



**START**

**The Influence of Nationalism  
on Russian Security Policy: The  
Logics of (Dis)-Order and  
Terrorism in the Shift from  
Nation-State to Nation-  
Civilization**

*Report for the Strategic Multilayer Assessment,  
U.S. Department of Defense*

October 2015

## About This Report

The author of this report is Dr. John Stevenson, Senior Researcher. Questions about this report should be directed to [jsteven3@umd.edu](mailto:jsteven3@umd.edu).

This report is part of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) project, “The Re-Awakened Bear: Emerging Threats and Opportunities in Eurasia,” led by Dr. John Stevenson.

The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals, without whom this research would not have been possible.

*START Research Assistants:* Patrick Bresette, Andre Short, Tiara Goode, Usha Govindaraju, Ben Jubar

This research was supported by a Centers of Excellence Supplemental award from the Department of Homeland Security’s Science and Technology Directorate’s Office of University Programs, with funding provided by the Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) office of the Department of Defense through grant award number 2012ST061CS0001-03 made to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or START.

## About START

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is supported in part by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate’s Office of University Programs through a Center of Excellence program led by the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism. For more information, contact START at [infostart@start.umd.edu](mailto:infostart@start.umd.edu) or visit [www.start.umd.edu](http://www.start.umd.edu).

## Citations

To cite this report, please use this format:

Stevenson, John. “The Influence of Nationalism on Russian Security Policy: The Logics of Order and Terrorism in the Shift from Nation-State to Nation-Civilization,” College Park, MD: START, 2015.

## **Contents**

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Data and Methodology .....	4
Donetsk People’s Republic.....	7
Terrorist Violence in the Donetsk People’s Republic .....	8
The Secessionist Movements of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.....	9
Terrorist Violence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia .....	14
The Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria .....	15
Terrorist Violence in the Chechen Republic.....	20
Caucasus Emirates .....	20
Terrorist Violence in the Caucasus Emirate.....	24
Conclusions.....	25

## Executive Summary

Far from being a peripheral issue, the challenges of nationalism are part of the core of Russian security policy and operate as stressors on the NATO-Russia-United States relationship. These nationalist challenges, especially in the case of irredentist nationalisms, are spurring constitutional innovation in Russia and creating a foreign policy/ international identity almost wholly foreign to American conceptions of international relations.

This report argues that as Russia is attempting a shift from a constitutional strategy of being a *nation-state* to being a *nation-civilization*, which increases the potency and militarization of nationalist responses to Russian foreign policy and will destabilize an international system that has territorial borders as its chief foundation.. Nationalist responses to Russian foreign policy lead to Russian state-sponsorship of terrorism abroad and ethnonationality terrorism at home. This a vision of a renewed Russian civilization, often identified as *Novorossiya*, does not comfortably fit within an international system Russian civilization, in contrast to a Russian nation-state, is based on two concepts, a unity of Russian-speaking peoples and the promulgation of a Russo-centric Orthodox-Slavic World.

The report analyzes Russian sponsorship of terrorism in the Donetsk People's Republic in Ukraine and in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia as well as Russian counter-terrorism against Chechen separatist movements, its principal source of domestic terrorism. The report argues that nationalism in Russia has to be understood in the context of a distinctive nationality regime of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of a distinctive territoriality regime as embodied by the Chechenization policies. Both the nationality and territoriality regimes are the expression of logics of political order that are largely incommensurate with Western views of international order based on stable, fixed boundaries separating distinct political units. In the former Soviet Union and the Russian federation, boundaries are not only less fixed, but political units are often not separated and distinct.

The evidence from these four cases is that Russia's *civilization-state* strategy requires an expansive view of its obligations toward Russian-speakers across international boundaries, which in turn is internationalizing the ethno-nationalist conflicts occurring within its borders. This strategy breeds conflict and disorder, both domestically and abroad. Although nationalism has been largely understood as ethnic domination within a single state, or aspiring to get a "state of one's own," Russia's interaction with nationalism has transformed nationalist influences on foreign policy to be as ideological as they are territorial. The report is therefore pessimistic that Russian foreign policy will continue to use force expansively both within its territory and in the territory of other countries that were once a part of a former Soviet Union.

## Introduction

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism (START) was tasked with this project as a Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) initiative. The project team is seeking to identify patterns of crisis instability, conflict and cooperation in Europe and the Caucasus, with a focus on the role of Russia.

For this contribution to the broader project, START examined Russian relationships with violent non-state actors. In previous contributions, START researchers analyzed state-to-state interactions in the context of Russian-NATO relations; in this report, START researchers categorized Russia-non-state interactions in the context of Russia's larger foreign policy goals. START's analysis of these military relationship will aid in modeling how factors detailed by other teams within the SMA effort interact within EUCOM AOR. Specifically, this report answers the following questions:

1. Who are Russia's allies and clients, and where is Russia seeking to extend its influence within the EUCOM AOR?
2. How might ultra-nationalism influence Russia's foreign policy rhetoric and behavior?
3. Will Russia become more assertive as its military capabilities continue to improve?

The analysis for this report was completed between July and October 2015. The project team included:

*Principal Investigator:* John Stevenson

*Project Manager:* Garrett Tippin

*Research Assistants:* Patrick Bresette, Andre Short, Tiara Goode, Usha Govindaraju, Benjamin Jubar

Much of Russia's state actor support aims toward the goal of undermining NATO and weakening the United States' relative advantage in the international distribution of military and economic capabilities.<sup>1</sup> Strategic preferences about the balance of capabilities between states, however, is not the only source of Russia's tensions with NATO and the United States: Nationalism—both irredentist or secessionist pro-Russian nationalism and (increasingly jihadist) anti-Russian nationalism—are also important determinants of Russian foreign policy, especially in conflict with NATO member states.<sup>2</sup> While the term “nationalism” is an over-used and often under-specified concept with a *very* large literature in the social sciences, here we take evidence of nationalism to be dense enclaves of Russian-speaking populations near or straddling internationally-recognized borders which once were within the Soviet Union (in the case of irredentist nationalism); secessionist movements within NATO partners near Russia's borders; and territorially concentrated non-Russian minorities that reject Russian sovereignty over the lands in which they reside.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> John A. Stevenson and Garrett Tippin. “Russian Clients and Global Foreign Policy Strategy: Evidence from Foreign Military Sales,” College Park, MD: START, 2015

<sup>2</sup> The idea that nationalism is the underlying explanation for some of the limited/hybrid warfare strategies Russia has recently been pursuing in Ukraine and Georgia is the prevailing view of many Russian experts, but not a consensus view. For a critical argument that nationalism is *not* driving Russian policy, see: Laruelle, Marlene. “The three colors of Novorossiia, or the Russian nationalist mythmaking of the Ukrainian crisis.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* (2015): 1-20.

<sup>3</sup> On the importance of cross-border ethnic kin, see Cederman, Lars-Erik, Luc Girardin, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. “Ethnonationalist triads: Assessing the influence of kin groups on civil wars.” *World Politics* 61, no. 03 (2009): 403-437. Saideman, Stephen M., and R. William Ayres. *For kin or country: Xenophobia, nationalism, and war*. Columbia University Press, 2008.

Why does nationalism, in some cases, create international political opportunities for Russia? There are two reasons. One, the borders of the Soviet Union republics often created extremely diverse polities with potentially unstable domestic dispute systems for resolving the fundamental questions of politics: identity recognition and “fair” resource allocation. Extreme diversity, in general, is often seen as a net negative for states: “arbitrary borders may lead to fragmented states that are liable to ethnic conflict. States formed predominantly by external influences may be unable to work out a stable relationship with their own societies...”<sup>4</sup> Linguistic, religious and ethnic heterogeneity *within* countries bordering Russia translates into foreign policy opportunities for Russia to pressure its neighbors into a more pro-Russian foreign policy, join Russian-sponsored regional organizations, or serve as transnational pressure points for Russian “soft” and covert military power. Two, because of the ways in which the institutions of the former Soviet Union constituted political elites and their interests and organized the social world within the former Soviet Union, the basic forms of claims-making and the pursuit of political power were inherently those of elites that thought of themselves in terms of nationalism. Within the former Soviet Union, these “institutional definitions of nationhood...constitute[d] basic categories of political understanding, central parameters of political rhetoric, specific types of political interest and fundamental forms of political identity” that continue today as elementary building blocks of contentious, nationalist politics and political action within the successor states.<sup>5</sup>

What cross-border ethnic kin, irredentist nationalism and secessionist movements have in common is that these political conditions contain the “spark” for collection action: They serve as preconditions for militant, mobilized non-state action which can aim toward statehood.<sup>6</sup> Since many theories of nationalism treat national groups<sup>7</sup> as proto-states, this report analyzes four groups for:

- the violent form their nationalist mobilization has taken,
- the reasons for their mobilization,
- the targets of their violence and
- the influence of this mobilization on Russian foreign policy and military support for or against that movement.

Far from being a peripheral issue, the pressures that nationalist mobilizations have on Russian foreign policy and the stressors that violent nationalist mobilization have on the NATO-Russia-United States relationship are core to some of the most pressing foreign policy challenges in EUCOM AOR today: the internationalized civil war in Ukraine, ongoing tensions in Georgia, and international cooperation against terrorism.

