

Chechenization: Ironies and Intricacies

ROBERT BRUCE WARE

Associate Professor of Philosophy

Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

THE TERM “CHECHENIZATION” INITIALLY DESCRIBED a set of Kremlin policies that handed Chechens responsibility for the conflict in Chechnya, aiming to relieve Russian troops of some combat duties by effectively predetermining a Chechen civil war.

If that objective were not sufficiently ironic, the term also bore alternative connotations for those with opposing aspirations. For the Islamist ideologues of what later became the self-styled Caucasus Emirate, “Chechenization” suggested the export of Islamic Sharia law throughout the North Caucasus, much as a Sharia society was established in Chechnya in 1999. Chechenization from this perspective presupposed the intensification of conflict between Russian and Islamist forces along with Russia’s expansion to other parts of the region. These aspirations were realized, for example, by attacks in Mozdok, North Ossetia, on 5 June and 1 August 2003; in Nazran, Ingushetia, on 21 June 2004; in Beslan, North Ossetia on 1 September 2004; and in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria on 13 October 2005.¹ In those years, journalists, policymakers, and NGOs, commonly described these conflicts as “spilling across Chechnya’s borders to neighboring republics.”² “Chechenization” in this sense suggested expanded violence, growing instability, and greater regional control for the Islamists.

Ironically, Chechenization occurred in both of these senses at once: the conflict in Chechnya became a civil war that gradually sidelined Russian forces in Chechnya, even as it “spilled into neighboring republics.” Of course, the ostensibly “overflowing” insurgency actually had much to do with endemic problems in sur-

ROBERT WARE is currently an associate professor of philosophy at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. He has taught at Oxford University, the University of Buckingham, and Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi. Since 1996, he has conducted field research in the North Caucasus with support from the National Research Council and the National Council for Eurasian and Eastern European Research.

Copyright © 2009 by the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*

rounding territories, problems that provoked distinctively local forms of militancy and protest. Over the passing years, these local distinctions added further ironies and nuances to notions of Chechenization. Indeed, as a consequence of the formative influence that the Chechen war had upon the Putin administration, the ramifications of its Chechenization policy rippled further outward from Chechnya, across the North Caucasus, arguably across all of Russia, and across the Caucasus mountains themselves.

ORIGINS OF CHECHENIZATION

Throughout his terms as Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin veered erratically among several prime ministerial appointments, casually tossing the title to Sergei Stepashin in May 1999. Yet, when Chechen militants invaded the neighboring Republic of Dagestan on 2 August of that year, the chaotic federal response was uncomfortably emblematic of Yeltsin's bumbling administration. One week after the invasion began, Yeltsin tapped the obscure director of the Federal Security Service (FSB). At the time, Vladimir Putin seemed an unlikely prime minister; yet his self-assured approach to the military operation in Dagestan won immediate public approval, as did his belligerent reaction to apartment bombings in Moscow and Volgograd that September.³

Putin's leadership style and administrative priorities were arguably cast during the military and political trauma of those initial months. It is no coincidence that at the stroke of the 2000 New Year, the very moment of Yeltsin's surprise resignation, Putin was not seated at the feet of his disgraced superior, but at the table of his new-found allies in Dagestan. "I love the people of Dagestan," he proclaimed.

Before Putin Chechenized Chechnya, Chechnya Chechenized Putin. Given the dramatic events during the formative months of his leadership, it is no surprise that Putin's administration of Russia, and particularly of the North Caucasus, was shaped by the demands that greeted him as he assumed power in the autumn of 1999. Hence, security, strength, and Kremlin control took precedence over local

If the signature of Yeltsin's administration had been radical decentralization, Putin dedicated his presidency to precisely the opposite course.

accountability, democratization, and socio-economic development. If the signature of Yeltsin's administration had been radical decentralization,

Putin dedicated his presidency to precisely the opposite course. In May 2000, Putin inaugurated his program for the recentralization of Russia. Given the early success of his militaristic approach to Dagestan and Chechnya, it came as little surprise

that his bureaucratic model was Russian military organization. Just as the latter was organized through its central command of seven districts, so too was the new federal state. The North Caucasus fell into the nascent Southern Federal District.

