

THE CHECHEN CRISIS
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
FOR RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 3, 1999

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
[CSCE 106-1-12]



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.house.gov/csce>

61-761CC

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
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COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
WASHINGTON, DC

The hearing was held at 10:00 a.m., in room 2226, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Christopher H. Smith, Chairman, presiding.

Commission Members present: Hon. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman; Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Co-Chairman; Hon. Steny H. Hoyer, Ranking Member; Hon. Frank R. Wolf; Hon. Joseph R. Pitts; and Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin.

Witnesses present: Dr. John Dunlop, Senior Fellow, the Hoover Institution; Dr. Fiona Hill, Director of Strategic Planning, Eurasia Foundation; Lyoma Usmanov, Representative of Chechen Republic to the United States; and Yo'av Karny, journalist.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, CHAIRMAN

Mr. SMITH. The Commission will come to order. Good morning. I am pleased to welcome you to this hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission. Today the Commission will examine the Chechen crisis and its implications for Russian democracy.

In response to armed incursions into Dagestan by Islamic extremists in August and September of this year, and in the wake of unsolved terrorist bombings in Russia that killed almost 300 persons, Russia has renewed its war against Chechnya as the alleged culprit behind Russia's problems with terrorism. Unfortunately, in using the excuse of seeking to punish a handful of guilty or alleged guilty persons, the Russian Government is applying indiscriminate force far out of proportion to its stated objectives.

As was the case four years ago, thousands of innocent persons are being killed or displaced by the Russian offensive. As winter approaches in the North Caucasus, a humanitarian catastrophe threatens in the neighboring region of Ingushetia, where the majority of refugees have fled to makeshift camps. At last report, up to 190,000 persons from Northern Chechnya had been internally displaced.

The capital city, Grozny, is under siege by the Russian army, and a Russian rocket attack on the market in the center of town left a reported 143 dead. It would appear that Moscow, supported at the present by Russian public opinion, is going full blast to revenge its humiliating loss of Chechnya in the 1994 to 1996 war.

Honesty compels us to make the assessment that in the three years of de facto independence, the Chechen Government has been unable to create a viable basis for the rule of law or a growing stable economy. To a considerable degree, this is a result of the devastation of the war, the absence of economic reform, and the relative isolation of Chechnya geographically.

But Chechnya would have enjoyed a great deal more international support over the past three years if foreigners had not been afraid to go there lest they be kidnapped and potentially killed, as was the case with the American citizen and humanitarian worker, Fred Cuny, who went to Chechnya on a humanitarian mission. To this day, his exact fate is not known. Of course, many residents in Chechnya were also the victims of kidnapping and murder, including several clergy and members of Christian churches.

There is agreement, I am sure, among my colleagues in the Congress as well as in the Executive Branch, that any country, including the Russian Federation, is justified in using appropriate methods to combat terrorism. However, launching a war against innocent civilians is another matter.

Russia is a participating State of the OSCE and has agreed to certain standards regarding the protection of citizens when addressing internal security matters. Chechnya is currently recognized by the international community as part of the Russian Federation; but this cannot be regarded as merely an internal affair, despite what Russian military and political officials say.

The 1991 Moscow Document of the OSCE clearly states that commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension—and we are certainly speaking of the human dimension here—are matters of direct and legitimate concern of all participating States.

In this connection, I note that the Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov has announced that Russia has agreed to allow a delegation from the OSCE to visit Ingushetia, Dagestan, and the parts of Chechnya under federal control. While this recognition of OSCE's role is welcome, the Russian Government has also declared that it no longer recognizes President Maskhadov as the legitimate head of the Chechen Republic. The president was elected, as we know, in February of 1997 in a multi-party election observed by international observers, including the OSCE, with the approval of the Russian Government. We expect the Russian Government to recognize the legitimate representatives of the people of Chechnya.

We are also concerned that heavy-handed military solutions and Russia's attempts to combat terrorism with a campaign of harassment against Caucasian minorities in Russian cities like Moscow may presage a move away from the rule of law, civil liberties, and democratic development. There is speculation that the Yeltsin administration may use the conflict in Chechnya as an excuse to cancel or postpone parliamentary elections scheduled for December.

Moreover, the Chechen war may also have a serious and negative impact on the security situation in the entire Caucasus region. The region has already seen much armed conflict, violence, and human suffering, most recently the brutal assassination of a number of government leaders in Armenia.

I have, on several occasions in the past, criticized what I believe was an anemic response by our own Administration towards Russia's treatment of the civilian population of the Chechen war during 1994 and 1996. I believe that the Administration appeared to give the green light to Moscow as early as December of 1994, when it tried to make a comparison between the Chechen conflict and the American Civil War.

By unfortunate coincidence, I note that our own Attorney General recently visited Moscow for a high-level conference on fighting crime. Her evasive response to a question about the Chechnya conflict led the *Moscow Times* to charge that her performance gave a "green light" for the war.

On the whole, the Administration's words about the Russian actions in Chechnya have been stronger than in the past, but there seems to be little concrete action behind the words. It seems that the Administration has for the past few years refrained from any criticism of or challenge to the policies of President Yeltsin in the fragile hope that this will enhance the prospect that democracy and civil society will prevail. Unfortunately, the strains of democracy and civil society have been drowned out by the sound of tank treads moving over the countryside of Chechnya.

Due to scheduling complications, the State Department was unable to provide us with a witness today. I hope that this absence can be remedied in the very near future, because I do look forward to an explanation of present Administration policy and hear what, if any, concrete steps the Administration is prepared to take to stop the carnage in Chechnya and try to facilitate a negotiated solution.

I would also point out that last week the Commission invited Ambassador Ushakov of the Russian Federation or a designated representative to speak today. However, the Embassy declined the invitation, stating that the notice was too short.

Nevertheless, we do have several excellent witnesses who will provide us with their insights on the crisis in Chechnya and the implications for Russian democracy.

Before going to our witnesses, I would like first to yield to our Co-Chair, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL,
CO-CHAIRMAN**

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this meeting on the future of democracy in Russia. The immediate crisis in Chechnya certainly has all of our attention. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. I am sorry that we didn't get a witness from either the Administration or from the Russia Government. It's my understanding they did have 10 days notice. So when they say they didn't have enough prior notice, that's simply not true. I think they had plenty of notice.

The United States has made significant investment in assisting the Russian people as they struggle to overcome the legacy of seven decades of communism and a centrally planned economy. The combined

U.S. commitment to Russia since the breakup of the Soviet Union totals more than \$5 billion. The international financial institutions have provided another \$25 billion or more during the same period.

Recent revelations concerning widespread corruption in Russia highlight one of the most serious threats to Russian democracy and the prospects for a sound market economy.

When we were in St. Petersburg, of course, Mr. Chairman, we heard a great deal about this. As you know, one of the young parliamentarians we met over there, Anatoli Lebedko from Belarus, recently visited Washington and met with members of the United States Senate. Within weeks after he returned to Belarus, he was put in jail for participating in what was called a pro-democracy rally. We are very concerned about developments in Belarus, too.

But the recent developments in Chechnya should serve as a wake-up call concerning our approach to Russia. Let us hope that this call hasn't come too late.

With parliamentary elections to be held next month and presidential elections scheduled for next summer, Russian democracy will certainly be put to the test. The results will have a profound impact both inside Russia and beyond.

Against that backdrop, Russia is once again embroiled in armed conflict in Chechnya, a conflict which has already killed or displaced over 200,000 people, as you have mentioned, Mr. Chairman. In fact, if you look at this morning's *New York Times*, there's a very, very devastating picture and article concerning these refugees. That number is going to swell. That is certainly going to get worse than the 1994 to 1996 war.

That war broke out within days of the conclusion of the 1994 Budapest OSCE Summit. Ironically, the leaders of the 54 OSCE countries are preparing to assemble shortly in Istanbul for the final major summit of this century. The horrific humanitarian disaster unfolding in Chechnya will certainly loom large over that important meeting.

While none should discount the threats posed by terrorism in the North Caucasus, neither should they serve as a pretext to use force against non-combatants or civilian populations. We recall too well the terrifying scenes of death and destruction in the streets of the Chechen capital of Grozny from the earlier war. Certainly every effort should be made to make sure that we do not have a repeat of that human tragedy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Chairman Campbell.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STENY H. HOYER,
RANKING MEMBER**

The Chair recognizes my good friend Mr. Hoyer, the Ranking Democrat on the Commission.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would ask that my statement be included in the record at this time.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection.

Mr. HOYER. I share your concern, Mr. Chairman, and congratulate you for holding these hearings. I want to hear the witnesses and therefore don't want to take time to read my statement. Again, expressing my view that the tragedy that is occurring in Chechnya is one that we all need to address. While it may be a complicated situation, most of

these incidences or these situations are in fact complicated. But the bottom line is, we are seeing actions being undertaken that are indefensible—are savaging civilian populations—and the world needs to focus on this issue.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pitts?

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have an opening statement, except to say that I am very pleased to be a new member of the Helsinki Commission. Thank you for convening this hearing today on this very timely issue. I am looking forward to hearing our testimony, especially regarding the impact of this situation on the civilian population.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Pitts.

Mr. Cardin?

Mr. CARDIN. I would just observe that we have a rather significant attendance of Commissioners here. I think it points out the importance of the subject. I applaud you for convening the hearing. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Wolf? We do have a video that Mr. Wolf has provided. As far as I know, he is the only Member of Congress to have traveled to Chechnya. Without objection, we would like to show that video—it's only a couple minutes long—and then go right to our witnesses.

Frank, if there's no commentary, would you mind just telling us what we're looking at.

[Video shown.]

Mr. WOLF. This is downtown Grozny. The closer you get to the center, the destruction was all over. Most of the homes were destroyed. Most of the buildings were destroyed. It was warm weather, so people were living out in the fields.

Mr. PITTS: When was this, Frank?

Mr. WOLF. This was in May of 1994. You are hearing the Russians approaching Grozny. They already were there. You'll see the Presidential Palace was destroyed. The closer you got to downtown, the more destruction there was.

The Russian soldiers were all over town. Maybe you can turn the sound up. The Russian soldiers were all very much afraid. The stories of the Chechen fighters coming out at nighttime, and the civilian population in different villages talked about atrocities.

This was all just destruction by the Russians. They went into villages. In Shamaski, a village there, they destroyed the school, killed a lot of people, threw hand grenades in buildings. It was like an atomic bomb hit the center of the city. You can see the Russian soldiers were there. It's not a new thing that they are taking this area. They already had it and couldn't hold it. The Russian soldiers at a checkpoint would stop you. They were drinking beer, dressed in odd uniforms.

That's the Presidential Palace, which was totally, completely destroyed. There were Chechen children taking photos of Russian soldiers and selling them to them.

Mr. HOYER: Whom were you with, Frank?

Mr. WOLF. Just my staff person and a person from the Embassy. We were down there looking for Fred Cuny. The fellow in the blue coat was with the Embassy. It was his responsibility to try to find Fred Cuny. We were with Fred's son earlier.

You'll see, if you can see, the soldiers are wearing sneakers.

Senator CAMPBELL. The soldiers—did they give you a bad time about taking film?

Mr. WOLF. Yes, they did. Here they did. At some checkpoints, they would get pretty aggressive.

That's pretty much it. That's enough I think. Block after block after block after block; village after village. Then we went into some villages where the people came out and told us of the atrocities. In one, Shumanski, they talked about the Russian soldiers injecting heroin that they carry with them, so that when they are wounded they can take it. They were mixing it with fruit juice, injecting it into their veins and shooting the village up.

Lastly, the Russian soldiers that we spoke with all expressed—many were draftees—that they didn't want to be there. At nighttime, they were very, very afraid. So my sense is this has already taken place once. It's about ready to take place again. The civilian population is being devastated. Somehow—and I see a lot of recommendations—somebody ought to be a force to bring this together or bring a cease fire, do something, because the winter is coming and a lot of people are going to really suffer. That's about it.

Mr. SMITH. Frank, thank you very much.

I would like to introduce our very distinguished panel. Professor John Dunlop is Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. His book, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*, is among the numerous publications he has written in recent years. His expertise encompasses the issues of nationalism in the former Soviet Union, Russian cultural politics, and the politics of religion in Russia. Dr. Dunlop has been a visiting professor at Stanford and Princeton Universities, a research scholar at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, and an academic visitor at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Dr. Fiona Hill is Director of Strategic Planning at the Eurasian Foundation. Prior to her present position, she was Associate Director of the Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Her research and technical assistance over the last decade has focused on economic and political transformations in Russia and the NIS, post-Soviet ethnic conflicts, the Caucasus region, and strategic issues in the Caspian Basin.

Mr. Lyoma Usmanov is the Representative of Chechen Republic to the United States. A civil engineer by profession, he has served as the Chairman of the Chechen Congress' Committee of Foreign Affairs, and the Deputy Director of the Chechen Information Center in Krakow, Poland. He is also the International Representative of the Chechen State University, and the Chairman of the U.S.-Chechen Alliance.

Finally, Yo'av Karny is a journalist with 20 years of experience as a foreign correspondent. He has traveled extensively in the Caucasus in the past decade and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Highlanders - Journey to the Caucasus in Quest of Memory*, to be pub-

lished by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. His articles on the subject of the Caucasus have been in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the *International Herald Tribune*.

I welcome our witnesses. Please proceed at this point, Dr. Dunlop.

**TESTIMONY OF DR. JOHN B. DUNLOP, SENIOR FELLOW,
THE HOOVER INSTITUTION**

Dr. DUNLOP. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's time for some clear thinking on the subject of Russia and Chechnya. The Yelsin-Putin regime appears to have returned to some of the worst practices of the Brezhnev era, including the widespread use of what used to be termed the "Big Lie." We are repeatedly assured by Russian Government and military spokesmen that the bombing, rocketing, and shelling of civilians in Chechnya represent "pinpoint" attacks on Chechen terrorists. These putative terrorists are then linked to the persons who recently blew up several large apartment complexes in Moscow and Volgograd, resulting in hundreds of casualties.

In a statement made to the press on 29 October, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stressed his view that, "The West regards with understanding Russia's actions aimed at eliminating the hotbed of terrorism in the Northern Caucasus." Beneath this fog of rhetoric, there lie a number of assumptions which, upon scrutiny, turn out to be unproven or misleading or both.

Was it in fact, one must ask, ethnic Chechens who blew up the apartment buildings in Moscow and Volgograd? Leading Russian newspapers such as *Izvestiya* and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* have reported that FSB investigators told them that they do not believe that Chechens were involved in these horrific bombings. As I noted in a recent op-ed, it might well have been ethnic Cherkess—another aggrieved nationality from the North Caucasus region—who set the bombs; or as numerous commentators have observed, it could have been Russian hardliners from the military or police, seeking to shift the country in an authoritarian direction.

Similarly, the armed incursions from Chechnya into Dagestan, which occurred in August and September of this year, appear to have been largely the work of Dagestanis, supported by relatively smaller numbers of Chechens, Central Asians, and others. The fact that the legendary Chechen field commander Shamil' Basaev served as one of the titular leaders of the two operations has confused many, both in Russia and the West, into believing that these were entirely Chechen actions.

Let us now pass on to a discussion of the supposed pinpoint bombing which is being conducted by the Russian military in Chechnya. Again, the statements of Russian Government and military spokesmen on this subject do not hold water.

There are numerous reports coming from Western journalists and others who have visited Chechnya, affirming that precisely Chechen civilians have been repeatedly struck and killed by Russian military assaults. Civilians have been hit scores of times in their homes, on the road while attempting to flee the fighting, and in temporary refugee camps located within Chechnya.

It is my conclusion that this campaign of terror against Chechen civilians has been fully intentional on the part of the Russian military, Prime Minister Putin, and President Yeltsin. Its principal aim appears to have been ethnically to cleanse hundreds of thousands of Chechens from their home republic.

If the Russian military were in fact seeking to minimize civilian casualties, then why are all these people fleeing their homes? We did not witness 200,000 Serbs fleeing from Serbia into, say, neighboring Bulgaria during the recent conflict while NATO was engaged in bombing Belgrade and other targets in Serbia.

It is essential that the U.S. Government insist that the Yeltsin-Putin government provide a detailed explanation of what its intentions are vis-a-vis these stranded and desperate Chechen refugees. According to the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations, approximately 40 percent of the refugees are women and 45 percent are children.

On 30th October, the Finnish Foreign Minister, representing the European Union, visited the refugee camps in Ingushetia. She reported that infant mortality in these camps was an appalling five percent. Chechen men, for the most part, have not crossed into Ingushetia, understandably wary of Russian filtration points and their Gulag-like procedures.

Ethnic cleansing, with its implied brutal indifference toward the group being cleansed, always contains within it the possibility of being transformed into a genocide. The Nazis originally intended to ethnically cleanse the Jews, and only later did they opt for a lethal final solution.

In a recent article entitled, "The Chechens will be sent to Altai," the newspaper *Segodnya* reported that the Russian Federal Migration Service has prepared a list of regions to which the refugees would be invited to come: Saratov, Tambov, Astrakhan, Orenburg, Orel, and Vologda oblasts, plus the Altai in Siberia. Scattered over the expanses of the Russian Republic, the Chechen women and children who managed to arrive at these remote destinations with their health intact would then be subject to a gradual process of cultural ethnocide.

And what of the Chechen men who have chosen to remain behind in their native republic? Apparently, the Russian Government and the Russian military want us to regard virtually all of them as 'bandits' and 'terrorists,' subject to physical "liquidation."

On 28 October, the headquarters of the United Command of the Russian forces in Chechnya let it be known that it believes that field commander Basayev and his fighters are in possession of chemical weapons. This 'fact' could be used to justify the employment of chemical weapons by Russia—in violation of international law—against the Chechens.

Since at least some Chechen males would presumably escape from this chemical plague, they would then feel completely justified in striking at Russian nuclear power stations or similar targets, perhaps creating one Chernobyl disaster, perhaps several.

Given the appalling condition of the refugees and the possibility that the Russian military might resort to chemical weapons, I believe the U.S. Government and its allies must demand an immediate cessation of hostilities in Chechnya and the commencement of talks by Russia with the lawfully elected government of President Aslan Masknadov.

If Russia declines to end the conflict and begin negotiations, then I would endorse the plan of action contained in a joint letter sent to President Clinton on 21 October by 35 former American high-ranking foreign policy officials, human rights activists, and intellectuals. In this letter, the authors underscore their conviction that it is appropriate for the U.S. to provide no foreign aid to the Russian central government or to facilitate loans from the IMF while the Russian Government is engaged in targeting civilian populations.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put the Chechen conflict, necessarily briefly, in the context of recent political developments in post-communist Russia. First, as I see it, Russia is, as we speak, slipping down a notch from what political theorists term an electoral democracy—not a liberal democracy, an electoral democracy in which issues of power are decided in relatively free and fair elections—to what theorists call a pseudo democracy.

Under a pseudo democracy—for example, Azerbaijan or Kazakstan—elections are largely rigged, freedom of the press is significantly curtailed, and the military and police gain inordinant influence.

On 28 October, former Prime Minister Primakov and his fellow leaders of the Fatherland All Russia Political Organization, contesting the parliamentary elections, circulated an open letter to President Yeltsin, accusing the Kremlin of “open interference” in the current parliamentary election campaign, in violation of Russian law.

A brief second point. The present military campaign in Chechnya can be seen as part of a neo-imperialist strategy among Russian military and political elites. As was the case in late 1994, the neighboring independent states of Georgia and Azerbaijan fall very much under the shadow of this new neo-imperial threat. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Dunlop, thank you very much for your excellent testimony.

Dr. Hill?

TESTIMONY OF DR. FIONA HILL, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANNING, EURASIA FOUNDATION.

Dr. HILL. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Co-Chairman, as my contribution to this hearing I would actually like to examine and analyze this second Chechen war in the context of the first war of 1994-1996. Because this is a very different conflict from the first on both the domestic and the international fronts, I think it is quite instructive as we look at Russian motivations behind what's going on currently.

Just to put the war of 1994-1996 in perspective again, this was the largest military campaign on Russian soil since the Second World War. The military casualties in just two years of this war were almost as high as the Soviet casualties incurred in an entire decade of fighting in Afghanistan. The stakes in the war were very high for both sides—for both the Chechens and the Russians—but it was a very unpopular war. In Moscow, the Russian media offered harrowing tales from the battlefield, and the Soldiers' Mothers Committee launched a very active campaign to bring their sons home from the front and to shame politicians into ending the conflict.

Essentially, the first Chechen war was Russia's Vietnam. The end of the war, in August 1996, came only in the wake of Russia's crushing defeat by the Chechens and by the complete rout of Russian forces from Grozny. Moscow was essentially forced to sue for peace in 1996, and the resulting peace treaty was a deep humiliation. The Russian military

felt that peace had been foisted upon them and that military victory had been denied by the vacillation and prevarication of politicians in Moscow and by the perfidy of the Russian press, which had whipped up popular sympathy for the Chechens. Many in the Russian political elite shared this view.

After 1996, as we have seen, attempts at reconciliation were feeble and all sympathy for the Chechens was dissipated by the political chaos and extreme violence that culminated in the Chechen incursions into Dagestan this summer and the bomb attacks in Moscow in September that Professor Dunlop has described.

So this has brought us to a second war, also in a very different international context from the first. In 1994, Moscow launched the Chechen war in part in response to the United States' quick and successful intervention in Haiti. In 1999, the stakes for Russia in this war are even higher, because we're now in a post-Kosovo world. For Russia, the U.S. and NATO's military intervention in the Balkans has drastically changed the post-Cold War strategic environment, and this has legitimized for the Russians the use of forceful interventions to resolve political disputes.

Another point I would like to make is that we're now also in an Osama bin Laden world, and U.S. missile attacks in Sudan and Afghanistan have paved the way—according to the Russians—for unilateral punitive actions by other states against purported centers of international terrorism.

As Professor Dunlop has noted, we also now have new terms of demonization. In 1994-1996, the Chechens were "rebels" and "bandits." Now in 1999, they are "terrorists." In the first Chechen war, this image of rebels and bandits didn't carry very much saliency. But this time, with bomb attacks in Moscow and rumors that Osama bin Laden is even funding the Chechen forces, this has made the image a very potent one for people in Russia.

So where are we now with this second Chechen war? What's it about, and where will it end? As Professor Dunlop has suggested, I would second it. I think this war is all about politics in Moscow in the run up to the Russian parliamentary and presidential elections. I also would say that it's all about defeat in the first war.