---

<sup>4</sup> David Holloway and Stephen Stedman, “Civil War and State Building” in Mark Beissinger and Crawford Young (ed), *Beyond State Crisis? Postcolonial Africa and Post-Soviet Eurasia in Comparative Perspective*. 2002, p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An institutionalist account." *Theory and society* 23, no. 1 (1994): pp. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Forsberg, Erika. "Polarization and ethnic conflict in a widened strategic setting." *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 2 (2008): 283-300.

<sup>7</sup> On the differences between national states and nation-states, see: Tilly, Charles, Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. *War making and state making as organized crime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. On secessionist nationalism, see: Canuel, Edward T. "Nationalism, Self-Determination, and Nationalist Movements: Exploring the Palestinian and Quebec Drives for Independence." *BC Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.* 20 (1997): 85.

These nationalist challenges, especially in the case of irredentist nationalism, are spurring constitutional innovation in Russia and creating a foreign policy/international identity almost wholly foreign to American conceptions of international relations. This is best expressed by the term “civilization,” or a collection of peoples across states whose collective interests are more important than territorial borders. A group of Russian foreign policy theorists that one scholar described as the “Imperialists” want to leverage Russia’s soft power, of which nationalistic appeals are a crucial part, to sanction states that are politically disloyal, such as Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova.<sup>8</sup> For these thinkers, Russian military support to secessionist territories, crackdowns on labor migrants from former Soviet republics, and offers of citizenship to groups supporting “reunification” with Russia constitute a potent soft power tool of statecraft.<sup>9</sup> In fact, one supporter of this view, “Stanislav Belkovskii proposes revising the Russian Constitution” to shift Russia from a “*nation-state* into a *nation-civilization*” so that the self-proclaimed states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestar would possess an “associate membership” for future formal inclusion into the Russian Federation.<sup>10</sup> The concept of “civilization” was also articulated in the wake of the Georgia-Russian war by then-Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov when he spoke of “civilizational unity” of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as all lands that were once part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.<sup>11</sup> Supporting autonomous provinces in countries like Ukraine are one such political recommendation of this view. Another is the use of border-control procedures to fan secessionist conflict; for example, “most residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,” secessionist provinces in Georgia, “were granted Russian citizenship and passports.”<sup>12</sup>

## Data and Methodology

Data informing this case study came from multiple sources. Open-source materials, including media reports, academic analyses, government documents, and intergovernmental reports, were obtained from multiple web-based databases. The data on terrorist activities are drawn from START’s Global Terrorism Database (GTD).<sup>13</sup>

Examining Russia’s interaction with terrorist groups is important to explaining Russian security strategies, both at home and abroad, because Russia ranks seventh in the world for countries with the most fatal terrorist attacks.<sup>14</sup> Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, there have been over 2,000 terrorist

---

<sup>8</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, “If not by thanks, then by banks”? The Role of Soft Power in Putin’s Foreign Policy” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58: 7 (2006), pp. 1079-1099.

<sup>9</sup> Members of the “Imperialist” faction in Russian politics include Vladimir Zhirinovskii and Dmitri Rogozin, among others.

<sup>10</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, “If not by thanks, then by banks”? The Role of Soft Power in Putin’s Foreign Policy” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58: 7 (2006), pp. 1085.

<sup>11</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Russia’s Spheres of Interest, not Influence” in *The Washington Quarterly*, 32: 4 (2009), pp. 3-22.

<sup>12</sup> Jim Nichol, “Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests,” CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> LaFree, Gary, and Laura Dugan. “Introducing the global terrorism database.” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19: 2 (2007): 181-204. LaFree, Gary. “The global terrorism database: Accomplishments and challenges.” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>14</sup> Sin, Steve, Sarah Spalding, and Salma Bouziani. “International Nuclear Detection Architecture Report: Russia,” Final Report to U.S. Department of Homeland Security Domestic Nuclear Detection Office. College Park, MD: START, 2015.



attacks resulting in nearly 4,000 deaths. In recent years, the rate of terrorist attacks has grown. The most recent large terrorist attack occurred in the Domodedovo airport near Moscow on January 24, 2014. Three Yevloyev siblings carried out a suicide bombing that took the lives of 36 and injured 168. Magomed Yevloyev, a 20-year-old from the Ingushetia republic, executed the attack. Terrorist leader Doku Umarov claimed to have called for the attack after it had taken place. Yevloyev’s home republic belongs in the North Caucasus region of Russia, which encompasses seven of the top 10 Russian republics with the highest number of terrorist attacks between 1992 and 2014, including Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, and Karachay-Cherkessia (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Russian Republics with Highest Number of Terrorist Attacks, 1992-2014<sup>15</sup>*

Administrative Region	Number of Attacks	Number of Fatalities
Dagestan	571	569
Chechnya	484	470
Ingushetia	307	305
Kabardino-Balkaria	163	163
Moscow	71	69
North Ossetia-Alania	40	40
Stavropol	27	27
Karachay-Cherkessia	19	19
Rostov	13	13
Volgograd	11	11

The primary terrorist movement in the country is an amalgamation of Chechen separatist groups, who are “loosely organized with semi-independent commanders.” From 1992 to 2014, Chechen rebels were responsible for carrying out approximately 17 percent of the attacks on is Russia.<sup>16</sup>

In the conventional view, Russia’s domestic terrorism challenges exist alongside Russian state-sponsorship/encouragement of terrorism in politically disloyal countries. This view misses something important about the way nationalism is being institutionalized in the post-Soviet territories: *The more Russia adopts logics of organization and order abroad based on being a nation-civilization, the more domestic terrorism it will face at home.* Russia’s unifying claim to being a civilization—found primarily in the concept of *Russkiy mir* (Russian world)—is based on an imagined unity of Russian speakers owing nominal loyalty

<sup>15</sup> “Terrorism and the Olympics: Sochi, Russia 2014.” Background Report, January. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). [https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport\\_TerrorisminOlympicsSochiRussia\\_Jan2014.pdf](https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_TerrorisminOlympicsSochiRussia_Jan2014.pdf); National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). 2015. Global Terrorism Database. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

<sup>16</sup> 77%of attacks during this time frame were carried out by unknown perpetrators. A few other attacks during this time frame were perpetrated by Ingush rebels (3) and Dagestani rebels (5); Global Security. 2014. “Caucasus Emirate.” Last modified September 27. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ik.htm>.



to Russian authorities providing them protection and the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>17</sup> *Ruskiy mir*, was always an expansive concept before it became an official part of state discourse: *Ruskiy mir* “is an ambiguous and open concept that initially signified ‘Russia’ beyond its state borders, but that later became a synonym for the construct of a Russian–Orthodox–Slavic civilization.”<sup>18</sup>

These two concepts of the Russian *mir* and an Russo-centric Orthodox-Slavic world come together in the organizing principle of *Novorossiya*, a vision of a renewed Russian civilization that does not comfortably fit within an international system that has territorial borders as its chief foundation. In *Novorossiya*, Russian elites imagine Russia as “the leader of a multicultural Eurasia promoting deeper integration with the Central Asian republics” with Christian Orthodoxy and the defense of Russian speakers abroad, with militarized force if necessary, as ideological connective tissues.<sup>19</sup>

*Novorossiya*, as an organizing political principle quite distinct from the territorial system inhabited by NATO member countries, shares more continuity than discontinuity with the institutional structure of the former Soviet Union, while remaining quite novel. *Novorossiya* is fundamentally consistent with the view that Putin’s foreign policy has aimed a restoration of the prestige of the Soviet Union but a revolution of its system of institutionalization.<sup>20</sup> The nationality regime within the former Soviet Union, and more specifically how political institutions constituted and responded to nationalism in the former Soviet Union, was never that of a nation-state, with strong views about territorial boundaries and a central identity propagated by the state in the form of a singular *Soviet nation*.<sup>21</sup> Instead of a central principle inhering within the state, the Soviet nationality regime defined component parts of the state, and the interaction of the citizens within it, in national terms, in ways that were “radically incompatible with the organizational model of the nation-state.”<sup>22</sup> The distinct Soviet nationality regime included: “system of ethnoterritorial federalism; the elaborate codification of, and pervasive significance attached to, personal nationality ...; and the deliberate policy of nation-building, aimed at the consolidations of non-Russian nations.”<sup>23</sup>

*Novorossiya* similarly challenges the nation-state system in part by articulating a distinct nationality regime of nations long-rooted in the *Ruskiy mir*. As a guiding principle in Russian foreign policy, *Novorossiya* increases the importance of nationalism and nationalist movements to the state’s security policy outcomes. Territorial incursions, state-sponsorship of terrorism, militarized disputes and military coercion can all be used in the service of ethnic or linguistic Russians within former Soviet space; in addition, nationalist

---

<sup>17</sup> Marlene Laurelle, “The three colors of Novorossiya, or the Russian nationalist mythmaking of the Ukrainian crisis”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015, p.9.

<sup>18</sup> Marlene Laurelle, “The three colors of Novorossiya, or the Russian nationalist mythmaking of the Ukrainian crisis”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015, p.9.

<sup>19</sup> Marlene Laurelle, “The three colors of Novorossiya, or the Russian nationalist mythmaking of the Ukrainian crisis”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015, p.5. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Stent, Angela E. "Restoration and revolution in Putin's foreign policy." *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 6 (2008): 1089-1106.

