

Russian Hostage Crisis Over

-- The special forces assault on a Moscow theater after a three-day Chechen siege leaves more than 118 hostages dead. --

BACKGROUND:



Chechnya has been trying to establish its own independent state since 1858 when it was conquered by Russia. There has been on-again, off-again fighting which became international news when, in September of 1999, Chechnya was accused of blowing up two blocks of flats in Moscow. The conflict

between the two countries has developed as follows:

1858 - After decades of violent resistance, Chechnya is conquered by Russia following the defeat of Imam Shamil and his fighters, who had aimed to establish an Islamic state.

1922 - Chechen autonomous region established; becomes the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1934.

1944 - Soviet dictator Stalin deports the entire Chechen and Ingush populations to Siberia and Central Asia, citing alleged collaboration with Nazi Germany. Many thousands die.

1957 - Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev restores the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

1991 - In Chechnya, Dzhokhar Dudayev wins a presidential poll and proclaims them independent of Russia.

1992 - Chechnya adopts a constitution defining it as an independent, secular state governed by a president and parliament.

1994 - December - Russian troops enter Chechnya to quash the independence movement.

Up to 100,000 people - many of them civilians - are estimated to have been killed in the 20-month war that followed.

1995 - June - Chechen rebels seize hundreds of hostages at a hospital in Budennovsk, southern Russia. More than 100 are killed in the raid and in an unsuccessful Russian operation.

1996 - April - Dudayev killed in a Russian missile attack; Zemlikhan Yandarbiyev succeeds.

1996 - May - Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Yandarbiyev sign a peace agreement; the short-lived truce lasts until July.

1996 - August - Chechen rebels launch a successful attack on Grozny, Chechnya's capitol; Yeltsin's security chief General Alexander Lebed and Chechen rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov sign the Khasavyurt Accords which provide for a ceasefire. An agreement on Russian troop withdrawals is signed in November.

1997 - January - Russia recognizes Maskhadov's government following his victory in Chechen presidential elections.

1997 - May - Yeltsin and Maskhadov sign a formal peace treaty, but the issue of Chechen independence is not resolved.

1998 - May - Valentin Vlasov, Russia's presidential representative in Chechnya, is kidnapped and held for six months. Later in the year, four engineers from Britain and New Zealand are kidnapped and murdered.

1998 - June - Amid growing lawlessness, Maskhadov imposes a state of emergency.

1999 - March - Moscow's top envoy to Chechnya, General Gennadiy Shpigun, is kidnapped from the airport in Grozny. His corpse is found in Chechnya in March 2000.

1999 - January/February - Maskhadov declares Islamic Shari'ah law will be phased in over three years.

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A group of former rebel field commanders announces the formation of a rival body to govern Chechnya according to Shari'ah law and calls on Aslan Maskhadov to relinquish the presidency.

1999 - July/August - Chechen fighters clash with Russian troops on the Chechnya-Dagestan border; Chechen rebels stage armed incursions into Dagestan in an attempt to create an Islamic state.

1999 - September - A bomb attack on Russian military housing in Dagestan and a series of apartment block bombings elsewhere in Russia are blamed on Chechen rebels; some 300 people are killed. Russian forces redeploy in Chechnya; the new prime minister, Vladimir Putin, says the campaign is needed to quash terrorism.

1999 - October - Moscow-based State Council of the Republic of Chechnya established by former members of the Chechen republican legislature. Moscow recognizes it as the sole legitimate Chechen authority and refuses to negotiate with Maskhadov.

1999 - October - Many thousands of civilians flee the Russian advance, leaving Chechnya for neighboring Russian republics. Their numbers are estimated to reach 200,000.

2000 - February - Russian troops capture Grozny; much of the city is razed.

2000 - May - President Putin declares that henceforth Chechnya will be governed from Moscow. Russia appoints former Chechen cleric Akhmed Kadyrov as head of its administration in Chechnya. Kadyrov is answerable to Putin and the presidential representative in the Southern Federal District, Viktor Kazantsev.

2001 - January - Putin transfers control of operations in Chechnya to the Federal Security Service (FSB) which is tasked with fighting insurgents. Stanislav Ilyasov appointed Chechen prime minister.

