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An Endless Conflict? An Update on Developments in the Russian-Chechen Conflict in 2011

Introduction

In the wake of the political demise and disintegration of the Soviet Union, which reached its climax in 1991, a highly decorated Soviet air force Major-General, Dzhokhar Dudaev, returned to his native Autonomous Republic of Checheno-Ingushetia.¹ During the previous year, the All-National Congress of the Chechen People had approved the Chechen Republic's Declaration of Independence and Dudaev had been elected Chairman of its Executive Committee. In August 1991, following the attempted putsch against Mikhail Gorbachev, the events known as the Chechen revolution broke out, in the course of which General Dudaev seized power in Chechnya. By October he was president of the self-declared Republic of Chechnya.

The president of first the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and then the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, initially ignored Chechen claims to independence, then tried to install Chechens who were believed to be loyal to Moscow. In November 1991, Yeltsin declared a state of emergency in Chechnya and sent in about 600 troops of the interior ministry's elite special units (*spetsnaz*) who were stationed there for one night and then sent back to Moscow.²

This was the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Chechnya.³ Twenty years and two wars later, the political and security situation in and around the small mountainous republic in Russia's North Caucasian Federal District has still not improved. Quite to the contrary, in 2011 it appeared to be as unstable as ever.⁴ In recent years, the Russian-Chechen conflict has spread over the whole territory of the North Caucasus. It is by far the most acute and violent ethno-political conflict in Europe today, claiming approximately two lives a day in 2010. Fareed Zakaria, who is not alone in holding this view,

1 See Yossef Bodansky, *Chechen Jihad. Al Qaeda's Training Ground and the next Wave of Terror*, New York 2007, p. 21.

2 See Emil Souleimanov, *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective*, Frankfurt am Main 2007, pp. 81-92. See also Sergei Maksudov, *Chechentsy i russkie: pobedy, porazheniya, poteri* [Chechens and Russians: Victories, defeats, losses], Moscow 2010, pp. 161-166.

3 See James Hughes, *Chechnya. From Nationalism to Jihad*, Philadelphia, PA, 2007, p. ix.

4 As one analyst, Liz Fuller, recently stated: "Over the past 15 years, Russia's North Caucasus has become a byword for war, destruction, human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, corruption, economic collapse, and Islamic terrorism." Liz Fuller, *Why is the North Caucasus An Unholy Mess?* Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 15 August 2011, at: http://www.rferl.org/content/north_caucasus_why_is_it_such_an_unholy_mess/24297384.html.

has called the conflict “the largest and most active new centre of Islamic terrorism in the world today”,⁵ others have referred to the North Caucasus as “Russia’s internal abroad”.⁶

This article tackles the question of how the conflict changed during 2011.

To answer this question, I will first take stock of the development of the conflict in 2011 via analysis of relevant conflict data. I will then proceed to evaluate the initiatives undertaken by the Russian government in 2011 to deal with the conflict (conflict management), discuss the results (success or failure) of these measures, and analyse why state policies have succeeded or failed. The last section will then give an overall assessment of the most important trends characterizing the conflict during 2011.

2011: A(nother) Bloody Year

On 5 February 2011, two weeks after the suicide attack on Moscow’s Domodedovo Airport, Doku Umarov, the self-proclaimed leader (emir) of the Caucasus Emirate,⁷ released a video message in which he vowed to make 2011 “a year of blood and tears”.⁸ In the video, Umarov stated that the Riyad-us Salikhyn suicide battalion of the Caucasus Emirate had fifty to sixty suicide assassins ready to be sent to Russia in the coming months. These attacks in Russia’s heartland were intended as a wake-up call for ordinary Russians, who, it was hoped, would urge their leaders to withdraw from the region.

Although the Domodedovo attack was the only major terrorist incident in Russia proper in 2011, the situation in the North Caucasian Federal District was very different. In the region itself, the conflict has lost none of its viciousness. The data suggests that in the first eight months of 2011 the level of violence did not change compared to 2010. In fact, the level of violence

5 Cited in: Murad Batal al-Shishani, Russian Policies in the North Caucasus fuels a new Generation of Insurgents, in: *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* 3/2011, pp. 3-5, here: p. 5, available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/54961a>.

6 Alexey Malashenko, *Losing the Caucasus*, Carnegie Moscow Center Briefing 3/2009, p. 1, at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Malashenko_Losing_the_Caucasus_BriefAug09_Eng.pdf. See also Maciej Falkowski/Mariusz Marszewski, The “Tribal Areas” of the Caucasus. The North Caucasus – an enclave of “alien civilisation” within the Russian Federation, in: *OSW Studies*, 34/2010, at: http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/PRACE_34.pdf.

7 The Caucasus Emirate is the main organization of the insurgents in the North Caucasus. It was established in autumn 2007 by its leader Doku Umarov. Umarov appointed himself “emir” of the Caucasus Emirate while resigning as president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. See Wojciech Górecki, “Creeping” civil war in the North Caucasus, in: *OSW Commentary* 50/2011, p. 2, at: http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_50.pdf.

8 Kavkaz Center, *Emir vows year of blood and tears for Russia*, 5 February 2011, at <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2011/02/05/13467.shtml>. See also Michael Ludwig, Nordkaukasische Islamisten drohen Moskau mit “Jahr des Blutes” [North Caucasus Islamists Threaten Moscow with “Year of Blood”], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 February 2011, p. 5.

remained very high throughout 2011 compared to other recent years.⁹ That said, there were some minor but crucial changes in conflict behaviour during 2011.

Terrorist Attacks, Violent Incidents and Victims in 2011 (January-August)

Compared to 2010, the situation in the first eight months of 2011 has grown worse. Data collected by the author shows that the number of terrorist attacks by August 2011 was already higher than for the whole of 2010 (see table 1).¹⁰ The website *Kavkazsky Uzel* (“Caucasian Knot”) reported a total of 238 attacks for 2010.¹¹ The total for 2011 will be significantly higher, with at least 283 terrorist attacks and terrorist-related violent incidents reported by the end of August. The same picture can be achieved by comparing the data for 2011 with the data compiled by the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) for 2010. The NCTC reported 187 terrorist attacks in the period from January to August in 2010.¹² The attack rate in 2011 compared to 2010 has therefore risen by as much as one third.¹³

The total number of victims tells a similar story. In the first eight months of 2011, 267 people were killed and 438 were wounded, giving a total of 705 victims. This is about the same number of victims as there were for the same time span in 2010, when a total of 650 persons were killed or wounded in the course of the conflict according to NCTC data.¹⁴

9 See Górecki, “*Creeping*” *civil war in the North Caucasus*, cited above (Note 7). See also Valery Dzutsev, *Conflict in Dagestan Approaches the Level of Civil War*, in: *North Caucasus Analysis* 4/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37518&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=514](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37518&tx_ttnews[backPid]=514).

10 The database compiled by the author for the purposes of this article is based on Russian open-source reports and information, which have been collected and aggregated by the Jamestown Foundation’s North Caucasus Analysis website. This covers events from January to July 2011. Data for August 2011 was collected from the Russian website “Voine Net” (<http://www.voinenet.ru>), which also uses Russian open-source information to track the development of the conflict. As the conflict has become asymmetric in recent years, with extensive use of terrorist tactics, the database primarily included terrorist attacks or terrorism-related acts of violence and excluded counter-terrorist operations carried out by Russia and the various national republics.

11 See, *Vooruzhennyi konflikt na Severnom Kavkaze: 1710 zhertv za 2010 god* [The armed conflict in the North Caucasus: 1,710 victims in 2010], *Kavkazsky Uzel*, 18 January 2011, at: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/179693>.

12 The NCTC Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS) database can be accessed and searched at: <http://www.nctc.gov/wits/witsnextgen.html>.

13 For details of the numbers from January to August 2011, see Sven Singhofen, *Terrorbekämpfung in Tschetschenien und im Nordkaukasus: Mission accomplished or failed? [Combating Terrorism in Chechnya and the North Caucasus: Mission Accomplished or Failed?]*, in: Institut für Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Kiel (ISPK) (ed.), *Jahrbuch Terrorismus 2010*, Opladen 2011, pp. 193-214.