<sup>21</sup> Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An institutionalist account." *Theory and society* 23, no. 1 (1994): pp. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An institutionalist account." *Theory and society* 23, no. 1 (1994): pp. 52.

<sup>23</sup> Brubaker, Rogers. "Nationhood and the national question in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Eurasia: An institutionalist account." *Theory and society* 23, no. 1 (1994): pp. 52.

challenges to Russian military supremacy within the former Soviet Union, especially from non-Orthodox religious minorities, will face the punitive wrath of Russia and its allies to isolate and destroy secessionist movements. In *Novorossiia*, the nations of the former Soviet Union—or more precisely, the nations institutionalized and cultivated within the former Soviet Union—would always already possess an “associate membership” for future formal inclusion into the Russian Federation in a revolutionized, re-imagined post-Soviet successor state.

This report aims to show how this ideology of a Russian civilization is the clearest way to understand and model the influence of nationalism on Russian foreign policy behavior. This report also argues that the political ideology of Russian civilization is made possible due to the lack of concerted international political action in articulating new institutionalizations of political interests within the successor states of the former Soviet Union. As such, this report focuses on Russian sponsorship of terrorism in the Donetsk People’s Republic and in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The report then turns to an analysis of Russia’s Chechen terrorism problem and its relationship to nationalism. Prominent Chechen militant groups have included the Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB),<sup>24</sup> the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment (SPIR),<sup>25</sup> Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance (to include a wing of female suicide bombers known as the Black Widows), the Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs,<sup>26</sup> and the Caucasus Emirate.<sup>27</sup> This report focused on the Armed Forces of the Republic of Ichkeria, as it was the armed forces of the Chechen secessionist republic, as well as its successor group, the Caucasus Emirate.

## Donetsk People’s Republic

Russian involvement in Ukraine is exploiting and deepening existing cleavages. “The main fault line” in Ukraine is between “two different types of Ukrainian identity: non-/anti-Soviet and post-/neo-Soviet, ‘European’ and ‘East Slavonic.’”<sup>28</sup> Russian activities did not create these cleavages, but Russia does “opportunistically exploit Ukraine’s weakness and multiple internal contradictions.”<sup>29</sup> Before Russia’s annexation of Crimea, many scholars believed that Russian-speaking Ukrainians were primarily loyal to the idea of Ukraine but were resistant to any anti-Russian ethno-linguistic political programs which left

---

<sup>24</sup> The group was absorbed into the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 2006. (Stanford University. 2014. “Mapping Militant Organizations: International Islamic Peacekeeping Brigade.” <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/397>.)

<sup>25</sup> The group was absorbed into the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 2006. (Stanford University. 2014. “Mapping Militant Organizations: Special Purpose Islamic Regiment.” <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/403?highlight=SPIR>.)

<sup>26</sup> Bhattacharji, Preeti. 2010. “Chechen Terrorism (Russia, Chechnya, Separatist)” Council of Foreign Relations. April 8. <http://www.cfr.org/separatist-terrorism/chechen-terrorism-russia-chechnya-separatist/p9181>.

<sup>27</sup> Global Security. 2014. “Caucasus Emirate.” Last modified September 27. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ik.htm>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-12269155>

<sup>28</sup> Riabchuk, Mykola. “Two Ukraines’ Reconsidered: The End of Ukrainian Ambivalence?” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2015), pp. 138.

<sup>29</sup> Riabchuk, Mykola. “Two Ukraines’ Reconsidered: The End of Ukrainian Ambivalence?” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2015), pp. 139.

them worse off in terms of their experiences of equal citizenship.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Russian-speaking Ukrainians, while willing to resist discrimination and exclusions, were fundamentally invested in the success of Ukraine. The votes for Donetsk People's Republic and the call to join arms either for or against the Ukrainian government are offering final tests of whether Russian-speaking Ukrainians see their future primarily in Ukraine or outside of it.

The Donetsk People's Republic is part of a new species of alternative nation-building underway in Ukraine in the wake of the Russian annexation of Crimea. Through the proclamation of *Novorissya*, in part as justification for Russian last strategic interests in Ukraine, several Ukrainian oblasts inside and outside of Crimea are now rhetorically conceived of as part of Russian geo-political space, despite being outside the formal territorial boundaries of the Russian Federation.<sup>31</sup>

These alternative nation-building projects include Donetsk People's Republic, as well as a Luhansk People's Republic, with the potential for other people's republics to arise in Odessa and Khariv.<sup>32</sup> The constellation of alternative nation-building projects, however, should not necessarily be understood as popular openings for Russian peacekeepers, bases or stationed troops. Public opinion polls conducted within the Ukrainian oblasts showed that the highest percentage of public support (at 12 percent) for hosting Russian troops was found in Donbas, and every other oblast had only 4 to 7 percent of respondents interested in hosting Russian troops.<sup>33</sup>

### Terrorist Violence in the Donetsk People's Republic

Formerly known as the "Federation of sovereign Donetsk," which was banned in 2007, the group reconstituted under the moniker "The Donetsk Peoples Republic" on April 14, 2014, and declared independence.<sup>34</sup> Before the declaration of independence, there were a total of 55 terrorist incidents reported in the country of Ukraine. After the declaration of independence, the number of total terrorist incidents in Ukraine increased from 55 to 944, of which 325 were attributed to the DPR. This increase appears to be related to the support the DPR solicits and receives from Russia. Along with the Luhansk People's Republic, the DPR has expressed a desire to integrate with Russia.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. "From borderlands to bloodlands." Eurozine (2014), p. 3. Accessed at: <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-09-19-zhurzhenko-en.pdf> Last accessed 14 September 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Oblasts are administrative divisions or demarcated regions in Russia and the former Soviet Union, including autonomous republics as well as titular republics. Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. "From borderlands to bloodlands." Eurozine (2014), p. 10. Accessed at: <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-09-19-zhurzhenko-en.pdf> Last accessed 14 September 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Oblasts are administrative divisions or demarcated regions in Russia and the former Soviet Union, including autonomous republics as well as titular republics. Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. "From borderlands to bloodlands." Eurozine (2014), p. 10. Accessed at: <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-09-19-zhurzhenko-en.pdf> Last accessed 14 September 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Riabchuk, Mykola. "Two Ukraines' Reconsidered: The End of Ukrainian Ambivalence?." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15, no. 1 (2015), pp. 148.

<sup>34</sup> Zhurzhenko, Tatiana. "From borderlands to bloodlands." Eurozine (2014), p. 10. Accessed at: <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2014-09-19-zhurzhenko-en.pdf> Last accessed 14 September 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Fabry, Mikulas. "How to Uphold the Territorial Integrity of Ukraine." *German LJ* 16 (2015): pp. 416-417.

Ukraine has understandably classified both the Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic as terrorist organizations, claiming that the “so-called people’s governors deliberately propagate violence, seize hostages, carry out subversive activity, assassinations and intimidations of citizens.”<sup>36</sup> Table 2 (below) shows the types of attacks the DPR has conducted in the Ukraine.

*Table 2: Number of Terrorist Attacks in Ukraine, 2007-2014*

Type of Attack	Number of Attacks
armed assaults	101
bombing/explosions	120
facility attacks	29
hostage takings	3
kidnappings	52
unarmed assaults	3
unknown attacks	21

Coercion and violence are the primary methods the DPR is using to influence the Ukrainian government. Instances of bombings, artillery, abductions, and mortar attacks are common throughout the region. Attacks began in January 2011 and occur through the end of the most recently available data, which is December 2014.

### **The Secessionist Movements of South Ossetia and Abkhazia**

The secessionist movements of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are located in Georgia; both are autonomous provinces with long histories predating incorporation into Georgia. The combination of South Ossetia and Abkhazia’s pre-Georgian autonomy and histories create supportive conditions for Russian foreign policy to cultivate ties with militant, nationalist non-state actors and to station troops in neighboring countries.<sup>37</sup>

Georgia’s borders and the political status of its neighbors shifted often in the early Soviet republican era. For instance, in 1922, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia united to form the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.<sup>38</sup> South Ossetia’s secessionist movement pre-dates the fall of the Soviet Union, stretching back to an aborted declaration of independence from Georgia in the 1920s. Similarly, Abkhazia’s conflict with Georgia also has deep historical roots—Abkhazians are ethnically distinct from Georgians and once had an Abkhazian state prior to Stalin’s 1931 decree incorporating into Georgia—but the particular emergence of the current secessionist movement is directly linked to the “political manipulation” of

<sup>36</sup> Interfax-Ukraine, “Ukraine’s prosecutor general classifies self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk republics as terrorist organizations”, KyivPost, 16 May 2014. Accessed at: <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/ukraines-prosecutor-general-classifies-self-declared-donetsk-and-luhansk-republics-as-terrorist-organizations-348212.html> Last accessed 14 September 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Cornell, Svante E. "Autonomy as a source of conflict: Caucasian conflicts in theoretical perspective." *World politics* 54, no. 02 (2002): 245-276.

<sup>38</sup> Stevenson, John Allen. "Capitol gains: How foreign military intervention and the elite quest for international recognition cause mass killing in new states." PhD diss., THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, 2014. p. 55.