2001 - Human rights organizations express concern about human rights violations in Chechnya, including alleged torture and widespread detentions at the hands of Russian

troops. Concerns are fuelled by the discovery of a mass grave filled with mutilated bodies.

2001 - September - Major rebel offensive on the Chechen town of Gudermes; a Russian helicopter carrying senior officers is downed.

2001 - September - After the 11 September attacks on the US, Putin urges rebels to "halt all contacts with international terrorists".

2001 - November - First official negotiations since 1999 as Maskhadov's representative Akhmed Zakayev and Russia's Kazantsev hold talks on a peace settlement.

2001 - December - Captured rebel field commander Salman Raduyev sentenced to life imprisonment on murder, terrorism charges.

2002 - July - UN suspends aid operations in Chechnya for six months after the kidnapping of a Russian aid worker.

2002 - August - Georgia accuses Russia of carrying out air raids in the Pankisi gorge, close to Georgia's border with Chechnya. Moscow says the gorge is a haven for Chechen rebel groups and wants an international operation to flush them out.

2002 - October - Chechen rebels seize a Moscow theater.

STORY:

A shocked, wary Russia counted its rising toll of dead and steeled itself for new terrorist blows Saturday in its never-ending Chechen war, after commandos striking behind clouds of disabling gas brought a sudden bloody end to a hostage nightmare.

The special forces assault on a Moscow theater after a three-day siege left Russians with feelings of both pain and pride: More than 118 hostages were dead, but 750 others were rescued and dozens of their Chechen captors killed.

It began at 11:00 PM Wednesday night when about 50 masked Chechen rebels - men and women - stormed into a musical theater in south-east Moscow and captured hundreds of hostages. They demand that Russia withdraws its troops from Chechnya within a week, threatening to blow

up the building. Negotiations begin, and about 30 hostages are freed.

Over the next three days 150 people were released or escaped from the building, but more than 500 remained inside. Then, Friday night the rebels ignoring Russia's offer guaranteeing their lives in exchange for the release of the hostages and threaten to start killing hostages at 6:00 AM on Saturday if their demands are not met.

At 3:30 Saturday morning a loud explosion and gunshots are heard. Russian officials say two hostages have been executed. A group of hostages tries to escape from the building.

At 5:00 AM Saturday Russian special forces begin their assault of the theatre and a gun battle ensues. They reported complete control of the building by 7:30.

Russia "cannot be forced to its knees," President Vladimir Putin declared afterward on national television. But the Russian leader acknowledged the heavy cost to victims' families: "We could not save everyone. Forgive us."

The key targets for the unidentified gas were almost 20 suicide attackers, Chechen women, who sat among the hostages wrapped in explosives, officials said. Had they detonated the charges, the toll of innocents would have been much higher, Deputy Interior Minister Vladimir Vasilyev said.

The incapacitating agent apparently seeped into the theater through the ventilation system, Moscow's TVS television said, and then soldiers from the Alpha anti-terrorist squad burst in. Television footage showed them kicking in glass doors and opening fire, the thunder of their assault rifles setting off car alarm shrieks in the theater parking lot. Soon the hostages were brought out, some in the arms of soldiers, most loaded unconscious onto city buses.

Besides the women's explosives, the attackers had rigged other bombs throughout the hall, officials said.

"The use of special means" — the gas — "allowed the neutralization of the female terrorists who were wrapped in explosives and kept their fingers on the trigger," Vasilyev said.

Because only one Alpha trooper was reported wounded, some analysts believed the gas, which officials would not identify, had so incapacitated or disoriented the gunmen that they couldn't pull the triggers on their guns.

Besides 50 Chechen assailants reported killed at the theater, officials said three other gunmen were captured, and authorities searched this nervous city for accomplices and gunmen who may have escaped.

The precision terror operation that began Wednesday night in the Russia's capital had defied the Kremlin's repeated contention that the nationalist rebels in predominantly Muslim Chechnya were on the verge of final defeat.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, will be as relieved as his fellow countrymen that the siege of the Moscow theatre was ended with so many lives being saved. But now the difficult questions begin.

