

# Caucasus Nightmare

## Red Dawn in Chechnya: A Campaign Chronicle

by Adam Geibel

This article was assembled from unclassified sources, in most cases without comment. Some reports required interpretation or extrapolation, which are italicized. This article is not meant to be definitive, as 'hard' information coming from the conflict area through civilian sources can be distorted, ignored or misinterpreted.

*"Freedom is their God, and war is their love. They repay good for good and blood for blood"*

Lermontov's description of 19th Century Chechens, in 'Izmail-bey'

### Prelude to Civil War

The dissent along the southern edge of the old Soviet Empire can be traced back to one of Stalin's legacies — ethnic resettlement. 'Enemies of the State' — usually minorities who allegedly supported the Nazis — were transported *en masse* thousands of miles away and not allowed to return for decades.

In reality, this policy served two purposes: populating desolate areas, and making room for reliable European Russians in the more desirable areas. Now, the ethnic minorities are back, and they don't want anything to do with Moscow, 1,000 miles to the north.

To the south is the large and independent Georgian Republic, to the southeast Azerbaijan. Even after the major republics split from the CIS, areas within the Russian Caucasus have been splintered.

Just to the west, Moscow backed Northern Ossetia's bid to separate from Georgia. The North Ossetians then moved against Inguish on 31 Oct 92, aided by a regiment of the Pskov Airborne Division. By supporting the Ossetians, the Russians created a power base at the western edge of Inguishtan around the garrison town of Vladikavkaz.

The Inguish Republic, repopulated with a returning Muslim minority similar to the Chechens and Dagestanis, split from Chechnya in 1992.

The litany continues. Moscow has been involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh debacle in Azerbaijan since 1988, po-

liced a truce in Southern Ossetia (trying to succeed from Georgia and join the North) and helped Abkhazia secede from Georgia in 1993.

### Chechnya

Under the leadership of Dzhokhar [Jokhar] Dudayev, a former Soviet Air Force bomber pilot and general, Chechnya unilaterally seceded from Russia in 1991. Since the region has strategic value for Moscow — Grozny's refineries had produced 8 million barrels a year and rail lines to the south passed through the territory — Yeltsin's advisors fear that Chechnya (smaller than New Jersey, with 1.1 to 1.3 million inhabitants) would slip away for good.

Among Moscow's complaints are that the area is a haven for the revenue-draining Russian Mafia and that black market



arms, oil, stolen automobiles, and narcotics smuggling are rife. Russian sources speculate that every Chechen household has at least one fully automatic (and illegal) weapon.

Dudayev's popularity amongst Chechens slips as crime and corruption spread throughout the republic. Since its declaration of independence, the breakaway government thumbs its nose at Moscow and is the target of several covert operations aiding anti-Dudayev forces.

Will Chechnya be the first of the CIS hodgepodge of 89 separate states — including 22 'republics' and 10 auto-

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mous regions — to secede? If so, the danger to the rest of the world lies further down the road, should Russia's nuclear arsenal fragment as well.

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#### Late November, 1994

With instigation and material support from Russian Intelligence, anti-Dudayev forces move against Grozny — a city at the foot of the Caucasus mountains. Dudayev loyalists claim 20 tanks destroyed, 350 dead, and 120 Russian mercenaries captured in the fighting.

For the next week, Yeltsin, Counter-Intelligence<sup>1</sup> Chief Sergei Stepashin, and Defense Minister Pavel Grachev deny giving Dudayev's opponents anything but political aid. However, Moscow relatives of the POWs in Grozny publicly identify them as members of the Russian Army. The commanding general of the 'Kantemir' Division resigns, protesting the use of his men as pawns.

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#### 7 December 1994

When Chechnya threatens to execute the Russians, Yeltsin is forced to play his hand. He gives Dudayev a 48-hour deadline for Chechen forces to lay down their arms and receive limited amnesty. When the 6 a.m. (Thursday, 9 December) mark passes, Russian forces mass along Chechnya's borders. Yeltsin offers to extend the deadline to 0001 hrs, 11 December.

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#### 10 December 1994

Dudayev's opponents use sophisticated fighter-bombers (possibly Su-25 Frogfoots) against loyalist forces, which indicates more materiel aid from Moscow.

Thirty An-12 transports land airborne forces in Northern Ossetia, carrying an estimated 6,000 troops [*rough description of an airborne division*] and their equipment. Mi-6 Hooks, still in civilian Aeroflot blue and white markings, provide tactical lift capability [*Note: Equipment in the area of operations could also indicate the presence of an air assault brigade*].

