

**STRUCTURE OF
POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERROR
IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS
IN THE 1990S-2000S**

Evgeny POLYAKOV

*Ph.D. (Political Science), Associate Professor,
Chair of Sociology and Political Science,
Voronezh State University
(Voronezh, Russia)*

ABSTRACT

The author relies on the structural violence concept to analyze political violence and terror in the Northern Caucasus throughout the 1990s-2000s, which brought him to the conclusion that direct armed violence, or even terror, are less

dangerous than structural violence. The dynamics of their manifestations, however, is interconnected. Applied to the armed conflict in the Northern Caucasus, his tridimensional model reveals the inner logic of the conflict's development and its cyclical nature. Indeed, outbursts of clandestine activities and terror alternate with relative lulls,

while the conflict's intensity gradually subsides. Each stage corresponds to an institutional structure of violence, which outcrops in the form of armed confrontation (either a classical frontal war or network terror) and its ideological frills (ranging from secular nationalism to radical international Islamism).

KEYWORDS: *the Northern Caucasus, Chechnia, structural violence, terror and political violence, the Caucasus Emirate.*

Introduction

Forty-five years ago, Johan Galtung put the structural violence concept into academic circulation.¹ Two years later, he and Tord Høivik showed how structural violence could be measured with the help of potential life expectancy statistics.² In 1976, Gernot Köhler and Norman Alcock offered a basic model for measuring the “magnitude of structural violence” accompanied by a basic definition of the concept: “Whenever persons are harmed, maimed, or killed by poverty and unjust social, political, and economic institutions, systems, or structures, we speak of structural violence.”³

Their model is fully applicable to the hypothetical state of affairs in a society that knows no structural violence. This suggests a question: How many deaths could have been avoided if all countries could offer life conditions similar to those of Sweden (*the Swedish model*), or if at any observable period of time the level of wellbeing was evenly spread across the world (*the egalitarian model*)?

The answer can be found in the formula the authors applied to the Swedish model:

$$VI = Pn/En - Pn/Es, \quad (1)$$

where Pn —population strength of the country N ;

En —life expectancy in the country N ;

Es —potential life expectancy in Sweden.

In 1976, Sweden could boast of the longest life expectancy, which means that the formula is applied to any country with the longest life expectancy at the time of study.

To calculate the level of structural violence in any country against the world's average, the authors somewhat changed equation (1):

$$VI = Pn/En - Pn/Em, \quad (2)$$

where Pn —population strength of the country N ;

En —life expectancy in the country N ,

Em —world's average life expectancy.

¹ See: J. Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1969, pp. 168-187.

² See: J. Galtung, T. Høivik, “Structural and Direct Violence: A Note on Operationalization,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1971, pp. 73-76.

³ G. Köhler, N. Alcock, “An Empirical Table of Structural Violence,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1976, p. 343.

The figures obtained from both equations show to what extent the level of structural violence would have been reduced in county N if its wellbeing was the highest at the moment of calculation.⁴

Structural and Direct Armed Violence in Russia Today

I will use this methodology and official life expectancy statistics for Russia⁵ to calculate the share of structural violence in Russia, Daghestan and Ingushetia being the two model regions.

Table 1

Potential Life Expectancy
in Different Regions for Twenty Years (1990-2009)

Year \ Region	Russian Federation	Republic of Daghestan	Republic of Ingushetia
1990	69.2	73.1	—
1991	68.9	72.6	—
1992	67.8	72.1	—
1993	65	70.5	—
1994	63.9	70.5	—
1995	64.5	70.4	—
1996	65.8	70.3	—
1997	66.7	70.5	—
1998	67.1	70.5	—
1999	65.9	70.6	—
2000	65.3	—	72.0
2001	65.2	—	74.8
2002	65.0	—	74.4
2003	64.9	—	74.4
2004	65.3	—	74.6
2005	65.4	—	73.5
2006	66.7	—	73.0
2007	67.6	—	75.2
2008	68.0	—	76.1
2009	68.8	—	74.1

⁴ See: G. Köhler, N. Alcock, op. cit., p. 345.

