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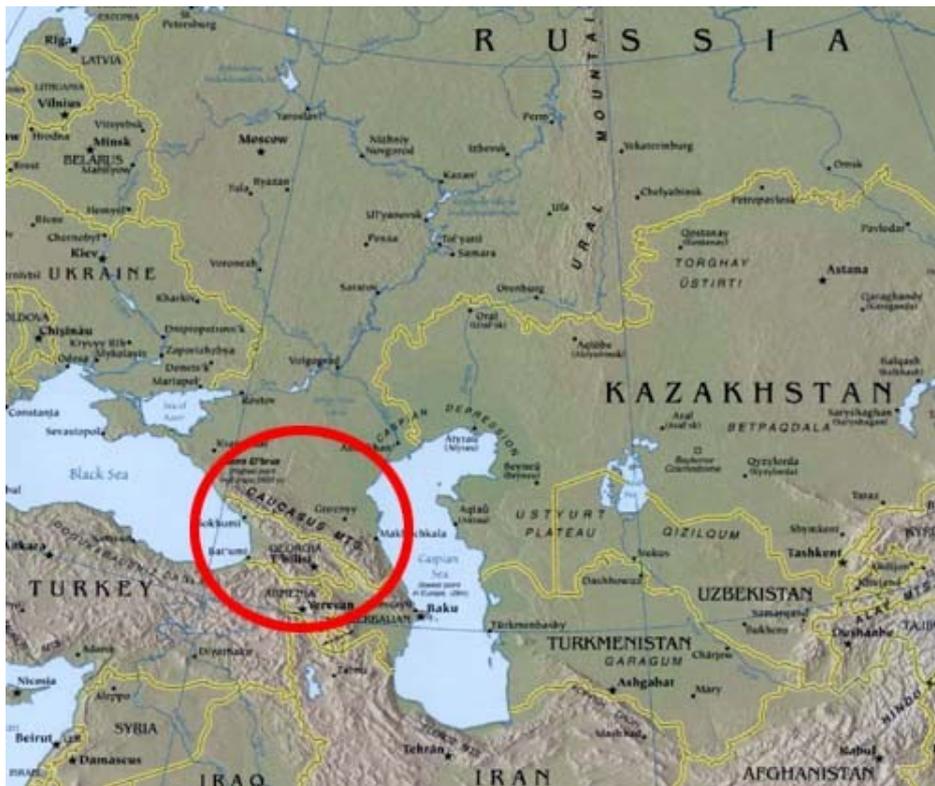
CONFLICTS IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS:
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL BALANCE IN THE
REGION

CHISINAU, OCTOBER 7-8, 2000

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The Caucasus Region within the Commonwealth of Independent States



Preface

On the 7th and 8th of October the Center for Security and Science (then operating as the William R. Nelson Institute) hosted the Conference on Conflicts in the Northern Caucasus. The conference was held in Chisinau, the capital of the Moldovan Republic.



Conference site in Chisinau

The purpose of this conference was to bring together individuals who would present different perspectives on the nature of conflict in this region and discuss those conflicts within an academic setting that would promote an understanding of the nature of these conflicts. It was also our hope that such an understanding would contribute to the peaceful resolution of those sometimes ancient disputes.



Doss, Bowers, Ciobanu and Akhmadov at the Conference Reception

The conference was organized by the Center's office in Moldova. The Director, Valeria Ciobanu, worked throughout the summer in order to prepare the conference. Delegates from Moscow, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, and Chechnya attended the conference as presenters. Additional participants from the Romanian and Bulgarian Embassies and from James Madison University joined in the discussions.

The enclosed materials are the transcripts of the presentations and discussions the participants engaged in during the conference. We hope that you will find them useful as you attempt to study the conflicts of this important but turbulent region.



Octavian Sofranski and the late Professor Marion T. Doss at the Conference

The Social and Political Situation in the North Caucasus: The Role of Public Organizations in Conflict Settlement

by Andrei Kamenshcikov
Non-Violence International, Moscow

The social situation in the North Caucasus is extremely difficult. Aside from economic difficulties, it is aggravated by its demographic situation. By the war in Chechnya, I mean both the first war and current military activities, where the budget is used only to finance the war.



A major portion of the population living in Chechnya before 1991 had to leave the republic for various reasons and at different periods of time. We all know that a huge number of refugees are located in the territory of Ingushetia, where the number of refugees and migrants remains unclear, but continues to grow as a result of different conflicts. The number of refugees is becoming comparable with the population of Ingushetia itself. Other republics of the North Caucasus also suffer from this problem.

Andrei Kamenshcikov

I would like to discuss what I believe can be done by public organizations with the aim of conflict settlement and how to overcome the consequences of war after its conclusion. When I speak about these issues I often have to confront certain skepticism. I assume that we must be realists. I would like to add that when we analyze the activity of non-governmental organizations and even the activity of individuals in the territory of Russia (especially in the regions of the North Caucasus), we can see that this is a new phenomenon, which has many possibilities for development. I believe that there is potential for work and that positive progress has already been achieved as a result of the activities of certain organizations and associations of people.

I will not agree with the statement that all conflicts are the result of continuous and targeted activity of certain structures that want to unleash armed conflicts. Undoubtedly in every war, especially in such a dirty and criminal war as the current Chechen war, there are a great number of groups on both sides that benefit from it, from a financial or political perspective. Irrespective of what our personal attitude is towards the new authorities of Russia, we should admit that they are very popular with the people, especially President Putin as his popularity has increased since the events in the North Caucasus.

There are many people who have profited greatly thanks to the current unstable situation. But there is also a humane, civil society that is able to react in a timely fashion these events, to draw public attention to these events and to prevent the suffering of its own population.

We, the people who express the interests of public organizations, should not only analyze our own activities, but we should do everything possible to resolve the situation of today and prevent the occurrence of such events in the future. Of course, it is extremely difficult to resolve all social and economic contradictions that serve as the basis of the current conflicts, but we should continue our efforts to carry on a civilized dialogue, preventing contradictions from taking extreme forms, and averting violence. Non-governmental organizations can play a significant role here. There are visible examples of how an idea was transformed into a positive result. I would like to present just a couple of them.

One of them is related to the situation that occurred a year ago in August-September [1999] when military activities were launched from the territory of Pakistan. They took place along the border of Chechnya and Daghestan, involving regions that had already suffered from acute internal confrontation between various ethnic groups inhabiting these regions. Primarily, this situation was related to the attack by military groups of the Novolakhsksk region of Daghestan. This region has been the subject of dispute between Chechens and Anints residing in the territory of Daghestan and other groups who settled in these regions after deportation of Chechens in 1944. It was an extremely complicated internal problem, which unfortunately had not been resolved. Chechen, Larsk, and other communities reached certain agreements, they devised a plan to implement these agreements, but, alas, all these decisions remained only on paper.

The program on the restoration of the Aushsk region of Daghestan (this is the new name for Novolakhsksk region) was adopted then. In conformity with this program, the population of Novolakhsksk, who arrived there after the deportation of 1944, was supposed to move to another region. Unfortunately, the implementation of this program was delayed. There was not sufficient financing and the funds that had been allocated were used for other purposes. Thus the problem remained unsolved. Under these difficult circumstances, rebels from the neighboring Chechnya attacked the region, and that was not the first, but the second attack. The situation in the republic was very heated and the majority of official and unofficial leaders of national movements started to create huge guard detachments. Because of this situation, the region has become involved into military activities.

There was a threat that the fire of military activities from the borderline region could spread into an internal Daghestani conflict between the Chechen population of Daghestan and other ethnic groups residing in this territory. In my opinion, a great role was played by the fact that the Chechen rebels acted very efficiently, as they had accumulated experience in the first Chechen war when

Daghestan accepted a great number of refugees from Chechnya (over 100,000 people). They had an organization that had relations with such famous structures as the Memorial Human Rights Protection Center in Moscow and with other organizations created with the aim of conflict settlement. So, in this critical situation, this organization has been for some time an unofficial leading structure of the Chechen population in Daghestan. (Bassayev, the leader of this organization, has become a legend of the Chechen population, which was on the verge of a serious ethnic conflict. There was a good chance that this conflict could have developed in conformity with the scenario of the conflict of 1992 in this region.)

There were armed formations, which could have begun to implement these ideas, but, fortunately, that did not happen. It did not happen because there was an organization, which on the one hand helped to carry out the reasonable and moderate policy of the leadership of the national council of Chechens of Daghestan, and on the other hand helped to draw the attention of numerous organizations to this problem. A group of famous human rights advocates from Moscow arrived to the region. However, it is difficult to say now to what extent the contribution of this group helped to prevent the tragic events in Daghestan.

Illegal Military Formation in the North Caucasus

by Yavus Akhmadov
Member, Academy of Sciences, Chechnya

The topic of this presentation is “Illegal military formations, non-government military formations.” I would rather call this report “Preliminary Analysis,” since this topic has not been practically studied by historians. By the way, I would like to caution you that I am a historian, and not a sociologist or a politician, therefore some people present here may fail to find in this report what they are expecting.



Yavus Akhmadov

At the end of the 20th century in the Northern Caucasus region of Russia, a new political and public phenomenon was born, namely illegal non-governmental formations. Unfortunately, the historiography on this issue is scarce. There is not any methodology for the study of this phenomenon. This issue is considered to be to a great extent a juridical and not a sociological one.

Currently, on the territory of Russia, there are security forces ranging (depending on the source of information) from 800 thousand to 1.5 million people. They provide security services to banks, offices, and companies, as well as private and official persons. There are also so-called Organized Criminal Groups (OCG's), which provide security services to criminal leaders. Unfortunately, this is characteristic for the whole Russian Federation. Sometimes these organized criminal groups carry out real gangster wars one against the other, fighting for the division of their spheres of influence.

Formerly, the existence of Cossack military formations in Russia was questioned. Their legalization is still an ongoing process. Beside Cossack regiments, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs have been arming inhabitants of borderline regions with firearms—and in particular the territory of Chechnya. There have been quite a few reports on the attempts of leaders of Cossack regiments to act as legal state authorities.

For the purpose of our analysis, it would also be interesting to review the activity of non-governmental military formations in, for instance, Transdnistria or Tadjikistan, as well as the activity of Islamic military formations. I will not discuss the Islamic military formations of Middle Eastern countries like Algeria and Afghanistan because this would take a lot of time and would distract us from the main topic of our discussion.

I would also like to mention that, as paradoxical as it may seem, the greatest number of non-government military formations is currently not in Chechnya, but in Daghestan. These are covert groups of national leaders like the Hachalayev

brothers and Hadji Mokach. Detachments of municipal police and numerous detachments of so-called 'vakhabites' were legally established as defense groups in the fall of 1999. (Once again I stress that I have been trying to find a proper term for this phenomenon; meanwhile, I will still use the term 'vakhabites,' but within quotation marks because the 'vakhabites' of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are different from the 'vakhabites' of the North Caucasus, and therefore there is a certain confusion of terminology.) There are the 'vakhabite' groups of Daghestan, where the guard group of the Karmakhyn zone headed by Ichkerist Djadulan is one of the most powerful, there is the rebellious army of Iman, and others.

In the spring-summer of 1999, at the call of Bagladin Bagamedov, all Islamic military forces began to unite and to move to the territory of Chechnya. Mountainous Chechnya became the venue of these Islamic groups before their intrusion into Daghestan. After the famous defeat of the 'vakhabites' in the mountains of Daghestan, most of the anti-government forces remained in the country and formed clandestine groups, while part of them withdrew to Chechnya together with the detachments of Khattab and Bassayev.

There are practically no non-governmental military formations in the small Republic of Ingushetia. Inghushi militants and 'vakhabites' left for Chechnya long ago, but the Ingush Ministry of Interior is staffed with three thousand people who represent a fairly well trained army under the command of the President Aushev. Aushev, a lieutenant general, participated in the Afghan war and is a Hero of the Soviet Union. Apart from Aushev's special presidential forces there are various paramilitary organizations, and even an Inghushi Cossack Regiment. Cavalry regiments (set up in 1992 before the Ossetian-Inghushi conflict) fell apart during the advance of Russian troops to Ossetia in autumn of 1992. Before the aforementioned conflict, the leadership of North Ossetia managed to set up a sort of national army in the form of the National Guard, controlling the regiments of the Ministry of Interior. The special guard forces consisted of at least 10,000 people. (The author is not aware of the current status of these armed forces.)

There are Cossack villages, stanitsas, of Ossetian peasants in Ossetia. During the first Chechen war, in the western part of Ossetia, a detachment of Muslim Ossetians was set up. It consisted of several dozens of people who participated in the Russian-Chechen war, and were present in Chechnya even in 1997.

Having increased the number of forces of the Ministry of Interior, the authorities of Kabardino-Balkaria managed to suppress the creation of non-government military formations and Islamic military groups on its territory. Nevertheless, I was told that at least one hundred Balkars participated in the first Chechen war and were trained in the military camps in the Caucasus. It is worth mentioning that dozens of Kabardins participated in Georgian-Abkhasian conflict in 1992.

