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Selected Western Countries' stance on the Chechen conflict

Annotation: The author made an attempt to analyze the Russian-Chechen wars that took place in 1994-1996 and 1999-2009 in terms of their international conditions, taking into account the historical experiences and cultural features of the Chechen nation. The aim of the article was to investigate to what extent and by what means Western states interfered in the conflict, and to show that one of the main reasons for the outbreak of the Chechen wars was the geopolitical struggle of third countries with the Russian Federation for domination in the North Caucasus. While working on the article, realism in the current of defensive realism was adopted as a theoretical perspective in the study of international relations and a methodological approach adequate for it was applied: the method of critical and causal analysis of the available written and graphic materials, as well as the comparative method with a historical perspective to describe the diversity of the reasons for the participation of selected political entities in the Russian-Chechen conflict.

Keywords: Russian Federation, North Caucasus, Chechnya, ethnic conflict, Chechen war, geopolitics, USA, Great Britain, France, Germany

Wybrane państwa zachodnie wobec konfliktu czeczeńskiego

Streszczenie: Autorka podjęła próbę analizy wojen rosyjsko-czeczeńskich, toczących się w latach 1994-1996 oraz 1999-2009 w zakresie ich uwarunkowań międzynarodowych z uwzględnieniem doświadczeń historycznych i cech kulturowych narodu czeczeńskiego. Celem niniejszego artykułu było zbadanie w jakim zakresie oraz jakimi środkami państwa zachodnie ingerowały w opisywany konflikt a także wykazanie, iż jedną z zasadniczych przyczyn wybuchu wojen czeczeńskich była walka geopolityczna państw trzecich z Federacją Rosyjską o dominację w obszarze Kaukazu Północnego. Podczas pracy nad artykułem przyjęto jako perspektywę teoretyczną w badaniu stosunków międzynarodowych realizm w nurcie realizmu defensywnego i zastosowano adekwatne dla niego podejście metodologiczne: metoda analizy krytycznej i przyczynowej dostępnych materiałów pisanych oraz graficznych jak również zastosowano metodę porównawczą wraz z ujęciem historycznym do opisu zróżnicowania przyczyn uczestnictwa wybranych podmiotów politycznych w konflikcie rosyjsko-czeczeńskim.

Слова ключовые: Федерация Росыјска, Кавказ Пóлночы, Чеченя, конфликт этничны, война чеченская, геополитика, USA, Wielka Brytania, Francja, Niemcy.

Избранные страны Запада перед лицом чеченского конфликта

Аннотация: Автор предпринял попытку проанализировать российско-чеченские войны 1994–1996 и 1999–2009 гг с точки зрения их международных условий с учетом исторического опыта и культурных особенностей чеченского народа. Целью данной статьи было выяснить, в какой степени и какими средствами западные государства вмешались в описываемый конфликт, и показать, что одной из основных причин начала чеченских войн была геополитическая борьба третьих стран с Российской Федерацией за господство на Северном Кавказе. При работе над статьей реализм в направлении защитного реализма был принят как теоретическая перспектива в исследовании международных отношений и применен адекватный ему методологический подход: метод критического и причинно-следственного анализа имеющихся письменных и графических материалов, а также сравнительный метод с исторической перспективой для описания разнообразия причин участия политические акторы в российско-чеченском конфликте.

Ключевые слова: Российская Федерация, Северный Кавказ, Чечня, этнический конфликт, чеченская война, геополитика, США, Великобритания, Франция, Германия

Introduction

The subject of Russian and Chechen wars has been undertaken not only by Polish academic writers but journalists as well. Sadly, it is not an uncommon phenomenon to diminish or even omit the significance of both exogenous circumstances and the geopolitical rivalry in the outbreak and proceedings of the Chechen wars. It is highly intriguing, especially nowadays, bearing in mind the time span since the conflict had ended as well as some ethical aspects of all non-government organisations and their true independence questioned more frequently. Moreover, values especially highlighted by some states, such as respecting human rights, democracy, freedom of speech and transparency also appear to be a subject of distrust. It seems as if they only exist in declarations.

It has been a struggle to depict the Chechen Wars only from the perspectives of human rights and a pure “fight for liberation”, as well as using only means of emotional influence and calls for empathy. Moreover, this narrative is usually conducted from a single point of view and based solely on Chechen information sources¹. Whereas, as in the hypothesis of this article, the Russian-Chechen conflict was not simply domestic in nature. It served an additional purpose to provide a platform to foreign subjects for geopolitical gains. The author depicts goals and means, used by selected Western states², in order to achieve them during the Chechen wars³ while proving the significance of the external factors to the conflict proceedings.

¹ Close to 90% of information repeated in mass media of Western countries about Chechnya’s situation during the conflict originated from the Chechen elites. See: T. Thomas, *Russian Tactical Lessons Learned Fighting Chechen Separatists*, «Journal of Slavic Military Studies», vol. 18, 2005, p. 742.

² The United States, Great Britain, France and Germany.

³ For this article, the time period assumes is 1994-2009.

This article is based on academic sources pertaining to this topic published in the series *Power. Elites. Leadership* edited by Tomasz Bodio, studies and analyses by the Centre for European Studies and the Jamestown Foundation, as well as the intelligence reports by the STRATFOR agency, and academic articles by the Academie de Geopolitique de Paris. Foreign interferences studies such as the analyses published by Viatcheslav Avioutsky proved to be especially fascinating, *Géopolitique du Caucase* in particular.

Despite the vast literature concerning the Russian-Chechen conflict, including Polish publications and the impressive works done by Polish researchers, we recognise the issue to find credible sources, especially on the Western interference. They are usually fragmentary, modest or sometimes even nearly impossible to verify. Hence, only the sources verified in publications universally considered trustworthy were selected.

The West and the Chechen Wars

In the academic literature concerning international relations, the most prominent notion is that the state of the relationship between the Russian Federation and the United States along with Western Europe is a direct result of Russian's imperialistic policies as well as their hostile and aggressive approach. It is also highlighted that the political elites of the Russian Federation squandered their only chance at creating a "free market, human-rights-respecting, democratic land of prosperity" while only non-government and humanitarian organisations were active in the Chechen areas⁴. The opinion that only Muslim countries were the ones who influenced the Chechen conflict along with organisation such as Al-Kaida and the Muslim Brotherhood⁵. However, the widely-understood Western countries also played an important role, not only from a diplomatic angle – by making appeals for humanitarian treatment and solving the conflict through peaceful negotiations.

Despite the numerous abductions and murders carried out by Chechen separatists on western journalists and activists, governments of Western states continued their cooperation with the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria's leaders for a very long time. Naturally, the level of their involvement and reasons were different.