In October 1995, if you remember, President Yeltsin described Chechnya as the biggest mistake of his presidency. I think this time around—this is now a chance for the Yeltsin regime and the Russian military to fight the war again, this time to do it right and to correct that mistake. It's also an opportunity for a victorious little war to—shall I continue?

Mr. SMITH. Yes. It just means there is a vote on the floor.

Dr. HILL. It was nothing that I had said?

It's also an opportunity for a victorious little war to propel the regime's designated successor to Yeltsin, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, up the popularity polls and into the presidency in June 2000.

Now both the Yeltsin government and the military have learned a number of key lessons from the first war. On the home front, the government is now keeping on message. This is a battle with international terrorism. It's no longer the repression of a secessionist movement. The media blackout has prevented morale-destroying stories from filtering back to the Russian heartland. The general public outrage in Moscow about the bombings has kept opposing views muted

and forged a remarkable political unity. The Chechens have been very successfully demonized and are accused even of staging the civilian casualties to discredit the Russian Government.

In sharp contrast to the first Chechen war, the Russian military has now been pushed to the fore in decision making. We see that the logic of a military campaign has been allowed to prevail. So in this context, for the Russian military, civilian casualties are just collateral damage. The unfolding humanitarian tragedy that Professor Dunlop described is simply irrelevant to military strategists.

Now as far as the potential impact on democratization and civil liberties in Russia is concerned, the demonization of the Chechens as a group, the harassment of other Caucasus peoples that you have described, Mr. Chairman, and the media blackout in the war are very serious causes for concern. However, the Soldiers' Mothers Committee and the Russian press are already beginning to provide information that runs counter to the state's depictions of events on the ground. There are already stirrings of political fallout in Moscow from the civilian casualties in Grozny.

So I would suggest that for Putin and the military strategists, timing and circumstances are now key. They may not be able to control the flow of information from the ground for very long. The window for decisive victory may now be a very small one. The Chechens have also not yet launched a full scale major counteroffensive. If there is a ground war, high Russian casualties seem inevitable. That will bring a public backlash. Just as Prime Minister Putin has risen in the polls, he can very easily fall as a result of a turn in the war.

Now I would say that it's also highly possible that the Russians could win a military victory this time around. Although the Chechen fighters may be battle-hardened and may be better equipped and trained than in the last war, the three years of chaos in Chechnya since it ended have taken their toll on the health and the morale of the population.

What we have to ask ourselves is, if Russia does achieve a military victory, what kind of victory will this be? What will Moscow do with Chechnya once it has been defeated? A victory on the battlefield and the absolute rejection of Chechen independence this time around do not resolve the serious problems that we have seen in Chechnya and which persist. One of the questions is, where will the funds come from to reconstruct the republic and to reintegrate it into the Russian Federation, if that's what is going to happen?

Also, what happens to Chechen fighters who get pushed out of the Republic by a Russian victory? Do they go to neighboring hotspots like Nagorno-Karabakh or Abkhazia? There certainly have been rumors of that possibility. What about the refugees? Do they return home or do they stay where they are, putting more strain on the rest of the North Caucasus and other regions.

While Moscow is preoccupied with mopping up in Chechnya, even if it has achieved a victory, will it have the energy and the wherewithal to deal with other explosive political situations elsewhere in the North Caucasus? I would suggest that even in the event of a victory, Russia seems likely to exhaust itself in attempting to police and rebuild Chechnya.

I want also to make some comments on what's going on outside Russia in the South Caucasus. As Professor Dunlop has mentioned and as you have also mentioned, Mr. Chairman, there is considerable concern about the long-term consequences of the war in the South Caucasus and the possibility of the resurgence of an aggressive Russian policy in the region. Russia's defeat in the first war certainly did temper its interference in Georgian and Azerbaijani affairs in particular and led to a much more pragmatic approach over the last three years.

I don't think this concern is misplaced, but I think it's still too early to tell whether or not it's fully justified. The war in itself, right now, does not denote a desire necessarily to return to a heavy-handed approach in the Caucasus. As I have just noted, even in the advent of a victory Moscow is going to be preoccupied with restoring its control in Chechnya; and it's going to find it very difficult to use this to launch a new thrust south.

However, I do think that there are very real threats right now to the South Caucasus from the increased instability resulting from the war and the likelihood of spillover from the fighting either in the form of stray missiles, as we have already seen, and refugees and fighters. The war is also, as has already been mentioned, a further endorsement of the use of force in settling political disputes at a time when other conflicts, like Nagorno-Karabakh, are at a very critical stage.

Now in terms of external intervention and mediation, I think at this specific juncture, sadly, the prospects for an intervention from the international community to bring the two sides to the negotiating table are very slim. Frankly, the Yeltsin regime does not want to negotiate with the Chechens until a military victory is secured.

I think that there is very little that the U.S. and the outside powers can do right now to turn back the Russian military advance. As in the first war, the advance will have to be halted and the attitude toward negotiations changed by the Chechens on the battlefield and by public opinion and sober minded politicians in Moscow.

The United States needs to approach the crisis cautiously and have a very keen sense of timing. The first rule of our policy should be "do no harm." We are in a very dangerous period right now in U.S.-Russian relations, and the level of anti-Americanism among the Russian elite is real and should not be underestimated. We have got to be very careful not to provoke an even greater backlash against the Chechens by anything that we do.

I would like to stress that in the minds of the Russian political elite right now—in this post-Kosovo world—the U.S. no longer commands the moral high ground. The Russian political elite sees the U.S. as adopting a heavy handed approach in dealing with threats to U.S. interests, while criticizing others for protecting their own. For the Russian political elite, they see the U.S. as an unchecked power that's operating across the globe in all of Russia's former spheres of interest and seeking to belittle and humiliate Russia at every turn.

So this makes our options and leverage limited. But there are a few suggestions of things that we can do. First of all, we have to recognize that this is a complex situation and treat it as such. We also have to stay on message and keep a close watch on Russian public opinion and the reactions of the Russian political elite.

We must obviously not condone Russian action, but we also have got to be careful not to make false promises to the Chechens by making rhetorical statements that we're not likely to follow through on in terms of action.

We must continue to condemn all of the attacks on the civilian population of Chechnya, and highlight the humanitarian tragedy that Professor Dunlop has described and the threats to democracy in Russia posed by the press blackout.

We have also got to try to engage those Russian politicians who are beginning to speak out against the war and against the civilian casualties and to stress the importance of negotiations.

We really must encourage the renewed engagement of the OSCE in the region. This played a very positive role in the first war, and we also have got to continue to offer humanitarian assistance to the refugees in the neighboring republics that are housing them.

Finally, if we can get to a negotiated settlement, we should offer to help broker and structure an international reconstruction effort for Chechnya that will address the republic's and the broader North Caucasus' deep-rooted problems. In fact, this might even be an opportunity to encourage the formation of an international task force to examine the whole political and security and economic challenges in the Caucasus and offer recommendations for future action. This could, for example, be created under the auspices of the OSCE—and perhaps adopt the format that we saw in the Carnegie Endowment's task forces on the Balkans at both the beginning and the end of this century.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Hill, thank you very much. There is a vote under way on the House floor, so the House Members will have to leave. But we will continue the hearing and then come back and ask questions. I just wanted to note that we do have your testimonies.

Chairman Nighthorse Campbell will take over.

Senator CAMPBELL. Please proceed, Mr. Usmanov.

TESTIMONY OF MR. LYOMA USMANOV, REPRESENTATIVE OF CHECHEN REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. USMANOV. Mr. Chairman, Honorable Congressmen, let me first express to you my respect and thank you for this opportunity to speak here about the events so tragic for my people.

Senator CAMPBELL. You want to pull that microphone over a little bit closer to you, please, Mr. Usmanov?

Mr. USMANOV. Your kind letter of invitation to speak asked me to address "the situation in Russia, with a special focus on the situation in Chechnya."

There is a major humanitarian disaster underway in the Caucasus. Hundreds of civilians have already been killed in Russian air and artillery attacks—mostly women and children—and thousands have fled to neighboring regions.

Chechens fleeing the fighting don't even have appropriate status as refugees. Russian Prime Minister Putin doesn't consider Chechens to be refugees. According to Moscow, the Chechen crisis is an "internal Russian problem," as the refugees have not left Russia. But they

don't leave Russia only because authorities don't give them travel documents. Chechen refugees have become stateless people within their own state because of Russian military action against them.

In Ingushetia, there are now about 200,000 Chechen refugees—nearly one-third of the pre-war population of Chechnya. Only those who were able to pay for their trip to Ingushetia or who had a car left Chechnya. The residents of Grozny are in the most critical situation. Grozny is a besieged city where there is no water, gas, electricity, outside communication, and little health care or food. People drink from rain pools. To make things worse, the humanitarian tragedy is taking place when the winter is approaching, when the death rate from illness and starvation will soar.

Russia officially declares that it wages war against terrorists. The pretext for this military operation in Chechnya has been the terrorist bombings in Russia. Moscow blamed terrorists supported by Chechnya.

I am authorized by our nation's president and government to tell you, first, that our country not only was in no way involved in these brutal terrorist attacks but condemns them in the strongest possible terms.

Secondly, our government is willing to cooperate completely and totally with the Russian Government and other authorities to locate and punish those responsible for these attacks.

Thirdly, I am authorized to tell you that the Chechen Government absolutely condemns the terrorists acts in all forms wherever and whenever they may occur. I can confirm the fact of our government's commitment to fight criminality in our country. It is the Chechen people and not the population of Russia who are the main victims of this activity. We therefore cannot understand why the Russian Government, instead of supporting us, started military operations against us. If instead of destroying our industrial infrastructure and environment, its potential had been utilized, the criminals would have been eliminated.

We also want to emphasize that it is impossible to liquidate criminals and extremists in Chechnya without our government's involvement. This is exactly the position that Maskhadov wanted to propose to Russian authorities with whom he has consistently been seeking negotiations.

I also want to inform you about the extremely negative attitude of Chechen parliament and president towards the Islamic fundamentalists who invaded Dagestan. Our position in this situation is also clear. We categorically condemn these events. Our rejection of religious extremists is based on the fact that all Chechens are Muslims of either of two Sufi schools which have nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. Sufi is very closely linked with our culture, with our mentality, and with the indigenous democratic system of Chechen society.

Second, Chechens, their parliament, and government in July 1998 sharply condemned the Islamic extremism as alien and non-democratic. I will be pleased to supply the relevant documents.

I regret to say that Chechen authorities have been inferior in resources to religious extremists, both in arms and finances. With even more regret, I wish to state that the Russian Government seems to have interest in supporting these elements. I wish to emphasize that on July 22 a special Russian Government commission adopted the com-

pletely contrary decision. In other words, Islamic fundamentalists acting in the North Caucasus have received judicial and political support from Moscow.

Aslan Maskhadov is legally elected president, a former regular officer, patriot of his country. He is the only person through whom it is possible to make a political settlement, whose opinion has the weight on all the territory of Chechnya. All other military and political figures in Chechnya are those who don't bear any responsibility and who already have nothing to lose. Islamic extremism turned out to be not so much the reason as the pretext to the escalation of the present conflict.

The true reason for the conflict in our view is uncertainty of Russian-Chechen relations. At the end of the previous war in 1996, the Russian-Chechan agreement was signed in the town of Kasav'yurt. Then in 1997, a peace treaty was signed, this time on the top level. The principal element of these documents was that Russian-Chechen relations were to be developed based on equal rights and peaceful grounds and by taking into consideration the right of Chechen people to self-determination and other norms of international law.

Moscow committed itself to restore our destroyed economy and also to give us the right to conduct independent international trade. However, nothing has been accomplished. Instead of developing peaceful relations, the political course was changed to incorporate Chechnya into the Russian Federation by force.

I would like to emphasize the political goals of Chechen people and government. Our first and main goal is peace and international guarantees of our security. We cannot accept this tragic fact that during the Russian election campaign, Chechnya will further serve as a firing ground for military and political games of Moscow politicians. It doesn't seem to us just when the destruction of the peaceful population of our small country is declared to be an internal matter of Russia, under whatever pretext it may be.

We Chechens have never granted such a right to Russia. Another political goal of our people is building our democratic society. Chechens don't accept any other political system. Never! Our people did not accept the communist tyranny of the Soviet Union—for which we were deported in 1944. Today, we don't have objective conditions to develop democratic institutions. Judge for yourself. Whatever democratic institutional power Chechens choose, they don't suit Moscow. Moscow wasn't satisfied with the parliament elected in 1990—which I bear witness as a former member. Moscow wasn't satisfied with the president and parliament elected in 1991, nor those elected in 1997 in the presence of OSCE observers.

For Chechens today, there is no place where they can feel safe. We are persecuted in Moscow, other regions of Russia, and our Motherland. Sincerely, we don't understand what Russia wants from us. If they want us to be in Russia, why persecute us? If we are disliked, then why not let us leave independently? In connection with this, our main political task today is the problem of the physical survival of the Chechen people as an ethnic unit.

I am addressing you on behalf of Chechen children and women, defenseless and deprived, weak and poor, cold and sick. Save us from extermination.

Esteemed colleagues, words cannot express my personal and my government's gratitude for the invitation to speak today. We hope that our friends in America will understand and support us in our efforts to achieve peace. As your President John Adams said, "Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will be America's heart." Certainly these standards have been unfurled on the peaks of the Caucasus. And America's heart must understand why we can choose no other path except freedom and peace. Thank you.

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Mr. Karny, would you like to proceed?

TESTIMONY OF YO'AV KARNY, JOURNALIST

Mr. KARNY. Mr. Chairman, a brief procedural point. I submitted written remarks yesterday. However, I have revised them considerably. I would beg your indulgence. The following remarks are the binding ones.

Mr. Chairman, it is an interesting feature of Russia's wars against Chechnya both now and the previous round between 1994 and 1996, that little war protest has been registered in Russia in the sense that the United States experienced during the Vietnam War, France during the Algerian war, or Israel at the time of its invasion of Lebanon 17 years ago.

Common to all those forms of protest was public outcry in the wake of enormous civilian casualties which their respective armed forces afflicted. To be sure, Russians did oppose the previous war, but they did so not because Chechens were dying, rather because inexperienced, ill-trained, and ill-fed Russian boys were dying.

Consequently, public indignation assumed the form of mothers demanding the return of their sons from the frontline; but rarely, if ever, did it inspire rallies to protest the decimation of Chechnya. For a while, while in Moscow during the previous war, I used to go every Thursday afternoon to Pushkin Square, a few blocks away from the Kremlin, to count the participants in a weekly anti-war rally, where attention was paid to the plight of the Chechens. I never got beyond 40.

Russians may have detested the leadership which took them to war, but I suspect most of them did not object to that leadership's description of the Chechens as a cancerous tumor on the body of Russia or as an assortment of highway brigands.

It is therefore safe to assume that for as long as Russia is able to keep its own casualties to a minimum, no public outcry is likely however tragic the fate of the Chechens might be. The war against the Chechens is as popular in Russia as the Chechens themselves are unpopular. A government and an army capable of delivering the Chechens are worth applauding and worth rewarding insofar as the majority of Russians are concerned.

The Chechen victory in 1996 was, by all accounts, an extraordinary event in modern military history. It certainly owed to Chechen military skills and spirit of sacrifice. But it was an improbable event, not likely to be repeated.

What makes the Chechens so unique in the annals of anti-colonial wars, in the annals of Russia's relations with its ethnic minorities, is the fact the Chechens are short on what we might call pragmatism and have never been dissuaded by the likelihood of defeat; indeed, not even by its virtual certainty.

I recall a visit I paid to a very old Chechen man. He was 102 at the time, though a Chechen companion whispered in my ear that the old man was cheating; he was, in fact, 106. This man was the father of six children when the Soviet army and secret police showed up in his village in February 1944 with the order to deport the entire nation to Central Asia. The villagers offered resistance. Five of the man's children were slaughtered before his eyes. Another one joined the mother in banishment, and neither of them was ever seen again.

The man returned to Chechnya about 15 years later. He was 68 at the time. He remarried, and he fathered eight children. His sons reached adulthood just in time for the next war with Russia. This is a metaphor on the Chechen condition, rising from the ashes time and again only to fall back into them.

In 1996, the Chechens finally beat the odds. A triumphant Chechen army was in full control of the land. Chechnya became the only territory in the former Soviet Union where Moscow pulled out under duress because it lost a war. No indigenous nation has ever accomplished such a feat.

Responsible Chechens should have gone out of their way not to provoke another war, not provide Russia's generals with a pretext to seek new marching orders from their government and avenge their 1996 humiliation. Yet this past summer, a famous Chechen military commander—Russians might say infamous—by the name of Shamil' Basayev, spearheaded two invasions of neighboring Dagestan, an autonomous province east of Chechnya. He announced his intention to bring Dagestan under the wings of an Islamic union with the final aim in mind of throwing Russia completely out of the Caucasus, all the way from the Caspian to the Black Sea. He never consulted the people he was about to liberate. Indeed, he did not in all likelihood consult his own president—the democratically elected Aslan Maskhadov, himself an experienced military man and an apparent realist.

Basayev told reporters that he was willing to wage a 30-year war in Dagestan. Why not? He's young, he's skilled in the art of war, and he may even like it. And if he's pushed back to the mountains of Chechnya, he said he "will come back again, and again, and again."

By raising the specter of Dagestan's secession, Basayev seemed to play into the hands of those in Russia who had all along warned that should Chechnya be let go, the entire federal edifice would come crumbling—a Russian domino theory, as it were.

Incidentally, I question the validity of such a theory. I do not think that any other ethnic group in Russia desires secession. Indeed, the uniqueness of the Chechen case is the strongest argument for Russia to recognize Chechen independence. Basayev should have gone out of his way to validate this argument and convince as many Russians and outsiders as possible that Russia faces no collapse as a state if Chechnya goes. Rather, Basayev provided the catastrophic circumstances so desired by the Russian generals.

Basayev is a man in his mid-30s, of considerable personal courage, not unpleasant as an interlocutor, blessed, surprisingly enough, with self-effacing humor. So what is it about him and about other Chechens who support him? Sadly, theirs is not only a political failure but also a cultural one. There is an element of bravado in the working, perhaps a measure of theatricality. Rebelliousness and lawlessness are often indistinguishable. Authority—any authority—is defied and disregarded.

Some Chechen leaders are believers in the virtue of perpetual conflict as a nation-building mechanism. The day after the peace agreement was initialed in September 1996, the Chechen leadership should have channeled the enormous wartime energy toward the urgent needs of reconstruction. The ingenuity which saved the day for the Chechens in the battlefield should have been summoned to save the day in peace.

I do not wish to underestimate the enormity of the problems the Chechens were facing in reconstruction. I read that East Timor is expecting now a massive infusion of international aid to compensate for the wanton destruction afflicted on it during its independence campaign. Nothing of the sort was ever available to the Chechens.

But nation building cannot depend solely on foreign largesse. It is also a matter of a nation's own resolve. Chechnya has a significant diaspora, which is well off, well educated, well positioned, and extremely loyal to the Chechen cause. It may be found in Russia proper. It may be found in Turkey. It may be found in Jordan. It boasts extremely capable individuals, some with particular experience in issues of international development, infrastructure, education, mineral resources, talents, which are highly valued all over the Muslim world. They, not the field commanders, should have been the navigators of post-war Chechen reconstruction. They were eager to come and lend a hand. Rather, Chechnya quickly descended into chaos. This time, wholly indigenously manufactured.

The leadership also faced a whole new phenomenon—a transplanted brand of Islam alien to North Caucasian soil, inspired by an aesthetic desert theology: purist, intolerant, unforgiving, and inherently contemptuous of local aspirations and traditions. For this Islam, which is messianic and supra-national, Chechen self-determination was not what the war had been waged for in the first place. Hence, obtaining it could not bring the conflict to an end.

Please do not mistake me, Mr. Chairman. I do not treat Islam lightly. To the contrary, I think it was of tremendous importance to Chechnya well before this war. Islam has kept the Chechens going ever since the Russian invasion in the late 18th century. It offered resilience and solace. It helped the Chechens preserve their dignity and their memory, particularly in times of defeat. Indigenous Islam, however, has little to do with the grim, unsmiling, and unempathetic Islam seen now in Chechnya.

The combination of this new ideology and some bad local habits—such as the growth industry of kidnappings and assassinations—has served to derail Chechen progress toward self-determination. Nonetheless, it has not invalidated it. It has certainly not de-legitimized it. The Chechens must be encouraged by their friends, however, to rethink their priorities and make a serious attempt at establishing a measure of national discipline.

It is painful for me to speak so harshly of some Chechens, primarily because I have boundless admiration for their perseverance throughout the last 220 years of their unfortunate encounter with Russia, and secondly because of the nature of the war Russia is now waging against them. I wish Russia showed herself to be far more restrained, perhaps restrained by the guilt feelings that any colonial power should harbor—especially a colonial power which has come close at time to applying a genocidal solution to the Chechen problem. I do see a clear continuity from czarist practices in the 18th and 19th centuries to Bolsheviks in the 1930s and 1940s to democratic Russia in the 1990s.

Chechnya's fate has been ignored too often by the outside world. Their own holocaust, which coincided with that of the Jews in Europe, is still awaiting world recognition and Russian repentance. It is our moral duty, Mr. Chairman, to make sure that this tiny and stubborn nation does not perish. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony. I would like to begin the questioning now.

Let me ask the whole panel: how would you characterize the U.S. Government's response to the Chechen war? Compare it, if you would, just by way of background. This Commission held a series of hearings. We had people like Elena Bonner and others testify who were very outspoken; and, as I said in my opening comments, indicated—and I believe it as well—that however unwittingly we gave the green light to the Russian military and to their political leaders, how are we responding right now, both the President, the State Department, the Congress? Has there been a response that's adequate, or has there been little or no response?

Dr. DUNLOP. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I think it was yourself who stated that recently the comments by Administration spokesman have been getting stronger in criticizing this campaign against civilians in Chechnya. In fact, just today in the *New York Times* there was a report that President Clinton had spoken with Prime Minister Putin quite sharply and critically about what is occurring.

I am afraid, however, that rhetoric is not enough. The Russian leadership is simply not going to pay any attention to rhetoric. So it might be that at some point strong action will be necessary. That's why I support the letter of the 35, and would opt for sanctions if Russia persists with this campaign against civilians and does not commence a negotiated settlement with the Chechen leadership—something which I advocated in my op-ed appearing in the *L.A. Times* last Sunday.

