Military coups are considered most likely when state political capacity is low and the army's corporate interests are threatened. However, these conditions are also frequently present in situations in which the military remains politically passive, weakening the explanatory power of these propositions. In Russia, an extremely weak state coexists with an army whose corporate interests have been threatened over the past decade, yet the military has not intervened in high politics. Two alternative explanations for this behavior are examined, one based on internal cleavages in the army (organizational structure) and the second on officer corps norms (organizational culture). Although both accounts are plausible, organizational culture provides the best explanation for Russian military passivity. The importance of this variable is demonstrated in a study of Russian military behavior from 1992 to 1999. Studying nonevents, and moving beyond the coup/noncoup dichotomy, provides a more complete picture of military behavior in domestic politics.

RUSSIA'S PASSIVE ARMY
Rethinking Military Coups

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Coups are the ultimate problem of civil-military relations. The coup was the most frequent method for changing executive power in most of the world in the 1960s and 1970s. Recent coups in Pakistan, the Ivory Coast, and Ecuador demonstrate that despite the decline in military intervention in the aftermath of the "third wave" of democratization, the phenomenon is alive and well. All three of these coups came about due to state weakness, threats to the armies' corporate interests, or some combination of these two. Specific reasons for the interventions included economic crises, military budget cuts, peace deals opposed by the high command, political unrest, fail-

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ure to pay army wages, the dismissal of military leaders, and civilian corruption ("Coup leader," 1999; Dugger, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c; Rohter, 2000a, 2000b; "Troops Overthrow," 1999; Weisman, 1999).

All of these conditions have been present in Russia in the past decade. A weak state and a military whose corporate interests are threatened are also the very conditions that the classic civil-military relations literature maintains lead to coups. Not surprisingly, then, many observers in both Russia and abroad have warned of the dangers of a military coup.[1] For example, former Prime Minister Yegor Gaydar ("Gaydar," 1998) remarked in September 1998, "We have a good many generals who are ready to don Pinochet's uniform."[2]

Why have these predictions of military intervention proved unfounded in Russia? The dominant social science explanations for military intervention—domestic structure and corporate interest accounts—would predict a military coup. These perspectives, however, have been a poor guide to understanding Russian military behavior. They also neglect ways in which the army can play a decisive role in high politics without seizing state power.

I argue that the best explanation for Russian military passivity is the organizational culture of the army, which sees intervention in high politics as inappropriate. An alternative explanation—that the officer corps has not intervened despite a common interest in doing so because of organizational structural barriers—is intuitively plausible. However, a broader comparative perspective shows that these obstacles have not prevented coups in other states.

This article proceeds in the following fashion. First, I define military intervention and discuss the following four alternative theoretical approaches to military coups: domestic structure, corporate interest, organizational structure, and organizational culture. Second, I examine the evidence for the four accounts and demonstrate that organizational culture provides the best explanation for the Russian military's recent political behavior. Third, I use the October 1993 crisis in Moscow as a more detailed case for process-tracing military behavior, showing how organizational culture affected the army's choices. Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion of how the different theo-

1. At a conference of American and Russian specialists on Russian civil-military relations in early 1997 (Stanglin et al., 1997, pp. 23-24), the Russian participants thought that the probability of "a coup, chaos, or disintegration of the Russian military within the next 12 to 18 months" was 60%, with some putting the probability at 100%. The Americans concluded that the probability of one of these bleak outcomes was 30% to 40%.

2. See also similar statements by Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov ("Zyuganov," 1998) and former General and current Governor Alexander Lebed ("Lebed," 1998).

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retical perspectives may complement each other and to what degree military intervention remains a threat in Russia.

EXPLAINING MILITARY INTERVENTION

The notion of a military coup evokes images of soldiers with machine guns seizing television and radio transmitters and surrounding government buildings with armored vehicles. In reality, the military can have a decisive influence in what Colton (1990) labels "sovereign power" issues, or the question of who rules the state, in several different ways. A dichotomous coding of coup/noncoup is inadequate in many cases.

There are three possible codings for the dependent variable of military involvement in sovereign power issues. The first is the traditional focus of much of the civil-military relations literature, military intervention. Military intervention is the use, actual or threatened, of force by members of the military, either alone or with civilian actors, in an attempt to change the executive leadership of the state (Finer, 1975; Luttwak, 1979; Nordlinger, 1977).

The second possible coding is military resolution of a civilian sovereign power dispute, or military arbitration. Military arbitration occurs when multiple persons or groups claim to hold legitimate state power, and the army is forced to decide whose orders to obey. This is different than military intervention because the military has not made an autonomous decision to become involved in sovereign power issues but is forced to play a role due to civilian activity. Military arbitration is a case of military involvement in sovereign power issues but not one of military intervention. This category of military behavior has been ignored in the civil-military relations literature.[3]

The third possible coding of the dependent variable is no military involvement in sovereign power issues. This potential coding is crucial and often overlooked. Much of the existing literature on military intervention studies only coups and ignores noncoups, thereby introducing selection bias into the research design (Geddes, 1990; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994).

The army can also play a role in other domains of civil-military interaction, such as defense politics (doctrine, budgets, etc.) or non–sovereign power domestic political issues (e.g., economic policy). Such military participation often represents normal bureaucratic politics, but sometimes such activity is unsanctioned and thus a potential threat to civilian control. This

3. A historical example is the December 1851 coup of French President Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (Ralston, 1967); a more recent example was the Ecuadorian crisis of February 1997 ("Ecuador's Post-Modern Coup," 1997).

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behavior, although important, should be distinguished from military involvement in resolving a sovereign power issue, the central concern of this article.

The two most frequent explanations for military coups are the domestic structure and corporate interest approaches. These perspectives have considerable merit, but they suffer from rarely being applied to cases of noncoups (the proverbial dog that doesn't bark). Organizational structure and organizational culture arguments are less well-known explanations but should be part of our standard civil-military relations repertoire.