14 See *ibid.*, p. 196.

Table 1: Terrorist Incidents and Victims in the North Caucasus and Moscow (January to August 2011)

Region	Attacks/ violent incidents	Victims			Victims	
		Dead	Wounded	Total	State agents	Civil- ians
Chechnya	23	35	87	122	119	3
Ingushetia	28	11	5	16	14	2
Dagestan	181	140	225	365	259	106
Kabardino- Balkaria	43	39	6	45	38	7
Karachay- Cherkessia	2	4	4	8	8	0
Adygeia	1	1	0	1	1	0
North Ossetia	2	1	1	2	1	1
Moscow	4	36	110	146	1	145
Total	283	267	438	705	441	264
<i>Sources:</i> Jamestown Foundation, <i>North Caucasus Analysis</i> 1/2011 to 16/2011, at: http://www.jamestown.org and Voine Net, <i>Ezhenedelnye khroniki</i> , 11-17 August 2011 to 25-31 August 2011, at: http://www.voinenet.ru .						

A Low-Intensity (Small-Scale) Conflict

In 2004, there were twelve terrorist attacks in which more than five people died. The attack in Beslan, North Ossetia, alone killed more than 300. Since then, the focus of the terrorist attacks has changed, and fatality rates have been far lower in subsequent years.

This trend was not reversed in 2011, with most attacks having a very low impact in terms of the number of casualties. Very few attacks caused more than five casualties, the suicide attack at Moscow's Domodedovo International Airport in January 2011 being the most prominent. Most attacks car-

ried out in 2011 targeted single individuals, police checkpoints, and transport infrastructure (e.g. railway lines). The main function of these small-scale attacks was to spread fear and show that the terrorists were still operational.

Such small-scale and low fatality attacks may not achieve the same level of public attention, especially outside the region and abroad, but they still have a profound effect, as can be seen, for example, in Dagestan, the centre of insurgent activity during 2011. Here, in the first eight months of the year, a total of 181 small-scale attacks occurred – close to one a day. It is therefore no surprise when analysts describe this as a region on the brink of civil war.¹⁵

Changing Regional Distribution of Terrorist Attacks

The spread of terrorism in 2010 had two different geographical vectors: one towards Dagestan and another towards Kabardino-Balkaria and Stavropol Krai. The last is particularly worrying because of its geographic proximity to Sochi, the venue of the 2014 Winter Olympics.¹⁶

The same geographic vectors are evident when comparing the results of 2010 and 2011 (see table 1). Dagestan is the epicentre of terrorism in the North Caucasus. In 2010, according to *Kavkazsky Uzel*, 260 terrorist attacks, explosions, and clashes took place in Dagestan compared to 143 in Ingushetia, the second hardest hit republic in the region, and 99 in Chechnya. Kabardino-Balkaria followed with 90 terrorist attacks and clashes.

In 2011, Dagestan witnessed by far the most attacks of all of the republics in the North Caucasian Federal District, with the occurrence of 181 attacks and violent incidents there. In contrast to 2010, the second-hardest-hit republic was not Ingushetia, but Kabardino-Balkaria with 43 attacks. Another 28 attacks took place in Ingushetia, while Chechnya lagged behind with “only” 23 attacks.

In other words, while the security situation has further improved in Chechnya and Ingushetia, it has (drastically) deteriorated in Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria. Of the 283 terrorist attacks in the first eight months of 2011, more than 50 per cent took place in Dagestan, while less than ten per cent occurred in Chechnya. The conflict, which had its origin in Chechnya, has spread through the region, and by 2011 four republics – Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria – were significantly affected by it. The three remaining republics in the North Caucasus – Karachay-Cherkessia, Adygeia, and North Ossetia – have not been substantially affected thus far. The Russian heartland, as in previous years, has been affected

15 See, for example, Thomas de Waal, North Caucasus of the Bizarre, in: *The National Interest*, 1 November 2010, at: <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/caucasus-bizarre-4334>. See also Górecki, “Creeping” civil war in the North Caucasus, cited above (Note 7).

16 See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *North Caucasus: Results of 2010*, at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/15/north-caucasus-results-of-2010/41rj>.

by one high-profile attack in Moscow, the Domodedovo suicide attack in January 2011.

Between Terrorism, Guerrilla Warfare, and Civil War

In 2011, the tactics of the militant underground remained largely unchanged, with the majority of incidents being armed attacks and bombings. According to the NCTC, there were 158 terrorist attacks in the first half of the year, of which 88 were armed attacks whose perpetrators used firearms or even rocket propelled grenades. Another 68 attacks were bombings and only three were suicide attacks. However, the data supplied by *Kavkazsky Uzel* in August paints a different picture, claiming that in the first eight months of 2011 a total of twelve suicide attacks occurred on the territory of the North Caucasian Federal District and in Moscow.¹⁷ This difference is probably due to the fact that the NCTC's WITS database was last updated in early October 2011 and thus recorded only the attacks that had taken place in the first two quarters of the year. One may therefore assume that the *Kavkazsky Uzel* data is the most precise and up to date on this issue.

In 2010, the picture was much the same, with more than 50 per cent or 231 of 396 terrorist attacks taking the form of armed assaults, followed by 167 bombings and 13 suicide attacks.¹⁸ Seven attacks in 2010 were arson or firebombing attacks.

The main tactics used in the terrorist attacks were thus armed assaults by a small or very small number of attackers and bombings. Second, the proportion of suicide attacks, at least in the first eight months of 2011, has not risen above the level of the previous year. Third, alongside classical terrorist tactics, the insurgents are also increasingly resorting to the methods of guerrilla warfare. Evidence of this is the number of incidents of gunfights, attacks on security forces and Russian combatants, and even outright battles between larger groups of *jihadi* insurgents and Russian troops.

In terms of victim type, the militant underground still primarily targets state officials of various kinds, including police officers, other law enforcement agents, members of the security forces, head teachers, local heads of administration and also, depending on the republic, local Muslim clergy (imams). It seems plausible that the overall objective is to strike at the governmental "nervous system" in the North Caucasus and to further weaken and discredit local governing capabilities. Civilians are mostly affected by accident, with the exception of a few high-profile attacks that aim at causing ci-

17 See 63 cheloveka pogibli v Moskve i na Severnom Kavkaze v 2011 godu v rezultate samopodryvov smertnikov [63 people lost their lives in 2011 in Moscow and the North Caucasus as a result of suicide bombers], *Kavkazsky Uzel*, 31 August 2011, at: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/191734>.

18 For details, see the NCTC's Worldwide Incidents Tracking System database, mentioned above (Note 12).

vilian casualties and sending a symbolic message, such as the suicide attack in Grozny on 31 August 2011.¹⁹

An exception is Dagestan, where a host of attacks have targeted civilians whose values and lifestyles differ from those of the Salafi and Wahhabi Muslims of the *jihadi* insurgency. Several shop owners and landlords have thus been attacked or even shot for no other reason than selling alcoholic beverages, or running a café, bar, or sauna. Folk-healers and fortune-tellers have also been attacked in a number of incidents. This explains the higher number of civilian victims in this republic (see table 1) and also shows why it is apt to speak of Dagestan as being on the brink of civil war.²⁰

Continuity is also evident in the type of facilities targeted. In 2011 as in 2010, terrorist attacks were predominantly directed at vehicles, public places, retail facilities, residences, and police stations.²¹ Trains and other forms of transport infrastructure were also targeted, as they had been in 2010. One-off attacks were also directed at energy infrastructure (hydroelectric power plants, gas pipelines). In an effort to counter Moscow's latest plans for development of the region, insurgents also struck at a cable-car support tower in a ski resort in the North Caucasus.²²

A new and particularly worrying trend in 2011 was the increasingly successful recruitment of "new blood" of Slavic origin for the North Caucasus insurgency. Whereas the perpetrators had until recently (almost) exclusively stemmed from the North Caucasus, this year there were signs that the *jihadi* insurgency had not only been successful in recruiting Russian supporters to its cause, but that the latter were even prepared to participate actively in terrorist acts.²³ The cases of Viktor Dvorakovsky, who was arrested in

19 See BBC News Europe, *Triple suicide bombing kills police in Chechnya on Eid*, at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14726122>.

20 See Valery Dzutsev, Dagestan Dubbed the Most Dangerous Place in the North Caucasus, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 5 October 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38492](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38492).

