



THE NORTH CAUCASUS

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Analysis

The Russian-Chechen Conflict and the Putin-Kadyrov Connection

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Over the past thirteen years, the Russian government has fought two brutal wars against separatist guerrillas in Chechnya, a small, landlocked republic adjoining Dagestan, Stavropol Krai, North Ossetia, and Ingushetia in Russia's North Caucasus region. The first war lasted from December 1994 until August 1996, when the two sides signed an armistice that led to a suspension of fighting and three years of de facto independence for Chechnya. This interregnum came to an end in the latter half of 1999 when a series of events beginning with deadly incursions by Islamic extremists from Chechnya into neighboring Dagestan reignited large-scale warfare between Russian federal forces and Chechen guerrillas — a conflict that has continued ever since.

Heavy fighting occurred during the first several months of the latest Russian-Chechen war, when roughly 2,500 Russian federal troops were killed along with tens of thousands of civilians. Starting in mid-2000, the war increasingly evolved into a classic insurgency. From 2002 through 2004 the Chechen separatists embarked on a series of spectacular terrorist attacks in Moscow and other major Russian cities, including mass hostage-takings, assassinations, and suicide bombings designed to kill the maximum number of people. This campaign was supplemented by hundreds of terrorist attacks within the North Caucasus, causing widespread bloodshed, misery, and destruction. The worst of these attacks was the grisly siege in September 2004 of a school in the North Ossetian town of Beslan, an incident that killed roughly 340 hostages, more than half of whom were children. Smaller incidents have occurred since then, and preparations for much larger attacks have been narrowly averted, mainly through luck. Nonetheless, the Chechens' terrorist campaign has ebbed sharply over the past two years. More generally, the separatist conflict in Chechnya, which had remained intense and deadly through late 2005, has diminished markedly over the past two years. The Russian government has trumpeted the decline of the insurgency as a rousing success and has implied that Chechnya is returning steadily to "normal life." Although the diminution of fighting in Chechnya has clearly been welcomed by — and beneficial to — the civilian population there, the "solution" devised by the Russian federal government raises serious doubts that long-term stability can be ensured.

The Putin Dimension

Vladimir Putin, who had been appointed prime minister by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 6 August 1999, took charge of Russia's latest war in

Chechnya from the very start. Putin earned public acclaim in Russia for his conduct of the war and quickly became the most popular figure in the Russian government. When Yeltsin suddenly resigned at the end of 1999, he designated Putin as his successor. Putin's standing rose still further in February 2000 when most of the Chechen guerrillas left Grozny and shifted to positions further south. Putin's decisive, first-round victory in the Russian presidential election in late March 2000, winning 53 percent of the vote, seemed to convey public approval of his tough line in Chechnya, a sentiment borne out in most opinion polls. Putin acknowledged as much when three Russian journalists interviewed him for the quasi-autobiography published in mid-2000 under the title *От первого лица: Разговоры с Владимиром Путиным* (From the First Person: Conversations with Vladimir Putin). During those interviews, Putin declared that his "historic mission" as president would be to "resolve the situation in the North Caucasus" and to consolidate Chechnya as a permanent component of the Russian Federation.

To accomplish this "mission," Putin resorted to wide-scale repression and destruction in Chechnya, especially during the first few years of the war. Whenever these tactics have been criticized by Russians or by foreign observers, Putin has reacted viscerally and has reaffirmed his determination to do whatever is necessary to "wipe out the terrorist scum" in Chechnya. To ensure ample political leeway for the war, Putin also systematically took steps to keep Chechnya off the political agenda. He learned a lesson from the 1994-1996 Russian-Chechen war, which was unpopular from the start and was sharply criticized on Russian television, particularly the independent NTV station. During the 1996 Russian presidential election campaign, the Chechen war came up repeatedly (albeit mainly as part of a general indictment of the government's incompe-

tence), and pressure mounted for a political settlement. Putin worked carefully to forestall any such pressure on him. Not only did he restore state control over television and other media outlets, but he also undercut rival political parties (especially those supporting liberal democratic reforms) and greatly narrowed the room for political debate and competition in Russia. As a result, despite the many thousands of Russian soldiers and police who have been killed in Chechnya since 1999 and despite the large number of highly visible terrorist attacks in Moscow in 2002, 2003, and 2004, Chechnya played no role in either the Russian parliamentary elections of December 2003 or the Russian presidential election of March 2004. Nor has it been on the political agenda since then, apart from a brief flurry of concern and recriminations following the Beslan massacre. The war has not been discussed in any depth on Russian television or in the Russian parliament, and the coverage of it on the television news is sporadic and highly tendentious.

With the precipitous decline in fighting in Chechnya since 2005, Putin now regularly boasts that he accomplished what he set out to do: to bring Chechnya permanently back under Russian control. The toll of the war — the deaths of nearly 10,000 Russian soldiers and police and of roughly 80,000 civilians (8 percent of the prewar population), the continued displacement of at least 200,000 people (ethnic Russians as well as Chechens), and the destruction of vast swaths of the republic — is never mentioned in Putin's speeches and statements. Instead, he has been intent on portraying himself as the man who "preserved Russia's territorial integrity and repulsed an aggressive challenge from foreign-backed terrorists and their supporters."

Federal Counterinsurgency Efforts

Federal counterinsurgency operations in Chechnya were initially overseen by the Russian Ministry of Defense and then, from January 2001 to July 2003, by the Federal Security Service (FSB). Since July 2003 the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) has been in charge of the Unified Grouping of Forces (OGV), which brings together armed units and intelligence resources from various federal agencies and service branches. The first deputy commander-in-chief of the MVD's Internal Forces, Colonel-General Yevgeny Baryayev, has been commander of the OGV since mid-2006, reporting directly to the Minister of Internal Affairs.

From 2000 through early 2005, Russia's counterinsurgency operations against the Chechen guerrillas were largely unsuccessful, but the OGV finally be-

gan to make significant progress in 2005. The federal authorities' success in killing Aslan Maskhadov, the then-president of the Chechen guerrilla government, in March 2005 was especially important in dealing an initial blow to the insurgency — a far more important blow than most observers expected at the time. To the extent that Chechens after the Beslan massacre in September 2004 still believed that Chechnya might eventually have a better future, they looked to Maskhadov as the only one who could bring it. Whether they were right in this perception is unclear (Maskhadov, for want of alternatives, had moved closer to the ultra-radical elements of the insurgency by mid-2004), but Chechens generally believed that Maskhadov was the only guerrilla leader with whom Putin and other leaders in Moscow might someday consider negotiating. When Maskhadov was killed by Russian forces, it removed the last hope that Chechens really had. Although many Chechens still had a sort of grudging respect for the notorious Chechen terrorist leader Shamil Basayev for his earlier exploits (he was a brilliant military commander, by any measure), they did not believe that he was capable of leading Chechnya to independence. They knew that Russia would never tolerate it and would simply rain more destruction and bloodshed down on Chechnya. The death of Maskhadov therefore cut deeply into the Chechens' morale and weakened the spirit of resistance. The federal forces' success in killing Maskhadov's successor, Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev, in June 2006 reinforced the impact of Maskhadov's death.

Moreover, the killing of Sadulayev was soon followed, on 10 July 2006, by the death of Shamil Basayev, who was killed in Ingushetia by an accidental detonation of explosives that were being gathered in trucks for a large-scale attack. This stroke of good fortune for the Russian and pro-Moscow Chechen authorities was arguably the most crucial turning point of all in the Russian-Chechen conflict since the fighting began. So long as Basayev was around, it was impossible to contemplate any sort of lasting truce in Chechnya. To be sure, guerrilla operations by Dokku Umarov (who was chosen to succeed Sadulayev as the president of the Chechen separatists) and other radical Chechen leaders have continued in the wake of Basayev's death, and bombings and ambushes still occur frequently. Very few parts of Chechnya are truly safe. Moreover, some attacks have resulted in the deaths of a substantial number of Russian federal troops and pro-Moscow Chechen forces. In late April 2007, for example, the downing of a Russian Mi-8 helicopter as it was pursuing Chechen insurgents resulted in the deaths of 20 Russian GRU (military in-

telligence) special forces and pilots. Roadside bombs and improvised explosive devices also have cost many lives. Nonetheless, violent clashes and terrorist attacks in Chechnya have declined precipitously overall. Although the federal authorities have not won “hearts and minds” in Chechnya, they have managed to crush most of the insurgency through unrelenting force and through the devolution of authority to Ramzan Kadyrov’s tyrannical government. With Basayev gone from the scene, most Chechens no longer have an obvious ideological rallying point. In the Weberian sense, Basayev was a “charismatic leader” for young Chechen radicals, spurring them to fight for independence. Without that kind of leader around, independence is now almost universally perceived in Chechnya as an unrealistic goal, at least in the short to medium term.

The greater stability in Chechnya — precarious though it may be — is likely to be a positive influence elsewhere in the North Caucasus by stemming the spread of instability and extremism, both directly and indirectly. Basayev had been seeking to link Islamic extremist groups across the region, and his death eliminated the main focal point for such groups. More generally, the experience of Chechnya over the past eight years has been a sobering influence for large segments of the population in the North Caucasus. Preliminary surveys by the Levada Center (a highly reputable polling organization) in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria reveal little public support for violent Islamic extremists and other radical forces and terrorists. The widespread popular desire to avoid destabilizing violence is attributable to many factors, including the “demonstration effect” of the appalling bloodshed in Chechnya, continued revulsion at the Beslan school massacre, and a sense that neither Western nor Islamic governments will take any significant action if large-scale violent conflict breaks out and provokes a brutal crackdown by the Russian authorities.

Barring some unforeseeable disaster, the current lull in the fighting in Chechnya will persist at least until Putin leaves office in March 2008, and probably well after that. During Putin’s presidency, the Russian government was able to quell the insurgency in Chechnya without in any way having “won hearts and minds.” This should not be wholly surprising, despite the emphasis given to “hearts and minds” in recent writings about counterinsurgency, including the newly revised editions of the U.S. Army’s and U.S. Marines’ counterinsurgency manuals. Historically, governments have often been successful in using ruthless violence to crush large and determined insurgencies, at least if the rulers’ time horizons are focused on the short to medium term. The Romans showed this

long ago; Adolf Hitler showed it in Warsaw (both the Warsaw ghetto in 1943 and the rest of Warsaw a year later), Josif Stalin showed it in western Ukraine and the Baltic states in the 1940s and 1950s; and Saddam Hussein showed it against the Shiites and Kurds when they rebelled in Iraq in 1991. Putin has now followed in this tradition in Chechnya. Even if the outcome is precarious, Putin will be out of office by the time a new armed conflict might erupt with Chechnya. Politicians rarely operate with long time horizons. When Putin leaves office next year, he can plausibly claim to have accomplished his “historic mission.” If a deluge comes later on, it will be blamed on his successors.

Chechenization, and the Ramzan Kadyrov Dimension

Whether the relative calm in Chechnya can be transformed into a lasting and stable solution under Putin’s successors is far from clear. For one thing, a number of grave problems continue to afflict the North Caucasus — pervasive corruption, the brutality of the local police and security forces, perennial government malfeasance, high levels of unemployment, a harsh clampdown on moderate Islamic groups, and the exploitation of ethnic tensions and intercommunal strife. These conditions have fueled extremism and political violence in republics like Ingushetia, Dagestan, and Kabardino-Balkaria. Although Putin’s chief envoy in the region, Dmitrii Kozak, has made considerable headway over the past two years in dealing with some of these problems and defusing possible flashpoints, daunting obstacles remain. The general volatility of the North Caucasus tends to militate against greater long-term stability in Chechnya itself.

