

GEOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE CAUCASIAN-CASPIAN REGION

Igor DOBAEV

*D.Sc. (Philos.), head,
Sector of Geopolitics and Information Analysis,
the Southern Scientific Center,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Rostov-on-Don, Russia)*

Alexander DUGIN

*D.Sc. (Political Science),
leader of the International Eurasian Movement Organization,
chief research associate at the Southern Scientific Center,
Russian Academy of Sciences
(Moscow, Russia)*

Geopolitics, the major theoretical propositions of which were formulated in detail in the 19th-20th centuries by its founding fathers (Ratzel, Kjellen, Mackinder, Mahan, Spykeman, Haushoffer, Schmitt, and others), is based on the fundamental dualism of Tellurocracy (Land) and Thalassocracy (Sea) as two opposing ontological and epistemological concepts.

“Land,” “Tellurocracy,” or “Supremacy on the Land” as a paradigmatic matrix of a wide variety of civilizations is associated with stable spaces and their quality orientations and descriptions realized in the domination of the whole over parts, conservatism, hierarchy, and strict legal norms which rule large human communities: clans, tribes, peoples, states, and empires. “Sea,” “Thalassocracy,” or “Supremacy on the Sea” is a civilizational type based on the domination of parts over the whole, individualism, liberalism, relative ethnic and legal norms, and the priority of nomadism and seafaring over the settled way of life. “Marine cultures” develop and change their external features easily while preserving the inner identity of their basic principles.¹

The larger part of human history has been unfolding under conditions of small-scale confrontation between the state-territorial units of both orientations. Whereby this dualism was concentrated along sea coasts and at river mouths and basins (Rome vs. Carthage, Sparta vs. Athens, etc.). By the beginning of the Christian era, political forms and improved technical transportation means created a stable geopolitical picture of the world, which Halford Mackinder depicted on his map. “Land” became associated with the inland expanses of Northeast Eurasia (which coincided, on the whole, with the territory occupied consecutively by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, the “Third Rome”), while “Sea” was identified with the coastal zones of the Eurasian continent and the New World colonized by the European maritime powers during the Age of Geographic Discoveries (the Anglo-Saxon world, “New Carthage”). The war of position that filled the 18th and 19th centuries with its geopolitical content was waged by Thalassocratic Britain against continental powers

¹ See: A.G. Kuznetsov, S.Ia. Sidorenko, “Mify etnoreligioznogo traditsionalizma na Severnom Kavkaze v kontekste geopoliticheskikh realiy,” *Politicheskaya mifologiya i istoricheskaya nauka na Severnom Kavkaze. Iuzhnorossiiskoe obozrenie*, Issue 24, ed. by V.V. Chernous, Rostov-on-Don, 2004, pp. 67-68.

(Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia). This interminable geopolitical dualism reached its peak during the Cold War of 1946-1991. Thalassocracy was associated with the United States and NATO (Atlanticism), while Tellurocracy with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) countries (Eurasianism).²

Classical geopolitics distinguishes the third, intermediary, zone, the so-called “coastal zone,” or “Rimland” with no ontological nature of its own. For this reason it cannot be described as a “third center.” It can be described as a space which can potentially join Thalassocracy or Tellurocracy, or become a scene of their confrontation.

Geopolitics looks at the Caucasian-Caspian region, which consists of the Greater Caucasus (the Northern and Southern Caucasus), as a Rimland. “Land” (the Russian Empire-Soviet Union-Russia) is convinced it should become part of the sphere of continental influence. “Sea” (the U.K.-U.S., NATO) believes it should serve as a toehold for further expansion inland with the aim of establishing its military-political and economic domination over Eurasia. It is no wonder that the Greater Caucasus has always been and remains an arena of struggle between the Anglo-Saxon states (Great Britain since the late 18th century and the U.S. since the mid-20th century) and Russia. Throughout the centuries, the local peoples have been and remain a sort of hostage of this confrontation.³

It was Arthur Connolly,⁴ a British intelligence officer, who coined the term the Big Game⁵ to describe the intertwining of diplomatic, economic, military, intelligence, and other measures, countermoves, and maneuvers used by the two main geopolitical opponents (Great Britain and Russia) in the 19th-20th centuries. It was eagerly accepted by the British political and, later, academic community. The 1907 convention on dividing the spheres of influence in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet Britain and Russia signed in St. Petersburg put an end to the Big Game. There is the opinion, however, that it never ended. Today, it is unfolding on a global scale⁶ even though the American establishment insists that it is merely “advancing democracy” into the post-Soviet expanse. (In 1948, the United States replaced the U.K. on this playing field.)