21 For details, see the NCTC's Worldwide Incidents Tracking System database, mentioned above (Note 12).

22 This belongs to what Gordon Hahn has recently called the Caucasus Emirate's (CE) "Sochi Vector". The CE clearly has the 2014 Winter Olympics on its mind, and hopes that attacks of this kind will create fear that other winter ski resorts will be targeted in the future, including Sochi. The mere threat of attacks on the games risks reducing investment. See Gordon Hahn, *The CE OVKBK's Sochi Vector*, Monterey Institute for International Studies, Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program, Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report, No. 36, 11 March 2011, pp. 2-4, available to download at: <http://www.russiaotherpointsofview.com/2011/03/islam-islamism-and-politics-in-eurasia-report-no36-march-2011.html>.

23 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Is the North Caucasus Rebel Movement Spreading Beyond the North Caucasus? In: *North Caucasus Analysis* 16/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38279&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=c449cca4a842d5677ad3102a64d3e506](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38279&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=c449cca4a842d5677ad3102a64d3e506). See also Mairbek Vatchagaev, Arrests in Astrakhan Point to the Spread of Islamic Insurgency in Russia, in: *Eurasian Daily Monitor*, 26 May 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37974](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37974); Gordon Hahn, Alleged Russian Jihadi Suicide Bomber Viktor Dvorakovskiy Captured, in: Monterey Terrorism Research and Education Program, *Islam, Islamism and Politics in*

Stavropol Krai in the summer, and Vitaly Razdobudko, who was killed in the Dagestani village of Gubden, are the latest examples. On top of this a “*jamaat*”²⁴ group, formed along the same principles as those already operating in the North Caucasus and following the same objectives, was uncovered in 2011 in the Russian region of Astrakhan in the Volga basin. If this trend were to continue, it would worry the Russian security forces, as it would further enhance the insurgents’ ability to move about freely and unhindered in regions outside of the North Caucasus. Also, it would mean that the North Caucasus insurgency has started to spread to other parts of Russia and that so-called *jamaats* have begun to form and operate independently of the Caucasus Emirate on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Sticks Rather than Carrots

Alongside standard constitutional measures such as territorial autonomy and power-sharing to deal with the demands of a multiethnic society,²⁵ the basic approach to conflict management that has been employed in the case of Chechnya and the neighbouring North Caucasus republics in recent years can be described as the classic carrot-and-stick combination of negative and positive incentives.²⁶ These consist of (a) military force or other repressive means, i.e. outright war or, after the end of the second Chechen war in 2001, anti-terrorist operations, (b) the delegation of responsibilities in the fight against terrorism and insurgents to local authorities (known as *Chechenization* or *normalization*), in other words, reliance on patron-client networks and an informal power-sharing agreement typical of an authoritarian environment, (c) a modern approach to the economic development of the North Caucasus that seeks to address the deeper socio-economic problems and roots of

Eurasia Report, No. 43, 21 July 2011, p. 4, available to download at: <http://www.miiis.edu/academics/faculty/ghahn/report>.

- 24 The term “*jamaat*” (from Arabic *jamaat* – meaning “community, group or collective”) is widely used to denote an association of Muslims forming a functional entity. In Dagestan, according to Enver Kisriev, the term has traditionally been used to mean “the inhabitants of a settlement, the constituency of a Mosque, any concrete assembly of Muslims mandated to execute a common task or to decide on an issue”. When militarized underground Islamic groups were formed in the Western Caucasus between 1999 and 2002, the term was also used for these groups. See Enver F. Kisriev, *Islamic Movements in the Northern Caucasus and Their Relations with the Authorities*, in: Hans-Georg Heinrich/Ludmilla Lobova/Alexey Malashenko (eds), *Will Russia Become a Muslim Society?* Frankfurt am Main 2011, pp. 39-83, here: pp. 40-41, 76-77.
- 25 In August 1996, the Khasavyurt Accord was signed, bringing an end to the First Chechen War. The Russian-Chechen Peace Treaty was signed in Moscow on 12 May 1997, establishing the framework for relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic. Chechnya had previously refused to participate in the drafting of the new constitution of the Russian Federation or to acknowledge its validity. But since the signing of the peace treaty, Chechnya has been considered de jure a constituent subject of the Russian Federation with full rights granted by the constitution adopted in December 1993.
- 26 See, for example, Malashenko, cited above (Note 6); Górecki, “*Creeping*” *civil war in the North Caucasus*, cited above (Note 7), pp. 4-6.

the conflict, (d) administrative-bureaucratic reform, such as the establishment of a separate North Caucasian Federal District, and (e) plans for a resettlement policy and population transfer.²⁷

Negotiations with segments of the Chechen separatist forces that have a constructive attitude and a potential (at least temporary) willingness to compromise, as represented by the former president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Aslan Maskhadov, and the current prime minister, Akhmed Zakayev, played a negligible role. Responsibility for this cannot be attributed exclusively to the Russian government, as internal strife and growing radicalization on the Chechen side since the conflict flared up again under Dudaev have also played a major role.²⁸

The problem with this approach so far is the unbalanced nature of the whole arrangement, which has led to highly inconsistent and therefore dysfunctional conflict management.²⁹ The argument is that the use of force – and very often this means excessive force by federal as well as republican security organs – is given too much weight in the overall architecture of conflict management, thus undermining efforts to build legitimacy and trust with the local populations. The indiscriminate use of force against insurgents and uninvolved bystanders will not end the conflict. In combination with widespread corruption and bad governance in the North Caucasus, it rather has the opposite effect, losing the hearts and minds of local populations, and very often driving segments of the younger generation to join the ranks of the insurgents.³⁰

27 This combination of negative and positive incentives almost exactly corresponds to the four-track approach used in other conflicts and counter-insurgency campaigns around the world as described by John Russell. According to Russell, The four strategies are: (1) eradication of terrorism, (2) terror against terror, (3) containment of the terrorists/insurgents, and (4) addressing the root causes. See John Russell, *Chechnya – Russia's "War on Terror"*, London 2007, pp. 102-106.

28 See, for example, James Hughes, *The Peace Process in Chechnya*, in Richard Sakwa (ed.), *Chechnya: From Past to Future*, London 2005, pp. 265-287, here: p. 282; Russell, *Chechnya – Russia's "War on Terror"*, cited above (Note 27), chapter 8: The paths not taken: The Russian failure to reach a political solution in Chechnya, pp. 131-148.

29 Wojciech Górecki, for example, argues that no Russian government since that of Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999) has come up with a coherent strategy for managing the conflict and developing the North Caucasus. Instead, the Kremlin has either neglected and abandoned the North Caucasus or merely reacted to unfolding events. In the latter case, a "force model" for managing the conflict and the region was applied under Yeltsin and Putin. A turning point was President Vladimir Putin's decision to give greater autonomy to Chechnya's government under the so-called "normalization" process and to foster the economic development of the region, as was President Dmitry Medvedev's decision in 2010 to separate the North Caucasian Federal District from the Southern Federal District. See Górecki, *"Creeping" civil war in the North Caucasus*, cited above (Note 7), pp. 4-6.

30 See, for example, James Hughes, *War makes jihad*, in: Antonio Giustozzi (ed.), *The Borders of Islam. Exploring Huntington's Faultlines, from Al-Andalus to Virtual Ummah*, New Delhi 2009, pp. 173-189; Murad Batal al-Shishani, cited above (Note 5), p. 5.

Use of Force and Anti-Terrorist Operations (Eradication)

As in previous years,³¹ Russian security forces scored quite a number of successes in fighting terrorism during 2011. Although the ten-year anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya was officially declared over in April 2009, it was soon revived, as the security situation clearly deteriorated again. In 2011, there were numerous limited and broad-scale anti-terrorist operations in which regional governments called in federal troops of the interior ministry or special forces. In other instances, troops of the Russian interior ministry and the Federal Security Service (FSB) operated on their own and on orders from Moscow.³²

Several prominent figures within the resistance movement in the North Caucasus were killed in these operations, either when they were stopped at roadside checkpoints and asked to show their identification documents or in the course of other operations. On 4 March 2011, Russia's security services managed to kill Khamzat Korigov, one of the leaders of Ingushetia's insurgency, in Nazran, Ingushetia.³³ On 22 March 2011, in an operation targeting a rebel base near the village of Verkhniy Alkun in Ingushetia, Russian air and ground forces killed 17 insurgents and one of the closest associates of the leader of the insurgency in the North Caucasus. At first it was believed that the Emir of the Caucasus Emirate himself, Doku Umarov, had been killed in the operation. Later on, official sources as well as the *jihadi* website *Kavkaz Center* ("Caucasian Center") confirmed that, as well as several fighters, it was Emir Supyan (aka Supyan Abdullaev) and not Umarov, who had been killed.