DOMESTIC STRUCTURE

The domestic structure perspective posits that military intervention occurs because low state political capacity provides the army with opportunities to become involved in politics. A domestic structure approach to military intervention highlights the armed forces' position in relation to the strength of other government institutions and other societal actors. Military intervention is simply the most dramatic of extrainstitutional means that actors adopt to influence policy in a weakly institutionalized, praetorian state (Finer, 1975; Huntington, 1968).

This explanation has considerable merit and has been used to explain military intervention or its absence in a wide variety of states (e.g., Margiotta, 1976; Yalman, 1968). However, much of this literature is sampled on the dependent variable—that is, only coups are studied and not noncoups. Yet states and societies often experience structural weakness without provoking military intervention. Goldsworthy (1981, p. 50) observes, "the kinds of features said to give rise to coup-proneness are often just as characteristic of the polities where coups have *not* occurred."

This approach could be strengthened with greater attention to the difference between military intervention and military arbitration. A more nuanced version of the domestic structure argument would maintain that political incapacity makes military involvement in sovereign power issues more likely, but not necessarily military intervention. I suggest below that organizational culture is a key factor that determines whether a military directly intervenes or tries to leave resolution of these political disputes to civilians.

Domestic structure, then, is not a sufficient explanation for military intervention. Indeed, by focusing on the opportunity for intervention at the state level, these approaches tend to ignore the motives for intervention at the military level.[4] A complete explanation of a military's behavior requires an investigation of its internal processes. The remaining three approaches—corporate

4. Finer (1975) was the first to use the categories of opportunity and motive.

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interest, organizational structure, and organizational culture—focus their efforts on explaining why military officers make the political choices they do.

CORPORATE INTEREST

The corporate interest approach to military intervention focuses on the bureaucratic motives of the armed forces. Armies are assumed to respond in a rational way to their environment, endeavoring to reduce uncertainty and to maximize the things all organizations seek: power, resources, and autonomy (Allison, 1971; Downs, 1967; Posen, 1984). The most common explanation for coups at the organizational level is that intervention is caused by corporate motives—the desire to protect or enhance the military's resources or position. Corporate interests, Nordlinger (1977) argues, have played a prominent role in military intervention in such diverse states as Peru, Ghana, Egypt, and Honduras. Thompson (1973) came to similar conclusions in his large-*N* statistical study of all military coups between 1946 and 1970.

The corporate interest approach to military intervention has received considerable attention from scholars working in a single-country context (e.g., O'Donnell, 1986). This perspective was also the one most consistently advanced in the study of Soviet civil-military relations, particularly in the work of Kolkowicz (1967) and Colton (1979).[5] Colton (1979, p. 240) states, "officers intervene against civilian authorities when their perceived interests are being denied or threatened by civilian policy."

The corporate interest approach also has much to recommend it, but it suffers from the same weakness as the domestic structure approach: It is sampled on the dependent variable. Thompson (1973) notes that the types of military grievances present in coups also exist in states that do not experience military intervention. Whether corporate grievances lead to intervention depends not only on domestic structure but also on other factors internal to the armed forces.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Even if the army as a whole might benefit from military intervention, it still may be difficult to put together a coup. Domestic structure arguments focus on the balance of power within the state; the organizational structure approach looks at the balance of power within the military itself, as well as

5. Colton (1979) challenged Kolkowicz's (1965) view that Soviet civil-military relations were inherently conflictual, but he shared with Kolkowicz a focus on the interests of the armed forces as an explanation for officer corps behavior; their disagreement was more empirical than theoretical.

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that between it and other armed state bodies. This perspective partially builds on a collective action logic.

Coup decisions are influenced by collective action logic, but they are not pure examples of a social dilemma (Green & Shapiro, 1994; Olson, 1965). Control of the state is not a pure public good, like clean air, because the benefits of it, such as power and wealth, are excludable. To the extent that material incentives motivate military intervention, the major spoils will be grabbed by the conspirators themselves, although the army in general also may benefit.

Moreover, the structure of the situation mitigates the collective action dilemma. Armies rely on coercion and hierarchy, coups arise in small conspiratorial groups, the decisions of a handful of officers can often tip the scales, and plotters are able to provide selective incentives (side payments) to other participants. Organizing a coup, then, is closer to what Green and Shapiro (1994) call a "quasi-dilemma" (pp. 77-78; also see Olson, 1965, pp. 2, 44-46) than a pure collective action problem.

Consequently the incentives for rational individual officers are more complex than in the conventional collective action dilemma. Doing nothing is often not the optimal strategy for officers during a coup attempt. Tullock (1974) reasons that neutrality will be punished by the winning side, so the trick for an individual officer is to figure out which side will win and commit to it early enough that his participation is rewarded. Civil-military relations specialists also have pointed to strong personal incentives, including the possibility of power and wealth, to participate in coups (Decalo, 1990; Finer, 1975; Thompson, 1973). Clearly there are both potential benefits and major risks involved in any coup, so a generalized claim about individual self-interest needs to be linked to more specific claims that can explain variation in military intervention across time and space. Two different variants of an organizational structure argument set out specific conditions likely to exacerbate collective action barriers to military intervention.

The first argument states that internal divisions within the military decrease the likelihood of coups. These divisions could be, for example, between junior and senior officers, along political lines, between services (i.e., army vs. air force), or ethnic or class based (Aguero, 1995; Janowitz, 1977). The empirical literature, however, shows that coups are at least as likely when militaries are internally divided as when they have a high degree of internal cohesion (Cox, 1976; Thompson, 1976). For example, in a meta-analysis of existing quantitative studies, Zimmerman (1983) states, "lower cohesion of the military will lead to increases in coup frequency" (p. 278). Although internal divisions may complicate the planning of a coup, they are not an insurmountable barrier to military intervention and in fact can serve as an impetus for a coup.