⁵ Here and elsewhere the figures of the potential life expectancy in Russia have been borrowed from the site of the Russian Committee for Statistics (see: [<http://www.gks.ru>]), 21 January, 2014.

Between 1990 and 1999, the Republic of Daghestan demonstrated the longest potential life expectancy and the Republic of Ingushetia from 2000 to the present. The slight deviation of 0.2 year from this trend in 2005 (when Ingushetia came second after Daghestan) can be explained by a statistical error, since throughout the first decade of the 21st century Ingushetia consistently outstripped Daghestan by about a year. The figures of potential life expectancy in the Russian Federation and in Ingushetia and Daghestan can be found in Table 1.

Table 2

Magnitude of Structural Violence, 1990-2009

Year	Rate	Russia's Population Strength, million	Victims of Structural Violence, thou.
1990		147.7	113.9
1991		148.3	109.7
1992		148.5	130.6
1993		148.6	178.3
1994		148.4	217.3
1995		148.5	192.9
1996		148.3	144.3
1997		148.0	119.6
1998		147.8	106.2
1999		147.5	149.0
2000		146.9	209.3
2001		146.3	284.6
2002		145.7	276.2
2003		143.5	281.8
2004		144.2	288.8
2005		143.5	245.1
2006		143.2	227.2
2007		142.9	212.6
2008		142.7	222.3
2009		142.7	147.5

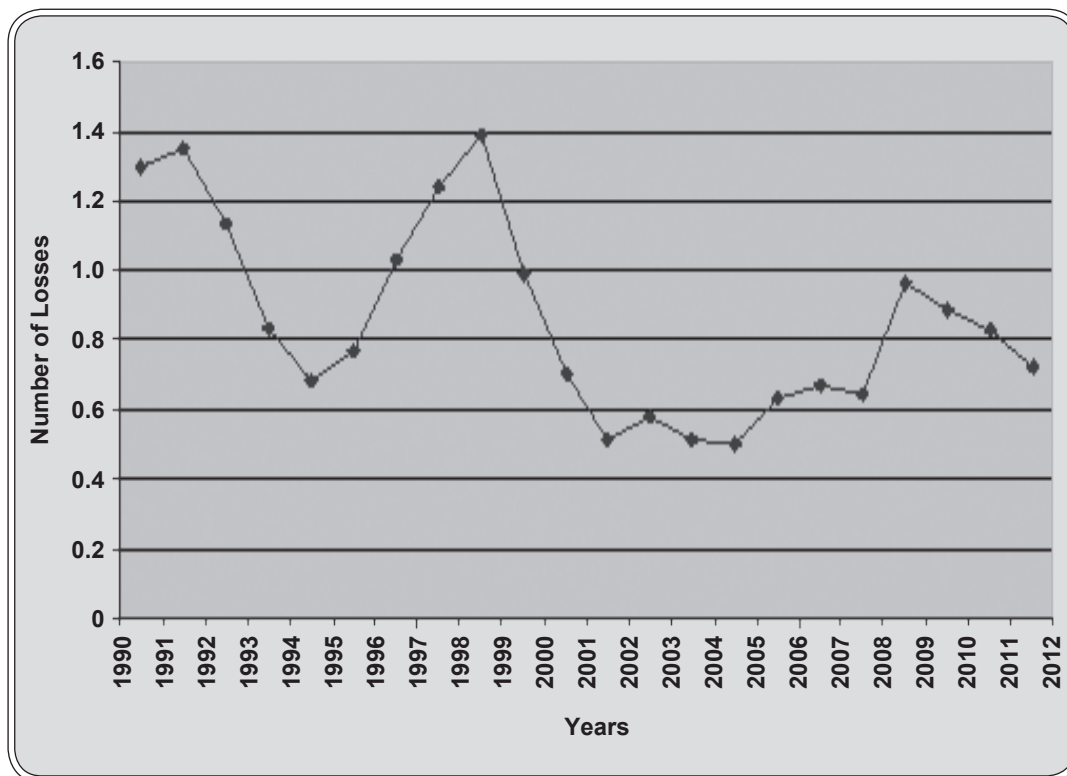
The losses caused by structural violence can be calculated by putting the figures of Table 1 in equation (2) and correlating the results with the population strength in any given territory for any given year.⁶ In the last two decades, the magnitude of structural violence increased nearly three-fold (see Table 2); after dropping to a minimum in 1991, it reached its maximum in 2004.