The first question which will have been constantly in Mr. Putin's mind ever since he was called to the Kremlin by news that the theatre had been stormed by rebels on Wednesday evening is, how could such a thing happen in the middle of Moscow? As a former member of the secret police, the KGB (now the FSB), Mr Putin will want to know where the intelligence-gathering process broke down.

All people who look as though they might come from the Caucasus have been regarded with suspicion in Moscow ever since the Chechens were accused of blowing up two blocks of flats in Moscow in September 1999 - the incidents which sparked off the second Chechen campaign. Caucasians in Moscow can expect to be stopped and have their documents checked every day.

So how could several dozen of them have banded together to break into the theatre? And how were they able to bring so many explosives to the building, when checks on transport are a common feature of everyday life in the Russian capital?



Putin faces some difficult questions.

Sackings can be expected in both the FSB and the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for the police.

But this question of internal security is secondary to the big problem facing Mr. Putin: what now for Chechnya? What the siege has done is to bring this hitherto largely forgotten conflict to the forefront of world attention.

Claims by the Russian authorities that they have had the situation in Chechnya under control have clearly been nonsense.

But you can get away with speaking nonsense if no-one bothers too much about the subject. Now the pressure will be on Mr. Putin to take decisive action in Chechnya. That decisive action could take one of two forms. He could step up the military offensive. Or he could enter into some form of dialogue with representatives of the Chechen rebels.

If Mr. Putin goes for the former, it will show that he has learnt little about the situation in Chechnya and the real nature of the problem.

He has a demoralized army which has committed gross human rights violations in Chechnya already, and which has shown itself to be incapable of coping with the type of guerrilla warfare being waged by groups of Chechen fighters.

Furthermore, the Chechens have shown in both the first, failed, Russian military campaign of 1994-1996, and in the current campaign, that they are well capable of using the mountainous terrain in the south of their republic to their own benefit.

So dialogue would seem to be a more positive way forward. For this, Mr. Putin and the Russian leadership would have to take the embarrassing step of granting recognition to the elected Chechen President, Aslan Maskhadov, or his representatives. Moscow did acknowledge Mr. Maskhadov's authority before the troops were sent back in 1999, but has since denounced him as a "terrorist".

There is a third option. To carry on the campaign as they have been conducting it for the last year or so. If Mr. Putin does this, a genuine solution to the Chechen problem will be as far away as ever. More Russian soldiers will be killed.

And now that Muscovites have had the war brought to their own doorsteps, that is a price which Russians may not now be prepared to pay.

Stocks Gain for 3rd Straight Week

Stocks staged a late rally on Friday, propelling the market to its third straight week of gains, as investors snatched up companies like Intel Corp and Merck & Co. on growing hopes for a lasting turnaround on Wall Street.

"We have gotten to the point now where we are buying on the dips instead of selling on the rallies. People don't want to miss this," said Todd Leone, head of listed trading at S.G. Cowen. "I think we could get a sustained rally for the end of the year. That's what people are talking about."

Computer chip leader Intel and drug maker Merck helped drive the blue-chip Dow higher as the market shrugged off earlier lethargy in a late-afternoon comeback.

****Reuters contributed to this story****

WHO YOU NEED TO KNOW:**Vladimir Putin**

Born Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, on October 7, 1952, in Leningrad (later St. Petersburg), Russia. An only child, Putin grew up living with his mother and father, a factory foreman and World War II veteran, in a communal apartment with several other families. As a young boy, he began studying martial arts, and by age 16 had become an expert at sambo, a Russian combination of judo and wrestling. Around that same time, Putin was selected to attend Leningrad School No. 281, a college-preparatory school for the city's best students. In 1970, he enrolled at the prestigious Leningrad State University, where he majored in civil law and continued his study of martial arts. He was Leningrad's judo champion in 1974, and a year later graduated with honors.

Upon his graduation, Putin was recruited by the KGB, the Soviet Union's notorious national security organization, where he learned German and earned a black belt in judo. In 1985, the KGB sent Putin to East Germany, where he lived in Dresden under a false name and with a cover-up job as the head of a so-called German-Soviet friendship society. The exact nature of his real work there is still a matter of some debate; but, during his time in the divided Germany, Putin was exposed to a number of Western ideas, both economic and political, that would play a pivotal role in his post-KGB career.