Chechen claims Dudayev's forces number from 12,000 to 13,000 guerrillas, though Russian military sources estimate only 3,000 are well-armed. Their weapons range from shot-guns and WWII-era bolt-action rifles to AK-74s and RPG-7/16s and 18s, without appreciable heavy assets like AA, heavy artillery, or tanks. There is speculation that the rebels have access to Stingers, [*more likely SA-7/14s*]. One source claimed that the rebels could muster 50 'tanks' [*a typical civilian press misnomer for anything with a gun and tracks*.<sup>2</sup>]

However, one must remember that a healthy percentage of Russia's population had been drafted and spent enough time in uniform to learn how to use a Kalashnikov or RPG. The Islamic locals have a long tradition of independence and sheer hate for Moscow's edicts. Their threats of guerrilla warfare carry the weight of history.

Dudayev's forces wear civilian clothes or a mixture of Soviet army cast-offs, a green bandana (symbolic of Islam) the only uniform item. Their resolve is grim; they organize in 'death brigades.' After Dudayev declares a *gazavat* (holy war), Interior Ministry propaganda asserts that 2,500 guerrillas are from neighboring Islamic republics and countries.

Apart from a Abkhazian battalion contingent, the reports will turn out false — intended to inflame public opinion against an Islamic tide. However, an estimated 98 percent of the area's residents are not practicing Muslims. Dudayev's call is a political one, not religious.

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#### 11 December 1994

Russian forces enter Chechnya in a three-prong attack, from the north, west, and south. From the beginning, the invasion commanders massively underestimate Chechen resistance. As soon as Russian forces leave their assembly areas behind the border, they come under harassing attacks. At least 20 Russian troops are captured in the first day.

In addition to Russian paratroops, the force is estimated to include another 35,000 men organized ad hoc in four divisions for the Chechen operation. Among them are Spetsnaz commandos, professional officers, Interior Ministry troops, intelligence service officers, contract soldiers hired from Russia's unemployed, and teenaged conscripts.<sup>3</sup>

The University of Edinburgh's John Erikson, a Russian military specialist, points out that coordination between these different elements is chaotic, with no clear command structure. Moving troops at the beginning of winter is another blunder.

This task force, while equipped with T-80s, T-72s, BMP-2s and BMDs, *has no time to work out their tactical and administrative problems. In the weeks to come, the supply situation will become grossly inadequate.*

Reuters reports that the northern column consists of 400 vehicles: APCs, tanks, SPAA weapons, mine-clearing vehicles and bridge-layers, as well as light river boats carried on transporters.

In Grozny, local television broadcasts instruct viewers on how to fight tanks in the city, how to make Molotov cocktails, and how to use RPGs.

Facing Russian threats, some of the anti-Dudayev forces put aside their differences to defend their homeland. *As in the Balkans, invariably some of these militias were pre-war criminal gangs now infected with patriotic fervor.* Moscow fears that ethnic Chechen criminal gangs could become terrorist cells — at least one BTR-70 checkpoint is deployed at the city's outskirts.

As Russian troops roll, Yeltsin will disappear from public view for the next 16 days — in the hospital for a sinus operation. There will be speculation that Yeltsin's advisors — including General Grachev — will deliberately keep the President isolated.

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#### 12 December 1994

Fresh snow covers the Caucasus. Rebel night raids, 'just enough to cause panic,' force the Russians to deploy troops to protect rear-echelon units.

The Inguish (western) column is ambushed and 30 vehicles set afire, while 48 prisoners were taken from the southern column by Dagestani irregulars — apparently without much Russian resistance. The southern column was under orders not to fire on civilians *and was apparently not expecting resistance.*

The first rumors of trigger-happy Russian troops firing on reporters and refugees filter out of the area.

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### 13 December 1994

The chinks in the Russian suit of armor become apparent. AFV crewmen are seen constantly adjusting carburetors and using buckets of puddle water to refill radiators at each stop. Rations and drinking water are in short supply.

There are more allegations of atrocities. Just outside of Assinovskaya, at around 1800 hrs — Russian troops fired on a group of refugee automobiles, killing up to nine civilians. Eyewitnesses reported that the Russians knew the civilians were unarmed and removed all of the bodies. Subsequent searches revealed empty cartridge cases, riddled and bloodstained vehicles, AFV tracks, but no bodies. Russian intelligence sources admitted the firing, but claimed it was in response to a guerrilla attack.

