

**AN ANALYSIS OF
THE ADDRESSES DELIVERED BY
THE HEAD OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INGUSHETIA YUNUS-BEK EVKUROV BEFORE
THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY IN 2010-2017:
PROSPECTS OF GROWTH AND
OVERCOMING THREATS**

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ABSTRACT

The texts of the Addresses of the Head of the Republic of Ingushetia to the People's Assembly in 2010-2017 are analyzed. This is the first attempt to examine the policy document from the viewpoint of political science. This document aims to formulate the policy course of the new regional leader and evaluate the successes and shortcomings of his own activities.

Special attention is afforded to the complexity of the social, political and economic situation in the Republic of Ingushetia due to military conflicts in neighboring regions. The tendencies that promoted the consolidation of society and a major shift in its condition are revealed. Comparative analysis allowed to expose the dominant ideas of these addresses and overcome the deeply rooted opinion regarding the immutable "instability constant."

The article heeds attention to the main factors that promote the upsurge of crisis events in society. In particular, the implementation of the stabilization policy was undermined by the quickly growing unemploy-

ment: in many of the region's republics with a low level of industrial development, the vast majority of able-bodied population is unemployed. This situation could have led to a number of problems, such as corruption, crime, etc. The issues of terrorism and kidnapping were of no less significance.

Practice revealed that a major breakdown of the stereotype regarding the regional leaders' inability to deal with the situation only occurred in the Republic of Ingushetia. It was associated with the assumption of office by the new President Yunus-Bek Evkurov in 2008.

The new Head of the Republic defined protection of human rights, improvement of the population's quality of life, a functioning civil society and a decrease in crime rate as priority issues. A great accomplishment of Evkurov is the overcoming of the crisis and a virtual absence of protest sentiment, explained by a notable growth of prosperity and an improvement in the service sphere, as well as the progress in the economic situation as a whole.

The policy document, namely, the annual Address of the Head of the Republic of Ingushetia, is used for the analysis of the situation in the region as one of the significant instruments of society's consolidation. The Address is an element of an open dialog with the people, which allows to publicly address the issues and priorities of state policy. Each document's preamble contains ref-

erences to the principal facts, achievements, and central events of the current year. The role of federal state institutions in the attainment of the obtained results is mentioned. The President expounds his vision of the strategy of the republic's socioeconomic development and defines the primary goals for the executive and municipal authorities for the next year.

KEYWORDS: *Northern Caucasus, Head of the Republic, Address, elite, economy, forced migrants, refugees, rating.*

Introduction

The period that began in the early 1990s was a time of crisis for North Caucasian republics in both socioeconomic and political respects. The efforts that the federal center exerted during that period, which aimed to resolve nationalities policy issues, turned out a failure, and the threats became increasingly more serious. The concept of state nationalities policy, in the process of renewal since 2000, also turned out to be less than effective. All the attempts to stimulate the potential growth were negated by the tens of thousands of refugees and forced migrants wandering in search of a refuge. A significant number of them, both from North Ossetia, and the Chechen Republic, concentrated in the recently established, weak Republic of Ingushetia.

This article is the first attempt to examine the policy document from the viewpoint of political science. This document aims to formulate the policy course of the new Head of the Republic and evaluate the successes and shortcomings of his own activities. Special attention is afforded to the complexity of the social, political and economic situation in the Republic of Ingushetia due to the military conflicts in neighboring regions. The tendencies that have promoted the consolidation of society and a major shift in its condition are revealed. Comparative analysis allowed to expose the dominant ideas of these addresses and overcome the deeply rooted opinion regarding the immutable "instability constant."

Since 2004 the Russian Ministry of Regional Development has been dealing with the ethnic relations in the region. The experience of establishing relations between ethnicities within the conflicting, and then the post-conflict territories of the three republics demonstrated the incompetence of the federal ministries as well as of the programs that they implemented. The reason comprised a number of factors that seemed impossible to surmount at the time. The problems were resolved to a certain extent by the efforts of the local elites, as the local community consolidated. It was only in the late 2000s that the federal center has given adequate consideration to the situation in the region. In 2009, the Russian President called the situation in the Northern Caucasus "...the most serious domestic political problem. Terrorist crimes against government officials, members of the clergy and law enforcement destabilize the situation and prevent normal economic and social development in the region. This problem is particularly acute in Ingushetia, where more than half of economically active population is unemployed."¹ In order to solve the indicated issues, the head of state initiated new

¹"Address Delivered by the Russian President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," 12 November, 2009, available in Russian at [<https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=325454>], 5 February, 2018.