Abkhazian identity.<sup>39</sup> Abkhazia was a union republic within the Soviet Union from 1921 until 1931; after it was demoted to an autonomous republic as a part of Georgia, Georgia attempted to transform and eradicate nationalist sentiment among the Abkhazians. Using the full power of its status as a union republic governing an autonomous republic, Georgia replaced Abkhazian schools, geographic names and linguistic markets with Georgian ones, while simultaneously, with Stalinist support, resettling large number of Georgians in Abkhazia.<sup>40</sup> Demographically, the incorporation and political support from the center transformed Abkhazia from 31.8 percent ethnic Georgian in 1926 to 45 percent ethnic Georgian in 1989.<sup>41</sup> The Abkhazian secessionist movement is a direct response to these hostile Georgian political interventions in society.



Map 1: South Ossetia and Abkhazia

Despite long histories of agitation for independence in part stemming from Stalinist manipulations of territorial boundaries, neither South Ossetia nor Abkhazia are internationally recognized, independent states. Many of the reasons why these territories are not independent states is due to the (in)action of the international community of explicating a political process and norm for how successor governments would arise from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Mark Zacher observes that “during the postwar period, all of the [successful] successor states that emerged from the nine breakups of existing states have kept their informal internal administrative boundaries.”<sup>42</sup> These nine territorial dissolutions produced about 25 new states, inclusive of the Soviet Union’s breakup into 15 successor states in 1991. These new states preserved pre-existing administrative boundaries, even when there were strong political reasons to not preserve

<sup>39</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 18.

<sup>40</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 19.

<sup>41</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 19.

<sup>42</sup> Mark W. Zacher, "The territorial integrity norm: International boundaries and the use of force." *International Organization* 55:2 (2001): pp. 215-250.



destabilizing territorial norms, such as was in the case in the politics of territoriality within the Soviet Union, where “Stalin was responsible for mapping the boundaries of most of the [titular] ‘republics’ of the Soviet Union, including the Russian Federation and Georgia...which were arbitrary based on the principles of divide and conquer.”<sup>43</sup> In the case of Georgia, depicted below in Map 1, what counted as an “administrative boundary” for the purposes of international recognition and what did not is one of the chief root causes of the South Ossetian and Abkhazian conflicts.

The relevant administrative boundaries that would count in the transition to a post- Soviet nation-state space were only those of the titular republics. The titular republics, however, were a small part of the varieties of institutionalized forms of nationhood within the former Soviet Union. This tremendous variation exceeded what the international system could transition from one institutional context (the Soviet Union) to another (the “Westphalian” international system<sup>44</sup>) peacefully, as there was little to no provision made for other kinds of institutionalized territorial entities that were legally lesser than titular republics, but sufficiently political distinct to make blithe incorporation into a territorial international system difficult. Moreover, as this report will discuss later, similar confusion about the sovereignty of various Soviet legal territorial units—such as union republics, autonomous republics, etc.—also create the conditions for armed violence between Chechen separatists and the Russian Federation.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the lack of an articulated international norm emerging from formal international political processes allowed the conflict over South Ossetia’s independence between South Ossetia and Georgia to re-ignite in 1990. South Ossetia wanted sovereign international status, but Georgia believed that international practice would more likely support continued Georgian administration and claim over the territory in the event of a political disagreement between South Ossetia and Georgia. By 1992, the conflict over South Ossetian sovereign status ended with a Russian-brokered ceasefire. Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peace-keeping units served as enforcers of the ceasefire; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitored for potential violations.<sup>45</sup> This peacekeeping brigade was about 1,100 strong, including 530 Russians, a 300-member brigade of South Ossetians with a North Ossetia commander, and 300 Georgians.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, when the Soviet Union dissolved, the Abkhazian parliament proposed discussion of a new legal status for Abkhazia with Georgia. From Abkhazia’s point of view, without the Soviet Union, there was no controlling legal framework to determine the political question of sovereignty. Georgia not only rejected

---

<sup>43</sup> Vladislav Martinovich Zubok. *A failed empire: the Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, p. xvii.

<sup>44</sup> On the basis of a “Westphalian” international system of distinct territories with fixed boundaries and separate, legally equal political authorities, see: Spruyt, Hendrik. *The sovereign state and its competitors: an analysis of systems change*. Princeton University Press, 1996. For works that discuss both the importance and the critical limitations of that view of an ideal international system see: Krasner, Stephen D. “Compromising westphalia.” *International Security* (1995): 115-151. Schmidt, Sebastian. “To Order the Minds of Scholars: The Discourse of the Peace of Westphalia in International Relations Literature.” *International Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (2011): 601-623.

<sup>45</sup> Jim Nichol, “Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests”, CRS Report for Congress (2008)

<sup>46</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 16.

suggested changes to legal status but attacked the Abkhazian Parliament to end the deliberations.<sup>47</sup> During the conflict, Georgian troops continued the Georgianization program in Abkhazia: For instance, in addition to numerous alleged human rights abuses, Georgian troops burned the Abkhazian State Archives and the Institute of History, Language and Literature, one of the central depositories of Abkhazian cultural artifacts, to the ground.<sup>48</sup>

While the Soviet legacies explain the origins and persistence of violent conflict, Georgia political action transformed conflict management situations into militarized disputes with non-state actors. Stationed Russian troops largely managed the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia until 2004, when Georgian President Saakashvili tightened border controls in an effort to crack down on a transnational smuggling operation that allegedly involved Georgian officials and Russian organized crime.<sup>49</sup> This tightened border control involved the introduction of several hundred Georgian law enforcement personnel into the region, which triggered an influx of paramilitary units from Abkhazia, Transnistria and Russia in support of the secessionists countered by police, military intelligence officers and intelligence operators on the Georgian side.<sup>50</sup> With respect to Abkhazia, Georgian non-accommodation of Abkhazian national language and schools, created the necessary social cleavages from which conflict could spring.

### Abkhazian, NATO and Georgia's Evolving Relationship

Militarily, Abkhazian resistance successfully defeated Georgian forces on September 30, 1993.<sup>51</sup> The bulk of Abkhazian forces were reportedly comprised of "Russian and North Caucasian 'volunteers.'" <sup>52</sup> Abkhazia's defeat of Georgia created a geostrategic opportunity for Russia. It was in Russia's interest to prevent the international recognition of autonomous republics, given how many autonomous republics were in Russia proper; likewise, a Georgia plagued by domestic conflict was seen as more pliable than a united Georgia able to pivot wholly toward a closer relationship with an American-led alliance.<sup>53</sup> The combination of the domestic security challenges that a militarized South Ossetia and Abkhazia posed for Georgia enabled Russia to coax Georgia into the CIS and, more importantly, into hosting a permanent Russian military presence at four bases in Georgia.<sup>54</sup> (Georgia withdrew from the CIS in 1999.)

Beginning in 1996 and lasting until 2008, Russia, along with other CIS members, maintained an embargo on Abkhazia.<sup>55</sup> During the period of the embargo, U.S. diplomatic efforts aimed at even-handedness:

---

<sup>47</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 21.

<sup>48</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 22.

<sup>49</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 21.

<sup>52</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 23.

<sup>54</sup> Kvarchelia, Liana. "Georgia-Abkhazia conflict: view from Abkhazia." *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 1 (1998): pp 23.

<sup>55</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 13.



Americans supported the Russian-led peacekeeping framework but also criticized Russian excesses in the region.<sup>56</sup> The United States' support for an oil pipeline and the centrality of the Azerbaijan-Georgia land route for military fuel, food and construction supplies to Afghanistan, played a large role in U.S. policy toward Georgia prior to the conflict between Russia and Georgia.<sup>57</sup> In 2008, both the United States' and Russia's foreign policy toward the region shifted. These changes in policy began with actions by the Russian government. In April 2008, President Putin formally withdrew CIS sanctions to permit Russian trade and investment in the region, and established, via presidential directive, "government-to-government ties with Abkhazia and South Ossetia."<sup>58</sup>

In response, U.S. policy shifted from supporting existing conflict management frameworks toward aiding Georgian calls for alternative settlement mechanisms.<sup>59</sup> The United States and its allies—Great Britain, France and Germany—even went so far as to reprimanded Russia in the United Nations Security Council: These countries expressed that they were "highly concerned about the latest initiative to establish official ties with...Abkhazia and South Ossetia without the consent of the Government of Georgia. We call on the Russian Federation to revoke or not to implement its decision."<sup>60</sup> In addition to these diplomatic condemnations, NATO, through training exercises, increased its activity in Georgia. NATO's main goal was to strengthen the capacity of the Georgia state to better maintain internal security within its existing recognized international border. As stated by General James Cartwright,

"We are focusing on building defense institutions, assisting defense sector reform, and building the strategic and educational foundations that will facilitate necessary training, education, and rational force structure."<sup>61</sup>

NATO's involvement, however, strengthened the tacit buy-in of other elite powerbrokers in the Russian government for President Medvedev to continue Putin's policy. On August 25, 2008, months after the presidential directive enabling deeper Russian-Akhazian ties, the upper and lower houses of Russia's legislative chamber, respectively, the Federation Council and the Duma, recommended presidential recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>62</sup> The next day, President Medvedev extended recognition to the two regions and called on Russia's allies to do the same. Despite considerable diplomatic pressure on stalwarts such as Belarus, to date Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Nauru are the

---

<sup>56</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Anne Gearan, "Georgia's Oil Pipeline is the Key to US Support," SFGATE online, 9 August 2008. Accessed at <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Georgia-s-oil-pipeline-is-key-to-U-S-support-3201499.php>. Last Accessed: 6 October 2015. Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests", CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 6. This land route is called the Northern Distribution Network.

