Chapter 3

YELTSIN’S POLICIES AND WAR IN CHECHNYA

In September 1994 there was another armed attempt to dislodge the Dudaev regime. The attack this time was launched by the Provincial Council and it received covert military support from Russian armed forces. The attempt subsequently failed and about 21 Russian soldiers were captured. Chechnya now demanded that they be accepted as prisoners of war or else they shall be executed. The Russian government did not want to do so as it would mean covert recognition of the Chechen government, after all hope for a peaceful settlement ended the Russian President Yeltsin under pressure from public opinion and both Rightist and Leftist political ordered for Russian military columns to begin an offensive operation against Chechnya.¹

The question then arises what imperatives were there for the invasion of Chechnya. If Dudaev’s regime was allowed to exist from 1991 to 1994 then why at all was it attacked in 1994? Many reasons have been forwarded regarding the Russian invasion of Chechnya. The official justification has been that it was necessary for the protection of the integrity of the Russian Federation. The statements of Russian President himself and the Russian officials emphasised that if Chechnya was allowed to leave the Federation other constituent republics would demand political independence. Moreover Dudaev’s Chechnya was also becoming a focal point by which the various other republics of North Caucasus Khaberdino-Balkariya, Adigaya, Karachevo-Cherkessia, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Ossetia and Abkhazia of Georgia and were sought to be organized into a North Caucasus state successor to the mountain republic of 1918. The Chechens had participated from the side of Abkhazia against Georgia and helped in defeating the Georgian forces. The Chechen battalion which took part in it was referred to as Abkhaz in honour and its
commander was Shamyl Basaev. Basaev fought on the side of Abkhaz separatists in 1992-1993. This was perceived by the Russians policy makers with alarm for they understood these developments as Dudaev’s attempts to carve out an independent North Caucasian state based on terrorism and militancy and which would cut off Russia from the Caspian Sea. Further it would rally around other “near abroad” areas against Russia ensuring its complete encirclement from the South. Another view maintains that Russia did not want to loose the mineral and oil resources that exist in Chechnya. A popular belief in Russia also is that Chechen war was fought for liquidating the many criminal’ gangs that had been operating in Chechnya. Another reason for the invasion is the 'bilitzkrieg' that is the Chechen invasion was stage managed by the Russian President.

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3 Valery Tishkov, "The Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet union: The mind Aflame", (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 1997), pp. 190
4 Ibid. pp. 191
None of the above views completely explain the Russian invasion of Chechnya. Amongst these the views that it was the preservation of the Russian Federation and the attempt to dismantle the various criminal gangs that led to the invasion seem most improbable. For one if the Russian Federation was to be saved why was it only in 1994 that it was attacked. Chechnya was in all possible ways an independent territory since 1991. Secondly, the whole of Russia is infested with criminal gangs today, then to isolate Chechnya and attack for it seems to be the most implausible reason.

As implied earlier, it was a combination of factors that led to the invasion of Chechnya. These include the pressure from the military, which wanted to strengthen itself through the war. The representatives of the military in the government and some cabinet ministers deliberately giving the scenario of a rapid conquest of Chechnya specially Grozny, particularly defence minister Pavel Grachev was particularly responsible
for giving such a scenario.\textsuperscript{5} The aims of the army establishment were further helped by the strategic location of Chechnya in convincing Yeltsin to invade Chechnya. It is the 'gateway to Russia' from the south as it is an important link to the other CIS countries in the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{6} Chechnya is also a region from where the economically lucrative envisaged oil pipeline linking the fabled Caspian Sea oil reserves with the rest of the world pass. The importance of Chechnya increased particularly when large hydrocarbon reserves were estimated in the Caspian Sea.