Federal Targeted Programs for the development of the south of Russia, in particular, the Republic of Ingushetia in 2010-2016.

The quickly growing unemployment rate interfered with the implementation of the stabilization policy in the social and economic sphere. In many republics, the number of the unemployed exceeded 60% of the able-bodied population. This situation could have led to a vast number of problems, particularly, an upsurge in corruption, crime, etc.

The next problem, which was just as significant, was the rise of terrorism and kidnapping. The influence of international terrorism was apparent as well.

Apparently, only a strong-willed leader with authority could deal with this situation. The popularity rating and efficiency indicators of the Russian regional leaders' work largely remain the same during the course of their time in office, and in the North Caucasian republics they remained low. Practice revealed that a major breakdown of the stereotype of the regional leaders' inability to deal with the situation only occurred in the Republic of Ingushetia. It was associated with the assumption of office in 2008 by the new President Yunus-Bek Evkurov,² a highly competent man with unique potential. Owing to his tough character, strong will and ability to plan he quickly adapted to his new position. The Head of the Republic prioritized the issues of human rights protection, civil society functioning, improvement of quality of life and lowering the crime rate. In a short period of time he had managed to overcome the crisis and mitigate the protest sentiments through a noticeable growth of prosperity, improvement of the quality of services to the population, and a general progress in the economic situation. In 2009-2010 alone, the rate of capital offences related to extremism, terrorism and banditry decreased by 40%, and of particularly grave crimes—by over 60%.

Characteristics of the President's Addresses as Political Documents

All of the positive tendencies of development of Ingushetia as a self-sufficient entity allow to analyze the annual Addresses of the Head of the Republic to the People's Assembly. The uniqueness of such addresses by the regional leader is in the utilization of this rather mundane form of political communication for self-assessment of the work that ensued over a specified period of time. In 2009, in the course of his Address to the Federal Assembly President Dmitry Medvedev proposed supplementing the charters and constitutions of the Russian Federation constituencies with articles on the annual report of the executive authority leaders to the local parliaments, as denoted in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.³ The Republic of Ingushetia went even further, the regional leader essentially reports to the legislative authorities in his Addresses to the People's Assembly.

Numerous experts are involved in preparing this political document. Collectivity is its second unique characteristic. Its significance for the political (and, in the future, for the historical) science lies with the fact that the document allows to see the state's involvement in resolving the essential issues in the republic's development. In addition, it allows to see the persona of the Head of the Republic as a political leader, as well as his interaction with Russian political elites.

² On 31 October, 2008, the People's Assembly of the Republic of Ingushetia confirmed Yunus-Bek Evkurov as the President of Ingushetia upon the recommendation of the head of state. From 1 January, 2011 to 4 July, 2013 he was the Head of the Republic. On 8 September, 2013, the members of the People's Assembly elected Evkurov the Head of the Republic of Ingushetia.

³ See: "Address Delivered by the Russian President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," 12 November, 2009.

Its preparation is aligned with the consecutive order of the problems in question. The preamble of each document reflects the main facts, achievements and memorable events of the current year, which require special attention. The role of federal institutes in achieving the obtained results is underscored. The regional leader communicates his vision of the republic's social and economic development strategy and delineates the objectives for executive and municipal authorities for the next year. The dominant topics in all Addresses are economic growth, raising investment attractiveness, improvement of the population's quality of life, ensuring stability.

The first section contains the assessment of the achievements in the sphere of social and economic development, with an outline of problems regarding the economic base and production facilities.

The last, ninth, address of the Head of Ingushetia occurred on 31 January, 2017, and the next scheduled, tenth Address is expected to be delivered shortly.

