

ITP: **Russia 2006**

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Paper Title: **Russia's War on Terrorism: An International and Domestic Prospective**

Abstract:

This paper will first examine Russia's domestic and foreign policy agenda on terrorism from an international perspective, comparing United States, Russia and United Nations' legislative and policy choices. Next, we will study Russia's recent domestic anti-terror legislation and its proposed effectiveness in countering terrorist attacks. We will then place these legislative choices in the context of an actual event by examining Russia's response to *Nord-Ost* by comparing the viewpoints of a legislative official, citizens, journalists and academics. Finally, we will explore the social cost of Russia's *Nord-Ost* resolution and anti-terrorism policies by examining Russia's delicate balance of security and civil liberties.

At the end of the day, Russia's policies are in line with the rest of the world, and in some ways, more progressive. The Russian government compares its terrorism policy to that of the United States, which the drafted language of Russian Federal Law No. 35-FZ and the Patriot Act reflect. But because there is no viable challenge from civil society to Russia's anti-terrorism law, the government acts without restraint. If *Nord-Ost* and Beslan are any indication, one consequence of this power is that the Russian government kills terrorists; it does not bring terrorists to justice. When one terrorist, out of a combined eighty-two, between Beslan and *Nord-Ost*, survived government raids, Russian civil society said nothing. When 130 hostages died from gas released by the Special Forces at *Nord-Ost*, and approximately 350 civilians died in the Beslan Siege, Russian civil society voiced its anger, but with no results. On the other hand, the United States government has suffered negative media coverage, public protests, and even constitutional challenges to its aggressive de facto anti-terror policy. As long as civil society

remains too weak to challenge the Russian government's terrorism policy, the people's liberties are lost.

From the Russian people's perspective, though a conflict exists between civil society and national security, the conflict never rises to the level of a debate in Russian society. That is, the Russian people appreciate the value of the civil liberties touted by Americans, but prioritize stability over such liberties. Because of these priorities, civil society remains weak, and the government has free reign on establishing and instituting policies regarding national security.

The high-level analysis performed by professors and journalists results in views that fall on opposite ends of the spectrum. On one end, professors support the government and its policies, and on the other end, journalists disagree with both the content of legislation as well as its implementation.