The geopolitical confrontation between “Land” (Russia) and “Sea” (the U.S.), which is especially obvious in the Caucasian-Caspian region, is gaining momentum. The Caucasus, which is part of this vast region, is a unique multilevel system with a unique intertwining of peoples, religions, and cultures. Taken as it is, this cannot explain why the region has become conflict-prone. It seems that the paradigm of the absolute majority of all large-scale social conflicts in the world is of a geopolitical nature, while their specific content is formed by objective ethnic, confessional, political, socio-economic, and other contradictions. If such conflicts become suddenly exacerbated, if the opponents become more radical and prone to aggressive methods, or if a conflict becomes indefinitely protracted, there can be no doubt that a third force is involved for its own subjective reasons. In the Caucasus, it is the Transatlantic community (the United States and its satellites) pursuing its geopolitical interests there that plays the role of a third force.⁷

In the spring of 2004, NATO extended its boundaries once more and reached Russia’s near abroad; synchronously it stepped up its activities in the Caspian and Black seas in an effort to play the role of

² For more detail, see: A.G. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii*, Moscow, 1999.

³ See: A.G. Kuznetsov, S.Ia. Sidorenko, op. cit., p. 69.

⁴ In June 1842, Arthur Connolly, together with another intelligence officer Colonel Charles Stoddart, was beheaded on the order of the Emir of Bukhara.

⁵ See: I.P. Dobaev, *Iug Rossii v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy: natsional'naia i regional'naia bezopasnost*, Rostov-on-Don, 2004, p. 14.

⁶ See, for example: F. Aliev, “The Caucasus through the Eurasian Prism,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (31), 2005, pp. 91-92.

⁷ See: G.B. Gavrish, “Prostranstvenno-vremennaia model Kavkaza v usloviakh globalizatsii,” *Nepriзнанные gosudarstva Iuzhnogo Kavkaza i etnopoliticheskie protsessy na Iuge Rossii. Iuzhnorossiiskoe obozrenie*, Issue 29, 2005, p. 25.

a “security guarantor” in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This was stated officially at the June 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul where its leaders made public their intention to pay “particular attention” to their cooperation with these regions.⁸

The American military presence is mounting rapidly in the region. In February 1998, President Clinton signed a plan for the U.S. Joint Forces Command that outlined, for the first time ever, the zones of responsibility of the joint operational-strategic formations of the U.S. Armed Forces, which included the former Soviet republics. On 1 October, 1998, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova were included in the responsibility zone of the USEVCOM. A year later, the USCENTCOM acquired Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan as part of their responsibility; still later (on 1 October, 2002), the USEVCOM responsibility zone was extended to include a large part of the northern Atlantic, the Caspian, and Russia.

American diplomacy scored the first victory by forming a peacekeeping battalion in Central Asia—CENTRAZBAT; there are plans to set up a similar structure in the Caucasus (CAUSBAT) with Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri participation.

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, America moved into the region and deployed its military bases there. On 7 October, 2001, the United States moved to Afghanistan and occupied it during Operation Enduring Freedom. Simultaneously, the Pentagon started moving its armed forces on the global scale to ensure its total strategic control of the “arc of instability” stretching from the Middle East to Northeast Asia.

The shifted accents led to Washington’s far-reaching diplomatic and military initiatives in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Having deployed 1,500 military in Uzbekistan, the Pentagon consolidated its strategic presence there; Tashkent placed the Khanabad, Kokaydy, and Tuzel bases at the U.S.’s disposal to be used for Operation Enduring Freedom; later, in June 2002, during a visit to the United States, President Karimov signed a declaration that described his country as America’s main strategic partner in Central Asia.

It was at the same time that Tajikistan let the Americans use the Aini and Kulob airfields.

Kyrgyzstan, in turn, let the United States use a military base at the Manas international airport. Today, the Americans are negotiating its long-term lease and deeper military cooperation with the country’s new leaders. There are 1,300 American servicemen deployed in the republic engaged in logistic support of the Pentagon’s operations in Afghanistan. Talks between Bishkek and Washington on leasing another base are underway. The U.S. plans to bring the number of servicemen on Kyrgyz territory up to 3,000.