It became a tradition to invite representatives of the Government, court system, municipal structures, federal and regional media, social and religious groups to the Address delivery, in addition to the members of the People's Assembly, the State Duma and the Council of the Federation.

Annual Addresses as Reflections of the Republic's Achievements and Problems

In his first Address the President of the Republic of Ingushetia stated: "We are taking all possible measures to create a higher-quality living environment for the people. These efforts are undertaken in a difficult context, but, despite the difficulties, we are consistently managing to move forward. I am grateful to everyone who is contributing their share to the renovation of our society."⁴ The phrase "These efforts are undertaken in a difficult context" is essential here. The emotional component of the addresses has been shifting as positive results were obtained. Another dominant thesis here was that of ensuring the safety of the population.

According to the data of the National Monitoring Service and the Institute of Independent Political Studies, in 2010 Yunus-Bek Evkurov was among the three most informationally transparent regional leaders in Russia. His drive for the best results was successful—it was not for nothing that the media hailed him as an outstanding leader of a problematic region. The head of the republic had found a way out of the situation without resorting to extreme measures. The method of utilizing personal contacts, or the dialog with the people, for violence prevention, which he proposed and consecutively implemented, had brought significant results right away. In this case, it concerned not only the return of those who have left their families to peaceful life, but also the reconsideration of the cases of convicts who might have incriminated themselves under physical or other pressure. This was a serious blow to the bandits' ideology.

It is essential to mention the attention and participation afforded to the development and implementation of internal regional policy by the Administration of the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasian District. In particular, a public chamber was established in the Republic at his initiative. Respected elders of the elders' council also play a significant role.

In 2010, the implementation of Federal Targeted Programs was launched in the Republic. These programs provided for the construction of 17 social and industrial-purpose facilities. The federal center participated in the development process in a very direct manner. According to the Head of the

⁴ "Republic of Ingushetia. Address Delivered by the President of the Republic of Ingushetia to the People's Assembly," available in Russian at [www.ingushetia.ru/m-news/archives/013718.shtml], 5 February, 2018.

Republic, this participation did not merely manifest in the financial contribution, but also in the clear indication of drawbacks. Owing to the FTP, the republic attained significant results, which it was unable to achieve in the time of the Soviet rule. Numerous significant issues have been resolved in the social sphere, high indicators have been achieved in the development of education, science, sports and health care.

In his last address to the People's Assembly of the Republic of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Evkurov mentioned the following as the result of his nine years in office: "With the direct assistance of the federal center, the republic has managed to overcome the crisis periods of its development, shifting the main vector of the republican authorities' operations from providing security and law enforcement measures to the social and economic development of the region in all the key directions."⁵

"The Republic of Ingushetia had more than once become the arena for landmark meetings, conclusion of significant agreements that imply further development of the economy, sports and culture in the republic."⁶

In 2011, the idea of developing a civil society, the formation of a positive image of the republic and political work began to dominate.

In 2012, the Head of the Republic had indicated the most promising directions of the government's operations. Among the measures of prime importance were the following: raising the efficiency of federal and republican Federal Targeted Programs, arrange certain measures in the framework of the state program Development of the North Caucasian Federal District in the Period up to 2025, the renewal of the investment legislation, support and development of small-business infrastructure, modernization of the basic infrastructure of the real sector of the economy, etc. The principal proposal was to improve the region's investment attractiveness.

High indicator levels were attained due to the implementation of nine federal programs, which allowed to build and reconstruct approximately 50 facilities in 2012. Under only one of them, the Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Ingushetia for 2010-2016, 26 facilities were commissioned.

Yunus-Bek Evkurov delivered his fourth Address to the Parliament on 31 January, 2013. Comparative analysis demonstrates that the number of facilities commissioned under the 12 Federal Targeted Programs in the housing and social sphere, in the agricultural and industrial complexes and in the power industry increased by one-third in 2013 in comparison with the preceding year. The prospects of growth of the Republic of Ingushetia's economy in general, as well as the population's quality of life depended on efficiency of these programs' implementation. These measures allowed to create approximately four thousand jobs. In 2012, the level of regional subsidies lowered to 84% from 94% in 2009.