Mr. SMITH. Others? Dr. Hill?

Dr. HILL. I think, like you said, that, unfortunately, we inadvertently gave a green light the first time around. It is always very difficult to repair mistakes. We see that the Russian military and the Russian Government are trying to repair their mistakes of 1994 to 1996, and it is also going to be very difficult for the U.S. to do so. I think, sadly, this time around, our leverage is much less than it was before. Even the kinds of sanctions that are mentioned in the letter of 35—this would have been great if they had been done earlier. I am afraid that they will have very little impact this time around.

As I mentioned in my statement, we are at a very, very dangerous time in U.S.-Russian relations. We have to bear that in mind too. We could inadvertently provoke an even greater backlash, because frankly, right now in Moscow, no one is listening to what we have got to say.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Karny?

Mr. KARNY. I think there may be an original sin involved here, which is how the United States treated the issue of the Caucasus in early 1993, as soon as the Clinton Administration walked into office. Strobe Talbot, who was then chief troubleshooter for the CIS (former Soviet Union), seemed to show extraordinary tolerance toward Russia's transgressions in the Caucasus. In that case, the victim of his tolerance was Georgia, where various rebel groups were supported openly by the Russian military.

I would suggest, however, that one thing should not be underestimated. Perhaps you would like to pursue it later. That is the role played by the Caucasus in general in the Russian mind, Russian history, and Russian culture. It is difficult for Russia to accept the fact that it had already lost the South Caucasus; and now, part of the North Caucasus seemed to be slipping off its fingers as well.

I suggest that somehow an ingenious dialogue should be established, sponsored by the international community between the various Caucasian ethnicities and Russia, where the matter might be debated or discussed with a historical perspective in mind. Russia has lost quite a lot in the last decade. If it is expected to lose more—let it happen as a result of a dialogue and through understanding of its own hangups and traumas.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Usmanov, is there any new information on the fate of Fred Cuny, or does anyone have any information regarding him?

Mr. USMANOV. I spent a lot of time personally trying to find his remains. I was in communication with John Finerty and Congressman Wolf on this matter. There were a lot of rumors in Chechnya. A number of times I was, it seemed to me, close to find some trace, even some names, but after always it appeared just rumors, nothingness.

Presumably, I was informed that his remains possibly may be near by a village of Urus-Martan or Achkhei-Martan, but I think there is a need to prolong these investigations. I don't have any concrete information so far. Even I received from the foreign minister later, maybe three months ago—I kept it. I hesitated to send it to Congressman Wolf because it was no concrete, no certain, information. So I am feeling very shamed. I hesitate, because he lost—he disappeared in Chechnya and I am feeling responsibility, as any Chechen, for his fate.

I am sorry. I can't say anything more.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Dr. Hill, let me ask you a question. You mentioned that some of the parliamentarians were speaking out. How organized is it? Do you have any idea how many have actually voiced opposition to the war? Have any of the newspapers or media opened up and become more even-handed in their coverage to try to get the truth out about the devastation and the civilian casualties?

Dr. HILL. I think there's just the beginnings of this. It is certainly not organized. There have been statements criticizing the opening of a full-scale ground assault. There have been statements beginning to criticize the civilian casualties. Yevgeni Primakov, the former Prime Minister, has made statements like this. Yabloko's leader Grigory

Yavlinsky, Konstantin Titov, the Governor of Samara (who was just in D.C. recently) have made similar statements. They have been very cautious, but there are the beginnings of stirrings of a movement against the war. Some of the Russian newspapers have also started to give out information, questioning what really happened in the marketplace attack, for example, in Grozny.

Unfortunately, as I just said, these are just very much the beginnings of a backlash. I think, sadly, as Mr. Karny has mentioned, it is only going to be when the Russian casualties increase that there will be even more of a backlash. Again, as he has said, that will be a backlash against mothers' sons dying on the battlefield rather than Chechen mothers and children dying in marketplaces or on the borders trying to leave.

I think though, however, we have to start to engage and open a dialogue with people like Primakov, Yavlinsky, Titov, and others, who are beginning to show signs of disaffection with this.

Mr. SMITH. I read the wire stories, correct, this morning. It would appear that Putin has said that he will allow humanitarian initiatives into the area.

How quickly do you think something like that could be mounted? Given the state of hostilities, do you think the humanitarian organizations—whether it be UNHCR, Red Cross, or any other NGO—would be able to have access to those who are at grave risk of dying?

Dr. HILL. Mr. Karny, who has been on the ground quite a lot, may be able to comment on this somewhat better. I think it's going to take a long time to be able to launch the kind of assistance initiative that's going to be required for something of this scale. In fact, the international assistance groups like Doctors Without Borders—they have been very reticent so far to move in because no one can protect their safety.

They have made quick forays into places like Ingushetia, but they are going to have to have protection. They are going to have to have real undertakings from the Russian Government and from local authorities to allow them to operate.

Mr. KARNY. I concur in that. I might add a point as for the mechanisms of Russian public opinion. There has been a thorough dehumanization of the Chechens in Russian culture—Russian market, for that matter, where people have increasingly tended to project their own personal experience with the Chechen vendor they disliked to Chechnya in general and the Chechen struggle.

The thorough dehumanization of the Chechens by Russian politicians is so deliberate. I saw it. You see, Mr. Chairman, I was born in Israel. I saw the evolution of the Lebanese war in 1982. Our prime minister at the time talked of the Palestinians as bi-legged animals. That was a prerequisite for what took place then, what ensued. That is, bombardment, indiscriminate bombardment of civilians and eventual complicity in massacres.

It is exactly what has been taking place in Russia, systematically. I would call your attention to documents, official documents released by the Russian interior ministry, by the Russian president and so on.

Just one more point, which is the shameful complicity of Russian scientists, ethnographers, anthropologists, sociologists in that dehumanization. One reflection of that complicity was describing the Chechens as nothing but an assortment of clans, hence, a non-nation undeserving of national rights. President Yeltsin made everyone be-

lieve back in 1995 that the Chechens would run away at the sight of the first Russian armed vehicle because they are nothing but highway brigands, mafiosi, people who are interested only in the money they had accumulated. He suggested to General Dudayev, then president of Chechnya, that he should be granted safe passage to Turkey. It never occurred to them that the Chechens would stand up and fight, and they might not, after all, be interested in the loot they allegedly gathered or in the good life of a well-cushioned exile.

This dehumanization is the beginning and the end of the process. So long as Russia is allowed to dehumanize one of its longest suffering ethnic minorities, this will never be resolved.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. One concern that I have—and I'll yield to Chairman Campbell for questions—I remember in the first war. General Lebed was very highly critical of the war, not because—if my understanding and remembrance is correct—there was a war but that it was improperly prosecuted. Hopefully, they haven't learned the lesson as to how to be more lethal in this second Chechen war.

I just point out for the record that we are hoping to mark up tomorrow H.Con.Res. 206, a resolution that I introduced that would put the House on record—when it gets to the Floor—against this horrific conflict. Hopefully, something similar will happen over on the Senate side, because we have to speak with one voice, Democrats and Republicans, that this has to stop.

Chairman Campbell?

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KARNY, Dr. Hill mentioned—and I'm sure we all agree—that Russia lost a great deal in the last war. But as I understand it now, the public opinion polls of Russia support Mr. Putin's handling of the war. In fact, as I understand it, press reports from Moscow indicate that Muscovites support Mayor Luskov's crackdown on the people from the Caucasus.

I was wondering what is the implication for the Caucasus if Russia—if they succeed in subjugating Chechnya or if they don't, are there implications that may move them to try and re-establish dominance over other breakaway republics?

Mr. KARNY. Senator, by breakaway republics, do you mean those which exist within the Russian Federation?

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes.

Mr. KARNY. There were misplaced expectations in late 1994, early 1995, that the entire North Caucasus would rise up and join the Chechens in opposition to Russia. Those were Chechen expectations, and those were general Russian expectations. They were proven totally wrong.

There is a distinct disinterest on the part of virtually all other ethnic groups in the Caucasus—even those related ethnically to the Chechens—either in seceding from Russia or joining an insurrection against Russia. That applies even to Dagestan, where the Russians are only about five percent of the population, and there is a clear historical Muslim identity.

I think that probably Russia's gravest mistake was in not letting Chechnya go in the early 1990s, even before the first round of fighting, because nothing would have happened in the Caucasus as a result. I think that the notion that there might be a spillover simply has not been borne out. The other republics in the North Caucasus are

ruled ruthlessly by autocrats, sometimes military people, often people who are closely associated with the old Soviet system. They are firmly in power and firmly attached to Russia.

Senator CAMPBELL. It has been reported that almost all the Slavic population left Chechnya between the wars. Is that your understanding?

Mr. KARNY. Yes.

Senator CAMPBELL. Where did they go?

Mr. KARNY. Chechnya—or Chechno-Ingushetia, as it was known at the time—was, in fact, the only ethnic republic of the North Caucasus where there was a decidedly indigenous mono-ethnic majority. The Chechens constituted about 70 percent of the population.

The thing was that two districts in Northern Chechnya had been incorporated into it belatedly in Soviet times, which had been historically inhabited by ethnic Slavs—Cossacks, to be precise. They obviously haven't had a good time in the war. There are many tragic dimensions to the collision between the indigenous people and the Cossacks. I wouldn't get into it. But by and large, it is true. The Slavs have—

Senator CAMPBELL. Where did most of the people that left the Slavs—where did they go?

Mr. KARNY. Northward, obviously, into Russia proper.

Senator CAMPBELL. Mr. Usmanov, it is my understanding, according to the agreement ending the war of 1996, Russia was supposed to provide economic assistance to help restore the economy and—certainly, I assume—some of the buildings that they bombed too. Did Chechnya ever see any of that assistance in real terms, in money terms, or do you think the Russians had any intentions of assisting, as provided for in the agreement?

Mr. USMANOV. Concerning the reconstruction of historic economic system is nothing. It's just a little aid, financial support for like education for elderly people, just maybe around 1 or 2 percent of necessity.

Senator CAMPBELL. You mentioned that Chechnya disavowed any connection at all with the bombing of the apartments in Russia. You made several comments about some Islamic extremists within Chechnya. Do you think that the bombing of the apartments in Russia could have been done by people who would for some reason encourage Russia's invasion of Chechnya?

Mr. USMANOV. Well, there are a lot of opinions.

Senator CAMPBELL. I am trying to find out what would anybody have to gain? Chechnya would have nothing to gain by bombing those apartments.

Mr. USMANOV. I am absolutely sure, 100 percent, that Chechens had nothing to do with these bombing attacks, absolutely sure. We made all kind of investigation ourselves.

Senator CAMPBELL. The bombings clearly encouraged the Russians to send troops into Chechnya. That seemed to be the catalyst to do it. So somebody would have had something to gain by that. I wonder if you know who that would have been. Who would have had something to gain?

Mr. USMANOV. It's hard to say. I don't like to baselessly accuse the Russian side. As I mentioned in my report, we would like to cooperate with Russian authorities to find out who did it, but Russia refused any of our proposals for this.

Senator CAMPBELL. Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Hill, how do you assess the apparent willingness of Moscow to permit the OSCE mission to visit the region under Russian control?

Dr. HILL. I think, unfortunately, that also has to be treated with caution. They express willingness—

Senator CAMPBELL. They'll let them see what they want them to see?

Dr. HILL. That certainly was the case in the last conflict. If you remember back to 1994-1996, the OSCE had to make considerable efforts on its own behalf to gain access into Chechnya. I mentioned earlier and Professor Dunlop noted—it actually played a very positive role once it was there in terms of providing a framework for discussions and negotiations; good auspices. The OSCE was also instrumental in facilitating the work of other assistance groups there.

I think it is going to be very difficult at this stage for the OSCE to operate effectively there. But I think that, particularly given the summit in November in Istanbul, this is a very good opportunity to stress again the importance of the OSCE role.

We should also remember that the OSCE is still for Russia, a much more valued international organization than perhaps even the U.N. is now and certainly more so than NATO. Perhaps we can kind of encourage the statements that have been made by many Russian politicians for a broader involvement of the OSCE in the whole region and take advantage of that.

Senator CAMPBELL. When we were in St. Petersburg just speaking unofficially to many people that we met—what I would call average Russian people—we were told that the American military presence in Kosovo, in fact, had given the Russian military and hardliners kind of a new life and that they felt they would have a greater role because of our incursion in Kosovo. How did you evaluate that? Do you think that that was so?

Dr. HILL. Well, actually it's interesting because I was also in St. Petersburg at the time when the NATO bomb attacks first started in Kosovo. I got into an actually very ugly argument with a St. Petersburg deputy about whether Chechnya would be the next target of NATO aggression, as he put it. He said, you know, if you are bombing Belgrade, why can't you then bomb Moscow if something happens in the Caucasus, specifically in Chechnya.

I mean we may think that that is absolutely absurd. Of course we know that in NATO headquarters in Brussels, they are not contemplating the next assault moving from the Balkans to the Caucasus. But there seem to be some real fears there, misplaced or otherwise. I think it is because people in Russia, among the Russian elite, now want to believe these kinds of fears because it is a rationalization for the hardline attitude that we are seeing now among the Russian military.

We have got to remember, there are plenty of people in Russia right now who would love to take an isolationist stance and who would love to have a really terrible relationship with the United States; and that, unfortunately, what happened in Kosovo played into the hands of these people because they were able to manipulate the situation there, and to provide rationale for—

Senator CAMPBELL. That was my understanding too, that Russia—having been invaded so many times in its history, the Russians have a very real fear of outside influence which drives the isolationist attitude, and certainly—it would seem to me—that would play into the hands of

the people that would be able to say well, you know, look at the United States. If they can do that right virtually on our borders, what is to prevent them from doing it in one of the other republics. That seems to have emboldened the military and some hardliners.

Dr. HILL. I think that's very true. As Mr. Karny pointed out, the Caucasus have a very special resonance for Russians, culturally. I mean some of the greatest literature by Tolstoy and Lermontov and others was written about Caucasus campaigns. The Balkans have that same resonance for Russians.

It was actually as a result of Austrian and German incursions in the Balkans just before World War I that Russia was pushed towards such a fatal confrontation in 1914. Sadly, we are seeing the same kind of momentum developing now in Russian perceptions of U.S. activity.

These are misplaced perceptions, but we are having a very hard time getting the message out. The Russians really saw what was going on in Kosovo not in humanitarian terms but in pure terms of balance of power. This is the U.S. making its stake in the Balkans. This is the U.S. seeking the preservation of NATO by creating a new rationale for NATO operations. They did not see this as an attempt to address what Milosevic was doing and to basically try to save the situation for the Kosovo Albanians. So we have a real message problem there regarding our activities.

Senator CAMPBELL. Well if you think like a Russian who went through World War I and World War II, maybe their opinion is not so misplaced. I mean they think from a different attitude than we do. I'm sure we have difficulty communicating that they don't need to be so afraid of any outside influence.

Dr. HILL. Yes. That is exactly right.

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Senator CAMPBELL. I apologize, but I have a conflict and I will have to run. Thank you so much for doing this hearing.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Cardin?

Mr. CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me try to pursue this a little bit more as to Russian public opinion. Studying Russian public opinion is very important in trying to resolve the Chechen situation.

Now I certainly understand—I try to understand how Russians felt about the NATO use of force in Kosovo. I accept they may have a hard time differentiating between the use of force to try to prevent an outside force from creating human rights problems within Kosovo. But how do the Russians justify their own use of force with the Russian people? If it was so clear to Russians that NATO was not patient enough or was abusive in its use of force, how does the Russian Government get Russian support for their own use of force?

Dr. DUNLOP. If I could answer that—I think the success up to this point, or, rather, the relative success of the Russian leadership in mobilizing the population behind this military effort, has been due to the aforementioned demonization of the Chechens. I refer to the alleged link of the Chechens to the terrorist bombing in Moscow and Volgodonsk. As I've suggested in my comments, those are dubious propositions; but apparently much of the Russian public has bought into them.

I want briefly also to comment on some of the other issues you touched upon. For example, the belief that Prime Minister Putin has gone up in

the polls as a result of this campaign. NTV and other news outlets have raised serious questions about these polls and about whether indeed they are authentic. They could very well be manipulated and massaged. Similarly, the rise of the Unity Party, supported by Prime Minister Putin, which is now supposedly above the five percent barrier. There are also serious questions about that. So a lot of the information that we're getting from Russia needs to be looked at very carefully.

One last point concerning the losses—the military and MVD losses—which Russia is incurring. Many believe that those losses are being undercounted, that actually Russian military losses have been much higher than have been reported to date.

Mr. CARDIN. How critical is the situation in Chechnya in regards to the December elections? Is it a major issue? Is it a critical issue? Is it important but perhaps not determinative issue?

Dr. DUNLOP. I think if there were a debacle for the Russian side before the elections, then that could seriously adversely affect the fate of the Unity Party, that I mentioned, because it's—

Mr. CARDIN. How do you define debacle? What do you mean?

Dr. DUNLOP. Well, in other words, if the Russian military were to suffer very obvious major losses in the fighting, which the Russian people were able to find out about—I think that could hurt them.

But I think the conflict is more likely to affect the presidential elections, to be held in the middle of the year 2000, because there is a lot of time, in Russian terms, between now and then. If success isn't obtained, then I think this could hurt Mr. Putin in his chances to be elected president.

Mr. KARNY. Congressman, perhaps you should be reminded that the previous presidential elections were held in 1996 while the war was still raging—in fact, two or three months short of the Russians' final defeat.

If I may say, Congressman, you have raised a very interesting question that might have a historical, almost abstract and moral dimension to it. That is how the Russians reconcile the rhetoric about Americans' use of force against the Serbs with their own actions in Chechnya. That calls into question the entire history of the last two centuries. How easy it has been for the victims to become executioners and to the executioners then to switch into the position of victims.

I think that one of the greatest flaws of Russia, if I may risk a generalization, is that it is full of self pity. The Russians perceive themselves as the ultimate victims. I take an exception to the notion that the Russians should be excused for a certain paranoia they might have as a result of their past history. The country is stretched along 11 time zones. I think the Chechens may be more entitled to be paranoid because they have a speck of a territory there.

I think that for as long as Russia feels so sorry for itself and for as long as it perceives itself as a victim—as an equal victim to any of its colonized ethnic minorities—nothing will change in its mind.

I would suggest as a first step that Russia should contemplate its historical responsibility as a state—the Soviet Union was, after all, a Russian state—to the events of 1944: a holocaust, to all intents and purposes, in which between one-third and one-half of four North Caucasian tiny ethnicities perished through massive deportation to the east, using sealed cattle cars in the process. If Russia were to come to terms with its history as a colonizer, as an imperial nation, then it might engender more sympathy on the part of its own ethnic minorities.

Mr. CARDIN. Just one last question. Talk a little bit about the region as far as public opinion as to what Russia is doing, the surrounding countries. What is happening?

Dr. HILL. One of the interesting developments of the last three years actually has been a backlash in the region within the North Caucasus against the Chechens, which is actually something that we ought to bear in mind. There has actually been a lot of animosity toward the Chechens from the Dagestanis—even from the Ingush, who are really a fraternal people—towards the Chechens.

So there is actually not a great deal of sympathy right now for the Chechen case. However, that may change if the scale of the war increases. There was a backlash from the North Caucasus people last time as the casualties mounted on the Chechen side.

As far as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the rest of the South Caucasus are concerned—as I mentioned in my statement—there is considerable concern right now that this is basically the prerequisite for a renewed thrust by Russia into the region. Professor Dunlop already mentioned that.

Mr. CARDIN. Is that because of the people or because of their fear that it could involve their relationship with Russia?

Dr. HILL. It's for fear it will involve their relationship with Russia.

Mr. CARDIN. Because of immigration issues, or because of—

Dr. HILL. No. Because, basically, of the emboldening of the Russian military and Russian politicians in Moscow—about now adopting a very heavy hand toward relations with them and perhaps intervention in their affairs.

Between 1992 and 1994, in fact, it was quite evident that Russia was heavily involved in all kinds of activities, particularly in Georgia and Azerbaijan. There was a lot of evidence of a Russian military hand in places like Abkhazia. Obviously, also, the support for the Armenian military, the bases in Georgia. There is now fear that Russia may now use this war again to re-launch these kinds of efforts because in fact, the Azeris make the point very clearly that they think it's only because of the defeat in the Chechen war that Russia withdrew from the South Caucasus over the last three years. They feel the Russians got their fingers burned and that they were then very reticent to move forward again.

Mr. CARDIN. What I'm hearing, Mr. Chairman, is that there is a political concern in the region but very little concern about the human rights problems itself. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. KARNY. Absolutely, Congressman. You may remember in 1994, early 1995, President Edvard Shevardnadze of Georgia was one of the first who applauded Russia for its operation in Chechnya, said Russia was well within its rights. At the same time, Armenians, for example, ultimate victims themselves, were applauding Russia's actions in Chechnya. You can see now things are turned upside down. President Shevardnadze or the Georgian Government is, in general, far more reluctant now about Russia's conduct that it was then.

Why is this happening? Because in 1994, Shevardnadze was of the opinion that hitting the "bandits" serves the interests of Georgia. Now he is of a different opinion.

Cynicism abounds. Little consistency is to be found. You will see, as I said earlier, that often the victims find it very difficult to empathize with fellow victims and often fall for the executioners.

Mr. CARDIN. My observation is it's very, very sad; but I would hope that OSCE would perhaps be the right forum for us to try to elevate the

problems that the people of Chechnya are suffering. The political issues are very important to be resolved. They are necessary for long-term lasting peace; but in the meantime, the human tragedies will mount if we don't cause more of an interest in what's happening.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Cardin. I just have a few follow-up and following questions.

First, I would ask without objection that two documents by Human Rights Watch be made a part of the record. One deals with the headline or the title "Civilian Casualties Mounting in Chechen Fighting. Russian Prime Minister Misleading the Public." It is pointed out by Holly Cartner, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, that on a radio interview on Sunday, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said, "Everything that concerns the bottom of the peaceful residents is the ill-intended propaganda of terrorists." So by extension, those of us who are speaking out against it—our panel—have to come under the rubric of being terrorists, which is absolutely and categorically absurd.

Let me also ask a question with regards to their second document, in which they talk—Human Rights Watch, and, again, this would be Holly Cartner—about how those who are fleeing are being forced to pay exorbitant amounts of money in Stavropol, a province of Southern Russia. Local Chechens said they were forced to pay an average of 1,500 rubles, the equivalent in U.S. dollars, \$60, for each family member seeking to escape from Chechnya.