Another factor that will clearly pose long-term problems is the federal government’s reliance on “Chechenization” to supplement large-scale repression as the means of combating separatism in Chechnya. Starting in early 2003, Putin claimed that the pro-Moscow Chechen government led by Ahmad-Haji Kadyrov would take over much of the responsibility for preserving order in Chechnya with the aid of the local police and security forces. The Chechen guerrillas sought to prevent the pro-Russian government from establishing a firmer hold and repeatedly targeted police officers, especially the ones who (at Kadyrov’s behest) had conducted mass roundups (*zachistki*) similar to those carried out by Russian troops. Many deadly bombings, shootings, and other attacks were directed against the Chechen police in 2003 and 2004, and in May 2004 the Chechen guerrillas planted a bomb that killed Kadyrov and other

senior officials during a Victory Day celebration in the Chechen capital, Grozny. A subsequent wave of terrorist violence in Chechnya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus, combined with the federal commanders' distrust of Chechen officials, raised serious questions about whether Chechenization would remain a viable approach.

Putin, however, chose to continue moving ahead with Chechenization by giving ever greater authority to Kadyrov's son, Ramzan Kadyrov, a young and uneducated man widely known for his violent cruelty and for the egregious abuses committed by the roughly 15,000-strong security force he set up and oversaw, the so-called Kadyrovtsy. Ramzan Kadyrov was appointed a first deputy prime minister in the pro-Moscow Chechen government after his father's assassination and received a Hero of Russia medal from Putin in December 2004. In March 2006, Kadyrov became prime minister in the pro-Moscow government, and in February 2007 he was able to force Alu Alkhanov, who had succeeded Ahmad Kadyrov as Chechen president, to relinquish the presidency. A few weeks later, Ramzan Kadyrov became the new president, having reached the minimum age of 30 in October 2006. Kadyrov's consolidation of power has been strongly supported by Putin, despite the qualms of some of Putin's advisers, notably Igor Sechin.

In the short term, Kadyrov's consolidation of power has been a stabilizing factor in Chechnya. Using proceeds from a mandatory payroll tax on state-sector employees, Kadyrov has launched reconstruction projects in several urban areas, especially Grozny and his hometown, Gudermes, with impressive results. Funding for reconstruction in 2006 and 2007 was 500 percent higher than in 2004, when Kadyrov's father was assassinated. Equally important, in 2006 Kadyrov managed to convince hundreds of former guerrillas to switch sides and join the Kadyrovtsy. The federal government has had an amnesty program of its own for some time, but Kadyrov's personal assurances (and payoffs) to former rebels made a vital difference. Kadyrov has staunchly denied that the Kadyrovtsy ever engaged in kidnappings, torture, and other abuses for which they have long been known and feared, but he apparently did take steps in early 2007 to curb the worst of these excesses. In particular, the incidence of illegal abductions and "disappearances" declined significantly in the first several months of 2007. Nonetheless, although abuses and extralegal executions have been more carefully targeted against Kadyrov's perceived enemies (e.g., Movladi Baisarov) in 2007, normal legal procedures and restraints remain completely absent in Chechnya.

The future direction of Kadyrov's government in Chechnya remains highly uncertain. Soon after Kadyrov became president in early March 2007, he began bringing every significant administrative and security body in Chechnya under his de facto control and appointing close relatives to the highest positions, including Odes Baisultanov as prime minister and Adam Delimkhanov as first deputy prime minister. Kadyrov formed an Anti-Terrorist Commission in March 2007 with himself as the head of it, overseeing the Chechen Republic's branch of the FSB and other security units. Kadyrov has sought to bring all the security forces in Chechnya under his de facto control by eliminating or co-opting the Russian federal units that are still operating there (apart from the 50,000 or so federal troops that are not involved in day-to-day security, mostly in the federal Defense Ministry's 42nd Motorized Infantry Division and the federal MVD's 46th Internal Forces Brigade, both of which are to be permanently deployed in Chechnya). In particular, Kadyrov has sought to discredit the federal Operational-Investigative Bureau (OSB) No. 2, accusing it of having routinely used torture and committed atrocities in Chechnya. These accusations are well-founded but are also disingenuous. By voicing these allegations, Kadyrov not only hopes to shift blame from the Kadyrovtsy for the worst of the abuses, but also seeks to eliminate the only internal security organization in Chechnya that is not yet under his de facto control. In May 2007, Kadyrov formally asked the federal MVD to disband the OSB-2.

Kadyrov's bid to become the total and unchallenged ruler in Chechnya raises questions about what will happen in Chechnya over the longer term. Sechin and some other Russian officials have been skeptical about Kadyrov's long-term loyalty to the federal government, and they worry that over time, as he gains ever greater authority within Chechnya, he may press for independence or some other undesirable arrangement. Kadyrov's recent vigorous campaign against OSB-2, the spate of press reports in May 2007 claiming that he wants to bring Ingushetia under Chechnya's influence (and perhaps eventually merge the two republics, restoring a configuration that was abandoned after the Soviet Union broke apart), and his formal request that Chechnya be granted a special status akin to that of Tatarstan have further stoked these suspicions.

Before Putin chose Kadyrov to replace Alkhanov, Sechin and a few other officials had privately recommended replacing Kadyrov, most likely by transferring him to a federal government post elsewhere in Russia. Putin rejected this advice, but even if he had accepted

it, such a step would have posed dangers of its own. The hundreds of Chechen guerrillas who accepted Kadyrov's proposal to change sides in 2006 might decide in his absence to turn back to violent anti-government actions. Indeed, several dozen have already done precisely that, rejoining the several hundred Chechen fighters who are still operating, mostly in the southern mountains. Moreover, the Kadyrovtsy, if suddenly deprived of their long-time leader, could easily wreak havoc in Chechnya and clash with other security forc-

es. At the very least, Kadyrov's departure would usher in a period of uncertainty in Chechnya and give an opportunity for radical elements to regroup. On the other hand, if Kadyrov remains in power indefinitely, the cruelty and intolerance of his government might eventually precipitate a backlash. Even if large-scale fighting does not recur, Chechnya will continue to be a highly volatile and dangerous component of the Russian Federation for many years to come.

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Analysis

Separatism and Islamic Extremism in the Ethnic Republics of the North Caucasus

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Abstract

The ethnic republics of the North Caucasus remain a headache and source of alarm for Russia's central government. Moscow's efforts to improve the political climate and the economic situation have not produced the desired results. Today Moscow must support a significant number of intelligence, military, and police personnel in this strategically important region. As the federal government cuts the number of its troops in Chechnya, the number of forces subordinate to Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov is growing. At the same time, the successful efforts to forcibly remove the separatist fighters from Chechnya during the past few years, has pushed them outside the borders of the Chechen republic. The drop in the number of separatist military operations in Chechnya has been accompanied by a growth in such operations in other North Caucasus republics, particularly Dagestan and Ingushetia, which border Chechnya.

The Separatist Underground

The suppression of the separatist rebel fighters in Chechnya has forced them to move to other republics in the North Caucasus. Today they are creating and expanding their own networks in Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachayevo-Cherkessia. The main centers of these networks are not only the mountainous regions, as one would expect, but large cities, such as Makhachkala, Khasavyurt, Kizlyar, Nalchik, Cherkessk, Karachaevsk, and others. The recent actions taken by the Russian force ministries against these separatists, including the use of heavy weapons in the mountainous parts of the region, provide evidence that these conflicts have yet to disappear.

Currently, we are witnessing a major restructuring of the separatist underground in the North Caucasus that is taking place under the pressure of changing circumstances. This restructuring includes the distribution of forces across a maximally wide territory and the creation of a network structure, in which the nodes are formally autonomous, but are able to communicate with each other to coordinate their actions using various agents and electronic means of communication. In setting up this network, the fighters are focusing on disgruntled local residents, especially those who have been abused by the local law enforcement agencies. Unfortunately, the republican police in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria in the 1990s and early 2000s carried out

numerous mistaken repressive actions against a wide range of practicing Muslims, instilling them with a desire to protest. The separatists have been able to exploit these mistakes by the local authorities to recruit additional numbers of active fighters and agents. In particular, they succeeded in attracting to their side one of the influential leaders of the Jamaat of Karbardino-Balkaria Anzor Astemirov, who is now known as Emir Seifullakh.

The separatists' underground network is extremely mobile. The separatists frequently change their bases, carry out terrorist acts, and then quickly regroup elsewhere. This mobility gives each unit a high degree of autonomy. At the same time, it is clear that there is a certain logic to the separatist actions in all of the North Caucasus republics, which suggests that there is some kind of coordinating structure. Rather than being a type of "general staff" of all the separatists located in one place, this structure is also spread out over space so that it would be impossible to destroy it in one operation. The wide distribution of resources makes it extremely difficult for the authorities to effectively subdue this movement.

The strong opposition put up by the North Caucasus separatists and their ability to inflict great pain by their terrorist acts demonstrates that the movement is well equipped with arms. They are able to acquire flame-throwers and explosives to carry out acts of intimidation. One of the basic goals of their leaders is to preserve the movement; therefore they do rarely militarily attack the federal troops, which enjoy superiority. These military acts have propagandistic goals and seek to show the federal authorities and local population that the underground is alive and able to wage an armed struggle. Thus, the rebels speak about various "fronts" where they conduct "battle", but, of course, there are no such fronts in a geographical sense because there is no ongoing and direct military confrontation between the Russian forces and the fighters. The fighters are essentially using partisan methods.

Not all of the armed rebels squeezed out of Chechnya are working to set up an underground in neighboring republics. Many of the rebels are Dagestanis, returning to their native republic. In contrast to their Chechen colleagues, they cannot legalize their status utilizing the amnesties that are announced from time to time. With their ability to fight, they do not remain without work. Instead they become the core of "personal armed groups" working for various important people. Such units can be used in a wide variety of situations: as body guards to settling scores with competitors. In particular, several

legislators at the republican and local levels employ these fighters. Public officials in the executive branch have also found use for them.

Islamist Jamaats

The organizational structure of the separatist societies, jamaats, does not coincide with the structure of traditional Muslim societies in the region, which are also called jamaats. The traditional jamaats are organized along territorial principles, incorporating the population of a village or city district grouped around a mosque. The separatist jamaats are extra-territorial and dispersed. One jamaat can encompass many small groups, united in one or several networks. One example is the Dagestani jamaat "Shariat." It was created on the basis of loyalty to the ideology and practice of the separatist movement. In principle, these jamaats do not represent any kind of united association. Their structure includes de facto autonomous groups, made up of a small number of members who frequently are not acquainted with the members of the other cells. It is particularly difficult to unravel such a network since finding one cell usually does not lead to uncovering others. While it is difficult to manage such a network, its advantage in the current situation is clear: this kind of organization helps the entire network to survive.

The membership of the separatist jamaats is diverse. Their base is the Muslim youth of the region and recently there has been an alarming trend in this regard. With greater frequency, young intellectuals are joining the Islamist movements. One example is the Dagestani Abuzagir Mantayev, who defended his candidate's degree in Political Science on the topic of Wahhabism in Moscow and then turned up in the ranks of the extremists. Mantayev was killed together with other extremists by security forces in Makhachkala on October 9, 2005. Another example is Makhach Rasulov (better known as Yasin). Rasulov, born in 1975, graduated from Dagestan State University (DGU), knew French and Arabic well and studied for a time as a grad student in the department of religious studies at DGU, though he did not finish his degree. He worked as a religious columnist for the newspaper *Novoye delo* and then anchored a religious show on Dagestani television. Over the course of a year, he became an extremist and earned the title "Emir of Makhachkala," having participated in several audacious attacks on Dagestani policemen. On April 10, 2006, the authorities announced that they had killed him in the course of a special operation in a building on Engels' Street in Makhachkala.

