A Destiny of the Caucasus Emirate: between the Rise and Fall

By dr. Grazvydas Jasutis

KEY POINTS

In October 2007, Dokka Umarov proclaimed the establishment of the Caucasus Emirate (hereinafter referred to as CE) which transformed the armed Chechen resistance based on nationalism into Salafist-takhiri-jihadism movement with limited pan-Caucasian identity. The move was rather contextual and was derived from the impact of Umarov’s allies (Salafists) and his frenzy over external support from Middle East jihadist organisations. Furthermore, substantially declined local support in Chechnya and successfully staged offensive operations undertaken by Ramzan Kadyrov dwindled the role of national resistance and called for new approaches.

From 2013 to 2015, the CE has undergone substantial changes which seriously modified its character and role in regional affairs. The death of Dokka Umarov in 2013 speeded up the process of conversion and resulted in the sunset of the CE. The leadership of the CE was transferred from the Chechens to the Avars from Dagestan, who were quickly eliminated from the arena and were not replaced. The tempo of the operation reduced significantly and, as a result of the penetration of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (hereafter referred to as ISIS), the organisation faced a real schism.

The consequences of the schism was the establishment of ‘Vilayat Qawqaz’, under the guidance of ISIS, in June 2015, which incorporated the theatre of operations of the CE and sent the ephemeral CE leadership serious awry. The pledge of the bayat (oath) to ISIS by numerous field commanders demonstrates that ISIS will be playing a key role in controlling and financing insurgency in North Caucasus.

Nevertheless, the armed resistance in the region will not be fully absorbed by ISIS. The very fact that not all leaders have pledged the bayat to ISIS, and the strong impact of CE opposition from foreign representations, indicates that certain ramshackle units will continue to operate under the flag of the CE, albeit with severely limited military chain of command, broken communication channels and scarce resources resulting in slow action.

The CE may be considering appointing a new leader to revive itself, re-establish links between the Chechen diaspora and jamaats, and to generate income needed for insurgency, which subsists on meagre support and scarce local resources.

The CE is likely to be searching for a new identity, which might rely upon pan-Caucasian ideas mixed with jihadist ideas, and which differs from ISIS. For example, there are two potential leaders for a role of new amir: Akhmed Umarov (brother of Dokka Umarov), who could generate fair support from abroad; and Tarkhan Gaziev, who has been a recognised field commander ready to take the lead of an insurgency. Even with a new leader and freshly coined ideas, the CE will remain a marginal group of insurgents as a result of fierce operations conducted by RF Special Forces, in addition to Kadyrov troops that will keep impairing their operational tempo and drastically reduce local support for armed resistance.
INTRODUCTION

On 23rd June 2015, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani declared the establishment of ‘Vilayat Qawqaz’, which incorporates the territory of the Russian Federation from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea. As a matter of fact, ISIS extended its zone of responsibility and presumably swallowed another terroristic organisation, the so-called Caucasus Emirate, which had been operating in the mercurial area of North Caucasus. The Caucasus Emirate was created in October 2007 by former Chechen field commander Dokka Umarov as a Salafist-takfiri jihadist group. Since its inception, it has taken responsibility for hundreds of lurid terroristic acts in the Russian Federation, and has been considered to be the number one threat to the stability and security of the region. Their ambiguous affiliation with ISIS has resulted in friction within the Caucasus Emirate, as well as creating a series of complex issues that must be addressed at both practical and academic levels. On 29th of December 2015, amir of the united villayet of Kabardino Balkaria and Karachay Cherkessia Salim posted a sharp statement on youtube disclosing internal disagreements and problems within the organisation as a result of their integration into ISIS. Therefore, it remains unclear whether the Caucasus Emirate will continue as part of a global jihad group, enjoying various benefits from its association with ISIS, or whether it will identify itself regionally and take on a different character while coping with limited resources.