On 12 June, Putin appointed the Chechen mufti, Akhmed Kadyrov, to head the new Chechen administration that Moscow was constructing. Putin's plan was to turn the Chechen conflict over to the Kadyrov regime, which would be integrated as a local element in federally centralized bureaucratic structures. The plan was feasible because Chechens, like Kadyrov, had been alienated by Islamists who dominated Chechnya during its period of de facto independence from August 1996 to October 1999.⁴ Kadyrov himself had fought against Russia in the first Chechen War, but was now prepared to align with old enemies against his new Islamist antagonists. Until his assassination in May 2004, Akhmed Kadyrov was a ruthless tactician, offering amnesties to Chechen militants at the same time that he made their operations more perilous. As more rebels switched sides, Kadyrov welcomed them into his administration, consolidated his power, and grew increasingly independent from Moscow.

After Akhmed's assassination,⁵ real power passed to his son, Ramzan, who pursued his father's policies with ruthlessness abandon. As he ignored charges of abuse, intimidation became the foundation for the cult of personality that he constructed around himself and his father's memory. His personal militia overshadowed those of rival loyalist warlords, including Movladi Baysarov, Said-Magomed Kakiyev, and the Yamadaev brothers. By the beginning of 2008, Ramzan had eliminated his rivals and had taken control of all other Defense and Interior Ministry Forces operating in Chechnya, with the sole exception of the Yamadaevs and their Vostock Battalion.

Moscow gradually ceded combat, administrative, and reconstructive responsibilities to former separatists in the Kadyrov administration. Moscow also allocated vast sums of money to its Chechen proxies. Between 2002 and 2006, Moscow sent to Chechnya 30.6 billion rubles (\$1.25 billion). In July 2007, Ramzan asked Putin for 168.8 billion rubles (\$6.6 billion) through 2010. Moscow was ineffective in tracking this money, though federal audits uncovered evidence of widespread corruption.

Nevertheless, Kadyrov could present Chechenization as a successful policy. Chechnya was being stabilized and reconstructed as a federal subject. In 2007, new housing was built for more than 1,000 refugees, along with scores of schools and clinics. In addition to reconstructed residential and commercial districts, Grozny, had a refurbished university, a new hospital, and a new airport with daily flights to Moscow. The capital's central square was dominated by a new mosque, accom-

modating 10,000 worshippers. As the economy gradually recovered, future stability seemed assured. Yet, irony is the consort of success.

THE IRONY OF INDEPENDENT CHECHNYA

In April 2008, tensions flared between Kadyrov and his last remaining rival, Sulim Yamadaev. Yamadaev commanded the Vostok Battalion of Chechen fighters, who operated under the auspices of Russian Military Intelligence (GRU). Approximately 375 Vostok troops had been responsible for combating rebels in eastern Chechnya, while Kadyrov personally controlled approximately 10,000 fighters.

In the city of Gudermes, on 14 April, a convoy of Vostok vehicles did not yield to Kadyrov's motorcade, causing a crash and a skirmish in which at least two people, and as many as 18 were killed. On 17 April, Chechnya's parliament urged Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov to dissolve Vostok or replace Yamadaev. On 19 April, there was a meeting of Defense Ministry officials to consider the future of the Vostok Battalion. The meeting was attended by General Aleksandr Baranov, Commander of the North Caucasus Military District, and General-Colonel Sergei Makarov, the Chief of the Staff of the District. The military brass decided to postpone a decision until after Dmitry Medvedev's presidential inauguration at the beginning of May. Immediately after the meeting, GRU Special Forces were dispatched to defend the main Vostok base against any hostile actions by Kadyrov's men. The move was widely seen as victory for Yamadaev, who called Kadyrov "a coward" on a popular Russian radio program that same day.