⁶ See: *Demograficheskiy ezhegodnik Rossii*, Rosstat, Moscow, 2009, p. 25.

Available statistical data point to certain regularities. First, outbursts of terrorist activity in Russia (illustrated by the number of victims) are negatively correlated with structural violence. Diagram 1 shows that the smallest share of victims of structural violence as related to the total population strength of the Russian Federation (per 1 thousand) occurred in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, that is, during the first and second military campaigns in Chechnia.

Diagram 1

Correlation of the total population strength of the RF and losses due to structural violence, 1990-2012



In the mid-1990s and the first half of the 2000s, the correlation between the losses caused by structural violence and the total population strength of the Russian Federation (per 1,000) was much lower than 1. In the periods of relative “lull” (in the early 1990s, late 1990s after the peace of Khasavyurt and in the late 2000s after the official completion of the counterterrorist operation in Chechnia), there were three peaks of structural violence with the rates rising to 1.2, 1.4, and 1.0, respectively.

The number of losses caused by structural violence, direct armed violence (including in the course of hostilities), and terrorist violence indicates that structural violence is the main threat and, at the same time, the main cause of “stable instability” in the Northern Caucasus.⁷

⁷ E. Walker, “Russia’s Soft Underbelly: The Stability of Instability in Daghestan,” Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2000, p. 5.

Specifics of Structural Violence in the Northern Caucasus

According to American expert Gordon M. Hahn, between 2008 and 2012 the number of terrorist attacks in Russia vacillated between 383 and 583, the ups and downs showed no clear trends. At the same time, the number of victims of political terror remained more or less the same (about several hundred).⁸ According to Russia's official figures, the peak of terrorist activities occurred in 2005 (203 attacks); the number gradually decreased during the latter half of the 2000s to drop to 25-30 cases a year.⁹ This means that the correlation between the losses caused by structural, armed, and terrorist violence is about 100:10:1.

It should be said that Norwegian academics postulated, albeit indirectly, a correlation between the high living standards and the high potential life expectancy (and consequently a low share of structural violence). In some of his works,¹⁰ Tord Høivik demonstrated that the Gini coefficient, social status, and distribution of national wealth are critically important for the index of structural violence. This does not fully apply to Russia.

There is no direct correlation in Russia. The North Caucasian subjects of the Russian Federation are very close to the other regions in terms of level of unemployment, monetary incomes, nominal wages, the number of pensioners (which directly affects the region's life expectancy level), and the subsistence level (the lower the level, the shorter the potential life expectancy).¹¹

A comparison between Ingushetia and Tyva gives food for thought. According to Høivik, the regions with opposite indices of structural violence should be very different socially and economically. According to official statistics, there are practically no differences (with the exception of unemployment figures). For example, Khakassia, Tyva, and the Sakhalin Region do not differ in terms of magnitude of structural violence: about 100-150 victims every year (or about 12%), while their economic indices differ two- or three-fold.

There is a second and very important regularity: there is a leveling factor in the Northern Caucasus that determines the potential of structural violence through a set of additional conditions, probably specific social institutions. I will limit myself to pointing out that in Russia the crime level is higher than in the developed countries and has come close to the indices of the far from successful countries of the South.

