

WORD

# DOSH

DIGEST



## WOMAN RULES THE MOUNTAINS

32

ISSUE #6

*The major portion of the materials collected in the last "DOSH" issue of the outgoing year is devoted to the 15th anniversary of the initiation of the so-called first war, when Russian troops started moving from three directions towards the Chechen Republic on 11th December, 1994. It was a lingering, murderous war with enormous human victims, which totally demolished the Republic's infrastructure. Still, the first war proved to be not the last one for Chechnya. According to various data the years of two wars from 1994 to 2005 brought death to 100 to 250 thousand people, of which children share 40 thousand. Tens of thousands of those crippled by the war became invalids for ever, thirty thousand of them are children, and about five thousand (according to the official data, highly unlikely to be overestimated) are missing.*

*Each of these victims was an inimitable personality, each death caused an irretrievable loss. When they are numbered being transformed into figures, they are presented as mere statistical data. Ossified society gets used to it with frightening easiness, and the State that filled the sanctuary of its integrity with so many lives of its own citizens, for all those years never saw it be right to announce mourning for them. As regards repentance - there is no mention of it altogether. This issue presents the materials of our own correspondents from different regions about abduction (kidnapping) of people in Dagestan, Ingushetia, report from the post-war South Ossetia, essay of 66th anniversary of the Karacheyevs deportation, narration about the life in highland Chechen village Day in Shatoy region.*

*Sincerely,  
the "DOSH" Journal staff*

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*On the 11th of December 1994 the Russian Federation launched a war in the Chechnya, and declared it to be "establishing of constitutional order". Decree of the then President of the RF, Boris Yeltsin, predetermined outbreak of large-scale military operations which involved internal military forces and regular army of Russia with the application of airforce, artillery and weapons of all kinds. All this was possible to be brought down on the tiny republic.*

# 1994 - 2009

## THE WAR IS FIFTEEN

On the 11th of December 1994 the Russian Federation launched a war in the Chechnya, and declared it to be "establishing of constitutional order". Decree of the then President of the RF, Boris Yeltsin, predetermined outbreak of large-scale military operations which involved internal military forces and regular army of Russia with the application of airforce, artillery and weapons of all kinds. All this was possible to be brought down on the tiny republic. Why? Even those who had not any clue at that time would later understand that the only reason was that certain politicians and military wanted to realize their ambitions. For the purpose of their careers and material benefits.

The result of this is world-wide known. The blooming capital city of Chechnya, Grozny city with a population of almost

half-million people, was ruined together with lives and fortune of its citizens. All towns and human settlements in the Chechen Republic suffered the same fate. There is still no precise information, but more that two hundred thousand people were killed, tens of thousands, including children, became disabled. And nobody can know how many children became orphans owing to the careful state, which was "establishing order" in such a drastic way for the sake of the Chechen people. And thousands more Chechen people are considered to be missing: their death is not proved, the ashes are not wailed over and not buried by their families, but hope to see them alive faded long time ago.

There is no any family in the Chechnya not related to this terrible tragedy of modern age. Its purport, scale and after-effect are still

not realized in full. It is desirable to believe that it will happen sooner or later, but we didn't set this overwhelming task before ourselves. We do not claim to have monopoly on the truth; we only tried to reconstruct the picture of the events, which took place before the 11th of December 1994. And we ask our readers to obtain further insight to the evidences provided hereinafter, to evaluate and compare opinions expressed here, to listen attentively to the voices of those who happened to play any prominent, maybe even crucial part in this drama.

Direct participants and witnesses of those events - **Umar Avturhanov, Sergey Filatov, Ruslan Aushev** - are speaking to **Abdulla Duduev** about if it was possible to avoid the war, why it was launched, in spite of the fact that nobody had wanted this to happen, and what all this led to.

## CHRONICLE OF THE TRAGEDY

### The year 1993

In conditions of growing aggravation of the internal political situation, on the **17th of April** president of the Chechen Republic Dzhokhar Dudayev dismissed the cabinet of ministers, the parliament, the constitutional court of the Republic, and the assembly of Grozny city, established direct presidential rule all over the territory of the Chechnya and imposed a curfew.

\*\*\*

On the **4th of June** the building of Grozny assembly headed by Beslan Gantemirov, former associate of president Dudayev, was occupied by the national guard of the Chechen Republic after it had been assaulted. According to different estimates, 58 people died and about 200 people were wounded during the assault. Those events were actually the first Inter-Chechen bloodshed in contemporary history.

\*\*\*

*Newspaper "North Caucasus", June:* "Organizational and force structures of the

Chechen opposition continue to be strengthened in the Nadterechny District of the Chechen Republic. Now its leaders may post here up to one thousand citizen soldiers, armed with light small arms; and about one thousand and a half volunteers more are in constant state of readiness in case of Grozny city suddenly takes actions. Self-defense regiment is being formed. According to the latest information, the opposition succeeded in neutralizing the threat coming from the supporters of D. Dudayev in Bratskoye village, armed with 4 APCs and one anti-aircraft mount".

\*\*\*

**December** - Interim Council headed by Umar Avturhanov was formed in Nadterechny District, which is not controlled by official Grozny.

\*\*\*

### The year 1994

On the **4th of June** the so-called national congress of Chechnya, called in the Nadterechny District at the initiative of the

Interim Council, expressed confidence in the Interim Council and demanded resignation of president Dudayev.

\*\*\*

On the **13th of June** the governmental forces of law and order destroyed the base of the armed group of Ruslan Labazanov, the former associate of the president. Labazanov escaped.

\*\*\*

On the **27th of July** the Interim Council, uniting the main forces of the Republic opposing to president Dudayev, called the president of the RF B. Yeltsin to recognize it to be the only legitimate authority in the territory of Chechnya and asked to "provide the necessary support in establishing law and order, in creating conditions for safe life and work for all the citizens of the Republic".

\*\*\*

On the **29th of July** the government of the RF made an announcement, in which it was said that if anyone in the Chechen Republic, whether they were Chechen,



# FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

Andrei KAMENSHIKOV  
Member of humanitarian  
organization "Nonviolence  
international"

15 years have passed. It is not a very long period, but it is enough to include those events into the history. All that yesterday seemed to be part of your life is now covered by time haze. Details have been erased from the memory, it is difficult to remember many faces, and, in order to develop proper arrangement of recollections, draw up my story in proper consistence, one should base on separate events and dates. Every man has his own history, and outline of the events of social importance, which had an impact on lives of many people, is mixed with personal outline, and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between objective, common reality and reality interwoven in a strange way with a series of personal actions, assessments, and emotions. On the other hand, under this inextricable connection between social and personal history, the truth about the events that occurred is likely to be concealed.

I remember the August of 1994. This was a relatively peaceful time. Of course, only if you do not live in the Chechen Republic. The



building of Russian parliament ruined by order of B.N. Yeltsin had been restored by that time, wave of bloody ethnic conflicts, which followed USSR breakup, was somewhat reduced, though having left millions of refugees and forced migrants, a pile of unsettled territorial problems. But alarm messages come from the territory of the Chechen Republic, which declared its inde-

pendence as early as 1991. At first sight that confrontation was of internal nature - between president Dudayev and various groups that were in opposition to him. If, according to mass media reportages, it is true, that federal authorities are not involved in the confrontation directly, they obviously support powers that are in opposition to Dudayev.

Russian or Ingush, would use violence thenceforth, then it would have to defend the Russian people subject to the Constitution and the law of Russia.

\*\*\*

## 30th of July

The meeting of Security Council of the Chechnya chaired by Dzhokhar Dudayev approves the measures "building security of the Republic and preventing provocative acts of Russia aimed against the Chechen people".

\*\*\*

Interim Council of the Chechen Republic declares that it undertakes all the plenitude of state power in Chechnya and dismisses D. Dudayev, who "usurped power in the Republic". This decision is made by meeting of the Council in Nadterechny District.

In accordance with the Decree, Interim Council proceeds immediately to prepare for general democratic election, forms a government of national emancipation and secures continuity of power until election of legislative authority - National Council of the Chechen Republic.

\*\*\*

Prosecutor general of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria - Usman Imaev - issues

an arrest warrant against head of IC - Umar Avturhanov. He was charged with high treason.

\*\*\*

On the **2nd of August** president D. Dudayev considers the declaration of the oppositional Interim Council as "demarche, prepared by national traitors". "Those are two-three people, who are acting jointly with the Kremlin and Russian special services", - he emphasized, commenting the results of the meeting of the Interim Council of Chechnya in Nadterechny District.

\*\*\*

On the **3rd of August** the former chairman of Supreme Soviet of Russia - Ruslan Khasbulatov - calls to secure free election in Chechnya with help of and under control of international observers. He believed that election should be held not later than two months after "the date when the people of the Chechen Republic establish control over their territory and Dudayev's regime down-falls".

\*\*\*

On the **5th of August** the former chairman of Law, Order and Crime Control Committee of Supreme Soviet of Russia - General Aslambek Aslahanov - held a press-

conference. He said: "President D. Dudayev will not leave political arena voluntarily, even if all the Chechen people would ask him about this kneeling before him. Even if Dudayev would like to resign, his environment would not let him do this, because no one wants to hold responsibility for crimes".

\*\*\*

On the **6th of August** the Interim Council says that on the night of the 6th of August near the bridge over Terek river in Nadterechny District an incident involving the use of arms occurred, in result of which 4 officers of official force structures fired upon an armed opposition post.

\*\*\*

## 8th of August

An oppositional government consisting of 13 people is formed in Znamenskoye village (the center of Nadterechny District).

\*\*\*

President of Chechnya D. Dudayev suggests that civil war in the Republic will be avoided. "It can happen between Chechnya and Russia only, and for reasons attributable to the Kremlin at that" - he says to journalists in Grozny.

\*\*\*





But one can feel that this would-be neutral position of federal authorities conceals far-reaching designs. Criminal cases relating to Chechnya are reported by mass media on a regular basis: forged letters of advice, train robberies, oil products stealing etc. Not only mass media, but also a series of public organizations supply reports on gang rule in Chechnya, especially, relating to non-Chechen, but mainly Russian population. There is growing exodus of Russian and other minorities from the territory of Chechnya.

People's emergency volunteer corps is being formed in Nadterechny District of Chechnya, the district which three years before declared to be oppositional to president of the Republic D. Dudayev.

\*\*\*

On the **9th of August** Moscow cancels temporarily all flights to Grozny.

\*\*\*



On the **10th of August** Congress of Chechen people held in Grozny debates a question of imposing state of emergency in the Republic, vests president Dudayev with emergency powers and charges him to carry out full mobilization "to defend the fatherland".

\*\*\*

Still, the Chechens are suffering too. Men of quick observation start to consider that words about potential war are not insignificant.

This was the background of my first mission to Chechnya on August of 1994. As it usually was, when going to a region new for me, I could hardly imagine the role of my own and that of other public organizations. But this was not a reason to ignore what was going on.

However, it didn't seem that Grozny could become a potential battlefield in August of 1994. Lively, noisy, and crowded enough city, though somewhat uncared-for (but this can be said of many other Russian cities of that time). Spontaneous and lively little markets everywhere. Though, two facts were striking: Many carried arms openly, including undoubtedly civil people, and the fact that advertisements like "For sale" could be seen on houses in private sector from time to time. And in several months those advertisements were changed by piercing: "People live here".

Ten August days in Chechnya of 1994. Three months before the war. Meetings, trips, meetings again. When speaking with officials

Ten August days in Chechnya of 1994. Three months before the war.

Meetings, trips, meetings again. When speaking with officials you think that the war is practically inevitable, clashes between different oppositional groups were considered by the federal center to be just a prelude, a pretext to overt armed interference.

you think that the war is practically inevitable, clashes between different oppositional groups were considered by the federal center to be just a prelude, a pretext to overt armed interference. Honestly speaking, first I thought that such interpretation of the situation is "exaggerated" - it was hard to believe that the Kremlin would be so desperate to begin such large-scale actions inside its own country. But to understand the situation it was better to speak to common people rather than to listen to the comments of persons that represented the then Chechen power. Their mood clearly showed on the one hand detachment from intra-chechen confrontation - "a plague on both your houses!", "we don't care if they stand apart" etc, but on the other hand - a highly negative position

#### 11th of August

President of RF B. Yeltsin says: "Force intervention in Chechnya is inadmissible".

\*\*\*

President of Chechnya D. Dudayev talking with journalists describes the state of Russian-Chechen relations as "force aggression of Russia against Chechnya".

D. Dudayev signs decree of full mobilization of the Chechen people.

\*\*\*

On the **12th of August** Interim Council in Znamenskoye appends a declaration, demanding of the president not to cause bloodshed.

\*\*\*

#### 15th of August

Extended meeting of Security Council of Chechnya is held, at which chief of armed service staff - Aslan Mashadov states: full mobilization of liable to military service and reserve officers of forward echelon is finished.

\*\*\*

Interim Council reinforces armed forces.

\*\*\*

On the **16th of August** near community Bratskoye in Nadterechny District a armed clash between a patrol of governmental mil-

itary forces and a detachment of opposition.

\*\*\*

On the **19th of August** military equipment begins to come to Nadterechny District, including a shipment of armored personnel carriers purchased in one of CIS countries".

\*\*\*



On the **20th of August** Ruslan Khasbulatov comes to Chechnya with so-called peace-support mission, and at the meeting in Shali city he calls for establishing a conciliation commission and signing of an agreement on non-use of weapons by armed groups against one another.

\*\*\*

#### 21st of August

A radio station of supporters of Khasbulatov goes on the air in Tolstoy-Yurt village. 7 armed groups join his peace-support mission.

towards potential interference of Russian federal power.

Not pretending to apply exhaustive representativeness, I should note, that among the people I spoke to, there was none who approved actions of armed oppositional groups (groups of Interim Council locating in Nadterechny District, group of Bislan Gantamirov in Urus-Martan, group of Ruslan Labazanov locating at that moment in Argun). Some sympathy was rather won only by demarches of Ruslan Khasbulatov, who was in Tolstoy-Yurt at that moment and was trying to conduct some intermediary activities. However, there were few strong supporters of Dzhokhar Dudayev's power. It often caused critical attitude towards his power in the Chechen society but that did not mean the society was ready to support attempts to overthrow that power (this fact had been totally ignored by both the opposition and the federal center). Especially, if Moscow would try to support the structures, which were oppositional to Dudayev.

Presence of Russian army officers - military advisers, attached to them, looked extremely inappropriate. It is well known today, but at that time any information about

military support for the Chechen opposition from RF armed forces was officially denied, though that fact was obvious to anyone who came to Znamenskoye (headquarter of the oppositional Interim Council). So, an extremely dangerous situation was created - Dudayev's opponents could count on increasing support from the federal center and while the powers of Grozny in their turn increased their capabilities uniting people, who, though, being not happy with the internal situation in the Republic, but still interpreted interference of Moscow as a challenge. On the background of more and more serious clashes occurring between the parties approximately once every two weeks a potential threat of large-scale armed conflict



was arising. By December of that year the possibility became quite apparent. But, at the same time it was hard to believe that we would demonstrate such a folly. It seemed that common sense should prevail.

I cannot avoid mentioning of another aspect. Later, when analyzing the course of events that caused the war in Chechnya, much was said about hard life of Russian-speaking and - to be broader - non-Chechen population of the region. Necessity of "drastic measures" was justified by that aspect. Let me say right now that the situation was really tense. Anarchy was developing in various aspects of life. By the early 1990s the criminal world was at its height over the whole Russia. There were many regions with problems of that kind, but it was possible only in Chechnya that armed to the teeth people,

\*\*\*

A "pro-independence of the Republic" rally held by supporters of D. Dudayev begins in Grozny.

\*\*\*

On the **22nd August** Moscow-Baku railway traffic is cancelled inside Chechnya.

\*\*\*

### 25th of August

In Grozny suburb, Staraya Sunzha village, an oppositional rally is held with R. Khasbulatov taking part. People were called for joining in the political strike and actions of disobedience to the leaders of the Republic.

\*\*\*

President Dudayev speaks at a multi-thousand rally of his supporters in the center of the Chechen capital. He says among other things: "Khasbulatov's aim is to instigate war in Chechnya to come back to Russian political arena through blood of the Chechen".



\*\*\*

### 26th of August

It is reported that 20 armed groups join Khasbulatov's peace-support mission by that day.

\*\*\*

The chairman of Interim Council U. Avturhanov and R. Khasbulatov meet in Znamenskoye village of the Nadterechny District and come to an agreement on "joint actions against Dudayev's regime".

\*\*\*

On the **30th of August** "Interim Council in Znamenskoye headed by Avturhanov receives "many-sided help" from Russia, and not only in monetary terms, as it was announced officially. "Volunteers" for Interim Council are sought in North Caucasian units of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defense. It is reported that supposedly General Kotenkov is directly working on this by order of his senior fellow-colleague in the government and in the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (PRUA) - Sergey Shakhrai.

It is difficult to say now to what extend these accusations are fair, but in any case they give an account for the reason, why Sergey Shakhrai was so sure to say at the press-conference last Friday that "120 peo-

ple can actually defend Dudayev, and Umar Avturhanov has three special force battalions". How could vice-prime minister without portfolio be so sure about all this?" (*The materials of newspaper "Segodnya"*)

\*\*\*

On the **1st of September** armed clash between the unit of former head of assembly of Grozny city - B. Gantamirov and supporters of D. Dudayev occurred in Urus-Martanovskiy District. There are killed and wounded.

\*\*\*

On the **3rd of September** Russian government spreads appeal to the Chechen people, in which it calls D. Dudayev to "find courage to resign peacefully and worthily".

\*\*\*

On the night of **5th of September** the governmental forces storm the armed group of R. Labazanov, based in Argun city. The opposition suffers considerable losses, there are tens of killed among Dudayev's supporters too.

\*\*\*

### 6th of September

Celebration of third anniversary of independence of the Republic is held in Grozny.

\*\*\*





belonging to unknown by anybody structures, were freely driving around the city in cars, just like it was a norm. There was freedom in Chechnya, but that freedom basing on "club law" was freedom from liability (including liability of authorities for the state of population).

All that resembled freedom of "Wild West" or, in the context of Russian history, a free rein of Stepka Razin. And Russians, for the most part oriented on functioning state apparatus and economically dependent on large-scale enterprises, had no protection of numerous relatives and clans and found themselves to be the most unprotected group of population. They were the ones who suffered the most from breakdown of large-scale industry and they were the ones who were the most unprotected from criminal

debauch. Of course, official nationalistic rhetoric of the then powers, conversations about inevitability of war did not gave them confidence in the future. Authorities of Grozny concentrated their attention on the opposition, on confrontation with Moscow, and actively improved its financial condition (though they were not as successful in the latter as authorities of other Russian regions), and actually lost control over many key aspects of life.