Rumors spreading from Moscow to the Caucasus anticipated that Medvedev would remove Kadyrov in favor of a leader with personal loyalties to him, and not primarily to Putin. Many analysts argued that Yamadaev could not be removed, and some reported that Kadyrov had already been notified of his impending transfer. As whispers breezed about the mountains, there was speculation that Medvedev might remove leaders in neighboring republics as well. Analysts argued that the Ministry's support for Vostok indicated that Medvedev might be more independent of Putin than had been previously foreseen. Kadyrov acknowledged these rumors on 17 April but insisted that he would remain in power.

If Vladimir Putin's ascendance to the Russian presidency was the beginning of the end for Chechen independence, there is a sense in which Dmitri Medvedev's succession marked the beginning of its reprise. In the week following his inauguration in May 2008, President Medvedev overruled powerful forces within the Russian Defense Ministry to consolidate the Kadyrov's control. On 12 May, Kadyrov announced the suspension of Sulim Yamadaev as commander of the Vostok Battalion, thereby eliminating the last Russian federal security agency that operated in the republic independently

of his control.

The move culminated Putin's Chechenization policy and signaled Medvedev's intent to sustain the policies of his predecessor in the North Caucasus. Paradoxically, Putin brought the North Caucasian republics under Moscow's bureaucratic power by ceding nearly complete local control and large economic subsidies to local elites in exchange for their loyalty to the Kremlin. Medvedev consolidated these policies in Chechnya by sidelining Defense Ministry officials in favor of Kadyrov. Having overcome the last federal agency in Chechnya, Kadyrov and his Chechen administration operated in conditions that approached autonomy. After fighting for fifteen years to prevent Chechen independence, Moscow subsidized its approximation.

POLICY PROLIFERATION

As he had first appointed Akhmed Kadyrov to rule Chechnya in 2000, Putin sought to extend central control by installing the president of the neighboring Republic of Ingushetia. In 2001, the Kremlin oversaw the removal of Ingushetia's popularly elected and highly effective President Ruslan Aushev. Though he had served as a general in Afghanistan, Aushev resisted the brutal military operations that Moscow was mounting in Chechnya. In Aushev's place, Moscow installed a bureaucrat, an obscure and pliable FSB colonel named Murat Zyazikov.

161

Lacking a local political base, Zyazikov's authority depended upon the unbridled force of federal and local security organizations. By 2003, young men were disappearing at an alarming rate in sometimes-blatant abductions by law enforcement personnel. Along with endemic poverty and rampant government corruption, these disappearances fueled a violent resistance with Islamist aspirations. On the night of 21 June 2004, Chechen and Ingush fighters launched well-coordinated attacks against law enforcement officials across Ingushetia. Thereafter, these attacks had become daily occurrences.

APPOINTMENT IN BESLAN

On 1 September 2004, a group of Chechen and Ingush militants under the direction of Chechen leader Shamil Basaev commandeered School No. 1 in Beslan, North Ossetia. They held over 1,100 hostages under harsh conditions in the school gymnasium. Following events that remain controversial, at least 334 hostages died, including 186 children. The episode shocked the world, convulsed Russia, and altered the course of Islamist militancy in the North Caucasus. Though his invasions of Dagestan had not

The episode shocked the world, convulsed Russia, and altered the course of Islamist militancy in the North Caucasus.

substantially discredited Basaev outside of Russia, the events in Beslan were condemned across the Muslim world, and he was blamed even by some of his militant Chechen supporters.

On 13 September 2004, President Putin cited this security crisis in the North Caucasus as calling for a strongly centralized federal bureaucracy. Toward this end, he announced sweeping electoral changes in Russia's 89 regions. The plan strengthened federal control by giving the Russian president power to nominate regional governors with the "endorsement" of regional legislatures, much as had previously occurred in Chechnya and Ingushetia. In a sense, Russia's remaining 87 regions were now being "Chechenized."