Abdullaev's death was a serious blow to the entire rebel movement in the North Caucasus, since he belonged to Doku Umarov's inner circle and was his designated successor. He was also said to have been behind the cre-

31 According to Mairbek Vatchagaev, in 2010 the North Caucasus resistance movement suffered a number of major losses among high-ranking figures. Among those eliminated by the Russian security forces in several special operations were Said Buryatsky (aka Aleksandr Tikhomirov) the chief ideologue of the Caucasus Emirate; Emir Saifullah (aka Anzor Astemirov) the leader of the Kabardino-Balkaria *Jamaat* and Emir Seifullah of Gubden (aka Magomedali Vagabov) the leader of the Dagestani *Jamaat*. Another prominent rebel leader, Emir Magas (aka Akhmed Yevloev-Taziev) the chief of the Ingush *Jamaat* was captured. In the whole of 2010, Russian security forces claimed to have killed more than 300 rebel fighters. See Mairbek Vatchagaev, *Moscow's Position in the North Caucasus Worsened Dramatically in 2010*, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 6 January 2011, at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37323](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37323).

32 See, for example, Mairbek Vatchagaev, *Endless Special Forces Operations Continue in the North Caucasus*, *North Caucasus Analysis* 12/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38058](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38058). See also Valery Dzutsev, *Moscow Reverts to Crude Force to Control the Situation in Kabardino-Balkaria*, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 20 July 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38198](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38198).

33 See Valery Dzutsev, *Russian Security Services Launch Wave of Arrests in Ingushetia After Moscow Airport Bombing*, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 March 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37616&cHash=97e51eefaf5c4835f644b8dadd85bb67](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37616&cHash=97e51eefaf5c4835f644b8dadd85bb67).

ation of the Caucasus Emirate and to have been “responsible for extending the frontiers of the Emirate to all of the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus”.³⁴ His importance and his role within the system of the Caucasus Emirate resulted from his effort to put into practice the very idea of forming an Islamic state in the North Caucasus.

Other high-ranking rebel casualties included (1) Emir Hassan (aka Israpil Velijanov), the head of Dagestan’s *Sharia Jamaat*, who was killed in the middle of April;³⁵ (2) Emir Mukhannad (aka Emir Khaled Youssef Mohammed Al Emirate) a well-known Arab *jihadi* fighter, who according to Russian intelligence services was an Al-Qaeda emissary securing the financing of the terrorist underground in the North Caucasus and who was killed on 21 April;³⁶ (3) Emir Abdullah (aka Asker Jappuev); (4) Abdul Jabbar (aka Kazbek Tashuev); (5) Abdul Gafur (aka Aslanbek Khamurzov); and (6) Emir Zakariya (aka Ratmir Shameev), who along with four or six other members of the Kabardino-Balkaria *Jamaat* was killed in a special operation on 29 April;³⁷ (7) Emir Daud (aka Abdullah Magomedaliev) the leader of the Makhachkala sector in Dagestan’s *Sharia Jamaat*;³⁸ and (8) three Chechens – Emir Khamzat (aka Berg-Khazh Musaev), Rustam Altemirov, and Zaurbek Amriev – who allegedly belonged to Doku Umarov’s inner circle. The three men were killed after they left a mosque in Istanbul after Friday prayers on 16 September.³⁹

A positive side effect of the special operations carried out in 2011 was the detection of numerous arms caches. For instance, in one such operation on 23 March, Russian military, police, and FSB agents blockaded the village

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- 34 Mairbek Vatchagaev, Death of Umarov’s Successor Is a Major Setback to Rebel Movement, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 7 April 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/nca/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37760&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=189&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/nca/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37760&tx_ttnews[backPid]=189&no_cache=1).
- 35 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Emir of Dagestan’s Sharia Jamaat Reportedly Killed in Russian Special Operation, *North Caucasus Analysis* 8/2011, 21 April 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37823](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37823).
- 36 See Russia Says it Killed “al-Qaeda” Emissary in North Caucasus, *North Caucasus Analysis* 8/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37831](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37831). See also Mairbek Vatchagaev, Latest Russian Claims of Victory in North Caucasus Ring Hollow, *North Caucasus Analysis* 9/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37861](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37861).
- 37 Emir Abdullah was the leader of the Kabardino-Balkarian *Jamaat*, while Abdul Jabbar was the emir of the northeastern sector and Abdul Gafur figured as Emir Abdullah’s deputy (naib), which means that the death of these men in effect decapitated the *Jamaat*. See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Moscow Kills Rebel Leaders in Kabardino-Balkaria, but was it a Mortal Blow? *North Caucasus Analysis* 9/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37891](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37891). See also Balkar, Kabardian Insurgent Leaders Reported Killed, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 29 April 2011, at: http://www.rferl.org/content/balkar_kabardian_insurgent_leaders_reported_killed/16797920.html.
- 38 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, The North Caucasus’ Troubled August, *North Caucasus Analysis* 17/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38341](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38341).
- 39 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Killings in Istanbul Just the Latest in Series of Murders of Chechens Abroad, *North Caucasus Analysis* 18/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/regions/turkey/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38435&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=390&cHash=37b1cd404d6f4ae729ad35d4e88066f4](http://www.jamestown.org/regions/turkey/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38435&tx_ttnews[backPid]=390&cHash=37b1cd404d6f4ae729ad35d4e88066f4).

of Gubden (Dagestan) and searched the homes of local residents. In the operation “33 guns, including seven pistols, more than 300 rounds of ammunition, seven tanker’s helmets with night vision equipment and two machine-gun belts were seized”.⁴⁰ Arms caches and rebel dugouts were also discovered and destroyed in Ingushetia, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachay-Cherkessia.

All in all, Russian security forces appear to have achieved quite a number of successes in 2011. According to official Russian sources, in the first five months of the year, 193 terrorist were neutralized, while law enforcement and federal military forces experienced 253 casualties (74 military personnel killed and 179 wounded). The killing of Doku Umarov’s deputy and successor, Supyan Abdullaev, one of the most senior figures in the Caucasus Emirate, also clearly ranks as a major success in the fight against terrorism.

But the clearest sign that the success of the policy of eradication has been rather limited is the swiftness with which prominent figures in the insurgency killed by the Russian side have been replaced.⁴¹ There is clearly a large reservoir of young supporters of the Islamist insurgency who continue to swell the ranks of the Caucasus Emirate and the local *jamaats*. Regardless of how many leading rebels are killed, the various groups can regain momentum quite quickly. Moreover, the insurgency network as a whole is not affected by strikes on the leaders of its subunits. This is especially true for Kabardino-Balkaria, where the entire leadership of the *jamaat* was killed in late April 2011. By June of the same year, the Russian Minister for Internal Affairs, Rashid Nurgaliev, had to concede that the insurgency had retained the ability to launch effective attacks despite the death of their leaders.⁴² Nurgaliev even admitted that Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan were the regions with the highest terrorist activity in 2011.

Chechenization (Terror Against Terrorism)

By 2002, the Kremlin had realized that the strategy of force, which had been employed since the start of the Second Chechen War in 1999 in an attempt to subdue the insurgency in Chechnya, was not succeeding.⁴³ For one thing, continuing to employ the force model would have required the constant presence of Russian armed forces, yet federal troops had so far proved unable to pacify Chechnya. Apart from this, the approach had a high political cost, as reports of human rights violations generated criticism in Russia and, more importantly, abroad. Furthermore, there was a massive outflow of the ethnic

40 Igor Rotar, Harsh Measures only Strengthen the Insurgency in Dagestan, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 31 March 2011, at [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?cHash=42abb036815e2cfd367dfa82903fecf&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37729](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?cHash=42abb036815e2cfd367dfa82903fecf&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37729).

41 See, for example, Murad Batal Al-Shishani, cited above (Note 5), p. 5.

42 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Endless Special Forces Operations Continue in the North Caucasus, in: *North Caucasus Analysis* 12/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38058](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38058).

