the March 1969 Clashes," *American Political Science Review*, 1972, pp. 1175–1202.

Table 1
Far Eastern Military District

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
TD	3	3	3	2	2	2	2			
TD (trg)				1	1	1	1			
MRD	21	18	18	14	14	14	11	8	8	8
MRD (trg)				2	2	2	2	2	2	2
MG/Arty div		2	2	6	5	5	5	2	2	2
Arty div	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MR bde								1	1	1
AB bde	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
AB bde (trg)										
Arty bde				11	11	11	11	9	9	9
Anti-tank bde				4	4	3	3	2	2	1
<i>Spetsnaz</i> bde			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SSM bde			3	4	4	5	5	4	4	3
SAM bde						6	6	5	5	5
Attack hel regt			8	6	6	6	6	5	3	2
Aslt tpt hel regt								2	2	2

Note: TD = tank division, MRD = motorized rifle division, MG/Arty div = machine gun/artillery division, MR bde = motorized rifle brigade, AB bde = airborne brigade, SSM bde = surface-to-surface missile brigade, SAM bde = surface-to-air brigade, Attack hel regt = attack helicopter regiment, Aslt tpt hel regt = assault transport helicopter regiment, trg = training unit.

Sources: IISS, *The Military Balance* 1989-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989-1998); author's estimates.

withdrawal of forces from Eastern Europe and Mongolia would boost Russian strength in the RFE, the army was barely able to maintain the number of formations it already had. By 1994, it could not even do that. (See Tables 1-3.) Many divisions were consolidated into brigades, which in turn were allowed to fall from full strength. At this writing, no Russian divisions in the region have more than half their authorized number of officers and men. Either by plan or a recognition of fiscal reality, Russia has gradually abandoned its strategy of forward deployment and reverted to one based on reinforcement, dependent principally on airlift and railroads. Unfortunately, Russian airbases across Eurasia, the venerable Trans-Siberian Railroad, and the new Baikal-Amur Mainline Railroad have all deteriorated during the 1990s. Moreover, units of the Siberian and Transbaikalian Military Districts, nominally devoted to defending those critical transportation networks, have been cut even more deeply than those of the Far Eastern Military District.²⁴

Today, less than 2 percent of Russian units are fully manned, according to some estimates, and field officers are in particularly short supply. "The majority of officers' contracts expire in late 1998 and early 1999, and indications are that

²⁴ Alexei V. Zagorsky, "The security dimension," in *Politics and Economics in the Russian Far East*, p. 37; Michael Specter, "Planned Military Cuts Touch a Nerve in Russia," *New York Times*, July 28, 1997; "Russia: Sergeyev: Army Reform Aimed at 'Combat Readiness,'" FBIS-SOV-97-223, Aug. 11, 1997, Moscow ITAR-TASS; James Clay Moltz, "Regional Tensions in the Russo-Chinese Rapprochement," *Asian Survey*, June 1995, p. 519.

Table 2
Transbaikal Military District

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
TD	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
TD (trg)				1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MRD	13	13	9	10	10	10	5	1	1	1
MRD (trg)				1	1	1	1			
MG/Arty div			1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Arty div	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MR bde							2	2	2	
AB bde					1	1	1	1	1	1
AB bde (trg)										
Arty bde				5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Anti-tank bde				1	1	2	2	2	2	3
Spetsnaz bde			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SSM bde						3	3	3	3	2
SAM bde				3	3	3	3	3	3	1
Attack hel regt			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Aslt tpt hel regt								1	1	1

Notes:

1. As presented here, the Transbaikal Military District includes units from the Mongolian Military District, which was deactivated in 1990.
2. The Siberian and Transbaikal Military Districts merged on December 1, 1998.

Sources: IISS, *The Military Balance* 1989-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989-1998); author's estimates.

40–50% are not planning to renew. Already, 32% of warrant officer posts are vacant, as are 22% of commissioned officer posts. In 1999, the Army will be short of 19,000 officers, with 70% of the vacancies for commanders of motor-rifle, tank, artillery and mortar platoons.” In the Transbaikal Military District, the 122nd Guards Machine Gun–Artillery Division is missing a sizable portion of its normal officer complement. Those officers the division does have are often without housing or money.²⁵

The RFE's renewed reliance on European Russia has made it imperative that regional units are strong enough to hold out until reinforcements can arrive. Thus, senior regional commanders were recently given operational control over all military assets in their districts, including select airborne units such as the 11th Airborne Brigade in the Transbaikal Military District and the 83rd Airborne Brigade in the Far Eastern Military District. These units, reinforced by armor and artillery, are expected to maintain higher levels of combat readiness. Meanwhile, Russia's five airborne divisions are held in strategic reserve for rapid deployment into crisis areas.²⁶

²⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies (hereafter IISS), *The Military Balance 1998/99* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 101; Dmitri Pushkar, “Military Stranded in Siberia,” *Moscow News*, Jan. 1, 1997.

²⁶ “Russia: Gen Army Kolesnikov Details Resubordination of Airborne Units,” FBIS-UMA-96-021, Jan. 23, 1996, Moscow Interfax. The Moscow Military District (MD) has two airborne divisions. The Leningrad MD, North Caucasus MD, and Volga MD have one airborne division apiece. IISS, *The Military Balance 1998/99*, p. 102.

Table 3
Siberian Military District

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
TD										
TD (trg)										
MRD	8	8	8	8	8	7	4	1	1	1
MRD (trg)										
MG/Arty div										
Arty div	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
MR bde						2	3	3	3	3
AB bde								1	1	
AB bde (trg)								1	1	
Arty bde				3	3		3	4	4	5
Anti-tank bde				1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Spetsnaz bde			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SSM bde					2	2	2	2	2	
SAM bde						2	2	2	2	1
Attack hel regt						1	1	1	1	1
Aslt tpt hel regt										

Notes: The Siberian and Transbaikalian Military Districts merged on December 1, 1998.

Sources: IISS, *The Military Balance* 1989-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989-1998); author's estimates.

The air element of Russia's reinforcement strategy was tested in an exercise called Voskhod-93, involving ten Su-24M and Su-24MR fighter-bombers. After three aerial refuelings and one landing for a crew change, all ten aircraft safely flew from a base in European Russia to one in Primorsky Krai in just three days. But skeptics immediately questioned the feasibility of moving larger air formations such long distances, especially with aircraft unequipped for aerial refueling. Since the normal ferry distance for front aviation is only about 1,300 kilometers (800 miles), aircraft transiting the breadth of Russia would realistically require at least five intermediate stops and at least seven days. Moreover, while Voskhod-93 took place under nearly perfect conditions, weather in the RFE is rarely perfect. And, of course, when moving large forces, bottlenecks will invariably arise, particularly with the withering of many Russian airbases.²⁷

Meanwhile, the forces on station have been strapped for supplies. In Khabarovsk, most military units have only 50 percent of the fuel and lubricants they need for routine training missions. In some areas of Eastern Siberia, railroads have periodically halted fuel deliveries to military bases in a gambit to force the military to pay its bills. Moreover, spare parts shortages have led to aircraft cannibalization and a decrease in the overall number of operational fighters and bombers. Finally, as officer pay continues to decrease in real terms, many experienced pilots have simply left the service to secure work elsewhere.²⁸

²⁷ "Russia: Support for Rebasing Mobile Forces Air Regiment," FBIS-UMA-96-035-S, Feb. 21, 1996, Moscow Armeyskiy Sbornik.