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A second argument about barriers to officer corps action focuses on "counterbalancing" by paramilitary or security bodies (Frazer, 1994). Such a strategy by the political leadership could complicate coup plotting, especially if these other bodies are large enough or perceived as particularly loyal to the government. Counterbalancing arguably has helped keep Saddam Hussein in power, as it did for Hafez Al-Asad, despite a history of coups in Iraq and Syria (Quinlivan, 1999). Luttwak (1979), however, reports that (as of the late 1970s) there were no cases of a paramilitary body actually defending the government once a coup attempt was under way.[6]

Organizational structure, then, could serve as a barrier to military intervention even if there are strong corporate motives for a coup, by complicating collective action. However, the empirical support for the two specific versions of this argument is weak. Moreover, by focusing on the distribution of material power within the army, this approach neglects potentially important normative restraints against intervention.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

An organizational culture argument maintains that the beliefs and values of the officer corps explain its behavior in sovereign power issues.[7] This approach, unlike the previous three, does not assume that all individuals or groups will behave in like fashion when confronted with similar objective circumstances (i.e., actors are not treated as having identical preferences). The aspect of a military's organizational culture that is most relevant to the study of involvement in sovereign power issues is the set of beliefs held by officers about their proper relationship to the political leadership.[8] In other words, what norms are held by officers on the question of who should rule the state?[9]

The organizational culture perspective stresses the unique experiences in the life of an organization as an explanation for subsequent behavior (Ott, 1989; Schein, 1984; Smircich, 1983).[10] Institutional lessons learned in response to critical events in the life of an organization powerfully shape the

6. A recent exception could be the Basra uprising in Iraq in the spring of 1992, to the extent that military units were involved.

7. Organizational culture is the pattern of assumptions and values held by members of an organization that help them make sense of the world and orient their choices (Gagliardi, 1986; Schein, 1984; Smircich, 1983).

8. Culture is often treated as a single or unified concept, although it is more a metaconcept than a single variable. Thus it is not necessary to map all aspects of a group's culture but only those relevant to the specific empirical question (Jepperson & Swidler, 1994).

9. Norms are collective expectations about appropriate behavior.

10. The concept of organizational culture has been applied productively to the study of military organizations by Kier (1997) and Legro (1995), although they focus on military doctrine.

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outlook of an organization's members. Events are defined as critical due to their place in history, their role in the development of organizational beliefs, or their metaphorical power (Feldman, 1984; March, Sproul, & Tamuz, 1991). Because of the socialization processes that operate within organizations, dominant interpretations of these events tend to develop, although some subgroups and individuals may draw different lessons. Organizational socialization is particularly likely to lead to a dominant interpretation in a hierarchical organization such as the military (Kier, 1997).

Restraints on military intervention will be higher before the first coup than during subsequent interventions. In a country with a tradition of military intervention or rule, officers are less inclined to doubt their right to intervene in politics. As Hibbs (1973, p.189) states, "an 'interventionist' history is likely to develop a tradition or 'culture' that makes current interventions more likely than otherwise would be the case." On the other hand, a failed coup attempt (Horowitz, 1980) or a disastrous period of military rule (Fitch, 1998) may strengthen officer corps' inhibitions against military intervention. Militaries also learn organizational lessons from events other than coups, such as wars, domestic usage for police-type missions, mutinies, and major organizational or personnel changes.

Although some scholars have emphasized cultural and ideational factors in their historical accounts (e.g., Abenheim, 1988), most theoretical explanations of military intervention emphasize structural and rational reasons for coups. The question of officer corps norms, however, has not been entirely ignored, although this work does not draw on the organizational culture literature.[11] Fitch (1977, 1998) offers the best and most comprehensive test of the importance of officer corps norms, or what he calls "role beliefs," in his work on the Ecuadorian and Argentinean armed forces. Using interviews and survey data, Fitch shows that the role beliefs of Ecuadorian officers changed from the 1950s to the 1960s and demonstrates how this changing role definition led to greater military intervention in politics. Similarly, in Argentina, norms against military intervention have spread in the officer corps since the 1980s. Most interesting, perhaps, in light of the January 2000 coup, is Fitch's (1998) finding that "Ecuadorian officers are divided and uncertain regarding their political role, with no single dominant perspective" (p. 72).

11. Huntington's (1957) argument that professionalism encourages politically passive militaries has sometimes been read as an organizational culture explanation, but his definition of professionalism is largely nonideational. Moreover, empirically professionalism is not a barrier to military intervention (Finer, 1975; Stepan, 1973) unless professionalism is defined in a way that makes the purported link between professionalism and voluntary subordination tautological (Feaver, 1996).

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An organizational culture approach to military involvement in sovereign power issues, then, focuses on the norms held by officers on the question of who should rule the state. Actors' behavior cannot be understood simply with reference to their forward-looking utility calculations; their socially formed subjective understandings and values also must be considered. Armies with different norms will respond differently (intervene or not intervene) to the same stimuli. In addition, norms often serve as a guide to action under conditions of uncertainty (Elster, 1989).

RUSSIAN MILITARY BEHAVIOR, 1992-1999

This section discusses the empirical evidence for the four alternative perspectives on military intervention, as applied to the Russian armed forces after the breakup of the Soviet Union. The weakness of the Russian state and the multiple attacks on military corporate interests provide both the opportunity and the motive for army intervention. Organizational structure represents a potential barrier to intervention, but the most important obstacle has been continuing commitment to a norm of civilian supremacy in the Russian officer corps.

DOMESTIC STRUCTURE

The Russian state today is extremely weak. The weakness of the Soviet state in its last years was dramatically confirmed by its collapse in December 1991. The successor Russian state is plagued by similar problems, and many observers have predicted that Russia is likely to disintegrate as well (Jensen, 1999; Stern, 1994).

A series of indicators of political capacity (Jackman, 1993; Krasner, 1978; Migdal, 1988) demonstrates the weakness of the post-Soviet Russian state. Russia is a new state, with a new constitution, that has undergone only one change in executive leadership since 1991 (and this took place with the irregular circumstance of President Boris Yel'tsin's surprise resignation). This "liability of newness" facing the Russian state, highlighted in the literature on organizational and political development (Jackman, 1993), has led to sharp political conflicts between the executive and legislative branches of power. The rules, norms, and divisions of power governing these relations are still highly uncertain (McFaul, 1998).