Similarly to Central Asia and Eastern Europe, in the West we can also observe deep connections between the worlds of business and politics. A scenario where corporations would participate in these events unbeknownst to their countries' political elites, is not only unlikely, but would also indicate their governments' incompetence, which is an inconceivable allegation.

American plans for Caucasus and the ways for their achievement in Chechnya

The policies of Russian elites as well as the acts of the Chechen elites led to sufficient grounds for foreign interventions. What provided for an additional incentive for

⁴ J. Szukalski, *Przeobrażenia polityczno-ustrojowe w Czeczenii w latach 1990-2000*, Toruń 2015; J. Doroszczyk, *Dlaczego Rosja nie jest państwem prawa? – o źródłach rosyjskiego nihilizmu prawnego*, <http://refleksje.amu.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/02-Doroszczyk.pdf>, accessed 10.02.2019; A. Evans, *The failure of democratization in Russia: A comparative perspective*, "Journal of Eurasian Studies", 2011, (2) 40-51; S. Gooldrup, *Russia's Failed Democracy*, <https://www.camdenconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Urock-Stacie-Gooldrup.pdf>, accessed 10.02.2019.

⁵ J. Szukalski, *Przeobrażenia...*, p. 336.

such actions, was the strategic location of the Chechen Republic. According to Zbigniew Brzeziński, thanks to the fall of the USSR, the US became an actual world superpower and was on its way to be a sanctioned arbiter for international relations⁶. Apart from losing a part of territory, the expansion of the UN was met in the Russian Federation with unsettlement – both in democratic and most military circles representing Soviet outlooks – at the beginning of 1990s. Furthermore, Brzeziński claimed that these doubts were justified⁷. The US became more and more influential on the former USSR territories, including Caucasus, by restructuring the relations between Eurasia states designed to diminish their potential and prevent them from ever reaching the US level, even as allies⁸. Hence, The US has always been interested by profiting from rich natural resources in that region as well as ensuring a military integration of American structures with the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, forcing the Russia to fully cooperate.

The Northern Caucasus along with its complex geopolitical, social and economic position became an excellent opportunity to achieve these American goals. They could take full advantage of the soft power instruments⁹. Nevertheless, it would be an error to believe that the Chechen secessionists were not chasing after the support of the West out of their own accord (including the US). What is quite surprising is that the democratic, human-rights-defending, and free market US elites would agree to cooperate with people, whom they know to have obvious criminal and mafia connections. However, as pointed out by a prominent theoretician of international law, Carl Schmitt, in order to ensure peace and lawfulness in international relations, it has to be enforced and the enforcers regulating it (in fact, holding a monopoly on it) are superpower states¹⁰. Hence, it is necessary to look at the selective approach of the US towards the aforementioned ideals from that exact perspective. Therefore, referring to this particular political theorist in this case is not unjustified, as it could be assumed that both the US and the Russian Federation promote the ideas Schmitt advocated in their respective foreign policies¹¹.

The person who initiated the independent communication of the Chechen Republic with the United States was Dzhokhar Dudayev¹² who began searching for allies in 1992, when he visited the US¹³. At the time of his visit, he planned on seeing President Bill Clinton as well as the members of both the Republican Party and the State Depart-

⁶ Z. Brzeziński, *Wielka szachownica*, Warszawa 1999, p. XXV.

⁷ Z. Brzeziński, op. cit., p. 102.

⁸ Z. Brzeziński, op. cit., p. 104.

⁹ Soft power means a capacity for a state to attract allies and influence based to the appeal of their culture, politics or values.

¹⁰ See more: C. Schmitt, *The nomos of the Earth in the international law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, New York 2006.

¹¹ An example of a contemporary follower of Schmitt's philosophy is one of George W. Bush's former advisors, John Yoo, and American politicians refer to it as the Unitary Executive Theory. According to the author of this article, there has been a similar case in the Russian Federation where the president refers to it as an "independent democracy". The politician behind it is Vladislav Surkov who has never admitted it originates from Schmitt's ideas.

¹² Dzhokhar Dudayev – Chechen politician and rebellion supporter, President of Chechnya 1991 – 1996.

¹³ Formerly having visited Bosnia as well.

ment¹⁴. Dudayev was accompanied by the Vice Prime Minister of Ichkeria¹⁵ Mairbek Mugadayev and the Mer of Grozny Beslan Gantemirov. This journey was mainly devoted to discussing an offer of cooperation between the US and Chechnya in the area of developing Chechen petroleum fields. Dudayev even visited NASA headquarters¹⁶.

Certainly, it was highly significant to receive recognition and the help of, what was at the time, the most prominent state on the international stage. Oil deposits in Chechnya were supposed to be a huge incentive for the powerful ally¹⁷. In October 1992, Dudayev was supposed to sign a document with a consortium based in Houston, Texas to deliver machinery necessary for oil extraction and refining. However, these declarations never reached the implementation phase¹⁸.

The US could benefit from the oil deposits not available to them until that time. Additionally, Chechnya had a favourable geopolitical location which could allow for influencing the Middle East, formerly an opinion held of Azerbaijan¹⁹. They could finally extend their influence over the North Caucasus. Similarly promising and related to both Northern as well as Southern Caucasus states was Dudayev's idea of a Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus. It would consist of the modern North Caucasian Federal District' republics and Abkhazia (previously separated from Georgia). Such organisation could increase the economic potential of the region as well as become a military alliance for rebelling republics. The concept was later evolved into a Caucasian Common Market²⁰, initiated by Khozh-Ahmed Noukjaev²¹. One of the supporters of that idea was the aforementioned Zbigniew Brzeziński.

During the conflict, Freedom House, officially non-government, whose goals are human rights and democracy protection in the world, was present on the territory of the Republic of Chechnya²². Among others, the organisation offers its own rankings in which they rate the maturity of democracy in states, how well the government respects the freedom of speech as well as each country's economic appeal etc. However, this organisation has been a subject of controversy for some years now²³. Not only its

¹⁴ Джохар Дудаев посетил Америку, "Коммерсантъ", 164(11), 17.10.1992, <https://www.kommer-sant.ru/doc/27023>, accessed 27.01.2019; J. Brewda, L. De Hoyos, *The Caucasus: new 'afghansi' hotbed*, "Executive Intelligence Review", vol. 23(16), 12.04.1996.

¹⁵ Chechen Republic of Ichkeria – the name given to the Republic of Chechnya during the proclamation of independence in 1991 and not recognised internationally.

¹⁶ Как Джохар Дудаев посетил Центр Управления Полетами НАСА в США, <http://chechenews.com/как-джохар-дудаев-посетил-центр-управ/>, accessed 27.01.2019.