At the same time, Putin expressed support for a Central Election Commission proposal to eliminate the single mandate constituencies that accounted for half of the seats in the Russian State Duma, thereafter requiring that all Duma representatives should be seated from lists compiled by the national parties. This move effectively eliminated independent deputies in the Duma, strengthened party control of the body, and effectively reduced the number of viable federal parties. At the time of the announcement, the pro-Kremlin, United Russia Party enjoyed a two-thirds majority in the Duma, sufficient to initiate changes to the constitution. Proponents of these changes argued that they would reduce local corruption, streamline decision making, and strengthen government control in response to threats such as North Caucasian terrorism.

APPOINTMENT IN KABARDINO-BALKARIA

In September 2005, Putin appointed Arsen Kanokov, a Moscow-based businessman, as President of Kabardino-Balkaria. Putin clearly hoped that his policy of giving free reign to an entrepreneur who had found success outside the republic would help to stem corruption and promote economic reform. One month later, Chechen and Ingush militants led local fighters in attacks against several sites in the capital city of Nalchik. Since then, corruption and Islamism have proliferated together.

To his credit, Kanokov has reduced federal subsidies from 65 to 57 percent, and some indicators have shown marginal economic improvement. Yet the key agricultural and mining industries have gravely deteriorated, and lowland resorts, which traditionally provided jobs to thousands of locals, have closed. Some highland ski resorts have opened, but these have been constructed on traditional Balkar grazing land. They have thereby benefited the Kabardin elite at the Balkar's expense and exacerbated smoldering ethnic tensions. The only flourishing industry is the production of alcoholic beverages. Clan elites have seized much of the remaining economy and respond to interference with tactics that range from the formal-legal to the unabashedly lawless. Unemployment is officially estimated at 23 percent—three times the national average—though the true figure is thought to be much greater.

APPOINTMENT IN DAGESTAN

In the republic immediately east of Chechnya, Dagestan's first president, Mukhu Aliev, was appointed by Putin on 16 February 2006. Previously, the Dagestanis innovated a unique democratic system that they sustained for exactly nine years, from 26 July 1994 to 26 July 2003. The system boasted the only collegial executive among 89 Russian federal subjects, and the only executive that was not directly elected. While these democratic institutions grew increasingly troubled, they were successful in achieving Dagestan's primary political objective: they avoided the conflict among Dagestan's 30-plus ethnic groups that had seemed nearly inevitable following the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁶

The collegial executive (State Council) seated a representative from each of the republic's 14 titular ethnic groups. Members of the State Council were elected by the Constitutional Assembly, which was composed of representatives to the People's Assembly plus one additional representative from

The election involved a complex procedure that successfully sidelined ethnic chauvinists and promoted candidates with inter-ethnic appeal.

each of the Assembly's 121 electoral districts. The election involved a complex procedure that successfully sidelined ethnic chauvinists and promoted candidates with inter-ethnic appeal. Representatives to the People's Assembly were elected according to a system that almost precisely reproduced the proportion of each ethnic group in the republic's population.⁷ This system also saw Dagestan through a staggering series of problems that followed from protracted ethnic conflicts in all of its surrounding territories. These included an influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees in conditions of near-total economic collapse, a virtual blockade during the first Chechen War (1994 to 1996), two invasions by militants from Chechnya in 1999, and abandonment by all major international relief organizations from the end of 1997 to the summer of 2000.⁸

However, Dagestan's democracy proved to be problematic. The Chair of the State Council never rotated, as required by Dagestan's 1994 constitution. Instead, it was monopolized by the representative of the Dargins, Dagestan's second largest ethnic group. Political power became increasingly corrupted and concentrated in the hands of a small number of elites. Moscow annually subsidized approximately 80 percent of Dagestan's budget, much of which lined the pockets of local bureaucrats.⁹