\textbf{The economic importance of Chechnya}

The Caspian Sea has been an area of conflict for ownership of its waters since many years. During the time of the Soviet Union the situation was less complex, then it was under the joint ownership of Soviet Union and Iran. The division of ownership was mainly for fishing rights and for

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\item\textsuperscript{5} Oleg Grinevsky, "Comparing Soviet and Russian Decision - Making in Afghanistan and Chechnya", \textit{North Caucasus Newsletter}, Issue 6, Fall 1998, pp. 3-11
\item\textsuperscript{6} P.L. Dash, "Chechnya: War Has No End", \textit{Economic and Political Weekly}, April 29, 2000, pp. 1518
\end{enumerate}
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preserving the Caviar producing Sturgeon found in these waters. The breakup of the Soviet Union however saw the emergence of three new countries around the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Thus the Caspian was now the property of five countries Russia in the North, Iran in the South, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in the East and Azerbaijan in the West. Although initially there were estimated reserves of about two hundred billion barrels of oil in the Caspian Sea, the revised and more realistic estimate still pegs the figure at around ninety billion barrels (both proven and estimated). 7 Though the Caspian Sea is land locked it needs the qualification of international law of convention on the law of the sea, the Soviet Union and Iran treated it as a lake. Even after the emergence of the above mention three Central Asian states, Russia and Iran continued to press that Caspian be treated as a lake. The reason for it has been that as per the 1982 Law of Convention on the Law of the Sea, the

countries bordering the Caspian would have the right to develop their own portion of the seabed. On the contrary if the Caspian was to be treated as a lake it would be the common property of all the littoral states. This would require that any exploitation of its waters, as well as navigation rights, would have to be subjected to agreement by all the five Caspian Sea Countries. This would be beneficial to Russia and Iran, as their side of Caspian is not so rich in hydrocarbon resources. The newly emerged states on the Caspian shore are poor therefore desperate to sell their hydrocarbon resources to the rest of the world to uplift themselves and remove their poverty and backwardness. To earn substantial profits these states need an access for their oil to be sold in the international market but their problem is that they are landlocked. The best option for them is a pipeline that would supply oil to the west and possibly in the east to China and India. The biggest hurdle in doing so is Russia, which has considered the Caspian as its

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8 Abraham S. Becker, “Russia and Caspian Oil: Moscow Loses Control”, *Post Soviet Affairs*, vol.16 no.22, April-June 2000, pp.93
backyard. Russia does not see kindly to any other power making an effort to have presence in this area. In fact one of the reasons for Russia pressing the case for treating Caspian sea as a lake has been that it wants the Caspian sea resources to be divided equally among all the state. The transmission of these rich resources should be handled by Russia, which would result in millions of dollars as transit fees. The fact that rich hydrocarbon resources are towards the side of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan has compounded the woes of Russia. One of the logic given by Russia is that there have been investments made by it since the time of Soviet Union in these republics and therefore these states should share the profits accruing from selling the oil resources of the Caspian Sea. The other reason for Russia to stall the marketing of oil by these three states is that it does not want competitor to its Siberian reserves. As a result Russia has made these states sell oil to the poor CIS countries, which are not such good paymasters, while for it self retaining the trade of oil to Europe

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Shebonti Ray Dadwal, no. 7, pp.751
which is more lucrative. The geography and historical connection and the historical legacy of the Soviet Union have provided Moscow with a strong advantage in this region.

There have been mainly four routes either way by which petroleum may be export resources to the west, the first being through Iran, which is by far the shortest, quickest and cheapest route, and Iranians have been vociferously trying to promote it. However it is U.S., which has stalled the pipeline through this route, as it wants that petroleum supplies be secure and stable for which reason it does not want it to pass through Iran. The second route is the so-called northern route this takes Azarbaijan's oil from Baku through Grozny, Chechnya to Novorossiysk called the BGN line. The third route is the 'western route' which transports oil by pipeline and rail across Azarbaijan and Georgia to the latter Black sea port of Batomi, Poti and Supsa. From here it may be tankered through the Turkish states or some of it could be shift to

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Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria and from there piped to other European destinations. The fourth route is pressed for greatly by Turkey and which has strong support by United States as well. This pipeline would pass from the Caspian through Azarbaijan and Georgia to the Turkish meditarrean port of Ceyhan.\textsuperscript{11} Amongst all these alternative routes Russia wants that pipeline passing through its territory be preffered. In this regard Russia has clear advantages for its above mentioned Northern route as well firstly this is the only pipeline which is already complete and has been transmitting oil since the Soviet era. For the other pipelines to be built, huge investments would be required. Secondly the other pipeline passing through Russia Tengiz to Novorossiysk is incomplete although work is going on it still requires heavy investments and there are many issues yet to be sorted out.