¹⁷ P. Sieradzan, *Ku nowej "Wielkiej Grze" – rywalizacja mocarstw światowych o przywództwo geopolityczne w regionie Kaukazu* [in:] T. Bodio (ed.), *Kaukaz: transformacja, przywództwa i elit politycznych*, Warszawa 2012, p. 96.

¹⁸ Avioutskii V., *Géopolitique du Caucase*, Paris 2005, p. 234.

¹⁹ See more: Z. Brzeziński, op. cit.

²⁰ This issue was described in more detail in the section dedicated to Great Britain due to its significant role in founding this organisation.

²¹ M. Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars. Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?*, Washington 2002, p. 54.

²² See: <https://freedomhouse.org/about-us>.

²³ It seems consequential that one of Freedom House leaders is a former head of the CIA, James Woolsey, which corresponds to certain theories that this organisation is actually an extended arm of the American Intelligence agency. See: *Freedom House Announces New Chairman, James Woolsey*, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/freedom-house-announces-new-chairman-james-woolsey>, accessed: 28.01.2019.

leaders²⁴ but also its way of financing²⁵ seem to suggest its 'independence' is only a facade.

In 1999, Freedom House founded an American Committee for Peace in Chechnya²⁶, chaired by former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, former Secretary of State Alexander Haig and former Congressman Stephen J. Solarz. The board itself could lead to suggestions that the headquarters of Freedom House in Chechnya was responsible for coordinating actions meant to secure American gains in the Republic as well as constituting a safehouse where various separatist groups, even terrorist ones, could come for political or financial support²⁷. American humanitarian organisations seem to keep double standards while rating the countries based on their respect for human rights²⁸. Freedom House did not even attempt at recognising that local conditions or the cultural character of the Chechen nation which is mostly Islamic and furthermore has a more conservative outlook.

American government and intellectual elites – despite their traumatic experiences with Islamic terrorism – seem not to discriminate their support against Islamic groups as long as their overall objectives match America's current interests. Considering the board composition of the Committee for Peace in Chechnya, its connections with the Voice of America and Freedom²⁹ as well as the State Department of the US, the humanitarian mission as its sole, exclusive objective seems questionable. Sending humanitarian organisations which were theoretically aimed at helping the victims to areas with military involvement has a long tradition³⁰.

Andrei Babitsky, a correspondent of Radio Free Europe, played a significant role during both Chechen wars. Without getting into details of the rightness of claims that the Federal Army caused monumental destruction in Chechnya and led to massive people migrations and deaths due to military actions, the journalist focused solely on criticising the Russian army. The narrative constructed by Babitsky was meant to convince the listeners that it was the Federacy which invaded the Republic whose peoples' only

²⁴ In the composition of the executive board for the organisation, there were people such as Jeane Kirkpatrick (US Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, US Defense Policy Review Board), Michael Chertoff (one of the authors of the controversial Patriot Act, US Secretary of Homeland Security) or Mark Palmer (US State Department).

²⁵ The organisation receives some of the funds through the US government and the National Endowment for Democracy, United States Agency for International Development and the State Department.

²⁶ Currently known as the Committee for Peace in the Caucasus (ACPC).

²⁷ Compare: W. Madsen, *Washington's « Civil Society » : CIA Financing of Chechen and Caucasus Regional Terrorists*, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/washingtons-civil-society-and-cia-financing-of-chechen-and-other-caucasus-regional-terrorists/5333359>, accessed 29.01.2019.

²⁸ One of the examples could be Saudi Arabia where homosexuality, apostasy or participating in street protests is punished by death. Freedom House repeatedly informs and criticises the policies of Ramzan Kadyrov against LGBT and the authoritarian nature of the regime. See: <https://freedomhouse.org/article/russia-police-kidnap-chechen-lgbt-crackdown-survivor>, accessed 28.01.2019.

²⁹ As stated by Andrei Babitski, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, these media have specific goals in countries where they broadcast their programmes. See: *Open letter of Radio Liberty Chechnya war reporter Andrei Babitsky to RFE/RL president Steven Korn*, <http://freemediaonline.org/freemediaonline-blog/2013/01/03/open-letter-of-radio-liberty-chechnya-war-reporter-andrei-babitsky-to-rferl-president-steven-korn/>, accessed 28.01.2019.

³⁰ See in detail: A. Sutton, *Wall Street a rewolucja bolszewicka*, Wrocław 2017.

dream is to be free as all other former Soviet republics. He also taped a documentary with Ilyas Akhmadov³¹.

As far as the American administration's stance on the matter is concerned, despite President Bill Clinton avoiding any decisive statements during the first Chechen war, the American non-government organisations openly criticised the Russian government and one-sidedly depicted the state of the Republic. Zbigniew Brzezinski appeared to be especially active in that regard. He rated the US President's ambiguous quite negatively as well as his comparison of the Chechen war to the United States' civil war in the 19th century³². Another personality attempting at urging the US President as well as the Congress was Ariel Cohen, a political scientist affiliated with the Republican Party³³. According to him, the attitude presented by the American Government was too passive while the military actions of the Russian Army was inhumane, and the Russian government squandered their chance to democratise their country³⁴. Nevertheless, both the decisiveness and unity lacking before were definitely visible during the second Chechen war and they were expressed by none other than Secretary of State Madelaine Albright. Some Western intellectualists demanded a military intervention in Chechnya, similar to the one in Kosovo³⁵.

Even before the first Chechen war, the presence of American political activists, scientists and people affiliated with American politics was discernible. Dudayev had the support of the aforementioned groups, the evidence of which could be a tape showing an official dinner party thrown in his honour in 1993 in Grozny³⁶. In the video, we can observe important figures from Ukraine, Lithuania, France and Azerbaijan, as well as people with Russian elites' connections such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

From the perspective of establishing relationships by Chechen elites with the American and British elites, a very important role was played by a Saudi-Egyptian arms dealer, Adnan Khashoggi. He was a representant of the Saudi Binladin Group when in the US and while in the Middle East, he represented American arms groups such as Lockheed, Nothrop and Raytheon. This controversial businessman was also referred to by Litvinenko with regards to attacks on civil resident buildings in Russia, 1999³⁷. Khashoggi had formed especially close relationships with Khozh-Ahmed Noukjaev and introduced him to his co-investor and advisor to The Carlyle Group, US State

³¹ Ильяс Ахмадов, Андрей Бабицкий, *Ведено*, 1999 г., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk639hJcaPQ>, accessed 29.01.2019.

³² M. McFaul, *US Foreign Policy and Chechnya*, (b.m.w.) 2003, p. 10.