The origins of the Caucasus Emirate

Regional pundits and experts provide a vast range of explanations as to the origins of the Caucasus Emirate making an attempt to impose their ideas and insights. In October 2007, Dokka Umarov buried the idea of independent Chechnya and announced the creation of the Caucasus Emirate, which changed the region’s security situation both qualitatively and quantitatively. His declaration contained 8 essential messages:

- The issue of occupation was considered: („I appeal to the Mujahideen who are fighting in the Caucasus and the oppressed Muslims of Idel-Ural, Siberia and other parts of the occupied Rusnya (Russia)“).
- The establishment of Sharia law was requested: („We, the Mujahideen, went out to fight the infidels not for the sake of fighting but to restore the Shariah of Allah in our land“).
- The armed opposition was highlighted: („Today, as throughout history, our condition can only be changed with a weapon in hand“).
- Chechnya links were referred to: („Jihad against Russian kafirs has never stopped; it was revived sixteen years ago in Chechenistan (Chechnya) when Dzhokhar Dudayev, may Allah have mercy on him, by the will of Allah became the leader of Chechen people“).
- All Caucasus law was rejected: („I reject all laws and systems established by infidels in the land of Caucasus“).
- The Caucasus Emirate was established: („I am officially declaring of creation of the Caucasus Emirate; All lands in Caucasus, where Mujahideen who gave bayah (oath) to me wage Jihad, I declare velayats (states) of the Caucasus Emirate including Dagestan, Nokhchiycho (Chechnya), Ghalghaycho (Ingushetia), Iriston (Ossetia), the Nogay steppe and the combined areas of Kabarda, Bulkar and Karachay“).
- Intentions to wage war outside Caucasus were expressed: („after expelling the infidels (from Caucasus) we must reclaim all historical lands of Muslims, and these borders are beyond the boundaries of Caucasus”).
- Finally, he declared himself to be the sole leader: (“I am the only legitimate power in all territories where there are Mujahideen who gave their oath to me as the leader of Jihad”).

The text of the declaration itself makes some hints of the origins of the Caucasus Emirate and its objectives. However, there are different opinions and perceptions as to the origins of the creation of the organisation, which vary depending on sources, interlocutors, and cultural and religious contexts.

Primarily, it is important to note the armed resistance for the Chechen independence because the CE turned out to be a follow up of their battle. The declaration of the creation of the Caucasus Emirate itself suggests that the „jihad against Russian kafirs has never stopped; it was revived sixteen years ago in Chechenistan (Chechnya) when Dzhokhar Dudayev, may Allah have mercy on him, by the will of Allah became the leader of Chechen people“. The founder Dokka Umarov has a significantly bewildering personality and a background in business and criminal activities. He joined the fierce battles for the independence of Chechnya in 1994, which struggled to relieve the oppression of Russia, when he was 30 years old. He was a field commander during the first Chechen war for independence; this must have had a social impact on his perception of the future of Chechen. In the interwar period, he was appointed as the head of the Chechen Security Council, and he supported the Sufi community in their clash against salafists (such as the case of Gudermes in 1998). He did not render support for the radical wing which, under Basayev’s command, staged military operations in Dagestan, which in fact led to the second Chechen war. He was later appointed as the commander of the Chechen Southwestern front, and participated in armed resistance during the second Chechen war. In 2004, the president Abdul Halim Sadulayev appointed him as vice-president of the Chechen Republic-Ichkeria. Finally, he was automatically proclaimed as the president of the Republic following the death of Sadulayev in 2006. The early career of Doku Umarov was in fact closely related to the full-fledged independence of Chechnya and the principle of statehood must have played a significant role in his perceptions and actions. His public statements, speeches and interviews strengthen the idea that Umarov was a pro-Chechen fighter with a clearly expressed Chechen identity, something that vanished from the text of the CE declaration.