This alarming trend demonstrates that extremist views are spread among the intellectual elite of Dagestani youth. Some young intellectuals in the North Caucasus republics, particularly in Dagestan, are convinced that in the current conditions, when injustice and corruption are rampant, the best response is the introduction of Sharia law. It is not only the uneducated who support these ideas, as earlier, but also those who are intellectually astute and have received a good secular education. Of course, this phenomenon also reflects social-economic and political problems. It is distressing that some young North Caucasus intellectuals have sought to solve these problems in the religious sphere.

The jamaats bring together members of different ethnic groups and countries. Usually their members are from the different ethnic groups of the North Caucasus, but there are also representatives of other countries, including Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and the countries of the Middle East. Official Russian statements usually describe these foreigners as mercenaries, but many of them came for ideological reasons. Those who have extensive battlefield experience work as instructors. However the instructors are not always foreigners; sometimes they are just rank-and-file fighters. Through the foreigners, the groups often establish ties with donors, typically from Islamic countries. Delivery of finances and other aid to the separatists is often criminalized: for example, through these channels counterfeit money is laundered. Other types of fund-raising are also employed, such as donations from various supporters and ransoms collected from the relatives of hostages.

For propagandistic reasons, the separatists are divided into specific "battalions" organized along ethnic lines. There are for example the "Nogai," the "Karachai," and other ethnic battalions. In reality, no such battalions exist. Military attacks and terrorist acts attributed to one or another battalion are carried out by the members of separatist jamaats of the corresponding nationality. The "Nogai Battalion" typically includes members of the Shelkovskoy jamaat, which is based in the Shelkovskoy Raion of Chechnya and the Neftekumsky Raion of Stavropol Krai. The Shelkovskoy jamaat has conducted large-scale actions against the federal troops, including the recent clashes in the village of Tukui-Mekteb of Neftekumsky Raion. Its activity receives wide attention because raids often take place beyond the borders of the ethnic republics, angering the federal government and the residents of Stavropol

Krai. This situation is not unique, since there are other jamaats that are even stronger than the Shelkovskoy jamaat.

The Separatists' Ideology

Today the secular nationalism of Dzhokhar Dudaev is a distant memory. The main ideology of the separatist movement in the North Caucasus is religious and is frequently called "Wahhabism" in the North Caucasus. The fundamental belief of the Wahhabis is the demand for the implementation of the principle of *tawkheed* (monotheism). This demand leads to a literal interpretation of this principle with very strict limits. The ideology of Wahhabism gives high priority to jihad, understood as an armed battle for faith against the enemies of Islam. The Islamists of the region take serious their right to declare jihad against other North Caucasus Muslims who do not support the separatists. As a result, there is extensive use of force against ethnic Muslims who serve the Russian power ministries. Policemen in Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and the eastern parts of Stavropol Krai are among the chief targets for the terrorists. When the separatists carry out terrorist acts, there are many victims who have no relationship to the authorities. The Islamists believe that it is acceptable to kill family members of policemen and other representatives of authority since these people stay with them and therefore presumably support their position and work. A true Muslim, in their view, should disown such relatives. They also believe that any innocent by-standers killed during a terrorist act go straight to heaven.

The ideology of the separatists is an enormous problem for the Russian authorities. The secular nationalists could have compromised with Moscow, agreeing to some level of autonomy for their people and region. With today's separatists in the North Caucasus, it is practically impossible to agree on this basis, since the separatists' ideology does not allow compromise with the "infidels." The state, which is the basis of human laws, should be destroyed, from their point of view. Everyone should obey God's law. While Muslim fundamentalists see Western democracy as useful, making it possible through honest battle to convince the population about the correctness of their vision for the further development of society, the militant extremists see democracy as an evil, a human construct, harmful from the start, since it does not agree with the clear God-given instructions about the construction of society.

Understanding the Islamist basis of the current ideology of the North Caucasus separatists is very

important in understanding the goals of this movement. Today they are not fighting for the independence of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria or Dagestan from Russia, but for the destruction of the “infidel empire,” as they call Russia, and the creation of a Sharia-ruled territory that would ultimately serve as one of the bases for uniting all Muslims around the world in a single political space. The nationality of a person is not significant for them; they recognize only Islam. Ethnic identity is definitely subordinate to religious identity. Their picture of the future has no place for national governments; instead there should only be a united Muslim society, based on the brotherhood of all Muslims.

Structures of “Traditional Islam”

So-called “traditional Islam” is often opposed to the Islamists. What do its structures represent?

The Spiritual Board of Muslims (the muftiat) officially represents traditional Islam in the North Caucasus. Today it exists in all republics of the North Caucasus, and the muftis of Adygeya and Karachayevo-Cherkessia also control the Muslim societies in the corresponding krais – Krasnodar and Stavropol. The muftiats are formally united in one structure: the Coordinating Center of Muslims in the North Caucasus, which today is led by the mufti of Karachayevo-Cherkessia and Stavropol Krai Ismail-khadzhi Berdiev. However, in reality, these official structures do not control all Islamic societies. The Spiritual Board of Muslims (DUM) as a set of official structures is suffering a deep crisis across Russia and the North Caucasus in particular.

Many Muslim societies exist autonomously of the DUM, sometimes creating influential parallel structures. For example, in Kabardino-Balkaria during the 1990s, a significant fraction of the Muslims, particularly the youth, created the Jamaat of Kabardino-Balkaria, which was organized much more effectively than the Kabardino-Balkaria DUM and competed for spiritual power in the Muslim society of the republic. Likewise, the Karachayevo-Cherkessia and Stavropol Krai DUM does not control some of the societies in the republic and many societies in the krai. As a result, the krai authorities have even suggested separating the Stavropol societies from Berdiev’s muftiat and creating a separate DUM in Stavropol Krai. However, this idea proved unworkable because of a variety of problems, including the lack of unity among the krai’s Muslims and their inability to choose a leader capable of uniting the various Muslim societies in the region.

The level of influence for the traditional structures is not the same in all North Caucasus republics. They are strongest in the Eastern part of the region: Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia. Today, Dagestan’s religious leaders are actively asserting their influence over the authorities at all levels of government, violating the secular character of the political system in the republic and the interests of the federal center. The most obvious intervention into the political sphere is the rising influence of the Sufi shaikhs in Dagestan. The intervention is felt at all levels, from local to republican. For example, many bureaucrats in the Dagestani government are disciples of one of the most influential shaikhs, Said-afandi Chirkeevsky. One-third to one-half of the members of the republican parliament are also disciples of Sufi shaikhs. In addition to Chirkeevsky, there are several other influential shaikhs.

One sign of the growing influence of the religious lobby on the authorities is the recent abolition of the Dagestan government State Committee on Religious Affairs. This committee tracked the overall ethnic and religious situation in the republic, registered religious organizations, evaluated religious literature and publications, and issued its own handbooks and religious studies literature. The committee managed to preserve parity between various religious organizations and groups, not allowing one to grow too strong while making clear to the key players that Dagestan is a secular republic in which secular Russian laws take precedence.

Unsurprisingly, practically all Muslim organizations were dissatisfied with the work of the committee, particularly the Dagestani DUM, which wanted to have more influence on state policy. Former employees of this committee told the author of this article that there is evidence showing that the DUM actively lobbied for the closing of the committee. Following the closure, the DUM placed its people as imams in several areas, particularly the mosque in the village of Shamkhal, which is under the jurisdiction of the city of Makhachkala. In place of the former committee, there is a new department in the Dagestani Ministry of Nationalities Policy, Information, and External Ties, which naturally cannot conduct an independent policy in the area of regulating relations between the state and religion, as the former committee once did.

The Dagestani DUM’s attack on the secular character of the state is a serious problem. Its leaders frequently announce that in Dagestan it is necessary to control the media since television broadcasts pictures of “uncovered women” and it is difficult to

counter the attacks of the Wahhabis and their accusations of cooperating with the “godless state.” In their opinion, it is necessary to create a centralized system of religious education in the North Caucasus and introduce the fundamentals of religion in the state schools.

There is a deep divide among the “traditional” Muslim societies of Dagestan, and no unity among the Sufis, called “tarikatis” in this part of the Caucasus. Shaikh Said-afandi Chirkeevsky and his disciples are seeking a monopoly of power. Today they control the Dagestan DUM and claim that the other shaikhs in Dagestan are not authentic. As a result, the other shaikhs do not recognize the DUM or stand in opposition to it. These shaikhs are uniting, which could lead to the creation of a serious coalition of Sufis opposed to the DUM. Additionally, the followers of Shaikh Israfilov Serazhutdin Khuriksky of Derbent represent another major power in the region.

Thus traditional Islam in the North Caucasus is being politicized and organizational structures like the Sufi brotherhood are presenting an alternative to Wahhabism, but this alternative is also based on imposing Sharia on local society. While the Wahhabis are conducting armed battle to introduce Sharia in the region, the Sufis are gradually Islamifying society, ever more actively trying to influence all spheres of life, including politics.

The Authorities' Policy

Solving the problem of separatism, an integral part of the Islamist movement, is one of the top priorities of Russian authorities in the North Caucasus. Let us examine how they try to solve the problem of religious extremism.

The authorities today are placing their bets on traditional Islam as described above. However, in the North Caucasus, traditional Islam takes various forms. In Chechnya and Ingushetia, there is a special form of Sufism where there are no living shaikhs, only scholarship left by shaikhs who lived in the past. In Dagestan, there is the Sufism of various tarikats and non-Sufi Islam; in the other parts of the republic, there is the typical “Islam of the mosque” (not related to Sufism). This mosaic of forms of “traditional Islam” makes it difficult to choose one which could be the standard form. For the time being, the official DUM has support, but its failings are obvious – it does not control all Muslim societies in the republic. Occasionally the state comes into conflict with a much stronger and cohesive structure, as in Kabardino-Balkaria’s local youth jamaat.

Within the framework of conducting a battle with Islamic extremism, the Russian authorities have placed serious limits on many Muslim institutions. To block financial flows to radical Islamists, the activities of almost all Islamist charitable organizations were closed. This practice led to a deterioration of the financial situation of Islamic societies and ended many charitable and educational programs. There were sharp drops in Muslim book publishing and many regional newspapers and journals closed. The authorities shuttered scholarly associations where there was open propaganda of Islamist extremist ideas, but in Kabardino-Balkaria and in Karachayevo-Cherkessia, the local authorities at the end of the 1990s closed all non-official scholarly institutions, the makhtabs and madrasahs. In the beginning of the 2000s, the Kabardino-Balkaria authorities also began to close the mosques. After the departure of the hated Kabardino-Balkaria Minister of Internal Affairs Khachim Shogenov and the appointment of Arsen Kanokov as the president of the republic, these mistakes were slowly corrected. However, the tension in the republic’s Muslim society has not declined.

The military actions conducted by Russian special forces are often focused and effective, especially in discovering specific groups of fighters. At the same time, they are sometimes directed against Muslims who think differently but have committed no crimes with the goal of removing them from the mosques or removing the possibility that they will become Wahhabis. While the number of such operations has dropped drastically, they are still taking place. It is obvious that in the complicated religious situation of the North Caucasus today, it is very difficult to determine the loyal groups and separate them from the ones that are not loyal, much less the ones capable of armed rebellion.