³³ Ariel Cohen is a political scientist born in Yalta (USSR) in 1959 specialising in political risk, international security and energy policies as well as the rule of law. He currently serves as the director of the Center for Energy, Natural Resources and Geopolitics (CENRG) at the Institute for Analysis of Global Security (IAGS). CENRG focuses the subjects of energy, geopolitics and security. Cohen is also a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council with the Global Energy Center and the Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center. Until July 2014, Cohen was a senior researcher in the Heritage Foundation in Washington. He specialises in Russia, Eurasia, Easter Europe and Middle East. Additionally, he served as an advisor to USAID, World Bank and Pentagon.

³⁴ Avioutski V., *Géopolitique...*, op. cit., p. 234.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

³⁶ *Торжественный ужин, данный Первым Президентом Чеченской Республики в 1993 году*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwbM27AqdbE>, accessed 28.01.2019.

³⁷ A. Litvinenko, *Blowing up Russia: the secret plot to bring back KGB terror*, New York 2007, p. 154.

Secretary of 1989-1992 - James Baker. The company has also been linked to President G.W. Bush³⁸.

In the spring of 1997, a Caucasian-American Chamber for Commerce and Industry, the leader of which became Noukjaev, was founded in Washington³⁹. The same year, Noukjaev claims in the economic forum in Switzerland that his endeavours are supported by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as well as the World Bank⁴⁰. His main investor was a British-French finance expert and a member of the 4th term of the European Parliament – James Goldsmith⁴¹. Considering another important person related to communication between Chechen separatists and Western businessmen was Maciej Jachimczyk⁴² - a Polish man who converted to Islam, changed his name to Mansur and received the nationality of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. He became an advisor to President Maskhadov regarding foreign policies of the Republic⁴³ and a deputy of Noukjaev in the aforementioned Caucasian-American Chamber for Commerce and Industry. Frederick M. Bush, a man close to former US President G.W. Bush, was appointed the Chamber's executive committee chairman and Kenichi Ito, known for chairing the Japanese Forum on International Relations as well as being former USSR and US diplomat was appointed deputy chairman⁴⁴.

However, the circumstances for investments, including stock exchange, was not adequate for both American and British businessmen. The lack of stability in the region would definitely not improve the predictability of loss and profit. The Americans were adamant to profit from all the natural resources near the Caspian Sea (American Energy Corporations were the most numerous in this region). Hence, Luis Farakhan⁴⁵ was sent in order to convince Dagestan's Republic elites to merge with the Republic of Ichkeria, stabilise the situation in the region⁴⁶ as well as remain loyal to the Russian government⁴⁷.

The Republic of Chechen-Ichkeria, considering itself an independent country, formed a Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired by Ilyas Akhmadov. He would often travel

³⁸ See more: A. Фурсов, С. Правосудов (red.), *На пороге глобального хаоса. Битва за будущее*, Moskwa 2015; R. Kessler, *The Richest Man in the World. The Story of Adnan Kashoggi*, New York 1986.

³⁹ Ш. Мамаев, П. Иванов, *Бог шельфы метит*, "Коммерсант-Власть", Nr 4 (256), 10.01.1998, p. 38.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ John Goldsmith was known to be a euro-sceptic. He organised a movement dedicated to leaving the EU. In 1994, when he was voted into the European Parliament, he co-founded a political group called 'Europe of Nations' with Philippe de Villiers. Goldsmith was a leader of that group until his death in 1997.

⁴² Jachimczyk left Cracow in 1980s for England where he graduated from Theology. In the 90s, he became the head of the Chechen Center in Cracow. He became an advisor to a Kazakh businessman, Bakhytbek Baiseitov, who in 2008 was a founder and chairman of Bank CenterCredit in Kazakhstan as well as the owner of oil permits. In 1997, Zbigniew Siemiątkowski, the then minister coordinator for Polish secret services defined him as a threat to Polish security. Jachimczyk died in 2018.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ I. Rotar, *Grozny is lobbying for a Caucasus Common Market, hoping the profit motive will force the world community to recognize Chechnya's independence*, <https://jamestown.org/program/grozny-is-lobbying-for-a-caucasus-common-market-hoping-the-profit-motive-will-force-the-world-community-to-recognize-chechnyas-independence/>. accessed 30.01.2019.

⁴⁵ Afro-American activist and leader of the Muslim organization Nation of Islam in the USA.

⁴⁶ Е. Антонов, И. Петров, *Воры Моря*, "Коммерсант-Власть", Nr 4 (256), 10.01.1998, p. 34.

⁴⁷ Americas impersonated allies of the Russian Federal government even though it was only a by-product of acting in their own interest

to the United States to meet Paul Wellstone, the senator of the Democratic Party, as well as Sam Brownback, the senator of the Republican Party. He would also meet people such as: Zbigniew Brzeziński, Richard Perle⁴⁸, Frank Carlucci⁴⁹, Lee Hamilton⁵⁰ as well as Strobe Talbot⁵¹, Steve Sestanovich⁵², Paula Dobriansky⁵³ and the aforementioned CIA chief and one of the Freedom House leaders - James Woolsey⁵⁴. Akhmadov also discussed possibilities to "help alleviate the disastrous humanitarian situation of the Chechen people" from the Americans with John Beyrle, the Acting Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for Russia and the New Independent States⁵⁵. Akhmadov made a plea to Beyrle asking him to request to the US government "to photograph mass graves and concentration camps in Chechnya using satellite imagery, as it had previously done in the cases of Bosnia and Kosovo"⁵⁶. These connections would prove very useful to Akhmadov after having fled the country, as he was granted asylum in the United States. Nevertheless, according to the minister himself - receiving asylum in the US is not the only reason for remaining there but in fact "completing important assignments set by the president of Ichkeria"⁵⁷. Ilyas Akhmadov, as an expat⁵⁸, published two books on the subject of the Chechen wars, both endorsed by Zbigniew Brzeziński⁵⁹.

As you can observe in the examples shown, American investments in Chechnya had ties with both Saudi and British capital. They were focused on using non-govern-

⁴⁸ US Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Ronald Reagan, advisor to President George W. Bush and advisor to Pentagon.

⁴⁹ American Intelligence Officer, in 1987-1989 he served as a US Deputy Secretary of Defense under President Reagan.

⁵⁰ Member of the US House of Representatives, currently US Homeland Security Advisory Council.

⁵¹ US Secretary of State Deputy.

⁵² American diplomat and scholar.

⁵³ Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs.