In the 1990s, there were noticeable attempts by 'vakhabites groups' to form military groups in Karachaev-Cherkessia. Representatives of Karachaev youth took part in the first Chechen war. Some sources indicate the creation by vakhabites of military justice detachments, similar to a "morals police."

The issue of the so-called Confederation of Peoples of Caucasus (CPC) deserves separate discussion and study. This is the movement of radicals from the mountainous regions aimed at uniting the Caucasus into a single state. CPC tried to set up their own army, something like 'special forces,' but in all their undertakings one could always notice the fangs of an Ichkerian wolf and the ears of special services. This organization has lost the respect of any community.

Recently, a strong politician of Caucasian scale, Yusup Soslanbekov, tried to rehabilitate this organization. Unfortunately, during the summer of 2000 he was killed in Moscow by Ghalbershtolts. He was a student in my class, and I knew him as a very kind and interesting person. Unfortunately, his life was suddenly cut short.

Let us now discuss the situation of Chechnya, located on the Northern slope of the main Caucasian range. It has a lack of iodine and excess of lithium in potable water. It has the youngest population and the weakest national and political elite of the former Soviet Union. With its extremely complicated historical past, it remains the most fragile link in the chain of the Russian Federation. Due to a series of events and preconditions, Chechnya has become the only state on European territory at the beginning of the 21st century where non-governmental military formations have the rule. The most radical of them, the Islamic group, openly declared their goal of setting up a single Caucasian Islamic state and fighting against the Christian world.

As we know, during the first years of perestroika and fight of the young Russian democracy against the military coup, certain radical political organizations in the Chechen-Ingusheti Republic overthrew local procommunist bases with the help of the Moscow Center. They also falsified election results for the purpose of revolutionary changes and seized the power. To a great extent, this was possible because of the great number of unemployed youth who put on green frontlets and came to rallies with bludgeons. This was the initial form of the military groups. After their victory, the new authorities, headed by General Dudayev of the Soviet military, proclaimed the sovereignty and independence of the Chechen Republic. Ingushetia did not participate in the elections and started its own independent development.

The National Guard began to form. Again, I would like to emphasize, it was the formation not of an army, but of a guard. Recruitment was not very successful. The social basis of the new regime was weak. Aiming to strengthen their power, they released over two thousand dangerous criminals from prisons and many of them joined the armed forces. One of the first armed formations in the territory

of Chechnya was the detachment of Ruslan Labozanov, which executed Dudayev's orders and personally participated in a number of armed operations.

Russian mass media published numerous reports on the launching of planned military developments in Chechnya and the creation of powerful armed forces counting 21,400 people, equipped with artillery, aviation and armored tanks. In my opinion, this served as a justification for the large-scale military activities of the Russian authorities on the territory of Chechnya. This would later result in great losses among the personnel of the Russian Army, as well as among civilians.

Favorable conditions, both economic and otherwise, enabled Chechnya to create the best-equipped army in the North Caucasus. When the Russian command withdrew its troops from Chechnya in the second half of 1992, it left at Dudayev's disposal a powerful military infrastructure. This infrastructure consisted of airports, military bases, training grounds, air defense facilities, underground military bases, and, most importantly, piles of weapons. There are documents that provide all this information and I will not go into details. It is indicated there that 125 armored troop carriers, 200 airplanes, about 70,000 automatic guns, machine guns and pistols (the number of fire-arms was understated though) remained in Chechnya. It is clear that all this was left with the purpose that Dudayev would sell it in Transcaucasia and share the profits with the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Defense. This plan was not implemented.

The creation of a regular army under Dudayev's command was considered a threat against his power and he rejected the idea of its establishment. Some people blamed this on Gamsakhurdia who was in Chechnya and talked Dudayev out of the idea of setting up his own army, as it was the young Georgian army that pushed Gamsakhurdia out of Georgia. The army obviously requires state order and the first president of Chechnya was not interested in that. (The truth is that Dudayev's real goal was not the development of a strong democratic Chechen society, but rather ensuring his ability to plunder the national wealth, in particular oil.)

Dudayev liquidated the Ministry of Defense set up in November of 1991 exactly one month after its establishment. This was illegal even according to the laws of Ichkeria. Puppet headquarters were set up, while officially the authorities claimed that they needed a National Guard, Frontier Troops, Custom Services, a State Security Department, and a Special Battalion or the so-called Presidential Battalion. In the mountainous regions, a detachment of 400-500 inveterate criminals was moving from one region to another. A Volunteer Regiment comprised primarily of Dudayev's countrymen was set up in the Staro-Promyslovsk region. Finally, there was also Shamil's tank regiment.

In the course of the Abkhazian war in the summer-autumn of 1992, the first field commanders leading their own detachments appeared. Ruslan Ghilayev set up a

special purpose regiment, comprised of so-called 'Afghani.' Shamil Bassayev created the diversionary reconnaissance battalion of the so-called 'Abkhazians.' The idea of setting up a National Guard on the basis of total conscription failed at the end of 1992.

A mountainous infantry brigade headed by Azer Luckayev was created on a contractual basis. It was called the 'mountainous hoof regiment' in the Republic. Over two hundred Chechen officers, who came from different parts of the country and took part in the creation of the Chechen Army, had to leave Chechnya because of the behavior of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. The only people who stayed in Chechnya were the friends of Dudayev, pilot Shishmanov, and the submissive Colonel Aslan Alamov.

I could tell a lot about the preparation of Chechen armed forces prior to war. The fact is that the war in Chechnya started not in November-December of 1994, but in the summer of the same year, in the course of the civil war. Democratic opposition hunted down by military groups began the creation of its own illegal armed units that fought Dudayev's forces. According to my estimates, Dudayev's forces attacked the Chechen population some 11 times. Over 700 people from both sides were killed and 1,500 were seriously wounded.

When Russian troops entered Chechnya, Dudayev did not announce general mobilization. When field commanders asked him for money and weapons (and according to different estimations he managed to earn from four to nine million U.S. dollars within three years) he replied, "Who ordered you to fight? Not me. Fight if you want, but this is none of my business." That is why it was not in vain when Maskhadov said that he had to create armed forces from the scratch. Neither 20,000 nor 40,000 people participated in Russian-Chechen war. According to the data of the Ichkerian commission, about 7,000 people took part in it during 18 to 24 months of military activities.

Of the 7,000 who participated in military activities, 2,000 were killed. The remaining 5,000 were divided into four surveillance units. The first unit was composed of those who had participated in the war from the beginning to the end, next those who had participated in a certain campaign (either summer or winter one). The last two were those who had participated in one battle or in one night patrol. That is how they were divided.

It was during the war when the first Islamic military formations began to appear. Nothing had been heard about either the vakhabites or Islamic military formations during Dudayev's rule; people knew only about Dudayev's security forces.

In one of its documents, the KGB mentioned a Jordanian Chechen in the town of Argun. He teaches there, while in the past he allegedly participated in the Afghan war. This was that Great first teacher, who laid the basis of Islamic units during the Russian-Chechen war. I call him the Great, because he was a great

person. He was a great humanist, wonderful organizer, and a talented soldier. He introduced moral laws prohibiting the assassination of prisoners of war. He was highly respected. His units were comprised of idealists, who found the way out of this terrible war in self-abnegation.

At the same time, Khattab appeared. The evolution of his military formation from the first units of soldiers going to die and what has become of it is another issue. This should be discussed separately.

I would like to complete my presentation by saying that I personally participated in the political events of the Chechen Republic. I considered this to be my civil duty. I participated in the movement of opposition and worked in the Chechen Government of 1995-96. I resigned at the beginning of 1996.

At that time, my contacts with so-called 'vakhabites' began. I was interested in them; they were interested in me. I respect their religious beliefs, though I consider them despotic to a certain extent. Their military and political activity reminds me of the activity of the Bolsheviks with their ideas of exporting the revolution and the war to the whole world.

DISCUSSION

Question to A. Kamenshchikov: I would like to continue your discussion about the role of non-governmental organizations in the settlement-of-conflict situations. It was reported that at the moment of conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina there were about one hundred NGOs, primarily international ones. Sometimes they helped and contributed to the conflict resolution process, and sometimes they impeded that process, or their activities overlapped. Could you please speak more specifically? What are the forms of activity of these organizations in the North Caucasus, given the complicated situation in Chechnya, in particular?

Answer: Of course, there is a lot to discuss about these issues, but I believe that my colleagues, representatives from Chechnya, who are dealing with important and very acute issues, will agree with me and each of them will discuss their activity.

It is very difficult to enumerate all the possibilities of these organizations; it is practically impossible. How can one get a clear picture of a situation that is constantly changing and differs in various regions? It is necessary to look for opportunities to do something positive, to make a contribution. I can tell you from my own experience, that when my colleagues and I started our work in Chechnya in December of 1994, military activities had already commenced. The war was going on. In January of 1995, we began making attempts to help civilians, particularly those who found themselves in a very difficult situation. These were primarily the elderly people, who were hiding in cellars. We just tried to help them to leave the town. This was relatively large-scale work.

Question to Akhmadov: My first question will be the following - Is there any interdisciplinary research on the current situation in Chechnya, and is there any other comparative data? And my second question is the following. As far as I can see you are a well-informed researcher on the issues of this region, and perhaps, my question will be excessively straightforward, but I would like to ask what the population of the Republic wants.

Answer: The population of this Republic wants peace, work, protection of their rights, guarantees of their life, personal freedom, etc., everything that any other nation in any part of the globe wants: to bring up their children in peace.

I assure you that although the Chechen society seems to be extremely politicized and divided with no clear political ideas, everybody dreams about life in a normal Republic, with normal state order. I can add that the issue of relations with Russia does not have any principal meaning for them, for the majority of population. As a result of the two wars, the people have reached a point where the most important goal for them is to survive, physically survive, and everything else is just words. The issue of physical survival is the main problem today.

About your first question: you are absolutely right; this issue requires comprehensive study, interdisciplinary research. But, unfortunately, no such studies are carried out in Chechnya, and the reasons for this are clear. Tishkov Institute in Moscow studies these issues, but they have a very narrow specialization.

We also have such organizations as the Security Council and a Presidential Administration. These two organizations are working very hard. They carry out very important research, but their approach is not very practical. That is why I highly appreciate the initiative of Stephen Bowers, the initiative of the Institute he heads, and the initiative of Valeria Ciobanu. Because we can say that now, here in Moldova, the most serious political center studying events in Chechnya and in the North Caucasus was created, though it may seem paradoxical. What has Moldova to do with the problems of Chechnya and the North Caucasus?

Question to Akhmadov: How do you differentiate between 'illegal non-government formations' and 'legal ones'? What is the difference between them? What is the importance of the meaning of the words 'legal' and 'illegal' or their activities? This is my first question. Don't you think that it is too early to say that Chechnya is the subject of Russia? The fact of the matter is that the legitimately acknowledged Chechnyan President Maskhadov spoke about former President Dudayev as the president legitimately acknowledged by Russia as well, with whom a so-called peace treaty was signed which is valid until now, and the status of the Republic is still not legally determined. We shall not go into details of politics now, and into the issue that Chechnya never voluntarily entered into union with Russia.

Answer: As far as the 'legal' and 'illegal' formations, the question itself contains the answer by referring to the legality or illegality of their activities. Unfortunately the illegality of their status and activities often coincide. They were illegal in their character and their activities were illegal as well. Any state has its own rule of law, which regulates the activity of the armed forces and law enforcement ministries. These are very important issues and it is understandable why the state resolves these issues in the first place. We are talking about security.

In my presentation I wanted to say that, in the North Caucasus, there are certain military formations that are involved in activities illegal in Russia, Daghestan, and Cherkesia, to say nothing about Chechnya.

I have mentioned already that President Dudayev did not get around to legalizing its forces, and that is why from the legal point of view they are considered illegal. For instance, now in Moldova they are setting up the National Squad, which may be called the National Guard, whatever, but if it is not provided for in the law, it is illegal, no matter how noble the intentions for its creation. This then is the formal legal standpoint.

Of course, in any war there are partisan units that defend certain positions. In spite of the fact that partisan units were not legally set up by the state, their activities are still deemed legal during wartime, i.e. partisans shall be treated the same way as the regular army.

Unfortunately, Russian troops in the North Caucasus benefit from these so-called legal discrepancies in their relations with, for instance, Ichkeria military formations. The leadership of Ichkeria stated that contractors are mercenaries and since they are mercenaries they do not fall under the provisions of Geneva Agreements, therefore they may be killed.

On the other hand, you know that the Russian troops use the assumption that all participants in partisan movements are terrorists, and since they are terrorists they must be treated accordingly. Of course, this is a problem that needs to be resolved through common efforts.