Beginning in April 2000, the Federal Prosecutor's office required Dagestani officials to make a series of changes in order to bring their constitution into accord with that of the Russian Federation. At first, they required 45 amendments to Dagestan's constitution. Then, Dagestan's ethnic electoral system underwent a series of changes. Finally, in 2003, the Dagestanis yielded to federal pressures to adopt a presidential system of government, though their first president was appointed nearly three years later.¹⁰

Dagestan's first president, Mukhu Aliev, was a former leader of Dagestan's Communist Party, who had gone on to chair the People's Assembly and who was widely viewed as a principled leader without ties to any of Dagestan's factions. Expectations rose following Aliev's early moves to rationalize bureaucratic appointments and eliminate some corrupt local officials. These expectations culminated in a series of popular protests against corrupt local administrators. To the horror of local residents, these protests were suppressed (sometimes by elite police forces from Dagestan's capital) with unprecedented brutality. Aliev stated that the government could not yield to popular protests because it would be a slippery slope to increasing demands and eventual chaos.¹¹

Aliev and other Dagestani bureaucrats are no longer accountable to the local population, but only to the central bureaucracy in Moscow. Under these conditions, political power has contracted into fewer hands and government corruption has increased and permeated all levels of public administration.¹²

Traditionally, Dagestan is the most intensely Muslim society in Russia. In 1989, it became the first Russian republic to see the arrival of radical Islamism.¹³ In 2002, Dagestani Islamists began a long series of near-daily attacks upon law enforcement officials. Subsequent police brutality radicalized more members of the population. Islamist attacks declined shortly after Aliev's appointment, due in part to the popular mood and in part to enhanced law enforcement. However, Islamist attacks again increased after peaceful protests were brutally suppressed. While most of Dagestan's Muslims are strongly opposed to radicalism, Islam provides the only non-bureaucratic form of social organization, and Islamism is the only form of political opposition. These propensities for destabilization are exacerbated by economic stagnation, low wages, high unemployment, infrastructural decay, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of communicable diseases.¹⁴

STALIN'S LEGACIES

Under the brutal, weak, and increasingly corrupt regime of Murat Zyazikov, Ingushetia saw militant attacks upon law enforcement and government officials nearly every day from 2004 through 2008. Yet, in contrast to Dagestan and Chechnya, the same years also saw the growth of a peaceful opposition movement that called for the removal of Zyazikov and his replacement by his popular predecessor, Ruslan Aushev. The opposition had grown to include well over 80 percent of the Ingush population by the summer of 2008. It was at that point—during Russia's brief war with Georgia and its recognition of South Ossetian claims for independence from Tbilisi—which threatened to revive a smoldering conflict between the Russian republics of Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

Ingushetia and North Ossetia fought a brief but bloody war over their disputed

claims to the Prigorodnyi region in 1992. This territory was inhabited primarily by Ingushes until 1944, when Stalin deported the entire Ingush and Chechen populations to Central Asia and annexed Prigorodnyi to North Ossetia. When the Ingushes returned to the region in the 1950s and 1960s, they found their homes inhabited by Ossetians. Since then, many Ingush refugees have been consigned to squalid settlements. Conflict broke out shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Ossetians prevailed over the Ingush with the help of Russian troops, who defended established boundaries. Since then tensions have smoldered ominously.

As Stalin gave Prigorodnyi to North Ossetia, so he awarded South Ossetia to his Georgian homeland. Yet while Russia had defended Stalin's partition of Ingush land, it declined to recognize his disposition of South Ossetia in the aftermath of its war with Georgia in August 2008. Moscow's inconsistency toward Stalin's territorial demarcations added to the bitterness that Ingushes felt toward the brutal and corrupt Zyazikov regime that Moscow had imposed upon them. With a civil war already at hand in Ingushetia, Moscow faced the prospect of a massive popular uprising.