In recent years, the number of deaths caused by criminal offences (that is, murders, as well as robberies, rapes, terrorist acts, etc.) was about 34 per 100,000 of the country's population and on the decline.¹² This can be explained by the somewhat improved criminal situation (and the end of hostilities in the Northern Caucasus) and the changed rules for registering crimes. To obtain a correct picture we should rely on the average of the last couple of years: 25 violent deaths per 100,000 a year. In the developed countries, the figure is 10 to 12 deaths.

Today Russia is close to the figures of the mid-1990s in terms of the total number of crimes: in 2010, the total number of registered crimes was 1,839 per 100,000; in 1995 this figure was 1,857 (in some of the federal districts this index is close to the late 1990s). Judging by the level of crime, the

⁸ See: G. Hahn, "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right," A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, CSIS, Washington, D.C., 2011, p. 23.

⁹ See: *Rossia v tsifrah*, Rosstat, Moscow, 2013, p. 180.

¹⁰ See: T. Høivik, "On the Methodology of Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 8, No. 3/4, 1971, p. 300; Idem, "The Demography of Structural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1977, pp. 59-60.

¹¹ See: *Rossiskiy statisticheskiy ezhegodnik. 2012: Stat. sb.*, Rosstat, Moscow, 2012, pp. 128-190.

¹² See: *Rossiskiy statisticheskiy ezhegodnik. 2011: Stat. sb.*, Rosstat, Moscow, 2011, p. 302.

2000s were the most dangerous period. The maximum crimes per 100,000 were registered in 2005-2007 (about 2,600).¹³ The Northern Caucasus stands apart in this respect: the number of crimes committed in the mid-2000s is higher than in the early and the late 2000s, but lower than the figures of the early and mid-1990s.

In 2010, there were 872 murders and attempted murders in the North Caucasian Federal District (in the Moscow Region and the Far Eastern Federal District with very close population sizes, the figures were 746 and 1,117, respectively). The average for Russia was 15.5 thousand per 142.9 million people or 10.8 per 100,000. The corresponding figures for the Northern Caucasus are 872 per 9.4 million people, or 9.3 per 100,000; in Dagestan, 296 murders and attempted murders per 2,914 million of the republic's population, or 10.2 per 100,000.¹⁴ These figures are lower than Russia's average, even though the region is rightly regarded as a source of social instability.

The slack armed conflict and the presence of an active terrorist underground lower the level of crime in these republics. They figure prominently in media reports about terrorist acts and are found at the end of the list of regions where the number of crimes per 100,000 is concerned: Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Dagestan, and Chechnia come 80th to 83rd, respectively.

This is natural and unavoidable: warlords, who rule in the Northern Caucasus, use physical violence to institutionalize their power. To de-criminalize society and improve the law enforcement situation in the country, the state should minimize the effects of structural violence caused by different development levels of social institutions across the country and to close the gap between the administrative and legal statuses of citizens in different regions.

The year 2014 will go down in history as the year of the Sochi Olympics and the year of the depressing jubilee of the beginning of the first armed campaign in Chechnia. In the twenty years that separate us from that day, the causes, course, and content of the conflict in the territory of the former Chechen-Ingush A.S.S.R. (and the Northern Caucasus as a whole) have changed to a great extent. The old leaders have left the stage; the conflict has gradually transformed from an open confrontation into a terrorist guerilla, it has spilt over the initial limits; the aims and tasks of the sides involved, as well as their strategy and tactics have changed considerably. In the last twenty years, the state took certain measures that brought no desired results, while the main aim—final victory over (international) terror and extremism—has remained unattained.

The Armed Conflict in the Northern Caucasus: Sources, Dynamics, Repercussions

In view of the above, I intend to analyze the counterterrorist struggle in the Northern Caucasus and partly in some other regions of the Russian Federation with the help of a tridimensional model that measures the conflict's duration, structure, and dynamics. They are interconnected and, therefore, should be discussed as an entity, each of the components being formally identified.

The long duration of the North Caucasian conflict and the fact that throughout its duration it fanned terrorist activities of all sorts of groups of influence point to the special importance of the time factor. The entire stretch of the conflict can be conventionally divided into four stages, the boundaries of which being conventional and, therefore, vague.