As far as the status of the Republic, I was a member of the Chechen delegation at the negotiations with the Russian Federation in 1992 in Daghomys and later in Moscow. I am familiar with these problems. I prepared drafts of agreements and the international agreement between Chechnya and Russia. I believed that the acknowledgment by Russia of Chechen sovereignty would not cause serious consequences for Russia. Chechnya has had very tight cultural, economic and financial links with Russia. In other words, even if Chechnya had proclaimed complete sovereignty, it would have remained in the economic and legal field of Russia anyway.

Just look at where all the roads in Chechnya lead. They lead to the north, there is only one recently built road that leads south to Georgia. The geopolitical character itself has dictated this situation between Chechnya and Russia.

I was never an opponent of sovereignty and, up to this day, I believe that any nation has the right to demand its political sovereignty, but it does not mean that just any scoundrels and carpetbaggers should benefit from this. Has anyone inquired about the suffering of the people of Chechnya? In 1993, we proposed to organize a referendum to let us see what the people wanted. If we switch to a purely legal viewpoint, I would like to ask the question whether Dudayev was legitimate? We should look at the elections, how they were conducted.

Dudayev stated that there were 33 foreign observers. Why then did only three observers out of those 33 sign the protocol? Does it mean that the remaining 30 refused to sign? In other words, if we go into the details, we can reach different conclusions.

Maskhadov is a really legitimate President. All the procedures were completely legal and observed by the OSCE, a serious organization. Maskhadov signed an agreement where the issue of the status of Chechnya was postponed to the year 2001. Of course, one can interpret these agreements between him and Yeltsin as the completion of a four hundred year war.

As far as the postponed decision on the status, it is an interesting issue. During this time we should have demonstrated to the international community that Chechnya is capable of independent economic development. And what have we demonstrated?

And again, the armistice between Russia and Chechnya was violated not by Russia, though this violation was probably beneficial for those political forces that were coming to power in Russia at that time. It was not they who launched the war. Therefore, if our state makes a commitment to be independent and sovereign, let us comply with this agreement, including the agreement with Russia.

I understand your interest in these issues, but I would also like to emphasize once again that the Chechen people who are scattered throughout all the regions of Russia, who fall asleep at the roar of missiles and wake up at the thunder of artillery are not interested in these issues now, they are interested in the issues of physical survival and we must find the ways to help them.

The Influence of Mass Media on the Creation of Public Opinion about Conflict Situations in the North Caucasus

By Vsevolod Ryazanov

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It is impossible more or less to carry out monitoring of these global issues in our small republic. Those who are interested in these issues can find more detailed information than I have presented in the materials to this Conference. I know sufficiently well what people think, what their attitude towards the problems is, and how they perceive any mass media reports. I can even say that we can watch the reaction of our audience to the information presented by an alternative side if this refers to the interests of Ingushetia and North Ossetia. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to bring this material to this Conference, but I promise to send it later.



V. Ryazanov

As far as the humanitarian aspect of conflict resolution, I would like to speak about one very important issue. We spoke a lot about the fact that mass media plays an enormous role, being the fourth power in the state. We have witnessed a huge explosion of information. Of course, we are aware of the colossal influence of mass media and we should speak the truth. I would like to discuss this issue from this very angle and share with you my doubts about what we understand and what we mean when we speak about the role of mass media.

What is significant is the sign of information, whether it is positive or negative. The way the mass media presents the problem is especially important in ethnic conflicts. At one point, we witnessed a real information war in Russia, from the presentation of positive materials about themselves and negative materials about opponents to the fight for the sympathies of neutral sides and ultimate victory.

I would also like to speak about the efficiency of the mass media in activating the ideas that are planted in subconscious of any person. As far as the subject of information, everything is clear. People are primarily interested in negative events. If there is any conflict, it immediately becomes the center of attention and becomes the main event in any news program. We all know this very well. For instance, when a conflict broke out in a territory of the former Soviet Union, Azerbaijan, the news programs constantly showed materials presented first by one subject then by another, and the same event was presented from different perspectives. Here one can see that interests change rapidly and morals are very flexible as well.

Upon what should the law be based in this case? It encompasses such values as life and good name, such factors that the state guarantees and protects as human rights. Unfortunately, the law is not as stable as we wish it to be. When we try to find the solution to complicated and contradictory relations between conflicting persons, resolution frequently depends on those who apply the law, attorneys and prosecutors. They can interpret these complicated matters very broadly. As a result, whether the subject of the law is an individual person or a whole nation, it actually depends on two or three people. The law, as the only subject of the state policy, which has the right of enforcement, should use its power very cautiously.

Today diverse people are assembled here. The majority of us are representatives of NGOs. Unfortunately, as it has been stated today, currently NGOs in our country and in the countries of the former Soviet Union are still weak and are not able to exert serious influence on state policy.

What is the main difficulty of this democratic governance? Based on my personal contacts with Russian lawyers, I can say that the Criminal Code has an article prohibiting instigation of national discord. But when we look at how this provision is enforced in everyday life, we can see that our lawyers have practically no scientific methods. I believe that this is an extremely serious drawback of our law and common people can hardly comprehend it. Even if science proposes certain methods, they are inefficient. The law does not specify what methods can be deemed authentic, what should be taken into consideration and what should not. Moreover, in conformity with our Criminal Code of Procedures the subject should be brought to trial. Sociologist Yakov was invited as an expert for the case of Zhirinovskiy. He explicitly deemed information disseminated by Zhirinovskiy as fascist ideology.

Why do we need such provisions in the Code? They have obviously no practical value. I would like to briefly summarize my thoughts. I would like us to think attentively of what we are implying when we speak about Motherland, what we include in this notion. I would like our laws to be based primarily on the principles of democracy and scientific approaches.

The Social and Political Situation in Chechnya. The Balance of Forces in the Region: Relations with Moscow and other Regions.

by Adlan Dinayev
"Laman Az" Youth Organization, Grozny, Chechnya

According to the data of the Department of the Republic of Ichkeria, the population of the Republic in the summer of 1997 amounted to 300,000 people. Today the population amounts to 200,000-250,000 people, while many were either killed or emigrated to the neighboring republics of Ingushetia, Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, as well as to the republics of the former Soviet Union and to other foreign countries in the past few years. No exact number of victims has been determined, but according to different sources of the Russian Federation it is about 30,000, and according to the data of the government of Ichkeria, it reaches 50,000.



Adlan Dinayev

About 100,000 people have emigrated. This can lead to the discontent of local authorities in the regions where refugees live, as it happened in Kabardino-Balkaria, where there were attempts of forceful expulsion of refugees from the republic. This is caused by the fact that the life in the republic is destroyed. There are no schools or hospitals, people cannot stay there and get settled. At the same time military activities do not cease.

The war in Chechnya is continuing; it has transformed into partisan war. That is why we hear the threats of diversions, shootings, and bombardments. Civilians often suffer because of them. Constant 'cleanups,' where illegal military formations are revealed make the situation in Chechnya unstable and dangerous for everyday life.

I want to say a few words about the main political leaders who are located both in Chechnya and outside the republic. The only issue separating all current Chechen leaders is the issue of the political status of Chechnya, to remain within Russia or to become an independent state. There are two opposite camps, pro-Russian and Ichkerian.

The former is oriented strictly to Russia and includes the people currently in power in Chechnya. These are Khadyrov, Gantamirov, and the so-called Moscow Chechens, such as Aslakhonov, Khaulat, and Gheniev. The latter (1996-1999)

includes Maskhadov and his fellow-fighters who are fighting now for the independence of Chechnya.

The main concern of these camps and groups (and there are dozens of them) is the welfare of Chechen people. All of them fight for power by participating in diversions. In 1995, Khadyrov was an ardent advocate of the independence of Chechnya and took an active part in the political life of the Republic. He always supported the Ichkerian Government and led military activities against the Russian federation. Therefore, his conversion to the Russian side was absolutely unexpected. Since then, Khadyrov has become Moscow's representative and, in June 2000, was appointed President of Chechnya by Putin.

Gantamirov, Khadyrov's deputy, was released from the Moscow prison this winter. Khadyrov got an unexpected appointment and his team came with him. The situation has deteriorated as a result of internal conflicts within the team. On one hand, Khadyrov had many Ichkerians opposing Moscow join his team, and on the other he acquired relatives of Gantamirov from the Chechen militia. Gantamirov had to leave Moscow. This was possible because neither was supported by real Chechnyan forces. Both Khadyrov and Gantamirov were dependent on Moscow and represented very influential organizations there. (Many believe that Khadyrov is a member of the prefecture, and Gantamirov is a representative of military forces. Their political situation in Chechnya depends on the interrelationship of these structures.)

With the calming of military actions, the Ministry of Defense has lost its influence on the situation in Chechnya. Moscow Chechens do not remain in Chechnya permanently and do not have a direct impact on the situation, though they might have.

A. Aslamov is the deputy of Chechnya in the Duma of the Russian Federation. In August of 2000, he was elected with many violations. I believe there were no elections at all. The former colonel of the militia now heads law enforcement forces.

As we have said, intellectuals can have a serious influence on the situation in Chechnya, but they prefer to do that from outside of the Republic. Marik Sadulayev, a Moscow businessman, made attempts to head Chechnya even before the beginning of the war. He was very popular in 1999, but he undermined his authority during this war. He thoughtlessly promised to stop the war, but later he collaborated with military men. Ruslan Khasbulatov, former speaker in the State Duma of the Russian Federation, is popular primarily among Chechens, but according to him he is not going to be involved in politics in Chechnya. And, finally, there is the leader of the 'Mankind' movement, A. Ghiniev. They say that his movement was actively funded by special services of the Russian Federation and in 1995 to 1996 he became a secondary person in the political Olympics of Chechnya.

An opposite camp of Ichkeria is made up of the people who governed in Chechnya from 1996 to 1999. They are not the obvious leaders of Chechnya, but depend on them much more, rather than on the people from the first camp.

Regardless of certain assumptions of the mass media that field commanders quarrel with each other, Ichkerians are strong military opponents. They do not represent a unified monolith force, but they are perfectly formed, armed, trained and coordinated partisan groups. They are real forces on which their leaders can rely, unlike Khadyrov and Ghataimirov. Funds are channeled to the leaders of these military groups through various representatives of Ichkerian and CIS countries.

Chechnya was officially acknowledged only by the Taliban, and has not received official support from foreign states.

If we analyze the work of certain mass media organizations, we can see that public opinion was thoroughly prepared for the situation in the North Caucasus. If we recollect the beginning of military activities in 1994 to 1996, we recall that Russia admitted that it had lost the information war. Now the situation has changed. A clearly prepared plan of portraying the Chechens as the enemy has enabled the Russian Federation leadership to resume the war.

Based on the data of the mass media, we can observe that the plan of the military campaign was thoroughly developed. In 99 percent of the cases, federal forces were criticized for barbaric actions. As a result of aviation and artillery bombardment many civilians died. Bombardments caused destruction that cannot be compared with the first war. Respectively, there were also many more victims among civilians. If people had not left for Ingushetia, there would have been even more victims, but no one speaks about this.

Public opinion in Russia is controlled by the mass media. Some Russians received biased information about events in Chechnya. An image of a monstrous bandit was created. If we look at the analytical data of the Russian Center on Public Opinion Research we can see that in 1995, 65 percent of Russians were against the war in Chechnya, but in 1999 this number dropped to a low 27 percent. Naturally, residents of republics and regions of the North Caucasus neighboring Chechnya did not need information from the mass media. Their attitude was not as negative. This data varied depending on each particular region of Russia.

Ingushetia met refugees from Chechnya with warmth. The republic with its own population of 300,000 people accommodated about 200,000 refugees. Daghestan, in spite of its complicated situation, accepted refugees as well. The situation in Kabardino-Balkaria was more complicated. About 6,000 people stayed there and there were attempts to forcefully drive them out from this territory.

Oil interests are very strong in the North Caucasus, which is famous for numerous oil fields. At its peak, annual oil production amounted to 20 million tons. Oil production started at the beginning of the century when oil became the reward for the possession of the Caucasus. It was at that time when the interests of many countries, including England and Turkey, collided. Recently, oil was discovered in Karachaev-Cherkessia, although the main oilfields are located in Chechnya. These oilfields were the source of a new war in Chechnya. Chechen oilfields allegedly became the main subject of the Caucasus conflict.

Currently 90 percent of the oil industry has been destroyed. At its best, out of 400 million tons of oil production only one million tons can be produced, which constitutes five percent of the oil production during the best years. About two billion dollars is needed for the complete restoration of the industry. The economic situation in Russia does not leave much hope for the restoration of this industry by Russia in the future.