By the above account it thus becomes clear that Chechnya was crucial to Russia because of this vital pipeline passing through Grozny. Although in the present Russia is

\textsuperscript{11} Abraham S. Becker, no.8, pp 105-106
making efforts to bypass Chechnya by making a diversion through Dagestan\textsuperscript{12} in 1994 pipeline via the Chechen route was the only available option. This pipeline had become all the more vital, as the other alternative did not exist, the Trans-Caucasus was disturbed by the ongoing war in Nagorno-Karabakh.\textsuperscript{13} Besides being an outlet to Caspian Sea oil Chechnya itself has rich oil reserves\textsuperscript{14}, which was also an important reason for Russia to not let go off Chechnya.

However the importance of Chechen economic resources should not be over emphasised. Therefore its needs to be added that personal initiative of Yeltsin also accounted for the Russian invasion of Chechnya. Although he did not stage-manage the war he could not have afforded not to respond to the provocation by the Chechens as he was under tremendous pressure from both the Left and Right wing political parties, specially from ultra nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky who had

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. pp. 109  
\textsuperscript{13} Zhores A Medvedev,"The War for Caspian Oil Via Chechnya" \textit{Philosophy and Social Action} 21(2), 1995, pp.27  
\textsuperscript{14} Rama Sampath Kumar, no.10, pp.29
done well in the previous elections. In the latter half of 1994, the composition of Yeltsin’s government underwent a major change. His reformist advisors such as Sakharai, minister for nationalities and regional affairs, P.M. Victor Chernomyrdin were replaced by ones having a more hard line approach such as Anatoly Kukilov, Nikolay Yegorov, Pavel Grachev, Minister of Security Sergei Stepashin. Kukilov in fact even after the Khasavayurt Accords said that it was a document, which would lead to destruction of Russia. Moreover through the Constitution of 1993 Yeltsin had been able to abrogate for himself extensive powers vis a vis the Parliament. Incidentally the fourth chapter in the constitution, which deals with powers of the President, contains the greatest clarity. He was therefore now in a position to take hard decisions and also not afford to be indecisive, as he could no longer blame the Parliament for his omissions and commissions.

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15 ibid, pp.30
During the same period there were political clashes within Chechnya the Russian government saw it as a god send opportunity to intervene in Chechnya. It threw its weight behind Omar Avturkhanov head of the Chechen provisional council. Avturkhanov had united a variety of opposition figures and was said to challenge Dudaev. Russians through its Federal Counter Intelligence Service arranged for heavy armoured vehicles aircraft and tanks and sent even Russian army personnel to help the Chechen provisional council. On November 26th these anti Dudaev volunteers started an armoured march on Grozny. Their anticipation was that Dudaev’s forces would be incapable of providing resistance to them. On the contrary they were routed by the Dudaev’s forces and the tanks and personnel were captured to rub further salt on the wound. Defence Minister Pavel Grachev’s denial of any knowledge or involvement in the operation, was countered by Chechen government, which paraded captured Russian soldiers live on television. This worked as a catalyst and precipitated the war.
The entry of Russian military forces completely altered situation in Chechnya, until now where Dudaev had been gradually loosing credibility it was the anti Dudaev forces that now lost all credibility amongst the Chechen people, who now thought them to be stooges of the Russian government. The entry of Russian army was perceived by Chechens as a proof of Russian imperial aggression similar to the once they had faced during the time of the Tsars and Soviet Russia. Almost the whole of Chechnya rallied behind Dudaev, in the initial part of the war even women and children blocked the way of Russian tanks prompting many Russian commanders to not proceed with the campaign. The Russian military strategy was large scale shelling and bombing, which resulted in large-scale civilian casualties. For the two years that the conflict raged on these were thousands of casualty and nearly 400,000 refugees.¹⁸ This prompted a wide spread criticism within Russia and outside by various heads of the government as

well. War in Chechnya completely falsified the Russian government twin estimation that the war would end quickly and it would be hugely popular with the Chechens. With arrival of 1996 Russian president Boris Yeltsin started looking for a peace settlement keeping in mind the approaching presidential elections of Spring 1996 as he was aware that the Chechen war had been politically unpopular. However the Russian army was still interested in continuing the war, which resulted in almost a dual authority about decisions on Chechen campaign, but by August 1996 the fate of the Chechen campaign was completely sealed. After Yeltsin’s 1996 presidential victory there was a fresh escalation of war by the Russian forces. The Chechens responded by launching an assault on Grozny, forcing the Russian forces out of it. Retaking Grozny would have meant totally destroying the city. Thus the Russian policy had reached a dead end and Russians were forced to come to the negotiation table.