²⁸ "Russia: Russian Military Official on Budget Money Reaching Units," FBIS-SOV-97-334, Nov. 30, 1997, Moscow Radio Rossii Network; "World wire: Russian fuel shutoff," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 4, 1996; Japan Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1996* (Tokyo: Japan Times, 1996), p. 41.

Russia's tactical pilots averaged no more than forty flying hours in 1998, compared to 110 for their Chinese and 230 for their American counterparts, due to a pervasive scarcity of jet fuel. Training for maintenance crews also sharply declined. Predictably, as pilot and ground crew proficiency decreased, the accident rate increased. A huge Russian An-124 military transport ferrying two Su-27 fighters to Vietnam smashed into an apartment complex in Irkutsk on December 6, 1997, prompting the Russian government to ground its entire An-124 military airlift fleet. Training of ground forces has also abated as electricity and fuel shortages have grown acute. Even modest maneuvers have been difficult to organize. As a result, both the Transbaikal and Far Eastern Military Districts have reported lower combat readiness levels.²⁹

**Ten percent of
army
conscripts are
underweight
or
malnourished.**

Although economically necessary, Russia's military draw-down does not appear to have been carefully considered, having more to do with a shortage of conscripts and money than with any analysis of perceived threats. Indeed, Russian commanders have simply not been able to fill even their diminished ranks because of plummeting enlistments and a rate of draft evasion that has increased from 2,800 cases in 1989 to 31,000 in 1995. Even those who report for duty sometimes pose a problem. Ten percent of army conscripts are underweight or malnourished.

In the Republic of Sakha, authorities judged that only 54 percent of those drafted were fit for military service. Among the men drafted into the Pacific Fleet, 12 percent have had to be placed on an intensive diet and 10 percent under medical attention. The incidence of social diseases such as alcoholism and substance abuse has skyrocketed, in some cases more than doubling since the 1980s.³⁰

Concurrently, food and wages for servicemen stationed in the RFE have not been forthcoming. Many army units received only 54 percent of their budgeted food allowance in 1996 and less than 40 percent in 1997. Only 78 percent of the normal food allowance was even budgeted for the following year. Army privates must make do with 5,000 rubles (\$0.70) each day. (Some prisoners are allotted 7,750 rubles worth of food each day.) Meat is scarce even for those such as pilots and submariners who perform strenuous duties. Hungry soldiers and their families have already consumed roughly 30 percent of the army's emergency wartime rations. Some food categories have been reduced from their mandated sixty-day reserve stockpiles to less than thirty days. A 1997 attempt by Vladimir Isakov, the chief of Rear Services, to have local businesses

²⁹ Nicolay Novichkov and Michael A. Tavema, "An-124 Military Fleet Grounded Following Crash in Siberia," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, Dec. 15, 1997, p. 29; Michael R. Gordon, "Russian Transport Hits Housing Complex, Death Toll May Exceed 80," *New York Times*, Dec. 7, 1997; Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Russia's Wounded Military," *Foreign Affairs*, Mar./Apr. 1995, pp. 86-98.

³⁰ "Russia's in-the-red army," *Economist*, Aug. 2, 1997, pp. 37-38; Zagorsky, "The security dimension," p. 37; "Russia: Conscripts Described as Unwilling, Unfit, Underfed," FBIS-SOV-96-197, Oct. 8, 1996, Moscow Rossiyskiye Vesti; Serge Schmemmann, "Russia's Military: A Shriveled and Volatile Legacy," *New York Times*, Nov. 28, 1993; Japan Defense Agency, *Defense of Japan 1983* (Tokyo: Japan Times, 1983), p. 30.

bid for military food contracts failed to produce meaningful results due to the ongoing economic crisis that has strangled true competition. Fears have emerged in the RFE that governors who volunteer to feed soldiers may sway the loyalties of some military units. As a result, Russia's 1999 federal budget provided for a 62 percent increase in the pay of enlisted soldiers and a 102 percent increase for officers "to buy peace in the ranks of the military."³¹

The suicide rate has noticeably increased among all Russian servicemen, particularly within the officer corps, which has accounted for nearly a third of all suicides. In the Far Eastern city of Kamyshin, the deputy commander for educational work of a motorized rifle company shot himself in front of his hungry wife and child. Off Kamchatka, a deputy commander of the frigate *Razumny* of the 173rd Missile Ship Squadron shot himself while on patrol. The commander of the 831st Machine Gun-Artillery Battalion hanged himself in his office outside the city of Ussuriysk. Finally, Private Sergei Polyansky, apparently grappling with similar demons, turned his weapon on himself while on guard at a lonely Far Eastern checkpoint. He left behind a scribbled note plainly saying that he could no longer bear the extreme poverty of being a soldier. All told, 461 soldiers committed suicide in 1997, while the number of murders on military bases also increased appreciably. In September 1998, a sailor aboard an Akula-class attack submarine killed several of his crewmates in the Northern Fleet.³²

These trends were already evident in September 1996, when a Ministry of Defense report coolly admitted that there were "unresolved problems in the social sphere for servicemen and members of their families." Among the most significant listed were:

1. The absence of regular and full financing of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.
2. Failure to implement the full range of social guarantees established by the Law of the Russian Federation "On the Status of Servicemen."
3. The sharp decline in the real standard of living of servicemen and members of their families, which raises particular alarm and concern in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.³³

³¹ Michael R. Gordon, "Russia Offers 1999 Budget: 'Honest' or 'Unrealistic,'" *New York Times*, Dec. 11, 1998; "Russia: Tender System Aggravating Military Food Supply," FBIS-SOV-97-267, Sept. 24, 1997, Moscow Moskovskiy Komsomolets; Michael Specter, "Planned Military Cuts Touch a Nerve in Russia," *New York Times*, July 28, 1997; "Russia: Army Supplies Pegged to Recent Tenders," FBIS-SOV-97-157-S, May 21, 1997, Moscow Moskovskiy Komsomolets. Food allowances in other areas were poor in 1996. St. Petersburg District received 52 percent, Moscow District received 35 percent, East Prussia's Eleventh Army received 33 percent, and Dniester's Fourteenth Army received none. Exchange rate on July 11, 1997, was 5,788 rubles = US\$1.

³² "Sailor Kills 8 on Russian Submarine," Associated Press, Sept. 11, 1998; Michael Specter, "Planned Military Cuts Touch a Nerve in Russia," *New York Times*, July 28, 1997; "Russia: Army Complaints on Pay, Living Conditions," FBIS-SOV-96-211-S, Sept. 27, 1996, Moscow Rossiyskiye Vesti.

³³ "Russia: Army Complaints on Pay, Living Conditions," FBIS-SOV-96-211-S, Sept. 27, 1996, Moscow Rossiyskiye Vesti.