Several other indicators also suggest the weak political capacity of the new Russian state. The inability of the state to collect taxes or to enforce federal laws at the regional level, and the absence of real political parties, are

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obvious signs of this weakness (Hanson & Kopstein, 1997; Stoner-Weiss, 1998). The Russian state has also been unable to resist private pressure in key decision spheres. For example, enterprise managers were able to hijack the state's privatization program in pursuit of their own interests (McFaul, 1995). The weakness of the Russian state prevents it from fulfilling its most basic functions, including collecting taxes, paying its own employees, and enforcing laws and the constitution.

The domestic structure approach, then, would lead one to predict military intervention. This has not happened. However, distinguishing between military involvement and military intervention does account for the October 1993 events, discussed below, when the army was dragged into a civilian sovereign power dispute.

CORPORATE INTEREST

The dominant approach to the study of Soviet civil-military relations, as noted above, was the corporate interest perspective. This argument was embraced by other scholars in the early Yel'tsin years. Zisk (1993, p. 17), for example, argued in March 1993,

> An anti-Yel'tsin coup may thus become likely if Yel'tsin proves either unwilling to meet military demands or unable to solve the social, economic, and corporatist problems officers now face. Yel'tsin must demonstrate, continually, both sympathy toward the military and competence as the crisis in Russian society continues. If he does not, the patience of the Russian General Staff may very well snap.

Yel'tsin, it is clear in hindsight, did not live up to these criteria. The Russian army's corporate interests have been seriously undermined in the past decade. The military's decline, which began under Mikhail Gorbachev, accelerated under Yel'tsin and has continued apace with little sign of a turnaround in the near future. Lieven (1996) states flatly, "the Russian army today is weaker than it has been for almost 400 years" (p. 24).

These signs of weakness are diverse and wide ranging. Two basic indicators of corporate interest, organizational size and budget, show clear evidence of an organization under threat. In the 9 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the size of the Russian armed forces has dropped by almost two thirds (see Figure 1). Similarly, since 1992, the military budget has been slashed by 62% (see Figure 2).[12]

12. The data used for these charts are from multiple issues of *The Military Balance* (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1992-1999).

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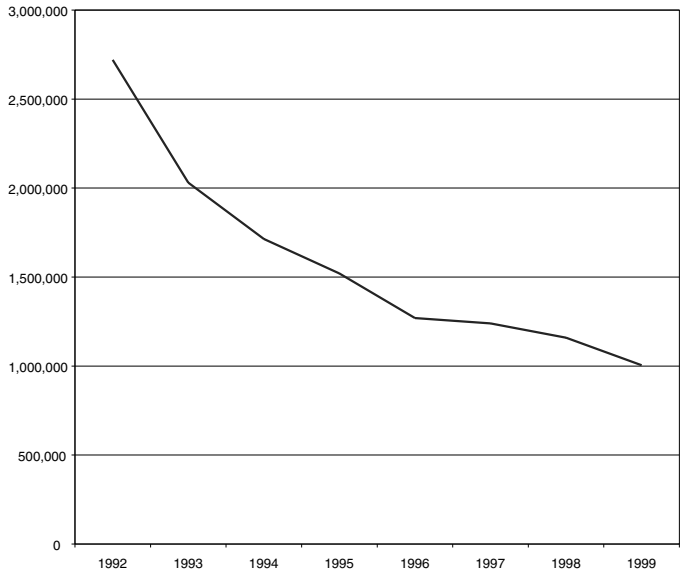

Figure 1: **Drop in number of Russian military personnel from 1992 to 1999.**

If anything, these figures understate the extent of decline, particularly in terms of the budget. According to some estimates, Russian defense spending has declined from $142 billion in 1992 to $4 billion in 1999, a 98% decrease. Moreover, actual expenditures in the past 7 years have rarely if ever reached the budgeted amount. For example, in 1998, actual expenditures were only 55% of planned allocations. Although Yel'tsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, has paid lip service to military needs, his government has proposed to cut many military financial credits, such as free public transport and untaxed wages, and the military budget remains below the levels mandated by Yel'tsin (Korbut, 2000; Manyukov, 1999; Mikhaylov, 2000).

Across a range of issues, the military is in a state of crisis, including housing, manpower, social support, training, and supplies. More than 125,000 officers do not have their own apartments. For several years, more than 70% of officers were regularly paid late, not receiving their salaries for months at a time. Military units have had electricity and telephone service cut off for lack of payment. Many units spend much of their time simply struggling to survive, not engaged in military training ("Kapitany," 1998; Korbut, 1998; "Ofitsery," 1998; Rokhlin, 1998).

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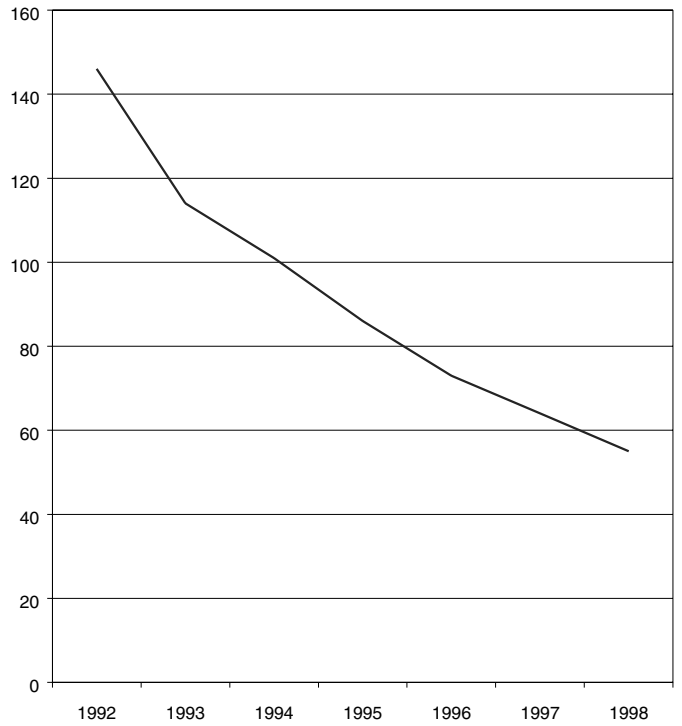

Figure 2: **Drop in spending on Russian military from 1992 to 1998 (in billions of 1997 U.S. dollars).**

The situation became so bad that in 1998, the Defense Ministry issued instructions on foraging for food in the forest, and some units were supplied with dog food (Saradzhyan, 1998). The military leadership has complained bitterly about the hardships inflicted on a once-mighty army. In February 1997, then Defense Minister Igor Rodionov ("Voyennaya tayna," 1997) stated, "What sort of defense minister am I? I am the minister of a disintegrating army and dying navy." General Lev Rokhlin (Shargorodsky, 1997), the former chair of the parliament's defense committee, stated in February 1997 that "if this happened to the army of a well-to-do country, there would have been a military coup long ago."