In September 2001, Kazakhstan was the first state to offer its support to the United States (the airfields at Chimkent and Lugovoy, and later at Almaty). The American and Kazakhstani defense departments have agreed on free delivery of a ship of over 1,000 tons displacement for Kazakhstan’s naval Caspian force. Americans are paying for the coastal military infrastructure; the U.S. has already offered the same to Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.⁹

America is doing the same in the Caucasus: in May 2002, after launching a \$64 million-worth Train and Equip program in Georgia with the declared aim of strengthening the antiterrorist component of the Georgian armed forces, the U.S. has secured itself the main role in developing the armed forces of this country. The Pentagon has established good working relations with the newly elected pro-Western president Mikhail Saakashvili and started a large-scale military reform in the republic.

In Azerbaijan the Bush Administration initiated “a series of joint military exercises in the Caspian Sea designed to train Azerbaijan’s naval fleet to protect the oil-rich nation’s offshore drilling

⁸ See: Istanbul Summit Communique, Istanbul, 28 June, 2004 [<http://www.nato.int>].

⁹ See: A. Gordienko, S. Mamedov, V. Ivanov, “Zastolbili Kaspiy,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 15 April, 2005.

platforms. At the same time, Pentagon planners have opened talks with Baku about establishing a major, cooperative military-training program and raised the possibility of basing U.S. forces in the country.”¹⁰

Today, the United States is persistently working toward realizing the Caspian Guard program (designed to cover the entire Caspian zone) in Azerbaijan, which includes newly formed special purpose detachments and police forces able to rapidly respond to terrorist attacks on oil pipelines and to other extraordinary developments in the Caspian countries. The program’s headquarters, which will be equipped with the latest radars, are to be housed in Baku.¹¹

The United States is working hard to establish contacts with Armenia, Russia’s strategic partner in the Caucasus. In April 2004, the Bush Administration signed an agreement with Erevan on developing military cooperation; later, official representatives of the American cabinet started negotiating possible joint military exercises.¹²

This is how the United States is realizing its clearly outlined scenario of establishing control over the Caucasus and Central Asia within the framework of the decisions of the Istanbul NATO Summit held in the summer of 2004 at which NATO described the Caucasian-Caspian region as an area of its strategic interests.

During the Cold War, the strategy of Atlanticism was based on the theoretical constructs of Anglo-Saxon geopoliticians (Mackinder, Mahan, and Spykeman). They were based on the so-called Anaconda Strategy of gradually mounting the pressure on continental Russia by depriving it of its sea-coast and cutting off its marginal areas. In the 1980s, American geopolitician Zbigniew Brzezinski formulated a linkage geopolitical theory according to which the Soviet Union could be defeated only if all the Eurasian coastal areas were linked together. This process was realized when the Soviet Union voluntarily withdrew its forces from Afghanistan. Left vulnerable to the Anaconda Strategy, the Soviet Union fell apart.

There is every reason to believe that the new world order the Atlanticists are cutting according to American patterns presupposes that the linkage theory will be applied to Russia by encircling its huge landmass with Anaconda coils to achieve Russia’s disintegration. This conclusion is supported by the pragmatic considerations of Russia’s geopolitical opponent: “Policymakers in Washington would do well to recognize the long-term incompatibility of U.S. and Russian regional priorities.”¹³

The geopolitical logic of American strategies betrays itself with clarity: the events in Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan testify that the United States has become resolved to squeeze Russia out of the post-Soviet expanse. Today, the members of GUUAM, an anti-Russian geopolitical structure (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) have already formed a corridor from Europe to Afghanistan to be used by NATO.

The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan (the latest in the CIS) ushered in a qualitatively new stage of the Big Game. The United States has obviously started establishing its direct control in Eurasia in earnest. It intends to introduce external governance in its territory in disregard of borders, sovereignties, and democratic procedures. Everything that serves the purpose is described as “democratic,” the rest is branded as “totalitarian,” “authoritarian,” and “dictatorial.”¹⁴

The Color Revolutions are obviously being used to weaken Russia’s influence across the post-Soviet expanse and to bring pro-Western and pro-American leaders to power who are resolved to detach

¹⁰ I. Berman, “The New Battleground: Central Asia and the Caucasus,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2004-2005, p. 62.

¹¹ See: A. Gordienko *et al.*, op. cit.

¹² See: “Armenia, U.S. Discuss Military Cooperation,” *RFE/RL Newslines*, 27 April, 2004.