The first period began in 1992-1995 when the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (CRI) was declared and ended in 1998-1999 when the active armed struggle for leadership between Basaev and

¹³ See: *Regiony Rossii. Sotsialno-ekonomicheskie pokazateli. 2011: Stat. sb.*, Rosstat, Moscow, 2011, p. 329.

¹⁴ See: *Ibid.*, p. 331.

Maskhadov and preparations for an invasion of Daghestan began. This means that the first period lasted for about six years and coincided with the period of Chechen statehood known as Project Ichkeria. The next stage began in 1999-2005, that is, between the invasion of Daghestan and the Nalchik Riot, the third lasted from 2005 to 2012, and the fourth, which began in 2012, has not yet ended.

The chronological limits of the conflict and its division into periods are necessarily conventional, while each of the four periods is identified by a special *type of terrorist activity* (TTA): special methods; targets; organizational structure; the infrastructure used; and the frequency. The periods are separated from one another by events or chains of events, after which a new type of terrorist activity came to the fore. This happened not because someone wanted this, the transfer to the next period was caused by a certain vague continuum.

The first period began with a fairly meaningful chain of terrorist acts in Nevinnomyssk, Budenovsk, Buynaksk, and other cities. They took place in 1995 when the hostilities in Chechnia were going on, *were aimed at civilians and civilian targets* (women and children, hospitals, maternity hospitals, etc.), *were carried out beyond the territories of the conflict*, and *were invariably sanctioned openly (or not) by one of the sides in the conflict*. This raised its status and increased external (that is, outside) legitimation. The terrorist act in Budenovsk and the famous telephone talk between Shamil Basaev, the Vice Premier of CRI, and Victor Chornomyrdin, the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, was a typical example of the general mood of this period.

During the first period, those who carried out the terrorist acts, those who supervised them, and those who extended political patronage can be defined as the leaders of one of the conflicting sides. The CRI leaders and Grozny claimed sovereignty and the status of an independent state, which allows us to formally define the type of terrorist activities from the mid-1990s onwards as *(quasi)state terrorism*. The illegal armed forces (the armed forces of the separatists) were, in fact, the organizational structure responsible for the terrorist acts.

This means that at the first stage there was *no structure or institution* responsible for this type of violence, which explains the uniform or even amateurish nature of the terrorist acts, in which the personal factor figured prominently (all the terrorist acts of the first period were organized by Basaev, Baraev, and other leaders of illegal armed units) and which were tinged with a “romanticism” or “nobleness” of sorts: if their demands were accepted, the terrorists set their hostages free; sometimes they set some of the hostages free even before their demands had been fulfilled to show that they trusted the federal government to a certain extent. This was the staple food of the media.

The discourse on terrorism and its legitimacy in the eyes of Chechen society and the leaders of the illegal armed units were purely nationalist. Jokhar Dudayev and Aslan Maskhadov, who came after him, repeatedly declared that they were building an independent democratic (at least at the early period duly impressed by the Vaynakh Democratic Party) Chechen Republic. This was ethnic symbolism pure and simple: the flag and state symbol bore the wolf, the totem of the Chechens; they planned to acquire their own currency (unofficially known as “dudariks”), teaching in schools remained secular and, from that time on, in the Chechen language, etc.

At this stage, the TTA was fairly efficient, since the terrorist attacks in regions bordering on Chechnia, the negative media coverage, and the efforts of human rights organizations, such as the Moscow Helsinki Group, the Memorial Foundation and the Soldiers’ Mothers’ Committee, convinced the Russian public that the war should be stopped. In view of the coming presidential election, Russia’s President Boris Yeltsin had to discontinue what was called “restoring constitutional law and order” and postponed the final decision about the CRI status until 2000. It was planned to carry out a referendum to decide whether the republic would remain part of the Russian Federation or become an independent state. The Peace of Khasavyurt was the highest point of the terrorists’ external legitimacy. From that time on, it was on the gradual decline: representatives of Dudaev and Maskhadov

were no longer greeted at international forums and Western embassies (they had been welcomed there, which irritated the Kremlin).