⁵⁴ Other people with whom Chechen separatist leaders most likely made contact with at the time are: Kenneth Adelman - former deputy US ambassador by the UN, assistant to US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, later on a member of the Defense Policy Board as well as an advisor to President Ronald Reagan; Midge Deuter - biographer of Donald Rumsfeld, the director of Heritage Foundation; Frank Gaffney - the director of Center for Security Policy; Bruce Jackson - an officer in the US Army, deputy director of Lockheed Martin, leader of the Project on Transitional Democracies in NATO whose main goal is to accelerate the pace of transformation in former countries of the Soviet Union and integration with the Atlantic structures; Michael Ladeen - member of President Reagan administration, a member of American Enterprise Institute.

⁵⁵ Assuming from the content of the aforementioned department webpage, this position no longer exists in the American administration. Nevertheless, the scope of responsibilities is self-evident from its name. The webpage also reads: "The Office is responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing U.S. foreign policy in the 12 countries of Eurasia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia on a variety of issues that deal with democracy, human rights, economic prosperity, protection of the environment, regional cooperation and conflict resolution, halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and combating terrorism and international crime." See: <https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/nis/index.html>, accessed 29.01.2019.

⁵⁶ *Chechen foreign minister in Washington*, «Noth Caucasus Weekly», vol. 2, <https://jamestown.org/program/chechen-foreign-minister-in-washington-2/>, accessed 29.01.2019.

⁵⁷ М. Мурадov, *Главы МИД Ичкерии притяли в США*, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/495527>, accessed 29.01.2019.

⁵⁸ Former Foreign Affair Minister of Ichkeria lives in the US to this day.

⁵⁹ *Збигнев Бжезинский о Кавказе и России*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqNbSmDTCTM>, accessed 29.01.2019.

ment organisations and investments in the oil industry⁶⁰. These bring to mind the issue of legal compliance since they took place in a time where Chechen and Russian relations were in deep crisis and while the Republic of Ichkeria's independence was not internationally acknowledged. Moreover, the people involved in the aforementioned movements were known to engage in activities which could be considered illicit or even immoral. Additionally, these examples remain in contrast with the popular statements that the US did not take part in any operations in Chechnya during the part of the crisis analysed in this article.

Great Britain and its Chechen projects

Great Britain is an arch-rival of Russia on both the Caucasian territory and in Central Asia. As a result of its profound influence in these parts of the world, Great Britain sometimes fell victim to the attacks of Germany through Muslim uprisings or 'holy wars' declared by Islamic nations. Nevertheless, for Great Britain, the region of the Caspian Sea seems more familiar – compared to the US – and the difficulties in Russian relations have historic underlining. While the US counted on weakening Russia as its only worthy geopolitical opponent in the first place and new, unavailable until that time, source of oil import being second or further down the list of profits, Great Britain on their last stretch of de-colonisation was in search of a new source of funding. Both their financial and political elites saw a prospect for profit in the vulnerability of the Russian Federation.

Thanks to Maciej Mansur Jachimek's connections as deep as the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher herself, Noukjaev was officially received in the Westminster Palace⁶¹ and could present his case to people who could realistically determine the fate of implementing his ideas. Caucasian Common Market was a key project since its creation were meant to ascertain the acknowledgement of Ichkeria's Republic by nations of the world. This endeavour was started on 13th October 1997 in Grozny, when Noukjaev welcomed a delegation consisting of: Lord McAlpine⁶², Francis Pike⁶³, Patrick Robertson⁶⁴ and Imran Khan⁶⁵. The contents of the discussions were confidential along with the deal signed on that day between the Chechens and the "Western energy business". It appeared that the signatories agreed to consider the prospect of creating a "Transcaucasia Energy Company (TCEC)" that would take a form of an international consortium involving energy carriers as well as investment banks and international financial institutions. Ichkeria's government proposed a lease of the portion of the oil pipeline crossing Chechnya's territory along with its infrastructure to the aforementioned consortium or any international corporation which would allow the Chechen government to become

⁶⁰ In 1991, oil refineries in Grozny exported 16-17 million tonnes of oil every year. See: Ridley N., *Terrorist financing: The Failure of Counter Measures*, Cheltenham - Massachusetts 2012, p. 35.

⁶¹ V. Avioucki, *Globalisation du conflit tchétchène*, <http://www.academiedegeopolitiqueparis.com/globalisation-du-conflit-tchetchene/>, accessed 31.01.2019.

⁶² House of Lords member and a former advisor to Margaret Thatcher.

⁶³ Peregrine Investment Bank representative from Hong Kong.

⁶⁴ British company 'Robertson and Associates' Director.

⁶⁵ Pakistan Movement for Justice leader, since 2018 the Prime Minister of Pakistan. His wife is a daughter of James Goldsmith.

both a shareholder and a co-founder⁶⁶. It was highly important for the Chechen elites to become a part of the global market and the global financial and banking system which would in turn allow them to be economically independent from Russia⁶⁷. Not long after, Noukjaev met with Margaret Thatcher, Zbigniew Brzeziński, World Bank leader James Wolfensohn and James Baker. Jacques Attali, the first ever chief executive officer of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, would become the first chairman of the board for the Caucasian Common Market⁶⁸.

Soon enough, the Caucasus Investment Fund was established (Caucasian Common Market's main financial frame) by Noukjaev, Lord McAlpine and Francis Pike. The goal was to raise \$3 billion to be used for investments in the Caucasus⁶⁹.

Aslan Maskhadov – the succeeding president of Chechnya promised to the British beneficiaris monopoly for extracting oil in Chechnya⁷⁰, hence all the declarations by the Chechen elites that Russia would be welcome at that table should have been treated with a healthy dose of scepticism⁷¹. Noukjaev was so adamant that he will bring this project to fruition, and that the whole territory of Caucasus will be independent from the Russian Federation, i.e. both Northern Caucasus in the territorial and financial sense, as well as the Southern Caucasus in the sense of influence, that he founded Caucasian Common Market branches in many world cities such as Kiev, Washington, Houston as well as Tokyo, London, Brussels and even Warsaw.

Chechen and Caspian oil were expected to flow through the same route as before via the "Friendship" pipeline crossing Russia, Ukraine to West Europe. The second projection was a route: Baku – Grozny- Rostov – Kremenchuk – "Friendship" pipeline and from there, through Poland and Germany⁷². This network was designed until Iran which prompted British and American businessmen to lobby to their governments the notion of normalising relations with this previously shunned state. The US was the most sceptical partner to the idea of involving Iran. Since the Russian Federation was not even considered as a potential partner, actions by Russian forces and armies in Chechnya were continuously harshly criticised. This narrative was changed by PM Tony Blair when Georgia refused the passage of Chechen oil through its territory leaving potential investors to their own devices.