At the beginning of 2000, the Russian Government issued a decree that authorized the organization called 'Rosneft' ('Russian Oil') to extinguish fires at the Chechen oil wells. However, the issue of ownership remained unresolved. 'Rosneft' does not have a license for the production and sale of Chechen oil. Nevertheless 18,000 tons were taken out of Chechnya during the first five months of the current year. Military people most likely benefited from this as this issue was passed to military structures. Thus, the plundering of Chechen oil continues, and nobody is talking about organized and planned oil production. And still it is unclear; does not Russia need this oil? Especially the oilfields in Cherkessia?

One thing is obvious, that Russia will stay in the North Caucasus for a long time. I often visit different regions of Chechnya and everywhere I encounter the same situation. The most important person in the district is the sentry at the checkpoint. He does not care about the signature of Khadyrov, as it is he who is master there.

I would like to say that the main forces in Chechnya are divided into two groups. Until an agreement is reached between these two groups, the Russian authorities represented by Khadyrov will not have any power. As far as the oil industry, there is no way for its restoration today, but what is important is to preserve what is left, as barbaric plundering continues right now with the help of the same military men who are guarding the plants. Everything is removed to the neighboring republics.

DISCUSSION

Question to Yavus Akhmadov: Do you believe that a referendum is an appropriate democratic form for the study of public opinion, since, as you

mentioned in 1992, you were prohibited from conducting a referendum in the republic?

Answer: The only time when an attempt was made to organize a referendum was in 1993 when we wanted to find out the opinion of the population on the two following issues, whether we need a presidential-parliamentary way of governance, and what relations should be established with Russia, as part of it or outside of it.

This attempt was abandoned in June of 1993 when the opposition was shot. By that time ballots had been delivered to polling places, but members of the opposition were seized and ballots were burnt. All this was seen on local television. No other attempts have been made.

Question of Albert Avduev: First, can you tell me how international public organizations influence the conflict situation in the region? What can they do to settle these conflicts? Second, how influential are pro-Moscow groups? Is there any support from the people of Chechnya? Do you presume that the current situation of the society is the result of military aggression?

Mr. Akhmadov, you have said that in 1992-93 you were a member of the democratic opposition, but it seems rather strange how former communists become democrats overnight. In your opinion, what was the status of your military formations and were their activities legal?

Answer of Yavus Akhmadov: I have never been a member of the Communist Party. Armed groups of opposition started to appear after the shooting in June of 1993. These were groups of democratic forces and authorities forced them to pass to military forms of struggle.

For those present here who have a better idea of what the regime of Dudayev means I will quote you one paragraph from the Decree of the President of the Chechen Republic of 13.04 1994. "Members of the Government of Chechnya and commanders of a military unit, as well as members of Presidential security forces detained on suspicion of criminal activity and brought to the state bodies for administrative violations shall be immediately released." All military men of Chechnya were completely free from any liability. A criminal case against these people could be initiated only upon written authorization of Dudayev.

Here is a sentence from a letter of Chechen intellectuals of February 20, 2000. "In the current political situation, when inactivity of the Parliament presupposes tragic events for the Chechens, we believe that the dissolution of the Parliament and the voluntary resignation of Maskhadov is not only politically reasonable, but also morally justified and a necessary step. Who is now ruling in Chechnya in the name of Allah, gracious and merciful?" The Supreme Military Council of Mujahideens, by Abdulla Shamil Bassayev, signed this document. Just written,

slave of God, Shamil Bassayev. He indicates that military activities were launched by the Supreme United Military Council of Mujahideens.

Currently this Council unites over two thousand mujahideens, divided into 40 military groups. There is no record about Maskhadov. Military forces in Chechnya are practically subordinate to Emir of the Supreme United Military Council of Mujahideens Shamil Bassayev. He is responsible for money issues and the communication and training of mujahideens.

Question to Vsevolod Ryazanov: After review and analysis of your materials one can question authenticity and representative character and stability of the data.

First of all, you have not defined your selection criteria. 196 people participated in your poll. What kind of selection was it, what was its type, what were your aims, what is the hypothesis of the research? Certain data is open to question. Can you tell us based on the criteria presented what material was selected? Are the issued newspapers the documents of official authorities or of any other bodies? Have you studied the audience of the mass media? Who is an informal leader of Chechnya today?

Vsevolod Ryazanov: We have not included readers of the newspapers. I got these newspapers in the territory of North Ossetia and of course we were planning to have joint research with the Inghushi Institute of Humanitarian Studies. But, due to certain reasons, this is very difficult to accomplish. Unfortunately we do not have the capability to compare the reaction to the same information of the audiences in North Ossetia and Ingushetia. We were deprived of such an opportunity. We could only hypothetically assume that this or that information would probably have a positive or negative impact.

Question: When we are saying 'Chechen side' do we mean one side, or are there several sides? Is there any force that could take all these military groups under its control?

Response of Adlan Dinayev: I do not know who this informal leader is. I know that the only real leader today is the current president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Aslan Maskhadov, who was elected by the people and acknowledged by many states.

I would also like to say a couple of words about an unclear position of Yavus Akhmadov. The mistakes of the Russian Government should not be justified by inexperience, as Russia has a long history of state governance. If he is talking about certain mistakes of the Chechen authorities, he immediately treats this as indicator of the fact that we are not able to become an independent state.

As far as the question of why Chechens do not want to be part of the Russian Federation, the answer is demonstrated by the history of many centuries. Even

the last peace agreement illustrates this. Two presidents signed this agreement on the prohibition of the use of force and on the peaceful resolution of all conflicts. Even if there had been defeat in the neighboring Daghestan, Russia would not have made any steps to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Andrei Kamenschikov: International and human rights organizations during the first Chechen war had a very serious influence on public opinion, and this had a great impact on the decision-making process. Such organizations are not able to stop a tank during military activities, but have the capability to influence some of these activities. I believe that we should seriously analyze the situation and not exaggerate our achievements. We should decide together what we should do in the future. These organizations play an especially important role before mass violence begins, when the war is only beginning, because political shocks can cause such phenomena as revenge. But surely before all these violent actions start, NGOs are presented with enormous possibilities to avert these events. Now, knowing what has happened, we know what we could have done.

Adlan Dinayev: As far as the influence of Moscow leaders on the situation in the Republic is concerned, I do not think that the population will support them. As it has been said, many Chechens are related through family ties, and these are relatives who support them. Only a minor portion of the population, about three to five percent, supports pro-Moscow groups. They could have had an influence on the situation in the Republic if they had been interested in the stability and development of Chechnya. They would not have remained aloof, but would have taken an active part in the restoration of order and human rights, in the economic and social development of Chechnya.

I do not agree with Mr. Akhmadov who says that the people of Chechnya support union with Russia. It is not true. All those who were nominated at elections spoke about the establishment of good neighbor relations with Russia. Every candidate discussed this. No one can say that Chechens agreed to be part of Russia because 70 percent of the population voted for Maskhadov. It is not so.

Octavian Sofranski: First I will make a comment and after that I would like to ask some questions. Both internal and external factors should be taken into consideration upon searching for ways of reaching peace in Chechnya. Moscow, Washington, and Istanbul have strong influence on the policy in this region. The question is how Russia determines its national policy and how it affects Moscow's relations Moscow with other political formations on the territory of Russia. Many suffer from the rigid policy of Moscow, from Finland to the Kuriles, including Moldova. I intentionally call this policy not imperial, but rigid. Regarding the North Caucasus, public opinion about the situation there is influenced by the mass media, government structures, and research centers. For instance, who is the author of the expression 'persons of Caucasian nationality,' the phrase that allows discrimination of people of the Caucasus?

The second question. How can we define the Russian policy in Chechnya in the course of the last decade? The first option is the fight against separatism. Certainly this is a region of Russia that tries to separate without the consent of the Center. The second option is civil war. And the third option is genocide. This has already happened in the history of the Chechen people who were once evicted from the territory of the North Caucasus. In other words, determination of a definition of the Chechen war could have an international impact. We know that NATO started its campaign in Kosovo after events there were defined as genocide. Let us compare the situation with Milosevic in Kosovo and the situation in Chechnya. The phenomena are very similar in their essence. We can even argue who suffered more, Albanians or Chechens.

And the final question, what possibilities has the civil society that we are representing today to influence such political centers as Moscow, Washington and Istanbul, which are very important for the purposes of peace in Chechnya and in the North Caucasus in general?

Adlan Dinayev: I will answer your question about what is going on Chechnya now. I would call it the physical extermination of a nation. They used to say during the first Chechen war "Chechnya without Chechens."

Andrei Kamenshchikov: The most terrible thing is the fact that Russia does not have a clear state policy. There are constant movements to different sides that result in chaos and victims. I disagree with the statement that the federal Center and the president are not interested in the resolution of the Chechen problems. I believe that our president is a sober-minded man, but one cannot operate on a person if he does not have any other instrument but an axe. You say that federal soldiers do not care and that they do what they want, but this is not the expression of interests of federal structures.

I remember how I was amazed once in 1997 when one high-ranking official said, "You know, if there is another Chechen war, it will not be like the first one. It will be like the war in the Persian Gulf." And I asked him, "Do you really believe that in three years the Russian army will change so much, it will become so high-tech, that the soldiers will just press the buttons of computers?"

The Influence of the Conflicts in Chechnya on Other Regions of the North Caucasus

by Andrei Kamenschikov
Non-Violence International, Moscow

In my opinion we are reviewing the situation in Chechnya in the context of a dilemma between self-determination and territorial integrity, but we are talking about the wrong things. If we look at the real interests of Russians and Chechens, we shall see that they are absolutely obvious. People want peace, stability, a functioning economy, etc.



Andrei Kamenschikov

When we start talking about representative character or confederation character, I get the feeling that we are distracted from the most important issue. Any activities may be justified and the slogans of state integrity may be used when we are talking about the federal army. What happens is that those goals that any normal state must protect are violated as a result of such protection.

The same can be said about the idea of independence. Unfortunately, the truth is that neither Russian authorities nor Chechen leaders are eager to deal seriously with the problems of the people living in Chechnya. Unfortunately, they view this problem as a chessboard.

As far as the conflict in the North Caucasus, I was talking about peacekeeping forces. Also, the creation and often legalization of numerous armed groups that are not governed by state structures, but are subordinated to national movements, worked as a factor of destabilization.

Intrusion into Daghestan allowed the republican authorities to use the threat of this external invasion as a factor to unite the society. Old contradictions that were moved to the background at first are now becoming more complicated due to the fact that the number of armed people has increased. As far as Ingushetia, Roman will speak in more details.

Today the war in Chechnya and recent political innovations of our authorities cause very agitated reactions. The attempt to centralize power has a certain rationale, but, as it happens in Russia, good initiatives often lead to opposite results after their implementation.

I would also like to draw your attention to the situation in the western part of the North Caucasus, in Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Cherkessiya. In my opinion, these regions are highly explosive. Fortunately, resistance in

Karachayev-Cherkessiya, which we have witnessed during the last year and a half and which has pronounced national character, was curbed. This testifies to the fact that there are possibilities for positive influence there. I believe that this territory is the most important of all the regions. We should also bear in mind that this region has very close ethnic links with the neighboring regions. We can say that administrative borders there are strictly perpendicular ethnical and cultural borders.

The Political situation in Ingushetia. The Status of Chechen refugees in Ingushetia.

by Roman Gashayev
"Laman Az" Youth Organization, Nazrani, Ingushetia

In general, the situation in Ingushetia is stable, but it can be affected by the activities in Chechnya and by the presence of Chechen refugees.



Roman Gashayev

At the very beginning of the military activities in Chechnya the mass media in Ingushetia paid special attention to the social position of refugees. The Chechens and the Ingush are the same nation and therefore the Ingush could not step aside and watch military activities against Chechens. At the same time, the North Caucasus found itself in an information blockade with regard to information about Chechnya. All the borders were closed to Chechens. All the republics were closed for civilians including Kabardino-Balkaria and the Stavropol region, Daghestan, and North Ossetia,

During the first days of the war, all of the borders were closed and Chechens were not permitted to leave the territory of the Chechen Republic. There were about 200 thousand refugees at the border with Ingushetia. Only thanks to the efforts of President Aushev were refugees able to come to Ingushetia and the number of victims among civilians was reduced. All this happened practically within a few days. Ingushetia assumed the main blow. Under Moscow's orders, Chechens were not allowed to go anywhere.

The mass media drew attention to these facts. They were talking about the humanitarian catastrophe of Chechens and about atrocities that took place in Chechnya. This was not exactly the same information that was presented by the Russian mass media. Given the planned distortion of facts in the articles of central newspapers about the situation in Chechnya, the television and press in Ingushetia spoke of the real situation in Chechnya. The position of the mass media in Ingushetia was based on the assumption that only political measures could bring peace in Chechnya, and negotiations with President Maskhadov should commence. We should mention that the mass media often talks about religious and political extremism of military groups, as well as about the involvement of 'vakhabites' in crimes, etc.