It is pointed out that, and rightfully so, that this kind of predatory extortion for compliance with residents permits is bad enough in peace time as a violation of freedom of movement, but these are helpless civilians fleeing armed conflict. The Russian Government has a legal obligation to protect them.

What have any of you on the panel heard about this extortion, this fleecing of those who have already been victimized?

Dr. HILL. I have actually heard the same reports from people in Chechnya. In fact, I had heard figures as much as \$100 for a refugee being levied by local commanders. But it is not clear from the reports whether this is just the kind of entrepreneurialism of the Russian military on the ground who are looking for a way of making a quick dollar, because, unfortunately, in the last war the Russians were in fact the main suppliers of the Chechens by selling their weaponry to them.

So this is sadly something that we have seen before. But it's not clear that this is an orchestrated move on the part of the Russian military command. So I think we would need to find out more information about that.

Dr. DUNLOP. Yes. I would like to add that from various press reports, it appears that if, say, an ethnic Russian—there are still some living in Chechnya, but not very many—wants to leave, there is no problem if he crosses over the border, and I doubt he has to pay a thing. So a clear distinction is made between ethnic Chechens and ethnic Russians. A Chechen is kept back. If he gets over the border, it's because he offers, at least very frequently, a significant bribe.

There is a great deal of concern about why the Chechens are being held inside in this tiny republic of Ingushetia. There are up to 200,000 refugees now, and the population of Ingushetia is about 300,000—perhaps a little more. That is extraordinary, if you think about it. Yet they are not letting the Chechens go, even when they have relatives in other parts of Russia.

Mr. SMITH. Would any of our witnesses like to make a final comment?

Dr. DUNLOP. Well, I would like to speak briefly on the OSCE dimension that has been raised. I don't think it is sufficient for an observer group to go down and have a look. Of course, this was done in the last war. What we need, and very strongly, is an assistance group as we had—well, particularly in 1996—when the Khasav'yurt agreement was arrived at. Ambassador Tim Guldemann of Switzerland played a key role, as you all know, in facilitating the reaching of that agreement between General Maskhadov and General Lebed.

It is absolutely essential that an assistance group be permanently based in Grozny with its safety guaranteed by President Maskhadov, and that it seek immediately to begin negotiations between the Russian Government and the Maskhadov-led government. In my view, this cannot be put off. It has to happen immediately.

Mr. KARNY. Mr. Chairman, I think that Russia seems to be making a classic mistake of a colonial power, a mistake that it committed already in 1995, 1996. That is, Russia is trying to find accomplices within the Chechen population, based on clan affiliation and religious preferences, as well as the degree of Russification among various segments of the Chechen population.

There are admittedly quite a few Chechens who are thoroughly Russified and would rather stay within the Russian Federation. It's a little bit arbitrary; but I don't think it would be totally misplaced to assume that one-third of the population would rather remain within Russia.

I think that the worst thing is not having a constructive dialogue here. I would like to put forward a suggestion entirely unsolicited, and that is that you might want to hear at some point from representatives of the Chechen diaspora, including people who were educated in the United States, speak the language well, use the imageries well—an assortment of extraordinary, impressive human beings with intellectual power and expertise in various fields who might provide a certain context that press coverage of this war fails to provide, and might offer also a hope out of this conflict.

If Russia got used to the idea that the Chechens do not pose a constant danger to people who are supine in their beds in the middle of the night, its attitude might change. But particularly, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the attitude of this institution might change.

I admire the fact that you have summoned this hearing, and I thank you profusely for having me over. I am afraid that by and large, American treatment of the Chechen war has been too Russo-centric. We are not talking often enough about the people at the receiving end.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for that observation and that encouragement. Part of the reason of having Mr. Usmanov here is to get that viewpoint. So I do thank you for that suggestion.

I would like to thank our very distinguished witnesses. You have really provided this Commission with very incisive testimony and suggestions which we will follow up on. If we are out of session, many of us will be going to Turkey, to Istanbul, to the OSCE meeting there. We will have, I'm sure, ample opportunity to engage this issue very aggressively.

Hopefully, tomorrow we will mark up this resolution that I mentioned earlier, to put the House on record, or at least get it out of committee, and then onto the House floor early next week.

So we are trying to do our part, but certainly much more needs to be done. I thank you profoundly for your great work.

This hearing is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.)

APPENDICES

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. STENY H. HOYER

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today. I am deeply disappointed that recent events have made this hearing necessary. I recall the last hearing that this commission held on the subject of Chechnya. Our guest at that time was the head of the OSCE mission in Chechnya, Tim Guldemann. The OSCE mission had done excellent work, in my opinion, at least in cooling off some of the most life-threatening situations, and helping to save lives. It seemed to be a time for moving forward to a final resolution of what had been a murderous and tragic conflict for both sides.

I also recall meeting president Aslan Maskhadov here in Washington last year. He impressed me as a man deeply committed to his people and to independence for Chechnya, yet also determined to have normal, peaceful relations with Russia.

Now, the OSCE mission in Chechnya is operating out of the Norwegian embassy in Moscow, president Maskhadov is under siege, hundreds are reportedly dead or wounded, and we are back at square one. Russia, which had actually enjoyed the sympathy of the international community as it appeared to be under assault by terrorist bombers in its cities and armed guerrilla forces in Dagestan, has now managed to squander that sympathy, and has embarked on what General William Odom calls, "Russia's next blunder."

As we gather here today, Russian bombs and troops are closing in on Grozny, the capital of the republic of Chechnya. The Russians claim the situation in Chechnya is simply an effort to address a terrorism problem. They claim to be targeting "bandits" not innocents. They say they are using "smart bombs." Well, the bombs aren't so smart, and the policy is not only murderous, but incredibly short-sighted. However it may have been planned, the war in Chechnya has not only become an attack on innocent non-combatants, but it will strain the fabric of Russia's democratic development, to say nothing of the financial resources that could be used to build up a society, rather than destroy it.

In the meantime, displaced persons have streamed out of Chechnya. Already 190,000 refugees have escaped to neighboring regions. In the neighboring republic of Ingushetia where many of the refugees have fled, president Ruslan Aushev reports "catastrophic shortages of food products, medicines, tents for the refugees. More than 3,000 refugees have no shelter and are living in buses, cars or in the open air."

That is what is happening outside of Chechnya. Let us consider for a moment the plight of those who remain trapped in the republic. In early October a busload of women and children were trying to return to their towns just north of Grozny. They had fled the Russian advance weeks earlier but were told it was finally safe to go home. They never made it. Russian planes bombed their bus, killing forty innocent civilians. Rescuers at the scene discovered a white flag splattered with blood lying among the ruins. The Chechens had attached this flag to their bus indicating their peaceful intent.

For a long time, Moscow denied that any innocent civilians were killed or wounded. Now they grudgingly admit that there have been "minor" civilian casualties. On October 21, western news correspondents reported that at least ten missiles hit a market in Grozny. More than 100 people were reportedly killed and 400 injured. I'm sure you will agree with me that this sort of destruction is hardly minor.

And while president Maskhadov offers to meet with the Russians, the kremlin repeatedly refuses—preferring bombs to words.

The Russians say they are fighting terrorists. But I would submit that when the government of a nation attacks its own people—destroying towns, villages, homes and innocent lives—it makes one wonder: who are the real terrorists?

Mr. chairman, like yourself, I regret that the state department was unable to send a witness to this hearing on such an important topic. I understand that there was an unavoidable scheduling problem. I know that deputy secretary Talbott and other department officials have urged the Russian government to seek a negotiated solution rather than a military one that could threaten the stability of the entire north Caucasus region. I hope that the commission will have an opportunity in the near future to avail itself of the administration's views and to hear what specific steps the administration is taking to attempt to halt the devastation in Chechnya and assist the victims of the war.

I would have also appreciated hearing the ambassador or a designated representative of the Russian embassy address this hearing today. I think it is in the interest of the Russian government to tell its side of the story and to understand the seriousness that the congress and the American people attach to this issue.

In the meantime, we have an excellent panel of witnesses today, and I look forward to their testimony, not only on Chechnya itself, but what Russia's actions today portend for Russia tomorrow. Thank you.

**PREPARED SUBMISSION OF JOHN B. DUNLOP,
THE HOOVER INSTITUTION**

It is time for some clear thinking on the subject of Russia and Chechnya. The Yeltsin-Putin regime appears to have returned to some of the worst practices of the Brezhnev era, including the widespread use of what used to be termed the “Big Lie.” We are repeatedly assured by Russian Government and military spokesmen that the bombing, rocketing and shelling of civilians in Chechnya represent “pinpoint” attacks on Chechen terrorists. These putative terrorists are then linked to the persons who recently blew up several large apartment complexes in Moscow and Volgograd (in south Russia) resulting in hundreds of casualties. Surely, we are exhorted by such spokesmen, the United States supports the global war on terrorism. After all, we, too, are committed to eradicating terrorism from within our own shores.

In a statement made to the press on 29 October, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stressed his view that, “The West regards with understanding Russia’s actions aimed at eliminating the hotbed of terrorism in the Northern Caucasus.” After the “liquidation of terrorist gangs,” has been completed, Ivanov pledged, there will then occur a negotiated settlement of “the situation in Chechnya.” It was unclear what Chechen negotiating partner Ivanov had in mind; presumably it was not the legitimately elected president of Chechnya, Aslan Maskhadov.

Beneath this fog of Russian rhetoric—which seeks to enroll the United States and the Western democracies in a struggle against Chechen “terrorism” and “banditry”—there lie a number of assumptions which, upon scrutiny, turn out to unproven or misleading, or both. Was it in fact, one must ask, ethnic Chechens who blew up the apartment buildings in Moscow and Volgograd? Leading Russian newspapers such as *Izvestiya* and *Nezavisimaya gazeta* have reported that FSB investigators have told them that they do not believe that Chechens were involved in these horrific bombings. As I noted in a recent op-ed, it might well have been ethnic Cherkess, another aggrieved nationality from the North Caucasus region, who set the bombs. (Or, as numerous Russian commentators have observed, it could have been Russian hardliners from the military or police seeking to shift the country in an authoritarian direction.)

Similarly, the armed incursions from Chechnya into Dagestan which occurred in August and September of this year appear to have been largely the work of Dagestanis, supported by relatively small numbers of Chechens, Central Asians and others. The fact that the legendary Chechen field commander Shamil Basaev served as one of the titular leaders of the two operations has confused many, both in Russia and the West, into believing that these were entirely Chechen actions. Russian official spokesmen have chosen not to disabuse their countrymen or Western audiences of this doubtful assumption. The sole valid claim which the Russian Government would appear to have against the Chechen Government of Aslan Maskhadov is that it has failed to police its borders. This is a serious claim, but does it in any way justify the terror bombing of civilians?

Let us now pass on to a discussion of the supposed “pinpoint” bombing which is being conducted by the Russian military in Chechnya. Again, the statements of Russian Government and military spokesmen on this subject do not hold water. There are numerous reports coming from Western journalists and others who have visited Chechnya affirming that precisely Chechen civilians have been repeatedly struck and killed by Russian military assaults. Civilians have been hit scores of times in their homes, on the road while attempting to flee the fighting, and in

temporary refugee camps located within Chechnya. It is my conclusion that this campaign of terror against Chechen civilians has been fully intentional on the part of the Russian military, Prime Minister Putin and President Yeltsin. Its principal aim appears to have been ethnically to cleanse hundreds of thousands of Chechens from their home republic, in what resembles a repeat performance of the Stalinist deportation of 1944, which eventually resulted in the Chechens losing 20–25 percent of their populace.

Currently it is reported that an estimated 190,000 refugees have fled the bombing raids and shelling, with the overwhelming majority of them now having moved into the tiny autonomous republic of Ingushetiya. The Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations recently warned that perhaps another 100,000 refugees may soon seek to leave Chechnya. The departure of some 300,000 refugees would mean that at least 50 percent of Chechens, and perhaps considerably more, have been ethnically cleansed.

If the Russian military is in fact seeking to minimize civilian casualties, then why are all these people fleeing their homes? We did not witness 200,000 Serbs fleeing from Serbia into, say, neighboring Bulgaria during the recent conflict while NATO was engaged in bombing Belgrade and other targets in Serbia. The answer seems clear. NATO was, with some lamentable mistakes, conducting pinpoint bombing in Serbia and not seeking to effect an ethnic cleansing.

It is essential that the U.S. Government insist that the Yeltsin-Putin government provide a detailed explanation of what its intentions are vis-à-vis these stranded and desperate Chechen refugees, many of them still living in the open air, and with the hard frosts of November fast approaching. According to the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations, approximately 40 percent of the refugees are women, and 45 percent are children. Chechen men, for the most part, have not crossed into Ingushetiya, understandably wary of Russian “filtration” points and their GULAG-like procedures. (During the 1994-96 conflict, many Chechen men never returned from the MVD’s filtration camps.)

That we have already witnessed an ethnic cleansing of close to 200,000 Chechens from their native land seems quite clear. But ethnic cleansing—with its implied brutal indifference toward the group being “cleansed”—always contains within it the possibility of being transformed into a genocide. The Nazis originally intended to ethnically cleanse the Jews; only later did they opt for a lethal Final Solution.

If the Chechen refugees do not receive immediate assistance, many of the women and children stranded in Ingushetiya are likely to become ill, and a goodly number will die. Their deaths will be on the conscience of a Yeltsin-Putin Russian Government which seems more than prepared to revert to Stalinist nationality practices.

In 1944, the Stalin regime, in an operation supervised by NKVD chief-tain Lavrentii Beriia, deported virtually all Chechens to Central Asia. Large numbers of deportees died of typhus and other diseases during the removal process itself. Those who physically survived emerged from the sealed trains to find themselves cast adrift amid the wastes of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, with insufficient housing and inadequate means of subsistence. As I have noted, the Chechens lost 20–25 percent of their population as a result of this operation.

In a recent article entitled “The Chechens Will Be Sent to Altai,” the newspaper *Segodnya* reported that the Russian Federal Migration Service has prepared a list of regions to which the refugees would be “in-

vited" to come: Saratov, Tambov, Astrakhan, Orenburg, Orel, and Vologda oblasts, plus the Altai in Siberia. Scattered over the expanses of the Russian Republic, the Chechen women and children who manage to arrive at these remote destinations with their health intact will then be subject to a gradual process of ethnocide.

What of the Chechen men who have chosen to remain behind in their native republic? Apparently, the Russian Government and the Russian military want us to regard virtually all of them as "bandits" and "terrorists," subject to physical "liquidation." Many Chechen males have no sympathy for the activities of Shamil' Basaev and other radical Chechen field commanders or for the risky adventures of Dagestani Wahabi guerrillas, but they now seem to believe that they have no choice other than to join a national defense effort against an invading Russian army.

Even those who feel little sympathy for the Chechen separatist cause and who are relatively unmoved by Russia's repeated infringements of international law would do well to consider what a continuation of this bloody conflict could entail. On 27 October, Emil' Pain, formerly an advisor on nationality affairs to President Yeltsin, and presently director of the Center for Ethnic, Political and Regional Studies in Moscow, underlined his view that Moscow will not be able to prevail in a drawn-out guerilla war in Chechnya. The Russian military, who are conducting a more intelligent and better planned campaign than in 1994-96, are not unaware of Pain's point.

On 28 October, the headquarters of the United Command of the Russian forces in Chechnya let it be known that it believes that field commander Shamil' Basaev and his fighters are in possession of chemical weapons. This "fact" could be used to justify the employment of chemical weapons, in violation of international law, against the Chechens. Such an action might well reduce the possibility of a protracted guerilla war, but at what cost?

Since at least some Chechen males would presumably escape from this chemical plague, they would then feel completely justified in striking at Russian nuclear power stations or similar targets, perhaps creating one Chernobyl' disaster, perhaps several. The ensuing nightmares would affect not only the Russian Republic. (The possibility of such a scenario is reportedly being seriously discussed within the Russian Government.)

Policy Recommendations: What should the U.S. Government be doing in light of the bloody armed conflict in Chechnya and the humanitarian catastrophe in Ingushetiya. First, it seems obvious that international humanitarian organizations, such as the U.N. High Commission on Refugees and the International Red Cross, must be given immediate access to the Chechen refugees and that Western governments must keep a constant eye on what happens to them. Any attempt forcibly to deport the Chechens to Siberia or other remote areas of the Russian Republic must be vigorously denounced.

Given the appalling condition of the refugees and the possibility that the Russian military might resort to chemical weapons, I believe that the U.S. Government and its allies must demand an immediate cessation of hostilities in Chechnya and the commencement of talks by Russia with the lawfully elected government of President Aslan Maskhadov. If Russia declines to end the conflict and begin negotiations, then I would endorse the plan of action contained in a joint letter sent to President Clinton on 21 October by thirty-five former American high-ranking foreign policy officials, human rights activists and intellectuals, includ-

ing, among others, Morton Abramowitz, Richard Allen, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Burt, Dennis DeConcini, Richard Perle, Stephen Solarz, Paul Wolfowitz, and James Woolsey. In this letter, the authors underscore their conviction that it is inappropriate for the U.S. to provide new foreign aid to the Russian central government or to facilitate loans from the IMF while the Russian Government is engaged in targeting civilian populations.

Should reasonable heads unexpectedly come to prevail in Russia, then a negotiated agreement along the lines of what I proposed in my op-ed appearing in the 24 October *Los Angeles Times* could be quite rapidly concluded between the Russian and Maskhadov governments, with the aid of an Assistance Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to based in the Chechen capital of Grozny (Dzhokhar City). This is the plan which I proposed:

A cease-fire would go into effect on the model of the successful arrangement of August 1996.

All Chechen refugees would be permitted to return to their places of permanent residence.

Russia would recognize Chechnya's political independence, since there is now no possibility that Chechens would vote in a referendum to remain part of Russia.

Chechnya would join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and acquire a status similar to such predominantly Muslim states as Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan (acquiring such a status was a constant refrain among separatist Chechens before the 1994-96 war)

Russia would keep Chechen territory north of the Terek River and now occupied by Russian forces. (This land was joined to Chechnya in 1957, and Chechens are not emotionally attached to it.)

The European Union, with support from the United States, would agree to restore the devastated Chechen economy and infrastructure and to provide jobs for a populace with an extraordinarily high rate of unemployment. Such a step would be as much in the interests of the European Union as it is in the interests of Chechnya

STATEMENT BY FIONA HILL, EURASIA FOUNDATION**WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 3, 1999**

Mr. Chairman: As my contribution to this hearing, I would like to examine and analyze this "Second Chechen War" in the context of the first war of 1994-1996. This is a very different conflict from the first on both the domestic and international fronts and these differences are instructive as we attempt to discern Russian motives for the most recent actions.

DOMESTIC FRONT

The War of 1994-1996 was the largest military campaign on Russian soil since the Second World War, and the military casualties in just two years of fighting were almost as high as the Soviet casualties incurred in a decade of war in Afghanistan. The stakes in the war were high for both sides. For Chechnya, the war was a fight for independence and the latest round in a long struggle against assimilation into Russia that dates back to the 19th century. For Russia, the war was an effort to retain control of the country's post-Soviet borders and of a strategic territory with a crucial oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea and an important oil refining industry.

This was, however, a very unpopular war. In 1996, Russian opinion polls consistently showed that approximately 60% of the population were in favor of an immediate termination of the war. In Moscow, the Russian media broadcast and related harrowing tales from the battlefield of senseless carnage and a humanitarian and military disaster—including graphic pictures of burned out Russian tanks in the center of Grozny holding the charred distorted bodies of teenage Russian conscripts. The Soldiers Mothers' Committee launched an active campaign both to bring their sons home from the front and to shame politicians into ending the conflict. The "First Chechen War" was, in essence, Russia's Vietnam

On the battlefield, the Russian military began to lose the campaign from the very start. In Moscow, the Russian Government pursued a dual and ultimately self-defeating policy of negotiation and military assault—promoting peace plans and safe zones while raining shells down on Chechen villages. The end of the war in August 1996 came only in the wake of a crushing defeat at the hands of Chechen forces and the rout of Russian military units from Grozny after a final assault on the city, and after the virtual collapse of the Russian military.

Moscow was essentially forced to sue for peace and the resulting peace treaty—the Khasavyurt Accord—was a deep humiliation. The Accord was repeatedly referred to in the Russian press and parliament in terms of "Great Russia's humiliation by small Chechnya." The Russian military felt that the peace had been foisted upon them—that military victory had been denied by the vacillation and prevarication of politicians in Moscow, and the perfidy of the Russian press which had whipped up popular sympathy for the Chechens. Many in the Russian political elite shared their sentiments. In a presentation at Harvard University not long after the conclusion of the war, Russian democrat Alexei Arbatov noted testily that the result would have been far different and Russia would not have a "Chechen problem" if Stalin were still in power. On the one hand, this comment was testament to the huge leaps that Rus-

sia has made in terms of democratization and the emergence of public opinion as an independent force, and on the other it revealed the depth of animosity and resentment left by the Khasavyurt Accord.

Ultimately, the peace the Khasavyurt Accord brought proved to be as unpopular as the war it ended, and the Accord is now nothing more than a glorified cease-fire document.

In the intervening period from 1996-1999, the attempts at reconciliation between Russia and Chechnya and the reconstruction of Chechnya were feeble at best. Sympathy for the Chechens rapidly dissipated both in Moscow and in the surrounding region of the North Caucasus in the face of widespread and blatant kidnappings, assassinations, murders, and attacks on economic targets in neighboring areas. International aid workers and Western and Russian reporters were driven from the republic. The Chechen forces that pulled together in the fight against the Russians in 1994-1996 fell at each other's throats after the Russian withdrawal. Islamic forces and gunmen stepped into the political vacuum in the republic undermining the authority of Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov. Finally, the Chechen incursions into Dagestan this Summer, and the bomb attacks in Moscow, reinforced the image of Chechnya as an exporter of violence and terror.

This has brought us to the second war in an international context that is also very different from the first:

INTERNATIONAL FRONT:

In 1994-1996, the Chechen War was launched by Moscow in part as a response to the United States quick and successful intervention in Haiti—a number of Russian military commentators made references to emulating the US' success and cleaning up in Russia's backyard. In 1999, the stakes for Russia are even higher. We are now in a post-Kosovo world. For Russia, the US and NATO's military intervention in the Balkans has drastically changed the post-Cold War strategic environment, and has legitimized the use of forceful interventions to resolve political disputes.