Imposing order in the system of Islamic religious education has taken on great importance for the Russian authorities since the beginning of the 2000s. Today there are 22 Islamic higher institutions of education functioning in the North Caucasus – 19 in Dagestan, one in Cherkessk, one in Nazran, and one in Nalchik. The problems with the education system have attracted the attention of presidential envoy to the North Caucasus Dmitry Kozak. His staff determined that the state should provide extensive support to develop a system of Islamic education. In June 2006, Kozak held a meeting with Caucasus muftis at which they decided to found two Islamic universities in the near future – one for the North-East Caucasus with an emphasis on the shafite school, the other in the North-West Caucasus with an emphasis on

the khanafit school. Kozak gave instructions to develop the curriculum of these schools and determined where they would be located. In this way, the state is trying to train loyal members of the religion, but most likely such measures will not resolve the problem of Islamic education in the North Caucasus, particularly the spread of extremist brands of Islamic scholarship.

Obviously, the problem of Islamic extremism and the closely related issue of separatism can only be solved in an all-encompassing way. The solution must include the use of force, but also must deprive the extremists of a social base through the development of the economy, improving the well-being of the population, and the development of normal dialogue within the region's Islamic society by encouraging cooperation with a significant part of the Muslim youth who reject extremism. To neutralize the protest mood, the authorities are trying to conduct a change of elites in the republics and also show decisiveness in fighting corruption and the ineffectiveness of the local economy. Replacing the leaders of Dagestan, Adygeya, and Kabardino-Balkaria, demonstrative actions against corrupt officials, and the development of tourism and other economic projects are well received by the local population. Given the deep crisis this region is facing, cosmetic measures are clearly insufficient. In the North Caucasus, it is

necessary to conduct systematic reforms, something that the federal government is having a hard time deciding to do.

No less important is the development of a civil form of identity: Muslim youth react very poorly to the growth in Russia of an anti-Caucasus mood. The integration of the Muslims of the North Caucasus into the broader civil society is not moving forward with enough decisiveness and speed.

In sum, there has been a change of the ideological base of the separatist movement in the North Caucasus. Starting as an overwhelmingly nationalist movement on the territory of Chechnya, it has transformed to a religious Islamist network. Today, the ranks of the separatists are filled not only with Chechens, but representatives of other North Caucasus peoples as well. They are fighting against the current authorities in order to create an Islamist state. The federal and local authorities must address the socio-economic problems of the region as well as the spread of religious extremism, particularly among the youth. In doing this, it will be difficult for them to use the traditional Islamic structures of the region, partly because they are weak (as in Kabardino-Balkaria) and partly because of their politicization (as in Dagestan).

Translation from the Russian: Robert Ortung

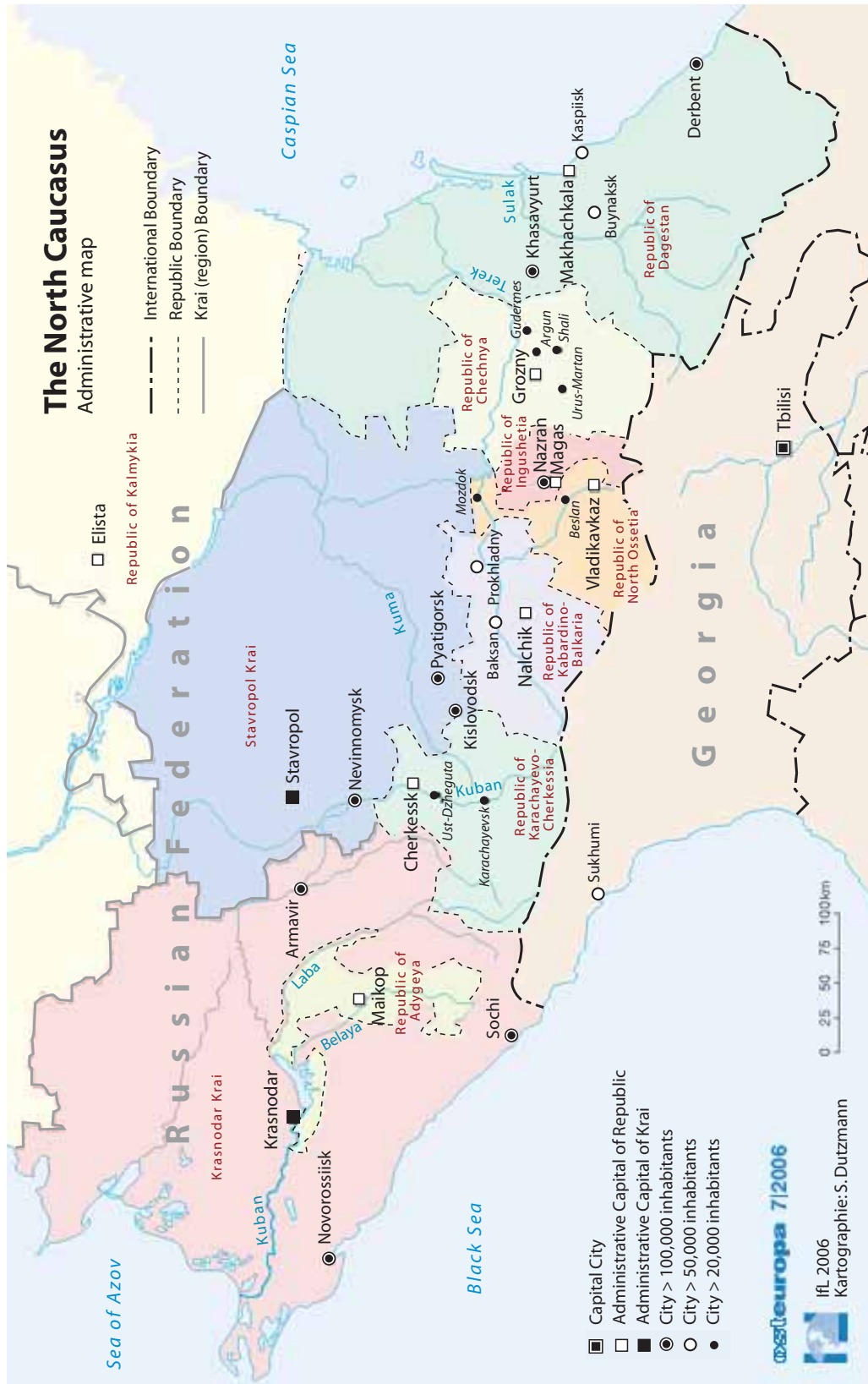
About the author:

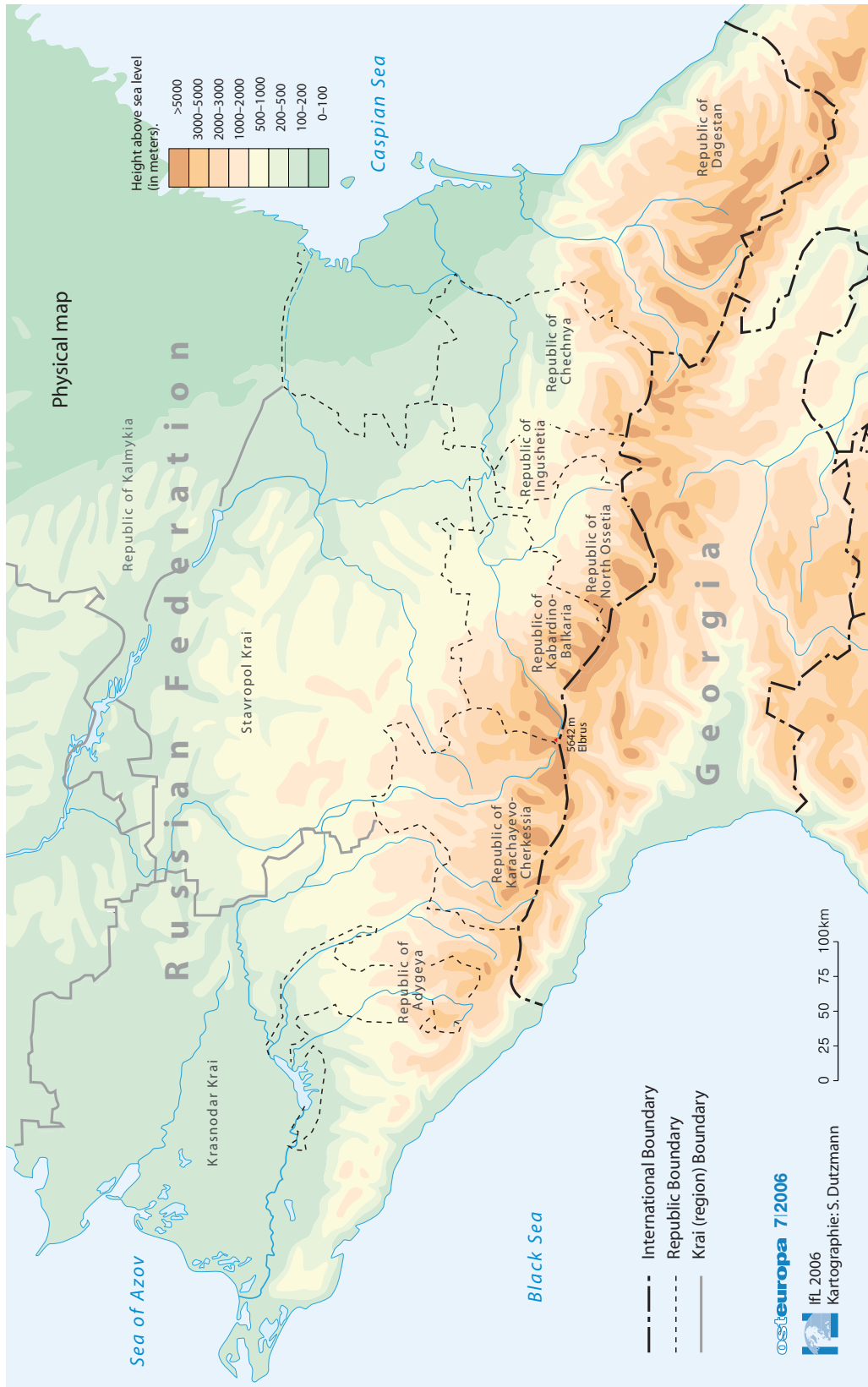
Dr. Akhmet A. Yarlykapov is a senior researcher with the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow.

Further reading:

- Neil J. Melvin, *Building Stability in the North Caucasus: Ways Forward for Russia and the European Union*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 16 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, May 2007), <http://www.sipri.org/contents/publications/Policypaper16.html>.
- Jeronim Perovic, *The North Caucasus on the Brink*, ISN Case Study (Zurich, International Relations and Security Network, 29 August 2006), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?id=15316>.

Maps





Documentation

Table: The Southern Federal District. An Overview of Main Statistical Indicators

	Capital	Territory ('000 km ²)	Population (in mln.)	Share in Russian GDP	Average monthly income per capita (in USD)
For comparison:					
Russia	Moscow	17 098	142.8	100%	276
Southern Federal District	<i>Rostov-on-Don</i>				
Republic of Adygeya	Maykop	8	0.4	0.1%	132
Republic of Dagestan	Makhachkala	50	2.6	0.5%	165
Republic of Ingushetia	Magas	4	0.5	0.04%	85
Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria	Nalchik	13	0.9	0.2%	140
Republic of Kalmykia	Elista	75	0.3	0.1%	82
Republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia	Cherkessk	14	0.4	0.1%	146
Republic of North Ossetia	Vladikavkaz	8	0.7	0.2%	182
Republic of Chechnya	Grozny	16	1.2	na	na
Krasnodar Territory	Krasnodar	76	5.1	2.2%	189
Stavropol Territory	Stavropol	66	2.7	0.9%	178
Astrakhan Region	Astrakhan	49	1.0	0.4%	197
Volgograd Region	Volgograd	113	2.6	1.1%	198
Rostov Region	Rostov on Don	101	4.3	1.5%	220

Source: Russian Federal Service for Statistics (Rosstat): *Rossiya v tsifrakh 2006*, Moscow 2006, pp. 40–47.