Kremlin officials had four options: 1) Retain Zyazikov; 2) Replace Zyazikov with Aushev; 3) Replace Zyazikov with someone else; or 4) Reunite Ingushetia with Chechnya. Retention was unlikely given the rapid escalation of instability. Yet despite the support of Ingushetia's peaceful opposition movement, Aushev's reprise was also improbable. While negotiating the Beslan hostage crisis, Aushev had prominently opposed Putin's tactics.

Ingushetia separated from Chechnya in 1992, and its reunification had been proposed by Chechen leaders. Yet since most Ingushes opposed reunification, this strategy would be unlikely to bring peace. Moreover, reunification would further strengthen Chechnya's autocratic ruler, Ramzan Kadyrov. Ramzan's triumph over Yamadaev, his neutralization of the last GRU force in Chechnya, and his achievement of near autonomy had disturbed top officials in Russia's Defense Ministry. This left the third option.

APPOINTMENT IN INGUSHETIA

By some accounts, Yunus-bek Yevkurov declined the Presidency of Ingushetia on two previous occasions but finally agreed to an offer that included Kremlin concessions. Without hesitation, Medvedev accepted Murat Zyazikov's resignation of 30 October 2008, and appointed Yevkurov as his replacement. On the following day, the Ingush Parliament endorsed the appointment and installed Yevkurov for a five-year term as Ingushetia's third president.

Yevkurov was born in 1963, among seven siblings in a peasant household in the Prigorodnyi region. His mother was among those who could not recover their homes

after their deportation. He graduated from the same school that was later the scene of the Beslan hostage crisis. He graduated from the Ryazan School for Airborne Troops in 1989 and from the Frunze Military Academy in 1997.

While stationed with peacekeeping forces in Bosnia in 1999, Yevkurov led a task force on a rapid 500-km march that secured the Pristina International Airport ahead of NATO troops. He thereby assured a Russian presence in Kosovo after NATO's aerial campaign against Serbia. A year later Yevkurov commanded the 217th Guards Airborne Regiment in Chechnya. While on a reconnaissance mission, his team discovered a group of captive Russian soldiers. After securing the captives, Yevkurov's men were surrounded by Chechen reinforcements. While Yevkurov provided cover, his men evacuated the wounded. Though injured himself, Yevkurov carried a fellow soldier to safety. Twelve Russian captives were rescued. On 13 April 2000, Yevkurov received his country's highest honorary award as a Hero of Russia.

In 2004, Yevkurov graduated from the Military Academy of the General Staff, and served as Intelligence Division Deputy Commander of the Volga-Urals Military District. His associates included Lieutenant General Vladimir Shamanov, the former commander of Russian forces in Chechnya who subsequently headed the armed forces' Main Combat Training and Service Directorate, and Anatoly Kvashnin, the former chief of the armed forces' general staff who became the presidential envoy to the Siberian Federal District. Major-General Yevkurov's appointment was greeted with favor throughout Ingushetia. Ruslan Aushev was quoted as saying "Yevkurov is the best solution for Ingushetia." Yevkurov immediately embarked upon a range of populist overtures. He canceled inaugural celebrations and went to the central mosque to pray at the end of his first day in office. Within the next few days, he met with key opposition figures who advanced him a line of political credit that would see him through

166

After referring to the police as "cowards," Yevkurov challenged them to resume nighttime patrols, which they did. his first hundred days in office. He visited the family of Magomed Yevloyev, an opposition leader who was slain by police in August. He appointed opposition leaders to official positions. Yevkurov supported the legal rights of young Ingush men being held in pretrial detention in Kabardino-Balkaria and stated that those detained in Ingushetia would not be presumed guilty. After referring to the police as "cowards," Yevkurov challenged them to resume nighttime patrols, which they did.