Can the Russian military reform? Results during the 1990s were dubious. Intending to trade off mass for quality, Russian generals made deep cuts in motorized rifle and tank divisions in favor of a rapid-deployment force of airborne divisions. But that tradeoff never fully materialized. Worn down by the Chechnya conflict, recurring budget cuts, and poor allocation of resources, Russia's army did become smaller but not stronger. Efforts to improve efficiency by streamlining and merging military commands produced mixed results. On the Kamchatka Peninsula, army, navy, and air defense units were consolidated into a joint command under Vice Admiral Valeriy Dorogin in an effort to cut overhead costs and consolidate supply channels. The new force was modeled after a similar command formed in the Baltic Sea four years earlier by the Eleventh Guards Army and the Baltic Fleet. However, Lieutenant General Mukhamed Batyrov, commander of the army corps stationed on Kamchatka, balked at the plan and publicly aired his objections to the transfer of his troops to a naval officer, when he viewed that any aggression against the peninsula would require mainly army, not navy forces. An appeal to his superior, Colonel General Viktor Chechevatov, commander of the Far Eastern Military District, won him a fleeting reprieve. But by September 1998 his corps was folded into Dorogin's portfolio. In Irkutsk Oblast a similar attempt by Major General Vladimir Shipov to preserve his command failed when the Siberian and Transbaikal Military Districts were merged in December 1998.³⁴

Airborne units also complained. Initially assured that they would be spared personnel cuts, Russia's airborne divisions and brigades were trimmed. South of Moscow, soldiers of the showcase 106th Airborne Division have seen their numbers dwindle, even as they have had to pick potatoes to supplement their rations. The 104th Airborne Division, based in Ul'yanovsk Oblast, has discharged many of its troops, including experienced veterans of the conflicts in Afghanistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Chechnya. In the Republic of Khakasia, the 100th Airborne Brigade was slated for total elimination in 1998, a decision which some regional leaders and military officers have characterized as purely political, rather than having any economic or security merit. Once headed by Aleksey Lebed (brother of Aleksandr Lebed), the brigade has strongly supported its former commander, who is now governor of Khakasia. Unsurprisingly,

³⁴ "Russia: Reorganization of Kamchatka Forces Viewed," FBIS-UMA-98-356, Dec. 27, 1998, Moscow Oriyentir; "Russia: New Military District Established in Russia 1 December," FBIS-UMA-98-335, Dec. 1, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Officers Skeptical of Primakov Promises," FBIS-SOV-98-335, Dec. 1, 1998, Moscow Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye; "Russia: Infantry Units to Merge With Navy in Russian Far East," FBIS-UMA-98-092, Apr. 2, 1998, Moscow NTV; "Russia: Joint Group of Troops To Be Created in Pacific Fleet," FBIS-UMA-98-090, Mar. 31, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Vice-Admiral to Head Northeastern Military Group," FBIS-UMA-98-082, Mar. 23, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; "Defence Ministry Reveals Plans For Unified Kamchatka Force," FBIS-SOV-98-079, Mar. 20, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Russian Far East General Opposes Military Reform Process," FBIS-UMA-98-062, Mar. 3, 1998, Moscow NTV; "Russia: Regions Objecting To 'Political' Troop Cuts," FBIS-UMA-98-062, Mar. 3, 1998, Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda; "Russia: Discontent Over Reform Growing in Military," FBIS-UMA-98-062, Mar. 3, 1998, Moscow Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye; "Russia: Russian Far East Army Chief Criticizes Reform Plans," FBIS-UMA-98-050, Feb. 19, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; Zagorsky, "The security dimension," p. 35.

Aleksey Lebed weighed in against the elimination and even cited his willingness to assume the cost of maintaining the unit. As a result of offers like this, some observers are worried about the influence that regional governors are garnering over local military units, whose personnel have become increasingly politicized or involved in illegal activities.³⁵

Meanwhile, Rokhlin, chairman of the Duma's Defense Committee, berated Yeltsin's government "for unleashing the Chechen war" and "[doing] nothing to ensure Russia's military security and to strengthen the armed forces." He further insinuated that Russia's current course might lead it "to lose the Far East and Siberia up to the Urals in the 21st century, and put Russia under the limitless dictate of the West." He categorically opposed plans, which he believed were promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to reorganize the Russian armed forces. Finally, Rokhlin urged Russian officers to hold a conference in every unit, work out their legitimate demands, and send them to the president, parliament, and the supreme and constitutional courts.³⁶

Russian border detachments have not been immune to the economic crisis. The Far East Border District's debt for electricity, transportation, and municipal services alone stood at 203 million rubles (\$31.2 million) in July 1998. "Railway stations and air terminals in Khabarovsk [were] flooded with border servicemen transferred into the reserve arriving from Kamchatka, Sakhalin, and the Maritime Territory because the Far East railways and airlines [were] refusing to accept their tickets and transportation documents." More seriously, border outposts have found food harder to obtain because few food allowances have been paid. Some outposts have been reduced to eating pearl barley and tea. Amur farmers helped the Blagoveshchensk Border Detachment by sending potatoes and pickled cucumbers.³⁷

Considering the sharp reduction of regular units, regional authorities have organized paramilitary units to help with routine border patrols. The Jewish Autonomous Area's governor, Nikolay Volkov, signed a resolution recommending that all of the region's villages bordering on China raise voluntary militias. In Amur Oblast's Leninsky district, a militia unit began detaining Chinese poachers near the village of Kukelevo in early 1997.³⁸

³⁵ "Russia: Airborne Troops Cutbacks Analyzed," FBIS-UMA-98-054, Feb. 23, 1998, Moscow *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*; "Russia: Regions Objecting To 'Political' Troop Cuts," FBIS-UMA-98-062, Mar. 3, 1998, Moscow *Komsomolskaya Pravda*; "Russia: Discontent Over Reform Growing in Military," FBIS-UMA-98-062, Mar. 3, 1998, Moscow *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*; "Russia: 'Military Opposition' Poses Threat to Regime," FBIS-UMA-98-085, Mar. 26, 1998, Moscow *Rabochaya Tribuna*; Michael R. Gordon, "As Its World View Narrows, Russia Seeks a New Mission," *New York Times*, Nov. 29, 1993.

³⁶ "Russia: Lebed Joins Criticism of Yeltsin's Handling of Army," FBIS-SOV-97-177, June 26, 1997, Moscow *Interfax*.

³⁷ "Russia: Russian Far East Border Troops Face Economic Problems," FBIS-UMA-98-205, July 24, 1998, Moscow *Radio Rossii Network*. Exchange rate in July 1998 was 6.5 rubles = US\$1.

³⁸ "Voluntary Militias Urged To Guard Border With China," FBIS-SOV-97-074, Mar. 15, 1997, Moscow *Interfax*.

Naval Forces

The Russian Pacific Fleet has fared no better. Both men and equipment have declined in number and condition. (See Appendices 1–4.) Throughout the 1980s, the aggregate number of warships in the Soviet Far East generally remained steady at around 258. However, that stability concealed two trends. First, the number of modern ships, mainly cruisers and guided-missile destroyers capable of oceanic missions, actually increased from twenty-six to forty-one by 1988. The additional ships included two aircraft carriers, reflecting the Soviet Union's aspiration to become a major Pacific sea power. Secondly, while the aggregate number of submarines held constant for much of that period, a reduction occurred in 1987 that marked the beginning of a long and precipitous decline of the Pacific Fleet's submarine flotillas. At the time, the dip was attributed to the Soviet Union's fleet modernization program, since many of the submarines withdrawn from service were old. But the submarines' numbers never recovered.