Timeline: Terror Related Incidents in the North Caucasus Since the Death of Shamil Basayev

(for previous events, see: RAD No. 5, 29 August 2006)

10 July 2006	Guerilla leader Shamil Basayev is killed in the detonation of a vehicle loaded with explosives. The Russian domestic intelligence agency FSB claims to have booby-trapped the vehicle.
12 July 2006	In Buynaksk (Dagestan), security forces raid a residential building and kill two guerillas hiding out there.
13 July 2006	The foreign minister of the Chechen underground government, Akhmed Zakayev, announces via the internet that the Chechen resistance is prepared to take up peace talks immediately and unconditionally.
13 July 2006	Chechen officials claim to have killed some 13 militants in fighting near the village of Nozhai-Yurt, close to the border with Dagestan.
15 July 2006	FSB Director Nikolai Patrushev calls on Chechen guerillas to disarm and to take up negotiations with the pro-Russian Chechen government.
17 July 2006	Two police officers are shot in the city center of Grozny in broad daylight by unknown perpetrators.
17 July 2006	A Muslim cleric and his brother are shot dead by unknown assailants in Grozny.
19 July 2006	Chechen rebel leader Dokku Umarov and other leading Chechen rebels reject an amnesty offer, describing the offer as a hopeless attempt by the Kremlin to hide the real situation in the region.
19 July 2006	Two police officers are shot and injured by persons unknown in the village of Maisky (North Ossetia). One of them dies later in hospital.
23 July 2006	The police track down three guerillas near Endirei (Khasavyurt region, Dagestan). In the ensuing gun battle two police officers and one militant are killed.

28 July 2006	Russian media claim that pro-Moscow Chechen forces have killed two alleged commanders of Chechen rebel groups.
2 August 2006	Unknown perpetrators ambush a vehicle carrying the pay for Russian peacekeeping troops in Abkhazia. Two Russian soldiers are killed, one is injured.
3 August 2006	The Russian human rights organization Memorial claims 125 people have been abducted in Chechnya since January 2006. Of these, 63 have been freed, eight were found dead and nine were put on trial. Memorial said the other 45 are unaccounted for.
8 August 2006	A roadside bomb in the Dagestani city of Buynaksk kills the local prosecutor, Bitar Bitarov.
10 August 2006	Authorities in Ingushetia claim one person has been killed and 12 others injured in an attack on the home of Nazran prosecutor Girikhan Khazbiyev.
12 August 2006	Police in Kabardino-Balkaria kill one suspected militant in a raid near Nalchik, the capital of the republic.
16 August 2006	In a fire fight with rebels in Nazran, Ingushetia, one Russian soldier is killed and two wounded. The attackers manage to escape.
19–20 August 2006	In Alchasty (Ingushetia), 10-15 unknown people attack the houses of one active and one former police officer, and kill both men.
22 August 2006	Two bombs explode at an oil pipeline at a refinery in the Malgobek district, Ingushetia.
23 August 2006	In Karabulak (Ingushetia), unknown assailants open fire on the vehicle of the local police chief and injure him.
24 August 2006	In Grozny, four soldiers of the internal militia are killed in an explosion; another is injured.
24 August 2006	Unknown assailants open fire on Aslan Khamkhoev, an Ingush police officer serving with the Russian High Command in Chechnya, severely injuring him.
24 August 2006	In Magas, unknown perpetrators fire on the car of Sultan Kushtev, a close relative of the commander of the Ingush president's bodyguard, injuring him and his companions.
25 August 2006	During a meeting with RF Prosecutor-General Yuri Chaika, RF Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev, Presidential Envoy to the Southern Federal District Dmitri Kozak, and the heads of the North Caucasus republics at Rostov-on-Don, FSB Director Nikolai Patrushev states that 18 terrorist attacks have taken place this year in Ingushetia and 11 in North Ossetia, a 50 percent increase over 2005.
26 August 2006	Heavily armed police surround a house in Dagestan and exchange gunfire with suspected militants holed up inside, killing four and wounding a woman who was with the gunmen.
26 August 2006	Three police officers are killed in an ambush near Voznesenskaya, Malgobek rayon in Ingushetia. In another incident, two servicemen are injured in an explosion near Nesterovskaya in Ingushetia's Sunzha rayon.
29 August 2006	In Gudermes (Chechnya), 49 insurgents surrender to the authorities. They are responding to an offer of amnesty made by the head of the Russian domestic secret service FSB, Nikolai Patrushev, in July after the assassination of Chechen guerilla leader Shamil Basayev.
29 August 2006	In a firefight between security forces and rebels in Ingushetia, two guerillas are killed.
1 September 2006	On the second anniversary of the Beslan hostage crisis, "Novaya Gazeta" and the website "The Truth About Beslan" publish a comprehensive set of documents promoting a highly critical view of the Russian authorities' actions.
3 September 2006	One person is killed and at least 13 injured in an explosion at the Khankala military base near Chechnya's capital, Grozny. Negligent handling of munitions is the most likely cause of the explosion.
7 September 2006	After a visit by Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov to Ingush President Murat Zyazikov, members of Kadyrov's bodyguard attack Ingush security forces trying to inspect the convoy. One Ingush police officer is injured.
11 September 2006	Twelve high-ranking officers of the Northern Caucasus defense district are killed when an Mi-8 helicopter crashes near Vladikavkaz, including the commander of the rear echelon services. Four people are injured.
13 September 2006	An exchange of gunfire between Ingush police and members of Chechen police at a checkpoint on the Ingush-Chechen administrative border leaves at least three Chechens and one Ingush policemen dead and more than a dozen wounded.
18 September 2006	Russian security forces claim to have killed alleged Chechen rebel commander Isa Muskiev during a security operation inside Chechnya. A second militant is also killed during the 17 September operation. A third is detained.
21 September 2006	Chechen officials say gunmen have killed five policemen in the Chechen capital, Grozny. In the neighboring republic of Ingushetia, five policemen are wounded when unidentified assailants attack them with grenades from a passing car.

21 September 2006	During a raid in Malgobek (Ingushetia), unknown assailants fire on police officers from a passing car. Five officers are injured.
25 September 2006	In Kislovodsk (Stavropol Krai), Abubakir Kudzhiyev, a local imam, is killed by unknown attackers.
28 September 2006	The Central Asia-Center pipeline is damaged by an explosion. Chechen guerillas claim to have bombed the pipeline; Russian authorities blame technical errors.
4 October 2006	In the Magaremkent district of Dagestan, one policemen is shot during a firefight with rebels.
7 October 2006	Prominent Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, known for her critical coverage of the war in Chechnya, is killed in Moscow.
9 October 2006	In Khasavyurt (Dagestan), 500 demonstrators block the main road to Makhachkala to protest against the increasing number of kidnappings. Four days earlier, two young men were detained by unknown perpetrators and disappeared. The Dagestani Interior Ministry denies having any knowledge about these kidnappings.
11 October 2006	In the Buynaksk region (Dagestan), two policemen are killed when their police station was attacked by unknown assailants.
18 October 2006	Two rebels are killed in the Novolaksk region of Dagestan. In Makhachkala, the capital city of Dagestan, one policemen is killed when rebels opened fire on a police station.
22 October 2006	Two gunmen open fire on police officers checking identity documents in Makhachkala, Dagestan, killing one and wounding another.
28 October 2006	In Khasavyurt (Dagestan), 1,000 demonstrators protest against the continuing kidnappings. Since 2004, about 70 residents of the city have disappeared. The demonstrators believe that the abductions are the work of Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov.
5 November 2006	In Nesterovsaya (Ingushetia) security forces storm a house and kill three alleged Chechen rebels.
7–8 November 2006	Seven Russian police officers are killed and another wounded when their vehicles come under fire overnight in Chechnya. The police officers are ambushed in the southern Shatoi District while returning to their base late on November 7.
8 November 2006	Pro-Moscow Chechen officials pronounce the Chechen resistance a spent force, numbering no more than a few dozen die-hard fighters. But more recent assessments by Russian military indicate that the Chechen resistance numbers at least 700 men and still poses a “serious threat”.
13 November 2006	Human Rights Watch (HRW) states in a report that the use of torture in Chechnya is “widespread” and “systematic.” The group has documented more than 100 cases of torture in its 16-page study. It blames pro-Moscow forces of Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov for the majority of torture cases, but has also documented “numerous” cases of ill-treatment and torture by federal police personnel.
18 November 2006	Movladi Baisarov, a rival of Chechen Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov and bodyguard to former Chechen President Akhmed Kadyrov, is shot dead by police in Moscow. Baisarov had refused to swear allegiance to Ramzan Kadyrov.
19 November 2006	According to Russian police, Chechen rebels kill a police official and two other people in a drive-by shooting in the Kurchaloi district, in eastern Chechnya.
22 November 2006	A human rights report compiled by Russia’s Memorial rights group and the France-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) accuses security forces in Chechnya of imposing a reign of terror in the breakaway Russian republic, where hostage taking, kidnapping, and torture are widespread. According to the report, 143 people have been abducted this year so far. Some 54 are still missing.
26 November 2006	Russian security forces claim to have killed five people, including Abu Havs, a Jordanian fighter, who was said to be the leading al-Qaeda representative in the North Caucasus.
8 December 2006	The Russian military say one of its soldiers in Chechnya has been killed and another seven wounded by a roadside bomb late on 7 December. The troops were traveling in a Russian military vehicle outside the Chechen capital, Grozny, when the bomb exploded.
25 December 2006	One rebel is killed and two are detained during a gunfight with security forces in Cherkessk, the capital of Karachayevo-Cherkessia.
10–11 January 2007	Russian special forces claim to have killed three suspected militants in Dagestan after a gun battle that lasted several hours.
15 January 2007	Russia’s National Antiterrorism Committee claims that 546 armed militants in Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus have surrendered to authorities as part of a governmental amnesty. The foreign minister of Chechnya’s separatist government, Akhmed Zakayev, calls the announcement “propaganda.”