The social and political situation in Ingushetia is rather stable if we do not pay attention to the situation of the refugees. Being the subject of Russia, it lives and functions in conformity with the legislation of the Russian Federation. One of

the most serious problems of Ingushetia is the insufficiently respected policy of the federal center. The President of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev, is groundlessly criticized by the Center and authorities of Russia for his fidelity to his principles and for his policy towards the Chechen people.

There are practically no political groups or any other associations in Ingushetia that have formally announced their existence. There are certain people who call themselves opponents of President Aushev, but they are primarily interested in financial issues. In spite of the obvious authoritarian style of governance by President Aushev, the majority of the population considers it reasonable. His activities are acknowledged to be appropriate and fruitful.

As far as the refugees from Chechnya are concerned, as I have already said at the beginning, the situation was extremely difficult. The federal Center did not say anything about this problem, about the need for humanitarian aid, or about the necessity of taking certain measures. The population of Ingushetia was about 300,000 people. The influx of 200,000 refugees from Chechnya changed the usual way of life in Ingushetia.

Almost all unfinished construction sites were inhabited by refugees. You know our religious traditions, so you can understand what people felt when they had to live on pig farms, but they had no other alternative. When you looked at this situation, you were just horrified, though now the situation has changed. Many international organizations provided help to Chechen refugees. You saw tent towns on TV. Some refugees lived in private houses (those who had money and possibilities), but the majority of them lived on cattle or pig farms and in unfinished construction sites. International organizations offered to build some cottages and tent camps, so that people could move there.

We cannot expect refugees to decide to return home, as winter is coming. In the summer we see an outflow of refugees. In the winter they return because at home they do not have electricity, gas, food, or the possibility to earn money. That is why the majority of refugees who go home, stay there for a while, see what is going on there and then return and get settled. Though Khadyrov announced that there is a possibility for them to come back home and that there is no danger for civilians any more, people do not believe this and refuse to return home. They know that nobody can protect them there and nobody will feed them.

On the one hand, it is good that humanitarian aid is provided to the refugees, on the other hand it has a certain negative factor, as people get used to this. They have gotten used to the fact that somebody comes to them, feeds them and gives them clothes. They do nothing, but stay in their tents and feel well.

Degradation of the nation is occurring. Nobody wants to work. Nobody wants to do anything. There is no possibility of setting up any mini-factories so that people do not just sit idly, but try to earn their living.

DISCUSSION

Question: My first question, we all know about the version of intrusion of Chechen military groups, but how can one explain the destruction of Daghestani villages and their populations by the Russian forces?

The second question, do you agree that the basis of the current conflicts in the North Caucasus has roots back in the times of the Soviet reign? And do you not consider the movement in the North Caucasus to be a national liberation movement that is presented as a national conflict? Do you not think that the charity organizations that are assisting refugees could solve their problems to a certain extent? And are there refugees coming back to their camps just because they are afraid for their lives, maybe? You have spoken of a specific situation today. But what specific steps and programs do you think are needed to solve the problem in Chechnya and Ingushetia?

Response: International organizations are doing everything possible to alleviate the sufferings and misfortunes of people. Initially Russian authorities did not want to let any international organizations come at all. But under the pressure of the international community which was talking about the humanitarian catastrophe in the region, they decided to allow certain international organizations to work there. These organizations provided substantial assistance and managed to improve the situation in Ingushetia to a certain extent. Russia was not able to cope with all the problems itself, neither with housing problems nor with food problems. During the first winter there were cases when children and grown-ups were freezing in tents, as there was no wood or food there. International organizations helped to resolve these problems.

Answering the next question I would like to say that people are coming back to Ingushetia because they were involved in events that were beyond their control. They could not stop these activities and they were afraid for the lives of their children. Some could stay there, but many people feared the mere sound of an airplane and explosions. When children just hear the sound of an airplane, they immediately start crying and try to hide somewhere.

There are only a few cases when refugees returned home and never came back to Ingushetia. They come back because they received some humanitarian aid there, as certain international organizations began delivering aid inside the territory of Chechnya as well. Organizations from France, Belgium, and Holland have been providing aid in Chechnya for two months already.

We were partners of the UN mission in Nazrani. We had the capability to participate in their weekly meetings. They work in different sectors, such as education and humanitarian aid. Great progress has been achieved already. The

current situation differs significantly from the situation at the beginning of January 2000 when there were attempts to help, but there was no coordination.

Now the UN mission has taken responsibility for the coordination of these activities. They are planning to move refugees to new tent settlements (according to preliminary data, about 12,000 people). I do not know how it will work out; it is just the idea of the project.

As far as impediments from the Russian officials, yes they often create obstacles. For instance, a military man who is standing at the checkpoint can prohibit the passing of our column in spite of all available permissions and documents. Usually they require some form of payment like money or food.

Recently there was a case in the territory of Ingushetia when a column of the Council of Women was fired upon. There was also an incident where a military column moving in cars from Chechnya to Ossetia was shot at by drunk soldiers. The driver and some local people were wounded. There were also cases where a column was turned back with the argument that there is shooting somewhere.

Adlan Dinayev: I would like to add to that. In all the conflicts that take place all over the world, the most important task is to prevent the conflict, to provide stability, to ensure the security and protection of human rights, so that people can come back. This is the most important goal, not to mention the development of social structures. People have already gotten used to difficulties, but there are signs that people are beginning to return to the regions where the situation is more peaceful. They have begun the restoration of life there. We should ensure stability if we want people to come back home.

Andrei Kamenshchikov: As far as the national liberation movement, I cannot say that I am a great expert on these issues. I believe that if in the middle of the previous century the war in the United States had ended differently and the country had been divided, we would have probably read in our history books about a weak national liberation movement. I believe that the main problem is that the state did not have any control in Chechnya in the period between the two wars. As far as events in Daghestan, let us admit that it was intrusion into the country, and that the majority of the intruders were Daghestanis. I cannot give any definite judgment, but I consider this to be a national liberation movement. It is true that it is an internal conflict and a really serious conflict.

As about other regions, like for instance Karachayevo-Cherkessiya, there are serious contradictions between different communities living in this territory. I do not think that we can characterize it as a national liberation movement.

Question: I would like you to say what you think about the destruction of a whole region in Daghestan by Russian forces?

Response: I am not aware of this.

Question to Roman Gashayev: How many refugees, both Chechens and Russians, are there in Russia now according to your data?

The second question, do Ichkerian authorities take any part in the efforts on the resolution of the refugee problem?

The third question, where do you think the relatives of Ichkerian authorities are located and what is the situation there?

Response: I do not have the data about the number of refugees from Chechnya in Russia. I know that about 6,000 of them are located in Georgia, 12,000 to 15,000 in Daghestan, about 200,000 in Ingushetia, and about 6,000 in Kabardino-Balkaria. Others went to their relatives in Russia or abroad. Since there is no registration of refugees in the Russian Federation, we do not have exact data.

As far as your second question, where relatives of the leaders are located, I was never interested in that. Apart from concerning the leaders of Ichkeria themselves, does it have anything to do with the problem of Chechen refugees? Do they provide any help? Yes, they try, but they cannot do it personally, they act through some organizations.

I believe that when we work with refugees from Chechnya, we do not work under the direct guidance of Maskhadov, but we try to do everything possible so that these refugees are not left in the care of international organizations alone, that other organizations are dealing with them. There are many Chechen and Ingush organizations that are working with refugees, both jointly with international organizations and independently.

Question to A. Dinayev: What is the influence of Azerbaijan and Georgia on the events in Chechnya? If there is any influence, what forms does it take?

Response: I would not say that there is some specific influence of Georgia or Azerbaijan on the situation in the Republic. We can only speak about their attitude towards the refugees who are currently located in the territories of these states. Relations between Georgia and Chechnya that have been developing recently made it possible to give optimistic projections for the future.

Albert Avduev (addition): If we are talking about the attitude of Georgia and Azerbaijan, I presume we should divide this issue into two parts, the attitude of the authorities and the attitude of people. But we should also not forget that Georgia and Azerbaijan are greatly influenced by Russian military forces and are very cautious in demonstrating their benevolence.

Reasons for and Evolution of Conflicts in North Ossetia. Social and Political Situation in the Region. Relations between the Leaders of Political Groups of North Ossetia and Georgia.

by Vsevolod Ryazanov

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I will speak about the South Ossetian-Georgian conflict, then about the Ossetian-Ingush conflict, then about events in Chechnya and the fourth conflict which took the latent form and has been moved to the background, but is nevertheless recurring. This is the conflict within the Ossetian nation itself within which three sub-nations exist. The situation is not that easy there, but let us start from the beginning.



V. Ryazanov

The South Ossetian-Georgian conflict began during the Soviet times, in 1989, and was transformed into a military conflict with over one and a half years of military activities. A major part of the population of South Ossetia and a great number of Ossetians living in the territory of Georgia left this republic and settled in North Ossetia. According to different sources there were about 90 to 100,000 people there. They say that currently about 40,000 South Ossetians are registered and are temporarily living in North Ossetia. There are some positive factors to this conflict resolution.

South Ossetia is aware of the fact that Georgia and North Ossetia limit its territory and its status. The main question is whether they will be able to become a republic. Without a sufficient Ossetian population in this territory, there is no sense in fighting only for the status. On the other hand, the social and economic situation there is extremely difficult. This does not facilitate the return of people there, especially since this region is deemed to be the territory of Georgia and Russia. It cannot directly provide either political or economic assistance in this conflict resolution.

A four-party commission is working on the resolution of this conflict. The commission is composed of Russia, North Ossetia, South Ossetia and Georgia. This complicated structure is discussing the problems of Georgia. These two conflicts (as well as the conflict with Abkhazia) prevent access of Georgia to the European Union. On the one hand Georgia is interested in these conflicts resolution, but on the other hand it does not want to give up its territories, and it very painfully perceives the issue of the status.

In the course of the last few years, North Ossetia has made desperate attempts to return refugees to South Ossetia, as their presence has resulted in increased criminal activity.

The social situation is very difficult as well as the situation on the labor market. That is why the territories occupied by the refugees started to be freed by force. Now these territories have to be restored practically from scratch. Refugees were consuming gas and electricity free of charge and we understand what it means for the country. In other words, some steps are taken, but to be honest, one cannot see the end of this process in the foreseeable future.

The Ossetian-Ingush conflict remains a painful point, as Ingushetia continues to have territorial claims against the Ossetians. Both people and authorities are unanimous on this issue. They do not see any reason for negotiations before this territorial problem is resolved. On the other hand, in contrast, they advance the issue on the impossibility of joint habitation by Ossetians and Ingush, which of course complicates the return of the refugees to North Ossetia. This slogan appeared after the completion of the armed phase of the conflict. Authorities of the Republic officially repudiated it, but nevertheless this idea penetrated the public's subconscious and it is difficult to project when it will be extirpated.

People of this country understand that it is impossible to live in a state of war, to live without real ways of restoration of the mutual trust between people. But frankly speaking, there is no political effort toward the technology of armistice or of conflict resolution.

Ossetia has traditionally been considered a pro-Russian republic. This is probably explained by the fact that the majority of population there is Christian, though it is difficult to call them very religious. In spite of the fact that there were certain anti-Russian moods, though not very explicit, Ossetia remains a traditionally pro-Russian republic.

Let us turn now to the conflict in Chechnya. Naturally, the majority of the population supports the idea of establishing order in the territory of Chechnya. They also adhere to the idea that it is the territory of Russia. Though if we are speaking about the methods of establishing order, the population disapproves of military options. I believe we all understand who the Chechens are, how they can be devoted to an idea, and when at some point somebody assured that Chechnya can be conquered by two battalions just in two hours, it caused nothing but a smirk. One would be a complete idiot simply to imagine such a situation.

A great number of refugees are living in the territory of the Mazov region. There are not many of them in the territory of North Ossetia, though there are some. In Nazrani attempts are being made to help children and victims. Tolnozevsk has become the shelter for a great number of families.

New leadership is looking over its shoulder at Moscow and is very cautious. No humanitarian programs have been implemented, though there may be a potential for that in the future. At least some families could be accepted. This

could become possible if the leadership carried out a well-organized campaign of humanitarian aid provision.

NGOs are very poorly represented. There are only a few organizations in Ossetia which are informal bodies representing Ossetians' interests. They have not explicitly expressed their opinion about military activities in Chechnya.

And the last issue is internal Ossetian conflict, which was very acute before the new conflicts broke out. The matter is the following: Muslim Ossetians speak the language that is deemed to be the state language while the other Ossetians speak another language; and so they demanded that the Constitution of the republic provide for two state languages.

I would like to reiterate that, while there were more serious conflicts, this one was moved to the background, but it has not been resolved. It has another aspect in the strengthening of Islam in the republic. Representatives of this religion are very active. They have built many mosques and have actively involved young people. In other words, the role of the Islamic factor in the public and cultural life of Ossetia has increased.