It is important to remember that politicians and both British and American parliament members had ties with Big Oil. Zbigniew Brzeziński was an advisor to Amoco,

⁶⁶ I. Rotar, *Grozny is lobbying for a Caucasus Common Market, hoping the profit motive will force the world community to recognize Chechnya's independence*, <https://jamestown.org/program/grozny-is-lobbying-for-a-caucasus-common-market-hoping-the-profit-motive-will-force-the-world-community-to-recognize-chechnyas-independence/>. accessed 30.01.2019.

⁶⁷ See more: А.С. Кацев, Н.Л. Слободянюк, *История российской журналистики в произведениях и лицах*, Moskwa-Biszkek 2014.

⁶⁸ He was an advisor to the President of France, François Mitterrand. In 1993, he resigned as the chairman of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development due to a scandal where it was uncovered that EBRD spent more for its own needs (e.g. \$100 million for furnishings at its London seat) than to support the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as territories of former USSR, which is in fact its main objective

⁶⁹ I. Rotar, *Grozny is lobbying for a Caucasus Common*, op. cit.

⁷⁰ V. Avioutski, *Globalisation...*, op. cit.

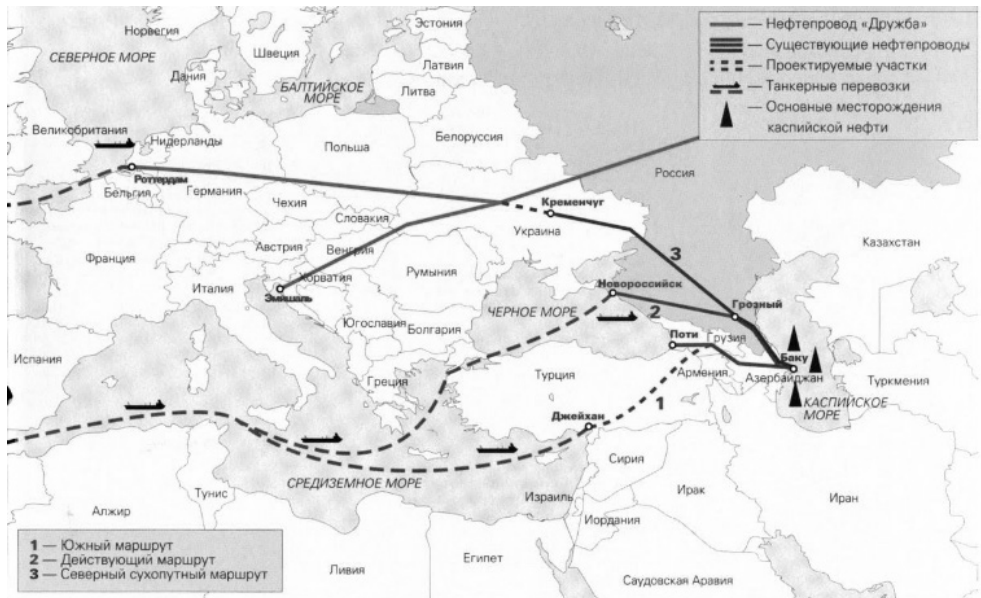
⁷¹ Ш Мамаев, *Говорит новый Чеченец*, "Коммерсант-Власть", 10 (262), 24.03.1998.

⁷² Н. Поливанов, *Темза впадает в Каспийское море*, "Коммерсант-Власть", 10 (262), 24.03.1998.

a huge oil company, property of the Standard Oil company founded by John D. Rockefeller. In 1998, Amoco merged with British Petroleum (BP) represented by Margaret Thatcher. Additionally, James Baker worked for an Azerbaijani international operations consortium. Therefore, contrary to appearances, this project was to be treated with great seriousness and care.

According to some sources⁷³, another British company – Thomas De La Rue – was implicated in printing the currency for the Republic of Ichkeria. One of the most prominent events related to producing banknotes and passports for Chechen separatists in Great Britain was the murder of the Outsiev brothers (the older, Ruslan, was in charge of the financial affairs for the Republic). They came to London in March 1993 in order to finalise a transaction, amounting to 7 million pounds, between Ichkeria and the printing house. Apart from printing services, the brothers were tasked with opening and managing bank accounts in London as well as meeting businessmen and American organised crime syndicates members there⁷⁴.

Figure 1. Caspian oil transit routes' designs



Source: “Коммерсант-Власть”, 10 (262), 24.03.1998.

Assuming that money for the separatist Chechen government was printed in Great Britain⁷⁵, researchers point out to the striking resemblance of the design for 1

⁷³ Р. Ромачев, “Финансовый суверенитет” Чеченской Республики Ичкерия, <http://muzeydeneg.ru/research/finansovyyi-suverenitet-chechenskoj-respubliki-ichkeriya/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁷⁴ Ridley N., *Terrorist financing: The Failure...*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

⁷⁵ M. Maciejak, *Anatomia konfliktu rosyjsko-czecheńskiego. Grozny 1994/1995, 1999/2000, Zabrze-Tarnowskie Góry 2018*, p. 169.

Nahar (independent Ichkeria's currency) including a depiction of a refinery (by Oberthur, Giesecke & Devrient) with the likeness on the Bolivian banknotes from the 1960s for 50.000 and 5 pesos. Moreover, it resembled closely the 50 Som banknote by Oberthur depicting Al-Kaaba in Mecca and was almost identical to Iranian Rials from the year 2000. The Bolivian and Iranian banknotes were printed by what was still a French company – De La Rue. Previously De La Rue and Oberthur was in close cooperation e.g. while manufacturing banknotes for Norway or Zambia and was considered a merger at some point. However De La Rue was acquired by the British in the 1990s and moved all presses to Great Britain. It would suggest that both Oberthur and De La Rue were effectively independent and cooperated with Ichkeria's government without consulting each other⁷⁶.

The government of the Russian government repeatedly accused the British of training Muslim fighters in special camps who then join Chechen separatists' groups. It soon became clear that it may be true. Between 1997 and 1998, a scandal broke out uncovering the fact that Great Britain indeed had shown support to the separatists by sharing military intelligence. A certain security agency trained Chechen fighters in counterattacks against the federal armies in areas of expertise such as bombing or leading offense. Among instructors, there were even American nationals and it is worth highlighting that all instructors were regular soldiers⁷⁷.

Neither British nor American government attach any significance to the fact that there was an active recruitment of Muslim fighters of various nationalities taking place in their territories, who then were sent to Chechnya in order to join the separatists. "Fighting against terrorism" only pertained to the interests of these states, contrary to their leaders having previously declared support to Russia. Even after the abduction of three British engineers who ended up being decapitated did not impede the progress of the cooperation with Ichkeria.