Along the Western route, Ingush locals sabotage rail lines and throw up roadblocks. The Western press counts seven burnt-out trucks on the road from Ingushetia, while others, with their tires cut, have been towed away. There are reports that Russian troops retaliated, burning a mosque and six homes.

A Russian pattern will emerge during the campaign — of assault, then resupply and reorganization under a flag of truce, then another assault.

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### 14 December 1994

The western column is stopped by sniper fire 18 miles from Grozny at Sleptsovskaya. Alongside the highway, a Grad missile launcher sets up to fire on Achkoi-Martan four miles ahead. Reports indicate 100 Russian POWs taken to date.

The Russian public begins to experience its first 'TV war.' Not only are the usual Western press agencies covering the fighting, but ITAR-Tass (the semi-official Russian news source), NTV (Russia's biggest independent television station) and a gaggle of other Russia media types are in the area. *Unlike Desert Storm, the Russian military appears to have no cohesive press policy.* Reports often appear unedited. Images of refugees, of rebels filled with religious fervor, of bombed-out buildings, of dead Russian soldiers are brought right into the citizens' apartments.

Afghanistan was a war fought in public denial by the government. Even a little over a year ago, *Swan Lake* played on Russian TV as tanks shelled the Parliament Building.

The Chechen coverage is not without a political agenda. Vladimir Gusinsky, MOST Bank president and the media magnate (owner of NTV, the newspaper *Sevodnya*, and radio station Echo Moskvy) is a political enemy of Yeltsin's. His offices were recently raided by masked government law enforcement officers.

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### 15 December 1994

The deadline comes and goes while TASS notes that 'not a single gun has been turned in...' Another deadline for 18 December is set.

Chechen rebels freely admit that they will take regular Russian troops prisoner, but not special forces... Dudayev threatens to execute one Russian PW for every air raid, but never carries it out.

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### 16 December 1994

Facing a human chain of several hundred civilians, the western column's leader, General Ivan Babichev, halts his

troops. At 1400 hours, Babichev and Col. Gennady Kandalin (both of the 19th MRD) met with Chechen leaders and journalists in Novo-Shurvoi, 20 miles from Grozny. Babichev hugs some weeping mothers and declares that his troops will not fight Chechen civilians, a statement bordering on mutiny.

The troops echoed their General's statement, and morale plummets. The column will not move for more than a week.

There are threats to use 'rockets' on Grozny if the rebels do not respond to the latest ultimatum.

According to the International Red Cross, since 11 December Grozny's estimated prewar population of 400,000 has shrunk to around 100,000 as women and children headed for fortified farms in the countryside and guerrilla fighters arrive. Many of the civilians that remain are too old to run or have no place to go.

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### 17 December 1994

Russian bombers knocked out five bridges along the Terek River, *presumably to cut the flow of refugees and Chechen reinforcements.* A Russian MASH unit sets up in Vladikavkaz. Western media estimates Russian casualties range from 16 to 70 KIA.

Three hours before midnight, Dudayev agrees to talks but Yeltsin rejects this as 'inadequate.'

The northern column halts 6-10 miles outside of Grozny, and at 2100 hours, Russian tanks fire on Chechen-held villages around Grozny and Russian aircraft bomb Grozny proper.

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### 18 December 1994

Under a new coat of snow, Russian air force jets bombed military and civilian targets in the Grozny area. Moscow claimed that shelling knocked out 16 rebel tanks and APCs, five aircraft (*apparently Su-17s*), two artillery pieces, a missile launcher, and an ammunition dump.

An Mi-8 helicopter is downed intact *by rebel ground fire*, the injured pilot executed. Apparently, the copilot and *crew chief* were already dead. ITAR-Tass reported that, in addition to the two crewmen, two military doctors were on board.

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### 19 December 1994

The northern column was within five miles of Grozny after capturing the fortified village of Petropavlovskaya. Another column, engaged in small arms and tank duels, halted in Dolinskoye, a western suburb. Twenty-four hours after spurning Yeltsin's last cease-fire offer, Dudayev presses his own appeal.

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### 21 December 1994

Western media show a unit of very young Russian infantrymen who surrender to the rebels *en masse.* *Their faces look like the German children sent to face the Soviet horde in April, 1945.*

Russian jets with gravity bombs begin hitting indiscriminate targets. They will continue this for the next ten days, in concert with long-range artillery bombardments, allegedly targeting industrial and utility sites within the city. They

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will hit some viable targets, as well as an orphanage, a hospital, and countless buildings of no military value.