But, nevertheless, Grozny remained quite a multinational city in 1994. Among Russian population, except those who planned to leave the region, there were people, sometimes young, who most probably felt themselves comfortable enough and fit well into those days life, knew the Chechen language, grasped various elements of local culture and were not going to leave the place of residence. Generally, among common people there was no domestic bitterness towards the issue of inter-ethnic relations. I remember that in a regular bus an old Chechen told the passengers a story about Russian women who saved him and his family during deportation. So I am convinced that in spite of all existing problems of Russian population in Chechnya,

it is wrong and immoral to justify on the ground of the above the large-scale armed actions performed in the end of 1994.

To make a resume I can say that in my opinion federal authorities had no right to ignore the situation existing in Chechnya of that time. But they should have solved vital problems of the population. I am sure that it was necessary to carry on a dialogue with the then Chechen powers at the top level in spite of the fact that the dialogue could be hard and unpleasant for both parties. There were chances to reach a compromise and they would have increased if the federal center would have demonstrated real care for people. Stake on armed fight, on regime change by means of force were the worst of all possible variants of interference. (Today the possibility of achieving an agreement with the then powers of the Chechen Republic is often called in question with reference to unsuccessful experience of such negotiations in the period from 1996 to 1999, but then it was quite a different situation.) Generally speaking, it was not the first time when choosing one of three variants - good, neutral, bad - Russian authorities managed to choose a fourth one.

Mourning for the fallen in past battle continues in Argun and Shali cities.

\*\*\*

### 7th of September

Administration of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service petitions Office of the Prosecutor General of Russia to open a criminal case of indiscriminate killings in the territory of Chechnya.

\*\*\*

Representatives of R. Khasbulatov arrived to the headquarters of Interim Council in Nadterechny District to "develop a strategy for further joint actions against Dudayev".

\*\*\*

On the **8th of September** units of North Caucasian military district gain control over the roads leading out of Chechnya and over air-space in the region. (*From an article published in newspaper "Narod", of September 1994, № 4.*)

\*\*\*

### 10th of November

Measures of military nature aimed to overthrow D. Dudayev's regime were discussed at the meeting held by Interim Council in Znamenskoye. (*Details of the decisions taken at the meeting are not disclosed.*)

\*\*\*

In his turn, D. Dudayev blames Russia for "imperial plans" in an interview given to a Grozny correspondent of ITAR-TASS.

\*\*\*

On the **14th of November** R. Khasbulatov, who headed the peace-support group, which includes, according to his words, 15 the most authoritative clergymen in Chechnya, says to a correspondent of RIA "Novosti": "Soon, maybe, some of these days the Dudayev's regime will fall".

\*\*\*

On the **15th of October**, according to Khasbulatov, the opposition was about to gain a bloodless victory, "but at the order given by no-one knows whom we retreated Grozny, and the victory was gone". After the victory would be gained he promises to investigate closely the reasons of that retreat, the result of which, as he believes, was the tragedy in Urus-Martan, where many people were killed, and in Tolstoy-Yurt, where several more people lost their lives.

\*\*\*

On the **15th of November** Interim Council offers the official authorities of Chechnya to exchange Aslambek Akbulatov, State Secretary of the Republic, who was

captured on the past Thursday, for one of leaders of armed units, Ibragim Suleymenov, who was under arrest more than one year. However, according to the information of spokesman of Interim Council - Ruslan Martagov - provided to ITAR-TASS, official Grozny "has not responded to the offer of the opposition yet".

The united oppositional forces, as noted R. Martagov, are finishing rearrangement and are ready to proceed to dynamic actions when needed.

Commander of the armed forces of Interim Council - Bislan Gantamirov, who returned from a trip to a series of CIS countries the day before, said that policy of Chechen opposition is supported by those countries. In addition, he reported that subdivisions of Interim Council will be equipped with large number of armor, heavy artillery and aircraft in the near future, which, as he expressed, will increase arms superiority of opposition considerably.

\*\*\*

On the **16th of November** president of RF B. Yeltsin isolates S. Shakhrai from handling the matters relating to settlement of Russian-Chechen relations. This information



## Umar AVTURKHANOV:

# «I would have done the same»

***Umar Avturkhanov, former head of pro-Russian Interim Council in Nadterechny District of Chechnya oppositional to official Grozny, chairman of Committee for nation salvation of the CR in 1995-1996.***

- Under what circumstances was Interim Council created?

- We should remember the events of 1991 and GKChP, attitude to which was dual among the leaders of the republic. As far as I can remember part of Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic supported it and the other part was against it. Those who were longing for a long time to overthrow the then existing power and to take the key positions took advantage of that situation.

Consequences of Gorbachev's perestroika should also be taken into account. A new way of thinking made it possible for those who had been afraid to express their political

views to state them openly. Everywhere socio-political movements were created.

In 1991 I was a businessman, but I also took an active part in rallies and meetings. I could hear what supporters and opponents of Dzhokhar Dudayev were saying. By the way, no one could think then about separation from Russia, including Dudayev. The leaders of Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic were forced to declare national sovereignty.

- Who forced?

- It was caused by the situation in the Republic. Many powerful members of Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, par-



ties and socio-political powers put the pressure. As for the position of Dzhokhar Dudayev, at that time he aimed at post of minister of internal affairs of Chechnya. And he became the head of the Republic by chance, if this word is appropriate: the situation of that time made it possible. Was he elected legally? The elections were found legitimate, but there are many evidences that they were manipulated. For example, proto-



of "Interfax" was confirmed by Moscow informational sources. According to their information, that problem was entrusted to minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy - Nikolai Yegorov.

The sources also noted that in recent time there were three centers settling relations between Moscow and Grozny in Russian capital city: head of administration of the president - S. Filatov, chairman of the Federal Council - V. Shumeiko, and vice-premier - S. Shakhrai. All of them had different opinions of how to settle that problem.

The PRUA chairmen left open the possibility that a new vice-premier can join the cabinet to supervise only national policy matters. They believed that incumbent minister for ethnic affairs and

regional policy - N. Yegorov, can probably be appointed to this post. "If this happens, S. Shakhrai will have to leave his post in the government", - PRUA representatives think.

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### 17th of November

The Chechen government considers "discharge of vice-premier of RF - S. Shakhrai - from handling Russian-Chechen relations as an evidence of the fact that Moscow changes its approach to the so-called Chechen problem to realistic". This was reported to "Interfax" by a high-ranking official from the apparatus of the Chechen president.

In his opinion, "discharge of Shakhrai from the Chechen problem was organized by himself to escape the responsibility for the deadlock in Russian-Chechen relations and to shift it on the minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy - N. Yegorov", who had been entrusted to supervise matters relating to Chechnya.

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"There are still good chances to settle the situation in Chechnya", - head of so-called peace-support group R. Khasbulatov thinks. Speaking on independent of official Grozny television channel, he says that to settle the

Chechen problem peacefully it is necessary that the more the better people would rise against criminal regime of Dudayev". R. Khasbulatov expressed his concern about Kremlin's position on Chechnya. "I am afraid that if Russian forces would be brought, they would dispose everyone - if only to teach other peoples a lesson", - he said. Leader of the peace-support group criticized both Dudayev's supporters and leaders of Interim Council. The first, he noticed, threaten to declare a war against Russia, the latter, like first grade pupils, comply unquestioningly with any decision of Moscow. (ITAR-TASS, Grozny)

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Special unit are redeployed to Bratskoye community locating in the north-west of Chechnya to strengthen government forces block, which was attacked by an armor column, which had come from Mozdok direction (North Ossetia) to support units of opposition. This was reported to "Interfax" by the department of state security of Chechnya. Shali tank regiment - the main striking force of Chechen official authorities is put on an alert.

According to the department, after fierce battle, which took place on Thursday near



cols of commissions with the same identical signatures. I got information about falsifications from various electoral districts, from almost every district. People took boxes into cars and were driving with them hunting for electors. And on seeing someone, they demanded: "Come here, vote!"

Within one week we recruited 800 people, but we had no arms. I asked him to give 200 submachine guns, and assured him that I would train the group and we would repulse the oppositionists. But the authorities refused. And local KGB, evidently, received an order not to be involved.

I am sure that if at the top-level, Moscow would have ordered a clear isolation of the opposition leaders presented by Dudayev and other members of All-National Congress of the Chechen People, the order would have been imposed in Chechnya. Uncertainty, inertness of the federal authorities, especially law-enforcement structures, after GKChP led to abolishment of the Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingosh Autonomous Soviet

Socialist Republic and subsequent events.

After dispersal of Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Interim Council was created in Chechnya, but actually it was inactive.

In October, Ahmed Baudinovich Arsanov was appointed as representative of the RF president in the Republic. And owing to the fact that our families had close relations, I decided to make acquaintance with him, in accordance with our tradition, though I was not interested in politics. I came to him in Grozny and said: "I have graduated from military school, state university, and if I can be helpful to you in any way, I am at your disposal". This was how I found myself in the action. Regional committee of trade unions was opposite to Ministry of Internal Affairs in Grozny. A group of opposition was located there headed by chairman of Shali district executive committee - Badrudi Dzhamaļhanov. Bek Baskhanov was with him. I was sent to them. A decision to form units of young volunteers, who had experience of military service was made generally to establish order and to resist Dudayev. At that time he hadn't been yet elected and nobody could predict further development of the things.

Within one week we recruited 800 people, but we had no arms. I asked him to give 200 submachine guns, and assured him that I would train the group and we would repulse the oppositionists. But the authorities refused. And local KGB, evidently, received an order not to be involved. As it became known later, KGB was demoralized. Regiment of internal forces did their best, but no one wanted to interfere. So, our group had no arms, except for several grenades and the only one submachine gun.

On the 9th of November 1991 emergency state was imposed, and we thought that at last the order would also be imposed. But it was not to be. After units of internal forces, under command of Russian authorities, had come by air from Moscow, the air-dromes were blocked by armed people of Yandarbiyev and Gantamirov. They surrounded the aircrafts. The arrived units found themselves in isolation and could not take actions. If the authorities had a will to act, in conditions of emergency state they would had the right to alarm the metropolitan regiment of the Soviet Army, operational battalion of internal forces, and to draw military structures from other republics. The

Bratskoye, 2 tanks from the column were disabled and their crews burned to death inside the machines. Two more tanks were damaged and they were towed back to Mozdok. More than 30 tanks managed to force their way to the territory controlled by the opposition". In the department of state security of Chechnya they maintain that most tanks were staffed with Russian servicemen.

On the part of governmental forces 3 people were wounded and one was killed during the battle, - they say in Grozny.

A representative of General Armed Forces Headquarters of Chechnya said to "Interfax" that second attempted armor breakthrough is expected in the near future. In this respect posts along roads in the area of Bratskoye are strengthened both in Znamenskoye village direction, where the headquarters of oppositional Interim Council are locating, and in Tolstoy-Yurt direction. Where the headquarters of peace-support group of R. Khasbulatov was located.

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In its urgent message to the Chechen government the world community announces that a new Russian-Caucasian war has begun and places all responsibility

for provoking of the bloody conflict on the highest political leaders of Russia and the leaders of North-Caucasian republics, "which encouraged unleashing of the war by their criminal silence".

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#### 20th of November

At the meeting of parliament, government, church and socio-political leaders of the Republic held in Grozny "in connection with begin of the war against independent Chechen state" a demand is made to create as soon as possible the State Defense committee, which would assume all the plentitude of power in the Republic, - agency "Chechenpress" informs.

It has been offered to suspend certain articles of the Constitution of the Republic with official notification of the UN Secretary General. (IA "Postfactum")

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General headquarters of the Chechen armed forces informed that on the night of the **20th of November** the governmental forces left Bratskoye village under pressure from the enemy. They say in the headquarters that the village was attacked by Russian regular units with the application of tanks, artillery and airforce. According to the

information of the Chechen leaders, the operation aimed at occupation of Bratskoye was conducted by general Kotenkov, the responsible officer of the Russian Ministry of ethnic affairs and regional policy. Meanwhile the sources from Interim Council of Chechnya reported that the battle in the area of Bratskoye village had begun as long ago as the 18th of November. The opposition representatives say that as the attack on Bratskoye developed 5 armored vehicles and 1 anti-aircraft mount of the governmental forces were disabled. The assistant officer from the information committee of Interim Council - I. Magomadov - described the authorities' reaction to this defeat as follows: "There begun a real hysteries in the residence of Dudayev. Even the Grozny television demonstrated our general regressed to childhood and shouting in his cabinet yesterday: fire, volley, fire, go ahead, attack etc. Gone nuts. The enemy is practically blocked in Grozny city and the mission on the agenda is to capture the capital city of the Chechen Republic bloodlessly. It seems to me that we will see the New Year in the capital". (*Radio "Echo of Moscow", 20th of November, 10:00*)

units of the opposition could be disarmed with help of regular forces of army, KGB, which were subordinate to Union leaders. But this situation was affected by confrontation between the Union and Russian authorities. Emergency state was imposed by B.N. Yeltsin, and Union force and special units were not subordinate to him.

*- But when emergency state was imposed, that was the day of inauguration of Dzhokhar Dudayev and thousands people from all the corners of the Republic crowded the center of Grozny. So, interference of forces could lead to bloodshed.*

- I was in the square then. There were less than thousand people. And those supporters of Dudayev had been hardly brought from all over Republic.

Authorities of the Russian Federation should have made a statement that emergency state was not aimed against the Chechen people, that it was aimed only at restoration of order. But the corresponding preparatory work had not been done.

After the events mentioned above gathering of people of Nadterechny District was announced. The delegates of our village were Usman Del'bijev and me. By the decision of

the gathering Coordination Council was elected. Del'bijev and me were also included. The main decision of the gathering was refusal to obey authorities, i.e. government of Dzhokhar Dudayev. By essence Coordination Council was created to pursue that line. I was elected as the chairman. Analogous councils were appointed in all the districts by the order of D. Dudayev instead of abolished district councils. In the end of 1991 and in the beginning of 1992 two variants of electoral law were published. We gave our preference to the variant, according to which it was supposed to elect heads of districts by direct and secret vote. In Nadterechny District as well as all around the Republic, elections were held on the 1st of February 1992. Four candidates run for, including me. I was elected to be the head of the district.

*- And whose initiative was it to create Interim Council headed by you?*

- Against the backdrop of the armed confrontation serious steps were taken aimed at overcoming the republic tension. One of dramatic events of that time was rally called to be unlimited (it lasted 53 days) at theatrical square of the village in April - June 1993. All the people of good sense in the republic

In autumn of 1993 I was invited to Grozny to a meeting of field commanders, dissatisfied with Dudayev's policy. Basaev, Gelaev and many others were presented there as well as their supporters. About two thousands of armed people gathered before the presidential palace. Basaev on behalf of the others went to Dudayev to negotiate.

supported us. Grozny city assembly headed by mayor B. Gantamirov and government headed by Y. Mamadaev supported the protestors. As regards our legitimate claim to hold a referendum, Dudayev and his clique responded with violence: With dispersal of city assembly and deletion of ballot papers. We wanted to raise two points on the referendum - about confidence in the President and attitude towards Russia. The people's answer to that question would be fatal for Dudayev. It would put an end to gangster rule of Dzhokhar's clique. But it was possible to hold the referendum only in Nadterechny District. The results were overwhelming -

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On the **23rd of November** Chechen president D. Dudayev more than once, in an interview to a correspondent of RIA "Novosti", for example, said that he is "strongly against mercenarism". However, R. Khasbulatov said to a RIA correspondent: "We can if you like today give exact addresses in Grozny and in other places of Chechnya, where Turkmen, Tajik, Tatar, Dagestani, Ingush, Balt mercenaries are locating at different bases, including "Caucasus" hotel, which is across Dudayev's residence".

A RIA correspondent got information from a confidential source that "the Russian have been regularly sending groups of 10-20 people to Grozny by air for the last 3 months. According to the information of Khasbulatov's informers, the most dangerous are "Tajik volunteers, 60 of which have completed terrorism courses in Pakistan before arriving in Grozny".

In his turn, Dudayev says that "there are representatives of 21 nations, including Georgian, Armenian, Korean, Kazakh, Russian, Ukraine, among mercenaries of the oppositional Interim Council".

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### 23rd of November

First volunteers, some of which are from Islamic countries, are ready to come to Chechnya "to protect its sovereignty and to counter Russian aggression" - said the minister of foreign affairs - Shamsutdin Yusef - on Tuesday.

Speaking on the Republic television, he said among other things: "If Russian politicians lost their heads and dream of war, they will have it".

According to Sh. Yusef, the result of the war with Chechnya for Russia "will be democracy buried in it".

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To overcome the protracted crisis in Chechnya the most admissible for the Chechen opposition are negotiations with D. Dudayev and such actions that could preserve its strategic position. This scenario corresponds to the interests both Russian (federal and regional), and foreign political forces (USA, EU, Turkey, Iran and other). Results of expert survey, conducted in the middle of November by the Socio-political modeling service of "Interfax", confirm this. Journalists, analysts from state structures, scientists and experts on North-Caucasus problems participated in the survey.

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### 24th of November

According to the decree of the president D. Dudayev, martial law is imposed in Chechnya starting from 24th of November, 24:00. The whole territory of the Republic is placed under curfew from 10 in the evening till 6 in the morning. People of Chechnya, including young men over 17 years of age, were called to arms. According to the decree, commandant institution is established in all centers of population. All crimes committed in the territory of Chechnya within the decree validity period, will be punished in accordance with the martial law. (RIA)

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Armed units of the oppositional Interim Council of Chechnya intend to start assault on Grozny on Friday, - they reported to an "Interfax" correspondent in the headquarters of the opposition in Nadterechny District. It is intended that armor will move in two directions: towards Tolstoy-Yurt, through Terek ridge, and towards Urus-Martan.

By present time, according to information from Grozny, the opposition concentrated more than 20 units of armor in Urus-

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I had another meeting with representatives of our diaspora. Khasbulatov, Gakaev and others were there, too. They asked about what we needed in that moment. I said that to begin we need at least a small amount of money to buy armament and for the people. There were ones who gave us support: they gave 20 thousand dollars.

98% of participant expressed non-confidence to the president. The next step was creation of Interim Council of the Chechen Republic. Such a measure was basing on the fact that Supreme Soviet of the RF didn't find the elections of the president in Chechnya to be legitimate.

Sergey Shakh-ray said that any representatives of parties and political movement of the Chechen Republic can come to the federal center and the official Moscow is ready to hold negotiations with them. In autumn of 1993 I was invited to Grozny to a meeting of field commanders, dissatisfied with Dudayev's policy. Basaev, Gelaev and many others were presented there as well as their

supporters. About two thousands of armed people gathered before the presidential palace. Basaev on behalf of the others went to Dudayev to negotiate. He spent there several hours and then came out and announced that agreement was reached, new elections will be held, and the authorities are ready to consider position of the opposition etc. However, some of those who were aimed at resolute measures, came up to me and said that all that was a fuss, and field commanders supposedly went into a huddle with Dudayev and their promises are just a trick to blow off steam. They asked: what should we do? I suggested to hold a meeting and to discuss the situation. We had a secret meeting in the December of 1993 in Urus-Martan in the place of late Yusup Elmurzaev. That was the place where Interim Council of the Chechen Republic was created. We were the three co-chairmen: I, Dukvaha Abdurakhmanov [currently chairman of the parliament of Chechnya] and a Russian. Then, on behalf of Interim Council we started negotiations with Russian authorities, to be more precise, with vice-premier, minister of ethnic affairs, Sergey Shakh-ray.