Disregarding the Russian Federation, which could be a valid business partner in trading oil without any necessary 'intermediaries', by both London and Washington were a valid proof that the states did not plan on conducting any exploratory talks with a country built on USSR ruins or even consider them equals.

The role of France and Germany

The Republic of Ichkeria, as observed before, resorted to issuing its own currency as a meaningful symbol of independence but moreover, issuing passports with the support of French and German companies. Usman Imajew, who was in charge of the whole project, was destined to be the first leader of Ichkeria's national bank. The company chosen by the Chechen Separatists Francois – Charles Oberthur Fiduciaire⁷⁸. As a matter of fact, this is the same printing house where the country of Georgia ordered the printing of its currency and Michel Gedevanishvili advised to the separatists on the matter⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ P. Ромачев, "Финансовый суверенитет", op. cit.

⁷⁷ Russia, United States: The Chechen War as a Geopolitical Battle, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-united-states-chechen-war-geopolitical-battle>, accessed 02.02.2019.

⁷⁸ See: <https://www.oberthur-fiduciaire.com/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁷⁹ See more: A. Airapetian, M. Gryckiewicz, *Transcaucasian banknotes*, (b.m.w.) 2009.

The troubles arising from completing the order were explained on the World Chechen Congress in Warsaw 2010⁸⁰ by Akhmed Zakayev. Additionally, he made a note of the fact that the government of Ichkeria was forced to change the manufacturer. The reason for such turn of events is most likely the push from the Russian Federation towards the French government⁸¹.

The currency itself resembled, among others, American dollars. Its exchange rate was planned to be 1:1 for facilitating the transactions between Oil people from the West and the Chechen. The themes and graphics would bear in mind Bolivian and Iranian currencies⁸².

The symbolism incorporated in the banknotes alluded to the history of the Chechen nation: fortified towers, Imam Shamil, The Caucasian War of the 19th century, the legendary she-wolf and many others. Nevertheless, the quality of the paper utilised left a lot to be desired. Moreover, presumably for sheer esthetical reasons, we can observe signatures of unknown individuals on the banknotes.

The lack of precision and low quality in the final product does not prove the lack of gravity concerning the request, especially since the order was handled by professionals in the business, despite the Republic of Ichkeria not being acknowledged on the international stage.

The cooperation of France and the Chechen elites was not limited to the currency and passports only. In June 1993, Dzokhar Dudayev paid a visit to the ministers of defence and internal affairs of France in Paris. As per the account of Viatcheslav Avioutskii, the French Army Command made an offer to Ichkeria's government to test the 'Mirages 2000' planes⁸³. Nevertheless, the only machines known to be utilised by the Chechens are helicopters: Mi-8 and Mi-24⁸⁴.

Bernard Courcelle was one of Dudayev's French "known associates"⁸⁵. According to his own words, Courcelle knew Dudayev quite well and made 11 trips to Chechnya in 1991-1993. He also admitted that during those visits, he brought with him instructors, who trained Chechen fighters in the areas of military combat⁸⁶. Afterwards, Courcelle met Shamil Basayev and got involved with the weapons trade to the Chechnyan rebels⁸⁷. Not only did Courcelle help the separatists to meet business partners, but also hosted Akhmadov in his own apartment and introduced him to the leader and recent candidate

⁸⁰ *Kongres Czechenów – bardzo niebezpieczna sprawa*, <https://www.wprost.pl/209466/Kongres-Czechenow-bardzo-niebezpieczna-sprawa>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁸¹ Р. Ромачев, "Финансовый суверенитет"..., op. cit.

⁸² Both Bolivian peso and the Iranian rial were printed in the aforementioned printing house "De La Rue".

⁸³ V. Avioutski, *Globalisation...*, op. cit.

⁸⁴ М. Пирвели, В. Новиков, *Подробно*, "Коммерсант", <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/230739>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁸⁵ The National Front Head of Security ensuring security during meetings and demonstrations led by the party.

⁸⁶ Nowadays the National Front party is considered as allegedly funded and supported by the Russian Federation. It is also the only one that is explicitly anti-immigration for people from Muslim countries to France. As it appears, the radically nationalist profile of the National Front did not prevent them from generously supporting radical Islamic Chechen militant groups. In this case, it should probably be viewed as the support of French nationalists toward Chechen nationalists.

⁸⁷ V. Avioutski, *Globalisation...*, op. cit.

for the President of France - Marie Le-Pen⁸⁸. Courcelle met with the representatives of French and Canadian oil industries. According to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Courcelle's initial motives concerned the safety of those companies on Chechen territory⁸⁹.

Additionally, Alyas Akhmadov was received in France by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Middle and Eastern Europe Department's Director as well the Green Party leadership who invited the "minister" to a session of the French National Assembly. Moreover, he was received at the session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg⁹⁰.

Another company tasked with printing the banknotes was Giesecke & Devrient, German company with headquarters in Munich⁹¹. It is assumed, 100 tonnes worth of banknotes was printed there, whereas those bound for destruction, during the federal army offensive in Grozny, still remain in Munich⁹². On these banknotes, we can discern the signatures of Ichkeria's Minister of Finance and Economy - Taymaz Abubakarov and the representative of the National Bank of Ichkeria - Nazmudin Ubaysayem. The same printing houses were in charge of printing high-quality passports for the Republic. They seemed more familiar on a much earlier stage to the then Chechen elites in their policies as they were presented in mass media both by President Dudayev and during various endeavours outside the country.

The matter of independent Chechnya in the context of the German state has a historic underlining however even nowadays, the topic of Chechen collaboration with the Nazis during Second World War is a controversial one. According to certain Soviet reports, the cooperation of the mountain peoples with the Nazis was certain, which in turn led to the destruction of their archives in 1944. It is true that the Germans founded, what could be construed as a Caucasian and Asian "foreign legion", groups such as: the 822nd Infantry Battalion 'Queen Tamara' consisting of 800 Georgians⁹³ or the so-called Eastern Legions conscripting Armenians, Azeris, Georgians, Turkmen, Tatars as well as Chechens⁹⁴. In the Battle of Stalingrad, Turkmen and Tatars fought, very effectively in destroying enemy tanks, in von Paulus' 6th Army. Yet another example is the 1st Eastern Muslim SS Division which was involved in the pacification of the Warsaw Uprising⁹⁵.