43 See John Russell, *Chechnya – Russia’s “War on Terror”*, cited above (Note 27), p. 87.

Russian population from Chechnya, leading to a mental and cultural separation of the republic from the Russian Federation.⁴⁴

It was at this point that the Kremlin switched, or – as some observers say⁴⁵ – returned, to a more flexible approach, which made use of indigenous North Caucasian elites loyal to Moscow. This approach has been called the *Chechenization* strategy.⁴⁶ It devolves responsibility for the conduct of all counter-insurgency measures to those Chechens who accept Chechnya's status as a member of the Russian Federation. In return, they receive Moscow's support as well as personal political and economic benefits.⁴⁷ Alexey Malashenko has strikingly summed up the implicit deal that underlies this approach: "You give us your loyalty and obedience, and we will not meddle in the way you run your internal affairs."⁴⁸ The strategy was first applied in Chechnya, where power was handed to Akhmed Kadyrov in 2000, who remained in charge until 2004. His son Ramzan has held the office of president since 2007. Thanks to the changes made to the federal system in 2000 and 2004,⁴⁹ and especially to the institutional mechanism regulating the appointment of heads of executive bodies in all of the federal subsystems, Moscow had the necessary instruments to transfer this approach to all the other subjects of the Russian Federation, including the ethnic republics in the North Caucasus. The first local leader to be removed from power was Ruslan Aushev in Ingushetia, who was replaced by Murat Zyazikov in 2001/2002. The leaders of Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia were all replaced in 2005-2006 by appointees of then president, Vladimir Putin.

In 2011, there were only a few instances in which the centre stepped in to actually influence the internal balance of power and to decide who was to rule in any of the North Caucasian republics. On 28 February, President Medvedev appointed two heads of government – in Karachay-Cherkessia and Chechnya.⁵⁰ In the latter case, Ramzan Kadyrov was reappointed to rule in

44 See, for example, Górecki, "Creeping" civil war in the North Caucasus, cited above, (Note 7), p. 6; Maciej Falkowski, *Chechnya: Between a Caucasian Jihad and "hidden" separatism*, Warsaw 2007, at: http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/PUNKT_WIDZENIA_13.pdf, p. 49.

45 See Hughes, *The Peace Process in Chechnya*, cited above (Note 28), p. 283.

46 "Chechenization", according to Maciej Falkowski, "is a journalistic term in use since 2002. The authorities have never mentioned it officially, instead referring to the 'peace process', 'normalisation', etc. The term was disseminated by Alexey Makarkin, a journalist writing on the situation in Chechnya for www.politcom.ru. Later, other journalists started to use the term as well." Falkowski, *Chechnya: Between a Caucasian Jihad and "hidden" separatism*, cited above (Note 44), p. 49.

47 See Russell, *Chechnya – Russia's "War on Terror"*, cited above (Note 27), pp. 82-88. See also Hughes, *The Peace Process in Chechnya*, cited above (Note 28), pp. 283-284.

48 Malashenko, cited above (Note 6), p. 3.

49 For a description and analysis of these changes see, for example, Vladimir Gel'man/Sergey Ryzhenkov, *Local Regimes, Sub-national Governance and the "Power Vertical" in Contemporary Russia*, in: *Europe-Asia Studies* 3/2011, pp. 449-465, here: pp. 451-457.

50 See Valery Dzutsev, *Replacement of Karachaevo-Cherkessia's President Highlights Kremlin Crisis in Appointment System*, in: *North Caucasus Analysis* 5/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37585](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37585); Radio Free Eur-

Chechnya, as his first term in his function as head of the republic had nearly expired. In the first case, Moscow decided to support a new face, Rashid Temrezov. The former president of Karachay-Cherkessia, Boris Ebzeev, who himself had been installed by Moscow, was unable to deliver the results Moscow wished to see. He was unable to control the republic, and the Russian leadership was reported to have been unhappy with levels of socio-economic development. Ebzeev was dismissed from his post as president of Karachay-Cherkessia “on his own request”.

The third case in 2011 in which the centre nominated and in effect appointed a head of a North Caucasus republic, was that of Aslan Tkhakushinov in Adygeia on the north-western fringe of the North Caucasus.⁵¹ Tkhakushinov is a former rector of Maikop State Technological University and had already served one term as the head of the Republic of Adygeia from 2006 until 2011. Under his rule, the republic seems to have experienced something like a modest economic recovery compared to other republics in the region, with federal subsidies decreasing from 61 percent to 49 per cent of the republic’s budget in recent years, the official unemployment rate falling from 4.4 to 1.9 per cent, and the receipt of 1.625 billion USD (51 billion Russian roubles) in inward investment.

On 1 April, Arsen Kanokov, the head of Kabardino-Balkaria, and Alexander Khloponin, the presidential envoy to the North Caucasian Federal District, jointly dismissed the republic’s government, which was held responsible for the unstable security situation in the republic over the previous several months.⁵² Kanokov himself remained untouched in the ensuing reshuffle.

Later that year, in June, President Medvedev appointed Major General Alexander Trofimov as Ingushetia’s interior minister.⁵³ Trofimov replaced Major General Viktor Pogolov, who took on a similar position in Kirov Oblast. The move was seen as a promotion for Trofimov and “an honorary resignation to a central Russian backwater” for Pogolov.

With loyal elites in place in the troubled republics of the North Caucasus, responsibility for countering the local insurgencies was largely transferred to them. One instrument they applied was the use of counter-terrorist operations, of which a large number were conducted in 2011. But local authorities also resumed the widespread use of unlawful practices in their counter-insurgency efforts, including abductions, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings (executions), special operations involving cruel and de-

ope/Radio Liberty, *Karachayev-Cherkessia President Steps Down*, 26 February 2011, at: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/2321813.html>.

51 See Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Adygeya Republic Head Nominated For Second Term*, 9 December 2011, at: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/24416956.html>.

52 See Valery Dzutsev, Kabardino-Balkaria’s government blamed for allowing region’s destabilization, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 4 April, 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37746](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37746).

53 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, Medvedev Appoints a New Interior Minister for Ingushetia, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 24 June 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38093](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38093).

grading treatment, torture, a policy of collective punishment (house burnings) as, for example, practised in Chechnya, and the persecution of Salafi Muslims, suspected by the authorities, especially in Dagestan, of ties to the insurgency.⁵⁴ As local authorities and judges turned a blind eye to the complaints of the affected local population, these unlawful practices were covered up by a de facto system of impunity. As a result, by 2011 there were more than 2,000 unsolved recent disappearances in the North Caucasian Federal District.⁵⁵

The Chechenization approach is often seen in the context of Russia's historical tradition of dealing with centre-periphery conflicts, and a number of authors argue that there are parallels to an imperial patron-client system of governance running back to Tsarist or Soviet policies.⁵⁶ Whatever the historical background, this approach has produced extremely mixed results.

On the one hand, the policies employed by the new personnel installed by the Kremlin have helped to stabilize Chechnya. An approach like this appears to have far more legitimacy than a centralized "dirigiste" solution. In the case of Ingushetia, it has also placed effective elites in positions of power, such as Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, Ingushetia's new head of government, who goes about his task much more responsibly and constructively than his direct predecessor. Above all, Moscow seems to have achieved its most central strategic goal of securing the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, as the elites brought into office by the Kremlin accept the membership of Chechnya and the other North Caucasian republics in the Russian Federation.

On the other hand, there are a number of serious drawbacks to the approach, which ultimately outweigh the short-term successes and call into

54 For reliable, open source, and up-to-date information on the practices and unlawful counter-insurgency measures of local regimes and Russian authorities in 2011, see the online document archive of the Russian civil rights NGO Memorial, in particular: "Chronicles of Violence", at <http://www.memo.ru/eng/news/index.htm>. For more recent years the same unlawful practices have been documented and published in various papers by Memorial and other organizations. See Memorial, *The System of Impunity in the North Caucasus (2009-2010) – How Does it Function? Abductions and disappearances of people in the North Caucasus in 2009 – Sabotage of investigation of criminal cases in 2009-2010*, 2010, available at: <http://www.memo.ru/d/2120.html>. See also Human Rights Watch, "As If They Fell From the Sky". *Counterinsurgency, Rights Violations, and Rampant Impunity in Ingushetia*, New York 2008, at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/russia0608/russia0608webwcover.pdf>; Human Rights Watch, "What Your Children Do Will Touch Upon You". *Punitive House-Burning in Chechnya*, 2 July 2009, available at: <http://www.hrw.org/node/84194>; US Department of State, *Human Rights Country Report Russia 2010*, at: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eur/154447.htm>.