After giving a close look to the Russo-Chechen war an obvious question that arises is, why was the western countries
response to this war so muted? In the beginning the west that is the countries of Europe and USA maintained a tactical silence over the war in Chechnya, as they feared that their relations with Russia might deteriorate further. Here it needs to be added that Russia’s relations with west was already strained because of the eastward expansion of NATO. It was all set to induct into itself the east European countries, which were once upon a time part of the former Soviet Block. Therefore Western countries repeatedly in their statements said that the happenings in Chechnya were an ‘internal matter’ of Russia. The other concern of the Western leaders was that secession in Chechnya could prompt other regions of Russia to also secede which could lead to the disintegration of the Russian Federation and hence loss of central control over vital nuclear armaments under the control of Russia. A US state department briefing of December 14, 1994 expressed this fear in the following manner, “we have no interest and the world has no interest in seeing a splintering or dismembering of the Russian
federation that would be enormously destabilizing\textsuperscript{19}. Along with this aspect there has been considerable confusion in the world community about application of the principle of self-determination and the conditions under which it could be invoked. There are many nations of the world, which are facing problems of similar nature.

Another reason for the muted response to the Chechen war, was the fear of the western government that criticism of Russian policy could weaken the position of Yeltsin in Russia vis-à-vis the Communists and the Nationalists. It was the belief of USA and other European countries that Yeltsin was their best bet to carry forward reforms in Russia and they were ready to support him against all odds. As a result in spite of the threats given by the Germans and Scandinavians to impose economic sanctions on Russia\textsuperscript{20} the western governments never really gave a serious thought to the issue even the suggestion that IMF or World Bank loans be refused or

\textsuperscript{19} Gail W. Lapidus, no.16 pp.74
delayed were turned down. The financial support to Russia by the Western governments at a time when the Russian government was unable to collect 30 percent of the tax revenue owed to it was actually indirectly financing the war.\textsuperscript{21} More vocal and categorical criticism of the Russian policy in Chechnya started coming from Europe and America only after the war had escalated considerably. Gradually the response of western nations in the form of criticism started gaining momentum particularly towards Russian infliction of civilian casualties in Chechnya. There was strong condemnation of bombardment of civilian areas in Chechnya by Russian air force, which continued in spite of the assurance of its non-occurrence given by Yeltsin. German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel in this regard was critical of the Russian tactics of using air power, and bombardment of Grozny, which led to high civilian casualties. German chancellor Kohl called the Chechen crises as ‘complete madness’. The French and the Italian foreign ministry were particularly concerned about the

\textsuperscript{21} Gail W. Lapidus, no.16 ,pp.77
human rights violations in Chechnya. The French, Dutch, Belgians all called for Russia’s respect of OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) code of conduct, to stop, the war and disproportionate use of force in Chechnya. Similarly Britain’s Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called for fighting to end with minimum civilian casualties and for a political agreement between Russia and Chechnya. The strongest criticism of Russian action came from Scandinavia, it suspended a bilateral military cooperation with Russia and even supported economic sanctions against Russia. Washington became critical of the Russo Chechen war only when it became clear that war in Chechnya was leading nowhere. It was harming the image of Yeltsin at home as well as abroad. Moreover continuance of it would result in instability in Russia, a situation to avoid which the Americans were withholding their criticism of Russia’s policy in Chechnya. In spite of these criticisms there was never a

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22 Taras Kuzio, no.20, pp.97-99
23 Gail W. Lapidus, no. 16 ,pp.77
strong rebuttal of Russia by the west. Had it been the case if not a prevention of war the western criticism would have at least resulted in a serious and sincere effort on the part of Russia to resolve the Chechen issue when it came to the negotiating table after the war.