¹³ I. Berman, op. cit., p. 67.

¹⁴ A.G. Dugin, “Kyrgyzstan: demontazh Evrazii (udar po Bishkeku—udar po nam),” *Rossia*, No. 11 (913), 2005.

themselves from Moscow to complete the process that started in 1991. There are indications that the United States is deliberating the possibility of replacing Ilkham Aliev's regime in Azerbaijan as "insufficiently pro-American." America will never relieve its pressure on Erevan to bring a pro-American leader and a like-minded elite to power in Armenia. The present low level of President Robert Kocharian's social support will make the task easier.

Very difficult elections are scheduled for 2006 in Belarus and Kazakhstan—the United States will undoubtedly use them to carry out "color" coups in these countries too. If it succeeds, the linkage program will be completed: Russia will find itself encircled by Anaconda. This is a very realistic possibility for the Russian Federation on the threshold of 2007 (the year for parliamentary elections) and especially 2008 (the year for presidential elections). Much should be done to preserve social-political stability and a guaranteed transfer of power. But the leaders still have no ultimate strategy for ensuring a safe transfer of power and this makes the situation vulnerable. The Sea Power will obviously not hesitate to take advantage of this vulnerability.

To achieve its far-reaching designs, the United States is using the latest technologies by setting up multilevel modern networks. The network projects used to carry out Orange Revolutions are based on the already tested conception of "netwar" first formulated by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt of the RAND Corporation in 1996.¹⁵

From the very beginning, it was surmised that information would play the main role in the armed conflicts of the future, while information supremacy would serve as the key to success. The "netwar" concept presupposes a decentralized network of "fighters armed with information" able to achieve a decisive bloodless victory by deliberately destroying the key "nerve centers"—the enemy's system of governance.¹⁶

Later, the same authors developed their idea of building armed forces on the netwar basis into the "swarming" conception,¹⁷ which means that seemingly disconnected yet carefully designed and coordinated actions of varied forces acting from different directions will penetrate into the enemy territory. The authors are convinced that this will prove effective if numerous small independent mobile subunits coordinate their actions.

As distinct from the earlier doctrine of air-land offensive operations, the Battle Swarm conception makes it possible to fully tap the netwar potential by introducing information technologies on a large scale and pooling the efforts of all the forces and services involved.

The Army's Future initiative is based on conceptions related to the network structure of armed forces and on two interconnected principles of future warfare: agility (maneuverability) and knowledge (procuring and using information). The light forces involved in this type of struggle should be flexible and be able to be rapidly deployed in distant theaters of military operations within the shortest time possible.

It should be said that terrorist groups and organizations (many of them—al-Qa'eda, the Taliban, and others—set up with the help of America and its allies) lost no time in mastering the latest achievements of the netwar doctrine. Their spider-web is highly flexible and resistant to external pressures. Today, they are successfully exploiting swarming tactics.

This somewhat levels down the pyramid of terrorist organizations, leaving their groups free to act and function independently. Al-Qa'eda consists of several loosely connected action subjects. Today, al-Qa'eda is rather a generic name for any of the Islamic anti-American groups functioning every-

¹⁵ See: J. Arquilla, D. Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Netwar," in: *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, RAND Corporation, 1997, p. 275.

¹⁶ See: A.A. Bedritskiy, "Evolutsia amerikanskoy kontseptsii informatsionnoy voyny," *Analiticheskie obzory Rossiiskogo instituta strategicheskikh issledovaniy*, Moscow, No. 3, 2000, p. 20.

¹⁷ See: J. Arquilla, D. Ronfeldt, *Swarming and Future of Conflict*, RAND Corporation. National Defense Research Institute, 2000, p. 4.

where there are Muslim communities. After analyzing the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the FBI concluded that the terrorists succeeded because those who carried out the attacks were absolutely unknown in the radical Muslim communities. No criminal proceedings had been instituted against them in any country, they had had nothing to do with politics, while many of them belonged to wealthy families. The investigators had to admit that the terrorists formed a small autonomous group with no contacts with terrorists in any other country.¹⁸

The netwar conception enriched “Islamic” terrorism with the following features: it is no longer limited to one region; terrorist groups are maximally decentralized; and they rely on suicide attacks as their main method. As a result, the terrorist wave raised by the radical Islamist groups has engulfed the world, even though the post 9/11 international counterterrorist operation scored certain successes.