In 1990, the whole Pacific Fleet began a sharp contraction. Since then, the total number of submarines fell by 75.2 percent and the total number of ships by 46.8 percent. Nonetheless, the surface ship count managed to level off in 1995 as the number of coastal combatants increased and compensated for the decline in ocean-going warships. By the late 1990s, the fleet's combat capability clearly was less than a third of its power in the preceding decade. Navies are expensive to build and maintain, and Russia can no longer afford to do either. Out of financial neglect, the Soviet Union's blue-water Pacific Fleet has essentially become a brown-water one, and its strategy of oceanic control has given way to the more modest goal of protecting its maritime communications between Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. As early as 1995, Rear Admiral Valeriy Ryazantsev, the Pacific Fleet's chief of combat training, lamented that "the Navy has embarked on a path of a coastal direction—we can't do anything in the ocean with what has remained to this day." By the time the cruiser *Varyag* sailed to Inchon on a goodwill mission in February 1997, it had already become the largest surface ship left in the Pacific Fleet.³⁹

Among the most valuable combatants the Russian navy has stated that it wants to preserve have been its submarines. Fleet commanders believe they represent the most versatile component of their forces. Nuclear-powered ballistic missile and attack submarines, especially those with less than fifteen years of service, have been given top priority for maintenance. In practice, however, Russian captains have struggled to keep their boats operational. Many surface ships now have only 65–70 percent of their standard crew levels, and just 10 percent of ships needing repairs actually receive them. Warships requiring expensive repairs or refits have been simply struck from the order of battle and left to rust. One Charlie-class attack submarine decommissioned in 1992

³⁹ "Russia: Missile Cruiser *Varyag* Sails for South Korea," FBIS-SOV-97-022, Feb. 3, 1997, Moscow ITAR-TASS; "Russia: Pacific Fleet R-Admiral Ryazantsev on Combat Training," JPRS-UMA-95-023, Apr. 21, 1995, Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network.

had a hull so badly corroded that it actually sank alongside its pier in May 1997.⁴⁰

The Pacific Fleet's naval bases have been consolidated into only those in Primorsky Krai and Kamchatka Oblast. The Soviet hope of using Magadan as a base for a strategic submarine sanctuary in the Sea of Okhotsk was abandoned, as the Northern Fleet has continued to serve as the home to the bulk of Russia's strategic naval forces. Currently, the Rybachiy naval base on Kamchatka holds one Delta I and six Delta III-class strategic submarines. Other submarines deployed in the Far East include five Oscar II, six Akula, two Victor III, and six Kilo-class attack submarines.⁴¹

Meanwhile, two new Akula-class submarines, under construction at the Amur Shipyard in Komsomol'sk, were put on hold when payments slowed in 1997. Undeterred, the Khabarovsk governor Ishayev quoted Anatoliy Kvashnin, chief of the Russian General Staff, as saying that the two submarines would be finished and would serve in the Pacific Fleet. But Kvashnin did not say when or how the remaining 500 billion ruble (\$86.4 million) construction cost would be financed. Once operational, the submarines' maintenance alone would require 12 billion rubles (\$2.1 million) each month. By the following year, at least one of the two submarines had been scrapped.⁴²

The navy's conscripts exhibit the same problems as the army's. Since the early 1990s, an increasing portion of would-be sailors arrive unfit for service. In some areas, that rate has climbed to 60–65 percent. Others who are fit often attempt to evade service by deserting, feigning disease, bribing medical examiners, or even practicing self-mutilation. Despite efforts by their commanders, trained naval officers have left in large numbers, particularly those who have served on submarines. Apart from their unpaid wages, many worry about the lack of housing for their families and envy their comrades who already left the fleet and found more reliable work and housing. In some areas, the salary of a seaman on a fishing schooner is now twice that of a nuclear submarine captain. It has become increasingly common to find officers who report for

⁴⁰ Richard F. Starr, "Russia's Navy Remains in Decline," *Proceedings*, Aug. 1998, p. 47; "Russia: Rear Admiral on Nuclear Submarine Danger," FBIS-SOV-97-206, July 25, 1997, Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network; "Russia: Adm Kuroyedov on Pacific Fleet," FBIS-UMA-96-229-S, July 1, 1996, Moscow Armeyskiy Sbornik; James Brooke, "Russia Far East Weighs New Era's Pros and Cons," *New York Times*, June 14, 1996; "Russia: Kasatonov on Past Capabilities, Current Plight of Russian Navy," FBIS-UMA-96-138-S, May 30, 1996, Moscow Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye (supplement to Nezavisimaya Gazeta); "Russia: Admirals' Appeal to State Duma," FBIS-UMA-96-104-S, May 29, 1996, Moscow Morskoy Sbornik; "Russia: Pacific Fleet R-Admiral Ryazantsev on Combat Training," JPRS-UMA-95-023, Apr. 21, 1995, Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network.

⁴¹ Zagorsky, "The security dimension," pp. 41–42; "Russia: Cuts in Russian Navy Personnel Expected," FBIS-SOV-97-204, July 23, 1997, Moscow Interfax.

⁴² Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 1998–99* (London: Jane's Information Group, 1998), p. 552; Bill Gertz, "Russian Sub Stalks 3 U.S. Carriers," *Washington Times*, Dec. 7, 1997; "Russia: Payments for Two Nuclear Submarines Uncertain," FBIS-UMA-97-190, July 9, 1997, Moscow Interfax.

duty in the morning, but leave to earn money to feed their families in the afternoon.⁴³

More than six hundred naval officers resigned in 1996 because they and their families could no longer bear the poverty. Even Captain First Class Aleksey Dikiy of the *Vylyuchinsk*, a modern Oscar II-class attack submarine, has felt the strain, not having received any pay in five months. "Once a month he brings home a small pillow case full of cans and packets of groats." Many sailors simply sign the attendance book and work in nearby cities as part-time laborers. "Money is so slow in coming from Moscow that provincial officials say that they now pay the fleet's electricity bill and much of its food bill."⁴⁴

**Most Pacific
Fleet sailors—
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Under these conditions, training is so rare that most Pacific Fleet sailors—including many officers—have never been to sea. Fuel is so short that ships rarely leave their berths. Even more damaging, experienced sailors have been discharged with little regard for retaining their technical skills. The drain has had especially baneful consequences for operations aboard submarines, whose crews require a very high level of competence. Unfortunately, crew training has been lacking due to a scarcity of working submarines. Spare parts such as high-priced submarine batteries have been hard to find. During the winter of 1997, sailors had to wait several weeks for a new battery to arrive so that a single submarine on the Kamchatka Peninsula could get out to sea. Once that submarine was operational, commanders hoped that all their crews might get a chance to sail in her on short training missions.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, what remains of the Russian Pacific Fleet has still managed to alarm foreign nations through its daunting power to pollute. In 1993 the world learned that the fleet was dumping radioactive waste from its dismantled nuclear submarines into the Sea of Japan. Vladivostok, a veritable "cemetery of nuclear submarines," is home to the Zvezda submarine repair facility, where 840 cubic meters of radioactive waste, twice the facility's designed capacity, are stored. Anchored nearby, two decommissioned tankers hold some 1,300 more cubic meters of radioactive waste. In the spring of 1996, American contractors largely finished the construction of a metal recycling plant at Zvezda, designed to dismantle some fifty decommissioned nuclear submarines. However, installation problems and the economic crisis that has periodically paralyzed the RFE

⁴³ William E. Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 283–304; "Russia: Crisis in Far East Submarine Fleet Viewed," FBIS-UMA-97-078, Mar. 19, 1997, Moscow NTV; "Russia: Pacific Fleet R-Admiral Ryazantsev on Combat Training," JPRS-UMA-95-023, Apr. 21, 1995, Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network.