55 See The Jamestown Foundation, More than 2,000 Disappearances in North Caucasus Remain Unsolved, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 3 June 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38012](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38012).

56 See, for example, Andrew C. Kuchins/Matthew Malarkey/Sergey Markedonov, *The North Caucasus. Russia's Volatile Frontier*, Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), Russia and Eurasia Program, Report, March 2011, p. 18, at: http://csis.org/files/publication/110321_Kuchins_NorthCaucasus_WEB.pdf. See also Hughes, *The Peace Process in Chechnya*, cited above (Note 28), pp. 283-284.

doubt the whole strategy.⁵⁷ For example, the loyalty of local elites is bought at the price of establishing and nurturing authoritarian, and, in cases such as Chechnya, quasi-absolutist regimes. The abuse of human rights and the use of terror tactics against insurgents – and all too often uninvolved bystanders – are problems that cannot be ignored, even if Moscow can now blame Ramzan Kadyrov and his ilk for them. Even more importantly, while the brutality of counter-terrorist measures may have yielded some successes, the insurgency has not been defeated. Above all, the present system of governance is far from sustainable and legitimate, as it rests on the power-sharing agreement described above. The result is the rule of ethnic clans, which monopolize state resources and embezzle funds provided from the central budget, as well as widespread corruption, nepotism, and the misuse of power by the Kremlin-backed elites. This ultimately exacerbates the problem it is designed to solve.⁵⁸

Socio-Economic Development (Addressing the Root Causes)

Traditionally, the North Caucasus has lagged behind in terms of economic development compared to the Russian heartland. This remains unchanged today, and is seen as one of the determining root causes of the ongoing conflicts in the region.⁵⁹ The North Caucasus is indeed the poorest region in Russia, suffering from structural unemployment, underfunding, overpopulation, and a shortage of arable land. According to the Russian State Bureau for Statistics (*Rosstat*), the unemployment rate in May 2009 reached 33.9 per cent in Chechnya and 50.3 per cent in Ingushetia, while the average unemployment rate in Russia as a whole was ten per cent.⁶⁰ The unemployment rates in

57 Most of the analysts on the subject would subscribe to this evaluation. See, for example, Nikolay Petrov, A Recipe for Success in the North Caucasus, in: *The Moscow Times*, 1 March 2011, at: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/01/recipe-for-success-in-north-caucasus/8mf>.

58 The problem with Chechnya is that its Moscow-backed ruler, Ramzan Kadyrov, is now in a position from which it seems to be difficult for Moscow to remove him. He is the undisputed leader of Chechnya, and commands far greater material and military resources than any Chechen leader since the days of Dudaev. Given Kadyrov's unlimited mandate for self-rule in his own fiefdom, some observers see the state of affairs as bordering on de facto or quasi-independence. See for example John Russell, Kadyrov's Chechnya – Template, Test or Trouble for Russia's Regional Policy? In: *Europe-Asia Studies* 3/2011, pp. 509-528. See also Richard Sakwa, The revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia", in: *Nationalities Papers* 5/2010, pp. 601-622.

59 For instance, in a session of the Government Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the North Caucasian Federal District on 3 August 2011, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin pointed out the importance of employment prospects, especially for the young generation, as a means of stabilizing the situation. See Government of the Russian Federation, *Prime Minister Vladimir Putin holds a meeting of the Government Commission on the Socio-Economic Development of the North Caucasus Federal District*, 3 August 2011, at: <http://government.ru/eng/docs/16110>.

60 See Wojciech Górecki, Managers instead of governor-generals? Moscow's new tactics in the North Caucasus, *OSW Commentary* 36/2010, footnote 1, at: <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2010-03-03/managers-instead-governor-generals-moscow-s-new-tactics-north-c>.

Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Kabardino-Balkaria were not as high as in the other two republics but, at least in 2003-2004, still lay between 21 per cent (Karachay-Cherkessia) and 28 per cent (Kabardino-Balkaria). Another indicator of economic under-development is the degree to which regional budgets are being subsidized from Moscow.⁶¹

After having previously ignored internal reasons for the conflict and relying predominantly on military force to deal with the insurgents, the Russian government turned to addressing the socio-economic causes of the conflict during Vladimir Putin's second presidential term. In 2004, Russia under Putin started to promote development in the North Caucasus, with the Ministry of Regional Development in the leading role. This aimed to reduce the chronic underdevelopment of the region and to deal with the root causes of the conflict.⁶² In 2006, President Putin issued a decree creating a commission, to be headed by Dmitry Kozak, which was tasked with improving the socio-economic situation in the then Southern Federal District. In a speech he gave in Makhachkala in June 2009, President Medvedev identified "systemic problems" such as corruption, unemployment, and poverty in the region as the main (internal) drivers of the conflict, and, on 19 January 2010, he signed a presidential decree to establish the North Caucasian Federal District. The first presidential plenipotentiary to the new federal district installed by Medvedev was Alexander Khloponin, which was a clear sign that a development-driven approach was replacing a security-first one.⁶³

In February 2010, after several weeks in office, Khloponin presented a plan entitled "Height 5642", which proposed the development of ski tourism and recreational facilities in the North Caucasus.⁶⁴ The entire programme was

61 According to Valery Dzutsev, the average Russian region receives about one quarter of its revenues from the central state budget. In the North Caucasus, Chechnya and Ingushetia receive over 90 per cent of their revenues from Moscow. Payments from Moscow amount to 80 per cent of Dagestan's budget, while the remaining republics receive over 60 per cent of revenues from Moscow. See Valery Dzutsev, Kabardino-Balkaria Youth Protest Against Moscow Reaches Tipping Point, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 11 July 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38158&cHash=3cb1937e376c0f0ef461e09d441506ee](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38158&cHash=3cb1937e376c0f0ef461e09d441506ee).

62 See Sergey Markedonov, *A Strategy for North Caucasus: don't mention politics or religion*, Open Democracy, 1 November 2010, at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/sergei-markedonov/strategy-for-north-caucasus-don%E2%80%99t-mention-politics-or-religion>. See also Gordon Hahn, *Russia's Thaw – Through the North Caucasus Prism*, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Russia: Other Points of View, 12 August 2010, at: <http://www.russiaotherpointsofview.com/2010/08/russias-thawthrough-the-north-caucasus-prism.html>.

63 Wojciech Górecki quotes an anecdote which illustrates this point: "The Russian president said during a meeting with journalists on 24 January [2010] that the Caucasus should be governed with economic methods, and not forceful ones ('Here a manager and not a dictator is needed. The era of governors-general belongs to the past.')." Górecki, *Managers instead of governor-generals? Moscow's new tactics in the North Caucasus*, cited above (Note 60).

64 The name of the project is taken from the elevation in metres of Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in the North Caucasus. It is not quite clear exactly when Khloponin came up with this concept. Some authors argue that it was published in February 2010, soon after his arrival in the region as presidential envoy, whereas others claim that the concept was

to cost 12-13 billion US dollars and comprised setting up four skiing and holiday resort centres of the highest standard in North Ossetia (Mamison), Kabardino-Balkaria (Prielbrusie), Karachay-Cherkessia (Arkhyz), and Dagestan (Matlas). Khloponin's next achievement was the preparation of the "Strategy for the socio-economic development of the North Caucasian Federal District by 2025",⁶⁵ which Prime Minister Putin had announced on 6 July 2010 and endorsed two months later on 6 September 2010. The strategy aims to reduce unemployment to five per cent by creating 400,000 new jobs, and to bring about a 2.5-fold increase in salaries. Two appendices attached to the plan list a wide range of projects to be realized in the process of implementing the strategy.⁶⁶

No great progress was made in realizing this far-reaching and ambitious development strategy for the North Caucasus during 2011. The year started well, with Khloponin canvassing for foreign investment in the Height 5642 project, for instance at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January. Private investors were expected to cover 13 billion of the project's total cost of 15 billion US dollars, with the Russian government contributing the remaining two billion.⁶⁷ However, the adoption of the development strategy for the North Caucasus came to a grinding halt in November 2011 and was postponed until at least May 2012, as a number of problems, including with financing, had appeared. This decision was confirmed by Khloponin at the end of November.⁶⁸

As sensible and necessary as it may be to address the region's economic problems, Khloponin's ambitious development strategy for the period up to

presented to the public about half a year later, in June 2010. See Górecki, *ibid.* See also Valery Dzutsev, Another Lost Year for the Kremlin in the North Caucasus: 2010 in Review (Part Two), in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 13 January 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37355&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=150f52692e](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37355&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=150f52692e).