Another trendy explanation of the origins of the CE focuses on the expansion of global jihad under the label of salafism with potential input from Al-Qaeda. The declaration places heavy emphasis on salafism. Although this may not be particularly clearly expressed within the text itself, further explorations into Umarov’s statements and CE activities find evidence that the supports the idea that the CE is based on salafism and remains ideologically linked to Al-Qaeda (hereinafter referred as to AQ). Salafism contains four major elements which are reflected in CE: tawhid (the ones of Allah); al wala’ wa’l bara (enmity towards non-muslims); the blaspheming of any thought or action of shirk (polytheism); and non-acceptance of innovations bida’ in Islam such as worshipping Allah in ways not mentioned in the Quran and Sunnah. Experts agree that the Caucasus Emirate has fully embraced Salafist-takfiri jihadist ideology: to liberate the Islamic Ummah from jahiliyyah; rid the world of murtads and kuffar; and to establish Sharia law throughout the entire world. This appears strange as Umarov was committed to the national approach and followed the Sufi Qadir
tariqat. The appearance of salafism as the cornerstone of CE overall ideology can be most likely traced across the ideas propagated by foreign fighters associated with Al-Qaeda. For example, the notorious Umar ibn Khattab from Saudi Arabia, a close ally of Shamil Basayev and a friend of Osama Bin Laden, operated in Chechnya and created the International Islamic Brigade, which consisted of foreign fighters and mercenaries. He concentrated on Salafism and requested appropriate behaviours and approaches from his fellows and staff. The significant part of insurgency in Chechnya and North Caucasus, together with its radical wing (which turned out to be the CE) has never acknowledged this fact and denies any affiliation with AQ. However, there was a large presence of foreign fighters with a background with AQ, and who shared the ideas of salafism. These facts, along with certain financial flows, tell a different story. According to Gordon Hahn, until 2004 Chechnya received approximately 20 million USD along with an enormous amount of equipment through AQ channels (AQ material and financial support were organised through the Benevolence International Foundation which operated in Grozny and Tbilisi). The support did not stop even after the death of Khattab, Basayev, Walid, and Urduni, indicating that Umarov became the recipient of the financial injections. It is obvious that AQ did not give operational orders in Chechnya (though they ran training camps in the area); however, the ideological links clearly indicate their close relations. What is more, the Al-Qaeda went through a process of transformation, and the newly created organisations under ideological auspices or affiliation with Al-Qaeda reverted rapidly to their own modus operandi and ultimately made little or no reference to the mother organisation. The CE was created in 2007, and it was very likely that it operated under its own modus operandi while hosting some mercenaries from AQ, and may have received some further funds from the organisation.

The review of the speeches of Dokku Umarov posted on websites such as youtube, and of field interviews with the Chechen community, revealed that, until 2006, Umarov’s ideas had nothing to do with radical Islam. Therefore, the salafism was embedded in his mind as a result of three factors. First of all, Umarov respected Sadulayev and his ability to unite the Chechen insurgency with foreign mercenaries. Abdul Halim Sadulayev, who was the fourth president of the Chechen Republic Ichkeria and field commander during the wars and Imam of Argun town, managed to bring together foreign fighters, appease Basayev and lay the foundations for a united Caucasus. Therefore, Umarov may have paid tribute to the idea promoted by Sadulayev. The second factor which made an impact on Umarov's move towards the creation of the CE was that his fellows were inclined towards salafist ideas. Among his fellow commanders were Anzor Astemirov (who is rumoured to have encouraged Umarov to declare the CE), Said Buriatsky (who studied Islam), Shamil Basaev (leader of the radical Chechen wing affiliated with Al-Q), and Movladi Udugov (the drafter of CE declaration); thus, Umarov had no choice but to refocus on salafism. However, the most convincing argument in this respect relates to the external context. While one of the most prominent experts in this field, Sergey Markedonov, claimed that the CE was created on the values of radical Islam, a factor of external support needed for the survival of Umarov needs to be taken into account. Backed by the Russians, Kadyrov was able to control the situation, and Umarov inevitably required external support, which was most probably rendered with some prerequisites – such as strengthening the position of salafism. What is more, Umarov could not heavily rely on the local community, which was fragmented as a result of various factors. Nevertheless, Umarov had to adopt salafism as the driving motto for the CE for the simple reason that external support made his fight possible. As recent research of Ratelle demonstrated, the support for the Global-Salafi jihad within North Caucasian society remains partial and eclectic, as radical Islamic views do not directly translate into open support for the Caucasus Emirate or international jihad in general.
Undoubtedly, the factor of salafism played a role in the CE. It also dwindled and curbed national Chechen resistance against Russia. A number of interlocutors in the field (the older generation) have explained that the creation of the Caucasus Emirate is a product of the Russian secret service. The organisation imposed itself forcefully and killed the Chechen separatism and nationalism which was highly regarded by the Russian secret service. Many fighters disagreed with their propagated approach and ideas of salafism, which replaced the concept of statehood and independence. Even the then political elite condemned such a move, explaining that Caucasus Emirate outlawed the struggle of the Chechen people. Current prime minister of the Chechen government in exile Akhmed Zakayev added that undoubtedly it was the Russian side that discredited the fight of the Chechen people, provoked international community (as Congress of Chechen and Dagestan people did, which resulted in the second Chechen war) and labelled it as international terrorism, which has nothing to do with Chechen statehood or Islamic values. The fight against Russia cannot be entirely disregarded. Dokka Umarov clearly made reference to Russia in the following declaration: „I appeal to the Mujahideen who are fighting in the Caucasus and the oppressed Muslims of Idel-Ural, Siberia and other parts of the occupied Rusnya (Russia)“ indicating that Russia was considered to be an occupying power and enemy. However Russia was considered to be the first target to be hit as he added in the declaration that „after expelling the infidels (from Caucasus) we must reclaim all historical lands of Muslims, and these borders are beyond the boundaries of Caucasus“. It implies that the genuine idea of the Caucasus emirate was not to curb Russia (as it seems assessing CE terrorist acts) but to pave a way towards something more global.