<sup>58</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> Nichol, Jim. *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for US Interests*. DIANE Publishing, 2011, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> Nichol, J.; (April 2 2014); "Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests"; *Congressional Research Service*; pp: 5-46 accessed on 7/15/2015; retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33453.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests", CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 10

only sovereign states to have extended and maintained diplomatic recognition to the breakaway regions, although a host of non-sovereign territories and secessionist movements, such as Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Donetsk's People's Republic, also recognize them.<sup>63</sup> Tuvalu and Vanuatu withdrew their recognition of the breakaway states in March 2014.<sup>64</sup>

### South Ossetia and the legal institutionalization of Russian Civilization

In September 2008, Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia signed Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance treaties, which, among other things, set new levels for the number of Russian troops those countries would host, effectively nullifying earlier basing agreements with the EU and OSCE.<sup>65</sup> In addition, the Friendship Treaties advance the "civilization" goal of Russian foreign policy by linking the two domestic-legal systems for eventual absorption: "the agreements provide for free entry into Russia" in the context of a pledge to "unify their civil, tax, welfare and pension laws [as well as] their banking, energy, transportation and telecommunications system" with Russia's while allowing Russian embassies to protect the interests of the residents of the regions when they travel abroad."<sup>66</sup>

### Terrorist Violence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia

With the exception of a few attacks in the early 1990s, the majority of attacks in South Ossetia occurred between 2004 and 2014 and are attributed in the GTD to "Georgian Militants," "South Ossetian Separatists" and "Chechen Rebels." These attacks are attributed to the terrorist organizations in so far as neither the Abkhazian guerrillas nor the South Ossetian separatists claimed responsibility for the attacks. There were approximately 30 attacks during this timeframe, most of which did not yield a tremendous amount of casualties.

Typical targets included government and military facilities, transportation infrastructure, and police. These attacks were commonly conducted using explosives or bombs. The majority of the explosive attacks (about 70 percent) happened in 2008. The explosive attacks were aimed mostly at villages and peace keeping stations. After 2009, the tactics shifted from explosions to incidents involving armed assailants. These attacks were mostly attributed to "Abkhazian Guerillas," "Abkhazian Separatists" and "Georgian Militants."

---

<sup>63</sup> Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests", CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 10

<sup>64</sup> Interpressnews, "Tuvalu takes back recognition of independence of Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia". Web. Accessed at: <http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/politicss/56198-tuvalu-takes-back-recognition-of-independence-of-abkhazia-and-so-called-south-ossetia.html?ar=A>

<sup>65</sup> Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests", CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Jim Nichol, "Russia-Georgia Conflict in South Ossetia: Context and Implications for the U.S. Interests", CRS Report for Congress (2008), p. 14

## The Armed Forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria

The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (CRI) and its associated armed forces were an unrecognized, secessionist government of Chechnya formed two months before the dissolution of the Soviet Union and disbanded in 2007. The secessionist group had a total of five leaders from the years of 1991 through 2007. The first president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was Dzhokhar Dudayev (November 9, 1991 to April 21, 1996).<sup>67</sup> The second president was Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev (April 21, 1996 to February 12, 1997).<sup>68</sup> The third president was Aslan Maskhadov (February 12, 1997 to March 8, 2005).<sup>69</sup> The fourth president was Abdul Halim-Salomovich Sadulayev (March 8, 2005 to June 17, 2006).<sup>70</sup> Doku Umarov became the fifth and final leader in October 2007 when he abolished the Republic of Ichkeria to create the successor group called the Caucasus Emirate.<sup>71</sup> The CRI's successor organization, the Caucasus Emirates, is profiled in the next section.

The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria fought two wars against Russia. In the first Chechen War, casualties and fatalities exceeded 100,000, and the capital of the CRI, Grozny, was destroyed.<sup>72</sup> The Second Chechen War added another 20,000-25,000 civilians killed.<sup>73</sup> As with the Georgian secessionist conflicts involving Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the disagreements with Russia and international society about Crimea's status, the conflict between Chechnya and Russia was a failure of a political process to determine how the political status of former Soviet Union territories would be decided in the context of Russian disagreement with other political actors. These territorial disagreements are "linked to broader ambiguities surrounding the concept of sovereignty itself, [and] the political and juridical basis of the Russian Federation."<sup>74</sup> Just as in the cases of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the collapse of the Soviet Union created political questions about Chechnya's sovereign status that both Russia and international legal norms were ill-equipped to answer peacefully.

Armed combat, both by militarized secessionists and the Russian Federation, occurred as a way to solve the question of Chechnya's political status in the context of the Soviet Union's dissolution and a newly emergent Russian state. Chechen leaders understood that denying Russia the ability to assert control over the territory would give them the option to curry international approval for a successful secessionist bid

---

<sup>67</sup> Bale, Jeffrey. "The Chechen Resistance and Radiological Terrorism." NTI. N.p., 1 Apr. 2004. Web. <<http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/chechen-resistance-radiological-terror/>>.

<sup>68</sup> McGregor, Andrew. "The Assassination Of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev: Implications For The War On Terrorism." The Jamestown Foundation, 14 July 2004. Web. .

<sup>69</sup> Patrushev, Nikolai. "Aslan Maskhadov Killed - Kommersant Moscow." Aslan Maskhadov Killed - Kommersant Moscow. N.p., 9 Mar. 2005. Web. <<http://www.kommersant.com/page.asp?id=552963>>.

<sup>70</sup> Hahn, Gordan M. "Islam, Islamism, and Politics in Eurasia Report." Monterey Institute of International Studies. N.p., Report 7 18 Jan. 2010. Web. Jan. 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Kuchins, Andrew C. et al. "The North Caucasus: Russia's Volatile Frontier," March 2011, Center for Strategic and International Studies, [http://csis.org/files/publication/110321\\_Kuchins\\_NorthCaucasus\\_WEB.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/110321_Kuchins_NorthCaucasus_WEB.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Gail W. Lapidus, "Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya", in *International Security*, 23:1 (Summer 1998), pp. 5-49.

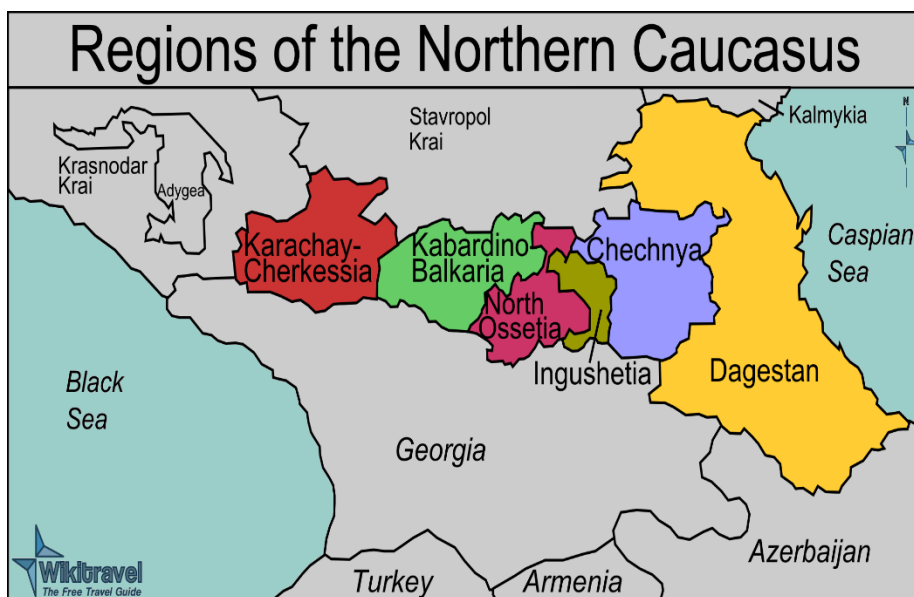
<sup>73</sup> Lapidus, Gail Warshofsky. *Putin's War on Terrorism: Lessons from Chechnya*. 2002. 43,44.

<sup>74</sup> Gail W. Lapidus, "Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya", in *International Security*, 23:1 (Summer 1998), pp. 7.

whereas Russian leaders calculated that only the dismantling of local military and political institutions could bury secessionist sentiment to keep Chechnya in the fold.<sup>75</sup>

The 1989 census revealed that Chechen-Ingush Republic, depicted in **Error! Reference source not found.** below, with 70 percent of its population being Chechen, had some one of the highest concentration of residents of the titular nationality as well as the highest proportion of the everyday use of the titular nationality's language.<sup>76</sup> Russia's second most common religion is Islam, which represents approximately 6.5 percent of the population (majority Sunni).<sup>77</sup> The Muslim portion of the population is concentrated in the Volga Ural region and in the North Caucasus, although Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Siberia also have substantial Muslim populations.<sup>78</sup> The relatively high concentrations of the titular nationality and the pro-nationalism policies of *glasnost* created the conditions under which widespread nationalist mobilization could occur.<sup>79</sup>

Map 2: The Northern Caucasus Regions



In addition to dense, concentrated ethnic networks, Chechens also possess a fair degree of a shared confessional identity, which had flourished despite/because of Soviet religious persecution. Within the Caucasus in general and Chechnya in particular, “the Soviets did not manage to completely eradicate Islam in the northern Caucasus...[Chechen] adherence to external signs of Muslim dogma” persisted “as an

<sup>75</sup> Gail W. Lapidus, “Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya”, in *International Security*, 23:1 (Summer 1998), pp. 5-49.