The latter half of the 1990s saw infiltration of radical Islam and its odious preachers (such as Bagautdin Kebedov) into Chechnia. Later, “among the critics of Wahhabism in the republics of the North Caucasus, a special word arose—‘Wahhabist’—which rhymes with ‘terrorist’.”¹⁵ Religious discourse gradually replaced national discourse. In 1998-1999, political terrorism in contemporary Russia passed its first turning point. This was when the top crust of the CRI split and the first attempt was made to build an Islamic state. The republic acquired infrastructure, which made it possible to move terror, at the second stage, beyond the republic’s borders. Let’s take a closer look at these factors.

The Chechen leaders split into “nationalists” headed by President Maskhadov and “internationalists” headed by Basaev (both terms are conventional). The former believed that the republic should pour its forces into building a national Chechen state, while the latter were inclined toward the idea of what was described as liberation of the Northern Caucasus, Daghestan, as the closest neighbor, being the first aim. Shamil Basaev, who lost the presidential election, never abandoned his efforts to snatch leadership among the separatists from Maskhadov. He was convinced that a successful invasion of Daghestan would be supported by the people, attract armed recruits, and, in general, give him wider resources to continue his struggle for power. It should be said that some of the warlords (the Yamadaev brothers) and other leaders (Akhmad Kadyrov and Bislan Gantemirov) remained neutral; later, in the course of the counterterrorist operation, they sided with Russia.

The invasion of Daghestan and the most active stage of the counterterrorist operation (1999-2002) showed that the separatist project within the CRI and in other North Caucasian republics was not even marginally popular in the region. Even in fairly Islamized Daghestan, the local people were not overjoyed at being “liberated”; after realizing the true intentions of the “liberators,” they took up arms and moved against them.¹⁶ Their external legitimacy (especially in the West) declined because of Russia’s support of the international coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan and adequate and skillful media coverage of the counterterrorist operation.

Terrorism, which at the first stage had been directed outwards, became concentrated within Daghestan, Ingushetia, and Chechnia, with a few exceptions, viz. the terrorist acts in Moscow and Volgograd (1999), Makhachkala (2002), and Vladikavkaz (2003). They were indeed exceptions to the rule, despite the scope and the largest (by that time) number of victims. The methods also changed:

- first, the local terrorists borrowed *the tactics of suicide bombers* with the help of so-called shahid belts widely used in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Iraq;
- second, *the terrorist acts became much more frequent*. In the past, terrorist acts had been few and far between, while, at the second stage, their frequency rose to once every two weeks (including failed attempts).
- Third, *the terrorist structures, being less dependent on the center, made the “deterrence policy” much more flexible*.

On the whole, this period demonstrated what was later called Chechenization: on the one hand, real power and the responsibility for the counterterrorist struggle were transferred to the authorities

¹⁵ S. Markedonov, *Radical Islam in the North Caucasus. Evolving Threats, Challenges, and Prospects*, A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program, CSIS, Washington, D.C., 2010, p. 6.

¹⁶ See: D.A. Efendieva, “Vzaimootnosheniia chechentshev s narodami Daghestana na rubezhe XX-XXI vekov,” in: *Chechenskaia Respublika i chechentsy: istoria i sovremennost: materialy Vserossiyskoy nauchnoy konferentsii. Moskva, 19-20 apreliia 2005 goda*, ed. by Kh.I. Ibragimov, V.A. Tishkov, N. Miklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology; Integrated Scientific-Research Institute, RAS, Grozny, Nauka Publishers, Moscow, 2006.

of the Chechen Republic, while on the other, Maskhadov's former supporters were lured to the side of the Chechen Republic and set against their former comrades-in-arms. The conflict was reduced to a purely Chechen conflict without additional ethnic hues. State power in Chechnia became ethnic, which led to an ethnocratic regime as a side product of the process described above.