There are also many South Ossetians whose way of life differs greatly, as refugees have to find ways of survival. This is the most active part of the population of North Ossetia. Hostility towards them is constantly growing. As you know, Russia is insisting on the introduction of an entry visa system within the CIS countries. What happens here if South Ossetia remains a part of Georgia, and these people will have to pass through different procedures each time they would like to come to Russia? From a purely practical standpoint, it will mean that the situation will become more difficult with the introduction of this new system and it is hard to predict how the situation will change. These people cannot receive citizenship either, as their passports are the former passports of the USSR. They are not valid in Georgia. Nobody will give them Russian citizenship; they are not even able to cross the border.

Of course, Ossetia has been raising the issue of being a separate nation. As far as the political aspect, I can say that there are about 200 political parties and movements in Ossetia. But in real terms not more than five of them work as well as representatives of the central parties. One of the most famous of them is the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. In general the situation is depressing, as there is no clear position, no alternative mass media. 90 percent of TV channels in Ossetia broadcast Moscow programs.

Question: You have not mentioned the activity of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia in Ossetia. What ethnic groups of North Ossetia support LDPR?

Response: At the last elections, LDPR got from one and a half to three percent of the votes, the same amount as in Russia in general. The fact that they are active does not mean that they have a serious basis. They are just more visible.

Question: When we are watching the processes in the former Soviet Union we can see that the national element is very sensitive in the North Caucasus. We saw the consequences of the national policy in Moldova, which can be called denationalization.

What I am interested in is to what extent people of the North Caucasus managed to preserve those elements on which any nation is based, such as the language, knowledge of its own history, literary classics. This spiritual element is what ensures the viability of a nation in the conditions of competition.

You have said that 90 percent of TV programs are in Russian, but if a nation does not have its own culture, its language, then only the ethnic shell remains, but the content is different.

Response: One of the ethnic councils is set up precisely with the aim of the preservation and restoration of these national values. But frankly speaking, their activity does not go further than declarations. They propose something, but it is so basic that we cannot speak about their work seriously.

A compulsory study of the Ossetian language at schools has been introduced, both for representatives of the title nation and for others as well. If we look at the quality of teaching, we will see that it cannot stand any criticism. If we are talking about knowledge of history, I can say that a history manual has just been published. It is even not a manual, but a huge monograph about the history of Ossetians from the very beginning until the modern times.

Information policy is very contradictory and inconsistent. A state channel exists, but the quality of its programming is very poor. The professional level of employees of television channels not only irritates, but even causes the indignation of the population. It is hard to say whether these efforts of restoration will lead to desirable results.

Question: Can you name the forms and methods of your cooperation with the public on the one hand and with authorities on the other?

Response: We were monitoring the social, political, and economic situation. All the issues we are concerned with are reflected in our reports. We forward them to the administration of the president and to the government. We suggest certain solutions, but as a rule they are put in drawers and forgotten.

As far as our work with the public, we try to broadcast our programs whenever we have the capabilities to do so. We have recently registered the Vladikavkaz Press-Club and under its auspices we hope to gather together many independent journalists in order to discuss some issues that are prohibited from discussion by official bodies of the mass media. We have also created an Internet site and would like to invite all interested persons to join the dialogue. We would like to

represent all regions of Caucasus and we would like to discuss the problems of Caucasus on this site, including the issues related to conflicts.

Question: How can you evaluate and characterize mass media reports about the events in the North Caucasus? Here I primarily mean not the Russian but the foreign mass media.

Response: I cannot answer this question.

Question: You were analyzing the situations in different regions of the North Caucasus. Have you analyzed the second military conflict in Chechnya and if so, who do you think is interested in the results of your research?

Response: The matter is that all these events turned out to be absolutely unexpected for us and we were not prepared for them at all. Since we work in the state structure, we do not go beyond our functional duties. The only thing that I can project is the fact that our president is promoting the idea of setting up a Center on Caucasus Studies in Vladikavkaz under the aegis of the Academy of Science. This center is expected to study the political situation in the region.

Question: How often do you carry out joint studies with the central institutions?

Response: We have certain contacts, for instance with Drobyzheva, but frankly speaking we do not have enough resources to carry out the monitoring of all the issues that interest us. Unfortunately, this is done on a random basis and at a rather low professional level. There are no professional sociologists in the republic and the studies that are carried out are based on pure enthusiasm. In the summer, we became a branch of the Academy of Science and we hope to get methodological assistance from them.

Question: Can you tell us whether authorities or certain groups that have power impede the peace process? Have you studied this issue?

Response: We do not have this kind of research, but I can say that authorities do not hamper it. They just do not do anything.

Oazu Nantoi: Issues of resolving conflicts in the North Caucous are extremely important today. Progress can be achieved only by joint efforts of the government and NGOs, only in such a way can there be appropriate recommendations and strategies for those who are at power.

DISCUSSION

Vladimir Gutu: When we analyze the religious situation in the countries of the former Soviet Union, and in particular, in the Republic of Moldova, we notice the significant growth of such religious communities as Jehovah's Witnesses,

Baptists and others. Here we can say that religion is not divided by a national feature. In your report you provided detailed information about the religious situation in your region. Do you see the growth of the religious communities that I have just mentioned in your republics?

Yavus Akhmadov: This issue should be discussed from a chronological point of view. Yes, there were Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses in Grozny, and primarily Russian speaking people were the members of these groups, but during the war representatives of these groups left Chechnya and that is why we do not have them now. There is a growth of non-traditional religions in the North Caucasus in general and the Orthodox Church has expressed serious concern about this.

Octavian Sofranski: It is becoming evident from your report that sectarianism among Muslims prevents the national integration of Chechnya. But I would like to draw your attention to another aspect of this issue, to Islamic solidarity. Since Islam is the second largest religion in Russia, how probable is the dissemination of religious conflict from Chechnya to other regions of Russia?

Yavus Akhmadov: This issue requires separate study. This issue appeared because major parts of the population are Christian, and a smaller part is Muslim. These two religions are the dominant ones in modern Russia. In other words, Russia is currently a Christian-Muslim power. This means that there are two religious policies. There are other religions, but they do not play such an important role. A major part of the Islamic clergy condemned the beginning of the new Chechen war. I recollect that during the first Chechen war they often came to the Chechen Republic when conditions allowed them to do this. Now there are not many possibilities to come to Chechnya. But nevertheless, their attitude is clear in their opposition to war.

As far as Islamic gangs, I have not studied this issue. I only know that certain religious organizations support the fighting side of Chechnya both morally and financially. Such support exists, but there are also certain religious groups which are really dangerous for vakhabism. Some countries, like Egypt or Algeria, have become objects of coup d'état attempts of radical Islamic groups. There are also attempts at counteraction. A month ago, Khadyrov was at an international congress of Islamic leaders in the United States. He came back from there satisfied, as his position was understood, supported and sympathized with.

Albert Avduev: It is difficult to understand from your report whether vakhabism is a movement or something else. The following question suggests itself in this respect. Last century during the Caucasus war, Chechens resisted the penetration of the Russian army into their territory. Later, Chechens were accused of disobedience to communism and now they are blamed for vakhabism. What is the difference between Judaism and vakhabism? Are there any sources which could provide for a clear definition of these terms? Do they have anything in common?

Yavus Akhmadov: Of course, this is an extremely difficult question, but I am always thinking about this issue. I can say unambiguously that the Caucasian Meridism we are talking about has touched us as well. Vakhbism has much deeper roots. This is the movement for the purity of Islam. This fight for purity of religion took such forms that people were killed and temples were destroyed. As far as Caucasian Judaism, this is a purely Sufi trend interpreted by Magomed Shariatsky and Djamaludin Kazimursky and adapted for mountainous people for their fight against Russian colonialists in the course of Caucasian war.

Muslim leaders believe that the main duty of a believer is jihad. At that moment they interpreted it as fight against Russian colonialists, i.e. if you are Muslim, you must fight. This is your religious way.

Vakhbism is Islam as well. If someone considers it a sect, well, that is their problem. Sufi's trend of Islam is considered by specialists as the highest and the most sophisticated form of Islam, but once again I would like to say that I am a bad advisor on theological issues.

Roman Gashayev: You have said that Dudayev refused to finance military actions. Do you mean that he did not lead these activities in 1994-96? Who did it then?

Yavus Ahamadov: Dudayev did not personally develop military operations. All the work was done by A. Maskhadov, then commander, who made decisions and informed Dudayev about them. You understand that Maskhadov had more military experience. In practice it was he who headed the army, but formally it was Dudayev. The money flew in from abroad, from Turkey and from Arab Sheiks.

Roman Gashayev: It is not true that Dudayev was not the head. He was the only head from the beginning of 1991 until 1996 and nobody could make a single step without his order.

Adlan Dinayev: I will not support this discussion, as it is not our business to discuss who and how these activities were financed. As we know, Khadyrov blessed the first Chechen war, announced gazavat, and every person who believed in Islam considered gazavat as a holy war. Can you explain the ideology of this word? I have two questions. The first one is why Khadyrov did not consider this Chechen war a holy war and gazavat? And the second question, how do you, being a Muslim and a religious person, understand the word 'gazavat'?

Yavus Ahamadov: Yes, they try to interpret 'gazavat' as the war for faith, for convictions and 'jihad' as defense war. The meaning of the word 'jihad' is much better. If we look at the initial meaning of this word, we shall see that it means 'overcoming,' 'fight.' In other words, even now we are doing something at this

conference, this is also 'overcoming', we are executing 'jihad', we are moving towards truth.

Khadyrov says in his publications, "Yes, I fought against Russia, but I do not regret anything about it. Nothing can scare me any more. Yes, I called upon jihad, as I was sure that I was right. Being Muslim I am fighting against those who wanted to establish slave-trade, who launch slaughtering, and who rob orphans and widows." That is how he explains his behavior. I personally understand 'gazavat' as war, overcoming, and study. As far as these two wars, I would like to quote one field commander who once said, "Russians will leave, but these enemies will stay, that is why it is easier for me to kill this enemy, than to fight with soldiers." This is the attitude of people. These enemies are more dangerous than external ones. I personally fight against this war, but not with the gun in my hand. I am using the possibilities that I have. I am also fighting for the interests of those who have guns and for the interests of their families. A scientist cannot divide a nation. The whole nation is the same for a politician of the national scale. My comments and statements have also played a certain role. I met with Putin in October of 1999 and demanded the establishment of order and justice.

Adlan Dinayev: Do you consider the first and the second Chechen wars to be 'gazavat'?

Yavus Akhmadov: For those who perished yes. Please forgive me if I am too straightforward, but how would you call those people who forgot about those who were killed, who forgot for what these people died. They were not dying for Dudayev, Maskhadov, or slave-traders; they were dying for the happiness of their country, for order and prosperity. I spoke with many soldiers who were saying: "It is not Dudayev we are dying for, we are fighting for Chechnya, but what has happened with it today?"

Oil Issues in the North Caucasus

by Albert Avduev
Oil Engineer, Chechen Diaspora

People know oil from prehistoric times and archeological findings prove that. The history of oil in the North Caucasus begins in 1833 with the first Russian oil wells. In other words, it is parallel with the process of Chechnya's colonization by Russia. In 1833, oil wells in the territory occupied by Ichkeria were the largest ones in the North Caucasus. They became the basis of industrial development in the region.



Albert Avduev

Oil was extracted in a very primitive way. It was scooped out of a one-meter deep well by buckets. This process lasted for decades. The amount of extracted oil was accounted for only during the period 1833-1863. From Grozny wells, about 15 thousand barrels were extracted.

Exploitation of oil wells increased upon the strengthening of Russian positions in the Caucasus, as the demands of the Russian Federation in oil were growing along with its development. Within a span of ten years, from 1865 to 1875, oil production doubled. At that time, kerosene, which was used as fuel, began to be produced from oil. From 1870 to 1880, oil production doubled again, and in 1890 increased 16 fold. This growth of oil production allowed Russia to build a railroad in the North Caucasus for the transportation of oil to the central regions of the country.

In 1895 a huge oil fountain burst out of a well. The smell of gas could be sensed ten kilometers away from the outburst. The fountain was active for three years, flooding the neighborhood and creating oil lakes. Specialists consider it to be one of the largest oil fountains. Over ten million tons of oil poured out during these three years.

Since then, foreign businessmen began coming to our region. New oil fields in Chechnya were of international importance. By the beginning of the 20th century, 70 percent of oil production belonged to international syndicates. In 1901, 22.5 million tons of oil were produced in the world, of which Russia produced 11.5 million tons, 40 percent of which was Grozny oil.

The invention of combustion engines created a new impetus for oil production. Oil became one of the most important factors of the world economy. In the 1970s, production of Grozny oil amounted to about 30 million tons.

In the mid 1980s, oil production was seriously reduced. The reason was the unique quality of this oil. In the 1980s, production of lubricating oil in the Soviet Union was based on Grozny oil. Oil fields in Daghestan also have great

possibilities. They are not deep, which can ensure an accelerated technological processing.