We are now also in an Osama bin Laden world, where US missile attacks in Sudan and Afghanistan have paved the way for other unilateral punitive actions by other states against purported centers of international terrorism, and have provided new terms of demonization. In 1994-1996, the Chechens were "rebels" and "bandits." In 1999, they are "terrorists." In the First Chechen War, the image of rebels and bandits did not carry much saliency either at home or abroad. In this Second Chechen War, hard on the heels of bomb attacks in Moscow and repeated rumors that Osama bin Laden is either planning to move his base of operations from Afghanistan to Chechnya or is funding Chechen forces, the image is a potent one.

THE SECOND CHECHEN WAR:

So where are we now with the Second Chechen War? What is it about? Where will it end?

I would suggest that this Second War is all about politics in Moscow in the run up to the December 1999 Russian parliamentary and the June 2000 presidential elections, and all about defeat in the first war. In October 1995, in the face of persistent Russian military reversals and an increasing public backlash against the war, Boris Yeltsin de-

scribed Chechnya as the biggest mistake of his Presidency. This is now a chance for the Yeltsin regime and the Russian military to fight the war again—and this time to do it right and correct that mistake. It is also an opportunity for a victorious little war to propel the regime's designated successor to Yeltsin—Prime Minister Vladimir Putin—up the popularity polls and into the presidency in June 2000.

Both the Yeltsin government and the military learned a number of key lessons from the first war. On the home front, the government has “kept on message”—this is now a battle with international terrorism, not the repression of a secessionist movement. A media-blackout has prevented morale-destroying stories from filtering back to the Russian heartland. The general public outrage against the Moscow bombings and revulsion over carefully released video footage of Chechen atrocities has kept opposing views muted and forged a remarkable political unity. The Chechens have been successfully demonized and are accused of staging civilian casualties to discredit the Russian Government.

In sharp contrast to the First Chechen War, the Russian military has been pushed to the fore in decisionmaking. There is no attempt to pursue a dual policy of negotiation and force. Chechen overtures to initiate talks have been rebuffed and the logic of a military campaign has thus far been allowed to prevail. On the battle front, the Russian military has moved in slowly and kept its options open for a minimalist approach of securing the northern part of Chechnya, while pursuing the maximalist goal of taking Grozny and the heartland of the republic. The military has also addressed the Chechens' tactical superiority on the ground in hand-to-hand combat with an aerial bombing campaign. In this context, civilian casualties are regarded as collateral damage. The unfolding humanitarian tragedy in the North Caucasus as tens of thousands of Chechen refugees flee into impoverished and unstable neighboring republics is irrelevant to military strategists.

DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS

As far as the potential impact on democratization and civil liberties in Russia is concerned—the demonization of the Chechens as a group and the extension of this demonization to other peoples from the broader Caucasus region, resulting in harassment by local authorities, and the media blackout on the war are major causes of concern. However, the rise and influence of Russian public opinion and of civil society in the form of the Soldiers Mothers Committee was the major success story of the last war and should not be discounted as a factor in this one. The current war may be popular for now but the Russian press is beginning to publish stories that run counter to the state's depiction of events on the ground, and there are already stirrings of political fallout from the civilian casualties in Grozny.

Opposition politicians such as former Prime Minister Evgeny Primakov, Yabloko Party Leader Grigory Yavlinsky, and Samara Governor Konstantin Titov have spoken out against an all-out ground war and attacks on civilian targets. For Putin and the military strategists, timing and circumstances are key. They may not be able to control the flow of information from the ground for long and the window for a decisive victory may be a small one. The Chechens have not yet launched a major counter-offensive, and if the aerial assaults are replaced by a full-scale ground-war, higher Russian casualties seem

inevitable along with the public backlash that will bring. As Putin has risen in the polls as a result of the war, so can he fall. He can also, even if he wins the war and rides high in the polls, earn the wrath of Yeltsin as other seemingly popular Prime Ministers have before him. War and its conduct are an art and not a science.

A RUSSIAN VICTORY IN THE SECOND CHECHEN WAR?

It is highly possible that the Russians could win a military victory this time around. The Chechen fighters may be battle-hardened and better equipped and trained than in the first war, but the last three years of chaos and the destruction of Chechnya's infrastructure have taken their toll on the health and morale of the population. The republic has seen the complete collapse of sanitation, basic health care, and food and other essential life supplies. In sum, Chechnya has been a permanent humanitarian disaster. In the first war, the Chechen population rallied round the cause to fight back against the Russian incursion, this time the remaining population is exhausted and beaten down and is fleeing.

If Russia does achieve a military victory, however, what kind of victory will this be? The Chechens won the First Chechen War but lost the peace—Russia could win the Second Chechen War but will surely also lose the peace. The Yeltsin regime and the Russian military may have absorbed the military lessons of the First Chechen War but they have not assimilated the economic, social, and political lessons of either its prelude or its aftermath.

The major question is—what will Moscow do with Chechnya once it is defeated? A victory on the battlefield and the absolute rejection of Chechen independence will not resolve the serious problems that persist in Chechnya—including severe economic dislocation, high unemployment, the destruction of infrastructure and industry, and the collapse of social and political structures. Where will the funds be found to reconstruct the republic and reintegrate it with the rest of the Russian Federation? We have seen the scale of the reconstruction effort underway in Bosnia and the difficulties of restoring order in Kosovo. Can the Russians really conduct such an effort? If the last three years of purported efforts to reconstruct Chechnya are anything to go by then the answer is a resounding no.

What will happen to the Chechen fighters who will be pushed out of the republic by a Russian victory? Will they hold up in the mountains in the south of the republic and launch intermittent raids against the Russian-held heartland? Or will they take their guns to neighboring hotspots such as Nagorno-Karabakh or Abkhazia, further destabilizing the weak states of the South Caucasus? What will also happen to all of the refugees from both the first and the second wars? Are they likely to return to a devastated Chechnya or are they more likely to stay in their places of refuge, putting even more strain on the fragile economies and polities of the rest of the North Caucasus? And while Moscow is preoccupied with mopping up in Chechnya, will it have the energy and wherewithal to deal with the explosive political situations already evident in other North Caucasus republics such as Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Dagestan?

In the event of a victory, Russia seems likely to exhaust itself in attempting to police and rebuild its own internal Bosnia and Kosovo, and unlikely to be able to formulate the kind of sophisticated long-term policies it requires to stabilize the North Caucasus.

BROADER IMPACT OF WAR IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

In the South Caucasus, there is considerable and understandable concern—especially in Georgia and Azerbaijan—about the long-term consequences of the Second Chechen War and the possibility of the resurgence of an aggressive Russian policy in the region. Russia's defeat in the first war certainly tempered its interference in Georgian and Azeri affairs and led to Russian retrenchment in the region and a more pragmatic approach to bilateral and multilateral relations in 1996–1999.

This concern is not misplaced, but it is too early to tell whether or not it is fully justified. The Second Chechen War is very much driven by politics in Moscow and by the desire to redress the humiliation of the first defeat. It does not in itself denote a desire to return to the heavy-handed approach of 1992–1994 in the Caucasus. And, as noted above, even in the advent of a victory, Moscow will be preoccupied with restoring its control in Chechnya and it will be difficult to capitalize on this for a new thrust south.

The current war also raises broader questions about the future of the Russian armed forces. Military reform is long over due. Although the Russian military seems to be benefiting from increased budgetary appropriations for weapons procurement and supplies to fight the war in Chechnya, this does not address the deep structural and doctrinal problems the military has faced since the collapse of the Soviet armed forces in 1991. The Russian military seems likely to exhaust itself in securing a victory. Chechnya could in the end prove to be its “last fling” rather than the first steps in a new dance.

The increased instability resulting from the war and the likelihood of spill-over from the fighting, either in the form of stray missiles, refugees, and fighters is, however, very real indeed. The war is also a further endorsement of the use of force in settling political disputes in the region at a time when other conflicts, such as Nagorno-Karabakh, are at a turning point.

THE PROSPECTS FOR EXTERNAL INTERVENTION AND MEDIATION

At this specific juncture, the prospects for an intervention from the international community to bring the two sides to the negotiating table are slim. The Yeltsin regime does not want to negotiate with the Chechens until a military victory is secured. Vladimir Putin has deliberately painted himself into a rhetorical corner by rejecting Aslan Maskhadov as the legitimate President of Chechnya and demanding that he turn over key Chechen commanders. In the first war, the same approach was taken with then Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev. The turning points for mediation and negotiation only came with major Russian military reversals and there is no indication that the situation will be any different this time around. Serious talks between the Russians and Chechens were initiated only after Shamil Basayev's audacious assault on the Russian town of Budennovsk in Summer 1995, and as I mentioned at the outset, peace was only vigorously pursued after the Russians were routed from Grozny in Summer 1996—and 4 months after Dudayev had been killed in a missile attack.

There is very little at this juncture that the US and other outside powers can do to turn back the Russian military's advance. The advance will have to be halted and the attitude toward negotiations changed by the Chechens on the battlefield and by public opinion and sober-minded politicians in Moscow.

The United States needs to approach the crisis cautiously and have a keen sense of timing. The first rule of US policy should be “do no harm.” We are in a very dangerous period in US-Russian relations. The level of anti-Americanism among the Russian elite is real and should not be underestimated. We must be careful not to provoke an even greater backlash against the Chechens.

In the minds of the Russian political elite, in the post-Kosovo world, the US no longer commands the moral high ground. The Russian political elite do not believe that the US intervention in Kosovo was a humanitarian one and see it purely in terms of the balance of power—resolving a political conflict with Milosevic, carving out a new role for NATO to ensure its preservation, and staking a claim in the Balkans. They see the US as adopting a heavy-handed approach in dealing with threats to US interests while criticizing others for protecting their own interests. For the Russian political elite, the US is an unchecked power that is operating across the globe in all of Russia’s former spheres of influence, and seeking to belittle and humiliate Russia at every turn.

This makes our options and leverage limited. What can we do?

- This is a complex situation and must be treated as such. We must “stay on message” and keep a close watch on Russian public opinion and the reactions of the Russian political elite.
- We must not condone Russian action but we must also not offer false promise to the Chechens in making rhetorical statements that are unlikely to be followed through in practice.
- We must continue to condemn attacks on the civilian population of Chechnya, and highlight the humanitarian tragedy and the threats to democracy in Russia posed by the press blackout.
- We must engage those Russian politicians who are beginning to speak out against the civilian casualties and the conduct of the War and stress the importance of negotiations. In the first Chechen War, Russian opponents of the war felt let down by the lack of a resolute and consistent response from the West and by statements from the US that seemed to condone the Yeltsin regime’s policy by making parallels with the US Civil War.
- We should encourage the renewed engagement of the OSCE in the region given the positive role that this organization played in the first war, and should offer humanitarian assistance for the refugees and the neighboring republics that are hosting them.
- We should offer, in the event of a negotiated settlement, to help broker and structure an international reconstruction effort for Chechnya that would address the republic’s and the broader North Caucasus region’s deep-rooted economic, social and political problems. This might in fact be an opportunity to encourage the formation of an international task force that would examine the political, economic, and security challenges in the Caucasus as a whole and offer recommendations for future action. This could be created under the auspices of the OSCE and adopt the format of the Carnegie Endowment’s task forces on the Balkans at both the beginning and end of this century.
- Finally, we must stress that while the Second Chechen War can be won in the rubble of Grozny the real test of victory will come in what happens next. Winning and securing peace will be difficult in the extreme.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LYOMA USMANOV

THE FATE OF DEMOCRACY IN CHECHNYA

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to talk about democracy in Chechnya while the whole political history of Chechens has always revolved around the physical survival of the people themselves. However, the naturally evolved norm of Chechen society is, and always has been, democracy. Democracy is more philosophically akin to the Chechen mentality than other political or religious forms of government. Democracy, among other things, is the most important element needed for the survival of peace and stability in Chechnya.

Democracy as a political system is interwoven with Chechen ethnic culture and Chechen mentality. The democratic organization of the Chechen people was recognized even by the Russians during the wars in the 19th century. An "Encyclopedia by Brockhaus and Efron" (vol. 76, p. 786), describes: *"This social system explains the extreme resistance of the Chechen nation in the long struggle against the Russians, and which glorified their (Chechen) heroic death"*. We can also find similar evaluations in the works of V. Potto, 'Caucasus Wars'. *"They (Russians) found the persistent, stubborn enemy, whose physical strength, and democratic customs, and their whole way of life was ignited by war and will."*

DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Chechen people are subdivided into several social groups, known as 'taip' (clan). At present, their number totals more than 150. Each clan is composed of a united group of people, more or less connected through blood or strong moral obligations. Whether the clan was based on blood-related bonds or not, it was the foundation of Chechen culture and their way of life. People say that the clan is the fortress of "Adat" (national customs). Execution of these customs requires a commitment of moral forces and material inputs, for example, in the case of hospitality.

Clans played an important role in the preservation of the Chechen ethnos, which, for example, created the will to sustain them during the first Russian-Caucasian war in the 19th century, in the face of the largest army in the world. A democratic clan organization, as a form of societal self-rule, has the function of social control.

During the Soviet years, the administrative totalitarian regime destroyed all ethnic and traditional social structures, but nevertheless, the organic basis of Chechen society, democracy, stayed firmly in place.

For propaganda purposes, Communist ideology used the thesis that the clan organization contradicts the laws and philosophy of the State. On the contrary, in ancient times, the clans undoubtedly gave birth to supreme bodies of government, 'Mekhk Khell' (Council of the country), i.e. parliamentarian-representative authorities. But it was not only the Council of the country, it was the complete system of State government. The bodies of local self-management were called 'Gala Khell' (Council of the city) and 'Evla-Khell' (Council of the village). 'Mekhk-Khell' established strict laws, based on the philosophy of 'Adat', and controlled observance of the law.

Centuries ago, Chechen 'Mekhk Khell' authority resolved problems connected with the rights of women and their protection; issues of military ethics, etc., that were beyond the ordinary sphere of land ownership, trade and commerce. The Chechen national and state political traditions reflect the modern concept of a state, in which the application of legitimate force should play a minor role in the society, and moral norms and cooperation should play the dominant role.

Now lets explore how these traditions fared within the communist system.

CHECHEN RESISTANCE AGAINST COMMUNIST TYRANNY

Up until 1989, Chechnya, as well as the rest of the former USSR, was part of a powerful communist system. At the same time, Chechnya was one of the avant-garde in terms of anti-communist resistance. For example, the famous Chechen political science scholar, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov was convinced that the real cause of the Chechens' deportation in 1944 was their unprecedented resistance to mandatory agricultural cooperatives because Chechnya operated under a system of private land ownership.

Resistance among Chechens was a national trait. Not just of some Chechens, but of all. Because of their rejection of Communist philosophy, the Chechen people were punished and deported. During World War II, Stalin annihilated about 50% of the Chechen population. Perhaps only the genocide of the Jewish people was more significant.

Despite this enormous loss, even in exile in Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, the Chechens were unrelenting in their resistance to the inhumanity of the Communist system.

The great Russian writer, A. Solzhenitsyn, who survived Stalin's prisons - where the Communist regime conducted experiments, transforming people into obedient livestock - writes in his "Archipelag Gulag": *"One can never reproach Chechen people that they ever yielded to oppression. ...but there was one nation, which didn't yield to the psychology of obedience, - not individuals, not insurgents - but the whole nation. They are (the) Chechen people... No Chechen man ever tried to oblige or please his superiors, but they are always proud and even treat them with enmity... They respected only insurgents (those with the same nobility of purpose). And what a miracle - everybody was afraid of them. Nobody could prevent them from living this way. And the state power, master of this land for the last 30 years, couldn't oblige them to respect its laws."*

Now let's fast forward to the autumn of 1991, key events in USSR history when the Communist system collapsed. The details of those events are well known so I won't repeat them. But I would like to mention one day - September 6, 1991 - the day which Chechens celebrate as their Independence Day. What happened that day?

Many who watched Chechnya mistakenly believe that that day Chechnya declared its independence. This is not true. September 6 was the day that Communism died in Chechnya.

On that day, the head of the Communist party in Chechnya, Doku Zavgaev, resigned. Nothing else happened that day. There were no other major events that happened that day. There was no uprising nor revolution to change the political situation. To this day, Chechnya is the only former USSR entity, including the Baltic States, that remains without a Communist party.

The former democratically-elected Chechen-Ingush Parliament was not dissolved by the Chechen people, as reported in Communist propaganda. The reality is that Parliament was dismissed two weeks later at the direction of the Russian Federation, according to Russian tradition and rules. I am a witness to this fact because I was a member of that Parliament.

Chechnya declared independence four times: the first time, the elected Chechen Congress declared independence on September 26, 1990; then on September 27, 1990, by the elected Chechen-Ingush Parliament, representing all nationalities in Chechnya; the third time on November 1, 1991 following the election of Chechen President Djokhar Dudaev and the fourth time, during the Russian-Chechen war in the summer of 1996, the outgoing Parliament reaffirmed its independence to the consternation of the Russian Government.

During the war, the Russian Government had reassembled the Chechen delegates of the previous Chechen-Ingush Parliament, elected in 1990. Moscow had hoped that this Parliament would be pro-Russian. However, what that Parliament did was to reaffirm the same September 27, 1990 Independence Declaration, excepting only the word, "Ingushestia". Then this parliament ceased to exist because Russia couldn't tolerate this insolent display of Chechen democracy. Russia made a pretext of electing another Parliament, a puppet Parliament, which they now in 1999 want to revive.

Once again I would like to turn your attention to the fact that none of these dates represents Independence Day for Chechnya. Why?

Because the main political purpose of the Chechen people for the last decade has been fighting against tyranny; against Russian repression; and for the security and survival of our people.

I would like to emphasize that Chechens are fighting not only for independence, but first of all for their security and ultimate survival.

In speaking of tyranny, I do not mean only the Russian threat. Of course this is the dominant threat. Chechens have been repressed by Russia for the last 140 years and, first of all, I mean domination and tyranny in terms of Communist culture, ideology, and mentality.

Now it is time to turn our attention to democracy. What was going on in Chechnya in terms of democracy?

REVIVAL AND DEATH OF DEMOCRACY IN CHECHNYA

In the beginning, I mentioned that democracy as a political system is the basis of Chechen culture and mentality. The national liberation movement in Chechnya at the beginning of this decade was totally based on democratic values. One can say that the democratic system was the basis of Chechen identity.

The first organized democratic movement in Chechnya, the Vainakh Democratic Party (VDP), was established in 1989. I served as the First Deputy of this party. During the next two years, after the demise of the Russian KPSS (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), the Vainakh Democratic Party became the leading party of our country. In 1990, the Chechen Congress, a powerful new political movement which was an organized Chechen national forum, appeared in Chechnya. As the basis of the Chechen Congress, VDP was the main political party.

Then in 1991, in terms of the military-political aspect, Chechnya obtained independence from Russia. But then what happened? What happened from that year on and what is going on today in Chechnya are probably the most tragic and dramatic years of our history.

Chechnya basically exited the military-political sphere of Russian influence in July, 1992. Russian troops withdrew from Chechnya, before than from any other republic, including the Baltic States and Azerbaijan.

However, it would be too naïve to presume that the Chechens obtained true independence. Chechnya was, and still is, dependent on Russia in terms of its economy, finance, transportation, information etc. Even though, Chechnya is independent from the international law standpoint, no nation recognized it as such because of the enormous Russian pressure.

The Russian purpose was and is to eliminate any Chechen desire for independence. Therefore, any criminal organizations, whether inside or outside Chechnya, as well as any religious extremists worldwide, were natural Russian allies. Many Russian criminal groups and organizations were successfully using Chechnya as their target of opportunity.

INTERNAL OBSTACLES TO DEMOCRACY IN CHECHNYA

Let me now direct your attention to the internal aspect of the problem. In 1991, General Jokhar Dudaev came to power in Chechnya, recently retired from the Soviet army and a member of the KPSS. In the beginning of his political career, he attempted to promote the presidential, or in this case, the “strong-man” genre political system instead of the parliamentary one, which was the preferred genre of Chechen democratic groups. Many former USSR regions also had as heads of state, former Communist military leaders.

In 1992, the Chechen Parliament voted to accept their Western-model, secular constitution, which is still in effect. This constitution provides for both presidential and parliamentary branches of government. Fortunately, this democratic Chechen constitution is mainly a parliamentary rather than a presidential system. But the real political fact in Chechnya has been the transformation of our country into the presidential version of government.

How did this happen?

General Dudaev was so ingrained mentally with the Communist ideology, that he was unable to distance himself from its system of “First Secretaries”, or regional leaders in the terminology of the Communist totalitarian system. This institution of “First Secretaries” was in the soul of many people including Dudaev and other “strong-men” of the former Soviet republics. It means to keep power in one “iron hand”.

The Soviet (Communist) system required one First Secretary for each region. This represented the centralization of absolute power. The will of the First Secretary is the law, regardless of the constitution. In other words, everything came from the old Communist political system. He didn't seek his power from the people. This was the model which Dudaev followed.

Under such pressure, democratic groups gradually weakened. It all came to a political crisis in Chechnya – President Dudaev wanted to keep the old political system and the democratic groups opposed him. As a result, in the summer of 1993, Dudaev dismissed Parliament.

Later, he also deprived the Chechen Constitutional Court of its power. The same political stranglehold continued with Aslan Maskhadov, who was in the Soviet Army and held the same military rank as Dudaev.

The dissolution of Parliament in 1993 was a serious blow to Chechen democracy.

One can contrast Russia and Chechnya. The Communists had total domination in the Russian Parliament. In the Chechen Parliament, there were national democratic movements representing various parties but no Communists, not a single one.

Dudaev had then been the irrefutable leader of Chechen nationalists since 1991 up until his death. There is only one reason why he was able to retain his leadership position in Chechnya. This was especially true during the previous Russo-Chechen war in 1994-96. What happened in Chechnya during the war?

THE BIRTH OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN CHECHNYA

Let me first attempt to estimate the significance of the war in terms of our subject, democracy. I think that the war was between Russian chauvinism and Chechen nationalism. Also I believe that both sides lost in this terrible war. The victor won Islamic fundamentalism. The loser lost military credibility. Before 1994, there had been *no political group, much less a person*, who subscribed to religious extremism in Chechnya.