<sup>76</sup> Gail W. Lapidus, “Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya”, in *International Security*, 23:1 (Summer 1998), pp. 10.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2013&dclid=222261#wrapper>; The Central Intelligence Agency. 2015. “The World Factbook: Russia.” Last modified September 4.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs/html>

<sup>78</sup> “Russia 2013 International Religious Freedom Report.” 2013. International Religious Freedom Report for 2013. The United States Department of State. 2. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/222473.pdf>.

<sup>79</sup> In addition to the Republic of Ichkeria, other nationalist organizations who mobilized included the Ingush Jamaat, Shariat Jamaat, Yarmuk Jamaat, and the Liberation Army of Dagestan.

integral part of an anxiously guarded ethnic identity...even during years of severe repression.”<sup>80</sup> In many ways, the Caucasian flavor of Islam, named “National Islam,” was synecdochic for broad-based, though not necessarily violent, anti-Soviet resistance: National Islam was a “syncretic religious system with a strong Sufi influence, whose organizational groundwork lay in the illegal brotherhoods (*virds*).”<sup>81</sup> The ubiquity of these brotherhoods made the highlands (southern, Ichkerian) Qadiriya *virds* the traditional bastions of anti-Sovietism in the Caucasus.<sup>82</sup>

State-sanctioned anti-Islamic practices and Islamophobic sentiments continued in Russia toward ethnic minorities after the Soviet era, allowing anti-Soviet resistance to morph into anti-Russian resistance. State-sanctioned discrimination occurs because so far as many of Russia’s ethnic minority groups practice Islam and identify as Muslim; this demographic situation has led many Russian elites—including President Putin who described Islamic radicalism as an infection that would lead to either the Islamization or breakup of Russia—to argue and act as if Muslim minorities in Russia are an imminent threat to the Federation at all times.<sup>83</sup>

Chechen secession, militarized if necessary, was part a political strategy to escape the discrimination within the Soviet Union and its successor state, the Russian Federation. The founding ideology of the secessionist movement for the Republic of Ichkeria was pointedly secular through the end of the First Chechen War. The first president of the Republic of Ichkeria, Dzhokhar Musayevich Dudayev (also transliterated sometimes as Jokhar Dudayev), articulated the secular ideology this way: “I would like the Chechen Republic to be an institutional secular state...If religion takes priority over an institutional secular system, a more striking form of...Islamic fundamentalism will emerge” in Chechnya.<sup>84</sup> Despite these secular starts, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria is infamous for Wahhabist jihadism, a doctrine based on the purity of early Islam. The prevalence of Wahhabism in Chechnya, particularly among militarized secessionist movements that Russia opposes, is a phenomena that cannot be taken for granted as a political outcome. Not only is Wahhabism distinct from, and arguably alien to, the Sufi practices characteristic of Caucasian Islam, but the Chechen secessionist movement was specifically started as an anti-Soviet, secular movement. *How did a secular secessionist movement within an anti-Soviet but Sufi society transform into a regional center of Wahhabist jihadism?* Answering this question requires an account of how the practice of Wahhabism came to the Caucasus in addition to an explanation of how Wahhabism displaced two competitor sources of militant ideological DNA: radical, militant secular (territorial) nationalism, on the one hand, and Sufi Islamic nationalism, on the other.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan”, in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.51

<sup>81</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan”, in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.52

<sup>82</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan”, in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.52

<sup>83</sup> Elise Giuliano, “Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 195-220. See especially, pp. 195-196.

<sup>84</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan”, in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.53.

<sup>85</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency”, *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 164.



How did Wahhabism, a rival, distinct form of Islamic practice, emerge within a Sufi-dominated confessional culture? Islamic migrants and refugees from Chechnya, that were “ethnic Arabs or Arabicized descendants of Chechen and other Northern Caucasia refugees and migrants...who had fled or had been forced by Russian colonial authorities to leave for the Ottoman Empire after the end of the Great Caucasian War” were the original waypoints by which people of Chechen heritage became involved in Wahhabism.<sup>86</sup> These descendants radicalized in Afghanistan to Saudi Arabian Wahhabism as it was the prevailing ideology of resistance in that conflict. Due to the shared experience of anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan, al-Qa’ida “funded the establishment of training camps in Chechnya and Georgia’s Pankisi Gorge” to bring “the message of Salafism and global jihadism” to the Republic’s armed forces.<sup>87</sup>

Wahhabism as an ideological core of a segment of the Chechen separatist movements were often as critical of Ichkerian leadership as they were of continued Russian control of Chechnya. Most Russian specialists, in fact, agree that “radical Islam in Chechnya...is a product of the [First Chechen] war rather than a cause of it.”<sup>88</sup> While there is consensus on how Wahhabism came to the Caucasus, the answers of how Wahhabism came to serve as the foundational ideology of the militant Chechen movement falls into three distinct complementary explanations.

1. Ideologically, an Islamic nationalism appealed to the Muslim ethnic majorities within the Caucasus region. Wahhabism outperformed Sufism as a species of Islamic nationalism by not being embedded in the traditional clan structures like Sufism was.
2. Politically, followers of Wahhabism were the least accommodating of a rapprochement between Russia and Chechnya, leading to a fragmentation of the Chechen anti-Russian resistance and a domestic constitutional strategy involving the Islamization of authority, which played to the Wahhabis’ strengths without truly shoring up the more accommodationist elites.<sup>89</sup>
3. Geopolitically, Wahhabist networks were connected to successful transnational Islamist organizations, such as al-Qa’ida, attracting a number of foreign fighters who transformed the militarized movements within Chechnya as a result of their transnational ties.<sup>90</sup>

The first framework explaining how Wahhabism rose to pre-eminence in the Chechen secessionist movement is about the superior ideological fitness of Wahhabism over Sufism for creating a militant nationalism. Many of the *virids* which persisted during Soviet rule were embedded in clan structures,

---

<sup>86</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan”, in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.56.

<sup>87</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. “The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications.” *Russia’s Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2012): 17.

<sup>88</sup> Elise Giuliano, “Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 210.

<sup>89</sup> De Figueiredo, Rui JP, and Barry R. Weingast. “Vicious cycles: Endogenous political extremism and political violence.” *Available at SSRN 1153519* (2000). Pearlman, Wendy, and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham. “Nonstate actors, fragmentation, and conflict processes.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 1 (2012): 3-15. Brian J. Phillips, “Terrorist Group Cooperation and Longevity,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Jun 2014, 58 (2) 336-347.

<sup>90</sup> Gordon Hahn, “Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right”, Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2011, pp. 2-6.

leading to many ongoing political disputes between traditional authorities about Islamic practice. Wahhabism, in contrast, promoted a united, unifying ideological foundation that transcended the clan alliance structure.<sup>91</sup> The egalitarian, militant ideology of Wahhabism thereby stood in contrast to the complicated, hierarchical social structure of the Caucasus; along with the financial assistance that many Wahhabi emissaries brought to Chechnya, the relative egalitarianism of Wahhabism more strongly bound the weaker clans into an anti-Russian secessionist movement.<sup>92</sup>

The second explanation for the rise of Wahhabism is that the Wahhabis were leading critics of President Maskhadov's 1998 policy of accommodation toward Russia, in the context of a declining economy and growing elite dissatisfaction with the domestic distribution of power concentrated in the presidency.<sup>93</sup> The critics labeled Maskhadov's accommodation strategy as "weak and defeatist" and Maskhadov's cultivation of ties with only the more powerful clans as the kind of corruption enabling the proliferation of crime.<sup>94</sup> These ills would be righted by the creation of a "truly Islamic" Wahhabi state in Chechnya.<sup>95</sup> In order to remain in power, given rising dissent and limited political decentralization, Maskhadov "was forced to join the anti-Russian Wahhabi faction or appear to be allied with Moscow."<sup>96</sup> President Maskhadov tried to outmaneuver his critics by announcing an Islamic government in 1999, which stripped his rule of a constitutional basis and made his authority subject to review by imams. The confusion about the ideological foundations of authority in Chechnya—or more precisely the competing centers of authority of the constitution and Wahhabi Islamic jurisprudence—destroyed the ability of the Chechen state to function, leaving only a radicalized militant jihadist movement in its wake.

The third and final explanation concerning Wahhabism's rise is that the Republic of Ichkeria began promoting a more religious and radical ideology as a result of external organization such as al-Qa'ida.<sup>97</sup> In this framework, some Chechen field commanders turned away from western states and the United Nations, due their tepid support for an independent Chechnya, toward "various Muslim parties, organizations and individuals in Islamic states [who] were willing to offer financial and military assistance to promote their ideology of 'pure' Islam."<sup>98</sup> The Chechen Republic of Ichkeria came to function as a jihadist magnet for anti-Russian nationalism in the Caucasus. The most important connection was the CRI-al-Qa'ida network of

---

<sup>91</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan", in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.54.

<sup>92</sup> Elise Giuliano, "Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 213.

<sup>93</sup> Elise Giuliano, "Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 211.

<sup>94</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan", in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.58.

<sup>95</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "Chechnya, Wahhabism and the invasion of Dagestan", in *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 9: 4 (December 2005), p.58.