The separatist project failed; by 2004 Maskhadov had lost the greater part of his supporters, either dead or turncoats. The new balance of power survived the assassination of Akhmad Kadyrov, of which Maskhadov was accused; the active terrorist underground moved to Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan.

Collapse of Ichkeria and the Caucasus Emirate: From Secular Separatism to Islamic Extremism

In his well-known *The Question of Nationalities or "Autonomization"*, Lenin criticized Stalin's project of unification of the Soviet republics within the R.S.F.S.R. as autonomies. He wrote about "a voluntary union of equal independent republics" and prevailed.

It is not easy to reconstruct the arrangement of the Salafi state; however, in the Northern Caucasus, Stalin's version was preferred. At the third stage, when the Caucasus Emirate was established, not only the existing vilayets, but also those that might appear in the future, even outside the Northern Caucasus (the vilayat Idel-Urals in the Volga Area), were to be subordinated to the Caucasus Emirate.

Analogies with the Bolsheviks are not limited to this: the RCP (Bolsheviks) regarded the revolution in Russia as the first step on the road toward a world revolution under the red banner of communism. In the same way, the so-called liberation of the Muslim territories of Russia from the power of the kafirs is but the first step on the road toward a world Caliphate under the black banner of jihad. It can be said that a century later (by 2017), Russia will again be confronted with a generation of active revolutionaries.

An outburst of Islamism happened in the mid-2000s, although the process that can be described as an "Islamic revival" is rooted in the late 1980s-early 1990s. The gradual radicalization of Islamic theologians was caused by the absence in Russia of world-level theologians and the mutual mistrust of old and young preachers.¹⁷

Ethnic affiliation plays a secondary role in the Islamic discourse: group identification is based on strict observance of the basics of Islam, as interpreted by the Salafis. Said Buryatsky was fond of saying that "a kafir Chechen is our enemy, while a Muslim Russian is our ally and brother." Internal legitimacy based on extra-ethnic solidarity buried Project Ichkeria and limited the terrorists' social basis. From that time on, their agents could be found in the fairly narrow circle of the radically-minded Muslims. This meant that it must be constantly replenished, hence the gradual radicalization of political protests involving slowly growing numbers of North Caucasian Muslims.

This happened because the target of terror had changed: since the mid-2000s, so-called law enforcers predominated among the victims of the terrorist attacks in the Northern Caucasus. Attacks on infrastructural facilities of the federal forces (the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Security Service) became a fact of life. The turn occurred in the summer and fall of 2004, when one

¹⁷ For more details, see: A.V. Malashenko, *Islamskie orientiry Kavkaza*, Gendalf, Moscow, 2004, pp. 56-64.

terrorist act followed another in quick succession: on 9 May, Akhmad Kadyrov was assassinated in Grozny; on 22 June, Nazran was attacked; on 1-3 September, hostages were taken in a school in Beslan; a year later, the so-called Nalchik Riot took place, the last in a series of large-scale terrorist acts in the Northern Caucasus and in the country as a whole.

Later, the terrorists mastered the tactics of surprise attacks and fast retreats. The number of victims per strike was much lower, while the increased number of attacks produced many more victims than before. Since the early 2010s, every year the number of deaths in the Northern Caucasus has remained at around 700, while the number of terrorist acts and armed attacks has topped 200. Civilians and civilian targets were rarely attacked in and outside the Northern Caucasus, but all the victims were judges, officials, politicians at the republican and federal level and their relatives.

The terrorist infrastructure changed when the Caucasus Emirate was proclaimed:

- first, terror was shifted to big cities, mainly the capitals of the North Caucasian republics.
- Second, the illegal armed units lost their function of the main fighting tools, which went to the jamaats (autonomous fighting units).
- Third, the rank-and-file fighters and their leaders became considerably younger: in Ichkeria the fighters were 30 to 40-year old; in the Emirate they are 20 to 25 on average.

The nature of violence, mobilization, and interaction with the world has changed accordingly.