Yevkurov blocked officials from privatizing public lands around the capital, and he demolished a fence that was built years before by Ibragim Malsagov, a former prime minister. Because the private fence blocked an urban street, it was a symbol of official arrogance and corruption that had long raised popular ire. Yet, Malsagov's influence was so great that not even Ruslan Aushev had dismantled the fence.

Yevkurov has also moved to revive the Ingush oil industry, Ingushneftgazprom. Oil revenues have been sharply reduced due to poor management and pilfering. Over a billion rubles in taxes were owed, and oil workers were not paid for three months. Yevkurov immediately sacked Aslan Khamkoyev and appointed Ruslan Korigov to succeed him as acting head of operations. He ordered the resumption of payments to workers.

Yet, the high expectations that have been generated by his early days in power may also work against Yevkurov. Like Yevkurov, Dagestan's Aliev's was greeted with widespread enthusiasm as the new leader dedicated himself to government reform. Aliev's auspicious start generated expectations that issued in popular protests against corrupt local leaders. Fearing that concessions would lead to further protests, Aliev supported a brutal crackdown. With subsequently diminished popular support, Aliev, like Zyazikov, grew dependent on a corrupt bureaucracy and brutal enforcement. Islamist militancy flourished as Dagestan's only viable form of political opposition. Only Ingushetia saw more violent attacks.

As the only republic in the North Caucasus with a peaceful opposition movement, Ingushetia has shown that this can be a viable strategy. Similar movements will probably sprout in other Russian republics, which is probably one of the reasons why the Kremlin delayed Zyazikov's removal. Like Aliev in Dagestan, the Kremlin may have feared that if it responded to popular protest by removing one corrupt leader, then many more protests would follow. The decision not to reunite Ingushetia and Chechnya combined with the appointment of a GRU officer in Ingushetia may signal the limits of Kadyrov's latitude in Chechnya and a reassertion of the regional power of Russia's Defense Ministry.

Yevkurov announced a policy of Ingush repatriation in the Prigorodnyi Region. While this did not receive immediate Kremlin approval, it may have been among concessions that Yevkurov required for his appointment. Russia's recognition of South Ossetia may open a window of opportunity in Prigorodnyi. At the same time that it offers something to the Ossetians, Moscow may offer something to the Ingush. On the other hand, further problems in South Ossetia will spill more Ossetian refugees into Prigorodnyi.

After six years of blatant corruption and brutal mismanagement, Ingushetia is in dire condition. An aggressive Islamist insurgency is complemented by federal death squads, widespread poverty, high unemployment, and a lack of any substantial production. More than 90 percent of the republic's budget is based on federal subsidies.

Under Zyazikov there were three groups vying for control of the republic: the government, the civic opposition, and the Islamist militants. Prior to Yevkurov's appointment, the opposition and the militants shared some of the same objectives if not

the same tactics. Yevkurov's task is to bring the population back behind the government. His populist overtures and efforts to build a local political base show that he has learned from Zyazikov's mistakes. It is likely that he will also take a page from Kadyrov's book by prosecuting an aggressive campaign against the militants while also offering them amnesties and jobs in law enforcement.

Militant attacks have continued since Yevkurov's appointment. Yet Yevkurov is clearly tougher than Dagestan's Aliev, and his military background is a source of traditional prestige. The question is whether Yevkurov will learn as much from Aliev's mistakes as he has from Zyazikov's.

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED

Chechnya was Russia's exceptional republic when the term "Chechenization" was first coined in 2000. At the time it signified the bureaucratic anticipation of a cruel civil war that deviated starkly from anything else in the federation. Yet from the start, the term also suggested the opposite of its intent, and eight years later it had brought changes to Chechnya that approximated those it was designed to prevent. In the meantime, it had become the model for fundamental changes in the neighboring republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria, and had been an inspiration for the evolution of Russian federalism. It is likely that Putin had long been planning the centralized appointment of Russia's regional governors, but Shamil Basaev cued him in Beslan and provided him with a persuasive rationale.