<sup>96</sup> Elise Giuliano, "Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 213.

<sup>97</sup> Bale, Jeffrey. "The Chechen Resistance and Radiological Terrorism | Articles | NTI Analysis | NTI." NTI: Nuclear Threat Initiative. NTI: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 1 Apr. 2004. Web. May 2012. <<http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/chechen-resistance-radiological-terror/>>.

<sup>98</sup> Elise Giuliano, "Islamic Identity and Political Mobilization in Russia: Chechnya and Dagestan Compared", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11:2, pp. 211.



training camps facilitating mutually beneficial connection between Chechens and al-Qa'ida.<sup>99</sup> These training camps in the Caucasus were a deepening of the relationship of the CRI to al-Qa'ida which began in Afghanistan: Several leaders of CRI participated in al-Qa'ida training camps in Afghanistan before returning to Chechnya to train other Chechens in militant Islamist ideology.<sup>100</sup> In addition, shortly before going underground, the Republic of Ichkeria deepened cooperation with other terrorist organizations across the North Caucasus: the jamaats (assemblies) – Shariat Jamaat, Yarmuk Jamaat, Ingush Jamaat – and the Liberation Army of Dagestan between 2004 and 2007.<sup>101</sup>

More than simply informal affiliation, there were often multiple overlapping formal ties between some of these organizations, such as the Congress of Peoples of Dagestan and Ichkeria whose co-leaders were Chechen rebel Shamil Basayev and Movladi Udugov, Deputy PM of the Republic of Ichkeria. Similarly, before his death in 2006, Shamil Basayev maintained significant and prolonged contact with the Taliban and al-Qa'ida. Over time, he made the transformation from a separatist to a jihadist, working closely with major actors in al-Qa'ida leaders to train fighters.<sup>102</sup>

### Terrorist Violence in the Chechen Republic

During the early stages of the First Chechen war the Republic of Ichkeria's tactics were to wage guerrilla warfare against the Russian Federation. Russia refused to pull their military out of Chechnya so the Republic of Ichkeria began targeting civilians, including, suicide bombing missions with the help of the Riyadus-Salikhin.<sup>103</sup> Explosives, rockets, mortars, RPGs, and machine guns were commonly used in attacks against targets. Public infrastructure such as police stations, businesses, and train stations were commonly attacked.

## Caucasus Emirates

The Caucasus Emirates is a Salafist nationalist organization created in October 2007.<sup>104</sup> The Caucasus Emirates was created as an umbrella organization to consolidate multiple militant groups already operating in the Caucasus region. The goal of this union was to combine jihadist forces into an Islamic governance structure for the Caucasus.

Toward the end of its existence, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria possessed mixed constitutional elements of both an Islamic and a secular state, and the armed forces of the Republic reflected the split between secular nationalists and Wahhabi nationalists. By 2006, shortly before the last President of the Republic,

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/apr/19/chechnya-terror-groups-and-ties-al-qaeda/?page=all>

<sup>100</sup> Aliyev, Huseyn. "CRIA Peace-Building from the Bottom: A Case Study of the North Caucasus." CRIA Peace-Building from the Bottom: A Case Study of the North Caucasus. *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 2010.

<sup>101</sup> Aliyev, Huseyn. "CRIA Peace-Building from the Bottom: A Case Study of the North Caucasus." CRIA Peace-Building from the Bottom: A Case Study of the North Caucasus. *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, 2010.

<sup>102</sup> <http://spectator.org/articles/46731/death-shamil-basayev>

<sup>103</sup> Separatist Extremism in Russia." Institute for the Study of Violent Groups. Institute for the Study of Violent Groups, 2012. Web. June 2012. <[http://vkb.isvg.org/Wiki/Separatist\\_Extremism\\_in\\_Russia](http://vkb.isvg.org/Wiki/Separatist_Extremism_in_Russia)>.

<sup>104</sup> Souleimonov, 2011

Sheikh Doku (Dokka) Khamatovich Umarov, abolished the Republic, the debate between the two nationalist sects went public in a highly publicized Internet debate between Akhmed Khalidovich Zakaev, the moderate foreign minister of the shadow Chechen government, and Movladi Udugov, a jihadist and editor of Islamic journal *Kavkaz Center*.<sup>105</sup> Zakev believed that the Republic should aim toward a Western, democratic model of governance and be oriented toward integration into the global community. Udugov rebuked that view, arguing that a global caliphate which embraced “ethnic Russians who had converted to Islam [over] Chechens who had strayed from their religion,” should be the end goal of Chechen resistance.<sup>106</sup>

In contrast, reversing the policy of the Republic, the constitutional design of the Caucasus Emirates is explicitly based on Islamist ratiocination. One author, in a risk assessment of the Caucasus Emirates noted, only somewhat exaggeratedly, that the Caucasus Emirates’ ideology “is now precisely the same Salafist theo-ideology as that proselytized by [al-Qa’ida] and other groups in the global jihadi revolutionary alliance.”<sup>107</sup> Critically, Umarov supported Udugov’s view; Umarov felt that the pre-existing Russian territories were nothing but “ethnic, territorial colonial zones, created by non-believers for the purpose of dividing up Muslims, and by special decree by the Emir, they were disbanded.”<sup>108</sup> As a result, in part due to this public debate, he abolished the Republic in favor an Islamic emirate whose *raison d’etre* would be the defense of all Muslims worldwide.<sup>109</sup> The declaration of the new emirate increased the amount of religious terminology used in official discourses, the very rhetoric from which “Umarov and his predecessors, not long before, had been trying to distance themselves.”<sup>110</sup>

Upon its creation, Umarov declared himself the Emir of the mujahedeen of the Caucasus Emirate and “leader of the *jihad* and *ghazavat*” of the North Caucasus region.<sup>111</sup> Building off his earlier view that borders were false divisions which masked the true division of the world between believers and infidels, Umarov in a May 2011 interview commented: “I have already mentioned that all those artificial borders, administrative divisions, which the Taghut drew, mean nothing to us. The days when we wanted to secede and dreamed of building a small Chechen Kuwait in the Caucasus are over.”<sup>112</sup> Toward this end, the

---

<sup>105</sup> Dmitry Shlapentokh, “The Rise of the Chechen Emirate?” *Middle East Quarterly* 15: 3, Summer 2008, pp. 49-56. (The online version does not have page numbers.) URL at: <http://www.meforum.org/1931/the-rise-of-the-chechen-emirate> Last accessed: 5 October 2015.

<sup>106</sup> Dmitry Shlapentokh, “The Rise of the Chechen Emirate?” *Middle East Quarterly* 15: 3, Summer 2008, pp. 49-56. (The online version does not have page numbers.) URL at: <http://www.meforum.org/1931/the-rise-of-the-chechen-emirate> Last accessed: 5 October 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. “The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications.” *Russia’s Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2012): pp. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency”, *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 161

<sup>109</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency”, *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 161

<sup>110</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency”, *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 161

<sup>111</sup> Emil Souleimanov, “The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency”, *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 163.

<sup>112</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. “The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications.” *Russia’s Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2012): 10.

Caucasus Emirates have organized themselves in a similar manner to that of al-Qa’ida, utilizing a decentralized command structure that allows a great deal of autonomy to the aligned *Jamaats*, which is the term for an Islamic council or assembly that operate within *vilayats* (governorate or provinces in Arabic).<sup>113</sup> Each *vilayats* has a specific leader that is assigned by the Emir and approved by the supreme council according to sharia law.<sup>114</sup> These leaders swear a *bay’at* (oath of allegiance) to the Emir. All *vilayats* contain multiple *Jamaats* and independently recruit and finance operations in support of the Emir’s strategy.<sup>115</sup> This organizational structure is ideal for the Caucasus Emirate: *Jamaats* are able to be self-sufficient and conduct separate or coordinated tasks at their own discretion.<sup>116</sup> The mountainous terrain of the area plays in favor of the Caucasus Emirate, providing cover and concealment from Russian security forces and separating the independent provinces.<sup>117</sup>

Map 3: The Provinces of the Caucasus Emirate



<sup>113</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right", A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, August 2011, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 24.

<sup>114</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency", *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 164.

<sup>115</sup> Gordon M. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right", A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, August 2011, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2012): 29.

<sup>117</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency", *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 155-168.

Some forms of traditional state-building, however, are occurring within the Caucasus Emirate, if only to consolidate the Emirate's control over territory in an international system largely devised on fixed, territorial boundaries. There are four elements of the Emirate state-building project:

1. Sharia courts and *qadis* as a basis of a judiciary system
2. The promulgation and enforcement of a legal sharia order through the coercive instruments of the Emirate. This order is secured against the potential disorder caused by not-rightly guided owners, workers, gaming patrons, prostitutes and consumers/sellers of alcohol.
3. A tax-collection and assessment system based on *zakyat* for the Emirate military, police and judiciary
4. Public diplomacy campaign for the purposes of fostering radicalization and spreading the jihadi message<sup>118</sup>

Russia has pursued two strategies to defeat the Caucasus Emirate, which can loosely be described as out-gunning and out-governing. The out-gunning strategy focused on military means of inducing organizational collapse through leadership decapitation strategies as well as leadership abduction operations.<sup>119</sup> Some of these military activities have involved non-kinetic tactics, including better intelligence coordination between state agencies tasked with responding, removal of the longest serving republic presidents and presidential amnesty for mujahedeen who demobilize.<sup>120</sup>

In terms of out-governing, Presidents Putin and Medvedev prioritized rebuilding Chechen infrastructure in the wake of two brutal wars. As President Putin has started major re-building and public works projects to provide for local employment and President Medvedev heavily subsidized Ingushetia to promote development and employment.<sup>121</sup> As Prime Minister, Putin also drafted an ambitious economic development plan targeted at the larger Caucasus region that supported, rather than regulated, independent civil society organizations.<sup>122</sup> In addition, the Presidents pursued a policy called "chechenization", which involves "co-opting (buying off) Chechen leaders" and transforming the coercive apparatus of the Russian state to have a Chechen, rather than a Russian, face.<sup>123</sup> As a constitutional strategy, chechenization is fundamentally about devolving "prerogative powers to a powerful president" of Chechnya.<sup>124</sup> This policy has brought stability to the Chechen region: For instance, once the Chechen

---

<sup>118</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College* (2012): 12.