⁴⁴ "Russia: Far East Nuclear Submarines Confronting Economic Crisis," FBIS-UMA-98-271, Sept. 28, 1998, Moscow NTV; "Japan, Russia: Russian Pacific Fleet Faces 'Life-or-Death' Crisis," FBIS-EAS-97-010, Jan. 13, 1997, Tokyo Shimbun; James Brooke, "Russia Far East Weighs New Era's Pros and Cons," *New York Times*, June 14, 1996. The *Vylyuchinsk* is also known as the *Wiliuczinsk* or the K456. Sharpe, *Jane's Fighting Ships 1998–99*, p. 550.

⁴⁵ "Russia: Correspondent Reports on Decline of Far East Submarine Port," FBIS-SOV-97-036, Feb. 19, 1997, Moscow NTV.

have made it difficult to operate the plant. So far, only two or three submarines have actually been scrapped each year; the others rust in a state of ecological disaster. Not until October 1998 did Moscow begin to repay its debts to the plant and its employees so that work could continue.⁴⁶

Keeping ships and submarines at sea presents another problem. Although most submarines are designed for a two-decade operational life, a lack of adequate maintenance can shorten their lives substantially. Occasional strikes by the Pacific Fleet's civilian workers and staff have not helped. The first occurred in 1996 when Valsiliy Grechko, chairman of the Pacific Fleet Trade Union territorial committee, announced that his members were suspending work at all enterprises in the Far East and all units of the Pacific Fleet. Grechko hoped that strikes by workers in the military infrastructure would draw government attention and force the Ministry of Defense to pay its debts. Eventually, workers at over forty repair and service facilities for ships of the Pacific Fleet held demonstrations. At the Amur Shipyard, 5,000 workers struck and 3,000 more joined them at the Vympel munitions factory. By December 1998, some shipyard workers had grown so frustrated with partially paid or unpaid wages and recurring layoffs that they have appealed to the government to renationalize their enterprise.⁴⁷

Other workers had even bigger problems. As military orders shrank, major military enterprises in the RFE have had to be drastically restructured. In Primorsky Krai, only a few of the largest enterprises still had military orders to fill. "The Vostochnaya Verf enterprise can still build guard boats for border units. Dalzavod will still be the Pacific Fleet's main shipyard. Zvezda still has a lot of work to do on the scrapping and repair of nuclear submarines, while Progress will continue with its production of military helicopters." But the Ministry of Defense has already stated that up to 70 percent of these plants' capacities would be opened up for competitive civilian production. Other industrial facilities have been slated for complete conversion or outright closure. Once the pride of Admiral Sergei Gorchkov's navy under Brezhnev, those that survive now struggle to produce small coastal fishing trawlers, food packaging,

⁴⁶ "Russia: Utilization of Nuclear Submarines Stepped up in Far East," FBIS-UMA-98-338, Dec. 4, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; "Russia: Russian State Debt Partially Repaid to Submarine Plant," FBIS-SOV-98-288, Oct. 15, 1998, Moscow Radio Rossii Network; Richard F. Starr, "Russia's Navy Remains in Decline," *Proceedings*, Aug. 1998, p. 48; "Russia: U.S. To Help Russian Factory Dismantle Nuclear Submarines," FBIS-UMA-97-268, Sept. 25, 1997, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Problems With Nuclear Submarine Disposal," FBIS-SOV-97-212, July 31, 1997, Moscow Nauka I Zhizn; "Russia: Rear Admiral on Nuclear Submarine Danger," FBIS-SOV-97-036, Feb. 19, 1997, Vladivostok Radio Vladivostok Network; James Brooke, "Russia Far East Weighs New Era's Pros and Cons," *New York Times*, June 14, 1996; "Russia: Lack of Funds Hampers Scrapping of Nuclear Submarines," FBIS-TAC-96-004, Feb. 9, 1996, Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskv; "Russia: Nuclear Waste in Vladivostok Discussed," FBIS-TEN-96-001, Dec. 5, 1995, Tokyo Ekonomisuto.

⁴⁷ "Russia: Shipyard Workers Seek Renationalization," FBIS-SOV-98-337, Dec. 3, 1998, Moscow Sovetskay Rossiya; "Russia: Pacific Fleet Workers To Stage Strike Over Wage Arrears," FBIS-SOV-96-183, Sept. 19, 1996, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Pacific Fleet Repair Plants Hold Protests," FBIS-SOV-66-044, Mar. 5, 1996, Moscow Interfax.

small electric motors, telephones, agricultural machinery, and printing equipment.⁴⁸

Confidence in the ability of military leaders in the RFE to address these daunting problems has been continuously weakened by episodes of corruption and incompetence. When Vice Admiral Mikhail Zakharenko assumed command of the Pacific Fleet in 1998, he was the fleet's fifth commander in six years. Of the former commanders, only two left because of promotions. The rest were tarred with scandal, including the starvation of sailors stranded on Russkiy Island and the frequent fires and explosions at munitions depots. Moreover, some former Pacific Fleet commanders and their subordinates have been accused of accepting bribes and selling fleet oil reserves for personal profit.⁴⁹

In November 1997, a military court tried Admiral Igor Khmelnov for abuse of office. While serving as commander of the Pacific Fleet, the admiral was involved in the 1995 deal to sell two aircraft carriers, the *Minsk* and *Novorossiysk*, to a South Korean scrapping company, as well as scores of smaller warships to South Korea and India. The proceeds from the sale of these vessels were to be spent, in part, on housing for naval personnel. However, an internal audit revealed that while 273 naval officers and their families did receive new housing, they were all personal friends and relatives of Khmelnov. And after leaving his post, he never returned his own spacious apartment to the government. Instead, he privatized the flat and sold it for profit. Found guilty of glaring abuse of power, he was sentenced to two years' probation by the Main Military Prosecutor's Office.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, illegal weapons have become easy to procure in the RFE. Some are sold directly out of storage warehouses, as has occurred in Khabarovsk, where in one instance unknown individuals acquired more than a hundred pistols, revolvers, and various types of rifles. In another case, the Khabarovsk prosecutor's office sought criminal proceedings against the kraj's defense sports-technical organization for illegally selling arms out of its warehouse. Some criminals have actively resisted arrest. The owner of one arsenal decided to defend it against seizure. Unfortunately for him, the grenade he intended to hurl at approaching police detonated in his hand.