29 January 2007	Russian forces and Chechen separatist rebels clash in Chechnya's Gudermes region, leaving four servicemen and one rebel dead. News agencies also report that two Russian servicemen and one Chechen militant are killed in a separate shoot-out in Chechnya's mountainous Shatoi region.
31 January 2007	An attempted assassination targets the highest-ranking Muslim cleric of the Republic of Ingushetia. Unknown assailants fire on his vehicle, injuring him and his son.
3 February 2007	Gunmen kill a police investigator in his car outside his home in Makhachkala, Dagestan. Two bombs then explode as a police convoy heads to the site, killing two policemen. The blast also damages the car of regional Interior Minister Adilgerey Magomedtagirov, though the minister is unharmed. Jammal "Sharia" later claims responsibility for these attacks.
3 February 2007	Security forces kill four suspected militants during a special operation in the town of Malgobek (Ingushetia). The Interior Ministry says the gunmen are suspected of firing on the republic's most senior Muslim cleric and his son earlier in the week.
7 February 2007	"Rossiyskaya Gazeta" reports that according to the Chechen Comptroller's Office, 1.9 billion rubles (US\$ 71.1 million) transferred by the Russian government for rebuilding Chechnya have been embezzled or wasted.
7 February 2007	In Nazran (Ingushetia), members of the FSB open fire on a suspect vehicle parked in front of a traffic post. Two people are killed. According to their families, the victims have no connection to the guerilla movement.
10 February 2007	Two Russian soldiers are killed and six wounded in a bombing attack in Buynaksk, Dagestan.
13 February 2007	Four militants and two police officers are killed in a clash near the village of Ishkoi-Yurt in Chechnya's Gudermes district.
14 February 2007	In Makhachkala (Dagestan), unknown assailants fire on the car of Eduard Khiridev, the chairman of the regional organization of the "Russian Patriots" party, severely injuring him.
15 February 2007	In the Chechen capital of Grozny, two rebels are injured in a shootout, another is arrested, and two members of the security forces are injured.
15 February 2007	In Makhachkala (Dagestan), traffic police officers protest against corruption in the Interior Ministry and demand payment of the overdue salaries owed to them.
15 February 2007	Putin accepts the resignation of Chechen President Alu Alkhanov. He is succeeded by Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov as acting president.
20 February 2007	In North Ossetia, federal judge Vladimir Albergov is found murdered.
20 February 2007	The Spanish newspaper "El Paese" quotes a journalist of "Novaya Gazeta" as saying that three independent sources confirm that the contract to murder Anna Politkovskaya came from the entourage of the acting Chechen president, Ramzan Kadyrov.
21 February 2007	Security forces search the offices of the British NGO, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), in Vladikavkaz, and confiscate computers and files.
24 February 2007	At least two rebels are killed when special troops storm a house in Dagestan's Kizlyar district.
1 March 2007	Russian President Vladimir Putin nominates Ramzan Kadyrov as president of the Chechen Republic.
2 March 2007	Chechnya's parliament approves Ramzan Kadyrov as president of the republic.
2 March 2007	In Dakhadayev rayon (Dagestan), a firefight breaks out between supporters of the "Union of Right Forces" and "United Russia" parties. Two people are killed and one person is injured.
11 March 2007	Irregularities are registered during elections in Dagestan. Among other incidents, one man is injured in a firefight outside a polling station.
14 March 2007	Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov rejects charges of continuing abuses in Chechnya by Europe's top rights watchdog, the anti-torture committee of the Council of Europe. The committee issued a statement on 13 March saying that detainees in Chechnya are being ill-treated and tortured by members of Russian law enforcement agencies.
19 March 2007	Dagestanis fail to track down a group of guerilla fighters suspected to be hiding out in Gimri (Uncukul rayon).
23 March 2007	Ursukhan Zyazikov, a close relative of the president of the Republic of Ingushetia, is kidnapped in the village of Barsuki.
1 April 2007	The deputy chief prosecutor of Dagestan, Abdu Basir Omarov, and another man are killed by unknown assailants.

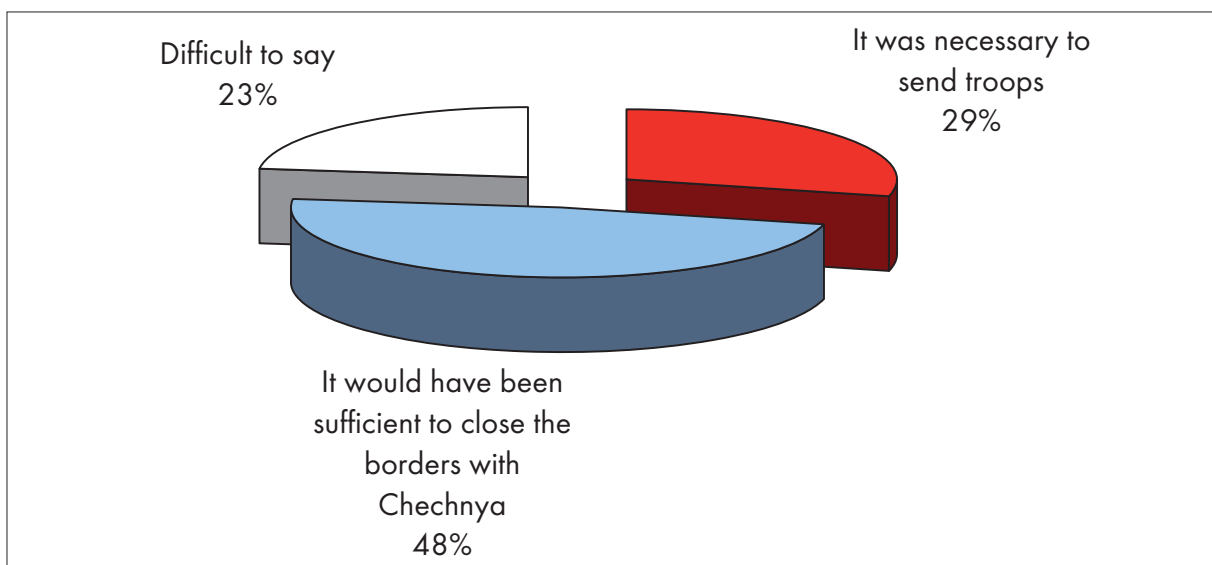
4 April 2007	Suleyman Imurzayev (a.k.a. Khairulla) is killed in Chechnya. He was commander of the Southeastern section of the Caucasus Front and vice-premier of the government of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (ChRI). Together with Shamil Basayev, he is believed to have organized the assassination of Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov (Ramzan Kadyrov's father) in May 2004.
5 April 2007	Ramzan Kadyrov is inaugurated as Chechnya's new president in a ceremony that took place in the town of Gudermes, Kadyrov's stronghold east of the Chechen capital, Grozny.
7–9 April 2007	Sustained fighting breaks out between Chechen guerilla fighters and security forces near the village of Gordali (rayon Noshay-Yurt, Chechnya).
27 April 2007	18 Russian soldiers and air crew members are killed in the crash of a Russian military helicopter in Chechnya, the deadliest single death toll for the Russian military in Chechnya in two years. There are conflicting reports on how the Mi-8 helicopter was downed while transporting troops to take part in an operation against separatist fighters in Chechnya's southern Shatoi region. Some reports say the helicopter appeared to have been shot down by separatists, while others suggest the crash was the result of an accident or a technical problem.
29 April 2007	A gas pipeline in Dagestan is damaged by an explosion believed to have been caused by sabotage.
1 May 2007	Two soldiers are injured in Ingushetia when they set off a booby-trap while conducting a sweep through a forest area.
6 May 2007	At least three police officers and three suspected militants are killed in a gun battle in Chechnya near the village of Khatani, in Chechnya's southern Vedeno district.
12–13 May 2007	In Khazavyurt (Dagestan), security forces surround a residential building suspected of housing two guerillas. After the building and two neighboring houses are destroyed, the body of one guerilla is retrieved.
21 May 2007	Security forces in Kaspiysk (Dagestan) kill two guerilla fighters. One police officer and three passersby are injured in the exchange of fire.
22 May 2007	Akhmad Kartoyev is kidnapped by unknown perpetrators. Kartoyev is an alumnus of the Al-Azhar University of Cairo and is considered a devout Muslim. Between 150 and 200 Ingush Muslims have been kidnapped and "disappeared" in the past two to three years.

(Compiled by Jeronim Perovic)

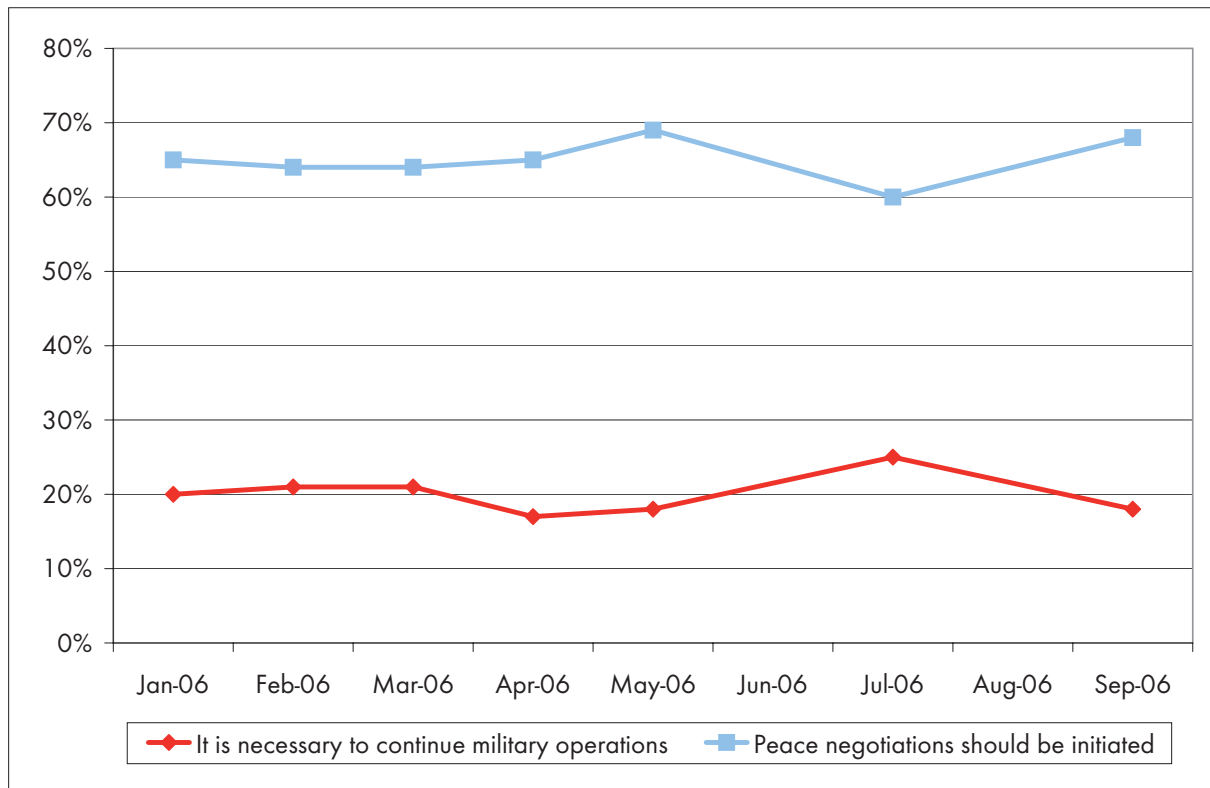
Opinion Survey

Why Did War Begin Again in Chechnya in 1999? (Levada)

Was It Necessary to Send Troops to Chechnya in the Fall of 1999, or Would It Have Been Sufficient to Station Troops on the Chechen Borders, Close the Borders and Wait Until "Healthy Forces" in Chechnya Settled the Problem?



Is It Necessary to Continue Military Operations, or Should Peace Negotiations be Initiated With the Guerillas?



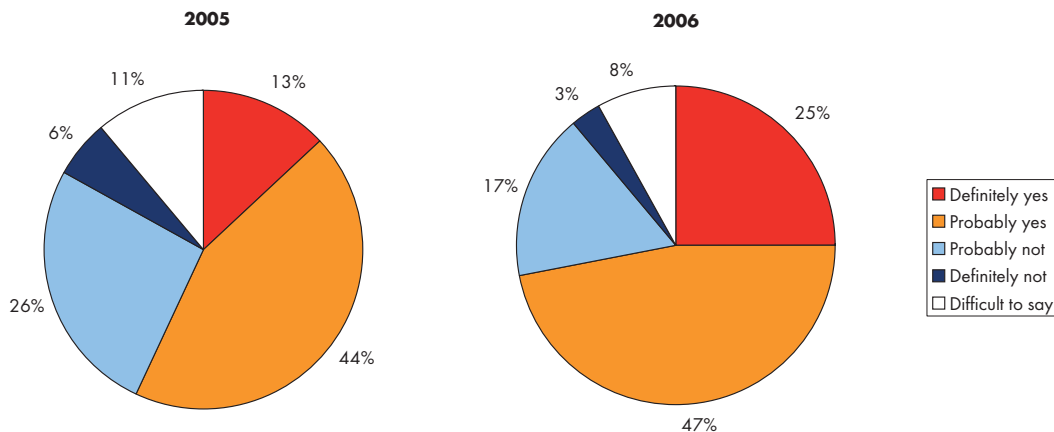
Ten Years Ago, in August of 1996, the Peace Accords of Khasavyurt were Signed. Why did Armed Conflict Start Again in 1999?