One reason for the poor accuracy was the token use of *expensive* laser-guided weaponry. The other was pilot proficiency — most had logged only 30 hours flight time in the previous year.

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#### **22 December 1994**

Russian forces step up pressure on Chechen strongpoints, often using Mi-24 Hinds for rocket attacks when the weather permits. Dolinskoye, 15 miles northwest of Grozny, continues to hold out in defiance of Russian tank fire.

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#### **24 December 1994**

GEN Eduard Vorobyov, ground forces commander in Chechnya and commander of last summer's joint Russian-American military exercise, is relieved of duty. Allegations fly that Moscow has been issuing all orders over the phone, without written backup, in order to maintain 'plausible deniability.'

Deputy Minister LTG Valery Vostrokin told the AP that all he had seen "are drunken soldiers and drunken officers manning the posts." One sergeant tells a Russian reporter that his battalion has 25 AWOLs.

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#### **26 December 1994**

Avlur Dudayev, Dzhokhar Dudayev's son, was seriously wounded in fighting outside of Grozny. His location is unknown.

Only now do Chechen rebels prepare bunkers and fighting positions within an 800-meter radius of the Presidential palace, formerly the offices of the Communist Party. They vow to hold the building at all costs, which promises to be a tough nut to crack. The structure was built to shelter citizens from the effects of a nuclear attack.

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#### **28 December 1994**

INTERFAX News agency reports at least 17 known Russian deserters.

The inexperience of young Russian tank crews becomes apparent as T-72s slide on mud-covered roads. An anonymous Russian colonel thought the drivers might have been exhausted and falling asleep, but they were simply incapable of dealing with the difficult conditions.

Yeltsin announces a "government of national revival" for Chechnya, to be headed by Salambek N. Khajiyev and other members of Chechen opposition groups. *Nothing more is heard of this puppet-government-in-waiting for two weeks.*

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#### **30 December 1994**

The tempo of aerial bombardments increases. An ammonia plant is bracketed and damaged. Admitted Russian casualties to this point are 61 KIA, 187 WIA.

The war in Chechnya is expensive, estimated by the newspaper *Izvestia* to cost 1 percent of the Russian GNP. The Russian army budgets \$56 to \$60 million, the Interior Ministry another \$18 million. Both Western and Russian economists' speculation fluctuates on how much more the fighting \$ and rebuilding — will cost, and whether it will endanger a \$6.4 billion IMF loan.

## **New Year's Eve Strike**

The desultory air and artillery strikes of the past week built to a crescendo during the day, a prelude to the mechanized Russian assault of 2,000 troops [*a rough description of an MRR*] with the railway station their objective. The Chechens anticipate the assault and bus in more fighters throughout the day, though Dudayev can rely on only 5,000 men.

On top of bad morale and an exhausting advance on the city, none of the Russian troops have maps of the objective,<sup>4</sup> nor have they received any MOUT training prior to the assault. Reported incidents of 'friendly fire' are rampant. Somehow, the lessons of Stalingrad, of Budapest, Prague, and Afghanistan are forgotten: the covering infantry become separated from the tanks, *or more likely wait too long to dismount, according to one PW's commentary.*

A motorized rifle battalion's BMP-2s took the brunt of the slaughter at the railway station; 30 survivors spend the next ten days barricaded in two nearby apartment buildings. A few blocks away, a group of cut-off paratroopers dig in and wait for help.

At the end of the day, Chechen fighters boast of 50 tanks destroyed. Film footage shows a massacre: a square full of smoking BMP-2s, an isolated and shattered BTR, rebels firing from the cover of a pair of disabled ERA-fitted T-80s, a street full of burnt-out T-72 and BMP-2 hulks. Russian and Western press counted nine AFVs knocked out in the Central Square.

The Chechens use ancient tactics — disabling the vehicle with an RPG or Molotov, then shooting the panicked occupants as they bail out. One driver fires back with his Kalashnikov as Chechen guerrillas close in. Fueled by religious fever, Chechen RPG gunners roam about, eagerly searching for targets.

Izvestia will report that Grachev orders the attack while drunk, offering to award a medal if Grozny is taken by his birthday, 1 January.

## **Regrouping**

### **1 January 1995**

*Russian troops lick their wounds.* Vladimir Chudinov, a 19-year-old infantryman and PW, claims to be the only train station assault survivor of his 120-man company. His unit had arrived in the AO 27 December 94.