The Wahhabi movement became well known to the world because of its notoriety in Chechnya. However, no one in Chechnya knew about the existence of these extremists. Prior to 1994, there were Wahhabis only in Dagestan. So then, what happened during the war?

First of all, one should take into account, that that war, like the current one, was not between equal groups. One side had the full might of Russian power and world support, and the other side, only moral right. The small band of Chechens possibly did not yet have an alliance between Chechen nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. Chechnya may have been unable to defend its independence without this alliance. Even taking this into account, the fact is that the first Wahhabi from Dagestan was invited to Chechnya in August, 1996, by Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, only after the death of Jokhar Dudaev. (See "Sufizm and Wahhabizm in Northern Caucasus", page 13; Vakhit Akaev; 1999; Moscow; Russian Academy of Science).

But Russia is an experienced empire player. And it can play a very smart political game with religious people, but Russia was never able to play games with the Chechen nationalists.

In Russian history, there are examples in ethnography books that the first enemy of the Russian empire was the strong Chechen identity and its culture with strong social democratic traditions. This current war, in my opinion, is clearly a pre-election strategy to divert attention from the daily expose of Russian state corruption. The propaganda for this current war has awakened the consciousness of very strong Russian national socialism. The Russian Government has convinced the Russian people that the Chechens are solely responsible for upsetting their daily lives.

In differentiating this war from the previous war, the previous war was much more clearly an imperialistic war. Because of this, the Russians completely and deliberately destroyed the entire material infrastructure of Chechen civil society, effectively killing Chechen nationalism.

Russia is now ready to come to the “*Final solution to the Chechen problem*” (premise that was on many occasions voiced by Andrey Kozyrev, ex-foreign minister of Russia), “*and finally make Chechnya a permanent part of the Great Russia*”. (This theme was repeated constantly by practically all politicians from the Kremlin). From a historical perspective, the idea of independence can be taken away from Chechens either through their complete extermination or through the destruction of their ethnic culture and its institutions. We insist on our condemnation of Russia, of its policy and its Chechen ethnocide. To support our point, we will operate only with facts of this war.

At the beginning of the 1994-96 war, all observers were surprised by the fact that Russian bombs did not first strike the presidential palace, (which, as it was later discovered, could be destroyed in one day), but instead struck the Chechen University and other cultural and educational centers of this small nation. Where the bombs could not reach, special military troops burned books, documents, archives, high precision laboratory equipment, and museum exhibits. Many valuable items from museums, especially precious metal icons, were looted and some of these items can now be found on the Moscow black market. All the buildings and structures of the Chechen archives were completely destroyed. War criminals even found underground bunkers, the existence of which was known only to experts. Most of Chechnya's priceless historical documents were housed in those bunkers, which had been miraculously saved even during the difficult years of exile, 1944-1957. All of these documents were destroyed.

The Research and Science Institute of Humanitarian Sciences was destroyed. It contained books written by all the well-known Caucasus' researchers, field research documents on the Chechen language and ethnography, history, and culture that had been gathered over many years. Priceless original books from the Middle Ages were kept at the Research and Science Institute. All these materials had been scheduled for re-publication in the near future. Now it is all gone, carefully and intentionally burned, to the last piece of paper.

Almost the entire Chechen library system was destroyed - about 7.5 million pieces. Even libraries not in battle zones were burned. But especially noteworthy is the destruction of such libraries as the State Central library named after Anton Chekhov; the Science and Technology Library, the main University libraries; all the libraries of the Science and Research Institutes and the Children's Libraries of the Republic. Nothing is left, not buildings, not books.

The fact that this was not a side effect of the war but was a deliberate policy, is confirmed by the identical fate of private science foundations. For example, the library and archives of the following academics were also completely destroyed: K. Chokaev, the President of the Chechen Science Academy; Professor I. Aleroyev, Professor S. Akhmadov, Professor V. Krikunov, Professor A. Yandarov, Professor S.-A. Husainov, Professor A. Mankiev, A. Arsanukaev, Director of a Science and Technology Institute and others. All of these persons are esteemed scholars of Chechen history, language, culture and philosophy. The author per-

sonally conducted inquiries into some of these cases - the same criminal signature was found. Men in masks specifically targeted residences of these people and burned everything. That is how the war against the culture and historical memory of the Chechen Ingush people was vengally conducted.

The same signature of violence was visible in the destruction of other cultural and educational sites in Chechnya including:

Completely destroyed, robbed or burned:

- Art museum (a small amount of what was stolen was recovered after the war)
- Science Academy of the Chechen Republic
- Writers Guild with all the archives
- Painters Guild with all the archives
- Musicians Guild with all the archives
- Theatrical Guild with all the archives
- The Children's Creativity facility of the Republic
- Chechen State University. All the equipment, all the libraries. Of all the dormitories, only one building survived.
- Chechen State Pedogological Institute. All the buildings, all of the equipment, all the archives
- Grozny Oil Institute. All the buildings, all the equipment, all the archives. A very rich and well known museum of archeology.
- Folk Center with all the archives.
- State Television. All the equipment and archives
- State Radio. All the equipment and archives
- Musical College. All the buildings, all the archives and equipment
- Pedagogical College. All the buildings, equipment, archives.
- All sports arenas, swimming pools.
- All theaters, movie theaters.
- Majority of hospitals.
- Majority of schools and preschools.

This sad list is by no means complete. For example, the author does not yet have the data on the damage that was done to Chechen cultural sites and their national architecture in remote mountain regions. Russia attempted a cultural genocide along with physical extermination of Chechens. This behavior is not a Russian prerogative. The Serbs did the same in Bosnia and Kosovo. In Bosnia, the full-scale war started with the bombing of Sarajevo's main library, and afterwards all signs of local Muslim culture were deliberately destroyed (minarets, libraries, old buildings). Nazis did the same to Jewish and Polish monuments and documents.

Because of this destruction of the material foundations of traditional Chechen culture and education, many Chechens turned to religion. But even in that, the equation turned out to be skewed. Before the war, all the Chechens and Ingushs were Muslims of the Sunni sect, which not only complemented Chechen culture but was an integral part of it. Now, as a result of the war, Chechnya has a radical movement called Wahhabism, which is opposed to the traditional Sunnism. Three years after the war, Wahhabism has spread so much that it has become a serious religious, political and military force. Wahhabis, for example,

reject traditional, civilized education; they reject the civilized social system; they reject most Chechen and Ingush traditions; and they reject any relationship with the West.

Wahhabis have virtually unlimited financing from abroad that allows them to financially support new members. Under the destitute conditions existing in Chechnya, that financial support in, and of itself, becomes a decisive factor among the population. Many young and middle aged people have embraced this movement. Unlike the traditional Chechen Sunni Islam, Wahhabis subscribe to clear political goals and they do not hide their intention to seize power. Wahhabis represent political opposition to the Chechen Government and they are following an open political line to destroy all the previous civil structures of the Chechen State. There is not an expert left who doubts the unification of religion extremism and post war criminal elements.

Democratic movements and parties that were a large and active part of Chechen society before the war have disappeared. With the background of a destroyed country and paralyzed social system, an educated Chechen can not possibly be satisfied by Russia's tardy admittance concerning their misguided policy toward Chechnya in the past. Recently, Sergei Stepashin, one of the individuals guilty of prosecuting the war who then became Prime Minister of Russia, said that if he had known Islam better he would have conducted a different policy towards Chechnya. (Reuters, June 3, 1999). Before that, Boris Yeltsin also admitted his mistakes regarding Chechnya.

There is still one question. Where is the educated and democratically minded part of Chechen society? To find the answer to that question, we need to take a look at the conditions existing today in Chechnya. The former speaker of the Russian Parliament, Ruslan Khasbulatov, once noted that, as a result of the war, Chechnya has been thrown back to the Stone Age. Now let's imagine, for example, how would Western scientists behave in the Stone Age? I do not think their academic achievements in astrophysics and genetics would mean much compared to their ability to kill a mammoth. What will a person do under these circumstances if he is cut off from the rest of the world, even if he is a professor of political science? He will either learn to hunt mammoth or he will escape to the civilized world where his knowledge could be valuable. That is the position that educated Chechens are in today. Chechen intellectuals, after finding themselves completely isolated and without support from Western society, simply desert their homeland. This only serves to deepen the humanitarian and political crisis. In the meantime, the cultural potential, if given support, could be a solid foundation for building a modern civil and democratic society.

Earlier I listed many of the deplorable war crimes that caused the formation of, and strengthening of, religious extremist groups in Chechnya. Chechen nationalism and all forms of democratic movement have almost completely lost their former dominant position. They have been replaced by Islamic extremism, for which lack of universities and libraries is the best possible environment. That environment, as you can see, was deliberately created by Russia.

One should not be amazed by the fact that the glimmer of independence has slowly faded into darkness. And the political purpose of Islamic movements is developing. For instance, during the last two years I've never heard our Islamic extremist rebels mention Chechen independence, Chechen strength or Chechen statehood. They have come to

use catchwords like, united Islamic nation, universal jihad against non-believers, Islamic Halifat, which in Caucasian means the desire to convert the entire Caucasus region into an Islamic state.

The extremists were forcing Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov to cancel the Chechen constitution. Fortunately, that did not happen.

CONCLUSION

What do we have in Chechnya today?

We have a democratic constitution that the Chechen parliament defended successfully against the fundamentalists. This is very positive, although, it is still necessary to revise the constitution for the future in order to establish clear parliamentary statehood, like the constitution in any small Western country, like Switzerland, Finland, Israel, etc.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that there is no logic in the Russian political position towards democracy. Russia is always fighting against democracy for no reason. Speaking more generally, of course, Russia would like to have a democratic Chechnya, but Russia's priority today is empire domination over Chechnya and the Caucasus. As long as Russia maintains this policy towards Chechnya, there is no chance for Chechnya to become a democratic state. In all pre-1989 Russo-Chechen political history, Chechnya as a region, never had a Chechen national as its First Secretary; it was always an ethnic Russian. This was a unique case in Chechnya-Ingushetia; in all the other regions, nationals were trusted to serve as First Secretary.

In 1990, Russia disliked the elected Chechen Parliament, because this Parliament declared Chechen independence. Russia also didn't trust the Parliament elected in 1991. They negotiated with this Parliament for two years and then began the war. Another Parliament was elected in 1996 which didn't fare any better with Russia than the previous ones. Russia distrusts the current Chechen Parliament, elected in 1997. All of these facts show us that Russia has no respect for the democratically-elected leadership in Chechnya.

Therefore, in 1997, Russia provided a cushy position for the self-appointed "Halif" Adam, who declared himself head of the Chechen Government in exile. "Halif" means a descendent of the prophet, Mohammed. This was ludicrous, given the fact that he had absolutely no respect among the Chechens. Halif Adam was maintained by the Russian Government as a "backup" Chechen leader until September, 1999.

Moscow then decided to use the "puppet Parliament" elected by Russian soldiers who were in Chechnya during the war in 1996, when it couldn't find enough civilians to vote. Finally, Russia decided to appoint a Russian, Koshman, whom they could trust. This appointment followed neither Russian law nor Chechen law. It is just another example of the erratic things Russia does.

Another paradox is Russia's widely declared fight against Islamic extremism. In July, 1998, Chechen Muslims, the Chechen parliament and the Chechen President declared Islamic fundamentalism was illegal and a movement against Chechen statehood.

Shortly after this declaration in Chechnya, a Special Presidential Commission in Moscow composed of members of the Russian Government, declared that the Wahhabi movement was not extremist. (see page 14, "Sufizm and Wahhabism in Northern Caucasus", Vakhit Akaev, 1999, published in Moscow by the Russian Academy of Science) In other

words, Russia provided political support to people who belong to true, and very dangerous for Chechen stability, Islamic fundamentalist organizations.

Obviously Russia is doing its best to destabilize the Chechen internal situation as much as possible.

At this time, Russia is pushing Maskhadov and is unwilling to negotiate. As his representative, I can confirm that he wants to negotiate an alliance with Russia so that together they can rid the Chechen people of Islamic extremists. Russia denied his willingness to negotiate.

Russia has always done its best to deprive the Chechen President of any chance to resolve the current serious political crisis. And forced him to make an alliance with the Islamic fundamentalists, because Russia is deliberately exterminating the Chechen people. Clearly genocide. President Maskhadov, just like his predecessor, Dudaev, has no other chance to win but by attracting once again the religious ideology.

Is there any prospect for Chechen democracy?

Because of its affinity for Chechen ethnic culture, democracy in Chechnya will always represent itself as a national liberation movement. Therefore I would like to emphasize once again that because of its natural antipathy, Chechnya will not be able to exist as a democratic country within the Russian empire. Moscow will never support Chechen democratic groups. Now after what has happened in Chechnya during the previous war, democratic power movements can develop only as a result of Western support.

The first thing is recognition of the Chechen peoples' right to international security and safety; which means international recognition of the Chechen nation's right of self-determination.

Secondly, the Chechen people need help to restore their infrastructure, on the model of a modern democratic society especially in the sphere of education. Of course all of us may question the perspective towards Islamic extremists in Chechnya. I must say that, right now, unfortunately, Chechnya presents the most attractive environment for Islamic fundamentalists from any part of the world. Within Chechen society, there is no cultural basis for the existence of Islamic extremism. Support of democracy in Chechnya is the one medicine against religious fanaticism. As a Chechen, I'm convinced of it.

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF CHECHEN REPUBLIC**

Khasav-Yurt, August 31, 1996

JOINT STATEMENT

We the undersigned,

Taking into consideration the progress achieved in the realization of the Agreement on the cessation of military actions;

Making efforts to achieve mutually acceptable preconditions for a political settlement of the armed conflict;

Acknowledging that the use or threat of armed force to settle disputes is unacceptable;

Based on the generally accepted principles of the right of peoples to self-determination, the principles of equal rights, voluntariness and freedom of choice, the strengthening of national agreement and the security of peoples;

Expressing the intent to unconditionally defend the human rights and freedoms of citizens, regardless of national origin, religious denomination, place of residence or other differences, an end to acts of violence between political opponents, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949 and the international covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,

We have worked out Principles for the determination of basis of relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic, on the basis of which further negotiation will take place.

signed by

A. Lebed,

A. Maskhadov

S. Kharlamov,

S. Abumuslimov

In the presence of the Head of the OSCE Assistance Cooperation in the Chechen Republic, signed by

T. Guldiman

VICTORS AND VANQUISHED IN CHECHNYA

Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, Nov. 8, 1999

ROBERT BRUCE WARE

Russians say that in every victory there is a defeat, and in every defeat a victory. As the West grows increasingly alarmed at the grim prospects of a Chechen defeat, it is helpful to consider how the seeds of the cataclysm were sown by Chechnya's triumph over Russian forces in 1996.

During the previous conflict, Chechens were united in their struggle with Moscow, while Russians were deeply divided in their views of that disastrously unpopular war. Yet in the three years after the war, Chechen solidarity disintegrated among Chechnya's traditional clan rivalries.

In Chechnya blood is everything. Chechen social organization is based upon entrenched kinship hierarchies without a history of overarching political organization, save that which was imposed from Moscow. Chechnya is in many ways a pre-modern society, and no sooner did it free itself from Moscow than it proved itself incapable of constructing a modern nation state. In compensation for this absence of political organization the Chechens had recourse to three expedients, all of which proved disastrous.

First, Chechens found comfort in their national mythology. In their ferocious resistance of Russian imperial forces in the early nineteenth century Chechens united with their Dagestani neighbors under the legendary Imam Shamil, who was himself Dagestani. The enduring legacy of the struggle was an heroic mythology that served as inspiration for, and drew further intensification from, the 1994-1996 conflict. Chechens like to say that a Chechen fighter is worth one Russian tank or a hundred Russian soldiers. Yet this warrior mythology is self-destructive particularly because it is self-perpetuating. The Chechen self-conception is an alter that demands human sacrifice. Hence, the dual invasions of Dagestan in August and September by Chechen warlord, Shamil Basayev.

As a principal feature of Chechen self-conception, Islam also served as an expedient through which the Chechens sought to address the deficiencies of their political organization. Sufi brotherhoods, which were the organizational basis of Imam Shamil's nineteenth century resistance, have emerged as a principled force for education, moderation and tolerance in neighboring Dagestan. Yet their role in Chechnya was complicated not only by warrior mythology and clan-based membership, but by an ideological intensification that occurred during the last three years as competing clan leaders staged appeals to Islam in order to obtain political legitimacy. It was also complicated by the introduction of Wahhabite Islamic fundamentalism, which spread rapidly through Chechnya and Dagestan with the help of supporters in the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and Afghanistan, including Osama Bin Laden.

Yet the spread of Wahhabism was also a response to the deepening impoverishment of the region. Hampered by their lack of effective political organization, and by their reflexive resort to a raiding tradition that is part of their mythology, Chechens have been unable to organize a legitimate economy. Apart from subsistence farming and barter, income is earned by organized crime,

by the widespread tapping of the petroleum pipeline bound for the West, by kidnapping, and evidently by counterfeiting \$100 bills. This economy of violent criminality has served as a further substitute for modern social organization.

Chechens have been kidnapping Russians for hundreds of years, but since 1996 the practice has become one of Chechnya's principle industries. More than 1300 Westerners and Russians, including women and small children, were taken hostage in those three years— more than one a day.

Hostages are held under brutal conditions for exorbitant ransoms, which are extorted with the help of Chechen-produced video documentation of their torture and dismemberment, including that of the children. Once taken, hostages are subsequently bought and sold among the Chechen clans, in much the same way as another culture might exchange money or securities. The result is a contemporary slave trade from which many Chechens have directly or indirectly benefited, and in which many are more or less complicit. Since social organization is dependent upon kinship ties, Chechens are spared the moral complications that might come from a capacity to empathize with outsiders. Yet in line with the Russian maxim, this practice has had an ironic twist: The reason that have been no international observers or relief workers helping inside Chechnya is that the Chechens long ago murdered or kidnapped them all.

Despite the complications of Moscow politics, despite its deficiency of candor and its unconscionable military excess, Russia's present conflict has its roots in Chechnya's clan culture, which perpetuates violent criminality while preventing political integration. The settlement negotiated in 1996 contributed to the Chechen myth of self-sacrificial militancy, and the tragedy is that another negotiated settlement would be unlikely to produce a different result. In a war in which it is difficult to distinguish "militants" from "civilians", it may be impossible to identify victor and vanquished. The only clear victor is likely to be the dark and barbarous past.

Robert Bruce Ware is Assistant Professor of Philosophical Studies at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, who has conducted field work in the Northeast Caucasus since 1997, and written extensively on the topic.

**LETTER TO PRES. WILLIAM J. CLINTON SUBMITTED BY THE
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY IN EASTERN EUROPE**

October 21, 1999

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Mr. President:

We hope you will vigorously use American influence, in diplomacy and public statements, to halt the second disastrous war in Chechnya. This war, in addition to its tragic consequences both for the Russian and the Chechen peoples, is also beginning to threaten Azerbaijan and Georgia. We therefore, hope that America will act, in our traditional way, to relieve the humanitarian consequences of these new strikes while seeking to terminate the hostilities.

Russia began with the bombing of Grozny and Chechen villages. Now the Russian Government has moved on to a ground invasion and recognition of a puppet government, overturning the democratic elections of 1997. The indiscriminate bombing, and shelling with inaccurate area weapons such as the Grad and Uragan rocket systems, remains the most unacceptable Russian action. The stated rationale was to attack the Islamic terrorist groups who invaded the neighboring province of Daghestan and, allegedly, were responsible for bombings of apartment houses in Moscow. (The Russian Government, however, has produced no evidence linking the appalling apartment-house bombings to Chechens.) Terrorism by Islamic extremists in the North Caucasus is, indeed, a serious problem, which menaces us as well as the Russians. But the main Russian targets have been the Grozny airport, oil refineries, fuel storehouses, Chechen Government television, cellular telephone towers, radio transmitters, bridges, roads, villages, and sometimes columns of refugees fleeing from the destruction. The real objective of Russian bombing seems to be destroying what remains of the economy, infrastructure, and civilian life after the war of 1994-96. At the same time, the Russian Government has cut off gas and telephone links, and ceased paying Soviet-era pensions. We cannot know Russian intentions, but the effect is to depopulate Chechnya, as the Serbs tried to empty Sarajevo by shelling. In any case, these actions against civilians are inhumane and violate universally acknowledged laws of war.

The likely effects will be to make terrorism worse. The extremist Islamic groups are well funded and armed by Arab and Pakistani sources; as ordinary life becomes even more impossible, they will be more attractive to young men. Every recent traveler's account agrees that fundamentalist views are unpopular among most Chechens, who want to live a normal life. By making this impossible, Russia will drive more and more of the population into the terrorists' camp. Certainly Russia has made the position of President Maskhadov, who was cooperating with President Yeltsin and Prime Ministers Primakov and Stepashin on a moderate policy, simply impossible. Finally, the bombings are already producing masses of refugees; these will burden the weak economies of the North Caucasus republics (and possibly of Georgia), increase ethnic tension, and provide easy camouflage for terrorists.

The ground invasion, given threatened peoples' obsession with borders, will turn a debate about the status of self-governing Chechnya into an eternal grievance. Finally, Russia has repudiated the internationally monitored, free election that elected Aslan Maskhadov as President, and recognized again a "parliament" that was fraudulently elected during the first Chechnya war, was regarded by most Chechens as a quisling regime, and vanished from Grozny with the Russian army. Doing this not only removes Moscow's only possibility of a settlement by dialogue, but calls into question Russia's commitment to democracy. Can Russia be considered democratic if one province is an imperial possession openly held by force?

All these factors make it important for the United States to take a very strong stand. We are pleased that our State Department has opposed the bombings, pointing out that they are not in Russia's own interests. But words alone will not shorten this disastrous war. American laws, and still more American tradition, call on our government, in giving foreign aid, and in voting in international financial institutions, to promote human rights. It is not appropriate to give new foreign aid to the Russian central government, or to facilitate loans from the IMF, while the Russian Government is targeting civilian populations. It is simply fact that waging this kind of war will sour the climate here for a cooperative relationship with Russia. Our government needs to explain this frankly. No official statements, unfortunately, have identified the importance of maintaining democratically elected government in all of Russia's 89 provinces. In Chechnya this means, until the next scheduled election, the Maskhadov government. We ought to offer generous humanitarian assistance directly to all the victims and refugees, whether in Daghestan or in Chechnya, through Russia and through Georgia. The U.S. Government should expect the governments involved to provide access and security. Finally, we should offer to join Russia in an international effort to promote regional economic recovery in the North Caucasus.

