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Sommario/riassunto	In September 1999, Russia's then-Premier Vladimir Putin ordered military, police, and security forces to enter the breakaway Chechnya region, resulting in these forces occupying the region by early 2000. The conflict has resulted in thousands of military and civilian casualties and the massive destruction of housing and infrastructure. This book looks at Chechnya and Putin's rise to power and continuing popularity which have been tied at least partly to his perceived ability to prosecute this conflict successfully. In the run-up to Russian legislative elections in December 2003 and a presidential election in March 2004, Putin endeavoured to demonstrate that peace had returned to the region. After Chechen terrorists held hundreds of Moscow theatre-goers

hostage in late 2002, the Putin administration appeared unequivocally opposed to talks with the rebels and more dedicated to establishing a pro-Moscow government in Chechnya. This pro-Moscow government has used its own forces to battle the remaining rebels, ostensibly permitting the disengagement and withdrawal of most Russian troops from the region. This "Chechenization" of the conflict, along with related pacification efforts, has constituted the main elements of the Russian government's campaign to wind down the fighting. The pacification efforts discussed in this book have also aimed to gain the support or acquiescence of the population to federal control and have included rebuilding assistance and elections. However, the assassination of a pro-Moscow Chechen leader in May 2004, the attack on a school in the town of Beslan, Russia in September 2004 by Chechen terrorists, and widening of conflict to other areas of Russia's North Caucasus have raised questions about whether Chechenization and pacification are succeeding.