We agreed that they would help us to hold new elections of executive bodies of Chechnya, to create self-defense units in districts and human settlements, and to provide with socio-economic and military help to the Nadterechny District uncontrolled by Dudayev.

And in June of 1994 we held a congress there in Nadterechny, and invited representatives of all districts of the Republic. I cannot say that many people came there, legitimacy of the congress was disputed, but still delegates from every village, every party and movement were presented there. Dudayev's people tried to ruin that plan of the opposition, but I made an ambush in Goragorsk, and after our personal conversation (probably, they were headed by deputy minister of ministry of internal affairs) they left empty-handed.

So, the congress was held, and I went to Moscow again with the resolution to seek for support.

There I was received by Shakh-ray again and had talks with Khasbulatov, Aslakhanov. All of them agreed to give a support, but still there was no real help.

*- And who supplied you with arms then?*

Martan direction. At a rough estimate, 40 units of armor are concentrated in Znamenskoye - Tolstoy-Urt direction.

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The governmental forces of Chechnya are ready to repulse the attack of opposition on Grozny, commander of Shali tank regiment I. Dalkhanov said to "Interfax" on Friday. According to his words, even though the oppositional Interim Council will have armor superiority, "this will not play the main part after all". "The main thing - is servicemen morale", - he noted, and expressed his opinion that in this context the oppositional gunmen cannot be compared with the personal assets of the forces true to D. Dudayev.

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According to the report of "Interfax" correspondents from Chechnya, armed helicopters of opposition began air striking against positions of governmental forces in the area of Terek ridge and in Grozny suburbs. They said to "Interfax" in General Armed Forces Headquarters of Chechnya that the air strikes are carried out by not less than 40 fighting machines with Russian identification marks.

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On the **26th of November**, the attempt, which involved forces of pro-Russian Interim Council, to assault the Chechen capital city and to overthrow the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria - Dzhokhar Dudayev, was a complete failure. Russian servicemen, recruited by the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service, participated in the assault.



Russian mass media inform that anti-Dudayev opposition, armed with all kinds of weapons, including tanks (5000 oppositionists plus 85 Russian soldiers and 40 tanks), entered Grozny. But after the tanks were burned or commandeered, it was found that inside there actually were officers and warrant officers of Russian army, recruited in tank units near Moscow by the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service.

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#### **28th of November**

Minister of Defense of Russia - Pavel Grachev - called the information about participation of the Russian army on the side of the opposition in the intrachechen conflict "stuff and nonsense". Minister said to journalists on Monday, that if Russian armed forces would have taken part in Grozny

- We received them from the depots of various military units of the Russian army, but they gave them to us only after negotiations with official persons in Moscow. But this support was not enough. The Russian authorities had no clearly defined unified position on Chechnya. Some patriots of Russia supported us and others said: "Let Chechnya leave!"

- *Who were those patriots?*

- I do not want to disclose their names now. But I will tell everything in my book. All names and facts would be included in it.

- *Did you try to have a meeting with Dudayev?*

- Yes, more than once. My old friends knew him closely. They worried about the situation and wanted to organize a meeting. But some people from Dudayev's environment prevented this. I proposed to take 25 armed people from every party and to meet. But those plans failed to come true.

We aimed to hold honest elections in the Republic. Then, Khasbulatov came and began to gather people. I visited Moscow again, but every time I went there my feeling got stronger that Russia did not want to listen to our words. I had another meeting with

representatives of our diaspora. Khasbulatov, Gakaev and others were there, too. They asked about what we needed in that moment. I said that to begin we need at least a small amount of money to buy armament and for the people. There were ones who gave us support: they gave 20 thousand dollars. I was successful at last to be heard by Russian authorities: the people from force structures of Russia whom I knew helped me. In summer of 1994 the summaries on situation in Chechnya of approximately the same content with recommendations were prepared and signed by ministers of Ministry of Internal Affairs, FCIS, Ministry of Defense and sent "above". The notes also contained request to support Interim Council of Chechnya headed by me. At that time we were heard. Officials from FCIS came to me. We had a meeting and a long conversation in Ingooshetia. Later, they invited me to Filatov [head of administration of Yeltsin], and then they decided that it was worth to give us a support. It was only after that Russia provided us with good deal of armaments, APCs and three helicopters.

- *And still there were Russian mercenaries in your forces?*

- Yes. During the whole period of our confrontation we had 40 people. All of them were tank drivers-mechanics.

- *At the same time, in summer of 1994, Khasbulatov had many trips around Republic with the so-called peace-support mission. What relations did you have?*

- He wanted power, but was extremely irritating for the leaders of Russia. At that time he was like a red flag for a bull. I was said directly: "Khasbulatov is unacceptable" I told him the same in the same direct manner: "Stop your game. We need to stop bloodshed in the Republic". By that time we had lost 500 people in the struggle with that regime. My personal attitude to Khasbulatov remained neutral. Later he tried to convince me, asked and demanded: it is necessary to capture Grozny immediately and delay is criminal. However, our first attack on Grozny in October of 1994 was a failure. It was not prepared. And later Khasbulatov blamed us for unskillful performance of the operation. It was headed by Gantamirov then. After that we urgently called Interim Council and decided to leave Grozny, because there were many victims. We went to Pervomayskaya village and retreated back.

combat, he would have never allowed the tanks to enter the city. "This is profound ignorance", - the minister said.

P. Grachev also noted that if Russian army would have fought on the side of opposition, then "it would have been possible to settle all the matters within two hours with the help of one airborne regiment".

In his opinion, "ordinary struggle for power" is taking place in Chechnya. According to the information of P. Grachev, a large number of mercenaries are fighting both on the side of the opposition and on the side of Dudayev.

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One of Chechen opposition figures, R. Khasbulatov called on the population of Grozny to evacuate children from the Chechen capital city. In a televised address on one of his channels, broadcasting from the territory controlled by the opposition, R. Khasbulatov said that Grozny would be under bombardment in the near future.

Meanwhile, the night of Monday was relatively quiet in Grozny. Only several armed clashes occurred. An "Interfax" correspondent was reported in the General Armed Forces Headquarters of Chechnya that the armed groups of opposition, which stayed in the city,

had been trying to fire on units of governmental forces practically in the center of Grozny. According to specified official information, during the action, which took place on the previous holiday, when, as Grozny maintains, Russian tanks forced their way to the presidential palace, more than 300 oppositionists were killed, more than 30 units of armor were destroyed and 12 more were commandeered. Up to 50 armor units took part in this attack of opposition, which was carried out on Saturday from Tolstoy-Yurt direction. More than 100 oppositionists were captured. And according to Grozny information, 70 of them were Russian officers.

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The Chechen authorities warned that about 70 Russian citizens would be executed by shooting on Tuesday if Moscow would not acknowledge the fact of their participation in the war against Chechnya on the opposition side. A representative of state security department of Chechnya informed an "Interfax" correspondent about this.

President's spokesman in the General Armed Forces Headquarters of Chechnya - Musa Merzhuyev - said that "two days will be enough" for governmental forces to neutralize the opposition absolutely. "But this can

only happen on the condition that Moscow would stop support of oppositional formations", - he noted.

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### 30th of November

Ruslan Khasbulatov gives an interview: For the recent time the Dudayev's units, - he says, - have thinned out much, many soldiers left their service. Even only 50-60 people appeared at the city square at call of the leaders. Little by little people turned away from Dudayev, and there was a chance that he would find himself isolated. But this absolutely absurd raid, surrender of many armor units, of course, will let Dudayev find new possibilities to continue his grip on power. And, at the same time, that caused great disappointment among the opposition.

*Question:* There is an opinion that during the assault on the 15th of October and on the 26th of November representatives of Russian special services, who were the ones who gave orders, such as when to attack and when to retreat, were behind the leaders of the Interim Council.

*RK:* I wouldn't like to answer this question. I wouldn't like to lie, but I just cannot say the truth. It is not in the interest of the





But we were hastened. The Russian leadership had several centers and each wanted to assume the honor of "settling of the Chechen crisis".

I suggested that when a repeated attack on Grozny would be held, we with our people would be the first to move being supported by Russian military aviation and

Later, they invited me to Filatov [head of administration of Yeltsin], and then they decided that it was worth to give us a support. It was only after that Russia provided us with good deal of armaments, APCs and three helicopters.

tanks. I said that I would capture Grozny, and we captured it on the 26th of November 1994: all the buildings except for the presidential palace were surrounded, including television. Even in the general headquarter of Dudayev I had my man, I knew the situation in the city thoroughly and I knew about the fact that well armed gunmen were in the basement of the general headquarter building. It was said on the television that Grozny is captured by the forces of Interim Council.

Till the very evening we were waiting for the support of military forces. What did they have to do? Only to enter the capital city to finally take all with their own hands.

*- But at that day from early morning fierce battles took place in Grozny, tens of tanks entered the city (later they were destroyed by governmental formations of Dudayev), and aviation was bombing Grozny. Aviation was Russian, tanks were Russian and soldiers were Russian servicemen, many of them were killed and many were captured. It was a bloody slaughter there on that day.*

- There were not so many Russian militaries, only 40 people - tank drivers and mercenaries, which had been transferred to the reserve of the Russian army. There was no aviation. We were practically left face to face with well-armed and experienced in battles mercenaries of Dudayev. Of course, in the evening we had to take our people out of Grozny.

After that incident we were convened in Mozdok and were informed that entry of federal forces was planned. At that time among those present were Yerin [RF minister of internal affairs], Yegorov [vice-premier of the government], Stepashin [director of FCIS

- now FSB]. We were told that we were not coping. I asked to give us the last chance in order we could settle the problem for ourselves. They refused. I insisted: "Let's attack in such a way that my units would be ahead of you. Then people would understand your intentions and either of the sides would avoid massive bloodshed. They did not agree again. I asked not to capture Grozny, but only to surround it, and we would take all the necessary steps inside by ourselves. They refused again.

- And what about a letter addressed to Yeltsin and signed by Hadzbiev and you with a request to bring forces? Did it exist?

- There was a letter with a request to give all kinds of support to Interim Council. We even offered Khasbulatov to sign it. I wanted to get rid of him, and I sent pre-prepared old men to him, who said: "If you care about the situation and since you are here, sign!" And he made a canny move: he promised to sign it, but in Moscow. And he went to Moscow.

- Did you think that if Russian forces would be brought in Chechnya, it would be possible to settle the situation and to avoid bloodshed?

Chechen people to quarrel with the federal authorities now. No matter by whom and for what reason decisions, were made, what mistakes were made, any disclosures would hurt the business. I believe that now it is necessary to facilitate strengthening of those federal authorities, who are aiming at resolute struggle with Dudayev's regime today.

*Question:* And still it is impossible to ignore "hand of Moscow" in unleashing the bloodshed. On the one part, weapons were delivered to Avturkhanov through intermediary of Filatov; on the other part - air corridor was created to airlift the weapon to Dudayev.

*RK:* I cannot be absolutely sure that this is work of Moscow. Weapons and gunmen were transferred from Ingooshetia very actively. Also, the weapons were delivered from Azerbaijan.

By the way, when Interim Council chose the armed struggle, this was a signal for certain forces to strengthen military resources of Dudayev. This provoked counteractions, and the leaders of Interim Council proved to be weak and unprepared, but very obedient to some chiefs of federal services. The stake was placed on people, who are indifferent, not very popular among the Chechen popu-

lation. This undermined the capabilities of the opposition. ("*Nezavisimaya gazeta*")

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Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defense of RF closely coordinated their plans of the coming actions.

The Russian party had enough power to ensure the operation on blocking the emergency area and liquidating the Chechen armed groups. The main workload will be done by the group of internal military forces of RF Ministry of Interior and the units of the North-Caucasian military district. Active application of assault aviation and armed helicopters is planned to suppress the bases and firing-points in the mountainous area.

If necessary, the helicopters of military transport aviation are ready to organize twenty-four-hour air bridge, through which additional contingent of soldiers and material and technical recourses will be transferred to the Northern Caucasus. The coming events will become the first real readiness test for mobile forces, creation of which cost Pavel Grachev so much time and energy.

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#### 1st of December

The 48 hours given by the Russian president B. Yeltsin have passed. All that time, as it

is turned out, was spent to tilt public opinion in favor of imposing a state of emergency in the territory of the Chechen Republic "with all ensuing consequences". In this campaign the most active position was taken by the press service of the RF President, which delivered through their channels, bypassing the Federal Council, an address to president Yeltsin by leaders of federal subjects, located near Chechnya. In this document **Aslan Djarimov** (Adygei), **Ahsarbek Galazov** (North Ossetia-Alania), **Valeriy Kokov** (Kabardino-Balkaria), **Vladimir Hubiev** (Karachai-Cherkess), and heads of administrations of Stavropol and Krasnodar Territories and the Rostov Region - **Evgeniy Kuznetsov**, **Evgeniy Haritonov** and **Vladimir Chub** addressed to "the Protector of the Constitution of RF" with a proposal to "stop the bloody conflict in Chechnya immediately and take every measure to impose constitutional order". The officer of the administration of the president of the RF, former chairman of the armed forces of Checheno-Ingoosh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic - **Doku Zavgaev** - also called to meet the conditions of the Russian president. There were no Ingooshetia and Dagestan among the "signers" (**Ruslan**

- If on 26th of November 1994 federal forces would have followed the forces of Interim Council, then this would have been possible.

- *Didn't you suppose that such consequences could occur: long war with enormous destructions and shocking number of victims?*

- Never. But all was done contrary to what we offered, quite the opposite. This is the root of all evil. Federal center hurried to bring the forces. This hurry can be explained, probably, by political reasons and desire to settle the conflict before joining Council of Europe.

- *Though conjunctive mood cannot be applied to history, but still if you would find yourself in the same situation and in the same position as in 1994, would you have done the same?*

- I would have done the same I did then, but by the present time I became more experienced. I would avoid making many mistakes.

- *What mistakes did you make?*

- It would have been better to have a meeting with Dudayev, in any case. Political settlement was not impossible, it was necessary to develop relationships with the people who supported him. When at the rally in

1993 Basaev came to us, I understood that it was possible to find understanding with any of them. When the forces were brought the second time [in 1999], I had a conversation with him in Karabulak. I came upon their request, and then I conveyed the content of our conversation to the leadership of Russia. I explained that it is possible to deal with them, those people do not want to fight.

- *And why there were no results?*

- It is hard to say. Probably, some other opinions existed; there were powers that didn't hurry to stop the war in Chechnya.

- *Perhaps, it is not a secret for you that many link bringing of Russian forces in Chechnya in 1994 and the followed war with such names as Avturkhanov and Hadzbiev. Do you feel you are to blame?*

- No. This happened not because we wanted this to happen. We wanted to stabilize the situation. The war was inevitable; it was not possible to avoid it, just as in 1999. On the contrary, thanks to us only Russia has not lost its South and we preserved for the Chechen people our Republic. Small nation, small republic cannot make its own life without patronage on part of a big country. If we would have broken away from Russia, with

There was a letter with a request to give all kinds of support to Interim Council. We even offered Khasbulatov to sign it. I wanted to get rid of him, and I sent pre-prepared old men to him, who said: "If you care about the situation and since you are here, sign!" And he made a canny move: he promised to sign it, but in Moscow. And he went to Moscow.

whom would we be then? The republic has such an experience. Two years of actual independence - 1998-1999. The results of management of the former authorities, as it is known, were deplorable. According to the research conducted by experts in 1995, there remained only 50 million tons of oil resources in the republic. And what will we do after we pump it all out? Independence is good when a country is ready to hold it, when a country has relations and resources. Allah gave us the neighbors we have, there are no other neighbors. Today nobody infringes our religious or any other rights. The city is being built, the republic is developing. What else could we ask for?..

**Aushev and Magomed-Ali Magomedov** - Note of "DOSH"), according to them - not all political instruments were used by the present time". (*"Nezavisimaya gazeta" of the 1st of December, № 230*)

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B. Yeltsin signed a decree "On certain law-and-order-building measures in the Northern Caucasus".

Spokesman of the president Viacheslav Kostikov said that under supervision and control of the Russian president there started implementation of a complex of measures aimed to drastically normalize the situation in the Chechen Republic and to restore there Constitutional order, law and protection of human rights. (*Os "Novosti", 1st of December*)

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Entering of peace-keeping forces into Chechnya under the state of emergency is now complicated, - as considered by Emil Pain - the head of the international department of the analytic center at the Russian president, member of the presidential council. In his opinion, such a variant of emergency state was likely to be realized two months ago, but not in the current psychological conditions, when Russian threat is

constantly mentioned. Despite the fact, - E. Pain thinks, - in the conditions of conflict, when both parties use weapons, methods of power-operated measures are as necessary as any other. Methods of power-operated measures imply separating actions of peace-keeping forces and guarding of strategic sites. However, taking power-operated measures for political purposes, namely, "to decide which power shall be governing" is strongly unacceptable. "This has no future, - he said, - it is impossible to establish the wanted regime, president or way of governing by force". E. Pain expressed confidence that actions of Russia would not lead to civil war. (*Moscow, "Postfactum"*)

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Starting from this day the "List of measures aimed at settlement in the Chechen Republic", prepared by the Security Council of Russia, comes into effect in the territory of Chechnya", - vice-premier of the government S. Shakhrai reported at a press-conference. According to him, among measures stipulated by Security Council there are bilateral, three- and multi-sided negotiations between Federal authorities and Chechnya representatives. One of the negotiation groups has already been created in the

Russian government. Measures for tightening control over transfer of weapon from Chechnya to Russia are also provided.

Vice-premier is of the opinion that the situation in Chechnya will become clear within next few days. If the actions taken will not lead to the desired result, measures provided in the emergency law will be taken. (*Moscow, "Postfactum"*)

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The head of the General Armed Forces Headquarters in Chechnya - Aslan Maskhadov informed that "center of Grozny is literally impounded with people ready to join the battle". According to his words, supporters of Dudayev gathered on the central square of the capital. As A. Maskhadov noted, "threat of armed invasion of Chechnya united the people of the Republic again". (*"Interfax", the 1st of December, 17:00*)

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Today 30 Kabardian volunteers left Nalchik and went to Grozny to help the official authorities of Chechnya. As it was reported to "Interfax" in the headquarters of Congress of Kabardian nation, the official dispatch of the volunteer groups to Chechnya is not organized by the Congress.

Sergey FILATOV:

# «We dealt a heavy blow to democratic values»

- Were any attempts to organize meeting between Dudayev and Yeltsin made while you were the head of the administration of the president? And if yes, why they were not successful?