Someone is profiting economically from the war in Chechnya	32%
The Chechen authorities did not adhere to the treaty and pursued anti-Russian policies	17%
The treaty of Khasavyurt was only a provisional measure, no one seriously intended to comply with it	13%
The Chechen authorities were not capable of combating the increase in crime, kidnappings continued to take place	12%
Provocative sorties by Basayev and Khattab, the incursion into Dagestan	12%
The aggressive character of Chechens and their unwillingness to engage in peaceful work	11%
Incitement by the West and Western secret services	9%
Economic collapse and the low standard of living of the Chechen population	9%
The flames of the Chechen war were fanned by circles close to Boris Yeltsin and the federal authorities in Russia	8%
The influence of Wahhabis and Islamic fundamentalists	7%
The Chechen problem can only be solved by force, not by negotiations	6%
In Russia a politician (Putin) appeared who was capable of decisively repulsing the attacks of the guerillas	5%
The accords of Khasavyurt were humiliating for Russia	4%
Other reasons	3%
The Russian generals could not resign themselves to defeat and to the fact that victory had been taken away from them	3%
Difficult to say	29%

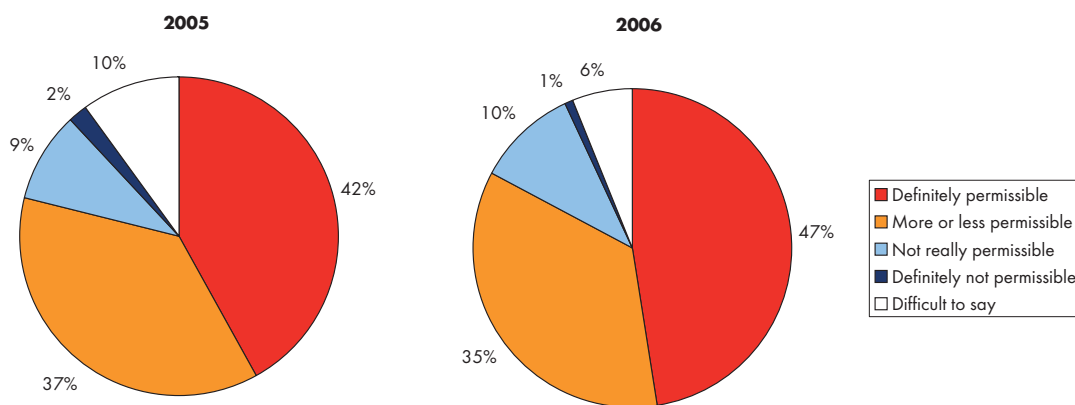
Source pp. 18–19: <http://www.levada.ru./press/2006083102.html>, 1 September 2006

Chechnya After the Death of Basayev (VTsIOM)

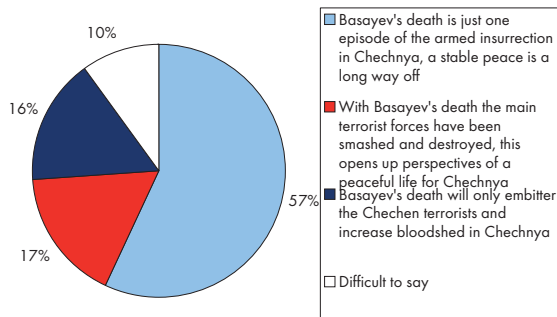
Vladimir Putin Promised to Finish Off the Chechen Guerillas. Is He Consistent in Fulfilling this Promise?



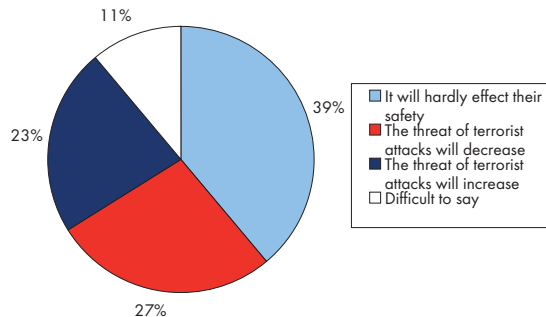
To What Extent is the Physical Elimination of Leaders of the Chechen Insurrection Within Russia and Abroad Permissible?



How Does the Elimination of Basayev Affect the Situation in Chechnya and the Other Regions of the Northern Caucasus?



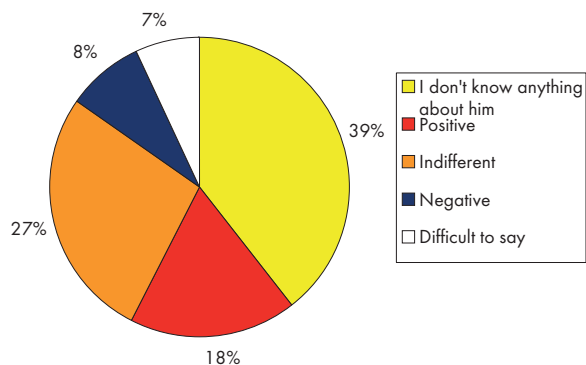
How Does the Death of Shamil Basayev Affect the Safety of Russian Citizens Outside of Chechnya?



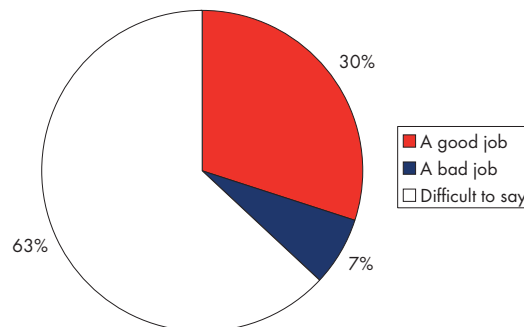
Source for p. 20: <http://wciom.ru/?pt=43&article=2911>, 20 July 2006

Ramzan Kadyrov, President of Chechnya (FOM)

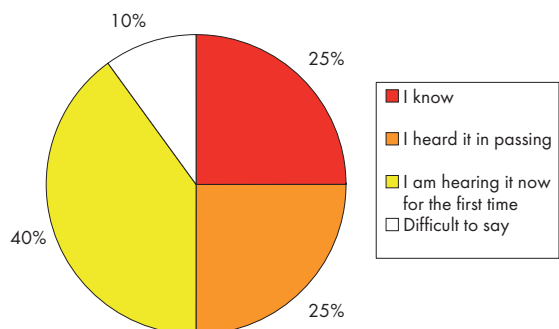
What is Your Attitude Towards Ramzan Kadyrov – Positive, Negative or Indifferent?



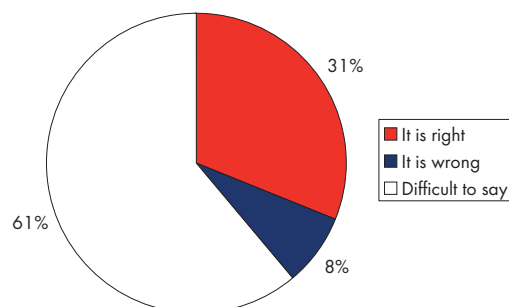
For the Last Two Years, Kadyrov Has Been the Acting Head of the Government of Chechnya. In Your Opinion, Has Kadyrov Done a Good Job or a Bad Job?



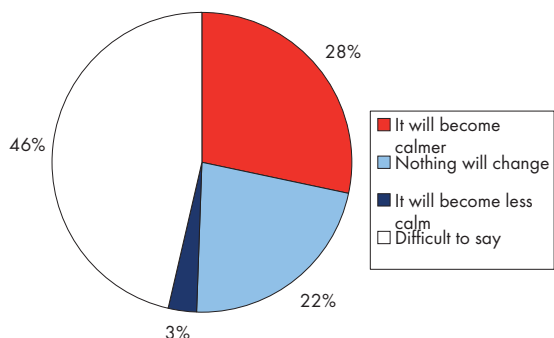
Do You Know, Have You Heard in Passing, or Are You Hearing Now for the First Time that Ramzan Kadyrov was Last Week Appointed President of Chechnya?



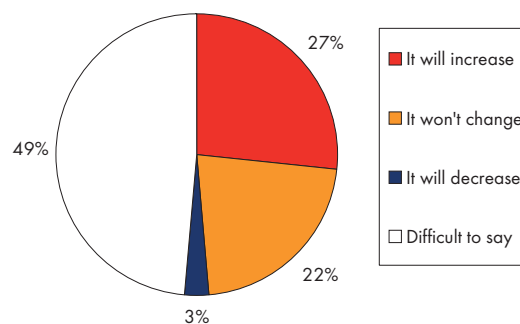
Do you Think the Decision to Appoint Ramzan Kadyrov as President of Chechnya is Right or Wrong?



If Ramzan Kadyrov Continues to Lead Chechnya, Do You Think the Situation There Will Become Calmer than It Is at Present, Will Become Less Calm or Remain Unchanged?



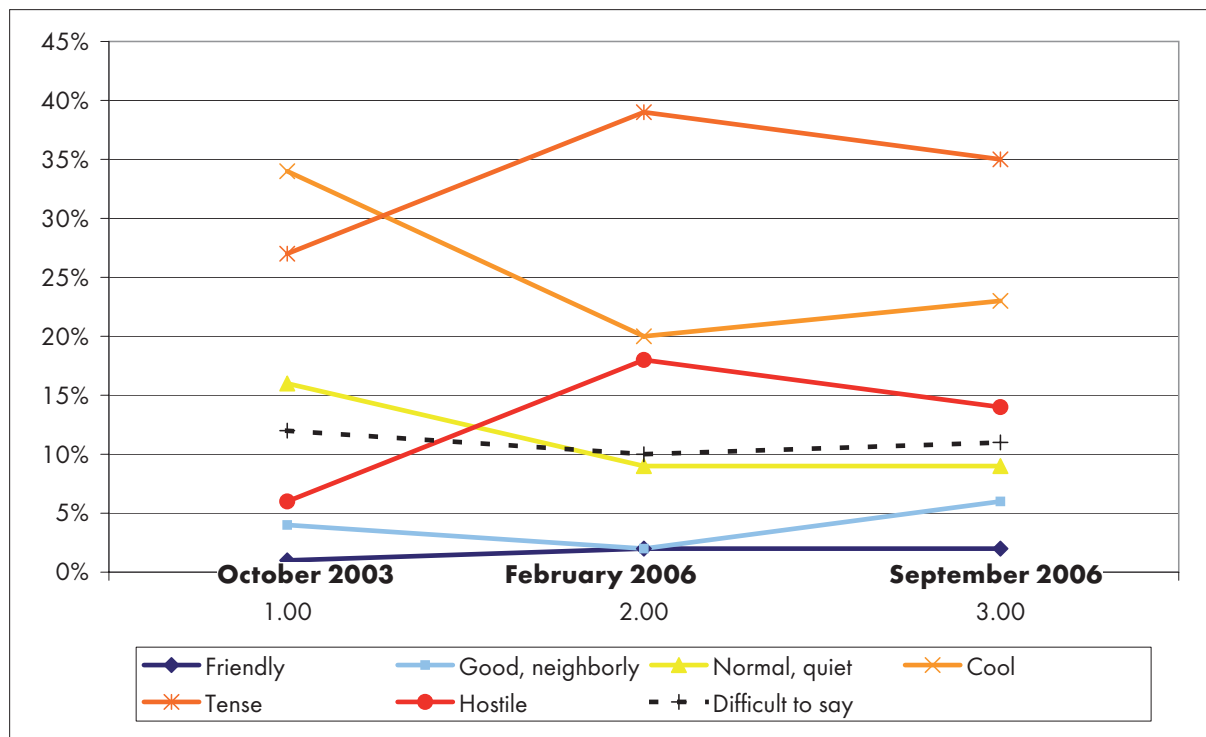
If Ramzan Kadyrov Continues to Lead Chechnya, Will the Standard of Living Grow, Decrease or Remain Unchanged?