Oil plays an exclusive role in the world, especially in the second half of the 20th century. Oil has taken leading positions in trade balances of developed countries of the world. A rapid development of the means of transportation and oil production resulted in an increase in the share of oil in the actual trade balance from five percent to 60 percent during the last one hundred years.

Today, an indicator of oil consumption has become the most important indicator of the country's development and it reflects the objective situation in the modern world. World demands for energy are satisfied primarily by oil and gas. In the modern world, oil is the major raw material for the chemical industry.

The oil industry plays an important role in the development of the economy of the North Caucasus. Oil and gas produced here are sufficient for this region's development and have ensured jobs for the population for many decades. I believe that oil production could facilitate the implementation of a labor market development program, as currently up to 80 percent of the population of certain republics in the North Caucasus is unemployed. People have no means for survival.

Oil production can also help the realization of certain social programs. But these programs cannot be carried out at a local level, that is, at the republican level of the countries that are subjects of the Russian Federation. Local and republican authorities have no independence in taking serious strategic decisions.

At the same time, Moscow is oriented on the export of raw oil and gas without the development of new advanced oil processing technologies. Proceeds from oil exports do not return to the republics where oil is produced and infrastructure is not developed. Contradictions and criminality of all power authorities of Russia interested only in their enrichment hamper the solution of these issues in the North Caucasus.

I will turn now to the current situation of oil in the Caucasus, and in particular in Chechnya. For over one hundred years, oil has been part and parcel of international developments in the region. We can say that every international conflict was predetermined by the oil issue. The current situation in Chechnya is not an exception. One of the main reasons of this war is oil and the desire of Russia to control its transportation in the Caucasus. Chechnya is located in the center of the North Caucasus and oil transportation roads traditionally pass through Chechnya. Therefore, this control over oil allows Russia to control the whole Caucasus, and I would say the whole Black Sea region. Citizens of Ichkeria view this issue differently, for them it is not a fight for oil, but a fight for freedom, self-determination, and life.

DISCUSSION

Question: Do you not think that oil is no longer a source of conflict? The oil factor could have been an incitement to the first war and maybe initially for the second war. But do you think that the interests of Russia are not directed to the resources of Ichkeria after an alternative way of oil transportation was proposed?

Albert Avduev: I presume you are right in saying that oil is not the main cause of the conflict. The main reason is control over the oil transportation routes. The vicinity to this oil permits the possibility of having an influence on the whole region. Even the new pipeline does not resolve the whole problem of oil transportation. This pipeline will not be able to transport the necessary amount of oil. Though some believe that oil fields in the North Caucasus are exhausted, this is not true. We know that all previous oil fields were not deep. They were very easy for production. The way of production and the depth of deposits affect the final value of the product. Once again I would like to draw your attention to the unique quality of Grozny oil and to the fact that these fields have practically no analogues.

Octavian Sofranski: I believe that we can say that there is a certain connection between the fact that Chechnya is one of the richest subjects of Russia and that it has many natural resources and its fight for self-determination and the rigid reaction of Russia to this movement. Today, after two Russian-Chechen wars, Chechen oil is not as important to Russia any more, but for Chechens oil remains the main natural resource which enables them to develop the economy of their country. In this respect, I would like to ask you how you see the possibilities for future development of oil fields in Chechnya. I think it should be the main issue in the future negotiations on the status of Chechnya. Two more questions, who will produce oil and how will profit be shared between Moscow and Grozny?

Albert Avduev: You are right when you say that Ichkerian oil is not the most important issue for Russia. I agree with you. The problem is that during the previous war and now as well, oil is extensively exported from Chechnya. Yes, for Chechens oil could become the starting point for their economic restoration. Besides oil fields, Chechnya has other natural resources, like metal deposits. This could be helpful for agricultural development.

The landscape and climate of Chechnya is in some ways similar to Moldova. If we assume that Chechnya remains part of Russia, then the profit will be shared in the old way, namely one percent to Chechnya.

Octavian Sofranski: Do you think that such an unfair division became the reason of the conflict?

Albert Avduev: Yes, this was one of the reasons.

Yavus Akhmadov: You have introduced yourself as a specialist in oil issues. When did oil production start in Chechnya as attested by documents? How much oil was produced in the period from 1991 to 1994? What social programs was this money used for?

Albert Avduev: Oil production started in 1833.

Yavus Akhmadov: You see, you do not know this issue. There are documents talking about oil production back in the 17th century. In the 18th century, Chechens started to develop oil wells in the region of Grozny. Oil was sold to Cossacks at the price of 15 silver rubles for 500 barrels.

Albert Avduev: Nobody contends this. In 1990, oil production in Grozny amounted to over five million tons and it was impossible to increase volumes of production either in 1991 or 1992, as equipment was obsolete. Pumps and drilling rigs needed replacement. I do not know how much Russian oil was produced from 1991 to 1994, but volumes of Chechen oil did not exceed two million tons. Some part of the proceeds was used for social tasks, especially in 1992-93. I do not know the figures and the data provided by the Russian mass media are not reliable. In 1992-93, proceeds from oil sales were used for the restoration of roads, medical institutions, and schools. However, it was not regular. In my presentation, I was using the figures that were officially published in Ichkerian resources.

Question: Oil production and the oil processing units of Ichkeria have been destroyed and practically do not exist. Their restoration is needed primarily for the Chechen people, but this can be achieved only with the help of private investments. Investments appear in politically stable regions. Nobody will invest money in the regions where everything can be destroyed. Political stability in Chechnya may be achieved through two scenarios, either Chechnya as the subject of the Russian Federation, or as an independent state. Since this restoration is necessary for the people of Chechnya, how do you see the achievement of political stability which would be beneficial for Chechen people?

Albert Avduev: We should review two possibilities, both as a member of the Russian Federation and as an independent state. In the case of the first scenario, I cannot foresee the achievement of stability in the next 25 to 30 years and not only because the economy and industry are destroyed. The main problem will be the people living in Chechnya who will never forget the bombardments, shootings, and overall violence from the part of the Russian troops.

I presume that it would be possible if we follow the second scenario, but we need international guarantees of security if we want investments to come to the republic.

Question: Let us imagine that tomorrow Ichkeria reaches stability as a part of the Russian Federation. Do Russian oil companies have sufficient financial resources and technical capacity to restore the Ichkerian oil complex?

Albert Avduev: I assume that they have the financial resources, but of course they would not restore the refineries, but only oil extraction capacities.

Roman Gashayev: I have some additions to what Albert has said. It is impossible to create an independent state on the territory of Russia while Russia continues to execute terrorist diversions against Chechen people. During three years of Chechnya's independence, there was not a single day when Russia did not carry out subversive activity against Chechnya.

There is no proof that the Chechens wanted this war or that Chechens organized terrorist acts in Moscow and Volgodonsk. Yes, it was done by the hands of Chechens, but nobody knows who was behind this. That is why it is not appropriate to blame Chechens and Maskhadov for this.

Question: If Russia withdraws from Chechnya, are there any guarantees that Chechnya will not submit to the influence of any other forces?

Albert Avduev: This is a topical question. I believe that Chechnya will be influenced by its own interests. Its interests consist of ensuring a proper life for the population, employment, and peace. If you suppose that Chechnya can become a factor of destabilization, I would say that there are no resources for that left in Chechnya. In the course of the second war not only human resources were lost (about 800,000 people), but material resources as well.

Yavus Akhmadov: I believe that this topic is close to me since I am teacher of social sciences. I will try to comment on this issue in the following way. In 1991, Chechnya had certain potential to become a free state. It was primarily an oil-processing center that was oriented to the whole southern region of Russia. It was a specific monopoly. If at that moment Chechnya could have become independent, it would have been able to support itself completely, if it had maintained close cooperation with Russia. Four to five million tons of its own oil and about 20 million tons of oil imported for refining would be enough for the development of a small republic with the population of one million people.

Those in power were busy with something else, not with the issues of the country's independence. The government was achieving other tasks and very successfully. I have already given you many examples. Unfortunately, in 1994, before the intrusion of the Russian army, all factories and oil wells were not working. The country was paralyzed. Even in this situation some ways out could have been found, as certain regions of Russia were ready to cooperate with Chechnya to establish normal business relations and to buy oil. Just imagine, here is Stavropol, harvest time. The Center says, "No contacts with Chechnya,"

but the Governor of Stavropol comes and says, "No I will trade with you. I will give you wheat and you give me diesel oil."

As far as those three so called 'peaceful' years that you were mentioning, people were running away from Chechnya in horror, as from the devil incarnate, saving their children and their property. Five hundred thousand people left, this is not Russian information. Russia was concealing this data, as it should have taken care of these refugees. It is concealing this information even now and will never admit it. They do not need extra borders.

Now for the second war, we have the territory where there is nothing, just the territory where the remaining population tries to survive. Can Chechnya be independent now? Yes, if somebody, roughly speaking, takes us in tow. I support this idea. We need gas and electricity, if the United States or Turkey agrees to support Chechnya for at least five years, I will be the first to support this idea. Or we will have to wait for another 25 to 30 years before we reach the normal level and will be able to raise the issue of an independent state. What does it mean to be independent? To cut down all forests, to eat up everything and to scamper about? No, I understand independence differently. Independence is a free and strong Chechen Republic, where people live with dignity. All the rest is just demagogy.

Adlan Dinayev: I would like to come back to the question whether we can get under influence of other countries. This was the reason why Russia did not weaken its attention to Chechnya in 1994-99. Instability was initiated there immediately after the completion of the war. People were stolen and this suited Russia perfectly well, as not a single investor agreed to come to Chechnya because of the unstable situation.

Andrei Kamenshchikov: I am deeply convinced that the policy of Russia towards Chechnya and what is done there by Russia is a crime. Let us speak openly. What international assistance can we talk about? Even those humanitarian organizations that were working in the region from 1996 to 1998 had to leave Chechnya or minimize their activity. I was dealing with this issue personally and constantly persuaded that aid should be maintained in spite of the difficult situation. What can be said if members of these organizations did not have basic physical security? How can you expect any investments? It is simply impossible!

The problem is that there was no statehood. We can talk about independence when there is normal state order. The problem is that neither Russian nor Chechen politicians wanted to work on its creation.

Adlan Dinayev: Sure, Russia was interested in that. I can give many examples including the experience of our organization. When foreigners came to us, we did not want them to have problems. We did not hire any security services for them and they safely came and left and we worked with them without any problems. I can give you many other examples.

But I would also like to ask another question, why are people kidnapped in Russia? I am not talking about Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, but about central regions of Russia. For some reason people kidnapped there are found in Chechnya. I just cannot understand this. When I cross allegedly the administrative border with Chechnya, I am searched so thoroughly, as if I crossed the border between the USSR and the United States at the time of the 'iron curtain.' I just cannot understand this.

These facts were described by the Russian mass media very well. This fact is unquestionable. I am not saying that all Chechens are good and you will tell me that all Russians are good. Such statements do not give the right to anyone to launch a new war. I believe that any nation has the right to self-determination. Of course, if there were no reasonable people in the political elite of Russia and if Russian policy in the North Caucasus is not changed, it would be very difficult. Dudayev was speaking about this. History shows that our life was always difficult, but we always survived, both during Tzarist wars and Soviet times. Nobody is saying that transition to independence will be easy.

I have a question to Akhmadov. You said that in 1991 there were grounds for independence in Chechnya. Why did not you take the side of independence then? I know that there were threats, blame, pressing, I am perfectly aware of all that, I live in this republic myself. But still, why did not you and your brothers-in-arms help this state to rise?

Yavus Akhmadov: In 1990-1991 I was an advocate of the independence of Chechnya. I was fighting for this when I was a member of the Chechen delegation at the negotiations with Russia. The Special Service has even taken a note of me as an active enemy. In the course of negotiations, five experts sat at the negotiation table with me and we worked out a document. You remember that I have told you I am realist. I have never been member of the Communist Party.

In 1990-91 we had conditions for independence provided we maintained lawful and economic links with Russia and I welcomed this opportunity. By the way, strange as it may seem, these were not Chechens who advocated the independence of Chechnya, but Russians, because this produced new economic opportunities. Oil was produced and conditions were perfect.

So you are not right at all when you say such things. Unfortunately, I do not publish my biography in newspapers, that is probably why you do not know it, and also you are still very young.

But in 1993, when a coup d'état took place, I saw that the President was bad, I saw the problems. And only when on April 18, Dudayev violated the Constitution of Chechnya, only then did I join the groups of people's volunteer corps. I have studied the system of robbery of the state.

Adlan Dinayev: The President of Russia violates the Constitution of Russia today. A whole nation is exterminated. I am not talking about military activities. Why do you not stand in opposition to Russian authorities now? I am not the adherent of Ichkeria or Russia; I am a citizen of my nation. I love this nation and I will fight for it until the end of my life.