- I was really addressed to with such an initiative. The first time it happened, as far as I remember, when 200th anniversary was celebrated after the Ossetia became a part of Russia. Two young men came up to me, introduced themselves as economic advisers of Dzhokhar Dudayev and offered to hold kind of consultations. My reaction to this was positive, but nothing followed after that. Then, after a long interval, some other people, I cannot remember now where it happened, came up to me again with the



**S.A. Filatov was the head of administration of the RF President in 1993-1996.**

same proposal. But all this was indefinite, that's why there was no progress, though every time I reported to Boris Nikolayevich about those meetings, indicating that Dudayev wanted to have a meeting with him. Either in the end of 1993 or in the beginning of 1994 such official contacts were established at last, when, as far as I remember, State Secretary of Chechnya came to Moscow. I am not sure if I remember his correct name - Aslambek Akbulatov, it seems to me.

We had a meeting with him in Staraya Square, and discussed that question in detail. Of course, the most important question I wanted to get answer to was: What does the Chechen party thinks of the format of the

But it cannot prevent intention of the Kabardian volunteers to help the brotherly Chechen people in their hour of need. Also, volunteer recruitment began in Dagestan. There are representatives of Avar, Laktsi and other Daghestani people among volunteers. (RT "Vesti", the 1st of December, 20:00.)

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Dagestan interpreted ambiguously the statement of the Russian president about Chechnya. Leaders of popular movements spoke out against ultimatum-based approach to the problems of the Republic.

G. Mahachev, chairman of the Council of Avar nation: "I think that ultimatum statement of the president of Russia Yeltsin regarding Chechnya can complicate relations between the contending forces in Chechnya and in the neighboring republics. Caucasus consists of unique republics, it is a sophisticated region, and it is necessary to find an absolutely different approach". (Reportage of O. Mamedova.)

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Only president of Russia with the approval of Security Council of Russia can bring Russian army into the Chechen conflict. He is entitled with this right in accordance with the acting Constitution of the RF.

Minister of Defence of the RF, Pavel Grachev, said: "It is possible that if such a decision is made, the army will take part in solving of this conflict, but this does not mean that the army will fight against the Chechen people. It will help the internal forces to commander armaments and equipment captured unlawfully by various armed units". P. Grachev made this statement today at noon, just after the morning session of the Defence Council of CIS countries, at which the question on Chechnya was neither on the agenda, as was expected, nor even discussed in the backroom. Ministry of Defense of Russian considers this to be internal business of the RF, and not CIS countries. (Reportage of G. Solomatin.)

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As mentioned in the today's statement of the Minister of Defence of Russia, P. Grachev, the president did not assign him a mission of imposing state of emergency in Chechnya. At the same time P. Grachev noted that if that mission had been assigned to him, all the necessary means and powers to accomplish the mission would have been found. But, as emphasized by the minister, the armed forces involvement in settlement of the Chechen conflict would require order of the

president and decision of SC. (RT "Vesti", the 1st of December, 20:00.)

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Today Russian prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed an order to establish a temporary information center under Roskompechat'. Chairman of Roskompechat' Sergey Gryzunov, who gave the following interview to a media representative, is appointed as the head of the center.

**Question:** What is the object and tasks of the new information center?

**S. Gryzunov, RF minister of press and information:** Today by order of the RF government a temporary information center under Committee of press of the RF was created due to the much complicated situation in the Northern Caucasus, threatening to destabilize socio-political situation. In this situation it is very important to provide Russian and global public with exclusive, reliable and objective information from an official source. We suppose to work not as some kind of funnel, filter, aimed to clean information, and provide only what someone thinks to be necessary. It is not so. We are created to provide the society with information as much as possible.

meeting in question? And what questions would they like to discuss? Because the press, as well as some speeches of Dzhokhar Dudayev, gave contradictory information in that respect. Either Chechnya would remain a part of Russia, or it would be part of the Soviet Union, or Chechnya voices some complaints against Russia - to be short, there was arising an absolutely obscure situation, as far as a legal perspective was concerned. Besides, this uncertainty was aggravated since the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia declared election of the Chechnya president to be null and void as early as 1991.

- Do you mean Supreme Soviet of Russia?

- Yes, Russian Congress of People's Deputies that was held on the 1st of November 1991. The situation that occurred appeared to be very complex, and Russia faced many other problems, so for me and for Boris Nikolayevich it was very important, of course, to know the questions that would be raised at the meeting and its format. And, I suppose, we had a reason to find this out, because when finally Maskhadov had a meeting with Boris Nikolayevich, a small quarrel took place which, of course, looked extremely unpleasant and not very decent.

- And what happened between them?

- Well, they quarreled about the places they should take. Maskhadov demanded Yeltsin to take a seat on the opposite side, Yeltsin objected to this saying: I am the president and so I should sit at the top of the table, and you should take place at the side. Your republic does not have equal status with Russia. Chechnya remains a part of Russia etc. It was an awkward and ill-looking situation.

- Do you mean the incident that occurred as far back as the first war, when the Chechen delegation headed by acting president of Ichkeria Yandarbiev was invited to the Kremlin, before presidential elections in Russia and after Dudayev had been killed?

- Yes, yes, you are right. That awkward situation occurred with Yandarbiev in particular. Anyway, this shows once more that diplomatic (or, if you wish, political) etiquette is still very important. Such meetings are held, usually, not t?e-?-t?e, public attention is concentrated on them, sometimes that of the whole world', so they should be reputable, and goals should be defined in advance. Unfortunately, this was not done. Instead I was told all the time: well, at the meeting they will find what to discuss for

Either Chechnya would remain a part of Russia, or it would be part of the Soviet Union, or Chechnya voices some complaints against Russia - to be short, there was arising an absolutely obscure situation, as far as a legal perspective was concerned. Besides, this uncertainty was aggravated since the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia declared election of the Chechnya president to be null and void as early as 1991.

themselves. You know, at such a level and at such a tense moment this kind of approach is inadmissible. I reported all this to the president, and he listened to me attentively, but, of course, it depended on him what decision to take, and he didn't take any decision because there was no certainty in formulation of the problems, which those two were supposed to settle during the meeting.

- Sergey Alexandrovich, it follows from your words that all initiatives, all attempts to come into contact originated from Grozny. And Russian leaders, it follows, had no ideas, suggestions or even clear understanding

**Question:** In case of imposing emergency state in Chechnya will your center be actually the only body providing official information, won't it?

**S.G.:** Let us not to be hasty in implementing any special measures. Not all variants of compromise settlement are exhausted. Let us wait. (OS "Novosti", the 1st of December, 21:00.)

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Today Russian Ministry of Defense took the decision to push minor forces and facilities from structure of the Northern-Caucasus military district forward to the area of Mozdok in the Northern Ossetia by the 14th of December. These measures, as it was reported to an ITAR-TASS correspondent, are approved in the context of realization of measures for stabilization of the Chechen situation, planned by Security Council of Russia. (OC "Novosti", 1st of December, 21:00.)

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A representative of "Chechenpress" agency reported that for the past few days most of the capital citizens, old people, women and children, went to villages in fear of military actions. And all men stayed in Grozny and are preparing to defend the city.

Meanwhile, the rally is still held in the center of Grozny. Its participants demanded to execute captured Russian gunmen, who had been fighting on the part of opposition, one at a time after each raid on the city.

According to the information reported by "Interfax", today at the press conference D. Dudayev said that the situation in the Republic slowly goes out of control and a moment can happen when the situation will grow into total all-in war.

Meanwhile, the head of the oppositional Interim Council spoke out totally against negotiations between Moscow and official Grozny, and insists on bringing Russian forces into the territory of Chechnya. No negotiations with the official Grozny are possible, - said U. Avturhanov today before journalists and added that the main purpose of negotiation for Dudayev is to gain time.

Official authorities in Grozny declined the intermediary mission of the president of Ingooshetia R. Aushev aimed at settlement of the situation in the Republic. Vice-president of Ingooshetia B. Agapov reported this to an ITAR-TASS correspondent today. (OS "Novosti", the 1st of December, 21:00)

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In P. Grachev's opinion, the Kremlin intends to use every way of political settlement. Meanwhile, it follows from his own statement that on this day the engagement of Russian army in Chechnya is not unlikely. (NTV "Segodnya", the 1st of December, 22:00.)

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At 15:00 Moscow time suburbs of Grozny were attacked from the air with missiles. As an "Interfax" correspondent reports, up to 10 missiles targeted the Hankala airport. The missiles stroked 2 aircrafts and a series of houses, where employees of the airport lived. According to the official information, one man was killed. According to the statement of a representative of state security department of Chechnya, "an attempt to deliver strike from the air was made targeting residence of D. Dudayev, where his family lives. 3 people died as a result of the raid".

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P. Grachev informed that "measures necessary" to release hostages, captured in Chechnya are taken by units of power infrastructure - Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Federal Counter-Intelligence Service. Talking with journalists he admitted that there are Russian service-



about ways of settlement of grown problems, even if we suppose that they could know about situation in Chechnya and position of its leaders only from the press? And what is the connection between pre-war attempts to organize Russian-Chechen negotiations and the incident in the Kremlin you described, which occurred on the second year of war?

- There were many initiatives from government and Supreme Soviet of the RF at that time. And it is true that no strategy was developed. Many officials went to Grozny to meet Dzhokhar Dudayev. Gennadiy Burbulis, Mikhail Poltoranin, Sergey Shakhrai and many deputies were among them. Ruslan Khasbulatov also was always busy with that problem when he was the Chairman of the RF Supreme Soviet. But they returned without any important results. By that time, forcing of Russian people and military garrison out, capture of arms in depots and operating units had already begun. It was obvious that the republic was preparing a military conflict. It was particularly obvious when according to the President's decree emergency state was imposed. This caused a military conflict and expulsion of security bodies and bodies of Ministry of Internal Affairs

from the republic. And it seems to me that the reason we had no strategy towards settlement of that problem relates to the fact that Russia had very many problems at that time. Besides, we could see that the Chechen party reacts very aggressively to every step we take. For example, when we tried to take families out of there, they put forward an ultimatum, saying that permission to do this would be given only on condition that some part of arms be left there.

- Whose families do you mean?

- Families of servicemen of the military garrison that was located in Grozny. And, you know, facing such an aggressive reaction at every step, we, let's say, left solving of all these problems until later. Since at the current moment they could not be settled, we meant to be silent about them for some time, or we would have to launch a war, but we didn't want this to happen, actually, it was a concept that the main thing is to avoid military operations. It was the main guideline both for the president and for his team. I can hardly imagine how it could occur in 1994 that we brought our forces into the territory of Chechnya: There was no serious reason that could cause this decision.

- Then why did it suddenly turn out to be possible and even inevitable?

- I think this happened due to some circumstances developed at the same time which played a mean trick with Boris Nikolayevich. He was very emotional with regard to some points, and his environment was very inhomogeneous at that time: Some were strongly against any military actions, others insisted on them.

- Sergey Alexandrovich, can you name the persons from the environment of Yeltsin, who were strongly against the war?

- I know that this was position of Chernomyrdin, Shakhrai, Baturin. I was strongly against any military actions, too. Yes, all the aides of the president, who were close to him, were against the war.

- And who was for the war? Who supported and pushed the idea that it is necessary to send forces?

- You know, it is difficult to specify the names of persons, but I can say, for example, that after Shakhrai was displaced from the position of minister of ethnic affairs and replaced by Yegorov, the situation changed, of course. And after that we became more inclined towards settling of the conflict by

men among hostages. At the same time the minister said that "neither ministry of defense nor General Headquarters gave an order to send them to Chechnya".

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Commentary of the vice-president of Ingooshetia B. Agapov: "Personally I am anxious as far as the ultimatum of Yeltsin is concerned. There are many other ways of peaceful political settlement of the situation in the Chechen Republic. It was necessary to conduct a well-weighted and persistent dialogue with the conflict participants. Since Russia is a big and powerful country it has no right to be provoked by parvenu and pretenders.

There is an impression that Boris Nikolayevich is being crossed up and pushed to decisive actions. A mistake can be made and it will be difficult to eliminate it.

Language of ultimatum is not for the Northern Caucasus. Russian government felt sore about the Chechen problem for three years, 10 more months remained to wait, till the moment when presidential term of Dudayev expires. In such a case the problem would be solved automatically. Certain Chechen politicians are longing for power in Grozny with the help of Russian tanks.

They have no other way to climb the political mountain". (*"Izvestiya", the 1st of December*)

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"B. Yeltsin demonstrated to the country and to the world that he was in fighting mood. Before expiration of the term set by the president of Russia for the Chechen antagonistic parts to disarm, a group of fighter-bomber aircrafts carried out a preemptive strike upon airdromes, where D. Dudayev concentrated aircrafts of his few air forces. It is known that official representatives of RF Ministry of Defense denied information of mass media about involvement of the Ministry to the air raid. However, the existing air traffic control system excludes any possibility of uncontrolled flight of



unidentified aircrafts in the airspace of Russia. Such aircrafts are intercepted by air defense facilities on duty and are easily forced to land, or otherwise are hit. Moreover, they were speaking about fighting machines, which, theoretically speaking, could have bombarded not only suburbs of Grozny, but Russian cities of the Northern Caucasus. So the question about their identity is initially clear". (*"Nezavisimaya gazeta", the 1st of December*)

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## 2nd of December

State Duma delegation headed by Sergey Yushenkov, which came yesterday to Grozny, met minister of foreign affairs Shamsutdin Yusef, held negotiations with vice-president of Chechnya, and later Yushenkov would have a meeting with Dudayev. The authorized representative of the RF president on Chechen matters, minister of ethnic affairs of the RF Nikolai Yegorov and his deputy Alexander Kotenkov have been in the area of armed conflict in the Caucasus since 26th of November. (*Newspaper "Segodnya"*)

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The force-oriented policy in Russian-Chechen relations is doomed to failure, -



military means. Nonetheless, we still were guided by the conception, which was developed by Shakhrai and me: to support opposition and to settle, first of all, social problems relying on opposition. Later we invested into the republic to favor this and to improve at least little by little life of those people, who were not included in the sphere of power [of Dudayev].

- *Do you mean individual help to Nadterechny district uncontrolled by Dudayev?*

- Yes, but later they declared, now, how did they call it, that Council?

- *Interim?*

- Yes, Interim Council. That is why the situation there changed dramatically. Military clashes became more frequent.

- *Head of that Interim Council Umar Avturkhanov said that at that time in 1994 he had a meeting with Sergey Shakhrai and you and that it were you who gave him support in Moscow. Could you tell me at what level the decision to support Interim Council was taken? Why were they the ones, on whom the stake was made?*

- The fact is that generally there were many groups both military and political in

Chechnya. We didn't cooperate with any of them, because close relations with any of the groups would cause increase of the number of our opponents. And when Avturkhanov started consolidation of all groups opposing to Dudayev, I, of course, began to find out details, to ask whether this opposition includes Khasbulatov, Gantamirov, Labazanov. And the answer that I got was positive. All those persons joined the united oppositional group.

- *Did you think that those people were able to overthrow Dudayev and thereby to solve the problem?*

- But, you know, when Avturkhanov came to me on behalf of his Council with a statement in which it was said about military solution, I asked him to delete that. According to different sources, at that time Dudayev's popularity was very low, number of territories controlled by him decreased, his power weakened very much. And, as a result, the opposition began to unite. But I said to Avturkhanov: "Your business is not military action against Dudayev, but it consists first of all in doing your best to settle social problems, those relating to children's education, public healthcare, supply etc., in the very ter-

The fact is that generally there were many groups both military and political in Chechnya. We didn't cooperate with any of them, because close relations with any of the groups would cause increase of the number of our opponents.

ritories that are out of Dudayev's sphere of influence. He agreed with me, and the published statement had not a word about military confrontation. But, I repeat: getting down to actions they gradually began to drift from settlement of social problems to use of military force. And those great sums of money they received, they began to spend on armaments. Their first clashes with Dudayev's group and the following events - are quite different things. The plan to support Interim Council was approved by the president B.N. Yeltsin. He signed a decree on creation of the working group headed by Prime Minister V.S. Chernomyrdin.

- *Avturkhanov said that they got arms and military equipment from the depots of various military units of Russian army. Can you confirm this?*

believes the head of Russia parliamentary delegation, which came today to Grozny, chairman of State Duma security committee S. Yushenkov. According to his information reported from the Chechen capital city on Thursday by telephone, monitoring of the situation at the local level convinced him of the fact that only negotiations can help to find way out of the situation.

According to Yushenkov, the Chechen party does not set forth any conditions in negotiating. On Friday Russian deputies intend to make a trip to the area where prisoners captured during the events of 26-27 November are detained now. The question of their release will be raised during negotiations with Dudayev planned for tomorrow. (*Moscow, 2nd of December, RIA*)

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Members of the State Duma delegation being in Grozny, called the president of Russia B. Yeltsin "to make every effort to stop bombardment of the Chechen capital and other areas of Chechnya".

"If this happens while we are being here, what will happen later?" - it is said in their address sent to Moscow, with which "Interfax" was informed in the defense committee of State Duma.

Members of the delegation - head of the committee S. Yushenkov, deputies E. Pamfilova, A. Shabad, V. Lysenko - who arrived in Grozny on Thursday to hold negotiations with D. Dudayev, ask the president to have an urgent meeting with them after their return to Moscow.

As it became known to the Temporary information center, the chairman of the Federal Council V. Shumeiko does not expect the government of the RF to apply extraordinary measures in Chechnya for disarming of the conflicting parties in the near future. According to the opinion of the upper house speaker, the forces concentrated around Chechnya are basing there to prevent penetration of armed units into the territory of the republic. (*"Interfax", the 2nd of December, 17:00.*)

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"I don't exclude the possibility that Russia applies force measures against Chechnya", - said member of the presidential council E. Pain while talking with RIA "Novosti" correspondent. According to the opinion of this expert in conflictology and ethnic policy, conflicts with application of weapon can be settled only by means of force. Force-based methods, may, in particu-

lar, be applied to protect people's life and strategic objects, and to preserve safety areas.

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However, Pain thinks that in the current conditions it is impossible to impose on Chechnya either a wanted regime, or a president, or a way of governing. Considering integrity of state as an essential condition for solving this political problem, it is necessary to keep balance in application of means in the name of that. "These means should not be such that could lead to a civil war", - the political scientist emphasized.

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If the measures on Chechnya developed by the Security Council of Russia yield no results in the near future, then in this case emergency state can be imposed in this region. This opinion was expressed by vice-premier of the Russian government S. Shakhrai, when he spoke in the press-center of the Conciliation commission on realization of the Social consensus treaty.

"Much will depend on the way the events will be developing in the nearest day or two. If negotiations yield results, then measures, provided by emergency state law can be taken", - said the vice-premier. He believes

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- Yes, but this was later, toward November 1994, after change of leadership in the ministry of ethnic affairs of Russia.