Rokhlin was not versed in civil-military relations theory, but he intuitively understood the claim made by much of the comparative, Soviet, and post-Soviet literature: Armies whose interests are consistently ignored will be inclined to intervene. The corporate interest approach, then, performs the

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worst of the four being considered; the Russian political leadership under Yel'tsin did not cater to military interests, but the officer corps remained passive.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Internal divisions within the army is one of the most commonly advanced explanations for Russian military passivity. Political, generational, socioeconomic, and regional cleavages are said to prevent concerted action, despite a common interest among officers in rectifying their material plight (Barany, 1999; Mendeloff, 1994).

The counterbalancing argument is also frequently invoked to explain military inaction. Lieven (1998) maintains that President Yel'tsin pursued a strategy of "divide and rule" designed to reduce the threat of military intervention. Experts suggest that the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and the Presidential Security Service have been beefed up, whereas the army has been allowed to atrophy as a way of strengthening Yel'tsin's rule. Galeotti (1997) argues that "an intricate balance of terror" has been created that prevents coup attempts. The Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB, also continues to place agents inside the army to monitor the officer corps.

All of these factors would certainly complicate the plotting of praetorian Russian officers. It is not clear, however, whether they are sufficient in themselves to deter a coup attempt. Reports about the strengthening of the MVD Internal Troops, for example, are at best overstated and at worst simply wrong—these troops also have shrunk considerably since the collapse of the Soviet Union, just not as fast as the regular army (Taylor, 1999). Moreover, many MVD officers were trained and served in the armed forces, including several of the Internal Troops' commanders in the past decade, and would be very reluctant to take up arms against former comrades (V. Solovyev, personal communication, June 16, 2000). The very appointment of army officers to head the Internal Troops calls into question the divide-and-rule argument. Federal Security Service agents, like those in many other armies, engage primarily in counterintelligence, not political monitoring. And the old political officers, or commissars, from the Soviet period do not exist. In general, the amount of political oversight of the officer corps has declined in the past decade. Finally, regular army units and troops from the MVD or the secret police have not been used in a counterbalancing role against each other since 1953, shortly after the death of Stalin. Much more common has been their joint use on the same side of a crisis.

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Other knowledgeable observers believe the difficulties any plotter would face are seriously overstated. Felgengauer (1998), Russia's best known military correspondent, maintained

> If a local military commander based a few hundred kilometers from Moscow were to rebel and demand Yel'tsin's resignation, he would gain support from other units, from the local population, and also the Russian parliament. Such a wildcat military rebellion in Russia could easily trigger a successful coup.

The most serious objection to accepting that organizational structure is an overwhelming barrier to military intervention is that these impediments have not prevented coups in a range of other states. Qualitative and quantitative studies of military coups have shown that divided armies intervene as frequently as unified ones. Paramilitary and security forces can be neutralized. Granted, it is probably easier to overcome these barriers in a country that has a tradition of military intervention, where examples of successful military coups are in the minds not only of the plotters but of their potential opponents. But this only brings us to the question, Why does the Russian army not have this tradition?

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

An examination of Russian military culture, based on its history, polling data, publications, and officers' statements, shows that a well-entrenched belief that the army should be "outside politics" exists. This norm has served as an important barrier to military intervention.

The Russian army was not always apolitical.[13] In the 18th century, Russian officers intervened repeatedly in sovereign power issues, deposing tsars and installing new ones. The last successful military coup in Russia took place in 1801, when Paul I was dethroned. The failed Decembrist uprising of 1825, which was spearheaded by a group of politically ambitious junior and mid-level officers, was a key institutional lesson for Russian officers, demonstrating the risks of a failed intervention. Imperial Russia's greatest defense minister, Dmitriy Milyutin (1861-1881), successfully reoriented the Russian army toward external threats and sharply diminished the involvement of officers in domestic politics and administration (Keep, 1985).

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was made possible in part by a military leadership that was fixated on the war effort and had little desire to get dragged into the political revolution at home. The so-called Kornilov affair in

13. Space obviously prohibits a lengthy exploration of the evolution and change of Russian military norms over several centuries. For a complete discussion, see Taylor (1998).

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August 1917 was a sovereign power crisis precipitated by the accusations of Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky that army commander Lavr Kornilov was guilty of planning a coup and treason. Kornilov had not in fact been planning to seize power, but Kerensky's accusation drove him into open rebellion, and Kornilov and several other leading officers were arrested. Most officers, however, sat out the affair (Katkov, 1980; Munck, 1987). Even after the Bolsheviks took power, the vast majority of officers tried to remain politically neutral, despite the hostility displayed by Lenin and his followers toward the army. It took defeat in a major war and the dismemberment of the country to bring about concerted military intervention during the civil war, and large numbers of imperial army officers served with the Bolsheviks, having concluded that they now represented legitimate civilian rule (Jones, 1976).

Soviet officers, like their late-Imperial counterparts, were inculcated with the notion that they had no role to play in sovereign power issues. The supremacy of the Communist Party over the army was a persistent feature of Soviet politics. Even during Stalin's murderous purges of the officer corps in 1937-1938, in which thousands of officers were killed, the military did nothing to protect itself from this onslaught. The one case of military intervention was the August 1991 coup attempt, which was undertaken to prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union. The putsch, which was organized by the head of the KGB and included the minister of defense, minister of internal affairs, prime minister, and vice president in its ranks, failed largely due to the unwillingness of high-ranking army officers to use force against civilian coup opponents. In December 1991, the officer corps remained passive and let the Soviet Union disintegrate (Taylor, in press-b).