Along the way, the policy of Chechenization underwent an evolution of its own. Murat Zyazikov proved that it took more than brutality and corruption to make a Kadyrov from a bureaucratic appointee. Arsen Kanokov showed that the skills of a Moscow oligarch are insufficient to revive a North Caucasian economy. Mukhu Aliev proved that principled bureaucratic leadership would backfire in the absence of local accountability.

Centralized appointment turned out to be more challenging in other parts of the region than it had been in Chechnya. If Chechenization had stabilized Chechnya at the cost of Chechen autonomy, its export to Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan was provoking militant Islamist reactions. As Chechnya congealed around its quasi-independence, the remainder of the region was "Chechenized" in a sense of destabilization that was exactly the opposite to Moscow's intent. How to make the right local appointment and how should a central appointee rule in this volatile region?

At the start of his five-year term, Yunus-bek Yevkurov and his Moscow supporters showed signs of having learned from errors in all of these other republics. As a GRU Major General, Yevkurov signaled that Chechnya's autonomy would be exceptional if not evanescent, and that the Ministry of Defense would remain an influential force in

the North Caucasus. Yet Yevkurov has learned that a peaceful opposition movement is preferable to militancy.

Irony has accompanied Putin's policies of Chechenization and centralization from the start. If these policies initially seemed to slam the door on grass-roots populism, then the intricacies of their evolution may yet find an open window. 

NOTES

1. Though the aspiration endures, and though his tactics have outlived him, all of these attacks were to one degree or another the work of Chechen leader, Shamil Basaev. Basaev never overcame the spectacular success of his raid on the town of Budenovsk on 15 June 1995. He spent the remaining 11 years of his life vainly trying to repeat it—even in his ill-fated invasions of Dagestan in 1999. During those years, much of the misery of this region, and much of the failure of the Chechen cause, may be attributed to Basaev's personal vanity.

2. See "Spreading Despair," Human Rights Watch, 21 September 2003, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2003/09/21/spreading-despair>; "75 Die as Chechen Rebels Stage Raid Across Border," *New York Times*, 23 June 2004; "Conflict in Chechnya," British House of Commons Report, 7 February 2000, <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2000/rp00-014.pdf>.

3. Robert Ware, "Revisiting Russia's Apartment Block Bombs," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 2005); Richard Sakwa, ed. "A Multitude of Evils," *Chechnya from Past to Future* (London: Anthem Press, 2005).

4. Robert Ware, "A Multitude of Evils."

5. Basaev claimed credit.

6. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "After Chechnya: At Risk in Dagestan," *Politics* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1998); Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "New Dangers in Dagestan," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1997).

7. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "Ethnic Parity and Political Stability in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach," *Europe-Asia Studies* 53, no. 1 (January 2001).

8. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "Conflict and Catharsis: A Report on Developments in Dagestan following the Incursions of August and September 1999," *Nationalities Papers* 28, no. 3 (September 2000).

9. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "A Summer of Innuendo: Contraction and Competition Among Dagestan's Political Elite," *Central Asian Survey* 20, no. 2 (June 2001); "Bending Not Breaking: Dagestan's Presidential Expedient," *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 4, no. 22 (December 2003).

10. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "Russian Recentralization Arrives in the Republic of Dagestan: Implications for Institutional Integrity and Political Stability," *Eastern European Constitutional Review* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2001); *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2009).

11. Ware and Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance*.

12. Ibid.

13. Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "The Islamic Factor in Dagestan," *Central Asian Survey* 19, no. 2 (June 2000); "Irony and Political Islam," *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 4 (December 2002); Robert Ware, Werner J. Patzelt, and Ute Roericht, "Political Islam in Dagestan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no. 2 (March 2003).

14. Ware and Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance*.

Copyright of Brown Journal of World Affairs is the property of Brown University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.