*- There was an episode in the end of 1993 when at a suggestion of Ruslan Aushev you gave your consent to organize a meeting between Dudayev and Yeltsin, and the next day Shakhbray made an announcement that the President of Russia was not going to talk to a bandit?*

- This can be true. We had frequent meetings with Ruslan Aushev, and he was very concerned about the situation in Chechnya because they are neighbors, and he was afraid that Ingooshetia would be drawn into conflict with Russia and didn't want this to happen. The fact is that many leaders of North Caucasian republics insisted on use of force in order to restore the status quo in the Chechen Republic. At one of such meetings Ruslan Aushev really asked about meeting between Yeltsin and Dudayev. But still he had not any plan or preliminary agreements, without preparation. But either at the same day or the next day Dzhokhar appeared on television and called Yeltsin with the worst words. You know, their outbursts against each other did serious harm. I do not know

who instigated Dzhokhar to say those words, but it were the very words that caused such a sharp reaction of Boris Nikolayevich. I should say that I think highly of Ruslan Aushev's position in that very complicated situation and I am very sorry that he was removed from Ingooshetia. Because he did a great deal to protect Ingooshetia from the confrontation, that occurred between Russia and Chechnya.

*- But he was blamed for concealing gunmen in his territory and God knows in what else.*

- They may blame him for anything, but we could see that he tried to make his republic to revive. I made several visits to him and know: he himself faced very serious difficulties in his Ingooshetia. More over, we should appraise his success in protection of his republic from miseries like in Chechnya.

*- Do you know who and how took the decision to send the forces in 1994?*

- After all, all led to the fact that after the clash on 26th of November in Grozny our guys were captured, who went to fight by contract driving the machines, and the final meeting of Security Council of Russia was held. Maybe you have seen the movie of

Alexei Pobortsev, "Beyond the war", in which the meeting was mentioned. I was not present at the meeting and only recently have I learned its content. Grachev and Yegorov spoke there. Nikolai Yegorov said that 70% of the Chechen people would meet the soldiers with salutation and flowers, 20% would take neutral position and only 10% would resist. On this subject he was then supported by Chernomyrdin.

Though Grachev is reproached for his support of military actions, at that time he objected to Yegorov: "I have quite a different information. If you really want the army to be involved in this, give me half a year to make preparations". But he was given only two weeks to prepare and bring the forces to the republic. Well, that was the tactics, which had been used by Gorbachev in his time in the Soviet Union. When a large amount of armor was brought in order to calm down disorders. But we knew that this could not be successful in Chechnya. We had been warned about this in the course of consultations held in Jordan and Syria, where numerous Chechen diasporas live. They told us: "Yes, we are also not satisfied with that power and understand that it causes many

that threat of Chechen terrorism is more dangerous than of any other.

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#### 4th of December

"Three powerful groups of Russian forces are concentrated in the Northern Caucasus for the probable operation on liquidation of gunmen groups in Chechnya", - said the head of the Temporary information center, chairman of Roskompechat' - S. Gryzunov. He stressed that "these groups can be used only after all political and compromise alternatives, which Russian government has today, are exhausted". The head of Roskompechat' didn't specify the period set for realization of those alternatives.

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Negotiations of the matters concerning disarmament of the opposing groups without application of radical political settlement of the Chechen problem are not likely to help overcome the Chechen crisis, - the director of working commission on settlement of the situation in that republic, deputy minister on ethnic affairs and regional policy - V. Mikhailov - said to "Interfax". He said that members of the commission have contacted Grozny and Znamenskaya village, where the headquarters of the opposition is located,

and proposed that the parties should come to the negotiation table in any city of their choice. Till this moment only the Chechen opposition accepted the proposal of the RF.

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The head of the parliamentary delegation of RF State Duma, chairman of the defense committee S. Yushenkov said that "people from "war party", who think that the Chechen problem can be settled by force-based measures, incited the president Boris Yeltsin to initiate the last actions against Chechnya". S. Yushenkov and other delegates, who returned from the North-Caucasian republic, - deputies of State Duma E. Pamfilova, V. Lysenko and A. Shabad - said that they were going to convince B. Yeltsin that "any attempts to settle the situation in Chechnya by military measures are absolutely inadmissible". Participants of the press conference supported initiation of parliamentary investigation to clarify the whole mechanism of planning the assault on Grozny by the opposition on the 26th of November.

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The former speaker of Russian parliament R. Khasbulatov, who headed the so-called oppositional "peace-support group",

is going to leave Chechnya. An "Interfax" correspondent informed that this was declared by him through one of television channels, broadcasting from Tolstoy-Yurt village, where his headquarters is located.

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The commander of Guards Kantemirovskaya division major general Polyakov resigned in protest against the fact that servicemen of his formation had been recruited to be sent in Chechnya behind the back of command. In an interview given to NTV company on Saturday he said that he made a relevant report about this to the major commander of the Moscow military district.

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#### 5th of December

The official Grozny gave consent to negotiations with the working commission on the matters of settlement of the situation in Chechnya, created by the RF government. According to the information given to "Interfax" in the Temporary information center, representative of administration of the Chechen leader D. Dudayev provided this information to the minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy of the RF N. Yegorov. The Chechen opposition had

troubles, but be aware: you can do anything but you should not bring forces into the territory of Chechnya. This will lead to dramatic and undesirable change of the situation". This was what happened then, unfortunately, and I think the events that occurred on the 26th of November, had a strong negative effect. And the people, who were close to Boris Nikolayevich, probably, influenced and instigated him to approve those extreme measures. And, you know, we prepared quite a different decree after the 26th of November, it was signed by our ministers, except the minister of internal affairs, and I sent it to Boris Nikolayevich. It was said in that document that it was necessary to impose emergency state in Grozny and to stabilize the situation to some degree. But he didn't sign that decree.

- Did you suppose that in this way you could settle the situation at that moment?

- Yes, we supposed that everything would be calmed down, and it would be possible to localize the conflict. But, why speak about it? The decree was not signed.

- But why the possibility to negotiate with Dudayev himself was not considered, the more especially as he had been the leader of

Absolute distrust of both parties to each other had been created, and there was no hope that it would be possible to overcome it by any means. That is why all the actions demonstrated such an exasperation.

Besides, we had to improve the state of things in the country. It was horrible at that time - both economic and politic.

*the Republic for several years? Is it possible that the goal of Russian authorities was to overthrow him, in spite of the probable consequences of such development of events?*

- You know, I think that at that time the most upsetting thing that can ever happen in anyone's life happened: Absolute distrust of both parties to each other had been created, and there was no hope that it would be possible to overcome it by any means. That is why all the actions demonstrated such an exasperation. Besides, we had to improve the state of things in the country. It was horrible at that time - both economic and politic. Remember the awful confrontation between the Supreme Soviet and the presi-

dent. Perhaps, the fact that the Supreme Soviet was headed by a Chechen had some influence on the situation. This could have increased distrust and hostility.

- Who felt distrust? The president only or his environment felt the same?

- This feeling was common for both Yeltsin, of course, and his environment. Because though I haven't been in Chechnya myself, many of those who have been there felt that electrified atmosphere. They returned depressed, they had no hope that it would be possible to settle the situation, to achieve any firm agreement, do you understand?! And Dudayev behaved himself in a strange way. Speaking before TV cameras, he said very abusive words about Yeltsin, and Boris Nikolayevich didn't mince his words too, spoke about Dzhokhar in an uncompromising manner, all this created a deep mutual aversion. If each party would have made even half a step towards reconciliation, then, possibly, it would have been possible to prevent the catastrophe.

- Don't you think that if environment of both would have demonstrated good will, then something could have been changed to better?

given consent to the Russian proposal earlier. Meanwhile, vice-president of Chechnya Zelimhan Yandarbiyev said to "Interfax" that the Chechen authorities "gave their consent to negotiations only with Russia and not with U. Avturkhanov". The matter for the negotiations, according to his words, should be "establishing interstate relations between Russia and the independent Chechen Republic". ("Interfax", 17:00)

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The Temporary information center informed "Interfax" that Dudayev's emissaries "are recruiting foreign mercenaries for the purposes of possible performing acts of sabotage and terrorism". According to the informed sources it is known that "foreign terrorist armed groups are coming to Chechnya". For example, members of Ukrainian nationalistic organization UNA-UNSO and mercenaries from Afghanistan have arrived to Grozny. Altogether up to 300 armed terrorists arrived to Chechnya over several days. ("Interfax", 17:00)

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The final measures on settlement of the conflict in Chechnya will be developed on the 8th of December at the meeting of the Security Council of the RF. This information

was provided by Defense Minister of Russia P. Grachev, who came to Mozdok (North Ossetia). The head of the military department stressed that the main goal of his trip to the North Caucasus is search for ways of peaceful settlement of the Chechen crisis. He also said that he was going to meet D. Dudayev and representatives of opposition on Tuesday to develop method of conflict settlement.

According to Grachev's words, if peaceful methods of conflict settlement give no results, in this case the law in the republic will be maintained by "force methods". However he assured that "the forces will not destroy the city". "We will take actions by separate assault groups", - said the minister. ("Interfax", the 5th of December, 22:00)

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The heads of the power departments of Russia, who participated in the conference on the Chechen problem in Mozdok, say that the conflict should be settled by peaceful means. "A dialog is essential for political settlement of the conflict. However, if this is not achieved, other resources and methods can be applied", - commander in chief of the border-security forces of Russia A. Nikolayev said to "Interfax". Besides, he said that an

alternative was discussed at the conference for the case D. Dudayev would refuse the Moscow proposal on peaceful settlement. According to the words of the general, threat of internationalization of the conflict, caused by sending of gunmen to Chechnya from abroad, should not be ignored in this situation.

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Deputy of State Duma, member of the "Choice of Russia" group A. Shabad warned the Russian federal authorities against the military settlement of the Chechen conflict. In an interview given to "Interfax" he expressed his opinion that even success of the military operation on capture of Grozny will lead to negative results. "We will see the second Caucasian war that will last for many years", - he stressed.

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"Participation of RF Armed forces in any action against Chechnya is anti-constitutional, because the Basic law of Russia says that the mission of the army is to defend the country against external threat". This was said by the well-known expert on North Caucasian problems, retired lieutenant general Alfred Gaponenko at a press conference in Moscow.



- In order this could have happened, it was necessary for the people from the close environments of both presidents to establish a closer contact between one another. But they didn't seek communication either.

- *Do you mean Dudayev's environment?*

- No, environment of Boris Nikolayevich. Yet, Dudayev's too. For example, their manner to communicate reminded me of some reconnaissance maneuvers. All this could not inspire confidence. Though, Dudayev made a friendly step towards me, he presented me with a book with a beautiful inscription, and I am very grateful to him for this sign of confidence.

- *Did you speak to him personally too?*

- No, unfortunately. Once, for example, Galya Starovoytova took the receiver and called Dzhokhar and was speaking to him easily. Sometimes it came to my mind to call him too. But we were not acquainted, and this can stop too. Besides, acts of chief executives are important in this case: When you act on behalf of the president it is not the same when you act on your own initiative, because you do not even know if this mission is assigned to someone else. I do not justify us. I think that being seniors, we should have

found an approach to find ways to start negotiating process after all.

- *What influence do you think this war had on the country and society?*

- I think the most unfortunate. Because, at that time, we were trying to strengthen our position in Europe and preparing to enter PACE. But we were imposed a condition - to put an end to the war in Chechnya. We were preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Victory over fascism, but we could not be in festive mood at the time the war in Chechnya was taking place. Our human rights defenders suffered the most. The country split and the human rights defenders caught an attack from supporters of war, among which there were many democrats too. And the result was very sad: Thousands of dead and banished from the territory of Chechnya people of different nations, discredited army, and the authorities, which lost their credit of trust.

- *And one more, final question: there is an opinion that all the current negative phenomena of social and political life of the country are due to the policy of those years, to some extent. Do you think that the environment of president Yeltsin with you being a*

*part of it is responsible, to some extent at least, for the changes, which followed the war?*

- At that time I was the chairman of the Conciliation commission on realization of the "Social consensus treaty", and just after the war began, I said: We have no social consensus, moreover - we dealt a heavy blow to our own democratic principles. We declared them and we restored the psychological state of the Soviet society, when we tried to solve problems with the help of tanks and arms. By the way, the consecutive powers took advantages of the situation, when maintaining new line of command.

Moreover, it is impossible to deny that the war marked the beginning of terrorist attacks. Before the war we didn't hear about them and now we can see and hear echoes of that war in every corner of Russia. And this traumatizes public conscience very much, it is still in a state of fear and uncertainty, it is under influence of different rumors. Besides, the society is split: Some think that the evil originates from the Chechen, others think that it originates from authorities. But today society needs solidarity, conditions of trust and collaboration in order to achieve peaceful purposes. All this is in danger due to the war.

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Leader of the major group "Choice of Russia" in State Duma, Y. Gaydar characterised the actions of Russian power structures and of government bodies in Chechnya as a provocation, aimed against the president of Russia. Such comment was given by him at press-conference for declaration of the group accepted in the first half of the day at co-ordination Council of "Choice of Russia".

The group demanded from the president, in particular, to define the scope of responsibility of the ministry of defense of Russia - P. Grachev, director of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service - S. Stepashin, secretary of the Security Council - O. Lobov, minister of ethnic affairs - N. Yegorov.

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"The only chance for the RF president B. Yeltsin to "keep his position" till the next elections, saying nothing of election winning, is to establish order in the Chechen Republic as soon as possible", - this opinion was expressed by the leader of the liberal democratic union "12 December" B. Fedorov at a press conference in Moscow.

In B. Fedorov's opinion, the president should take the most resolute actions,

within the limits of the Constitution of the RF, "regardless of any estimations or interpretations", - up to and including bringing of military forces to the territory of Chechnya.

Actually, gunmen groups hold control over part of the Russian territory today - and where is the federal power and its actions?" - inquires B. Fedorov.

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#### 6th of December

Negotiations between the minister of defense of Russia P. Grachev and D. Dudayev began about 16:00 in the Ingoosh village Sleptovskaya, 75 km to the South from the Chechen capital city.

Representatives of the Chechen opposi-

tion, including the head of the Interim Council U. Avturkhanov are ready to give order to lay down arms in case of adequate response from the regime of Grozny. This was stated during the meeting in Mozdok with the minister of defense of Russia P. Grachev, along with proposal to hold free elections after the general disarmament of all the armed groups. P. Grachev denied the rumor that five Russian army servicemen went over to official Grozny. (*"Interfax", the 6th of December, 17:00*)

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A meeting between P. Grachev and D. Dudayev ended. After this P. Grachev said that "some mutual understanding is achieved, but one more meeting is necessary to carry on a longer conversation".

The minister also said that the negotiations resulted in a number of political problems that should be analyzed in detail. "But we spoke as a military with a military, - he said, - and we found a common language". Grachev said that he would report to the president B. Yeltsin and to Security Council about the result of the negotiations on the 7th of December, and then "the position Russia will take in respect of Chechnya" would be determined.



# Ruslan AUSHEV:

## «Chechnya, Russia or Caucasus - none of them needed that war»

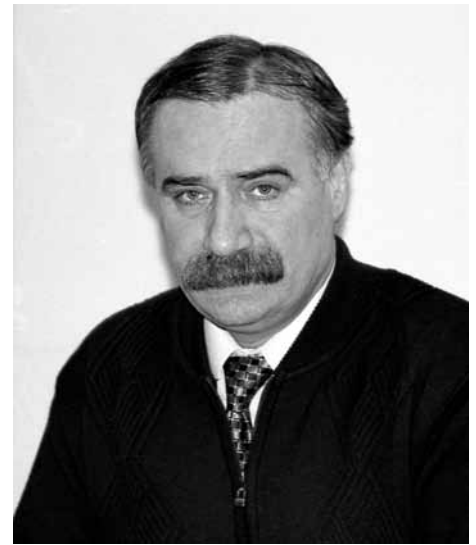
- *There are lots of various opinions concerning what happened fifteen years ago. Some say the situation could have been saved without resorting to the war, others consider the war to have been inevitable. What is your view point on that today?*

- I haven't changed it. The Chechen Republic, the Russian Federation or the Caucasus - none of them wanted that war. What goes on in the Caucasus today dates back to 1994. Anyone who can forecast the way the situation will develop, who can estimate the consequences the certain steps can lead to during one, two or three years,

must be in the know. I strongly objected such a turnaround of events, I took every effort to warn the Russian leaders, I used to tell them: you cannot even imagine the future consequences!

- *You seem to have been the only regional leader who often talked to the president of Chechnya and took attempts to set up negotiations between Dzhokhar Dudayev and Boris Yeltsin. Why did you fail?*

- Because there was the so-called Dudayev's opposition which was to a certain extent supported by the Russian president's administration. All the Dudayev



meeting initiatives were turned down, partially on behalf of theirs. Let's recall the 26th of November, 1994, when the so-called paramilitary forces of the Nadterechny District entered Grozny. They were very persistent in convincing both the president's administration (headed by Philatov at that time) and Yeltsin to give them weapons and all things necessary to "solve" the Dudayev's "problem". I can clearly remember that I received information about the armed

In his turn, D. Dudayev said that he was satisfied with the results of the meeting and announced that the Russian servicemen captured on the 26th of November will be released. (*"Interfax", the 6th of December, 22:00*)

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After the tete-a-tete meeting in Sleptsovskaya village was over, minister of defense P. Grachev and president of Chechnya D. Dudayev "came in the hall, asked to pour out champagne and said that the war would not be started". The head of administration of Sunzhenskiy district of Ingooshetia A. Pliev gave this information to "Interfax".

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President of Tataria, member of the Federal Council M. Shaymiev says that a civil war instigated from the outside started in Chechnya. He stressed that yet it is possible to find peaceful means of crisis settlement today. M. Shaymiev believes that Federal Council should deal with representatives of statutory authorities of Chechnya. "In spite of the fact that not everyone likes to think so, but it is Dudayev who represents Chechnya", - said the president of Tataria.

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The Russian Orthodox Church support only peaceful means of conflict settlement in Chechnya. This is said in a statement of patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Alexy. "Any growth of violation in the present time, - the patriarch stresses, - can cause bloodshed aggravation and inclusion of many new participants".

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Currently the Russian society encounters "outrageous reluctance of the higher bodies of state power to provide trustworthy information about its activity", - it is noted in the statement of the Union of Journalists of Russia, Committee for the protection of freedom of expression and rights of journalists, Glasnost Defense Foundation. The authors of the statement say that it becomes apparent firstly in the events in Chechnya and operation against "MOST-bank" in Moscow. It is noted in the document that "information flow coming from the presidential and government apparatuses, ministers and power departments is contradictory and mutually exclusive".

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The Russia State Duma committee on ethnic affairs warned that relying on "military and force-based methods for restora-

tion of constitutional rule of law, order and peace" in Chechnya can be "dangerous" and "absolutely without future". "Only on the basis of negotiations and achieving of consensus, only by political methods it is possible to achieve the goal set in the address of the president of the RF", - it is noted in the statement of the committee.