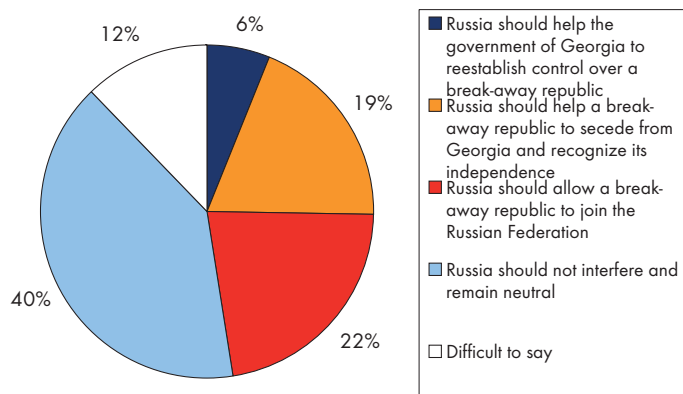
Source p. 21: http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom0709/domt0709_5/d070923 1 March 2007

Russian-Georgian Relations (VTsIOM)

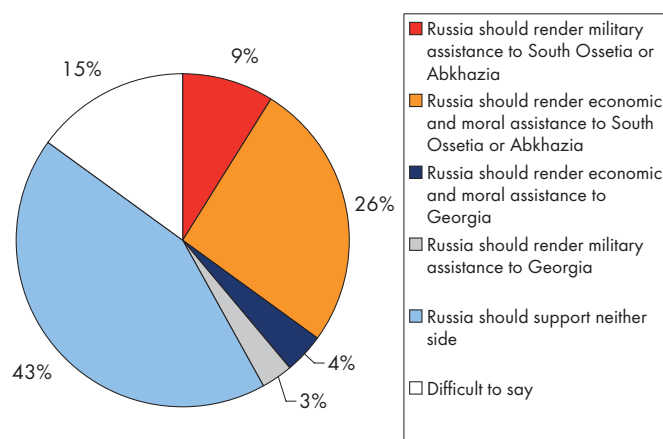
How Do You Assess the Present Relations Between Russia and Georgia?



What Should Russia's Position be in the Issue of a Possible Secession of Abkhazia or South Ossetia from Georgia? (September 2006)



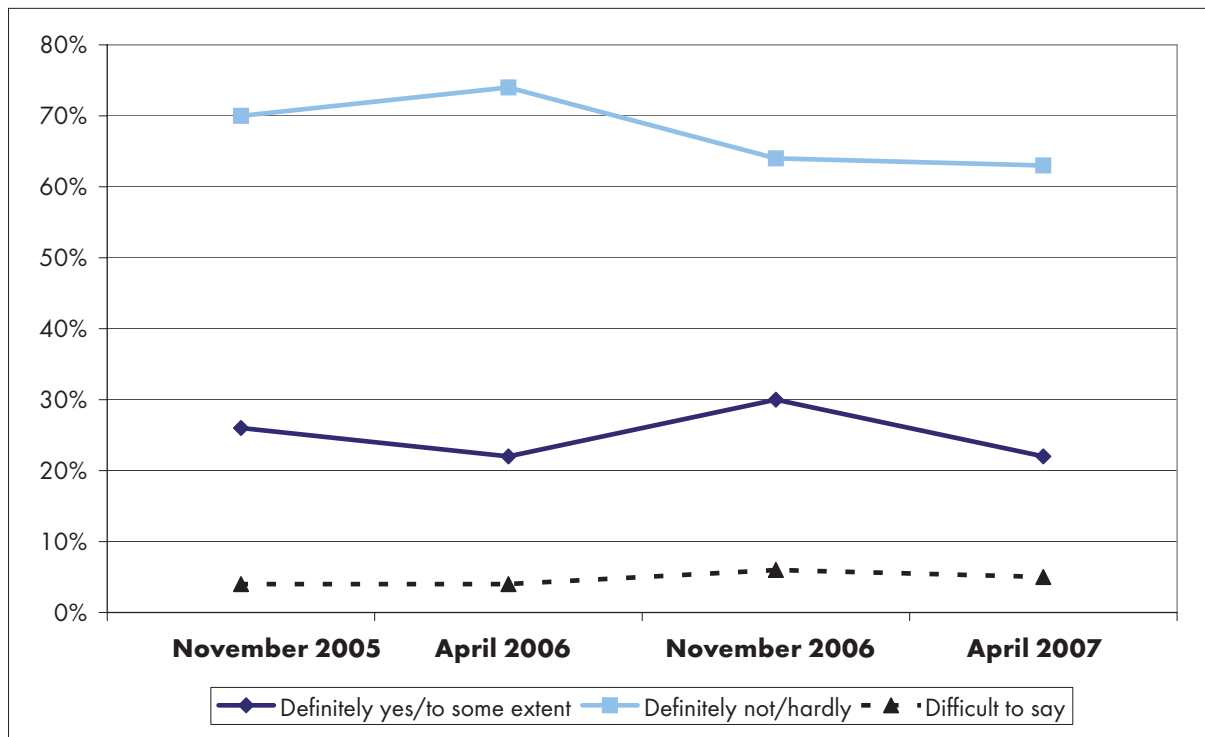
What Should Russia Do if Georgia Begins Military Operations against South Ossetia or Abkhazia? (September 2006)



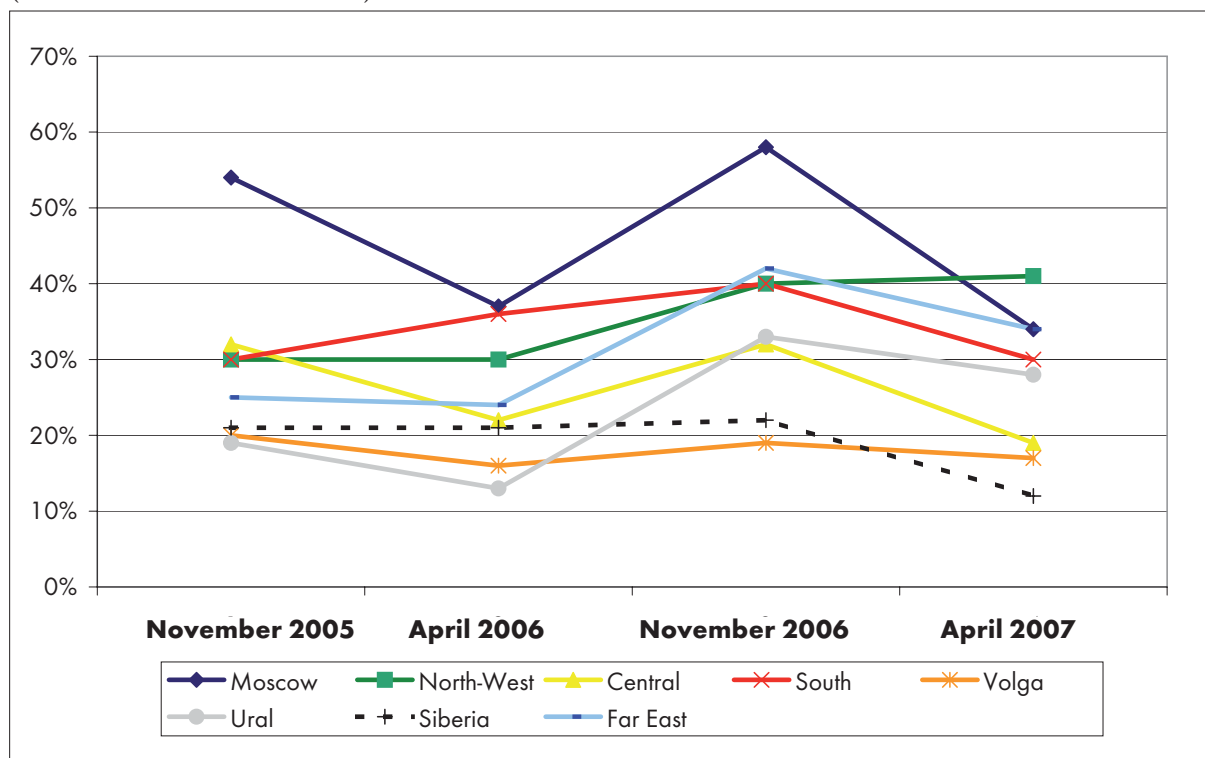
Source p. 22: <http://wciom.ru/?pt=53&article=3238>, 27 September 2006

Interethnic Tensions November 2005 – April 2007 (Levada)

Can Interethnic Tensions be Felt in the Town or Area Where You Are Living?



Respondents Who Answered “Definitely Yes/To Some Extent” By Region (Moscow and Federal Districts)



Source p. 23: <http://www.levada.ru./press/2007051501.html>, 15 May 2007

About the Russian Analytical Digest

The Russian Analytical Digest is a bi-weekly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle-osteuropa.de) and the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich). It is supported by the Otto Wolff Foundation and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Digest draws on contributions to the German-language *Russlandanalysen* (www.russlandanalysen.de), the CSS analytical network on Russia and Eurasia (www.res.ethz.ch), and the Russian Regional Report. The Russian Analytical Digest covers political, economic, and social developments in Russia and its regions, and looks at Russia's role in international relations.

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Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen

Founded in 1982 and led by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Eichwede, the Research Centre for East European Studies (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa) at the University of Bremen is dedicated to socialist and post-socialist cultural and societal developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Research Centre possesses a unique collection of alternative culture and independent writings from the former socialist countries in its archive. In addition to extensive individual research on dissidence and society in socialist societies, since January 2007 a group of international research institutes is participating in a collaborative project on the theme "The other Eastern Europe – the 1960s to the 1980s, dissidence in politics and society, alternatives in culture. Contributions to comparative contemporary history", which is funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.

In the area of post-socialist societies, extensive research projects have been conducted in recent years with emphasis on political decision-making processes, economic culture and identity formation. One of the core missions of the institute is the dissemination of academic knowledge to the interested public. This includes regular email service with more than 10,000 subscribers in politics, economics and the media.

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The CSS is engaged in research projects with a number of Swiss and international partners. The Center's research focus is on new risks, European and transatlantic security, strategy and doctrine, state failure and state building, and Swiss foreign and security policy.

In its teaching capacity, the CSS contributes to the ETH Zurich-based Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree course for prospective professional military officers in the Swiss army and the ETH and University of Zurich-based MA program in Comparative and International Studies (MACIS), offers and develops specialized courses and study programs to all ETH Zurich and University of Zurich students, and has the lead in the Executive Masters degree program in Security Policy and Crisis Management (MAS ETH SPCM), which is offered by ETH Zurich. The program is tailored to the needs of experienced senior executives and managers from the private and public sectors, the policy community, and the armed forces.

The CSS runs the International Relations and Security Network (ISN), and in cooperation with partner institutes manages the Comprehensive Risk Analysis and Management Network (CRN), the Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact (PHP), the Swiss Foreign and Security Policy Network (SSN), and the Russian and Eurasian Security (RES) Network.

Any opinions expressed in Russian Analytical Digest are exclusively those of the authors.

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