It is pertinent to consider the social-economic context of imperatives, which may address certain queries raised. The social-economic imperatives did not have a direct impact on the creation of the Caucasus Emirate; however, it helped to mobilise social resistance and unabated support. Local community, together with insurgency, have been affected by an unstable and fragile social-economic situation and the imperatives should be taken into consideration. North Caucasus has been fed by federal centre, receiving financial injections to their budgets varying from 55 to 83 percent. The rate of unemployment is the highest when compared to the other regions in the Russian Federation. Deeply rooted corruption, nepotism and clan connections have prevailed in the republics and have blocked any foreign investment. Unambiguously, it contributed to the resistance to the current regime and to some extent opened unfettered opportunities for the creation of the Caucasus Emirate in light of social opposition and the struggle for a better life. Alexander Knysh claimed that the establishment of the Caucasus Emirate is a direct outcome of the two decades of the post-Soviet turmoil in a region that enjoyed neither social stability nor economic prosperity even in its better days, under the heavy but relatively benevolent hand of the Soviet regime. Ratelle and Souleimanov argued that local incentives such as corruption, nepotism, socio-economic conditions, religious repression, and retaliation better explain the development of religious insurgent groups in the North Caucasus; rather than religion being a trigger for the violence, it is simply the by-product of exclusion and participation in insurgent groups.  

It is not possible for the variety of factors to reveal a simple truth in respect of the origins of the CE. However, it is likely that Umarov was forced to side with the salafists and offer different projects for the North Caucasian insurgency, which would not have been as successful if it had been based on nationalism.

**Structure of CE**
Professor Gordon Hahn explained that it would be wrong to see the CE as driven solely by local concerns and lacking central control or hierarchy as the CE’s organisational structure is determined by Umarov by decree (omra in Arabic) and is a mix of typical network forms. Indeed, it seems that the CE operates as a hierarchically structured organisation which encompasses judicial, political and military branches with a clearly expressed top-down decision making model. The chief of the organisation is the amir who receives bayats from other amirs. The key roles were taken by the deputy naib, the military emir and the qadi. The Qadi is responsible for the Sharia court and all interpretation related to Islam. The sharia courts solve disputes between CE members as well. One example of this is the matter of disloyalty of certain Chechen field commanders against Dokka Umarov. Gakayev, Vadalov and Gaziyev blamed Umarov in court for straying from Chechen national ideas and autocratic decision making. Majlis-al Shura serves as consultative body on all matters of the CE and appoints the new amir. There is a further element of the so-called vekalat, which operates abroad and represents the interests of the CE outside Caucasus. It is also worth mentioning the Brigade of Martyrs, which was established under Shamil Basayev, re-activated by Said Buriatsky and incorporated into the structure of the CE. Muhabarat is responsible for intelligence information gathering and security matters.