Occasionally, military personnel are directly involved in gun running. The chief of a Pacific Fleet ammunition depot, assisted by his guard detachment, openly sold cartridges and explosives. Following his arrest, a search of his apartment uncovered grenades, trinitrotoluene blocks, electric detonators, flare guns, anti-aircraft ammunition, and even an aerial bomb detonator. In Primorsky,

⁴⁸ "Russia: Russian Maritime Territory Designs Military Conversion Plan," FBIS-UMA-98-036, Feb. 5, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; Odom, *The Collapse of the Soviet Military*, pp. 235–43.

⁴⁹ "Russia: Gromov Says Pacific Fleet Will Remain Independent Force," FBIS-UMA-97-204, July 23, 1997, Moscow Radio Rossii Network; "Russia: Bribery Becoming 'National Security Problem,'" FBIS-SOV-97-191, July 10, 1997, Moscow Rabochaya Tribuna.

⁵⁰ "Russia: Russian Supreme Court Rejects Former Admiral's Appeal," FBIS-SOV-98-167, June 16, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; "Russia: Pacific Fleet Admiral on Trial For 'Abuse of Office,'" FBIS-UMA-97-315, Nov. 11, 1997, Moscow NTV; Steve Glain, "Korean Aircraft-Carrier Deal Prompts Skepticism," *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 5, 1995.

police arrested two naval officers of the Pacific Fleet whose quarters were found to house an anti-tank grenade launcher, grenades, and about 4,000 machine gun rounds.⁵¹

In Amur Oblast, militiamen, assisted by military counterintelligence, arrested the commander of a military unit who stole some 475 kilograms of explosives, over a kilometer of fuse, and 123 detonating caps. A criminal group that operated within a brigade of railroad troops in Amur Oblast looted so much weaponry from the local arsenal that authorities believed that it had enough munitions to supply an entire infantry battalion for a week of defensive operations. According to information supplied by the Far Eastern Military District, its warehouses "lost" 5 machine guns, 121 submachine guns, 15 rifles, 37 pistols, 4 grenade launchers, 152 grenades, and about 120,000 rounds of ammunition in 1995 alone. In a notable 1998 case, a brazen band of criminals attacked an armory at Strelok Bay in Primorsky Krai. After killing one guard and wounding another, they escaped with a cache of weapons.⁵²

As Russian military discipline has become lax, the accident rate has risen dramatically. That has proven to be an especially dangerous situation as surplus munitions from deactivated European divisions have been stored in the RFE. Seven Russian navy ammunition dumps blew up around Vladivostok between 1990 and 1996. In April 1998, over seventy pieces of military equipment were destroyed in a fire that engulfed an artillery ammunition depot and ignited shells and fuel in the village of Baranovo-Orenburgskoye in Primorsky Krai. Fortunately, civil defense troops were able to quickly evacuate 4,000 local residents to safety. Another day that month, a powerful blast shook Bira in the Jewish Autonomous Area. The explosion originated from an artillery depot six kilometers northwest of the city. Although forest fires were probably to blame for triggering the detonations, no one could explain why the ammunition had not been moved out of danger.⁵³

Conclusion

Nationwide, disastrous harvests that have been called "the worst in 45 years" and the subsequent hoarding of what little was produced by farmers have combined to threaten many Russian regions with severe shortages. The remote RFE "at the end of this food chain [was] left with a pittance." The ruble's devaluation only magnified problems by delaying payment for winter food and

⁵¹ "Russia: Russian Naval Officers Caught With Arms For Sale," FBIS-TAC-97-216, Aug. 4, 1997, Moscow ITAR-TASS.

⁵² "Russia: Military Investigators Probe Attack on Far East Base," FBIS-SOV-98-125, May 5, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service; "Russia: Maritime Kray Illicit Arms Trade Extensive," FBIS-UMA-96-133-S, July 11, 1996, Moscow Moskovskiy Novosti.

⁵³ "Russia: Fire in Primorye Destroys 70 Pieces of Military Hardware," FBIS-UMA-98-096, Apr. 6, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; "Russia: No Casualties in Far East Artillery Depot Explosion," FBIS-UMA-97-117, Apr. 27, 1997, Moscow Interfax; James Brooke, "Russia Far East Weighs New Era's Pros and Cons," *New York Times*, June 14, 1996.

fuel shipments to the region. By late October 1998, just 250 million of the 841 million rubles originally earmarked for freight had been sent by Moscow, with the result that “only 47,000 tons of food [was] shipped to northern Yakutia, barely half the 89,000 tons shipped last year.” Winter supplies to other regions were similarly slowed. What was not late, however, was the advancing ice. Even as financing was found to pay for the shipping, ice already reclaimed most navigable sea and river routes. With Soviet-built nuclear-powered ice-breakers in disrepair and the food reserves left from the Soviet era all but gone, there were real fears of starvation.⁵⁴

Among the things the RFE and its creaky military infrastructure desperately needs is economic relief. But “with the political turmoil in Moscow, the government has collected even less tax revenue than usual.” To offset a 40–50 percent deficit in the federal budget for the last three months of 1998, Primakov’s government decided to print more money. As a result, the IMF hesitated to release loan money it had already promised, “noting that Russia already has failed to make payments on some Government debt [and questioning] the notion that Russia can finance such a huge budget deficit with borrowed cash.” While few believe that liquidity alone can rescue Russia’s economy, it is clear that new money supply would spark higher inflation—unwelcome news to foreign investors. After all, “When we make multibillion-dollar decisions, you have to have the confidence that the system is predictable and stable,” one Texaco executive said. “All these things are absent.”⁵⁵

Political uncertainty abounds as well. Far Eastern frustration with Moscow has found vociferous expression in paralyzing worker strikes and troublesome regional leaders. The political atmosphere has become even more fractious as regional administrators fight among themselves over slices of a small and shrinking pie, further weakening not only whatever chance the region ever had for independence, but also the ability of the region to be a significant actor in East Asia.