Yavus Akhmadov: I am not a fighter; I am a builder. I have been building this republic; I have devoted much effort to it and I hope that my work will be useful. I stand against the policy of Russia on the issue of the Chechen war. I have respective publications and documents about this. I said this to Putin's face. The Russian Embassy in Moldova denounced my participation at this conference. This is my anti-Russian action. I am a Russian civil servant, but I am not afraid to express my opinion, and thanks to that I can push this situation to a certain direction. I did not fight against the regime of Dudayev with guns in my hands. I have a much more powerful armament than guns.

Oazu Nantoi: If the people of Chechnya want to achieve independence, we have to clarify what kind of independence is possible today? I believe that the armed fight against Russia is suicidal, as the Russian army, no matter what its condition is, has the systems of armament, though they are not able to transport it over the mountain passes.

That is why if we are talking about Chechnya with such pain, let us have a look at what can be considered independence and not suicide today. I believe that this conference should do the following. Russia is carrying out criminal policy in Chechnya, but in order to use this argument in full force, Chechnya should have some structures of representative authorities that are eligible to speak on behalf of the people of Chechnya.

The situation is absolutely abnormal now. Somebody acknowledges Maskhadov, and somebody Khadyrov. As far as I understand, the people are fighting for survival. You should require from Moscow the establishment of legitimate structures of power and carry out dialogue with Maskhadov who was acknowledged by Moscow. But in this situation you cannot say that Chechnya is an independent state. This immediately gives Russia an opportunity to suppress you by force and to fight for the preservation of its territorial integrity. We are discussing various issues, but we should outline a way out of this situation.

Question: Not a single normal person wants war, not only at home but in general as well. I presume that every Chechen wants to stop this war, to have a normal life, and to be sure about the future. Because of the events that took place between the first and the second wars, the Russian mass media presented Chechens as bandits and as terrorists who cannot be trusted. Before the presidential elections, Putin was actively involved in the Chechen issue. His quick promotion to the presidency makes us ponder whether he could become president without launching this war.

Octavian Sofranski: My question is about the role of Russia in the North Caucasus. Back in the 18th century, Russia assumed the role of civilizer in the North Caucasus. The last two wars in Chechnya demonstrated that Russia does not cope well with the role of civilizer; it lacks something in its collective vision. I do not want to discuss ideological stereotypes, I believe that the trouble of the peoples of Russia is that Russian statehood is so flabby now, and that the statesmen who see the interests of the people are not in power in Russia now, but the people who are working for certain groups based on their own interests. As for Chechnya, the preponderance of Russia is obvious, but the hope of the Chechen people lies in the cessation of the war and the establishment of regular statehood in the territory of this region. Nobody can speak about an independent state without functioning statehood. This is the common task and the response to both parties.

Yavus Akhmadov: From a geopolitical point of view, the new stage of the development of Russia's relation with the creation of statehood is troublesome. According to some researchers, the issue of the sovereignty of national regions of Russia, including Chechnya, can depend not on the imperial intentions of Kremlin, but on the geographical location and technological development. Few countries have geopolitical independence. In other words, we have to find the answer to the following question, what country Chechnya should be part of, Russia or some other state?

Chechnya does not have anything now; somebody must feed it. If we decide to be with Russia, we should also decide in what forms and at what conditions we should be with Russia. The scenario after the completion of armed activities can be the following. The war is ceased, but the army does not leave. That is why we have two situations in Chechnya now, military and civil. A state of emergency can be introduced for, let us say, one year, depending on the period of stabilization. It is senseless to have any negotiations with Russia at this time before state authorities are created.

After Constitutional authorities are established in Chechnya as a result of elections, the issue of signing an agreement between Russia and Chechen Republic can be discussed, as it was discussed in 1996-97. Before elections, an administrative separation of Chechnya and Ingushetia should be carried out. Another task is the adoption of the Constitution by the legal authorities.

I believe that the future agreement should be based on the positive experience gained by the international community. The type of agreement should be determined, whether it is of international legal character or of a state legal one. The authors of the text of the agreement should not ignore the national interests of Chechnya. They should take into consideration that it has its own approaches to economic development and they should also bear in mind that Chechnya holds a very important geographical position.

Vsevolod Ryazanov: It is interesting to mention that immediately after the completion of the first stage of the conflict, both confronting parties began blaming the federal center of lacking any policy in the North Caucasus. This was formulated as the state level task. The state should have some ideology in conformity with which the main ideas and principles are formulated.

We can see now that they are not able to ensure even minimal human rights in their territory. We are not talking about any economic issues, but about at least some political rights, about the right to life.

Albert Avduev: We were talking about human rights in the North Caucasus and I believe that practically the whole North Caucasus is the subject of the Russian Federation. We cannot talk about rights of some national minorities. The policy of the center towards people of the Caucasus is discriminatory. The bodies that are traditionally called law enforcement bodies infringe and discriminate this group of the population. This is not the only group of the population that is treated like that in Russia. I think that Russian ideology is closer to racism, to the division of people based on their race or nationality.

Yvauz Akhmadov: The future of the people of the North Caucasus depends a lot on the development of Russia and the CIS. Great indignation is caused when some statesmen speak with Chechnya as with some inimical state for even such a simple reason that representatives of the North Caucasus appeared in Moscow back in the 16th century. If there were at least five or six political figures from the North Caucasus in the Russian Government relations would have been absolutely different.

The main task of the conference participants is to find ways and procedures for the resolution of the conflict in the North Caucasus, where the Chechen crisis is the main one. This conflict is the result of an aggressive policy of not only Russia, but of extremist forces in Chechnya as well. Unfortunately forces appeared that pushed the republic into chaos and destruction. They feel free; negative potential is being accumulated. For them, war is a life that involves young people. For them, it is a sort of sport one gets used to very quickly.

But our main task is to lead the country out of the war. What is the essence of realistic policy? It is always the choice between bad and worse. Unfortunately, we sometimes require ideal solutions. Some people consider the notion that Chechnya should become some ideal subject of the Russian Federation, which it should play in accordance with some rules. Of course, it is not constructive.

The first thing that should be done by Russia is to withdraw the army from the Chechen Republic, to create Chechen armed forces in the form of a militia and the National Guard. On the other hand, the existing provisional civil administration should prepare for future elections, referendum, texts of the Constitution, and drafts of the Laws. But the first thing that must be done is to stop the war. If neither Russia nor Chechnya can do that, then we shall have to

speaking about the introduction of forces of the UN or of some other international organizations.

I do not believe that Maskhadov will be able to give something new to his people besides what he and his fellowmen gave them during three years. Unfortunately, forces that came to power in 1996 were not able to function or create a normal, legal state. But not all the possibilities have been lost. I am sure that with the assistance of the international community this task can be accomplished.

Albert Avduev: If Russian forces are withdrawn from Chechnya, how long will the so-called civil administration be able to survive? I think that not a single minute, as it has no support from the people. I believe that first of all we should find out who is supported by the population.

Oazu Nantoi: There is only one way. You should find out what people want. They want the withdrawal of the army, no violence, to have access to truthful information, free discussions, and free elections and referendums. Now, in the situation that Chechnya has found itself, nobody can say anything for sure, except for the withdrawal of the army and the cessation of war.

Albert Avduev: I am basing my thoughts on previous experience. The same people remain in power. Can these people assess the attitude of the people towards them? Did we not have celebrations when the Russian army left? But these people did not stay long; they left even earlier than the Russian soldiers. They went to Moscow, and now they have come back, but only after the Russian forces. We should think of what kind of program they can have.

Yavus Akhmadov: In 1996, we Chechen activists proposed the withdrawal of Russian troops and the establishment of forces of the Chechen militia which would deal with the rebel fighters themselves. But somebody else made decisions for Chechnya, for its people. Russia selected a very dirty policy. This is not the fault of the people of Chechnya.

When we discuss the ways of stability achievement, we should think about the necessity of establishing the institutes ensuring this stability maintenance. We should create new state bodies in the most efficient and cheapest way. If we want to continue our efforts on the Chechen conflict settlement, we can call Maskhadov and Bassayev back. I do not adhere to the position that some part of the population is right and another is wrong. I think about the interest of the whole nation.

Roman Gashayev: I would like to answer the question, what should be organized elections or a referendum? I just want to remind all that in 1997 without any troops, without any violence, Chechnya voted for Maskhadov. These were free elections acknowledged by Russia and international organizations. No one voted for union with Russia then. Every candidate had a program of Chechnya's independence. This can be confirmed. The major part of

the population who took part in elections voted for independence of the Chechen Republic.

Yavus Akhmadov: I agree with you. A plan is needed to bring Maskhadov back. Let us think how we can do that, but we need a plan.

When we are talking about the Chechen militia, I mean not just a basic regional office, but armed formations able to participate in military activities. The Chechen militia was not simply brought out of Grozny on the eve of the rebels' intrusion; it was isolated from any contacts with population. I will tell you that there were no skirmishes between Russian troops and rebels at all. There were some administrative detachments for allegedly the liberation of the House of Government. By the way, not a single bullet hit the Building of the Federal Security Services.

Adlan Dianeyev: It was completely burnt.

Yavus Akhmadov: Now, but in 1996 not a single window was broken.

Roman Gashayev: On the 6th of August, Bassayev made an ultimatum to the Federal Security Services to leave the building. It was filmed.

Adlan Dianeyev: Why can Khadyrov represent the interests of Chechens now and Maskhadov cannot? Because he is in opposition to Russia and Khadyrov passed to the side of Russia. I want to understand something else. We were talking about the meaning of a nation; that a nation cannot live without its own values. I understand why somebody wants war in Chechnya now. Chechens managed to preserve their traditions and I believe that this had an impact on the war. I cannot see the future existence of Chechnya as a part of Russia. We will find ourselves in this situation when at the end of the 20th century Chechens will have no spiritual values and this is much more dangerous than the physical extermination of people.

I do not agree with the fact that there are two ruling forces, Russian forces and confronting structures, in Chechnya now. I do not think that Khadyrov has any power now. These confronting parties should sit down at the negotiation table. Yes, there was once an agreement on peace and cooperation, but we shall not succeed without the support of the international community.

Albert Avduev: It is not up to Khadyrov and Maskhadov who should search for the ways out of the conflict. We should come back to the recent past if we want to find a way out of the existing situation, at least to 1991, when Chechnya really started to exist. Let us look at the relations between Russia and Chechnya if we want to decide how we should proceed.

In 1992-94, before the first war, there were intensive negotiations with Russia. There was a possibility to sign an agreement. But Russia did not accept the

conditions that were put forward. At that point, representatives of the government of Chechnya insisted on common borders, common economy, and common armed forces that would remain in the territory of Chechnya. In the event of military activities, Chechens would have the right to make the decision as to whether they will fight on the side of the Russian Federation or not.

In 1994-96 the issue of negotiations was not raised. They could not be called negotiations. There was an attempt of forceful imposition of its own puppets, which had no power. Their only power was to sign documents. After the withdrawal of Russian troops, these people stayed in Chechnya for a while, participated in elections, and even managed to pass to the second round of elections; but they lost. Maskhadov was and remains to be the legitimate President. Many did not approve of this choice, but it became possible only because Chechens thought that Yeltsin would not want to negotiate with Dudayev. If Russia prefers Maskhadov, let it be Maskhadov for the sake of avoiding war. Maskhadov announced independence, full independence as his program.

During all this time we were searching for ways of statehood development. Both in Moscow and in Chechnya, people were kidnapped. But in Moscow it was done by law enforcement bodies, and in Chechnya by bandits, which were partially financed by Russian special services.

Having analyzed all this, it would be difficult to invent something new. But I believe that the international community has solutions for ensuring the security of a weaker nation that is not able to defend itself. I believe that the best thing would be the invitation of observers to the country. And then we can see what Chechens are inclined to.

Vladimir Gutsu: What is going on in Chechnya right now is connected with a low level of cultural life and a lack of harmonious and well grounded policy of Russia. I think that common solutions could be found for all the problems. Having sufficient intellectual resources, why did you not take specific steps or make respective adjustments to the national policy? I believe that the only way out for Chechnya is uniting with Russia.

Adlan Dinayev: Unfortunately I do not see possibilities for that now. We would be very glad to do this even in 1998. At the OSCE Conference in Istanbul, we proposed to carry out activity jointly with Russia. Unfortunately, it is impossible. We know what policy we are carrying out as citizens of our nation, and we do not call upon anyone to any radical activities. We are advocates of peaceful discussion and dialogues. We were called terrorists even when we attended a seminar on land mines prevention in Germany in June of 1999. Nobody can guarantee us that the same things will not occur again if we remain part of Russia. It is impossible without any guarantees; one party should provide these guarantees.

What is peculiar is there was an agreement, and they say that the Chechens violated it. I disagree with this. Others believe that it was Russia that violated this agreement. Obviously both sides are to blame. But we need a party that would be able to stabilize the situation.