The Muslim world from the very beginning was vociferously critical of Russian campaign in Chechnya. Turkey has historical links with the North Caucasus but it fell short of sending military aid to Chechnya as it was also facing separatist revolt of the Kurds. Similarly Iran condemned the 'violence and slaughter and massacre of the defenseless people of Chechnya'. Other Muslim nations like Libya, Egypt, Kuwait, were also quite critical of Russia. Pakistan particularly rejected claims that its citizens were in Chechnya as mercenaries but admitted that there is 'sympathy and concern for the people of Chechnya in Pakistan and other Islamic countries.' There were demonstrations in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran, and Turkey against Russian Chechen
policy. In spite of these condemnations the international community did not grant recognition to Chechnya.

The war in Chechnya proved to be a failure. Instead of the rapid conquest of the territory the Russians got involved in the war for two years and without any positive outcome for them. The attack on Grozny in December-January 1994-1996 also known as New-year eve's attack, in spite of heavy firepower being used by the Russian could not dislodge the Chechen rebels. At the start of the first Chechen conflict Dudaev had nearly 265 aircrafts which had been left behind the Russian army. These aircrafts were used against the Russians. The Russians on the other hand played heavy reliance on aircraft but it was quantity rather than quality which was hallmark of Russian operations. There mechanized divisions got bogged down in the built area near Grozny. The campaign had been planned when the Russian army was amidst major transition and turbulence. The operation was

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24 Taras Kuziono, no. 20, pp. 99
launched in great hurry and without adequate thought and preparation. Though Russian forces occupied most of Chechnya, they were not numerically strong to retain the control. Grozny could come under Russian control only in February 1995. The theatre of the war was also the countryside and the hills, where the fighting was in the form of Guerilla warfare. This was history repeating itself, the Chechens could not win in the plains but could not be defeated in the hills. The hills were their familiar territory. Moreover the young Russian conscripts were unpaid for demoralized as a result when Chechen guerillas regrouped and launched a series of surprise offensives they were able to recapture Grozny and many other major Chechen cities.

In the Chechen war there were heavy causalities from both sides. According to an estimate there were a total of 35,000 dead in this Russo-Chechen conflict.26 This was further aggravated by the Russian bombardments of the cities and

26 Valery Tishkov "Ethnic Conflicts in the Former USSR: The use and Misuse of Typologies and data.", The estimates vary from 35000 to 100,000.

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villages, in order to flush out the Chechen rebels, thus causing heavy civilian causalities. All this further estranged the Chechens from the Russians.

The main reasons for the Russian failure were the high quality of Chechen resistance. A number of Chechen fighters had served in Afghanistan and were familiar with the tactics of the Russian army. A large proportion of the Chechen population was also mobilised with even civilian citizens participating in the war. The poor planning of the operation and the poor stranded of the Russian forces comprising mostly young in experienced soldiers were also the reasons for the Russian failure.\textsuperscript{27}

It shall be a futile exercise to determine weather the demands for sovereignty prompted religious revivalism in Chechnya or vice versa. The Russo-Chechen war may be viewed from the standpoint of clash of two religions Christianity and Islam, rather between two civilizations the

\textsuperscript{27} Pontus Siren, no. 1, p. 128.
Christian west and the Islamic east. This view would see the region of Chechnya falling in the zone of fault lines, which are the most volatile areas, where two different civilizations come into conflict with each other. In this scheme religious revivalism is seen as preceding the demands for sovereignty in Chechnya and Tatarstan. In fact it is seen as a main determinant of these demands. What is inherent in this argument is to see religious or Islamic revivalism in Chechnya and Tatarstan as fundamentalist. Fundamentalism as already discussed is a call for return to the purer and older form of religion. It has a definite agenda of redefining religion in this case Islam. This particular definition of Islam is arrived at by a few individuals who are intolerant to dissention and may even use violent means. Islamic Fundamentalism is inextricably linked with the call of pan-Islamism that is uniting the Muslims living in different geographical, political and cultural divisions into a single entity. This Pan-Islamism in fact traces its identity in terms of the non-Muslim world and in

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that sense it is negative, it is often directed against the non-Muslim world. So does this phenomena exist in Tatarstan and Chechnya. Firstly Islamic revivalism and demand for sovereignty in these areas emerged almost simultaneously and it is very difficult to place them in a sequential manner, secondly Islamic revival has definitely taken place in Chechnya and Tatarstan attendance at Mosques in Chechnya is rising and there is enormous pride in the value system it instills. Similarly Tatarstan also witnessed a revival of Islam. Mosques that had been converted to other uses in the Soviet period were returned to the Muslim clergy and restored, including the prestigious Azimov Mosque in Kazan. New Mosques were built particularly elaborate Mosques appeared in Naberezhnye Chelny, Nizhnekamsk and Bugul'ma. The number of pilgrims to Mecca have risen and Muslim clergy has become much more active in educational and missionary work. Islamic revival was given a boost by the celebration in August 1989 of the eleventh centennial of the adoption of Islam by the Volga Bulgars. A pole taken in 1989 indicated that the percentage of Tatars professing Islam had increased