He returned to Russia in 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, as a decorated KGB agent. The agency rewarded him with an administrative post at his alma mater, Leningrad State University, a cover for him to continue intelligence work.

Shortly thereafter, Putin encountered his old law professor, Anatoly Sobchak and left the KGB to become one of Sobchak's key aides. After Sobchak became the first mayor of the newly renamed city of St. Petersburg in 1991, Putin was named deputy mayor in his administration. In addition to overseeing the daily operations of St.

Petersburg, Putin was primarily responsible for opening the city to a good deal of foreign investment, including Credit Lyonnais, Coca-Cola, and NEC. Putin resigned when Sobchak lost his reelection campaign in 1996.

He was offered a Kremlin post in 1997 as the deputy to Pavel Borodin, the head of the powerful property department in Moscow. In 1998, then-President Boris Yeltsin appointed Putin as chief of the Federal Security Service, the domestic successor to the KGB. In August 1999, as conflict in Chechnya began to heat up, Yeltsin named the 47-year old Putin as prime minister.

On December 31, 1999, Yeltsin resigned as president and appointed Putin acting president. Putin managed to ride the wave of popular support to a victory in the general elections on March 27, 2000, when he became Russia's second president and its youngest leader since Josef Stalin in 1922.

Putin, who is very private about his personal life, has a wife Lyudmila and two daughters, Katya and Maria.

SPORTS:**World Series Champs,
Congrats Angels!**

Anaheim Angels owners Jackie Autry, left, and Disney Chairman Michael Eisner celebrate after the Angels beat the San Francisco Giants in Game 7 of the World Series in Anaheim, Calif., Sunday, Oct. 27, 2002. The Angels won the game 4-1 to win the best-of-seven series.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY:**October 28, 1886****STATUE OF LIBERTY
DEDICATED**

The Statue of Liberty, a gift of friendship from the people of France to the people of the United States, is dedicated in New York Harbor by President Grover Cleveland.

Originally known as "Liberty Enlightening the World," the statue was proposed by the French historian Edouard de Laboulaye to commemorate the Franco-American alliance during the American Revolution. Designed by French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, the 151-foot statue was the form of a woman with an uplifted arm holding a torch. Its gigantic steel supports was designed by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, the latter famous for his design of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

In February 1877, Congress approved the use of a site on New York Bedloe's Island, which was suggested by Bartholdi. In May 1884, the statue was completed in France, and three months later the Americans laid the cornerstone for its pedestal in New York Harbor. In June 1885, the dismantled Statue of Liberty arrived in the New World, enclosed in more than 200 packing cases. Its copper sheets were reassembled, and the last rivet of the monument was fitted on October 28, 1886, during a dedication presided over by President Cleveland and attended by numerous French and American dignitaries.

On the pedestal was inscribed "The New Colossus," a sonnet by American poet Emma Lazarus that welcomed immigrants to the United States with the declaration, "Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me. / I lift my lamp beside the golden door." In 1892, Ellis Island, adjacent to Bedloe's Island, opened as the chief entry station for immigrants to the United States, and for the next 32 years more than 12 million immigrants

were welcomed into New York harbor by the sight of "Lady Liberty." In 1924, the Statue of Liberty was made a national monument, and in 1956 Bedloe's Island was renamed Liberty Island. The statue underwent a major restoration in the 1980s.

ENTERTAINMENT:**Richard Harris Dies at 72**

The producer of the Harry Potter movies on Saturday hailed hell-raising Hollywood legend Richard Harris as "irreplaceable."



Harris, twice married, twice bankrupt and a firm believer in living life to the full, was twice nominated for Oscars in a career that spanned 70 movies, including "Camelot" and "Gladiator." He won a new generation of young fans as Professor Albus Dumbledore in the Harry Potter movies. His last movie, "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," comes out November 15.

Actor, extrovert, hellraiser, poet and pop singer -- Richard Harris lived each role to the maximum as the quintessential Irishman.

His three sons said "their beloved father" died peacefully in a London hospital. After his funeral, his family will take the ashes back to his home in the Bahamas. Memorial services are to be staged later in London and Dublin.

Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern called Harris "one of Ireland's most outstanding artists."

Harris, nominated for Oscars for "This Sporting Life" and "The Field," went from two bottles of vodka a day to total abstinence. "I drank because I absolutely loved it," Harris said of his notorious binges. The ebullient extrovert stopped drinking in 1981 when told he had only 18 months to live if he did not call a halt.

He became a millionaire by shrewdly buying the stage rights of "Camelot." He made the Top 10 with his song "MacArthur Park."

FEATURE:*Daylight Saving Time*

by Matt T. Rosenberg

Every spring we move our clocks one hour ahead and "lose" an hour during the night and each fall we move our clocks back one hour and "gain" an extra hour. But Daylight Saving Time (and not Daylight Savings Time with an "s") wasn't just created to confuse our schedules.

The phrase "Spring forward, fall back" helps people remember how Daylight Saving time affects their clocks. At 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in April, we set our clocks forward one hour ahead of standard time ("spring forward"). We "fall back" at 2 a.m. on the last Sunday in October by setting our clock back one hour and thus returning to standard time. The change to Daylight Saving Time allows us to use less energy in lighting our homes by taking advantage of the longer and later daylight hours. During the six-and-a-half-month period of Daylight Saving Time, the names of time in each of the time zones in the U.S. changes as well. Eastern Standard Time (EST) becomes Eastern Daylight Time, Central Standard Time (CST) becomes Central Daylight Time (CDT), Mountain Standard Time (MST) becomes Mountain Daylight Time (MDT), Pacific Standard Time becomes Pacific Daylight Time (PDT), and so forth.

Daylight Saving Time was instituted in the United States during World War I in order to save energy for war production by taking advantage of the later hours of daylight between April and October. During World War II the federal government again required the states to observe the time change. Between the wars and after World War II, states and communities chose whether or not to observe Daylight Saving Time. In 1966, Congress passed the Uniform Time Act which standardized the length of Daylight Saving Time. Arizona, Hawaii, parts of Indiana, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa have chosen not to observe DST.

Other parts of the world observe Daylight Saving Time as well. While European nations have been taking advantage of the time change for decades, in 1996 the European Union (EU) standardized a EU-wide "summertime period." The EU version of Daylight Saving Time runs from the last Sunday in March through the last Sunday in October. During the summer, Russia's clocks are two hours ahead of standard time. During the winter, all 11 of the Russian time zones are an hour ahead of standard time. In the southern hemisphere where summer comes in December, Daylight Saving Time is observed from October to March. Equatorial and tropical countries (lower latitudes) don't observe Daylight Saving Time since the daylight hours are similar during every season.

The next time you're changing your clocks for Daylight Saving Time, remember that it's not just trying to mess up your schedule but its purpose is to save energy.

In the average home, 25 percent of all the electricity we use is for lighting and small appliances, such as TVs, VCRs and stereos. A good percentage of energy consumed by lighting and appliances occurs in the evening when families are home. By moving the clock ahead one hour, we can cut the amount of electricity we consume each day.

Studies done in the 1970s by the U.S. Department of Transportation show that we trim the entire country's electricity usage by about one percent EACH DAY with Daylight Saving Time.

Daylight Saving Time "makes" the sun "set" one hour later and therefore reduces the period between sunset and bedtime by one hour. This means that less electricity would be used for lighting and appliances late in the day. And most people plan outdoor activities in the extra daylight hours. A poll done by the U.S. Department of Transportation indicated that Americans liked Daylight Saving Time because "there is more light in the evenings / can do more in the evenings."

While the amounts of energy saved per house are small...added up they can be very large.

Quote of the Week:

“Oh yes indeedy, it doesn’t pay to be greedy.”
-Popeye, *The Popeye Cartoon Show*

Fact of the Week:

Cows outnumber people in nine US states.

Word of the Week:

referendum (ref*er*en*dum) n. The reference to public vote, for final approval or rejection, or measures or proposals passed by a representative assembly.

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And
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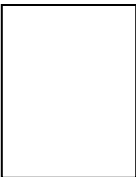
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