Spetsnaz forces thoroughly search all traffic coming from Dagestan while a BBC producer and her crew are arrested while trying to film impact areas from Tolstoy-Yurt.

Today will be the last specific report of the immobilized western column.

In the weeks to follow, General Babichev will not be mentioned, yet there will be implications that his men are moving again.

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### **2 January 1995**

For three hours, SU-27s rocket and bomb Shali, claiming a few empty autos and two buses reportedly full of civilians.

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### 3 January 1995

Defense Minister Grachev declares that his troops control central Grozny. However, most Russians in that area are dead or wounded.

ITAR-Tass reports that an 'elite ground unit' and a naval infantry unit are enroute from Murmansk, and that other units are on the way from the Urals (The MRD at Yekaterinburg [?]) and the 'Tula' Airborne Division) and the Far East.

Troops of the Russian-backed, anti-Dudayev 'Chechen Provisional Council,' led by Russian Labazanov, attack Russian units.

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### 4 January 1995

Fighting in the city is sporadic, with middle-aged, white-haired Chechens holding the teenaged Russians off with rifle fire. Yeltsin orders the "end of the bombardment of the capital of Chechnya," but the fighting continues.

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### 5 January 1995

Chechen sources claim that only a handful of the 200 AFVs used in the New Year's Eve attack were T-80s, and that 100 AFVs were knocked out. Infantry support was allegedly minimal. Estimates rise to 300 Russians KIA during the attack.

Pavel Feltgengauer, a Moscow military analyst for *Sevodnya*, theorizes that the Russian forces used outdated tanks that were to be disposed of under the CFE Treaty. *However, no T-54/55s are seen on film — only standard issue AFVs.*

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### 7 January 1995

Russian forces start using MOUT tactics reminiscent of Stalingrad, with infantry moving up building-by-building and tanks in direct support. Some units are reported to be within 1500 meters of the Presidential Palace. Cracked gas mains and buildings throughout the city burn unchecked, but Chechen forces still hold the palace. Artillery fire support was estimated at 15-20 rounds per minute while the city the Russians have come to save crumbles.

The Chechens are capable of return fire. The commander of the Russian Interior Ministry forces, MG Viktor Vorobyov, is reported killed by a rebel mortar burst. Two senior officers are wounded in the same attack.

Russian authorities admit to 256 KIAs and claim 2,500 rebel casualties. Unofficial sources put the figure at 2,000 for each side. Civilian casualty figures are unavailable, but estimated to have been heavy due to indiscriminate Russian bombing.

Over the next several days, ground fog will cloak the fields around Grozny. MAJ Andrei Ivanov and 12 paratroopers are captured by rebels in the hills outside Alkhazurovo, while on a search-and-destroy sweep.

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### 8 January 1995

Dudayev has abandoned his bunker underneath the Presidential Palace, Russian press reporting that he had fled to a mountain hideout 25 miles southwest of Grozny.

Russian artillery intensifies to 12 rounds per minute in support of an attack on the railroad station. The attack is beaten back, but 29 Russian AFVs reach the central market,

where they are able to fire on the Presidential Palace. Film of Palace defenders shows good tactics: standing well inside to hide muzzle flashes while firing through windows, moving quickly to alternate positions after firing RPGs, and using spotters. The same film also shows the rebels resupplying with abundant small arms ammunition.

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### 9 January 1995

Russian infantry move up to within 900 feet of the Palace and are building up their strength. More T-72s and BREM 1/2 ARVs move into town past heavily armed but exhausted-looking troops. *TIME* identifies the 131st Brigade and the Volgograd Division as part of the Russian reinforcements, versus 7,000 rebels.

Outside of Grozny, Spetsnaz troops engaged in an unimpressive bout of rifle practice criticize their higher officers, admit their morale is low and their purpose unknown. Their commander candidly reveals that his men are undisciplined and his unit is subject to constant sniper attacks and nighttime minings. At another location, an Interior Ministry major echoes the same warnings, telling the camera crew that he and his troops just want to go home.

While leaving the area, a film crew covers 30 T-72s and assorted softskins moving up to Grozny. Other sources report 40 tanks due west of Grozny, presumably the same unit, *indicating elements of another MRR.*

Russian military sources claim to have inflicted 500 rebel casualties today alone. Meanwhile, the 300 or so Russian dead lying in Grozny's streets are being eaten by dogs. Fearing disease, the rebels shoot the dogs.