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from 15.7 percent of 1980 to 43.4 percent.\footnote{Edward W Walker, "The Dog That Didn’t Bark: Tatarstan and Assymetrical Federalism in Russia" (Research Paper, UC erkeley, Soviet and Post Soviet, Berkely, 1996), pp. 14} Inspite of this there is no indication that these republics are converting to fundamentalist Islam. The Islamic revival, which is taking place here, is not of the fundamentalist nature. There is no call for Pan-Islamism. In Chechnya the traditional religious elite mainly the Sufis are opposed to the fundamentalist Islam being preached by those coming from the Arabian countries. The fact that Chechens supported a secular and moderate Maskhadov, and before him Dudaev, is an indication that the Chechens have not strayed towards Islamic fundamentalism.

In Tatarstan the people continued to show their faith in Shaimiev who is moderate and secular. He in fact steered Tatarstan towards a compromise with Russia. On February 14, 1994 was signed a treaty entitled "On the Delimitation Of Jurisdictional Authority and the Mutual Delegation of Powers Between the State Bodies of the Russian Federation and State Bodies of the Republic of Tatarstan." The treaty was signed by President Yeltsin and Shaimiev and Prime Ministers
Chernomyrdin and Sabirov. An additional five intergovernmental agreements were signed at the same day bringing the total agreements to twelve. The key element of the agreements that while Tatarstan recognizes that it as a part of the Russian federation, Russia recognizes that Tatarstan is united with it through a treaty and the two parties to the treaty are formally equal.\(^{30}\)

Thus now technically speaking there is a separatist demand only in Chechnya. The fact that Tatarstan has a big Russian minority which is almost 43 percent, it being surrounded by Russia from all sides, Tatars having taken to an urban living, they are more into modern professions; all contributed in Tatarstan finally reaching a compromise and taking a different path than Chechnya. In Chechnya on the other hand Chechens mostly live in rural areas and have not taken to urban lifestyle. The scars and trauma of deportation have also contributed to the Chechens taking an uncompromising stand. Never the less in the aftermath of the Russo Chechen war there was Khasavayurt agreement between

Russia and Chechnya, by which both the parties agreed to defer the issue of Chechen sovereignty till 2001. This agreement was later ratified as a treaty in 1997.\(^{31}\) The Khasavayurt accords were the personal initiative of retired Russian General and newly appointed head of Yeltsin’s National Security Council Aleksandr Lebed. He traveled to Khasavayurt, Dagestan to negotiate with Chechen representatives. Three weeks late on August 31, Lebed and Aslan Mashkadev signed an accord in Khasavayurt which ended the war and demilitrised Chechnya subsequently a short peace agreement which acknowledged the Khasavayurt accords was signed in May 1997 by Russian President Yeltsin and Chechen President Aslan Mashkadev who in the meanwhile was elected by Chechen in a popular vote as Chechen President in January 1997. The most controversial aspect of the accord was the provision of five year moratorium according to which decision on Chechnya status was to be taken by 31\(^{st}\) December 2001. The other provisions were to

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create a joint commission composed of Russians and Chechen officials to complete the withdrawal of Russian troupes from Chechen territory, initiate and implement measures to control crime and prejudice, make proposals for monetary and budgetary mutual relations and develop programmes for the Russian governments to rebuild socio economic infrastructure of Chechnya. Another controversial aspect was the mention of right of nations towards self-determination. This and deferring the status of Chechnya in 2001 made the Khasavayurt accords open to interpretation by Russia and Chechnya both claimed victory though it stopped the war and opened hostilities. It has failed to resolve the differences between Chechnya and Russia. Through this agreement Russians were willing to grant Chechnya extensive autonomy within the federation. The Chechens on the other hand were adamant on complete independence. The impact of the failure of Khasavayurt accord has been analysed in the next chapter.