In the wake of 9/11, the Pentagon concentrated on the netwar subject. In one of his speeches after the terrorist attack, U.S. Defense Minister Donald Rumsfeld pointed out that the attacks on Washington and New York created a new battleground and conflicts of a new type. He also said that in the near future America would be facing two important tasks: defeating terrorism by liquidating terrorist networks and readying itself for a new type of war that would differ radically not only from the wars of the past century, but also from the counterterrorist war America was waging at that time.¹⁹

Americans describe the qualitatively new “netwar” as an operational conception based on its information supremacy, which makes it possible to increase the troops’ fighting capacity by orientating them toward a network of sensing systems, staff offices, and responsive detachments. This promotes greater information flow, more rapid notification of troops, higher operation rates, greater destructive capability and survivability, and a higher level of self-synchronization.

In fact, the netwar transforms information supremacy into fighting capacity by efficiently connecting all the intellectual objects into a single information space of the TO. The “battlefield” concept is transformed into the “fighting expanse” idea. The fighting expanse includes all traditional targets to be hit by conventional weapons; it also includes virtual targets, such as the enemy’s emotions, perception, and psychology. Action is carried out on the new classes of targets through close integration of all the network structures of the Defense Ministry and similar structures of civil society (understood as the sum total of public institutions that shape “public opinion”).

The netwar theory presupposes that the war is carried out simultaneously in four areas of human activity: physical, information, cognitive (reasonable), and social, each of them being of independent importance. The effect is achieved through synergy (unidirectional application of varied forces) of all these elements.

The wars of the post-modernist, or information, epoch are based on a deliberate integration of the above four areas. They are brought together into a network which serves as the basis for carrying combat action. The spheres in which the areas meet are of fundamental importance. The military effect of the armed forces’ efforts is multiplied by the harmonious interaction of all the network factors, while deliberate actions against an enemy break up its formations and disconnect the areas. This deprives the enemy of the most important factor of its superiority.

All netwars aim at effects-based operations (EBO), which are described as the sum total of measures designed to shape the behavior models of allies, neutral forces, and enemies in the contexts of peace, crisis, or war.

¹⁸ See: I.P. Dobaev, V.I. Nemchina, *Novy terrorism v mire i na Iuge Rossii: sushchnost, evolutsia, opyt protivodeystvia*, Rostov-on-Don, 2005, p. 27.

¹⁹ Quoted from: S. Griniaev, “‘Setevaia vojna’ po-amerikanski,” *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 15 February, 2002.

The EBO are not limited to hostile operations—they are used against neutral and even friendly powers in all contexts (peace, crisis, and war) to manipulate their behavior, shape their starting conditions, and subordinate their actions to the interests of the entity waging the netwar.

The meaning of military reform within the “new theory of war” framework of the information epoch is simple: to create a powerful universal network designed to replace all existing military strategic models and conceptions by integrating them into a single system. The war becomes a network phenomenon, while warfare develops into a variety of network processes. The regular army, all types of intelligence and reconnaissance, technological breakthroughs and high technologies, journalism and diplomacy, economic processes, social transformations, the civilian population, the military, regular units, and loosely structured groups are integrated into a single network in which information circulates.

Obviously, as distinct from the conventional doctrine of war, the netwar concept can be realized in all types of conflicts (of high and low intensity), as well as for the sake of other aims such as Color Revolutions in the states which become targets of global and regional geopolitics.

A series of state transformations, first in Serbia and then in new post-Soviet states (Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan), has taken place since the late 1990s in full accordance with the netwar rules. The same rules and invented pretexts of promoting “democracy” and “liberalism,” shaping a “civil society,” etc. are put forward by Russia’s geopolitical opponents, who are working hard to wipe away the single CIS expanse.

As the first step toward victory, network technologies require a fifth column in the administrative and intellectual elites of the enemy state, in the media, and among the youth. There is obviously a certain pattern of Orange Revolutions applied by their organizers every time. The activists of “Khmara” (“Enough”) and the Byelorussian nationalist structure “Zubr” were trained by members of the Serbian youth movement “Otpor” (Repulse), which, assisted by Western NGOs back in 2000, helped remove Yugoslavian leader Slobodan Milosevic from his post. Slogans in Serbian (without translation) which appeared across the country and abounded in Georgia’s capital Tbilisi indirectly betrayed the Serbian trace in the mass youth rallies during the state coup in Georgia in 2004. The most popular of them (“Gotov Je” [“We have done away with him”] among them) later appeared in Kiev and Minsk. Young Ukrainian “revolutionaries” were prepared to help likeminded people in Azerbaijan, Belarus, etc. The name and the symbol of the Kyrgyz youth movement called “Birge” (Together), which looks like a raised fist, bring to mind the symbol of the Serbian “Otpor,” Georgian “Khmara,” and Ukrainian “Pora.”²⁰ There are many more similar coincidences.