Significant results were achieved in counteracting terrorism and extremism, in decreasing the crime rate, including the very significant segment of fighting corruption. In general, 2013 was a successful year for Ingushetia both economically and politically. Much has been done to reinforce stability. In resolving the tasks of socioeconomic development, the objectives set forth in the May decrees of the President of the Russian Federation were used as the foundation.⁷ The establishment of the Federal Ministry of the North Caucasian Affairs was not accidental either, and was determined by the

⁵ Kh. Targimov, "Ingushetia preodolela krizisnye periody," 31 January, 2017, available at [<http://gazetaingush.ru/news/ingushetiya-preodolela-krizisnye-periody>], 5 February, 2018.

⁶ "Pobedy Ingushetii-2011," *Komsomolskaia pravda*, 29 November, 2011, available at [<http://pravitelstvori.ru/news/detail.php?ID=3430>], 4 February, 2018.

⁷ May decrees—the provisional name granted by the media to the series of 11 decrees signed by Vladimir Putin on 7 May, 2012, on the day of his inauguration as the President of the Russian Federation, which contained 218 instructions to the Government of the Russian Federation to be executed in 2012-2020 (see [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9C%D0%B0%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D1%83%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7%D1%8B]), 8 February, 2018).

special circumstances in the Northern Caucasus. However, despite the equitable difficulties characteristic of the entire Northern Caucasus, the republic has for the second year in a row been included in the list of the twenty Russian regions that demonstrate the best dynamics with respect to the criteria set forth by the Ministry of Regional Development. It has become a leader in construction volumes, while the share of small and medium businesses in the economy constituted 40-60%.⁸

The 2013 Address differs significantly from the preceding ones. More long-range objectives were set, which was made possible by the updates in the investment legislation and the strong results attained in the preceding year. This Address was dominated by the topic of development of the tourist business, small and medium businesses, as well as interregional cooperation.

In his Address to the People's Assembly in 2014, the Head of the Republic informed that Ingushetia is one of the leaders among Russian constituencies in its proprietary revenue growth rate. Under the roadmap there was an unprecedented number of pre-school facilities designed and successfully commissioned in the republic—52 kindergartens with a total of 10,000 spots for children. Strategic priorities have been set in the spheres of health care and education, physical culture and sports. In 2009, there were 63,000 people officially registered as unemployed in the republic, and in 2014 this number decreased to 30,000. In part this decline was promoted by the implementation of the Federal Targeted Program Social and Economic Development of Ingushetia for 2010-2016, the republican program that aimed to lower tension in the labor market, as well as the program of assistance to small and medium business (up to 2018). Consistent coordination of the state authorities' activities on preventing extremism and improving the spiritual and moral education of the population with religious leaders and the community remains another priority for the government. The President of the Republic had named the creation of a comfortable living environment as a key priority.

In 2015, the Head of the Republic delivered his Address in the new Honor Hall at the Administration. Its preamble was devoted to the international situation and the problems in the social and economic spheres that have emerged due to the economic sanctions implemented by the Western countries. The President particularly emphasized the concept of import substitution—a new term that became the key thesis of this Address. The positive dynamics of many economic and social sphere development indicators were also noted. As the result of the goal-oriented policy, the republic's dependence on subsidies decreased by 8.7% between 2009 and 2014. A Standard of executive authorities' efforts to ensure a favorable investment climate in the republic was implemented.

The development of cooperation with other regions, first and foremost with those of the Northern Caucasus and those immediately adjoining the republic, is an essential objective of the republic's national policy.

For the first time the head of the Republic expressed his gratitude to the charitable foundations for their work in resolving a number of social issues faced by the republic's population. According to him, "National consolidation and a stable relationship between the society and the authorities have decreased the protest sentiment. It is largely the achievement of social and civil institutions, which are formed by people who feel it their duty to defend their homeland."⁹ The crime rate has significantly lowered, and there was not a single terrorist act—an incredible fact in our times.¹⁰

In 2015, the elections of local authorities became an important political event. On 13 September, the single voting day, elections took place in 40 municipalities. Eight territorial and 134 district election committees were engaged in the process.