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"On the 6th of December, 1994 Dudayev signed order № 118 "For establishing of the governmental commission for negotiations with the Russian Federation". In spite of all our previous agreements, he assigned me as the chairman of the commission, consisting of 9 people, though the subject of negotiations, specified in his order - regulation relations between the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and the Russian Federation - did not comply with my official duties as a minister of economy and finance. That was specialization of the minister of foreign affairs". (*"Records of Dudayev's minister of economy and finance" Taymaz Abubakarov, 1998*)

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### 7th of December

A meeting of Security Council chaired by the RF president B. Yeltsin was held in the Kremlin to discuss the Question of "process





I was told, like, it's fine, it'll take us no time to bring the order. And I used to explain: the war is bound to start, and you cannot imagine where it will lead!

columns heading for the Nadterechny District. And then they used to ask: how come there are weapons in the Caucasus? But it was they who delivered them, and the weapons were later distributed all across the Caucasus for a song. One had only to come to the place, say that he is against Dudayev, for his ID data to be recorded and arms to be given. And later the cleansing raids were conducted by the Federal troops in 1994, 1995 and 1996 in Samashki and other villages according to these lists. The authorities used to come and say: 250 sub-machine guns were handed in this village to create detachments against Dudayev, and we need all 250 of them to be submitted. But the reason the people had taken them was not because they were going to fight Dudayev. Why, the mountain dwellers just love weapons! Indeed, they were neither for Dudayev, nor against him. They simply thought: I can only take a gun, sign a paper

and that's it! The war will write everything off.

I believe, both the Russian Federation political situation and a difficult economic one played their role alongside with many other factors that brought the country to the brink of war.

- *Today every one of Yeltsin's ex-councilors say that they were against the war, that such decisions as bringing troops to Chechnya were made solely by the President.*

- Nothing of the kind. I cannot remember a single Administration official, President's assistant or councilor who would be against the bringing of troops. If they really wanted to they would have convinced Yeltsin not to do that. But as far as I know, nobody objected. That is why they were all up in arms against me: now, why does he stick his neck out? All the leaders of the North Caucasus republics signed up a letter to Yeltsin requesting to establish order in Chechnya. I was proposed to sign it as well.

- *By whom?*

- The president's administration officials, but I refused. I said: this will launch a war. I was told, like, it's fine, it'll take us no

time to bring the order. And I used to explain: the war is bound to start, and you cannot imagine where it will lead!

- *What did Dudayev say in a private talk with you when he asked to assist his meeting Yeltsin? What did he propose? What was he ready to do, and what was he not?*

- We talked about the Tatarstan's variant. As far as I remember, we discussed the authority the federal center will have. Moreover, those were the basic powers. But no one could predict the outcome; the most important thing was to start negotiations. Who could have said in advance what the parties would arrange for? He might have agreed even to a less favorable alternative for the Chechen Republic. Not many people recall the November negotiations between Dudayev and Grachev in Slepkovskaya village. They had a private talk, provided by the head of the Sunzhensky District administration, but what they actually discussed remains a secret so far. At that time I attended the Federation Council in Moscow. And this meeting was unexpected; they must have appointed it using their own channels. Grachev flew there, accompanied by Yerin. But Stepashin, the director of the Federal

of realization of measures on restoration of constitutional rule of law, order and peace in the Chechen Republic". According to the information of the presidential press service, attention was given to reports of ministers who returned from the North Caucasus. The president demanded to "abide strictly the Constitution and other laws of the RF relating to protection of rights and liberties of citizens, public order, and prevention of activities of illicit armed formations and sparking of national and religions strife". (*"Interfax", the 7th of December, 17:00*)

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Another rally in support of independence of Chechnya began on the central square of Grozny. According to "Interfax" correspondent, several thousand people are participating. It was announced at the rally, that "soldiers-volunteers are coming to Grozny from remote regions of Chechnya and from Russia".

An "Interfax" correspondent, having taken a trip along Grozny-Nazran highway, notes that heavy trucks loaded with concrete slabs are along the highway in the territory of Chechnya and Ingooshetia and it is possible to block the road traffic at any moment. (*"Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00*)

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The Security Council of the RF called attention of "all kinds of mass media, all the publicity to the fact that there is no conflict between Chechnya and Russia". This is said in the statement of the Security Council, promulgated in the Federal Council. It is said in that document that "illicit armed groups are just struggling for power in that part of the RF. Armed clashes resulting in mass human losses should be stopped immediately and all the conflicting armed groups should be declared to be an outlaw",

It is stressed in the document that it is necessary to take all constitutional measures to disarm and liquidate illicit armed groups.

Coordination of all governmental structures' efforts to restore constitutional order in Chechnya is entrusted to N. Yegorov, who was appointed deputy of the prime-minister of the RF government by president's order.

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The Federal Counter-Intelligence Service of Russia made a statement that "position of army and security forces on Chechnya is defined by the Constitution of the country, according to which Chechnya is a con-

stituent territory of the Russian Federation and therefore all force structures consider their activity in that North-Caucasian republic as activity in the territory of the RF". This is said in a statement of Public Relations Center of FCIS.

It was noted there that nature of the situation in Chechnya became extremely dangerous for vital interests and national security of Russia. Trying to retain its power by all means the anti-national regime of Dudayev relies upon ex-offenders, gunmen of Turkish extremist organization "Grey Wolves", Afghan Mujahideen and other foreign terrorist armed groups".

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82 Russian servicemen took part in the failed attack of opposition on Grozny on the 26th of November, and 55 of them are still missing. Vice-chairman of the defense committee E. Loginov gave this information at the press conference of LDPR parliamentary group. The leader of LDPR V. Zhirinovskiy demanded from journalists not to blame soldiers, who just complied with the orders and did not asked "provocative" questions like who and under what conditions recruited them".

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Counter-Intelligence Service, wasn't there. It looks like he hadn't been put into the picture. As I understood it, they didn't want him to be in the know. And then they came out and announced: "We, two generals, have agreed. There will be no war." But the majority at the Security Council meeting was for the war, and they turned the tide. Grachev was just about to be called a coward and was nearly dismissed from office.

- Today many people say that at that time both Yerin and Grachev were against the bringing of troops.

- Yes, I think, Yerin and Grachev came to Moscow to press for the troops not to be brought as everything could have been settled down peacefully. But there were the vice-premier Yegorov and others steering the country to a war.

- But some think Dudayev wasn't consistent in his actions.

- Dzhokhar made mistakes, that's true. But I know him and I consider it to be a pure emotional reaction. Besides, when tanks entered Grozny November 26 and the opposition tried to take the city, they were defeated. Most probably, Dzhokhar thought that any troop bringing will lead to nothing,

as it had happened in Georgia and in the Baltic states. But this situation was contrary. At first Dzhokhar hasn't considered it, I think. And when he realized what was going on, the world situation, not only in Russia, changed dramatically. And there was

Most probably, Dzhokhar thought that any troop bringing will lead to nothing, as it had happened in Georgia and in the Baltic states. But this situation was contrary. At first Dzhokhar hasn't considered it, I think. And when he realized what was going on, the world situation, not only in Russia, changed dramatically. And there was no one to resist the launch of war.

no one to resist the launch of war. Then he hit me up and asked to organize a meeting with Yeltsin. I appealed to Korzhakov, to Yeltsin; I said Dudayev was calling, he is ready to come over and asks for a 20-minute talk. It was the beginning of December. Korzhakov was against the war as well, as far as I know. But other people

and circumstances that were more important for Yeltsin, clenched the matter.

- The Russian military explained their failure and setbacks in the first war by the fact that their enemy was a better equipped and trained regular army of Chechnya. Being not only a military person but a person being well up on Chechnya as well, what can you say about that?

- The only thing the Chechen Republic had was their spirit. No army can defeat a spirit. If there's no such, it's hopeless. The Russian army had neither idea, nor facilities. The Chechen army had only spirit; nothing to be said about the facilities as well. But they had the idea, which won.

- What is the major result of this war?

- The situation we have now in the Caucasus. What have we achieved by means of this war? Nothing. Today we can see tension in Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria already. Every day there're emergencies. Every now and then we hear of gunmen's sorties. We ended by turning the Caucasian society to the radical one. It is quite clear that the Caucasus has been a turbulent region from everlasting. But there's no need spreading discord,

## 8th of December

Comments of newspaper "Segodnya" on statement of the Security Council: "Nikolai Yegorov, minister of ethnic affairs, appointed yesterday a vice-premier will take measures for restoration of constitutional order in the Chechen Republic". After he is granted new powers Mr. Yegorov, Kuban "boss", completely replaces the law officer - Sergey Shakhrai (thus, one of requirements of Grozny - not to deal with Mr. Shakhrai is satisfied by this appointment) in the Northern Caucasus. We may expect that the new deputy prime-minister will not waste power on theoretical disputes, but will undertake resolute actions".

The official statement of Russian structures, mutual preparations for war in Mozdok and Grozny show that Russia is ready for "appeasement" of part of its territory, and Chechnya is ready for war against Moscow. But it depends on Mr. Yegorov's decision whether arms will be taken up or not".

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Negotiations among the working commission of the Russian government on the Chechen conflict settlement, official Grozny and opposition will begin on the 12th of December at 15:00 in the Museum of Fine

Arts in Vladikavkaz. On the part of the federal authorities 12 people headed by the deputy minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy V. Mikhailov will participate in negotiations. It is supposed that the subject of the negotiations will be problems, relating to stopping of bloodshed, laying down of arms and establishing of normal relations.

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Russia is not going to cardinaly change the approach to Chechen crisis, director of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service S. Stepashin said to "Interfax". "There is a problem concerning disarmament of the illicit armed groups and restoration of the constitutional order over the territory of Chechnya", - he said, explaining that he came to Mozdok to "implement the decision of the Security Council on imposing of the constitutional order over the territory of the Russian Federation". RF Vice-premier N. Yegorov also arrived in Mozdok.

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A group of border-security troops of Russia in the Northern Caucasus is strengthened by 50%, the chief of General Headquarters Alexander Tymko said to "Interfax". According to his words, this was done to prevent entry of armed gunmen

units and transfer of weapon through the border. Besides, due to aggravation of the situation of Chechnya extra units were posted along the perimeter of North Caucasian borders. A. Tymko thinks that "agreement only cannot ensure that the parties conflicting in Chechnya will lay down arms". "Without force-based intervention there can be no voluntary disarmament", - he pointed.

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Deputies of RF State Duma summarizing the results of the executive session on the Chechen situation assumed as a basis the draft act of parliament, prepared by the chairman of the security committee - V. Ilyuhin. This documents offers to admit "that work of the federal bodies of authority over the settlement of the situation in Chechnya was highly unsatisfactory".

They recommend that the president of Russia apply any means of "political and legal nature" to put an end to the armed confrontation in Chechnya and to restore rule of law in the Republic.

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The Federal Council of Russia condemned actions of some departments of federal authorities, aimed at settlement of



adding fuel to this smoldering fire. And there are refugees, devastation now; a new especially radical and warlike movement appeared - Salafi. And the future consequences are obscure.

It was clear, another war was approaching. The country was flying to arms. Military people carried on quite straight conversations. Boozy generals used to say: we'll settle with Chechens yet!

- After the first war several talks between the Chechen and Russian leaders were arranged. In May 1997 a meeting of Yeltsin and Maskhadov took place during which a treaty between the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and the Russian Federation was signed. Your country hosted many such meetings. What was their aim? Why was no positive result finally achieved?

- Because nobody wanted to get any results. You could tell, such were the circumstances. The first war was stopped by the presidential election of 1996. And then, after they were over, Chechnya was virtually blockaded: there was no economy, a per-

fect disorder and thousands of armed people. Basayev, Udugov - they all played their own games. And Maskhadov was mounting the ruins, with no economy, no money; what could he do then?

From the look of it, Russia held negotiations for the sake of negotiations. It was clear, another war was approaching. The country was flying to arms. Military people carried on quite straight conversations. Boozy generals used to say: we'll settle with Chechens yet!

- Not long ago, the current president of Ingushetia, Yevkurov, said that before letting refugees enter Ingushetia during the Chechen wars the country had to get ready in a better way, which wasn't done and that is why the refugees brought a lot of problems.

- I was surprised to have read that. What else could the president of a brotherly, neighboring republic undertake, when there were so many women, children, old men leaving the town being bombed? Why, refuse passage? What kind of person would do that? A person who at the same time attends mosque, prays, considers himself a Moslem?

- And how many refugees were there?

- During the first war we sheltered 150 thousand refugees, during the second one - 280 thousand. After the Khasavyurt Accord [after the first war] about fifteen percent of them stayed in Ingushetia. They refused to go back. In such a grave situation the political leaders, especially those of Chechnya and Ingushetia, must have cold hands, self-control, civic courage, and patience but not wrangle over things, to everybody's marvel. Most important is that we saved people then.

- Do you think there's hope that the Caucasus will soon calm down?

- The present moment is characterized by a different stage of discord. Earlier, the Chechen Republic's independence was at stake. Today those who call themselves gunmen and are located in the mountains speak of different things. They've become radical. Just like Afghanistan after the war. All this resulted in the rising of Taliban. And that goes for the Caucasus, too. A boy aging 5 in 1992 is now 22. Dzhokhar used to allure people with his speeches. They ate out of his hands. Later on many of them changed their view point but are still fighting.

the Chechen conflict by force-based means, and proposed that the president of the RF B. Yeltsin undertakes "constitutional efforts" to normalize the situation in that Caucasian republic. The resolution of the Federal Council recommends that the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation investigate acts of some persons, who were involved in bombardment of Grozny, and to decide on their responsibility. The Federal Council addressed to the leaders of the parties conflicting in Chechnya with a proposal to stop the armed confrontation immediately and to enter into political negotiations.

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33 deputies of the Federal Council classified the "actions of executive officers, who took the decision and performed unauthorized by the Federal Council military operations, including application of tanks and aviation, resulted in many victims among civilians" in Chechnya as criminal.

In their political statement those deputies blame first of all ministers Grachev, Erin and Stepashin (ministers of Defense, Internal Affairs and Federal Counter-Intelligence Service, respectively) for that tragedy.

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#### 9th of December

13 State Duma deputies of democratic orientation called upon the RF president B. Yeltsin to speak on republican television in the nearest future and to explain his positions in relation to settlement of the Chechen crisis". "We are sure that in case of bringing the forces in Chechnya the whole responsibility for the bloodshed will fall on you personally, and the democratic system of Russia will be changed into police system, - they say in the telegram sent to the president by the deputies on Friday. - You will lose favor of millions of Russian citizens, who aim at peaceful democratic development of Russia". The telegram was signed among others by Sergey Kovalev, Victor Sheynis, Lev Ponomarev, Anatoly Shabad, Nicolai Molostov, Pavel Bunich, Aleksey Emeljanov, and Irina Khakamada.

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President B. Yeltsin signed a decree "On measures on preventing activities of illicit armed formations in the territory of the Chechen Republic and in the area of Ossetia-Ingosh conflict".

It is noted in that document that

"Security Council of the RF acknowledged presence of illicit armed groups, acts of which over a long period are causing bloodshed, take lives of people and violate the rights of citizens of the RF in the Chechen Republic and some other areas of the North Caucasus".

"In accordance with clauses "e" and "f" of Article 114 of the RF Constitution, the president entrusts the RF government to implement all the necessary measures to ensure the state security, the rule of law, human rights and freedoms, protection of public order and crime control, disarmament of all the illicit armed formations". ("Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00)

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Minister of Defense of Russia P. Grachev arrived at the airport of Mozdok (North Ossetia) on Friday evening. According to the information from "Interfax", P. Grachev did not comment the purpose of his visit to the Northern Caucasus to the journalists.

Minister of Internal Affairs of the RF V. Yerin arrived in Mozdok together with the minister of defense. At present time there are also head of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Council Service S. Stepashin and minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy,



# Vyacheslav MIKHAILOV: «Peace talks were opposed by many»

Since 1994 numerous attempts have been made to settle negotiations between the federal center and Dzhokhar Dudayev, to ease the military confrontation. Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich Mikhailov, a famous international relationships officer on the part of Moscow, was appointed the head of the negotiations workgroup. At that

time he was a Deputy Minister and later on became the Minister of Ethnic Policy.

Nevertheless, despite the extensive experience of the workgroup head, and the professional and personal qualities of the negotiation participants, none of the persistent attempts of the 90s was successful. Chechnya was swept with hurricanes which the people called "the first war" and "the second war" that brought mass human losses and immense destruction... Why were neither the hostilities halted nor negotiations settled? **Maria Katysheva**, our reporter, has interviewed **Vyacheslav Mikhailov**, the head of the Department of National and Federative Relations (Russian Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation).

- Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich, today seems to be the time to reconsider the events that took place in Chechnya 15 years ago. The negotiations, of which you were an indispensable participant, was widely covered by the press; newspapers often published both your and Arcady Volsky's interviews. Nevertheless, there was bound to be something behind those publications - which wasn't discussed for some reasons, which was the exact thing to impede the peace. Today, when that situation is becoming time-distant, being analyzed, when everyone interprets the events in their own way, it would be interesting to look at the Chechen war behind the scenes, so to speak. Why did the peace initiatives come to a deadlock? What mysteries lie behind the phrase "breakdown of talks"?

vice-premier N. Yegorov in Mozdok. ("Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00)

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"The conflict in Chechnya can be settled by any means that are at disposal of the state and are allowed in accordance with the rules of international law", - says speaker of State Duma I. Rybkin. In an interview given to "Interfax" he said that it is inadmissible and anti-humanistic to tie hands and feet of president B. Yeltsin and the government in the face of armed criminals".

I. Rybkin believes that "we have been watching as impartially as an outside observer for a very long time how people in Chechnya had been suffering for more than three years". ("Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00)

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The chairman of the parliamentary committee on defense S. Yushenkov ("Choice of Russia" group) leaves open the possibility that "if federal executive authorities of Russia will decide to use military forces to settle the conflict in the Chechen Republic, State Duma can create a deputy commission to lay an accusation against president B. Yeltsin". He noted that in this

case the president can be charged "with sparking of national strife and provoking of indiscriminate killings of Russian citizens supposedly for the sake of establishing of constitutional order in the territory of Chechnya". ("Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00)

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General Dudayev made an offer to the former president of the USSR M. Gorbachev to act as intermediary between him and Russian authorities. In the interview given to "Interfax" M. Gorbachev said that general Dudayev had called him and offered "to provide assistance in settlement of the Chechen conflict". ("Interfax", the 7th of December, 22:00)

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B. Yeltsin issues decree №2166 "On measures on preventing activities of illicit armed formations".

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## 11th of December

At 8:30 first tank force groups, consisting of subdivision units of armed forces and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, crossed Ingoosh border from the direction of the North Ossetia and moved out in the direction of Chechnya.



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## 12th of December

"In early morning of the 12th of December, 1994 our delegation went to Vladikavkaz. Composition of the delegation could not be favorable for conducting full-scale political negotiations. Moreover, the negotiation would be held on the background of fruitless meeting between Dudayev and P. Grachev and military confrontation of the parties. Probably, when forming the delegation Dudayev did not take seriously the possibility that things could take such a turn.