Figure No 1

The structure of the Caucasus Emirate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amir</th>
<th>Dokka Umarov (killed in 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majlis-al Shura</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy-naib</td>
<td>Supyan Abdulayev (killed in 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Amir</td>
<td>Ali Taziev (arrested in 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qadi</td>
<td>Anzor Astrermirov (killed in 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhabarat (Security service)</td>
<td>Tarkhan Gaziev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyad-us Salieheen Brigade of Martyrs</td>
<td>Said Buriatsky (killed in 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vekalat (foreign office)</td>
<td>Shamsudin Batukaev</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional entities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chechnya vilayet</th>
<th>Ingushetia (includes North Ossetia) vilayet</th>
<th>Nogay Steppe (includes Northern Krasnodar District and Stavropol District vilayet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dokka Umarov (killed in 2013)</td>
<td>Ali Taziev (arrested in 2010); Alan Digorski or Amir Saad (vilaet North Ossetia) (killed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At a regional level, there are five entities (“vilayets”) which cover the territory of the North Caucasus; these include Dagestan, Chechnya, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Stavropol District and a part of the Krasnodar District. A part of the emirate structure encompasses autonomous combat formations, called “jamaats”, that operate in the well-defined territorial fragments of the emirate and beyond. The jamaat leaders are appointed by the amir and approved by the Supreme Council. Each vilayet is divided into the fronts: the zones of responsibility of local amirs. The chain of command within the Emirate is rather unclear, though local amirs must obey the orders of the emir who issues the directives. It may appear to function effectively as an organised bureaucratic machine, with clear instructions, terms of reference and legal acts. For example, in 2015 Akhmed Umarov addressed the issue of a lack of financial accountability in the field operations. He brought it in writing to the amir who blessed to further proceed to the Sharia court. Then, following the procedures, Akhmed Umarov tried to hand over an invitation to the court. It demonstrates that there are regulations and acts that the CE obeys. This is slightly obscured and complicated in the field of military operations because within the framework of the individual vilayets, certain active and territorially defined jamaats are generally self-sufficient in terms of finances and human resources, and thereby enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Each jamaat operates autonomously in different territorial fragments and enjoys almost full freedom of military activities and operations. The leaders make decisions to organise terrorist acts independently and they do not consult each other. While the jamaats act on their own, contending issues can be referred to the amir for a final solution or reconciliation which would not then be ignored. This is related to the strong offensive operations taken by the federal centre, and Ramzan Kadyrov who has been very pro-active and efficient in the region. As a matter of fact, the CE has not been able (or willing) to sustain a typical chain of command which has been permanently targeted by federal centre and would have ceased to exist if it had been hit.
Double leadership in CE: quo vadis?

The period of 2013-2015 has been very mercurial for the CE and left many question marks about its survival and continuation of its terroristic activities. It has undergone many inevitable changes in terms of leadership. Dokka Umarov, the top leader and emir of the CE, was targeted by the Russian FSB and eventually killed in 2013. In March 2014, qadi Ali Abu Mukhammad made a speech which announced that he would take the responsibility for the Jihad in the Caucasus region, and replace Dokka Umarov as the leader of the Caucasus emirate. This appointment of the new amir from Dagestan did not follow the rules of the operation, and dramatically changed the internal and external context in which the CE operates. The whimsical decision to appoint a non-Chechen leader weakened the links with Chechen diaspora and finally cut any aspiration related to the Chechen identity, independence and nationalism. With this, it lost additional support from the Chechen community. Mukhammad’s limited combat experience put the military operations into serious question, though Islamic education and Arabic knowledge could have attracted additional support from global jihadists movements. The hub of insurgence moved to Dagestan and concentrated mainly on the theatre of operations there. What was more, Mukhammad had to face the schism within the emirate, and the trend of young insurgents who were travelling en masse to fight in Syria and Iraq. On the 21st of November 2014, Suleiman Zailanabidov, chief of insurgents from Khasaviurt, pledged his bayat to ISIS, thereby publically affirming the schism within the CE. He was followed by the amir of Dagestan Abu Muhammed Kadarsky in December 2015, and the field commander Abu Muhhamed Agachaulski who led the insurgency in Shamilkalinski district. Ali Abu-Muhammad was disgruntled, and went on youtube to urge any who had betrayed to leave North Caucasus. He called for a stop to any support for ISIS and his followers. The internal schism had a negative impact on the tempo of operations.
The above chart clearly demonstrates a steady decrease in casualties, from 749 killed in 2010 to 188 killed in 2015. No major terroristic acts took place in 2015. In 2013, Dokka Umarov promised to start a fire at the Sochi Olympics. This received significant attention from the international community; however, nothing actually transpired. Since, there is one noteworthy act where the CE group ambushed a police checkpoint in Grozny on the 4th of December, 2014, killing three officers. This resulted in a massive offensive counterattack from Chechen forces that left 25 killed and 36 wounded.