65 Strategiya sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya Severo-Kavkazckogo federal'nogo okruga do 2025 goda, *Kavkazsky Uzel*, at: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/175166>.

66 The first appendix details "priority investments" for social projects for the years 2010-2013 in the following areas: I. Energy, II. Education, III. Industry, IV. Agriculture, V. Housing, VI. Tourism, VII. Transport, VIII: Communication. It contains a total of 44 projects. The second appendix lists 63 long-term projects to be realized by 2025 in six areas: I. Industry, II. Tourist-recreational projects, III. Transport, IV. Energy, V. Culture, VI. Environmental projects. The "Height 5642" project is one of these long-term projects.

67 See Valery Dzutsev, Russia's Grand Vision for the Development of North Caucasus Remains Unrealistic, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 2 February 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[swords\]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews\[any_of_the_words\]=waziristan&tx_ttnews\[pointer\]=11&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37447&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=0be6a968a9e0df400f22184f490](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[swords]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews[any_of_the_words]=waziristan&tx_ttnews[pointer]=11&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37447&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=0be6a968a9e0df400f22184f490).

68 See Sergey Kononov, Pervym delom – pushki. Prinyatie federal'noi tselevoi programmy po razvitiyu Severnogo Kavkaza otlozheno do maya budushchego goda [First of all – guns. Adoption of the federal target programme for the development of the North Caucasus postponed until May next year], in: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 November 2011, at: http://www.ng.ru/regions/2011-11-25/1_kavkaz.html. See also: Programma po razvitiyu Severnogo Kavkaza v etom godu prinyata ne budet, utverzhaet istochnik v apparate Khloponina [Programme for the development of the North Caucasus will not be adopted this year, according to a source in Khloponin's office], *Kavkazsky Uzel*, 1 November 2011, at: <http://www.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/195028>.

2025 can boast only few, very limited successes. As Khloponin himself has admitted on several occasions, unemployment in the North Caucasus – especially in the eastern part (Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan) – is still high, and one should not expect any positive changes any time soon.⁶⁹ Even if the claims made by the Russian government and the envoy of having reduced unemployment by 100,000 in 2011 are correct, which is difficult to prove, the situation is still lamentable. Only modest progress has been achieved in attracting foreign investment. Besides the French state-owned bank CDC, which plans to invest an enormous 13.6 billion US dollars in the ski resorts project, there is only one other foreign investor, Finland's Arvotec, which plans to build a fish farm in Kizlyar. Dagestan will also receive a solar energy plant, to be built by the Russian company Hevel and the Swiss Oerlikon corporation.⁷⁰

Most strikingly, while the strategy of regional development was much talked about in 2011, there has still been no real investment, let alone any actual implementation of any of the projects proposed in the strategy. The plan as a whole is thus still in its very early stages – at best. With the November 2011 decision to suspend the implementation of the strategy until May 2012, there is a great risk that the precepts of this strategy “will never be implemented in reality”.⁷¹ A reorientation towards the use of military means seems to be far more likely, given the renewed influence of the *siloviki*⁷² faction following Putin's return to the presidency.

Stimulating Migration (Addressing the Root Causes)

While the economization strategy aims at reducing unemployment in the North Caucasus by developing the local economies, it also seeks to influence patterns of migration caused by the dire economic situation. Both ethnic Russians and non-Russians are leaving the region in search of better employment

69 See Mairbek Vatchagaev, *Despite Risks – Moscow Turns to Ski Resorts as Regional Panacea for the North Caucasus*, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 June 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38031](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38031). See also Valery Dzutsev, *Moscow's Aggressive Assimilation Policy May Spur a Further Growth of Nationalism*, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 3 October 2011, at: [www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38484](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38484).

70 See Valery Dzutsev, *Moscow's Plan to Increase Control over the North Caucasus Imperils its Effort to Modernize the Region*, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 20 June 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38073](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38073). See also Kononov, cited above (Note 68).

71 Górecki, “*Creeping*” *civil war in the North Caucasus*, cited above (Note 7).

72 The term “*siloviki*” refers to one of the elite groups ruling Russia. It is derived from the phrase “*silovye struktury*”, which refers to the state institutions and ministries wielding coercive power, e.g., the armed forces, law enforcement bodies, and intelligence agencies. The best known agencies are the FSB (Federal Security Service), the other intelligence services, the interior ministry, various branches of the military, and the state prosecutor's office. See Andrei Illarionov, *The Siloviki in Charge*, in: *Journal of Democracy* 2/2009, pp. 69-72, here: p. 69. See also Ian Bremmer/Samuel Charap, *The Siloviki in Putin's Russia: Who They Are and What They Want*, in: *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2006-7, pp. 83-92, here: p. 86.

opportunities in other parts of the Russian Federation. However, unemployment is still very high, especially among younger people.⁷³

In December 2010, to deal with both the high unemployment rate and the brain drain from the North Caucasus, Khloponin advanced a resettlement programme as an integral part of his 2025 development strategy. This programme seeks “to encourage internal migration within Russia, with the unemployed in the North Caucasus settling in inner Russian regions while skilled Russian workers head in the opposite direction”.⁷⁴ According to the plans outlined in the strategy, an estimated 40,000 people from the North Caucasus were to migrate to the inner Russian regions.⁷⁵ In June 2011, at the International Economic Forum in St Petersburg, Khloponin once more emphasized the urgent need for unemployed North Caucasian youth to migrate to inner Russian regions. He also proposed to bolster the region’s ethnic Russian population by “distribut[ing] arable lands in the North Caucasian republics” that are still owned by Moscow among the Cossacks.⁷⁶

Many criticisms can be made of this programme. Not only does it betray a Soviet style of thinking about how to deal with economic problems, it is also based on a patronizing view of the Russian people as more developed and the primary source of high-skilled labour. But above all, the concept is completely unrealistic, as the idea of encouraging large segments of the population of any North Caucasian republic to migrate to Russia proper is met with growing scepticism and even open aggression by the Russian population in many places.⁷⁷ It is also unrealistic because most migration of North Caucasians to other Russian regions is temporary, and there is a great attachment to the home region. Encouraging migration of Russian skilled labour to the North Caucasus is equally problematic, predominantly for security reasons, but also because of poor economic conditions and the regional political climate.⁷⁸

It is therefore hardly surprising that the idea of stimulating migration to and from the North Caucasus did not show any signs of success in 2011.

73 See Kuchins/Malarkey/Markedonov, cited above (Note 56), pp. 15-17.

74 Ibid., p. 17.

75 See Valery Dzutsev, Another Lost Year for the Kremlin in the North Caucasus: 2010 in Review (Part One), in: *North Caucasus Analysis* 1/2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37351](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37351).

76 Dzutsev, *Moscow's Plan to Increase Control over the North Caucasus Imperils its Effort to Modernize the Region*, cited above (Note 70).

77 Shortly after the Russian government had presented its development strategy for the North Caucasus, including the resettlement plan, a crowd of ca. 5,000 Russian nationalists staged a riot in Moscow, shouting slogans such as “Russia for Russians” and demanding the deportation of North Caucasians from Moscow. Similar riots took place in several other major Russian cities. See Dzutsev, *Another Lost Year for the Kremlin in the North Caucasus: 2010 in Review (Part One)*, cited above (Note 75).

78 See Valery Dzutsev, Russian Ethnic Outflow From the North Caucasus Continues to Worsen, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 26 October 2011, at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38572](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38572).

Russians are still leaving the region with no intention to return,⁷⁹ and while the indigenous population does indeed move to Russian regions, they do so only temporarily and not in the numbers desired by the authorities.