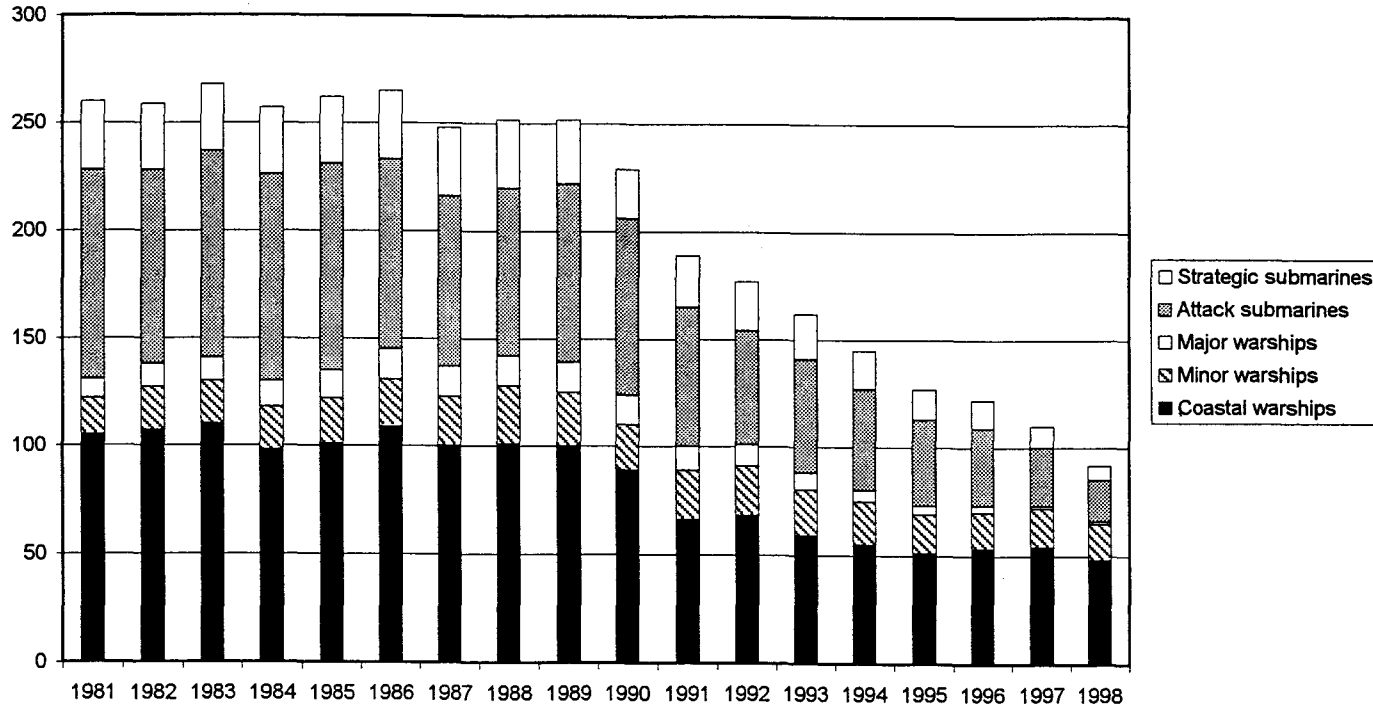
The end of the Cold War and the shift in defense priorities away from forward deployment have thrown the RFE’s military establishment into turmoil. The number of army divisions and navy vessels has dropped precipitously. Maintenance, supply, and training for the forces that remain are woefully inadequate for wartime readiness. Unless there are major changes, the region’s military forces will continue to languish, with little chance of recovery. Indeed, Russian power and influence in East Asia will not be easily restored, especially if they are to be built anew on the basis of military might.



⁵⁴ Michael Wines, “Siberia’s Coming Winter: Hungry, Cold and Broke,” *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1998.

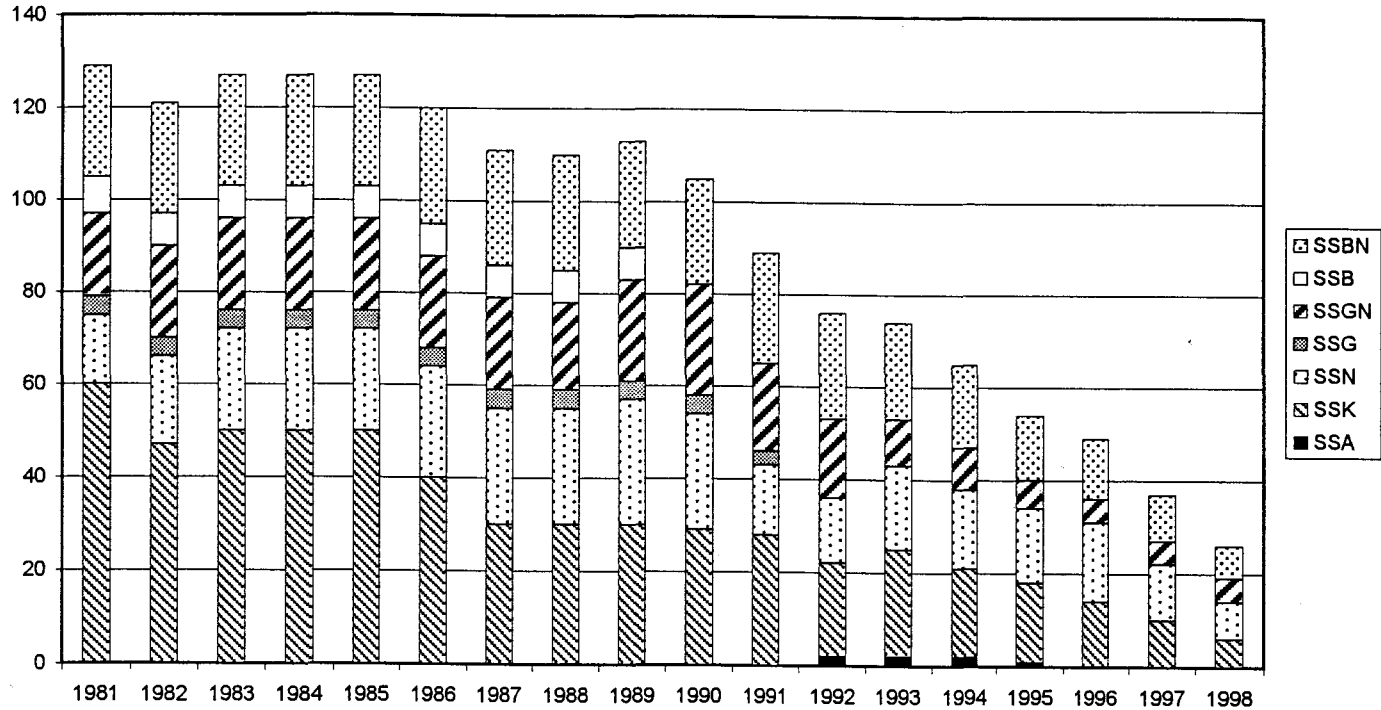
⁵⁵ “Russia: Foreign Firms Withdraw From Maritime Territory in 1998,” FBIS-SOV-98-363, Dec. 29, 1998, Moscow ITAR-TASS; Michael Wines, “Primakov’s Silence Raises Worries, and the Ruble,” *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1998; Sharon LaFraniere, “Primakov Details Plan to Revitalize Economy,” *Washington Post*, Oct. 15, 1998.

Appendix 1 Russian Pacific Fleet Aggregate Strength



Sources: Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships* 1981-1999 eds. (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981-1998); IISS, *The Military Balance* 1981-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981-1998); Bernard Prézelin and A.D. Baker III, eds., *The Naval Institute's Guide to Combat Fleets of the World* (hereafter *CFW*) 1992-1999 eds. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Press Institute, 1992-1998); author's estimates.