By 11 o'clock of the specified date we came up to Ingoosh-Ossetia board

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*What events and situations were not spoken of publicly?*

- As it is known, B. Yeltsin signed a decree containing a negotiation paragraph on the 1st of December. Attempts to settle down the conflict peacefully have been made since 1991. But for some reasons they were never successful. Certain forces in both Moscow and Grozny profited from the tension. They cashed in on weapons but mostly on oil. While the situation in the republic was getting worse, and the violence was thriving causing a huge surge of refugees, different scenarios were being developed. By the end of 1994 it became clear that the supporters of forced problem solution won the day. It became clear that the troops will be brought into. But yet they were not. According to the abovementioned paragraph of the president's decree a negotiation group was formed with me as its head. All of the group members including me clearly understood that this step was made while watching the reaction of international society. On the departure day, when our delegation consisting of State Duma deputies, well-known scientists and responsible people was at the Chkalovsky

airport, we came to know that the troops had started to advance towards Chechnya. And the question if it was still reasonable to fly to negotiations in Vladikavkaz appeared quite naturally. I said then: "Howbeit, we have the president's decree, we have the government's decision. We as law-abiding citizens must obey." Besides, the negotiations held during attacks should not necessarily lead to negative results, so people can come to an agreement even during actions. But I said: "Those who want to stay, may stay." No one refused to go then. Our group left for Vladikavkaz in full force.

And there were also certain events preceding the choice of the negotiating venue.

As it is known, B. Yeltsin signed a decree containing a negotiation paragraph on the 1st of December. Attempts to settle down the conflict peacefully have been made since 1991. But for some reasons they were never successful. Certain forces in both Moscow and Grozny profited from the tension. They cashed in on weapons but mostly on oil.

D. Dudayev was trying to give the talks an international status and insisted on choosing one of the foreign capitals; Vilnius, for example, would have been very suitable for him. We offered to meet in one of the North Caucasian towns. Vladikavkaz was not on this list, by the way. When it started to seem that it's impossible to find any mutually acceptable venue, Galazov offered Vladikavkaz and Dudayev suddenly agreed. Thus, we took flight to the talks, and at the same time our troops were advancing to Grozny. At that time my immediate supervisor, minister of ethnic affairs N. Yegorov in capacity of vice-premier, and power ministers were in Vladikavkaz. So we had a conversation of, so to speak, a moralizing nature. I was being insistently told that the negotiations were a mere formality, like, don't you grasp it? However, I considered such an approach not serious. My life experience and many years of the CPSU Central Committee staffwork where I was head of department allowed me to speak without looking back at ranks and titles. I remarked that I was in no need for patriotic education at that time, and that I myself could teach anyone else in this respect. I said that if we

and were held up there for about one hour. The problem was that from the Ossetia direction a huge column of Russian forces was moving in our direction, and we had to let it pass because military controllers didn't want to hear anything about any delegations or negotiations. At some moment we even wanted to go back to Grozny, because new situation led in principle to a change of nature and pattern of the forthcoming negotiations and made them ambiguous. However, feeling of responsibility for the experienced moment made us move further to negotiations, which were planned at 14:00 by agreement with V. Mikhailov. On arriving in the place, first of all I made a strong protest against two-faced policy of the Kremlin, which under cover of peaceful negotiations started military aggression and, therefore, is going to speak from a position of force. V. Mikhailov assured me that he had known nothing of bringing the forces into Chechnya and that he had received that message only in the airport several minutes before departure of his delegation from Vladikavkaz". (*Reminiscences of T. Abubakarov*)

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In Vladikavkaz, the capital city of North Ossetia, negotiations on settlement of the conflict in the Chechen Republic are held. Negotiations are conducted between the working commission of the government of the RF, headed by the deputy of the minister of ethnic affairs and regional policy Vyacheslav Mikhailov, and delegation of the Chechen Republic, headed by the minister of economy and finance Taiman Abubakarov. According to the sources from the RF government, the parties have to struggle with difficulty along the dialogue. Basing on the Constitution of Russia, the Russian delegation offers to start disarmament of illicit armed formations immediately. The Chechen party insists in complete withdrawal of forces of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defense of Russia from the territory of the Chechen Republic and then offers to develop mechanism of disarmament of illicit armed formations in the territory of Chechnya. (*ITAR-TASS, 12th of December*)

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#### **20th of December**

"Subject to Decree of the president of the Russian Federation "On restoration of federal territorial bodies of executive

power over the territory of the Chechen Republic" of the 17th of December 1994 №2200" government of the RF issues decree № 1411 "On territorial administration of the federal executive bodies in the Chechen Republic".

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#### **21st of December**

At a meeting of the Security Council of the RF held on the 21st of December 1994 P. Grachev acknowledges that: After the operation of Russian forces aimed at blocking of the Chechen Republic and Grozny city began on the 11th of September of this year, military political situation is getting more tense. Position of Dudayev's regime finds broad support among the population of Chechnya. Units of Russian forces encounter strong resistance on all the ways to the capital city of Chechnya. Actions of armed Chechen groups have the character of active discontinuous resistance, organized in suburbs of population places and at road junctions.

Political and other kinds of support from some republics of the Northern Caucasus and some foreign countries for the Dudayev's regime have broadened consider-



could come to agreement we had to try then.

Our delegation was actively supported by A. Galazov who accompanied our group at the talks. We were able to organize and commence very serious negotiations. I told Taimaz Abubakarov who was the head of Chechen negotiating workgroup: "Our leaders quarrel but we have to do our job. I, on behalf of the Russian Federation, give you a chance - if you accept our terms and we work out some compromise, in this case both B. Yeltsin and D. Dudayev will agree with us."

Since at that time the Interim Council headed by Avturkhanov came into operation in the Chechen Republic, the representatives of anti-Dudayev opposition were also present at the Vladikavkaz negotiations. This fact displeased Abubakarov's delegation, for they were ready to get down to negotiations with the opposition representatives only in case they were on the official list of the Russian delegation.

Then we played it in a different way without getting endorsement from the center - we proposed Abubakarov to work in two groups. One of the groups (headed by

A. Asmolov, a well-known Doctor of Psychology, my deputy in negotiations) held talks with the opposition represented by Gantamirov, Baskhanov and Madiev. I myself headed the group to hold talks with Dudayev's team. Disarmament was the most important problem. We raised the question of disarming both Gantamirov-Avturkhanov's group and Dudayev's units. We worked out quite a reasonable solution which was proposed by the member of our delegation, Kalamanov, who had graduated from the MGIMO and participated in solving foreign countries conflicts in due time. International practice has seen such precedents of simultaneous disarmament and withdrawal of forces. The idea was good, so we recorded it.

The formulation of which paramilitary forces are legal and which are not appeared to be another problem. Our vis-a-vis refer to the Constitution of the Chechen Republic, we refer to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Then N. Yegorov called me and warned that we must by no means deviate from the federal Constitution. But we managed to work out a compromise approach in the long term - we recorded it as "in com-

The formulation of which paramilitary forces are legal and which are not appeared to be another problem. Our vis-a-vis refer to the Constitution of the Chechen Republic, we refer to the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

pliance with international practice". Yegorov expressed his indignation at it, like, why do you make concessions, why is there no reference to the Constitution of the Russian Federation in the text? "My dearest minister," I replied, "what does the Constitution have to do with this, when we speak about human lives? There's no deviation from the Constitution in the meaning of our document, even in a disguised way".

A. Abubakarov started to call Yandarbiyev in this respect. They were troubled, and Abubakarov said: "We're ready to sign the documents, but first Dudayev asked us to come for consultation". So I go like: "Why do you need this consultation? We accept full responsibility. There is a government regulation, and I, being the head of

ably. Intransigent attitude of the Chechen authorities towards demand for disarmament of illicit armed formations and broadening support of Dudayev from the leadership of republics and socio-political organizations of the region contributes to armed conflict escalation and aggravation of the situation in the North Caucas and in the South of Russia as a whole". (*"Nezavisimaya gazeta", the 29th of December*)

An address of a group of deputies of State Duma to B. Yeltsin: "Boris Nikolayevich! Today the politics turned into human tragedy. At the present time, while we are being in Chechnya, we do not only gather information, but we go together with its population - Chechen and Russian people - through airstrikes and artillery bombardment. We witnessed deaths and miseries of civilians and destruction of residential buildings.

We would like to inform you that today general Dudayev not without help of our narrow-minded politics is being surrounded and guarded not by gunmen units, but armed people. Imposing of constitutional order in Chechnya with the help of tanks, aviation and artillery means a threat to the basis

of democracy in Russia, to the way of living of its citizens.

It is extremely important to note that the campaign began with lies of the official executives, and now it is going on accompanied by disinformation from semi-official mass media. Moral mind of Russian nation is resisting the lie. Russian soldiers and officers do not want to fight against people and asked us to communicate this to you, Boris Nikolayevich. We are sure that not all peaceful methods of conflict settlement are exhausted, unlike those who would like to represent the opposite and who continue to provoke a massive bloodshed in the Caucasus and far beyond". Signed by: S. Kovalev, V. Borschev, M. Molostvov, L. Petrovsky, O. Orlov.

**Boris Gromov**, deputy of the minister of defense of the RF: "Sending forces to the zone of armed confrontation, people, who gave such orders, did not thought and do not think about the price of the "victory" and aggravating consequences for the armed forces of Russia. "Blitzkrieg" failed. Significant number of killed and wounded people corresponds to the level of actions planned and performed by the army".

(*"Komsomolskaya pravda", 29th of December*)

Lieutenant general **Alexander Lebed'**: "Russian authorities who connived Dudayev's regime before, now made their choice to apply the hard variant. And exercised it in the most unskillful way. The introduction of forces was assisted by the most shameful provocation - assault on Grozny on the 26th of November, when Russian tank crew members had been recruited, got into tanks, deceived, and thrust into the city without assistance of infantry, where they were burned, of course. And later they were simply repudiated. Later on, the recruits, who only just joint up the army, had no time to become proficient in handling submachine guns, were thrust into Chechnya. The result is known". (*"Komsomolskaya pravda", 10th of December, 1995*)

**Alexander OCHERETNIY**

**PICNIC IN GROZNY**  
**Tenth anniversary**  
**of the Chechen horror**

It strikes me when I read again my notes written ten years ago. How preconceived

the workgroup, will sign the drawn up document; so why won't you sign it? History will judge us then." And Abubakarov says: "Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich, I totally agree with you, but I was told to come." After that he called me and told that Dudayev completely agrees, but he suddenly received a call from Moscow informing that B. Yeltsin is ready to meet him. Then it was quite natural for Dudayev to say that it would be much better to sign the document with Yeltsin, not at that moment.

I must say that Dudayev craved for personal meeting with him. I know that Yeltsin was also eager to meet Dudayev, but each time he was somehow talked out of it. And so I call back (it was a conversation with Usman Imaev, at that time he was Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria - author's note) and say: "Listen, does it really matter if they meet or not? Let Abubakarov come and sign the document to make it a tool for Yeltsin and Dudayev's negotiations." And he goes like: "Well, yes..." I tell him that I won't pay off the team and we stay for three more days in Vladikavkaz to wait for them. And then they change the meeting format:

Chernomyrdin but not Yeltsin will take part in it.

Dudayev is ready even for this.

I'm waiting for one more day in Vladikavkaz. Then the Yeltsin's press secretary calls me: "Vyacheslav, we're having a Security Council meeting now; I think your policy will be supported, and you will be promoted, because the circumstances call for it." That means that the Security Council was discussing signing of the very document, and thus they considered to promote the group head (or send somebody of appropriate rank instead of me). But, instead of all this, they again suddenly change the format: the meeting with Dudayev will be attended by Yerin, Stepashin and Grachev, and will be held in Mozdok. What happened at the Security Council is a closed book for me even now. I told the press secretary: "Are you out of your mind? Dudayev will never go to Mozdok..." The talks were wrecked and that's how the 15-year-old episode ended.

Meanwhile a new conflict step broke out in January. New Year's tragedy, loss of life, assault on Grozny. Nevertheless, in January, 1993 we held a meeting of

Chernomyrdin and Shakhray with Abubakarov and Imaev; it was our secret, and even my minister didn't know about it. They decided to come to an agreement with Generals Rokhlin and Babichev concerning the corps exchange. But Chernomyrdin didn't want to openly meet the representatives of Dudayev, just imagine what people would say: the chairman of the government associates with bandits! I think, though, it was agreed with Yeltsin. That's why we used the following scheme. Imaev and Abubakarov came first to me, the deputy minister, on Trubnikovskiy Pereulok. Yegorov was in Chechnya then. After the RF Ministry for the Nationalities' Affairs and Federative Relations we went to the White House, to Shakhray's office. So we are having a talk. A secretary comes in, says Chernomyrdin would like to see some painting in his office. Shakhray stands up: "I could bring it to him." And then suddenly Chernomyrdin comes in. As if by chance. "Well, you have guests..." That was the beginning of the talk. Later Abubakarov and Imaev disclosed the information having wisely withheld the fact that the meeting took place in Shakhray's office: they just

relation of the press to those events on the North Caucasus was then. Sheer glamour, ecstatic rapture, sheer lofty style regarding organization of the assault on Grozny, occupied by separatists. 10 years ago sharp, the units called "armed Chechen opposition", which actually was a combined team of servicemen from units of Russian army, made the first attempt to assault on the Chechen capital city. The assault, officially named as the "first" was committed on the New Year's Eve, at night of the 1st of January 1995, was, of course, the primary one and the most bloody, but not the first. It was the second.

They threatened us with the assault every half an hour. They threatened so frequently that nobody was worried by another announcement about the assault coming in half an hour, even those who made those announcements. And they announced every detail: even the information about direction from where the tanks would arrive, number of tanks and soldiers and even names of tank crew members. Firstly, the journalists believed that and hugged the walls. Then, they didn't believe any more. Later on, Russian SU-27 was shot down by a portable anti-aircraft mount near Grozny, and the Russian pilot was taken pris-

oner. According to his words, the assault would begin in the nearest time. People believed him, but didn't shelter themselves in slits and in basements. This was the way the Chechen capital spent a couple of days.

### UNSKILLFULL ASSAULT

At 9 o'clock in the morning a slight rumor flew around: it was said that tanks, about 40 in number, were coming into the city from three directions.

But there was no stir and fuss: It seemed that everyone knew best, where they could escape. Then crackling of submachine guns and first "bangs" of rifle-attached grenade launchers and AT hand weapons were heard not far off.

I and my colleague from Tver ran in the direction of "Neftianik" hotel, where the unit of department of state security familiar to us took up a defensive position. We and several other civilians (generally Russian women - service staff of the hotel) were sheltered in the basement of the building.

As it was supposed, the tanks were moving from three directions, including prospekt Mira where we were located. The tanks were followed by infantry in cars and trucks. They were riding with noise, were crying some-

thing deterrent and inarticulate and were shooting at anything and anyone. Just then the first victims of the first Chechen war fell to the asphalt of Grozny. For the most part they were traders delayed in the market.

The shooters, occupied windows and roofs of buildings, began with cutting the infantry off. It was not hard to do: The soldiers got down under hail of bullets, threw up their submachine guns and rushed backwards, shooting back over their shoulders from time to time. Few escaped. The most unlucky were the ones who were on back seats of two-door cars "Niva". The fighters had no time to jump out. The infantry was quickly followed by tanks.

Any amateur tactician or strategist now snatches an opportunity to explain that it is suicide for the tanks to come into a city along narrow streets. All that seemed to be pompous and terrible at the same time. Grenades were being launched from everywhere - from windows, from behind corners of buildings, from roofs. The three front tanks, which I could see myself, were showered by not less than ten grenades (though it was rather difficult to count in conditions of bangs, cries, fire and smoke).

said they had been received by Chernomyrdin. Thus, their level was raised.

- *What political word juggling! And what did they achieve as a result of this "partisan" meeting?*

- As a result Maskhadov and Rokhlin have agreed to temporarily cease fire. Peace standards were introduced, if I may say so.

- *As long as Nikolai Yegorov, a minister of ethnic affairs, and you, his deputy often had different opinions concerning one or another situation, it's obvious you had other such cases, right?*

- Few people know that when certain events took place in Budyonnovsk, an incident happened. Arcady Volsky calls me and goes: "Look, Vyacheslav, there two people of the "Abkhazian" battalion Basayev used to lead. If you arrange their flight to Budyonnovsk, they will meet him." And before that Yegorov, Stepashin and Yerin had invited Basayev's brother, Shirvani, for him to start negotiations with Shamil. But he refused saying: "If he comes, I'll kill him." Shirvani offered: "Bring all the relatives and tell Shamil, my brother, that a relative will be shot dead for every dead person." Yegorov and Stepashin answered: "We can't

do that, we are no vandals." Shirvani replied: "In this case you lost."

And then Volsky suddenly tells me: "He didn't receive Shirvani, but these people are his sworn brothers, he'll see them."

And I was not let into this situation by Yegorov. Even though before he took office in the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, S. Shakhray had developed a solution scheme of the Chechen problem. Everything was provided for and agreed on. But after Yegorov's commission other ideas prevailed. Yegorov used to say: "Chechens crave for force." There is a popular belief that Shakhray was nearly the organizer of the showdown. On the contrary, Shakhray's concept united the political and financial-economic approaches. Yeltsin did approve of it but it was never implemented.

And at 9 p.m. here come these guys, Basayev's sworn brothers. They told a story of their joint Abkhazia experience. They didn't doubt he would agree to talk to them. I tried to get through to Chernomyrdin but he wasn't there. Then I call O. Soskovets and say: "Two "Abkhazian battalion " people are sitting in front of me, they guarantee Basayev will receive them."

The negotiations were quite successful, but there were forces that didn't want peace as they profited from the war. They were bargaining their authority. Such people were even in the president's environment.

- *What do you need?*

- A plane.

Chernomyrdin was urgently communicated. A private plane was given; these two guys took a flight and reached the place at 5 a.m. Basayev did receive them. And he said: "If you arrange the negotiations with Chernomyrdin I will tell him what we want and what should be done." The very talk took place. As a result Basayev left the hospital and we established a group authorized to carry on negotiations with the belligerent. Arcady Volsky and I took a flight to Chechnya at once, an hour or two after Chernomyrdin's address. Chernomyrdin gave us the following directions: "Use your own discretion." There a question concerning the meeting place arose. Moscow warned me: no OSCE.. But we decided to

The tanks stopped fighting: Like huge wounded bugs, they were fussing about from one wall to another, crashed newsstands of "Soyuzpechat" and, struck by more shots, piled the parked cars. Some members of tank crews tried to get out, but barely had they opened the hatches, antipersonnel grenades rushed in that direction. The tanks were shot from grenade launchers RPG-7 and one-shot "Mukhas". The worst began when ammunition load started to burst inside the tanks put out of action.

The most tank-men were captured, many of infantrymen, who laid down arms, were captured too. Only soldiers and officers who were Slavic by appearance were captured, but Chechen ones, who were among the captured, were shot on-the-spot. By firing into belly.