⁸ See: "Yunus-Bek Evkurov: Maidanovshchiny v Ingushetii byt' ne dolzhno!" 25 June, 2014, RBK, available at [<https://kuban.rbk.ru>], 31 January, 2018.

⁹ "Yunus-Bek Evkurov vystupil s Poslaniem k Parlamentu Ingushetii," 29 January, 2016, available at [<https://www.parlamentri.ru/index.php/analiticheskie-materialy/ezhegodnye-otchety-glavy-ri-v-ns-ri/2682-poslanie-glavy-respubliki-ingushetiya-yu-b-evkurova-narodnomu-sobraniyu-respubliki-ingushetiya-na-2016-god>], 9 February, 2018.

¹⁰ See: *Ibidem*.

The priorities of social and economic development emphasized in the Address included the resolution of import substitution objectives in agriculture and the industrial complex, the increase in efficiency of budgetary funds' utilization, tax policy and prevention of unreasonable price hikes.

As he indicated the goals for 2016, Yunus-Bek Evkurov had specified 14 priority directions of the republic's development. Budgetary and tax policy and the development of small and medium businesses were designated as essential. The development of the agricultural complex and the environmental sphere, in particular, were underscored.

On 31 January, 2017, the head of Ingushetia made his ninth Address to the People's Assembly. The ceremony took place in the Honor Hall at the Administration of the regional leader.¹¹ Aside from the habitually invited guests, students took part in the ceremony for the first time.

In discussing the social and political situation in Ingushetia, the regional leader emphasized that in recent years it has been characterized as consistently stable and under indisputable control of the state authorities at all levels. The crisis has been overcome owing to the support from the federal center.¹²

The President had also mentioned the results of the completed FTP Social and Economic Development of Ingushetia for 2010-2016, which allowed to attain high indicators in the economy and the social sphere. A total of 139 facilities was built and reconstructed, including 37 schools, which allowed to switch education to a two-shift mode, with 65% of schoolchildren studying in the morning shift. Kindergarten availability level rose from 7.4% to 27.1%. In 2009, there were 29 kindergartens, while by 2017 there were already 66 such institutions.

The fact that the republic is one of the leaders of the safest regions ratings is also significant¹³.

The following were celebrated in the Addresses as the most important events of recent years from a historic viewpoint: the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the restoration of the Ingush people's statehood, the visit of the Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, the Head of the Russian Imperial House to the republic, the pick of the Olympic flame relay in the republic, the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the deportation of the Ingush people to Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the Constitution of Ingushetia, the 70th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, the 245th anniversary of Ingushetia's integration with Russia, elections to the State Duma and the People's Assembly, the visit of the Russian Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev, to the Republic of Ingushetia, the signing of the Law of the Republic of Ingushetia on transforming the Sunzha city settlement into a city district, etc. A special mention was given to the upcoming celebration of the 250th anniversary of integration of Ingushetia with Russia in 2020.

Conclusion

It is important to note that all the Addresses, despite their objective evaluation of the shortcomings, contain a positive message. The creators of the text of the address always emphasize the attention on the part of the President of the country. No other names, aside from the minister of the newly created Ministry of the North Caucasian Affairs, have been mentioned in the Addresses. The nature of the Addresses changes depending on the then current economic and political situation in the world.

¹¹ See: "The Programmed Document for 2017. Address of the Head of Ingushetia to the People's Assembly of the Republic," *Ingushetia*, an on-line newspaper, available at [<http://gazetaingush.ru/vlast/poslanie-glavy-ingushetii-narodnomu-sobraniyu-respubliki>], 19 December, 2017.

¹² See: *Ibidem*.

¹³ See: "Evkurov prokommentiroval otmenu rezhima KTO v Ingushetii," 19 March, 2016, available at [<https://ria.ru.20160319>], 31 January, 2018.

The Annual Address of the Head of the Republic of Ingushetia is one of the significant instruments for the consolidation of society. It is an element of a public dialog with people, which allows to openly address the issues and priorities of state policy. This form of dialog or interaction of executive and legislative authorities promotes the establishment of a specific type of behavior in society, its integration for the implementation of common goals that the state is facing.