According to political forecasts, on the eve of the 2008 presidential elections Russia, like other CIS countries, will become a target of network operations designed to manipulate its behavior under crisis conditions. It is irrelevant whether Washington looks at Russian power as friendly, neutral, or hostile. Similar operations of different colors will be carried out irrespective of political contexts. America will do this to prevent reintegration of the post-Soviet expanse around the Russian Federation.²¹

We all know that the political spectrum in the United States is wide: there are groups wishing to destroy Russia; there are others that would like to use Moscow as Washington’s compliant junior partner in Eurasia. These groups agree, however, that America’s structural pressure on Russia should be stepped up—they are prepared to wage netwars and carry out network operations against Russia to give the White House the opportunity to alternate scenarios and abandon the disintegration variant for soft

²⁰ See: A. Rodin, “Tiul’pany v krovi. Kto obmanul oppozitsiu v Kirgizii?” *Kompromat.ru*, 24 March, 2005.

²¹ See: G. Erler, “Amerika—edinstvennaia superderzhava. Rossia na puti k sebe,” in: *Sotrudnichestvo v Evrope: perspektivy i vyzovy razvitiu: Materialy rossisko-germanskogo seminar (Moskva, 12 iulia 2001 g.)*, Moscow, 2001, pp. 11-12.

pressure or move from soft pressure to a coup. Much will depend on Washington's ability to establish its control over nuclear facilities and other strategic centers believed to be hazardous to U.S. security and world ecology. In all other respects, network operations are flexible enough to be fitted to the changing conditions.

This is especially pertinent in the Northern Caucasus, which has become a priority netwar target. Chechnia is a center of active separatism there; there are Islamist networks connected with international terrorism. Georgia, its closest neighbor, is totally controlled by the United States; America is stepping up its influence in Azerbaijan. The Northern Caucasus is a hub of ethnic, religious, and administrative conflicts; it is torn apart by disagreements between clans, groups, elites, and non-formal movements. The North Caucasian segments are varied and contradictory.

All of these elements are instrumental in network operations; the tension will rise as the 2008 presidential elections draw closer. The "color" network in the Northern Caucasus includes all sorts of elements such as *Orange Groups* in various segments of the Russian public and the media they control; *nationalists*; *Islamists*; *humanitarian foundations*, and *NGOs* controlled by the United States and its allies; *terrorist organizations* based on the so-called Wahhabi jamaats of the notorious Jannet and Yarmuk types; shadow *financial networks* and the *havala* system (informal channels through which money is transferred via telephone from different countries under personal guarantees); *clans* in the local power structures; *criminal groups*; as well as *basic network infrastructures* (libraries, post offices, medical and insurance structures, etc.) and *emissaries* which look after individual segments (varied and unified, etc.).

The "color" network in the Northern Caucasus is intended for:

- *At the physical level*—creating a critical mass of people prepared to take an active part in protest rallies (under all sorts of slogans and for different purposes depending on the circumstances and regions) and mobilizing terrorist cells for pinpoint actions.
- *At the information level*—raising the degree of social involvement, aggravating the situation and actual problems to create a negatively charged atmosphere around all sorts of crisis situations, as well as establishing direct contacts among the most radical of the network organizations.
- *At the cognitive level*—influencing public opinion by convincing the people that radical measures have become overdue and that they cannot live like this any longer, etc.
- *At the social level*—mobilizing and stirring up ethnic, social, administrative, and religious groups in the Northern Caucasus by pushing them toward settling their most urgent problems by radical means in an increasingly chaotic situation.

As soon as the Orange Groups manage to destabilize the situation in any region, the manageable crisis can be exploited to spread destabilization across Russia by pushing the events in the desired direction at the federal level. Depending on the specific course of events in some of the southern republics and regions, the processes may reach the highest degree of separatism or may stop at the "relative chaos" stage. In any case, the Russian leaders should take adequate measures to deal with the asymmetric challenges and threats to Russia's statehood.