Thus when the Russian state was created in 1992, the apolitical tradition of the officer corps stretched back more than 150 years. Only during the extreme cases of state collapse, in 1917 and 1991, did elements of the officer corps violate organizational norms against military intervention. Normative commitments, however, made military behavior weak, halfhearted, and consequently ineffective. Domestic structure pressures were severe and clearly played an important role in making intervention more likely. Corporate interest considerations were not important in these intervention decisions, and organizational structure was a less important barrier to army action than organizational culture. This cultural disposition has remained remarkably robust during the tumultuous 1990s.

Polling data represent perhaps the most straightforward method of accessing subjective beliefs. The Russian officer corps has been polled on multiple occasions in the past decade. These data show a consistent aversion to a military role in high politics. In a number of polls conducted between 1992

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(Makarov, 1992; Zalesskiy, 1992) and 1997, large majorities (from 75% to 90%) of officers have stated their view that the army should not become involved in politics and their opposition to military rule. For example, in a U.S. Information Agency survey (Grant, 1997) of 1,200 Russian officers in May 1997, 78% of those polled stated that the military should not be involved in domestic politics. A major poll (Ball & Gerber, 1996, p. 166) conducted in 1995 concluded, "The majority of officers we interviewed displayed an unmistakably democratic orientation." In a poll conducted in 1994 (*The Military Elite in Russia*, 1994), officers rated full Russian membership in NATO within the next 2 years more likely than a military coup.

These polling data demonstrate how fallacious comparisons of the Russian military to Third World and Latin American militaries are (e.g., Blank, 1998). Data on the Ecuadorian military from the 1950s and 1960s, for example, showed that less than 20% of officers believed that military involvement in domestic politics was illegitimate (Fitch, 1977), in sharp contrast to the opinions of Russian officers today.[14]

Another important aspect of Russian military organizational culture is the widely held belief that the army's primary task is defense of the state against external attack. Polls in recent years have found a majority of officers against using the military for internal tasks, including domestic policing missions. The only internal missions that consistently gain support are in cases of natural disasters or nuclear power accidents (Ball, 1996; *The Military Elite in Russia*, 1994). The first Chechen War (1994-1996) was perceived by many officers as an internal policing mission and encountered serious opposition from many high-ranking officers (Lieven, 1998). In contrast, the second Chechen War, begun in 1999 and continuing today, came about after an attack by Chechen rebels on a neighboring Russian republic and has been seen by both military and civilian elites as a legitimate defense of the state's territorial integrity. Current officer support for the war does not imply a willingness to become involved in sovereign power issues.

This aversion to involvement in sovereign power issues also has been demonstrated in the statements of the military leadership and in the indoctrination materials of the armed forces. Russia's first minister of defense after independence, Pavel Grachev, reiterated continuously during his 4 years in office that the military should be "outside politics." Grachev (Dokuchayev, 1992) clearly stated this position in December 1992: "The army should be outside politics, and the leadership of the armed forces will not permit it to be

14. Incidentally, the sharp contrast between the Russian and Ecuadorian results shows that polls of officers should not be simply dismissed as unreliable because significant variation was found both within and across different militaries (as well as across time in Ecuador). The results must be taken seriously.

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dragged into politics. Soldiers do not want to become hostages, or even more so participants in any political games" (p. 3).

Officers in military publications stress the tradition of subordination to civilian authority in the Russian and Soviet armed forces. Bel'kov (1992, p. 26) noted that the Russian army "does not have putschist traditions, and also no putschist inclinations." Rodachin (1993, pp. 13-14) argued that the tradition of civil-military relations in a country has a major influence on the stance of the officer corps. Prerevolutionary Russia, observed Rodachin, had "firm traditions of soldierly obedience, inspired by the ideas of faithful service to the tsar and fatherland." Similarly, he continued, in the Soviet period, the army was "unquestionably subordinate [to] the institutions of power controlled and directed by the party."

Russian military journals remained focused on narrow military issues throughout the late Soviet and early postindependence period. The overwhelming majority of articles in the main army journal, *Military Herald*, from 1985 to 1993 were about traditional military questions such as tactics, training, personnel issues, and military history; less than three tenths of one percent dealt with internal security questions. This fixation on narrow technical issues is particularly notable during a period of state collapse. In contrast, the French military in the 1950s (Ambler, 1968) and the Brazilian army in the 1950s and 1960s (Stepan, 1971) began to focus more on internal threats and "counter-revolutionary war" in their journals, a shift in orientation that pointed to a changing organizational culture with a more praetorian outlook.[15]

Consistent with an organizational culture account, Russian officers point to the lessons learned from critical events that reinforced norms of civilian supremacy. The disastrous use of the military for internal missions in Tbilisi, Georgia, in April 1989 and Vilnius, Lithuania, in January 1991 reinforced officers' views that playing an active role in domestic politics was not the army's job and would only damage the military's reputation. The military newspaper *Red Star* ("U armii," 1993), for example, emphasized institutional lessons and their influence on the officer corps:

> In the last few years [the army] has learned a great deal. So many times it has been set up and betrayed. There was Afghanistan, and Tbilisi, and Vilnius, and the August putsch of 1991. The bitter experience received in the burden of these dramas, of course, had its effect. And if there are some political forces or leaders that even theoretically consider the use of military force in the resolution of internal political problems, they need to think about this.

15. The content analysis of *Military Herald* is discussed in more detail in Taylor (1998).

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In summary, the dominant organizational culture of the Russian armed forces, based on a wide range of data, demonstrates a strong commitment to a norm of civilian supremacy and the belief that officers should not be involved in sovereign power issues.