There is yet another, unexplained to this very day and confirmed only by NKVD sources, theory about creating a Special Party of Caucasus led by Hasan Israilov⁹⁶ in

⁸⁸ M. Hunter, *Oil, Guns and Money*, <https://www.tol.org/client/article/5264-oil-guns-and-money.html?print>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁸⁹ The brother of Courcelle - Nicholas was managing a security group called "Groupe 11" ensuring safety of Dudayev during his visits in France. As per: M. Hunter, *Oil, Guns and Money*, <https://www.tol.org/client/article/5264-oil-guns-and-money.html?print>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁹⁰ See more: I. Akhmadov, N. Daniloff, *Chechnya's Secret Wartime Diplomacy: Aslan Maskhadov and the Quest for a Peaceful Resolution*, New York 2013.

⁹¹ See: <https://www.gi-de.com/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁹² P. Ромачев, "Финансовый суверенитет" Чеченской Республики Ичкерия, <http://muzeydeneg.ru/research/finansovyy-suverenitet-chechenskoj-respubliki-ichkeriya/>, accessed 01.02.2019.

⁹³ Georgians were conscripted to Wehrmacht directly from prisoners of war camps in 1941.

⁹⁴ In September 1943, these units were formed by almost 500.000 soldiers under the command of general Ernst Köstring.

⁹⁵ W. Rodak, *Barbarzyńskie legiony III Rzeszy. Specjaliści od pacyfikacji*, <https://naszahistoria.pl/barbarzynskie-legiony-iii-rzeszy-specjalisci-od-pacyfikacji/ar/12938702>, accessed 16.01.2018.

⁹⁶ Hasan Israilov (died 25th December 1944), writer, anti-Soviet uprising originator in Chechnya,

1942. The organisation was intended to consist of 25.000 armed Ingush and Chechen people⁹⁷. The final goal of the Caucasus Brothers was creating a Caucasian Federation under the German state. Allegedly, it was the Nazis who incentivised the movement by distributing pamphlets among the local peoples stating: "We will lead, and you will bring freedom and improved, well-deserved standard of living, the freedom-loving people of Caucasus!"⁹⁸. The aforementioned episode was never formally proved however some historians highlight that when the Nazi army was advancing near the Caucasus, Chechen partisan groups became more active in the mountains⁹⁹. The question we could pose here is: to what extent could all these events, including the ones with only circumstantial evidence, possibly influence the perception of extremely ideologised Chechen separatists by the Germans?

Germany was also a place where the Chechen fighters could receive professional medical care. Naturally, only political and military elites could be admitted for treatment there. One of the most prominent patient of the German clinics was Salman Raduyev¹⁰⁰.

Both France and Germany cooperated with the separatist government of Chechnya-Ichkeria in terms of printing documents and currency as well as in the case of France, nationalist parties who offered weapons, instructors, money and contacts. The military elites received medical care in Germany as well as weapons (with the assistance of Turkey) from the arsenal of the dissolved German Democratic Republic (DDR)¹⁰¹.

Summary

Considering the ethnic and ethnopolitical conflicts, it is necessary to remember their origins. We often focus our attention only on battles, statements issued by the sides involved in the conflict while being under the universal impression that the truth could only be on either side. Be that as it may, the overwhelming majority of conflicts are very complex.

Yet another problem, arising with conflicts of such character, is the right of a people to self-determination and interventions of foreign states. Sadly, the so-called "support" in obtaining political autonomy becomes in fact a "divide and conquer" strategy and the supporting side stands to gain as much as possible. Unfortunately, the unquestioning faith in humanity and the innate generosity of some states leads to drawing

member of Chechen intelligence (Terloy), member of the VKP(B) from 1929.

⁹⁷ In its programme, the party was intended to include the following demands: uniting all anti-Soviet powers, eradicating Bolshevism in the Caucasus as well as leading to the victory of Nazi Germany over the Soviet Union.

⁹⁸ Moreover, the following symbols were supposed to be designed for the future independent Caucasian federation: an eagle (symbol of Caucasus) whose head was imprinted in the emblem of the sun (symbol of freedom) with 11 rays of sunshine (11 brotherhood nations of Caucasus), holding in its claws a venomous snake (symbol of bolshevism) and a pig (symbol of a "defeated, barbarian Russian nation"). On one of its wings, there would be a depiction of a scythe (a peasant-breeder), sickle (a peasant-farmer), hammer (worker) and a quill (education for the brothers of Northern Caucasus).

⁹⁹ Aviovutskii V., *Géopolitique...*, op. cit., pp. 114-116.

¹⁰⁰ Chechen politician and commanding officer distantly related to Dudayev, whose face, heavily wounded due to a 1999 attack, was operated on by a Michael Jackson surgeon. See: M. Kuleba, *Radujew do odstrzału, "Komandos"*, 1 (66), 1998.

¹⁰¹ Y. Bodansky, *Chechnya - The Mujahedin Factor*, http://www.freeman.org/m_online/bodansky/chechnya.htm#N_1_, accessed 07.02.2019.

false conclusions and numerous wars that could have been prevented. What seems to be another problem is a preference for publishing popular, journalistic, feature-writing pieces at the expense of the academic analyses as well as a radical media bias. It is quite a fascinating phenomenon that the accounts of morally dubious or dishonest personas, such as Boris Berezovsky or Anna Politkovskaya who had professional and financial ties to him, and Alexander Litvinenko, were received unquestionably by mass media in the West. There was no more room for a balanced, common sense discussion as its place was taken by an aggressive attack on one of the sides of the conflict. It was also the Western side which fell victim of manipulation and was reaffirmed that the intervention of their nations is justified and in fact, is only for the purpose of the proclaimed ideas and values.

The potential for destabilising the region is naturally very high, hence there is a vast number of factors. Therefore, boiling the Russian-Chechen conflict to the level of spontaneity could not be further from the facts.

Considering all the aforementioned aspects, the statement that "the empire fell on its knees"¹⁰² before the heroic Chechen nation standing alone should have been verified in some way. As demonstrated in this article, that statement was not justified as the war with the Chechens was also a battle for the remaining influence of Russia on the Northern Caucasus and the Caspian Sea after the dissolution of USSR. Treating the Chechen conflict as an attack of one country on another combined with the genetic tendency of Russians to be a cruel instrument of their despotic and cynical authorities and a concurrent disregard of the right to territorial integrity of other states are assumptions deprived of objectivity.

It is important to highlight that the states helping the Chechens during the conflict, despite extending generous support, had their own goals and motives. The discernible differences could be noticed even in utilising various means. Western countries used non-government organisations, the media and repeating stereotypes under the banner of "human rights protection". While the common goal was sadly, taking the control of natural resources of the enemy and winning the geopolitical game.

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¹⁰² Reference to a publication by M. Kuleba *Imperium na kolanach. Wojna w Czeczenii 1994-1996*.

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