In April 2015, amir Ali Abu-Muhammad was killed in Dagestan and his successor Avar from Dagestan Magomed Suleymanov, who has had an Islamic education, was chosen to replace him. The decision was quick and there was no information whether other candidates were considered for the role. His term ended after only a few months and he was killed in the anti-terroristic operation in August 2015. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the very serious and fundamental change to the Caucasus Emirate. Suleymanov inherited the egregious issues of the schism, which reached a peak in June 2015. Aslan Byutukaev, the commander of the Riyad-us Saliheen Brigade of Martyrs, pledged bayat to ISIS. This was followed by a joint message posted on youtube on the 21st June 2015, where all field commanders expressed bayat to ISIS. ISIS positively and quickly reacted to the bayat and appointed Abu Muhammed Kadarsky as chief of the newly established Caucasus Villaet of ISIS. Magomed Suleymanov was killed in action in August 2015 and the CE as such should have ceased to exist. Whether this is actually the case remains ambiguous for various reasons. There has been no new leader selected since the death of Suleymanov though some attempts to refer to Akhmed Umarov (brother of Dokka Umarov) as a potential leader took place in September 2015. Nevertheless, A. Umarov distanced himself in late October from the fighters who identified him as their amir. Tarkhan Gaziev, who has been a recognised field commander, may be ready to take the lead of an insurgency as repeatedly promised to come back to Chechnya to fight. Ekaterina Sokirianskaia explained that the CE could not elect a new leader first and foremost because it is almost impossible to follow the procedure for elections of the new amir and there is a clear shortage of leaders who would possess minimal knowledge in Islam and have relevant battle experience. It is very possible that there are small groups operating in various geographical fragments that did not pledge bayat to ISIS. For example, the vilayat of Nogai Steppe did not announce their choice with respect to ISIS. Former fellows of Magomed Suleymanov may well operate independently under the flag of the CE. Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay amir Salim made a sharp statement in December 2015 addressing the schism within the vilayet and urged to return fighters to Caucasus. Nevertheless, the Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay vilayet has been decimated gradually since its amir and the CE's qadi 'Seifullah' Anzor Astemirov was killed in March 2010. The Dagistanis are likely the only force that could significantly revive the CE to something approaching its previous potency, and that is unlikely since their religiosity and frequent Islamism draws them to the jihadism of ISIS (comments provided by H.Gordon). Furthermore, Yarlukapov underscores that the Salafis of the North Caucasus are far from unanimous in their assessment of such actions because many of them, including some of their leaders, do not view ISIS as an Islamic project but rather as a narrowly political one that is dividing the umma rather than uniting it. This may provide motivation to revert back to a more nationalistic (or regional) approach in respect of insurgency.

ENDNOTES
About the author

Grazvydas Jasutis received his Ph.D. from the University of Vilnius, Lithuania. He is a scholar and conflict management practitioner who held various positions in the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia, the EU electoral monitoring mission in Burkina Faso, the EU Monitoring Mission in Aceh (Indonesia), the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE Mission in FYROM, the Permanent Delegation to NATO, and the Minstry of National Defense of Lithuania. Conducted researches at Columbia University in the city of New York, Creighton University, Omaha NE, University of Geneva and Tbilisi State University. Currently he is Research fellow at Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and teaches post-soviet security courses at General Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy and Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University.

Acknowledgment

The author appreciates comments, remarks and ideas offered by prof. Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, prof. Gordon Hahn, prof. Emil Suleimanov, Ekaterina Sokirianskaia, Mairbek Vatchagaev, Liz Fuller, Giorgi Kanashvili and many knowledgeable Chechen interlocutors from the Caucasus region and diaspora. The research was supported by a Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme Fellowship within the 7th European Community Framework Programme.”