Bureaucratic Control Mechanisms (Containment)

Territorial-administrative restructuring was previously employed as a conflict management strategy by President Putin, who, towards the end of his first term, started a process of merging national autonomous subjects of the Russian Federation with larger territorial units.⁸⁰ He was also responsible for the invention of the seven so-called federal districts, of which the Southern Federal District was one. These administrative subunits were designed to control and oversee regional legislation, ensuring not necessarily good, but obedient governance in the territorial subunits, and facilitate the execution of federal programmes.

On 19 January 2010, Putin's successor, Dmitry Medvedev, decided to create an eighth federal district by separating the North Caucasian Federal District from the Southern Federal District.⁸¹ Ever since then, the North Caucasian Federal District has comprised seven subjects of the Russian Federation: Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Stavropol Krai. Adygeia and Krasnodar Krai remained in the Southern Federal District. As already mentioned, Alexander Khloponin, a successful businessman and former governor of Krasnoyarsk Krai in Siberia, was appointed to the position of the presidential envoy to the North Caucasian Federal District.

Among the main obstacles to Khloponin's objectives and his oversight functions are the security situation in the region, which has not improved and is still jeopardizing any ambitious economic development programme, and the patron-client network installed by Moscow as part of its Chechenization strategy.⁸²

79 An incident referred to by Mairbek Vatchagaev clearly supports this evaluation: "The president of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov, eloquently described the results of this program recently in Ingushetia: 'I ordered the head of the administration to find at least one [Russian] family that returned to the republic to talk to them,' he said. 'There is no such a family.'" Mairbek Vatchagaev, *Migration Patterns in the North Caucasus Paint Dismal Picture for Moscow*, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 10 November 2011, at [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38650&cHash=5a2cbb2ac3d52184cf91c463bbb6a0b](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38650&cHash=5a2cbb2ac3d52184cf91c463bbb6a0b).

80 See, for example, Neil J. Melvin, *Building Stability in the North Caucasus. Ways Forward for Russia and the European Union*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 16, May 2007, pp. 25-26, at: <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRI16.pdf>.

81 See Wojciech Górecki, "Creeping" civil war in the North Caucasus, cited above (Note 7), p. 5.

82 See, for example, Kuchins/Malarkey/Markedonov, cited above (Note 56), pp. 17-18.

Conclusion

2011 did not bring a turnaround in the course of the conflict. In fact, it was another bloody year for the North Caucasus. Judging by the data, the first eight months were even worse than the equivalent period in the previous year. The main findings derived from analysis of the conflict in 2011 can be summed up as follows:

- The overall level of violence compared to the previous year has risen considerably, with a total of 283 terrorist attacks and violent incidents from January to August 2011, compared to 238 such attacks in the twelve months of 2010. NCTC data confirms this.⁸³
- Although the number of attacks seems to have risen, the number of victims in 2011 (705) still lags behind the 2010 level as given by the *Kavkazsky Uzel* website (1,710), but this may very well be due to counting differences. Compared to the NCTC data for the first eight months of 2010 (650) the number of victims has risen slightly.
- The centre of the *jihadi* insurgency in the North Caucasus is still Dagestan,⁸⁴ as it was in 2010, and the geographical vectors of terrorism remain unchanged since 2010. Accordingly, next to Dagestan, the republic most affected by terrorist attacks was Kabardino-Balkaria. Dagestan, with 181 terrorist attacks and violent terrorism-related incidents and 365 victims in the first eight months of 2011 is on the brink of civil war, while Kabardino-Balkaria is establishing itself as another hub of terrorism in the North Caucasus.
- Other republics (Chechnya, Ingushetia), which have witnessed more violence in previous years, have seen the situation improve.

As far as conflict management is concerned, 2011 saw no fundamental changes, but rather a continuation of existing methods and approaches. While federal and regional security organs have succeeded in killing several high-ranking insurgent fighters, especially in Ingushetia, this seems to have brought little improvement, as an examination of the conflict shows. Little if any progress has been made in other areas of conflict management, either. Moscow still prefers to use military force or other repressive means (eradication) in combination with the so-called Chechenization (terror against terror-

83 According to NCTC data, there were 187 terrorist attacks in the whole of the Russian Federation during the first eight months of 2010.

84 Even the Russian interior minister, Rashid Nurgaliev, admitted this. In a meeting with the head of Dagestan's government, Magomedsalam Magomedov, on 3 October in Makhachkala, Nurgaliev was reported to have said: "The degree of the terrorist threat testifies that Dagestan is in the worst state [compared with] the other republics of the North Caucasian Federal District." Cited in: Dzutsev, Dagestan Dubbed the Most Dangerous Place in the North Caucasus, cited above (Note 20). See also Jamestown Foundation, Is Dagestan Now in the Midst of a "Real Guerilla War"? In: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 23 September 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38444](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38444).

ism) strategy.⁸⁵ The social and economic development of the North Caucasus has apparently ceased to be a priority and has been all but abandoned. Moscow's approach may have resulted in isolated successes, most notably the killing of a number of leading figures in the Caucasus Emirate, but overall it is ill-designed, and has reduced the effectiveness of other elements of conflict management. The effect of the emphasis on military means and counterterrorism has been to undermine the possibility of a sustainable and peaceful settlement of the conflict and drive new generations of fighters into the ranks of the insurgents.⁸⁶

One of the most important developments of the year was the decline in support among Russians for the government's policy of keeping the North Caucasus in the Russian Federation at all costs. Large-scale public demonstrations and discussions among the political elite called for the separation of the North Caucasus from Russia,⁸⁷ proving that there is growing resistance to the distribution of a rising share of the federal budget to elites in the North Caucasus republics without any clear sign of improvement. Obviously, pondering the separation of the North Caucasus is no longer taboo in Russia.

At the same time, there seems to be no readiness on the part of the Russian government to even think about this scenario. Following the abandonment of Khloponin's economic development programme in November 2011, it seems most likely that the Russian government will pursue a military containment and eradication strategy to deal with the conflicts.⁸⁸ This is espe-

85 See Petrov, cited above (Note 57).

86 Nikolay Petrov, for example, argues that Moscow's policies of strong military pressure and the creation of loyal "archaic khanates" are ineffective. See *ibid.* Murad Batal al-Shishani and others have made the point that the indiscriminate use of military force does not end the conflict, but rather reinforces and augments existing grievances the people of the North Caucasus have regarding Russian rule. See Murad Batal al-Shishani, cited above (Note 5), pp. 3-5. See also Liz Fuller, *It may be too late for a new North Caucasus Policy*, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 27 January 2011, at: http://www.rferl.org/content/commentary_new_north_caucasus_policy_too_late/2289607.html.

87 According to Emil Pain, a prominent Russian expert on ethnic politics and a former Russian government official, between 50 and 60 per cent of Russians agreed with the slogan "Get rid of the North Caucasus" in 2011 for the first time. See Valery Dzutsev, Medvedev Displays Bewildering Ambivalence About Russia's North Caucasus Policy, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 6 July, 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38140&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=631b58be2f484513028de280ec307601](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38140&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=631b58be2f484513028de280ec307601). See also Paul Goble, The Most Important Development in the North Caucasus in 2010: Russians Begin Talking About Letting it Go, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 26 January 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37408&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=27&cHash=0d93b141a2](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37408&tx_ttnews[backPid]=27&cHash=0d93b141a2).

88 See, for example, Valery Dzutsev, Moscow Launches Military Buildup in the North Caucasus to Safeguard Sochi Olympics, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 22 February 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=37543](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37543). See also Konovalov, cited above (Note 68); Valery Dzutsev, Kremlin Chooses Guns over Butter Approach to Dealing with North Caucasus, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 5 December 2011, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=38745](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=38745); Valery Dzutsev, Russia Launches Massive Military Redeployment to Dagestan, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 21 March 2012, at: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=39160](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=39160).

cially plausible in view of the approach of 2014 and the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.

Given the continuing influence of the root causes detailed above (corruption, unemployment, underdevelopment, cultural distance between Russians and other ethnic groups, growing radicalization and Islamization) alongside the inadequacies of Russia's security-centred approach to dealing with this situation, the conflicts in the North Caucasus will definitely not find a sustainable political solution in the near future. In other words: The Russo-Chechen conflict will remain a protracted conflict with no settlement in sight.