The Russians officially offer a 48-hour cease-fire, primarily to recover the dead and wounded. Locally, the offer is challenged by both sides. One cynical rebel thinks that the Russians are deliberately avoiding one, so that the Russian leadership cannot issue exact casualty figures.

Prior to Moscow's cease-fire offer, the local commanders threaten to level Alkhazurovo, a town of 6,000, unless 45 Russian PWs held in the Presidential Palace are freed by the rebels. Civilian residents and Groznian refugees evacuate Alkhazurovo immediately. All but three PWs had been moved by the rebels to the town of Shali, where a dozen are put on display for the media.

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### 10 January 1995

The 0800 48-hour cease-fire in Grozny lasts all of two hours, with the heaviest fighting on Victory Street and just across the Sunzha River bridge. Russian bombardment recedes to one round every two minutes.

Both sides claim the other has advanced under cover of the cease-fire. Russian forces are within a few hundred feet of the palace, while civilian food and water supplies are critically short.

Moscovite civilian protesters question the number of lives and rubles this war is costing Russia. Yeltsin asks liberal Foreign Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin to arrange a truce, despite friction from Yeltsin's hawkish advisors (including his aide, Oleg Lobov, Vice Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, and Interior Minister Nikolai Yegorov, in addition to Grachev and Stepashin).

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### 11 January 1995

One month since the invasion began, Russian forces are still bogged down in city fighting. Yeltsin takes command of the Russian military, amid speculation that this disaster is a 'set-up' by General Grachev to discredit the President. Russian press insists that between Moscow and the front lines are multiple layers of incompetents and political hacks masquerading as officers.

Writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn tells ITAR-Tass that the northern territories of Chechnya, with ethnic Russians, should revert to Russia, and that the traditionally-Muslim southern territories be allowed independence.

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### 12 January 1995

As the 48-hour cease-fire officially ends, Russian troops renew the assault. A heavy artillery barrage promptly begins at 0800 hrs and a column of 100 Russian vehicles approaching from the west turns to reinforce positions north of the city. By the end of the day, Russian positions surround the city center on three sides. Only the southern approach remains open.

Chechens report chasing off Russian looters near Alkhai-Yurt.

The operations are estimated to cost Russia \$25 million a day, and recovery will be around three trillion rubles (\$850 million).

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### 13 January 1995

Between 0700 and 0900 hrs, 20 rounds per minute fall on the city and the rebels are pushed into a pocket around the Presidential Palace. INTERFAX reports another column of 77 AFVs and 55 'troop carriers' (trucks?) left Inguishtan for Grozny. Moscow announces that its hand-picked Committee of National Rebirth is working with local governments in 5 of 11 Chechen regions.

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### 14 January 1995

Unopposed pairs of Mi-24s circle city targets at NOE heights amidst continued heavy bombardment. Bombers strafe the southern access road, then troops close it after seizing buildings on the Sunzha's north bank. The BBC reports that Russian troops momentarily entered the Parliament building but were repulsed.

The Prosecutor General's office announced that it was considering filing charges against some high-ranking officers who refused to take part in the Chechen fighting.

With their ammunition supplies critically low and the Parliament defenders cut off, rebel mechanics struggle to bring one captured T-80 back on line. The bombardment has eroded the upper floors of the Presidential Palace, which still houses an estimated 100 rebel defenders.

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### 15 January

One news program announces that Dudayev's son is KIA. The rebels also report Russian troops are fighting room-to-room in the Parliament building, that naval infantry have

joined the fighting, and one Russian drive on the locomotive depot is surrounded on three sides.

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### 16 January 1995

Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, in his capacity of negotiator, calls for another cease-fire and peace talks. Under another Russian barrage, two rebel T-72s drive in from the outskirts — rebels claim to have retaken sections of the city.

Russian sources estimate that their losses are around 500 KIA, 200 MIA, and 6,000-7,000 WIA.

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### 17 January 1995

The fighting in Grozny continues...

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Federal Counterintelligence Service [FSK], spawn of the old KGB.

<sup>2</sup>[Hereafter, media references to 'tanks' will be replaced with 'AFVs' unless verified from film footage.]

<sup>3</sup>One tank battalion will hail all the way from St. Petersburg. Is this the T-80 unit?

<sup>4</sup>Under Soviet practice, maps of the Motherland were 'classified material.'

**Times given are local, while dates of events are as they occurred — not as they were reported.**

**NOTE:** The author would appreciate authoritative articles and photo clippings on the subject, in any western European language, forwarded via the editor.

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