The so-called Russian Wahhabis who have emerged into the limelight can be described as the most important feature of the current stage of the development of terrorism in Russia (comparative descriptions of all stages are shown in Table 3). There is nothing new in this: the phenomenon is rooted in the early 2000s; it came into the focus of the media's attention after the first of a series of three terrorist acts in Volgograd late in 2013; assessments ranged from negative to very negative.¹⁸

Table 3

**Comparative Characteristics of
the Four Stages of the Development of Terrorism
in Contemporary Russia**

Number of the Period	1	2	3	4
Duration	1994-1999	1999-2004/2005	2006-2012	2012-...
Territory	Outside the conflict zone	Partly outside the zone	Inside the zone of conflict	No clear borders
Infrastructure	No infrastructure; illegal armed units	Small groups of fighters	Special three-tiered	Special three-tiered
Objects of terror	External civilian	Internal civilian	Internal military	n/d
External legitimacy	Practically maximal	Average declining	Minimal	Practically zero
Internal legitimacy	High	Average	Average	n/d
Discourse	National	Ethnic	Religious	n/d

¹⁸ A. Polubota, "Chislo russkikh vahhabitov budet rasti?" available at [<http://svpressa.ru/politic/article/58244>] or I. Boykov, "Russkie vahhabyty kak osoby tip natsionalnogo predatelstva," available at [<http://www.zavtra.ru/content/view/russkie-vahhabyty/>], and also A. Bolshakov, "Russkie vahhabyty. Fenomen natsionalnogo predatelstva," available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1383023400>].

So far, the phenomenon remains outside academic studies and has not yet been discussed in detail in academic publications. Everything said so far has been fairly superficial, although the emergence and spread of Russian Wahhabism is the gravest (at present) threat to Russia's national security.

The fourth stage began in 2012 with the attempted assassination of the mufti of Tatarstan. Judging by the previous periods, it will last for 5 to 6 years and reach its peak in the latter half of the stage. This means that the Russian leaders have several years to devise countermeasures.

Conclusion

So far, the current fourth stage has not acquired clear boundaries of the "zone of struggle"; there is no generally accepted ideology (that is, there is no strategy of propaganda or "external" ideology); there is no external legitimacy (according to indirect information, Saudi Arabia has abandoned the North Caucasian Salafis). On the other hand, potential Russian and other neophytes (from the Volga area in particular) will complicate the activities of the special services.

A counterterrorist struggle presupposes that the enemy is well-known, or can be easily identified by the way he is dressed, his dialect, and his external appearance. People from the Caucasus are easily recognized, while it is practically impossible to identify people coming from the Ryazan or Irkutsk regions. This requires a wide network of agents and much higher efficiency than that demonstrated by the special services today.

A potential terrorist is, as a rule, a migrant, but in the case of Daghestan, Ingushetia, and Chechnia their number is small: 95% of Ingush, Chechens and Daghestanis live in their titular regions; this does not apply to other peoples (Tatars or Ukrainians, for example) scattered across the Russian Federation. This means that the emergence of Russian Wahhabis has significantly increased the number of potential terrorists, or to be more precise, the potential number of targets the special services must keep their eye on. The terrorist threat in the country as a whole is much more real (while it has somewhat decreased in the Northern Caucasus), and the number of potential terrorist acts and their potential victims is much higher. The Center (Moscow, the Moscow Region, and St. Petersburg) are in danger; the same applies to other regions with high migration activity of *the autochthonous population* in particular.

On the other hand, the experience of other countries has shown that terrorism is efficient as a tool of national-liberation (anti-colonial) war or separatism.¹⁹ This means that in Russia the limit of terrorist efficiency was reached at the first stage. Today, the Salafis are fighting to restructure the Russian Federation on the basis of political Islam. The fact that they still rely on terror as the method of struggle means that they have suffered a strategic defeat. It remains to be seen whether the Russian Federation, that is, the present form of the Russian statehood, will outlive Salafism.

¹⁹ See: A. Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1993, pp. 235-242.