If you wish to reply, or there are questions or comments they should be directed to Irena Lasota, President, Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe.

Respectfully yours,
Ambassador Mort Abramowitz

Ms. Sheppie Abramowitz

Mr. Richard V. Allen

Ms. Nina Bang-Jensen

Mr. Kurt Bassuener

Mr. George Biddle

Mr. John Bolton

Mr. Hyman Bookbinder

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

Ambassador Richard Burt

Mr. Hodding Carter

Mr. Dennis DeConcini

Ms. Patt Derian

Dr. Paula Dobriansky

Dr. Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr.

Dr. Frank Fukayama

Dr. Jeffrey Gedmin

Mr. John Heffernan

Mr. James Hooper

Mr. Bruce P. Jackson

Mr. Robert Kagan

Mr. Adrian Karatnycky

Mr. William Kristol

Mr. Robert McFarlane

Dr. Joshua Muravchik

Mr. Richard Perle

Mr. Gary Schmitt

Mr. Stephen Solarz

Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt

Mr. William Howard Taft IV

Dr. Paul Wolfowitz

Mr. R. James Woolsey

**PRESIDENT OF INGUSHETIA PLEAS FOR HUMANITARIAN
CORRIDOR; SUBMITTED BY CATHY FITZPATRICK**

APPEAL FROM THE PRESIDENT OF INGUSHETIA

NOVEMBER 1, 1999

Today federal forces opened a so-called corridor for the exodus of refugees from the Chechen Republic, something that had been promised several times in the course of the [last] week. But the corridor opened today has nothing in common with the concept of "corridor."

Only an insignificant number of the forcibly displaced persons have been allowed to pass through a checkpoint. Thousands of people are standing in the rain and snow, day and night. Civilians — elderly men, women, and children — are thus being abused.

I consider such treatment of people to be anti-human, violating the universally recognized norms of international law and the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

I hereby state that the leadership of the Republic of Ingushetia has nothing whatsoever to do with the procedure for checking people established by the federal government agencies.

I hereby announce the need to immediately install order at the checkpoint for forcibly displaced persons in order to guarantee civilians a real opportunity to leave the zone of military actions and to avoid airstrikes.

The struggle against terrorism should not be turned into a struggle against civilians.

Once again, I state that the crisis in the Chechen Republic must be settled only through political means.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INGUSHETIA
R. AUSHEV

City of Magas
1 November 1999

According to official information from the Ministry for Emergencies of Russia, as of November 2, the total number of refugees who had fled the territory of the Chechen Republic is 195,000 persons.

Of these, 175,000 are currently in Ingushetia:

- 142,000 refugees have been placed in the families of local residents
- 16,312 persons are living in parked rail cars
- 1,128 persons are living at a factory in the city of Karabulak
- 6,642 people are living in 123 tents at the town of Sleptsovskaya
- 6,328 people are living in 7 camps consisting of 741 tents for temporary survival.
- More than 10,000 people are living and spending the night in train stations, near tent cities, or in the open air in Ingushetia.
- 2,883 people have come to Dagestan and are staying with relatives.

12,950 people have come to Northern Ossetia (city of Mozdok). Of these

- 4,153 have transited from Ingushetia to other regions of Russia;
- 6,873 are located on the territory of Northern Ossetia;
- 1,924 have returned to Chechnya
- 4,033 people have come to Stavropol Territory. Of these:
- 1,553 have left for other regions
- 2,480 remain located in Stavropol.

INFORMATION ON TENT CITIES

1. Aki-Yurt tent city — 77 tents, 1,630 persons: 244 men, 652 women, 734 children.
2. Karabulak tent city — 101 tents, 1,130 persons: 169 men, 453 women, 508 children.
3. Karabulak — 41 trailers [vagony] — 2,214 people: 332 men, 886 women, 996 children.
4. Nazran tent city — 7 tents: 70 people: 10 men, 28 women, 32 children.
5. Sputnik tent city — 274 tents, 3,498 persons: 527 men, 1,399 women, 1,576 children.
6. Severny camp — 128 trailers and 12 tents, 6,642 persons, 996 men, 2,657 women, 2,989 children.
7. Promzona camp, 1,128 persons: 169 men, 451 women, 508 children.

MANY CIVILIANS KILLED IN SAMASHKI VILLAGE, CHECHNYA

(New York, November 4, 1999) — A Human Rights Watch research team in Ingushetia has interviewed five survivors of an October 27 Russian attack on Samashki village, [] 15. The heaviest assault appears to have occurred on October 27, when dozens of Samashki civilians were injured or killed. Human Rights Watch has no information regarding possible military targets in the village. The Russian attack struck homes inhabited by dozens of noncombatants.

Beginning late at night on Oct 26, Russian shells fell with increasing intensity on Samashki. “We had taken shelter in our neighbors’ basement,” recalled Malika Abudullaeva, a thirty-year-old school teacher. “There were about seventy people with us underground, including many children and babies.” At 11:00 p.m. on October 27, Abdullaeva took advantage of a lull in the shelling to leave the shelter and look for food, together with her twenty-five-year-old sister, Satsita. As they returned to the basement, the house standing above the shelter suffered a direct hit. The two sisters, located some fifteen yards away, were thrown to the ground by the force of the blast. Malika was hit by shrapnel in her right thigh, while Satsita was wounded in her back and left leg. “People ran out of the basement and dragged us inside,” Satsita recalled, “and we learned that a young girl had been killed and that others were wounded.” Because no bandages were available, their injuries were bound with torn cloths.

Louiza Abaeva, a thirty-year-old Samashki resident, said that Russian shells “landed on the whole area of the village,” on October 27. She said her shoulder wounds were caused by explosives launched from two Russian war planes strafing the village at 10:00 am. The planes scored a direct hit on two nearby homes, killing two women and three children from the Abdukadirov family, and blowing off the leg of twelve year old Zelimkhan Yakuev. Madina Avturkhanova, a twenty-year-old woman, said she too was hit by an explosive during a lull in the October 27 shelling. “I came out of my basement with my mother,” she said, “thinking that the bombing had stopped.” Madina suffered injuries to her leg and both arms, and is now being treated at Sunzha district hospital. Madina’s mother, forty-two-year-old Hava, said that “95 percent” of Samashki’s dwellings were aflame by the evening of October 27 and that many residents were killed or wounded that day.

Human Rights Watch is concerned that the attack on this village may have been conducted without appropriate precautions to avoid grossly disproportionate harm to civilians and calls on Russia to respect the principle of civilian immunity.

**ARTICLES SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH—MOSCOW**

**RUSSIAN FORCES CONTINUE POUNDING CHECHEN TARGETS;
WOUNDED CIVILIANS UNABLE TO GET MEDICAL CARE**

(New York, November 4, 1999) — Russian forces are continuing to strike Chechen targets with artillery, warplanes, and missiles, according to witnesses interviewed yesterday in Ingushetia by Human Rights Watch. The heavy fire is killing and injuring civilians, and pinning them down in overcrowded basements in central and southern Chechnya.

The fighting is overwhelming Chechnya's medical facilities. Wounded persons are afraid to leave their shelters and flee to hospitals in the nearby republic of Ingushetia. Injured civilians who do attempt to flee face potentially life-threatening delays at the Chechen-Ingush border.

Kheidi, a 37-year-old woman who crossed the Chechen border early Wednesday morning, said that Russian warplanes bombed the village of Starye Atagi on Monday and Tuesday, killing nine civilians. According to other witnesses, Russian forces are still besieging Grozny. Zarema Badayeva, a wounded 26-year-old Grozny woman who crossed into Ingushetia Wednesday afternoon, told Human Rights Watch that Russian forces are "bombing everywhere" and that the remaining residents are "terrified to leave their basements." All essential services in the capital have collapsed, and the population has no gas, electricity, or fresh food. "You live on what you have stocked in your basement or you starve," said a 62-year-old woman at the border.

The Russian shelling complicates medical evacuations. Kheidi's seven-year-old daughter was hit by Russian shrapnel in her knee, ankle, and back on October 23. "She lay in Grozny city hospital for five days," Kheidi said. "And then we ran to Starye Atagi to escape the shelling." When that village was hit by Russian warplanes on November 1 and 2, Kheidi fled again with her daughter to the Sunzha district hospital, located in Sleptsovsk, a few miles inside Ingushetia. As a result of the travel and inadequate care, Kheidi was forced to have her daughter's leg amputated above the knee. Kheidi said that both the Grozny and Starye Atagi hospitals were understaffed, undersupplied, and overwhelmed by new patients.

Zarima Badayeva, whose left pelvic bone was shattered in the October 21 market bombing in Grozny, took shelter on Verkhnyaya Street for 12 days, leaving only once for first-aid treatment in the Grozny city hospital. On November 3, her family decided to make a run for the Ingush border. "We crammed six people into our car," 32-year-old Gamza Badayev said, "and we finally got through after waiting hours at the border." Another woman interviewed in the Sunzha hospital said she was forced to wait at the Ingush-Chechen border for three days after being wounded by Russian shellfire on October 27. Although she had suffered a shrapnel wound in her right shoulder, Russian border troops blocked her from crossing until November 1.

Human Rights Watch calls on Russian field commanders to cease attacks on civilian objects, as well as carpet bombing or other means of attack that indiscriminately strike civilians and combatants alike. The Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, to which Russia is a party, as well as the customary international law of war, emphasize the principle of civilian immunity. This body of law prohibits attacks - even when aimed at legitimate military targets - if they are indiscrimi-

nate or disproportionately harmful to civilians in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. Humanitarian law also requires precautions to protect the civilian population, such as effective advance warning.

Human Rights Watch also urges the Russian authorities to announce well-enforced pauses in the bombing by leaflet and radio, which may help civilians trapped in Chechen combat zones to escape the fighting. Russian authorities must also allow unimpeded freedom of movement to wounded civilians seeking to cross the Ingush border. Blocking access to a safe area out of the conflict zone violates Russia's international obligations to protect civilians. These are inscribed in the Geneva Conventions and in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED CHECHENS STRANDED AT INGUSH BORDER

(New York, November 4, 1999) — Human Rights Watch researchers at the border between Ingushetia and Chechnya have learned that as many as 40,000 internally displaced persons are stranded on the Chechen side of the frontier, prevented by Russian troops from crossing to safety. The column of displaced civilians reportedly stretches for over ten miles, and the overwhelming majority appear to have no access to food, water, sanitary facilities, or shelter. Many of the stranded Chechens are fleeing areas heavily bombarded by Russian forces, and require urgent access to neighboring Ingushetia, a republic of the Russia.

According to Ruslan Maskurov, the vice premiere of Ingushetia, Russian federal forces “do not permit anyone, including doctors or nurses,” to access the displaced persons column. “We cannot do anything for those stuck on the Chechen side of the border,” Maskurov told Human Rights Watch.

Some 200,000 Chechens have already fled to Ingushetia, placing a heavy strain on the tiny republic’s indigenous population of 347,000. Ingush authorities have protested the border closure, saying they are willing to provide a safe haven for Chechnya’s noncombatant population.

The head of the line of displaced persons is three miles from the nearest Ingush border post. Russian commanders argue that the threat of infiltration and terrorism requires that they rigorously screen Chechen civilians seeking to leave the embattled republic. According to Chechens who have been through the process, the federal authorities have erected a complex security screening procedure: officials check the record of each individual through a computerized databank, search their baggage, and question them vigorously. This cumbersome apparatus is unable to quickly process the flow of displaced Chechens.

Officials at the border have stated that 153 persons crossed into Ingushetia on November 1, followed by 423 people on Nov 2. The figure for November 3 at 5 p.m. was 1026, an encouraging increase that may have been prompted by a flurry of official border visits by United Nations representatives and Russian federal authorities. As long as the cumbersome screening procedure remains in effect, however, the column of displaced civilians is likely to grow.

Despite mounting domestic and international attention, Russian forces refuse to grant journalists access to the column of displaced persons. Ingush officials, relief workers, and medical personnel are also denied access, complicating attempts to provide a minimum of basic care. Several civilians have already died in the column, reportedly as a result of heart failure.

A senior Ingush police officer told Human Rights Watch that the authorities are sending bread and water across the border, but said he was unable to verify if the supplies were reaching the intended beneficiaries. “We have no access and thus have no idea if we are helping,” he said.

The Russian military should allow immediate and unimpeded access to the column of displaced persons by Ingush authorities, relief agencies, human rights monitors, and the media. By placing tens of thousands of civilians in effective quarantine, Russian forces are violating their international obligations to protect civilians. Non-combatants fleeing the bombing should have free access to Ingushetia.

WAR CRIMES BEING COMMITTED IN CHECHEN OFFENSIVE

(New York, November 3, 1999) — A Human Rights Watch team in Ingushetia has interviewed nine witnesses to Russia's October 21 attack on the Grozny Central Market. Their testimonies suggest the assault may have been a serious violation of the laws of war, and Human Rights Watch urges the Russian authorities to vigorously investigate the incident and publish their findings.

The testimonies also indicate that Chechen fighters may have situated a key command post within or adjacent to the market. This too would be a serious violation, as the Chechen forces are obliged to respect international law prohibiting use of the civilian population to shield military objects.

Three large explosions ripped through the Chechen capital's downtown bazaar at approximately 5:00 p.m. on October 21, killing an estimated 140 people and wounding about 260, according to Chechen estimates. After initially denying any role, some Russian authorities acknowledged their involvement in the blast, but said they had struck legitimate Chechen military targets. The witness testimony, however, suggests that the Russian attack may have been illegal, as the use of powerful explosive devices in a congested civilian marketplace at an especially crowded time of day is likely to have been both indiscriminate and disproportionate.

The Geneva Conventions and their protocols, to which Russia is a party, as well as the customary international law of war, emphasize the principle of civilian immunity. This body of law prohibits attacks - even when aimed at legitimate military targets - if they are indiscriminate or disproportionately harmful to civilians. Humanitarian law also requires precautions to protect the civilian population, such as effective advance warning.

The witnesses were all interviewed separately and at length. They indicated there may have been legitimate military targets in the market. One forty-year-old woman said she heard that a number of Chechen fighters had been killed and wounded in the blast, and that the injured combatants had been sent to the nearby Urus-Martan hospital. Another 35-year-old woman wounded in the attack told Human Rights Watch that Chechen military commander Shamil Basayev had his headquarters in a corner of the market near a group of stalls selling automatic weapons, pistols and ammunition. However, neither the importance of Basayev's headquarters, nor the possibility of arms merchants in the bazaar, justifies the tremendous amount of force used against the market.

Witnesses said that the central market was thronged by hundreds of shoppers at the time of the attack. The shopping arcade, a narrow, informal bazaar stretching for some 400 yards along the trolley tracks in central Grozny, runs perpendicular to Prospekt Svobody street, the capital's central thoroughfare. "You can buy everything you need there," said Zalina Amirkhanova, a 17-year-old nursing student injured in the t, flowers, eggs, jewelry, and medicine." Her upper right arm was seriously wounded.

Customers included Chechens as well as ethnic Russians and Ingush. "It was the main place to buy produce and household goods," explained Bella Titiyeva, a 27-year-old pharmacist. "I shopped there almost every day." The bazaar included dozens of small stalls jammed against one

another. [line missing] almost push my way through,” recalled Shamil, a 42-year-old math teacher whose right foot was injured. The market was particularly crowded at the time of the blast, as it was filled with shoppers on their way home from work.

The first explosion hit a building about fifty yards northeast of the central bazaar. Most of the marketplace deaths came from the second and third explosions, however, which occurred within 100 yards of each other in the central bazaar area.

The second explosion hit a building adjacent to a Number 7 bus, which was caught in traffic at the corner of Prospekt Svobody and Mira Streets. “I saw the building explode and then glass flew everywhere,” recalled a 63-year-old female bus passenger. “I then looked down and thought, ‘Where is my arm?’” Part of her right arm was blown off. As she crawled off the ruined bus, the witness saw the bodies of two children who were “less than 10 years old,” lying dead on the pavement.

The second blast caught Bella Titiyeva in the center of the market, “near the flowers and confectionery stalls,” while she was shopping for toiletries with a friend. “There were bodies everywhere,” she recalled; her lower leg was shattered by the blast, and her calf muscle was shredded. Her mother recalled that “it was hard to get to my daughter, because there were so many bodies strewn around.”

Another 34-year-old woman, wounded in her right leg, discovered her 16-year-old son’s body lying between two stalls. She said the top of his head had been blown off.

Many of the blasts’ victims were brought to the central Grozny hospital, where doctors operated by candlelight. “The first floor was packed with wounded and dead people,” recalled one 25-year-old man who brought his brother to the hospital. “They were putting them on the balconies, the floors, everywhere.” Some of the wounded were evacuated across the Ingush border that same night. Others, however, were taken across 24 or 48 hours later, and therefore faced lengthy delays by Russian troops attempting to seal the border. “I waited with my daughter in an ambulance for 24 hours at the Russian checkpoint,” Bella Titiyeva’s mother recalled. “They wouldn’t let us through, even though they could see she needed urgent attention.” According to Ingushetia hospital officials, the medical condition of some blast victims deteriorated as a result of the border delays.

Although there is some evidence that there may have been legitimate military targets located near or within the Grozny bazaar, the size and extent of the blasts, combined with the large number of noncombatants in the immediate vicinity, strongly suggests that the Russian attack was grossly disproportionate.

If Chechen commander Shamil Basayev did indeed situate his headquarters within the Grozny market, that too would be a serious abuse of international law. Although Chechen fighters are not parties to the Geneva Conventions, as individuals within the territory of a state party [Russia], they are bound to respect the basic precept of civilian immunity. Human Rights Watch calls upon Chechen commanders to immediately redeploy their troops, headquarters, and weapons storage facilities out of populated areas.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION OF ISLAMIC SUPREME COUNCIL OF
AMERICA

**THE CURRENT CRISIS IN CHECHNYA:
A SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON THE CONTINUED
PLIGHT OF THE CHECHEN PEOPLE**

“We urge Russia not to repeat the mistakes of the past in Chechnya and instead to open a dialogue toward a peaceful resolution with legitimate Chechen partners.”—*Secretary of State Madeleine Albright*

At the beginning of the extremist insurgence in Daghestan, in August of this year, it was unclear to almost everyone who the insurgents were. Under the guise of Islamic revivalism, a group of Chechen warlords violently infiltrated neighboring Daghestan and proceeded to dominate nearby villages. This group, whose actions were allegedly tied to a series of bombings in Moscow, prompted an aggressive reaction from the Russian Government. The magnanimous force of the Russian military was soon directed at this hostile group of radical revolutionaries.

Initially, it appeared that Yeltsin and Putin were initiating force against a handful of Muslims who just wanted to practice their religion. However, the truth has become clear in recent weeks, dispelling this Western misconception.

The world now knows that the so-called “Islamist” rebels are in fact a mismatched group of Chechen oppositionists, empowered by foreign vigilantes who brought their rebellion to the Caucasus, and a handful of unwitting youth driven by the vision of an Islamic state. It is unmistakable that *the insurgents are not representative of the Chechen people*, nor does the legitimate Chechen Government support their rhetoric. In fact, Chechen authorities have struggled with religious radicals, funded by foreign influence, since the first days of the republic’s de facto independence from Russia.

Similarly, this faction of Islamic extremists has been forcing their militant ideology upon the people of Uzbekistan for over 20 years. Their actions have resulted in disorder and turmoil throughout the Caucasus and Central Asia.

These vigilantes have staked a claim in Chechnya since 1997 and have repudiated any campaigns for their removal. The Chechen Government has done everything in its limited power to control their terrorist actions, only to be attacked by the Russian Government when those same vigilantes filtered into Daghestan and, allegedly, Moscow.

Through massive military intervention, Russia has forced the matter with Chechnya beyond the threat of a group of vigilantes. Moscow’s decision to build and enforce a security zone along the perimeter of the Chechen – Russian border, and the concurrent bombing of rural and urban areas across the breakaway republic, has revived anti-Russian sentiments in the band of radicals and the Chechen people alike. While Russia’s intention is to target terrorist bases, they are actually destroying homes and livelihood, making villages unsafe to live in. Though innocent civilians are supposedly not the targets, the bombings are annihilating what is left of Chechen civilization.

Sadly, since the Russian Government alleges that oil has been a major source of funding for the insurgents in Daghestan, warplanes have managed to destroy what little was left of Chechnya's oil refineries and pipelines. These facilities were all but flattened in the previous war and have not been used for anyone's financial support, let alone a group of renegade warlords.

There is currently underway a seemingly deliberate obliteration of rural homes, crops, villages, and cities belonging to *a people that has never supported but actually denounces the acts of the handful of religious radicals*. Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov has beseeched President Boris Yeltsin to meet with him and negotiate saying "We have had enough bloodshed," but this has been to no avail. He has used his best efforts to appeal to Russia, even suggesting that an independent group inspect the country for terrorist bases. His proposals have been met with no response.

As a result of Russia's unwillingness to cooperate with Maskhadov, the Chechens respond accordingly. "Under threat of invasion, all Chechens [extremist or not] must be allies" (Chechen Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov). The President of Chechnya has declared *jihad* against the Russian incursion. Extremists and Chechens fight side-by-side to prevent the genocide of their people. The peaceful and moderate Chechen Sufis are forced to turn to their radical "brothers" for protection.

BACKGROUND ON THE CURRENT CRISIS

CHECHEN ISLAM—A BELIEF IN SPIRITUALITY, TOLERANCE AND MODERATION

In addressing the current situation, it is essential to understand the constituency of the Chechen Republic. Chechnya is at the spiritual heart of the Caucasus, for centuries the locus for educating and promoting Islam in the entire region. The Chechen understanding of mainstream Islam has always been based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), with emphasis on the spiritual dimension of Islamic knowledge and with great consideration given to upholding Islam's spiritual tradition. The majority of Chechens have gone so far as to subscribe to Islam's ascetic tradition, Sufism, and belong to either the Naqshbandi or Qadiri Sufi orders. As a result, they are exceptionally peaceful and tolerant in their religious observance.

Imam Shamil, who courageously fought Russian imperialism in the Caucasus for over 35 years in the mid-1800's, was a Sufi leader and now serves as a role model for the Chechens' fight against Russian domination. Their great love for Imam Shamil and other Islamic leaders has kept the spiritual tradition alive in their hearts, particularly during the period of Soviet communism when religious teaching was officially banned. When this rule ended, the people enthusiastically brought these spiritual teachings back into the open and exercised the practice of Islam with which they have been familiar for over one thousand years.