The organizational culture of the Russian officer corps, however, is not monolithic. As the polling data suggest, there is an organizational subculture (around 10%-20% of the officer corps) with a more praetorian stance. This cohort bases its stance on the multiple humiliations experienced by the army in the past decade, including the collapse of the Soviet state and the repeated blows to the army's corporate interests catalogued above.[16]

A series of pretenders, with varying degrees of seriousness, have put themselves forward as a Russian "man on horseback" during the past 8 years. Most recently, in the summer of 1997, General Rokhlin (1997) charged that Yel'tsin was responsible for the collapse of the army, called on Yel'tsin to resign, and announced that he was forming a Movement in Support of the Army that would rally the people and push Yel'tsin from power. Many observers took this threat seriously, but the movement has little support (it received .59% of the vote in December 1999 Duma elections) and Rokhlin himself was killed in the summer of 1998 in a domestic dispute. A U.S. State Department report (1999) concluded "attempts to organize the armed forces into opposition movements . . . have fizzled after receiving little support from the armed forces and have had negligible impact on Russia's political order."

Of course, creating a public movement is the opposite strategy from organizing a coup. To the extent that Russian officers have been involved in Russian domestic politics, it has been to lobby for military interests within legally available channels. When Russian officers run for public office, for example, it implies an acceptance of the democratic process, not its rejection.[17]

SUMMARY

Four different theoretical approaches have been tested against Russian military behavior in the Yel'tsin era (1992 to 1999). Consistent with organizational structure and organizational culture accounts and contrary to domestic structure and corporate interest perspectives, the Russian military has not intervened in politics. The corporate interest approach performs particularly poorly (Table 1).

16. Baranets (1997, pp. 27-28) provides good anecdotal evidence on the existence of a praetorian subculture. On organizational subcultures, see Sackmann (1992).

17. Although most Western democracies appropriately restrict active-duty officers from running for public office, this is not true in Russia.

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Table 1
Predictions and Evidence of Russian Military Behavior

	Predictions				
Observations	Domestic Structure	Corporate Interest	Organizational Structure	Organizational Culture	Outcome
1992 to 1999	Intervention or arbitration likely	Intervention likely	Intervention unlikely	Intervention unlikely	No intervention One arbitration
October 1993 events	Intervention or arbitration likely	Intervention likely If arbitration, will side with contender most likely to protect corporate interests	Intervention unlikely If arbitration, internal split or counterbalancing possible	Intervention unlikely If arbitration, first choice is neutrality, second choice is to side with most legitimate contender	Arbitration Sided with most legitimate contender after initial neutrality Internal split feared but did not take place; no counterbalancing

There was one instance of military arbitration during this period, in October 1993. Process tracing of this event shows that the stance adopted by the military during the crisis was most consistent with organizational culture predictions, partially consistent with domestic and organizational structure arguments, and inconsistent with corporate interest claims.

THE OCTOBER 1993 EVENTS

Although the military has not intervened in sovereign power issues in post-Soviet Russia, it has been involved in high politics. In October 1993, during his showdown with the former Supreme Soviet and his vice president, Alexander Rutskoy, Yel'tsin called on the army to use force to suppress armed bodies that had come out in open revolt against the Yel'tsin government (Taylor, 1994; Taylor, in press-a). What do these events say about the competing theories considered here?

The October 1993 crisis was a clear case of military arbitration, not military intervention. The crisis began September 21, when Yel'tsin signed a decree closing down the Supreme Soviet. The Supreme Soviet declared Yel'tsin's decree unconstitutional and appointed Rutskoy as president. Rutskoy proceeded to appoint his own minister of defense and other top officials. The military leadership adopted a stance of neutrality during the early phases of the crisis, declaring that they were "outside politics" and insisting, in Garbo-esque fashion, that they wanted to be "left alone" (Maryukha, 1993; Pavlovskiy, 1993, pp. 5, 16, 50).

Only after open violence had erupted on the streets of Moscow, with the pro-parliamentary forces launching assaults on the mayor's office and the main television tower, was the army called in to put down the uprising. Initially the army reiterated its position of neutrality, asserting that MVD Internal Troops should resolve the crisis. Yel'tsin's military adviser, General Dmitriy Volkogonov (Volgonov & Kiselev, 1993), noted, "until the last moment . . . this slogan was heard everywhere, that the army is outside politics." Deputy Minister of Defense Col.-Gen. V. I. Mironov (1994, p. 591) observed that the slogan "the army is outside politics . . . undoubtedly, made a definite imprint both on societal perceptions and on the psychology of soldiers." Yel'tsin (1994, p. 384) wrote in his memoirs that the government, the military, and society "had become hostages to a pretty formula: the army is outside politics."

Yel'tsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin went to the Ministry of Defense at 2 a.m. on October 4 to convince the army leadership to storm the so-called White House (the Russian parliament building), where the anti-

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Yel'tsin opposition had returned after its failure to seize the main television tower. Grachev insisted on a written order from Yel'tsin indicating Yel'tsin's responsibility for the decision to, as Grachev put it, "use tanks in Moscow" (Baranets, 1997; Korzhakov, 1997; Yel'tsin, 1994).

The decisive factor propelling the army into action was a direct, written order from Yel'tsin. When asked what it was that eventually moved the military leadership, Volkogonov (1993) replied, "the order of the commander-in-chief, which was given in the presence of the prime minister." Yel'tsin ("President," 1993) later reflected, "I took the view that the defense minister should have acted himself, but he did not. That is why I had to give the order." When push came to shove, the military leadership's unwillingness to be involved in sovereign power issues was trumped by the responsibility to carry out the orders of the legitimate head of state.

Contrary to predictions at the time (e.g., Kuz'mishchev, 1993; Odom, 1993), the military's role in October 1993 did not open the door to more extensive political involvement in the future. Most officers were appalled by the need to use the army to settle a domestic political struggle. Marshall Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov (Dikun, 1993, p. 8), the last Soviet minister of defense, stated, "A normal officer or soldier regrets that he was drawn into this conflict and now desires only one thing, that it not be repeated." The October 1993 events reinforced existing organizational norms against military involvement in sovereign power issues.[18]

How do the theories discussed above perform in explaining the Russian army's role in October 1993? The army was dragged into the political dispute between Yel'tsin and the Supreme Soviet due to the low political capacity of the Russian state. The domestic structure approach, then, helps explain why the armed forces became involved in a domestic political crisis. The October 1993 events were not, however, the classic military coup that this approach considers likely in periods of political disorder. Latsis (1993, p. 5) noted after the October events,

> The *use* of the army in internal conflicts is no gift; it signifies the failing of politics. . . . But, this in principle should not be confused with the *intervention* of the army in politics, that is an independent political decision of the military.