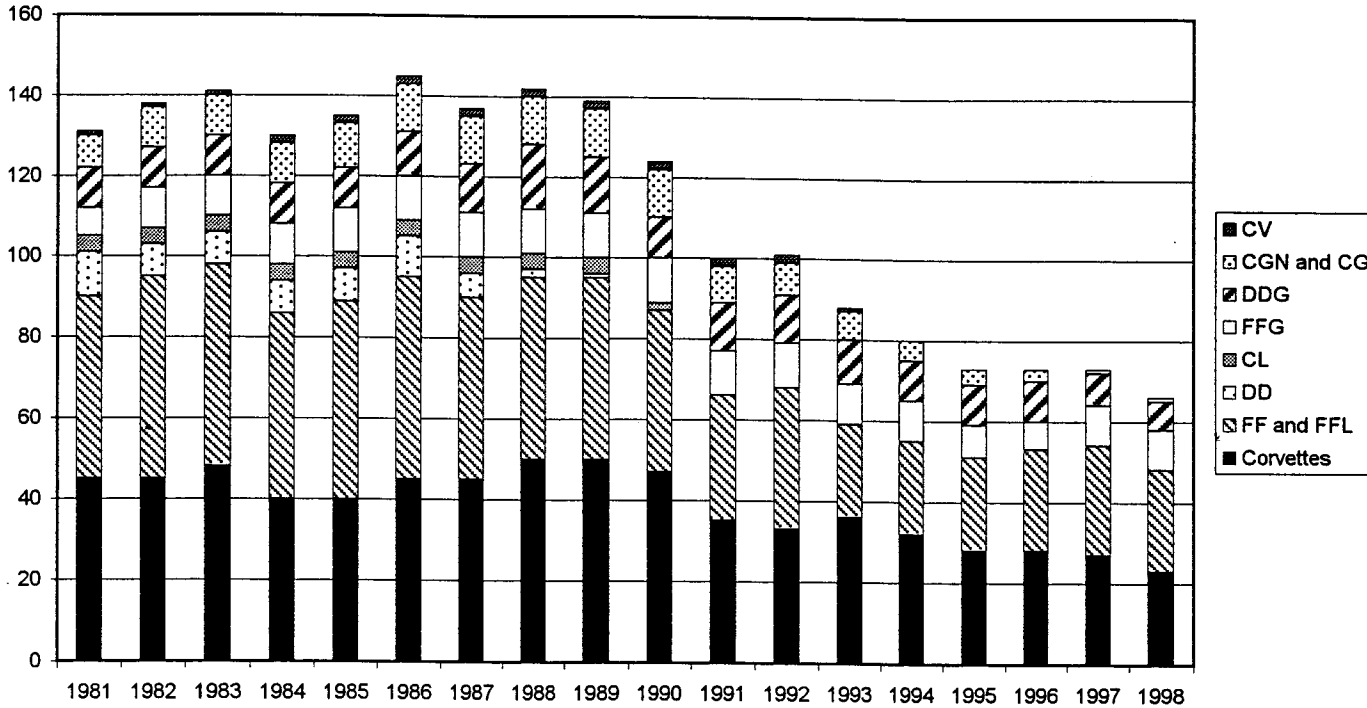
Appendix 2 Russian Pacific Fleet Submarine Strength



Note: SSBN = nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, SSB = ballistic missile submarine, SSGN = nuclear-powered non-ballistic missile submarine, SSG = non-ballistic missile submarine, SSN = nuclear-powered attack submarine, SSK = attack submarine, SSA = auxiliary submarine.

Sources: Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships 1981-1999* eds. (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981-1998); IISS, *The Military Balance 1981-1999* eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981-1998); Bernard Pr ezelin and A.D. Baker III, eds., *CFW 1992-1999* eds. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Press Institute, 1992-1998); author's estimates.

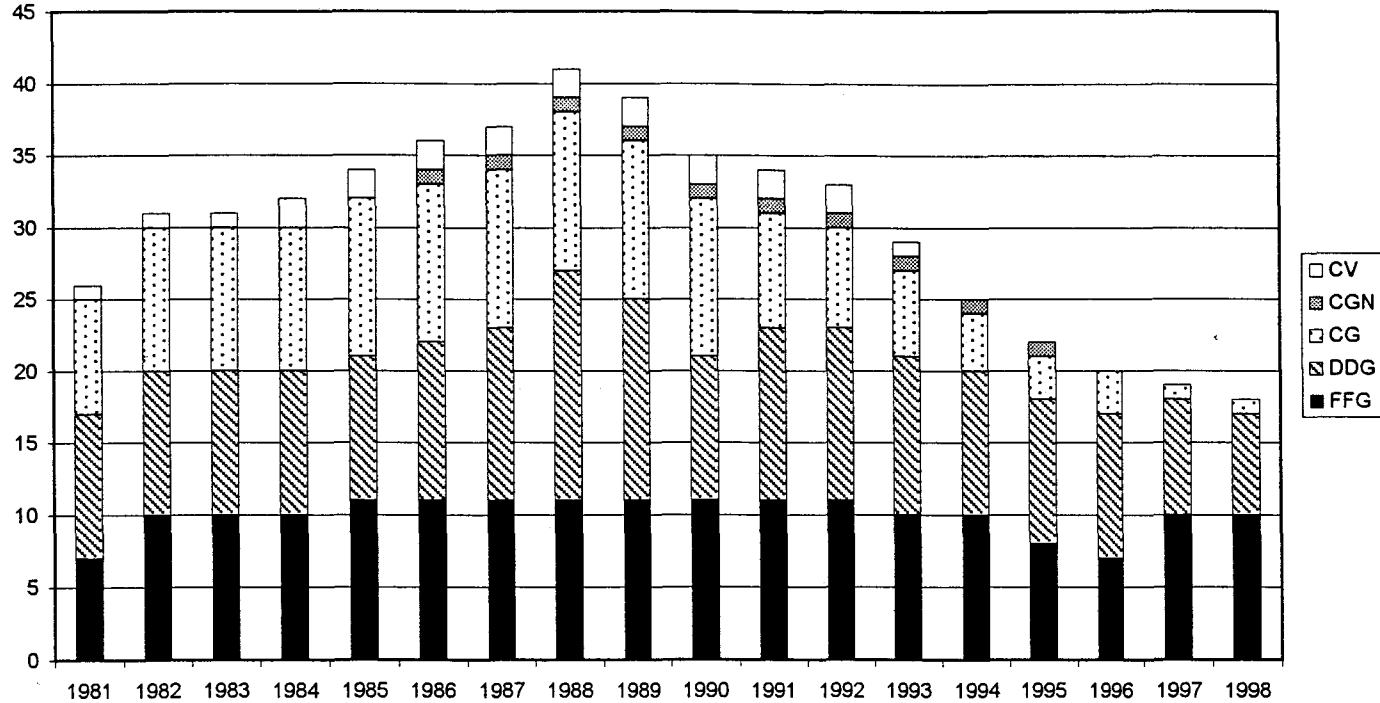
Appendix 3 Russian Pacific Fleet Surface Strength



Note: CV = aircraft carrier, CGN = nuclear-powered cruiser, CG = cruiser, DDG = guided-missile destroyer, FFG = guided-missile frigate, CL = light cruiser, DD = destroyer, FF and FFL = frigate.

Sources: Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships* 1981-1999 eds. (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981-1998); IISS, *The Military Balance* 1981-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981-1998); Bernard Prézelin and A.D. Baker III, eds., *CFW* 1992-1999 eds. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Press Institute, 1992-1998); author's estimates.

Appendix 4 Russian Pacific Fleet Ocean-Control Surface Strength



Note: CV = aircraft carrier, CGN = nuclear-powered cruiser, CG = cruiser, DDG = guided-missile destroyer, FFG = guided-missile frigate.

Sources: Richard Sharpe, ed., *Jane's Fighting Ships* 1981-1999 eds. (London: Jane's Information Group, 1981-1998); IISS, *The Military Balance* 1981-1999 eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981-1998); Bernard Prévelin and A.D. Baker III, eds., *CFW* 1992-1999 eds. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Press Institute, 1992-1998); author's estimates.