After the end of the war with Russia, and even slightly before, Chechnya began to experience the unfortunate influx of Afghan Arabs who preached a new ideology called Wahhabism. This deviant ideology within Islamic tradition was seen as foreign, strange, and radical for the Chechen people. As a result, there were confrontations between Maskhadov's moderate government and the foreigners who manipulated a small number of the country's youth to indulge in this narrow ideology – one that is rejected by the majority of traditional Islamic scholars throughout the world. These foreign radical groups condemned any difference of opinion, and insisted on imposing their misconception of Islam through military confrontations – something no government can permit, yet which Maskhadov's government has had no power to control.

These foreign radical groups throughout the Caucasus are backed with significant funding and have been able to attract Chechens to the movement using financial incentives. In a nation where most young men are unemployed, leaders are known to offer a bonus of an average two months pay in exchange for becoming a member of the Wahhabi movement. In addition, the president explained that the Wahhabis have been successful in Chechnya because there have been no religious laws for people to abide by, outside Chechen culture and traditions, due to the lack of religious education during the years of communist rule. The Wahhabis offer the people an "Islamic" path, albeit a radical one, just when many Chechens hunger for a strengthened commitment to the religion. Unfortunately, seventy-years of communist rule virtually eradicated the traditional Islamic clergy that existed in the Caucasus, leaving no one qualified to lead a moderate resurgence of the inherently peaceful religion.

BASAYEV LEAVES MASKHADOV FOR THE RADICALS

In 1998, President Maskhadov lost his Acting Premier, Shamil Basayev, to the Wahhabi-backed opposition movement, along with other prominent field commanders from the war. Chechen officials said that Basayev aligned himself with the Wahhabis in order to widen his base of support. Along with other oppositionists, Basayev evolved into a warlord and began to take control of areas within Chechnya from Maskhadov.

The following incidents have occurred as the warlords struggle to destabilize Maskhadov's regime:

In April of 1998, one of the former war commanders launched two separate attacks on Russian railway lines. The same individual, Salman Raduyev, is suspected of harboring supporters of Osama Bin Laden in Chechnya (*Al-Hayat*).

Car bomb and gunshots have attacked President Maskhadov five times since taking leadership of the country. Witnesses of these attacks claim militant Wahhabis were behind them.

In December 1998, four telecommunications workers were kidnapped and brutally beheaded, representing an incredible deviation from the Chechen tradition of hospitality and good treatment of guests, and an act that caused great embarrassment for Maskhadov. The Chechen Government suspects the same extremist parties behind the crime.

In January 1999, the leading Islamic authority in Chechnya, Mufti Kadyrov, was shot and seriously injured. Wahhabi militants were implicated in the shooting.

On June 10, 1998 Chechen Mulla Khasenbek Yakhayev of the Grozny mosque was shot at point blank range. Reports from witnessed claim that the killer told Yakhayev that he would not permit him to insult Wahhabism.

In an effort to defend Chechnya against the rise of the extremist Wahhabi movement and terrorist acts such as those above, President Maskhadov signed an order to expel four key Wahhabi leaders from Chechnya. His aides indicated that the four Wahhabi leaders were:

- The Arab Afghan Khattab
- Abdul Malik
- Abdul Rakhman
- Arbi Bareyev

The order was not successful as we now see that Khattab leads the militant group, which instigated the insurgence into the Daghestan alongside Basayev.

In 1998, while Basayev enjoyed official power as Acting Premier in Maskhadov's government, one of his last acts was to form the Congress of the Peoples of Chechnya and Daghestan. *Its goal is to create a united, independent, Islamic Caucasus state.* Unable to wrestle enough territory away from Maskhadov's regime, the radicals turned to Daghestan. With the help of the Arab Afghan Khattab and a mismatched group of Chechens, Daghestanis, Arabs, Turks, Uzbeks and Ingush, Basayev initiated the incursion into Daghestan in August 1999, stating the goal to be to "free" Daghestan from the "pro-Moscow" government. In other words, he sought to further their cause of creating that independent Islamic State.

Even as they wreak unrest in Daghestan, the rebels continue to upset the move toward stability in Chechnya. President Maskhadov was scheduled to visit Daghestan to sign a document that condemned the activities of Shamil Basayev and Khattab in Daghestan, and then work for the extradition of Daghestani extremist leaders hiding in Chechnya. However, Maskhadov was forced to return to Chechnya when Salman Raduyev arranged a rally in Grozny and accused him of colluding with Moscow.

Preying on the Caucasian populace's anti-Russian sentiments was a convenient tactic for the radicals until Russia actually attacked. At first, the moderate Muslim majority of the population expressed anger and resentment at the radicals for having provoked the Russian military into action. Now, while President Maskhadov's government and the moderates have never had any doubts as to who the terrorists are, all Chechens have set aside ideological and political differences, to fight side by side and save themselves from annihilation.

THE THREAT TO WORLD PEACE

THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF CHECHEN INFRASTRUCTURE

In the war with Russia that ended in 1996, over 100,000 Chechens lost their lives. They believed they had won their independence, however, and returned victorious to the homes that then lay in shambles. Since then, Chechnya has been in crisis. Not only did Russia renege on their peace agreement with Chechnya, but also most of the war reparations were never paid. The newborn Republic fell victim to an enormous humanitarian crisis. Unemployment soared at 80%, tuberculosis ravaged homes across the country, and basic utilities were only available intermittently. This is to say nothing of the psychological trauma inspired by the concentration camp which still stands in Grozny (see *The Devastation of Chechnya*, The Islamic Supreme Council of America).

Any attempt to solicit investment or humanitarian support was thwarted by the terrorist actions of a small group of radicals. This same group of radicals has turned Chechnya's struggle for independence into a struggle for life. Humanitarian organizations and NGO's were unable to provide any assistance to Chechnya for fear of being kidnapped by Islamist radicals. Now again, the dangers of war limit Chechnya's access to essential food and medical supplies. Moreover, since Chechnya is not officially recognized as an independent nation, it stands boycotted by the world, in the name of respecting "the territorial integrity of Russia".

A CONCERTED EFFORT TO PREVENT A TERRORIST NATION

It is essential that all viable intermediaries intervene in the current conflict and help negotiate a peace with Russia. Only then can the true enemy – militant radicals – be fought. As suggested in the Economist, September 30, 1999, the use of force is in fact encouraging the spread of Islamic militancy. *The rebels are gaining support as peoples of the Caucasus unite against the threat of Russian annihilation.* If the militants, through a slim chance, succeed in helping to defend Chechnya and repel the Russian onslaught, they will be heralded as heroes and the moderate regime of Aslan Maskhadov will be history.

At that point, the world may face the threat of an Islamic Terrorist Nation. Supporters of terrorists such as Osama Bin Laden (and perhaps Bin Laden himself) will win ever-increasing support from the impoverished nations of the Caucasus. They will finance the basic needs of the populace through their drug, arms, and kidnapping operations. In addition to their profits from illegal trafficking, militants will have the added financial backing of the Caspian oil reserve. According to President Maskhadov, a person can dig seven meters beneath the city of Grozny and find oil. The difficulty of combating an enemy with such resources is frightening.

Should Russia continue to dominate the battle, there will be genocide. What little was left of Chechnya's economic base after the '94 – '96 war will be destroyed, and the remaining women and children will be refugees with broken families. From the Russian perspective, the future is no less bleak. If they are attempting to build the only viable plan for pipeline security, they should know that it is a vain attempt. According to Marshall Goldman, at Harvard's Center for Russian Studies, pro-

tecting pipelines in such a violent region may be impossible. Any attempt to solicit foreign investment is also likely to fail due to the fear of bombing the oil infrastructure (RFE/RL 10/1/99).

The only way to move forward is for the United States to intervene and help negotiate a peace. The overwhelming message from the media and governments around the world is that the Chechen population should not be targeted, and Russia should participate in negotiations with President Maskhadov for a peaceful resolution. Countries who have expressed this position include Turkey and the entire European Union (15 nations, including Germany, France and Italy). In fact, Assistant Secretary James Rubin has expressed the same sentiment on behalf of the U.S. Government. He states (5/10/99):

“We continue to believe that any resumption of general hostilities in Chechnya would damage Russia’s own interests and would further threaten stability in the entire northern Caucasus region. We have urged a constructive dialogue involving all legitimate leaders in the north Caucasus and remain convinced that only in this manner will the Russians be able to achieve long-lasting stability and security in the region.”

The EU supports the involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as the mediator. However, given our relationship with Russia and our role as the world’s strongest mediator, the United States is the only choice to lead the negotiations with President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Putin. In addition, a number of U.S. interests in the Caucasus are served through our intervention:

PROMOTE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

There needs to be an agreement between Maskhadov and Yeltsin in order to fight the true aggressors: militant “Islamists”. Only through controlling extremism and the threat of violence presented by militant “Islamists” overseas can the US control the growth of this threat into the United States. This was acknowledged by Assistant Secretary James Rubin when he said, “We and Russia are united and partners in a fight – it is the fight against international terrorism” (10/1/99).

U.S. COMMITMENT TO DEFEND UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The U.S. plays a unique role in the world as the champion of human rights. The violation of human rights in Chechnya, as a result of the conflict with Russia, amounts to nothing other than a brutal attempt at ethnic cleansing and revenge. The proposal to resettle Chechen refugees in areas controlled by Russia is unacceptable. The lives of the Chechen civilians, within their homeland, must be defended and preserved. The sanctity of innocent human life is a universal principle we as Americans cherish, and must defend.

INCREASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND REGIONAL GROWTH

Stabilizing the region will create the investment climate necessary for the growth of private industry and the channeling of funds into the world market. Also, exporting oil from the Caspian and Central Asia will help reduce the necessity of purchasing oil from hostile countries such as Iran and Iraq, as well as decreasing our dependence on the Gulf

States for oil production. With a decreased dependence on the Gulf region for oil, we may pressure these nations to suppress their exportation of militant ideology.

THE SOLUTIONS

Once a peace has been brokered, we must turn our attention to the threat of militant radicals. They will continue their pursuit of a “terrorist nation” once the acute Russian threat has subsided. The threat of militant radicalism is worldwide and the effort to combat this movement must be a cooperative one. The following are some ways in which we can help to end this terror:

END THE RUSSIAN EXCURSION AGAINST CHECHNYA

US, NATO, OSCE, and the EU must pressure Russia into negotiating a settlement with the *democratically elected* Government of Chechnya, under President Aslan Maskhadov

Organize a strategy whereby the Governments of Russia and President Maskhadov can capture the terrorist insurgents and end their financial infrastructure in Chechnya

Stop the global spread of extremism

Put pressure on “exporting” countries to combat terrorism, which may include providing them with financial incentives to stop economic justifications for militancy

Educate others and ourselves about traditional, moderate, Islam so that we are able to differentiate it from the militant rhetoric and illegitimate ideology of the Wahhabis

support moderate governments against the radical threat

Offer the moderate regimes of states such as Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgystan good foreign policy, economic aid, and increased trade to fortify their economy and reduce the underlying causes of radicalism

Understand the conflicts in these states before insisting on a western conceptual framework of freedom (i.e. what seems to be instances of religious persecution or a stifling of religious expression may actually be the only way these nations are able to control the spread of militancy and terrorist ideology)

Encourage other super powers to enter cooperative relationships with these developing moderate nations to promote regional growth and market capabilities

Implement programs designed to train and educate these states on effective, sophisticated modes of detecting and suppressing terrorist attacks which can replace their primitive methodology of crime prevention

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE CHECHEN
REPUBLIC**

Agreement on the terms for relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic, to be decided in accordance with generally accepted principles and norms of international law, must be reached before 31 December 2001.

No later than 1 October 1996 a Joint commission will be formed from the representatives of State organs of the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic, whose tasks will consist of:

Control of the implementation of Decree no. 985 of the President of the Russian Federation of 25 June 1996 and preparation of proposals for the complete withdrawal of armed forces;

2. Preparation of agreed upon measures to combat crime, terrorism and manifestations of national and religious conflict and control of their implementation;

3. Preparation of proposals for monetary and budgetary relations;

4. Preparation and creation by the Government of the Russian Federation of a program of rehabilitation of the economic infra-structure of the Chechen Republic;

5. Control of the activities of organs of state power and other organizations in the supplying of food and medicine to the population.

The Laws of the Chechen Republic will be based on respect for human rights and rights of citizens, the right of peoples to self-determination, the principles of equality of peoples, the protection of peace, international harmony and security of civilians living in the territory of the Chechen Republic, regardless of their national origin, religious denomination or other differences.

The joint commission will undertake its work in accordance with mutual agreement.

The above is an unofficial translation of the text of the agreement and principles.

PREPARED SUBMISSION OF THE UNION OF COUNCILS FOR SOVIET JEWS

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ) strongly endorses the “Announcement by the Joint Action Initiative Group of Human Rights Advocates on the Situation in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria,”⁵ received on November 1, 1999 from Ludmilla Alexeeva, chairperson of the Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG) and president of the International Helsinki Federation. As a partner organization with MHG in a landmark project to monitor human rights throughout the 89 regions of Russia, UCSJ strives to serve as the Washington voice for the Russian human rights movement.

Joining Ms. Alexeeva as signatories of the attached appeal on the Russian military action in Chechnya are seven other prominent human rights activists. The appeal continues to be open for endorsement and additional signatures are expected.

In brief, the appeal argues that the legitimate horror over terrorist acts in Russia is being used by Russian authorities as a pretext to undertake a brutal campaign in Chechnya, where the primary victims are civilians. Russian bombing and artillery assaults have left countless dead, anti-Chechen hysteria has been whipped up across Russia and the Russian response to the outflow of nearly 200,000 refugees has been cruelly inadequate.

The appeal warns, “We believe that the authorities’ actions will not solve the problem of Chechnya. The most that they will accomplish will be the establishment of a long term military occupation of Chechnya which will deform Russian democratic and legal institutions and will once and for all transform Russia into a police state...”

These strong words from respected human rights leaders in Russia should give the international community reason for great concern over Russia’s future. The appeal proposes nine constructive steps for Russia to take to resolve its long-term problems in Chechnya, steps that include the introduction of international peace keeping forces, the legalization of non-governmental organizations and the safe return of refugees.

UCSJ supports efforts by Russian human rights organizations to promote a future for Russia centered on democracy and respect for human rights. The current actions of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin including the attack on Chechnya and its associated refugee crisis, the persecution of nuclear scientists and environmental researchers and reporters like Alexander Nikitin, Grigory Pasko, Vladimir Soyfer, Josh Handler, Igor Sutyagin, and Pavel Podvig, and the failure to adequately combat antisemitism and neo-fascist activity across Russia gives UCSJ serious concerns that the prime minister will cater to popular passions and lead Russia towards greater repression rather than enhanced democracy, rule of law and human rights.

UCSJ therefore calls on Russia to immediately end hostilities in Chechnya; to end actions that create anti-Chechen hysteria in Moscow and other Russian cities; to protect refugees fleeing from Chechnya, permit international humanitarian assistance and provide safe-haven elsewhere in Russia if they cannot return to their homes; and to seek a negotiated settlement on the future of Chechnya along the lines suggested by the Russian human rights leadership.

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE “JOINT ACTION” INITIATIVE GROUP
OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES ON THE SITUATION IN THE
CHECHEN REPUBLIC OF ICHKERIA
OCTOBER 27, 1999**

Russian forces are taking full scale military measures on the territory of their country—in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. They don't have any legal basis for these actions. Instead, they only have a pretext—the fight against terrorism and terrorists whom, in the words of the Prime Minister, have to be “killed in their outhouses.”

We assert that this is only a pretext because of the following facts:

Over the course of a long period of time (1996-99), armed formations sprung up in Dagestan and were trained by fighters/terrorists, including Chechens and people of other nationalities. Basaev, Raduev and Khattab freely traveled around Dagestan. Neither the FSB, the MVD or Prime Minister Putin have answered the justifiable question of why they did not take any measures to stop these activities which, without a doubt, they knew about. There is just as little doubt about the fact that the inaction of the Russian authorities helped the terrorists to seize population centers in Dagestan and helped to escalate the conflict.

Up to now, neither the MVD, the FSB, or any other authorities of the Russian Federation has brought forth any clear evidence to support assertions that Chechen terrorists were behind the explosions in Buinaksk, Moscow and Volgodonsk. More likely, the answer is to the contrary. There are a series of facts to back this up, including:

The announcement by representatives of the special services which stated that the explosive substance was not hexagen, but a different substance, makes the arrest of the people who allegedly took part in the bombing in Moscow unproven.

The detention of FSB agents who were preparing an explosion in Ryazan, and the very strange explanation for this given by FSB director Patrushev that it was a training and vigilance exercise, could prove that these terrorist acts were committed either by Russian special services or on their orders.

Strictly following the principle of the presumption of innocence and the necessity of its strict observance, and emphasizing that the nullification of this principle, the searching out and the persecution of people who are declared “enemies,” only leads to the growth of tension in Russian society and the growth and severity of violations of law, we insist that at the present time, there is no proof of either Chechen terrorists or federal special services being behind the terrorist acts.

Between 1996-99, not one terrorist was put on trial for kidnapping and ransoming people and Russian legislators did not take any steps to bring Russian legislation into line with the UN Declaration of December 18, 1992 (Resolution # 47/133) which defends all persons against violent disappearances. In addition, during this period, kidnapping, hostage taking and the ransoming of people developed into a whole system through which many people, not just Chechens, make a living. Today, the Russian authorities have restored the practice from the period of the Red Terror—the FSB, like the Cheka in its day, now de facto takes women, children and the elderly, whose families may include men who are fighters, as hostages.

Law enforcement and special service agencies have shown their total “helplessness” (if not complicity) in the fight against political terrorism, since up to now not one of the well publicized killings of Alexander Men,

Dmitry Kholodov, Galina Starovoitova and others have been solved. Perhaps they think that the way that these acts of terrorism should be combated is through a total war against the entire Russian people?

The categorical refusal of the Russian government and Prime Minister Putin himself to conduct peaceful negotiations with anybody in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria does not have any basis because:

The legitimacy of President Aslan Maskhadov has been recognized de jure and de facto by the Russian government whose head, President Boris Yeltsin, signed an agreement with A. Maskhadov on May 12, 1997 entitled "Agreement on Peace and Principles of Relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria." The OSCE recognized the legality of President Maskhadov's election.

The Russian government, represented by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and by representatives of law enforcement agencies, often held talks with terrorists aimed at saving hostages. Similar negotiations have a role in international practice, even if the talks are aimed at saving the life of one person, and not the whole people of one's own nation.

The demonstrative refusal of Prime Minister Putin to accept badly needed humanitarian aid to refugees from international organizations which, in the conditions of the total isolation of the Russian public from the truth about the second Chechen war, appears to be a refusal of possible witnesses to the ongoing lawlessness there.

The whipping up of hysteria and the propaganda campaign in the media, which began with repeated announcements of a "Chechen link" to the terrorist acts in Moscow before anything was proven, and the loss of independence of the main electronic media and in connection with this, its unobjective coverage of the destruction of civilians and the situation of refugees from Chechnya.

Having chosen full scale war in Chechnya as the means to fight against terrorism, the Russian government, in the face of complete silence from the Russian Federation's Ombudsman for Human Rights, is severely violating human rights which are guaranteed by the European Convention on the Guarantee of Human Rights and Freedoms: the right to life, the prohibition of cruel treatment, the prohibition of torture, the right to freedom and the inviolability of the person, the right to a fair trial, property rights, freedom of movement, and others.

The authorities are using "the fight against international terrorism" to distract international attention from the scandals connected to the total corruption of the Russian government. But these actions are discrediting our homeland in the eyes of international public opinion and are threatening the very existence of political freedom and rule of law in our country.

We are convinced of the necessity of fighting against terrorism. Like the rest of Russian society, we are deeply saddened by the explosions of apartment buildings in Russian cities. We truly sympathize with the victims of these explosions and with their loved ones. At the same time, we are convinced that a full scale war in Chechnya, the massive bombings of population centers and civilian targets and the destruction of the civilian population will not destroy terrorism, nor will it punish the guilty. The proof of this is:

The way this conflict is unifying the Chechen population to fight against federal forces, the unavoidable guerrilla war which will be long and bloody and which will require more and more Russian soldiers, including newly called up recruits.

The further strengthening of a campaign in Russia to persecute people on the basis of their ethnicity, which will incite ethnic and religious discord and threaten the integrity of the Russian Federation.

We believe that the authorities' actions in Chechnya will not solve the problem of Chechnya. The most that they will accomplish will be the establishment of a long term military occupation of Chechnya, which will deform Russian democratic and legal institutions and will once and for all transform Russia into a police state with an even more criminal government than it now has.

- We therefore recommend the following measures for a constructive exit from this problem:
- The introduction into Chechnya, with the consent of President Maskhadov, of international peacekeeping and police forces.
- The dispersal and disarmament of all armed groups in Chechnya and the disarming of the population.
- A joint investigation by international, Russian and Chechen authorities of kidnapping and ransoming people and the terrorist acts in Buinaksk, Moscow and Volgograd. The return of all hostages and the bringing to justice of the culprits.
- The return of refugees to Chechnya under the guarantee of their security by international forces.
- The provision to Chechnya of at least the minimal means necessary to restore the economy.
- The dissolution of the parliament and of the government of President Maskhadov, who will retain his post until elections are held.
- The legalization of the activities of NGOs.
- The holding of parliamentary elections and the establishment by the new parliament of legislation upon which to base a new governmental structure, including a judicial branch.
- The resolution of Chechnya's status vis a vis the Russian Federation (no earlier than 2005).

The many previous appeals by human rights organizations to halt the escalation of war in the Caucasus have been ignored by the authorities. We have no choice but to recognize that the Russian public, which has been deafened by subtle militaristic propaganda, sees as normal such expressions as the "cleansing" of population centers and applauds the underworld slang of the Prime Minister and his "successes" in destroying his own people. On the eve of the elections, many politicians fear looking soft, and for that reason are silent. We understand that disillusionment will come soon enough and that the country will be repulsed by the organizers and inspirers of this new dirty war. But it is impossible to wait for that and in the meantime we will do all we can to mobilize international public opinion against the war in Chechnya and for a long term peaceful solution to this terrible problem.

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This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the
**Commission on Security and Cooperation in
Europe (CSCE).**

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individuals and organizations about developments
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