The corporate interest approach performs especially poorly. The post-Soviet Russian army had fared extremely poorly as an organization in its first few years of existence—to say nothing of during the final years of the Soviet

18. In contrast, in Ecuador a case of military arbitration in 1997 apparently encouraged praetorian sentiments and paved the way for a later coup. These different reactions can be explained by the very different military cultures and traditions in the two states.

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period. The political crisis of September-October 1993 could have been seized as a golden opportunity to promote the military's interests. Rather than seeking a larger role in politics, however, the army hoped to avoid any involvement. In fact, the armed forces supported the contender for power (Yel'tsin) who was less sympathetic to military corporate interests than the ex-General Rutskoy. After October 1993, the military's corporate interests, in terms of power and resources, have been cut even more than they were in 1992 to 1993.

The organizational structure perspective provides a plausible explanation for the hesitancy of the military leadership. Grachev (Burbyga, 1993) noted that one of his key tasks had been preventing a split in the officer corps, suggesting that he considered internal divisions in the army a real problem. Yel'tsin ("Muzhskoy razgovor," 1993) also later remarked that the fear of a split in the army had delayed the storming of the White House. In the final analysis, however, very few officers openly supported the parliamentary opposition. Moreover, it was not the case that the army's key role in October 1993 emboldened the officer corps for further political activity by demonstrating their capacity for playing a decisive role in sovereign power disputes. Counterbalancing also was not an issue—the other security forces worked together with the army in storming the White House.

The organizational culture approach performs particularly well both as an explanation of the army's initial unwillingness to play a role in the domestic power dispute and in its ultimate subordination to civilian authority. The army had a long tradition of nonintervention and had learned through bitter experience in the late Soviet period that it should avoid internal missions. Minister of Defense Grachev's favorite axiom, "the army is outside politics," had been reinforced by events such as the failed August 1991 coup and heavily promoted within the armed forces. These organizational norms served as a focal point (Kreps, 1990) that helped orient officer behavior during the highly unpredictable situation they faced in September to October 1993. Military hesitation was overcome by a direct written order from the commander-in-chief, reinforced by the fear of widespread disorder and even civil war if the army stayed on the sidelines (Dikun, 1993; Leonidov, 1993). Even so, many officers believed that Grachev had violated organizational norms against military involvement in politics and expressed their dismay at the October events (Ball, 1996; Lt.-Gen. [ret.] V. V. Serebryannikov, personal communication, July 6, 1994; Maj.-Gen. A. V. Tsal'ko, personal communication, July 28, 1994; Turchenko, 1993). Finally, in terms of counterfactual analysis, a military that had a tradition of playing the arbiter role (Stepan, 1971) would have been much more likely to insert itself into a sovereign power dispute between civilian contenders.

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CONCLUSION

Why do the two dominant explanations for military coups in the existing literature, domestic structure and corporate interest, provide either partially or completely flawed predictions for Russia? The major reason is because many scholars have failed to sufficiently delimit the applicability of their theories (King et al., 1994). These explanations often provide compelling accounts of military behavior, but studying noncoups allows us to see some other things that might be going on. Officers may be deterred from intervening, despite ample opportunity and motive, by barriers to effective action within the military itself. These barriers can be either material (organizational structure), ideational (organizational culture), or both.

Although based on different logics, in this case, rational calculation and normative restraint reinforced one another. Officer corps norms often will be central to the calculation of coup plotters. If potential coup makers believe that they will face widespread military resistance or inactivity because most officers adhere to a norm of civilian supremacy, and therefore no coup is attempted, then norms have played an important role. In contrast, in armies with weak normative constraints against intervention, internal divisions may actually make the use of force by a military subgroup more likely. Both self-interested and normative reasons may be present in any particular action, but this does not mean that norms are not autonomous or important (Elster, 1989).

The behavior of the Russian army in the post-Soviet period shows that deeply embedded norms can restrain officers from pursuing strategies that other militaries might adopt. Armies with more permissive organizational cultures and a tradition of military intervention and rule, on the other hand, may not show similar restraint. Unfortunately, the process of instilling norms of nonintervention can often be a lengthy one (see Putnam, 1993). Civilian elites also do not have complete control over the institutional lessons officers will draw from previous experiences.[19]

Does this mean a military coup is impossible in Russia? The field of Sovietology (and political science in general), after all, is littered with predictions falsified by later events. Analysts (e.g., Kagarlitsky, 2000) have wasted no time in forecasting that Putin also faces the danger of a military coup. However, based on the evidence discussed above, a norm of civilian supremacy seems strongly entrenched in the Russian officer corps, despite the political tumult of the past 15 years. The two cases of military intervention this

19. For prescriptions on the construction of civilian control institutions, see Busza (1996), Frazer (1995), and Stepan (1988).

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century took place during periods of state collapse, the 1917 revolution and the Soviet collapse in 1991. Even in those cases, especially in 1991, support for intervention was thin and halfhearted. Barring the unlikely scenario of state collapse, the most likely scenario for military involvement in sovereign power issues is through military arbitration. Past experience suggests that the army will try to remain on the sidelines.

Thus military behavior will remain at least partially dependent on the fate of Russian democracy and the actions of civilian elites. Russia's democratization efforts have encountered a host of significant obstacles. A praetorian military, however, has not been one of them. This fortunate situation has made it possible both to radically decrease military spending in the face of a severe budget crunch and to call on the army to repress domestic rebels (as in October 1993) without the fear that the army would seek political power for itself. Few observers would describe Russia today as lucky, but at least in this limited sense it has been fortunate.

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