<sup>119</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College* (2012): 45.

<sup>120</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College* (2012): 45.

<sup>121</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College* (2012): 47.

<sup>122</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. "The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications." *Russia's Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College* (2012): 45.

<sup>123</sup> Miriam Matejova, "Russian 'Chechenization' and the Prospects for Peace", *International Journal on World Peace*, 30: 2 (June 2013), p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> Richard Sakwa, "The Revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia", *Nationalities Papers*, 38: 5 (September 2010), pp. 601,

security forces operating on behalf of the Russian Federation were better equipped and trained, intra-Chechen violence reduced as well as direct violence between Chechens and Russian soldiers.<sup>125</sup>

Sometimes the out-governing and out-gunning strategies complement each other, as they do in the formation of the Kadyrov regime—the Russian Federation’s governors of Chechnya—which some analysts have reasonable characterized as “authoritarian in character” involving mass “disappearances, torture and various other human rights abuses.”<sup>126</sup> Akhmat Kadyrov, a former mufti of Chechnya, established the Kadyrov regime following his appointment as head of the federal administration in Chechnya on June 12, 2000.<sup>127</sup> Kadyrov I was assassinated in May 2004, and was succeeded by his son in 2007, as soon as Ramzan Kadyrov came of legal age.<sup>128</sup>

The devolution and concentration of local power into the Kadyrov regime offers a glimpse of what Russian nation-civilization might look like in areas that it annexes and intervenes in. Chechenization, as a form of “separatism-lite,” creates a working political equilibrium as it allows the “Chechen leader to run the country as he sees fit” while maintaining Russian political hegemony over territory it considers important.<sup>129</sup> In current Russian foreign policy doctrine, as noted before, lands outside the former boundaries of the Soviet Union are imagined as a part of a complex nationality regime of the transborder civilization of *Novorossiya*, the lands within the Russian Federation are to be governed as a part of a complex territoriality regime known as the “dual-state model” of local units operating in conjunction with Moscow’s political needs, but are functionally distinct administration.<sup>130</sup>

### Terrorist Violence in the Caucasus Emirate

On February 8, 2010, the Russian Federation was the first to formally recognize the Caucasus Emirate as a terrorist organization. And from that we have seen a typical hard line taken by Russia in regards to this terrorist organization, conducting raids and strategic killings of key leadership. The United States joined Russia in formally designating the Caucasus Emirate a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224 on May 26, 2011.<sup>131</sup> The United Nations was quick to follow the United States lead and announced their formal designation on July 29, 2011.<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Miriam Matejova, “Russian ‘Chechenization’ and the Prospects for Peace”, *International Journal on World Peace*, 30: 2 (June 2013), p. 14.

<sup>126</sup> Miriam Matejova, “Russian ‘Chechenization’ and the Prospects for Peace”, *International Journal on World Peace*, 30: 2 (June 2013), pp. 16, 14.

<sup>127</sup> Richard Sakwa, “The Revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia”, *Nationalities Papers*, 38: 5 (September 2010), pp. 606,

<sup>128</sup> Richard Sakwa, “The Revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia”, *Nationalities Papers*, 38: 5 (September 2010), pp. 606,

<sup>129</sup> John Russell, “Ramzan Kadyrov: The Indigenous Key to Success in Putin’s Chechenization Strategy?”, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 36:4 (2008), p. 660.

<sup>130</sup> Richard Sakwa, “The Revenge of the Caucasus: Chechenization and the dual state in Russia”, *Nationalities Papers*, 38: 5 (September 2010). John Russell, “Ramzan Kadyrov: The Indigenous Key to Success in Putin’s Chechenization Strategy?”, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 36:4 (2008).

<sup>131</sup> Hahn, Gordon M. “The Caucasus Emirate Jihadists: The Security and Strategic Implications.” *Russia’s Homegrown Insurgency: Jihad in the North Caucasus*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (2012): pp.2.

<sup>132</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2011



There have been 42 separate attacks that have been carried out by the Caucasus Emirate. Suicide bombings are the preferred method of attack in the region. The most frequent attack targets are legitimate targets of war, the *siloviki*—those members of the security services, the Army and the forces from the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>133</sup> Police stations, as well as train stations and other modes of transportation were targeted to maximize casualties and effect of attack. Transportation systems such as trains and airports have been targeted more recently and with increased effectiveness and organization. The level of coordination and organization has increased recently, which leads one to believe that this group is evolving and receiving some form of training that is increasing the level of sophistication in their attacks.<sup>134</sup>

The Caucasus Emirate were created to assist in the mobilization of militants across Russia. Therefore, the majority of the funding and organization is done by terrorist organizations, such as al-Qa'ida and the Taliban, as well as the Chechen government.<sup>135</sup> The CE's alliance with external criminal and terrorist groups continues: The Caucasus Emirates in May 2015 posted an oath of allegiance to ISIS online.<sup>136</sup> Overall, their relations with Russia are tense and violent. Ideologies in the region transformed from nationalist to radical Sunni extremist.

The Caucasus Emirate is currently operating in the south-east portion of the Russian Federation throughout the Caucasus Mountains. Specifically, the Caucasus Emirate's area of operation is confined to six Vilayats (provinces listed from east to west): Dagestan, Nogay Steppe (the southeast part of Stavropol Krai), Noxçiyçö (Chechnya), Ğalğayçö (Ingushetia), Iriston (North Ossetia) and Kabardino-Balkaria-Karachay<sup>137</sup>

## Conclusions

The evidence from these four cases is that Russia's *civilization-state* strategy requires an expansive view of its obligations toward Russian-speakers across international boundaries, which in turn is internationalizing the ethno-nationalist conflicts occurring within its borders. Russia's civilization-state strategy operates on distinctive logics with respect to its nationality and territoriality regime. This distinctive logic, because of its functional rejection of the principles of the Western state system of territorial entities separated by stable borders, breeds conflict and disorder, both domestically and abroad. Although nationalism has been largely understood as ethnic domination within a single state, or aspiring

---

<sup>133</sup> Emil Souleimanov, "The Caucasus Emirate: Genealogy of an Islamist Insurgency", *Middle East Policy* 18:4 (Winter 2011), pp 165.

<sup>134</sup> 2015. Global Terrorism Database. Retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>

<sup>135</sup> <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/255>

<sup>136</sup> Regis Gente, "Is this the end of the Caucasus Emirate?" in OpenDemocracy.net, 29 June 2015. Accessed at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/regis-gente/is-this-end-of-caucasus-emirate>. Last accessed: 5 November 2015.

<sup>137</sup> Hahn, G.M. (2011). A Report of the Center for Strategic and International Studies: Russia and Eurasia Program: Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right. Washington, D.C. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Retrieved from [http://russiaotherpointsofview.typepad.com/files/hahn\\_gettingcaucasusemiratert\\_web.pdf](http://russiaotherpointsofview.typepad.com/files/hahn_gettingcaucasusemiratert_web.pdf)

to get a “state of one’s own,” Russia’s interaction with nationalism expresses a range of institutional forms beyond the establishments of separate states.

Abroad, Russia’s pursuit of unity between ethnic and linguistic Russians increases conflict by not respecting establishing borders and zones of governance. Moreover, it encourages Russia to sponsor terrorist and secessionist groups in neighboring countries to either increase its territorial gains (in the case of Crimea) or to expand its basing rights and transnational military infrastructure (in the case of Georgia). These secessionist groups exist because of the former Soviet Union’s nationality regime preserving and creating national elites distinct from the titular republics in which they were situated. Russia’s post-Soviet Union involvement with these groups stems from its expansive view of a civilization of peoples centered on, but fundamentally larger than, the Russian Federation.

At home, the Russian pursuit of civilization will only increase the distance in the bargaining space between the federal government and its secessionist minorities for a peaceful resolution to political disagreements. With the mobilizing power of both an Islamic network sustained during decades of Soviet persecution as well as territorial nationalism against Russian intrusion, many of Russia’s Caucasian minorities will continue to react violently to Russia attempts to unilaterally settle political disagreements about sovereignty. These militarized minorities exist because the international politics of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union could not accommodate these ethnically distinct republics that were not titular republics. Russian military retaliation against internal separatism movements produced the ironic effect of preventing the secessionism caused by the distinct nationality regime of the former Soviet Union by institutionalizing a distinct dual-state territoriality regime of local authoritarian rule operating on behalf of the Russian Federation.