## BLOODY RESUME

According to official version, "units of armed Chechen opposition" were the ones who carried on such an unskillful assault on Grozny, and not servicemen of Russian army. It turns out to be that a small number of Chechens, who were participating in the operation, were added for general "entourage" only.

The official results of the battle were as follows: the attacker lost hundreds of people killed, 18 Russian tank-men were captured, about 20 tanks were destroyed and 6 tanks were captured in perfect condition. The citizen soldiers of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, according to the same official Chechen reports, lost 14 people killed. Quantity of wounded from both sides was not to be counted, all Grozny hospitals, including military hospital, and medical institutions of Argun were overfilled with them. The number of dead civilians was never calculated precisely, but, judging by Grozny cemeteries where bodies were lying in rows, barely covered with a thin layer of earth and torn to pieces by dogs and flocks of ravens, were estimated at hundreds.

## GLOOMY YAVLINSKIY DID NOT HIDE HIS FEELINGS

There in Grozny I was offered the opportunity to speak to the prisoners. All of them are bristled Russians, mainly officers. There was one ethnic Byelorussian among them - senior lieutenant of Kantemirovskaya division named Volfovich. He refused point blank to speak to a representative of Byelorussian press.

The prisoners were kept quite properly, in an outhouse, not far from the presidential Palace. They were fed with kasha with mutton, and provided with cigarettes "Astra" as much as they needed. They were occupied with repair of destroyed equipment, i.e. their own tanks.

Though the Chechen government promised that if the then RF minister of defense Pavel Grachev would not acknowledge that the prisoners were regular servicemen of the Russian army, but would keep calling them "rabble and mercenaries" - they would execute each of them by shooting. Grachev was not in a hurry to acknowledge that those were his people.

The next day after the shameful assault of Grozny a delegation of Russian parliamentarians headed by Yavlinskiy and Lysenko arrived. Gloomy Yavlinskiy did not hide his feelings and was very sharp. And Lysenko was nervously animated, and communicated with the press and ate patties with jam, brought by Chechen women for deputies and the press. The deputies tried to offer themselves as hostages instead of captured Russian servicemen.

In the course of negotiations with the Chechen party, a very common bar-



agree to it at our own risk. Many people resented: "How is it possible? OSCE? To internationalize the negotiations? We were guided by a single thing: to stop the haemorrhage. One-month negotiations started. Everything left unsigned in December - word for word - was signed here.

During the negotiations Chernomyrdin decided to promote me and proposed me a minister's office. Both A. Kulikov and me were the participants of the negotiations, and both of us became ministers: I did on July 5, he did on July 6, 1995. I became the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, and he became the Minister of Internal Affairs.

The negotiations were quite successful, but there were forces that didn't want peace as they profited from the war. They were bargaining their authority. Such people were even in the president's environment. There was this incident (by the way, cited by Akhsarbek Galazov in his memoirs) when a huge price was asked for the meeting organization between Yeltsin and Dudayev...

- *It looks like the main role on this tragedy belonged to the stair-work...*

- When Stepashin and I held negotiations in Nazran, Yeltsin wanted to dismiss

Now it's hard to define the role of the first, second and further negotiations in the conflict settlement. Of crucial importance is to keep the peace that has come to the Chechen land and for all of us to learn a lesson from the severe past.

me from the minister's office because we skipped one paragraph in the treaty - the paragraph concerning the legislative assembly election. The Chechen party wouldn't otherwise sign the treaty and we conceded. That was the only right decision. But were "ratted on", and Yeltsin brought up a question of my immediate ouster. By the way, thanks to our signing the treaty in Nazran, Yeltsin's rating was raised, and he won the second round of elections.

He intended to dismiss me twice. First, in March, 1996 when Shaimiev and I flew to the Hague. The Hague-1 and the Hague-2 - those were the international negotiations with separatists attended by representatives of unrecognized republics of Pridnestrovie, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh... The representatives of the Chechen Republic were

there as well. Y. Primakov calls me and goes: "Vyacheslav, please, don't go there, I'm asking you. Otherwise the consequences will be disastrous." I thanked him for the concern but said I had already promised Shaimiev. And I took a flight. There I said in my address: "If we cannot remove Dudayev, if we can't dismiss him, we should get round the table with him." Yeltsin was told about that and I was proposed to be dismissed from the minister's office for misuse of powers. And that happened in March, at a very bad time when Yeltsin was supposed to give address to the people. Yuri Baturin calls me and says: "Vyacheslav! A real torpedo passed you by!..." It turned that Yeltsin had changed his address and said: "I am ready to meet Dudayev."

As soon as he expressed his intent, Dudayev was assassinated. Dudayev could have been eliminated even before but wasn't because Yeltsin wasn't going to hold talks with him, which meant no peace.

- *It turns out Yeltsin wasn't the master of his decisions? It's the court that makes the king...*

- Yes, there were forces who took no interest in the peaceful conflict settlement,

gaining began. The parliamentarians went home and took half of the prisoners (7 people), mainly regular servicemen, and also 4 bodies of Russia soldiers, who died because of wounds in hospitals of Grozny. Seven Russian officers were still in prison, and later they were released unconditionally.

However, that assault was just a beginning. "Unidentified flying objects" that looked like Russian SU-27, kept striking suburbs of Grozny and other cities. For example, on the 28th of November I and my Moscow colleagues were witnesses of a flap on Argun, as a result of which three civilian women were killed.

The mission's term was over and in the beginning of December I was leaving Chechnya. There was still a hope that forces would take initial position, the fire vortex would no devour over the city and bloody feast would not reach the apogee. That was not only a hope of us, journalists, but also of defenders of Grozny and even those who firstly tried to take it to ring of blockage, and then was forced to assault.

*("Belgazeta" (Belarus), November, 2004)*

#### Pavel GRACHEV:

##### "My voice against war was solitary"

The meeting of Security Council on 29th November, 1994 was decisive. Nikolai

Yegorov, Minister for affairs of ethnic nationalities was a lead speaker at it. According to him a military operation should be conducted in Chechnya, that 70% of Chechens are looking forward to entry of the Russian Army and, as he put it into expressive words, they would be as glad as to spread the flour over the road for our soldiers. The remaining 30% of Chechens are, in Yegorov's opinion, are in neutral mood.

After him I was offered to speak. I told that Chechnya would meet us not with flour but with bullets. And if the forces are to be entered, then it should be done not now, when winter is coming, at least it's better to wait till spring. Yeltsin was sitting with a pale



and the president's effusiveness played in their hands. Afterwards, Romanov's life was attempted on. Two weeks before that Zorin and I drove under that bridge. We were shut at but everything was fine thanks to the driver's reaction: he slowed down just in time, and gun-fire burst in front of the car. I told Romanov then: "Why are there no guards at the Minutka Square?" And he gave a com-

mand to plant guards. But on the same day, when he was driving, the guards were called off by somebody's order. And at the very place we had passed, his life was attempted. And the events were developing according to a well-known story.

The tragedy was, we didn't have a profound juridical base to settle such conflicts step by step resorting to force, defying the

"world community". We didn't even call an emergency. That is why the world public opinion was against us.

Now it's hard to define the role of the first, second and further negotiations in the conflict settlement. Of crucial importance is to keep the peace that has come to the Chechen land and for all of us to learn a lesson from the severe past.

## Editorial Note

When there are no laws regulating state's affairs, and the existing legal texts are not taken into consideration, when executives treat the legislation as the proverb goes: "one law for the rich, and another for the poor", there appear such situations like the one which is now called "the Chechen problem" or "the Chechen war". Such conditions are difficult for diplomats who take every effort to settle the conflict. The peacemaking efforts of professionals come across lack of understanding, rejection and even direct confrontation on behalf of those whose last word is most important. Disregard of expert opinion brings disasters. The society never learned the Chechen war lessons...

Today the situation in Ingushetia is disturbing. The analysts have observed that the situation in this republic became worsened after the enforced resignation of the president Ruslan Aushev. Few people know that Vyacheslav

Mikhailov has publicly tried to explain through the press what consequences the personnel policy discarding the people's opinion will bring to. In his opinion, Moscow has made a false step in respect of Aushev and Gutseriyev. "The Ingush were never against Russia even during the Caucasian war or at Shamil's time. Even Chechnya didn't accept Shamil unanimously," says Mikhailov. - Aushev couldn't treat Dudayev or those events differently - he protected his people. I believe, the current situation in Ingushetia is particularly a revenge for Aushev and Gutseriyev. I don't mean to say they organized all that. But one of the reasons the republic changed its attitude toward Russia was the way it had been treated." Nevertheless, these thoughts were not covered publicly and the above quotation was deleted from the interview published in one of prestigious federal editions.

face, till now I'm sure he did not want the war. At that time my voice against initiation of the war was solitary. The situation was overcome by the then Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who spoke immediately after me telling that Grachev is not in command of the circumstances and should be dismissed as Minister of Defense for his irresolution. All the rest members of Security Council either submitted, or kept silent. Yeltsin himself abstained at voting, nevertheless, I was given an order by him to be prepared within 10-day period to enter the forces into Chechnya.

- But you could have refused, you could, by your own free will, tender yours resigna-

tion as a notice of protest

- I could have done it. But I thought that it was not possible to abandon the army at such a moment, it would be treachery.

What lesson has been taught to you by the Chechnya campaign?

In my opinion, the most essential error is that Dudayev, after he came to power in Chechnya, was not even once invited to the Kremlin. It was an intolerable wound to his pride. I think it was possible to come to some agreement with him, to find certain compromises and to prevent a large-scale bloodshed. (*"Trud" newspaper, № 233, 11th December, 2009*)





# WOMAN RULES THE MOUNTAINS



Sometimes you don't believe the calendar. It happened to me when I got to high-mountainous village Dai in the Shatoisky area of the Chechen Republic. It felt like a real summer in the height of fall. In the afternoon the sun was so hot that I had to put a hat on.

The locality is crossed, the relief is rugged, therefore the houses are scattered here and there. There are two Dai settlements - Upper and Lower, and the Lower looks especially picturesque if you look down from Upper Dai. I haven't seen wonderful panoramas like these for a very long time.

Nowadays about five hundred people live here. The mountain village of Dai sprang up in the 18th century. That time it consisted of 50-60 farms. They were protected by the tall fighting tower. There are three cemeteries in Dai, one of them is ancient, over 300 years old. Agriculture, cattle breeding and beekeeping have always been the primary occupation for the locals. Besides that, there

was smithery and workshops. The people lived using subsistence production.

Our family arrived here in 1957 - returned from exile. I was three years old then. There was no house here, only ruins. People lived in tents. But all the native people with no exception headed here, to the patrimonial nests. There was no school in Dai. Later one was built, but it was only middle school. In due course a high school building appeared, but it was supposed to be in service for only ten years, and the children have been studying there since 1974. The Shatoisky district had a name of Sovetsky. The roads were also a big problem. The men of Dai constructed the roads with their own hands using just shovels and picks. Besides that, there were no bridges through the Argun River that runs by the village. Self-made bridges were often taken down by the stream. On the collective farm the people planted tobacco and potatoes, breed yaks, once delivered from the Altay territory, and were occupied by beekeeping.

"In 1969 electricity was installed, - aboriginal Dai, teacher of history and the director of studies of the local school Koka Tuburova recollects. - In the seventies there were more people here, than at any other time. A club was built for the youth, different hobby groups were organized, there were



In due course a high school building appeared, but it was supposed to be in service for only ten years, and the children have been studying there since 1974.



two libraries, and the kids participated in amateur performances".

Though in the nineties in Dai, as well as in other places, they stopped paying salary, the first war refugees rushed here. The Shatoisky District seemed very safe. It managed to avoid bombardments and victims. However the second war turned out to be much more terrible. It unexpectedly came from neighboring Dagestan.

"They said that insurgents had moved to the Chechen Republic through the mountains, - says Koka. - In August of 1999 they started to bomb here - prepared a corridor for the Russian troops. Refugees who by force of habit gushed here again, ran for their lives. But the local residents had no place to go. In late December we left our shelters and found 20 holes made by the exploded bombs. Two "ground-to-ground"

rockets smashed several rural houses. Probably, it was the most important strategic target of the Federal forces - three housing estates and a cowshed. That day the inhabitants gathered to discuss a question, whether it was the time to leave the home grounds altogether. We had to interrupt the meeting because of the shooting. Landing was made near Dai. We decided to send men of truce envoys to the soldiers. We made a flag of truce out of a sheet; and three of us went - one of our old men, my brother and I. Of course, we were scared..."

### Блокада

The Federal soldiers met the Dai messengers fine. Talked and assured that there were no reasons for anxiety; they had an order not to open fire at the settlement. In return the truce envoys explained that many elderly, sick people, children and pregnant women lived in the village. Everybody was weakened by hunger. Koka tells: "For almost three days we had had nothing to eat because we couldn't leave the cellars. The next day the military men brought us some provisions. The Federal soldiers convinced us that they were not at war with the peaceful population; they even talked to the chiefs of administrations of the neighboring villages. However, at first they couldn't hide their amazement that somebody survived after their qualitative bombardments. Those who could were leaving Dai at night, without headlights on. In March, 2000 the school started its work again. For the first time in several years we got salary. Before that we worked free of charge, Russia owes me a debt".



Koka has become the first woman-leader in the history of the village. But she is not going to leave school, the more so, as the students' parents asked her to continue working. So, she wants to combine the two hard duties.







According to Koka, after the Federal intrusion the school remained dilapidated for a long time, library was taken away by pieces, all documents were destroyed, and the classes were dirtied. The local mosque suffered the same fate.

### Execution

My interlocutor - Hamzat Tuburov's sister; Hazmat was shot in February, 2002 by notorious Ulman. That massacre carried away the lives of six people - the driver of the trip minibus and its passengers going to Nokhch-Keloi from Dai. Loss of the brother, painful investigation and headline-making court on this case, twice ending up with justification and on the third time with condemnation of the group of Ulman, depleted Koka's strength. Her two nephews and three nieces lost their father.

"After this tragedy, - says Koka, - the trust we had in the military men, disappeared. To tell the truth, because of the lack of information we considered as exaggeration all those horrors that people told us about - that the Federal soldiers terrorize, abduct, torture and kill people. But here we realized it was true".

Koka admits that since then she cannot look without disgust at the Russian soldiers: "But I try to overcome the hatred, after all I am a teacher and I should set children for positive attitude to life. Ugly creatures suffice in any people. Criminals do not belong to any nation".

### Elections

Many years Koka worked as a teacher. At the municipal elections on October 11th of this year, she was elected to be the head of the administration of Dai.

"The home-folks asked me to, - my interlocutor smiles (she absolutely doesn't look like an official). - They told me: "At the elections we can elect the leader ourselves (earlier in the Chechen Republic the municipal elections had never been held). I consulted the elders and after their approval I ran as a candidate". By that time the period of registration for candidates was coming to an end.

Some people, on the contrary, dissuaded her from participation in the elections. They said that this burden was too heavy for female shoulders, that the people were nervous, offended, and for everything that they don't like, the head of the administration would be blamed. The family worried: "Will you manage?"



"When I finally came to the scratch, I explained my position. I didn't write the program. However I promised the people to attain that road should be repaired and a trip bus would connect Dai and Shatoi. Besides, I said that I would demand for a new school bus to bring the children from Lower Dai to the school in Upper Dai. I would try to arrange a house for the teachers who come from other places. I also will do everything I can to help the rural youth to have the possibility to take credits for business development and for support of those who by tradition want to be engaged in farming. It is very necessary, otherwise the youth will leave the town and it will die. I have a dream to restore the club and library. The head of the administration of the district approved these offers. He really was interested in our problems. After his arrival a part of the road was repaired, and sheikh Hasi's (revered saint) ziyarat was restored at the cemetery".

Koka has become the first woman-leader in the history of the village. But she is not going to leave school, the more so, as the students' parents asked her to continue working. So, she wants to combine the two hard duties.

"The town council will help me - seven men, - explains Koka. - The local Imam, a respectable man will be among them, by the way, he is a member of the "United Russia" party. I will ask them to find out the residents problems in detail and to hand them to me in a written form. Then together we will choose the most urgent one, which should be solved with the help of the district and the city authorities. Not to lose contact with the population. And I certainly will consult with the old men making any decision, it will be competent. I won the election by a huge margin, which means, the people trust me. It would be wrong not to justify their hopes".

# Svetlana ISAYEVA:

## «Why do we lose our sons?»

*The rights advocates organization "Mothers of Dagestan" is known far beyond the Republic. However, its reputation is rather ambiguous: rights advocates in Moscow and abroad consider "Mothers" to be experts on human rights in Dagestan and render them all kinds of support, whereas attitude towards them in the Republic itself is on the alert. Suffice it to recall sensational meeting at the local White House in June of the last year, when Mubuh Aliyev, President, asked: "What do these "Mothers" need? In response, a voice similar to that of the now late Minister of Interior told: "Bullet head-on". At the recent "round table" organized in Makhachkala by Public Chamber member, journalist Maxim Shevchenko, it was declared by representative of Republican authorities that he possesses facts of evidence that "Mothers of Dagestan" recruit young adults to go to the forest. The organization's reputation was severely disrupted by the kinship of its active members, for example, brother of Gulnara Rustamova died in special operative action shooting off from militia officers, while his sister was convicted for keeping of weapon. On the other hand, if no problems with law enforcement bodies existed for relatives of "Mothers", there would be no such organization. Our conversation with its Chairman Svetlana Isayeva started from this point.*

- Our Organization is quite young, being two and a half years old, the women who, like me, enter into it, are those who were harmed by law enforcement bodies. We lost our sons 25-26 April, 2007, in Makhachkala four young people disappeared, and one more - in Buinaksk. None of parents know anything about their fate till now. Criminal proceedings for facts of abduction were initiated. They are either paused or re-started with no result as yet. Then, mothers of the abducted united. We conducted several protest actions, then, announced hunger strike, and, finally, made registration of our organization. The Head of independent trade union of Dagestan's businessmen and drivers Isalmagomed Nabiyeu gave a room for our office.

From that time the people whose relatives disappeared or are persecuted appeal to us. However, little can be done. At least we can conduct monitoring. We are accused that we protect terrorists, war leaders. I can state that to none who had been taken with weapon did we offer support during our activity. We protect only those who are not yet squeezed out by our system into the underground. We know in what way it occurs, which we can see in terms of Gulnara Rustamova's brother case. She constantly wrote appeals to prosecutor's office, investigative committee, Ministry of Interior that her brother is being persecuted. No answer was obtained for her applications. He was not given the chance to work in peace,



grenades were put furtively to his acquaintances, and he was charged in organization of criminal association. No way out was left for him and he went. The tragedy followed. However, the man took up arms to protect himself. All members of our organization and me often saw the process and perceived how it occurs. A suspicion arises, and militia hooks its fish, has an eye on him, "works him out", and at some moment he is informed that there is no peaceful life for him.

Here is the case with a large group of Gubden residents. They are brought 30-40 persons in Makhachkala, distributed among district militia departments, interrogated each one separately, and everybody is told: "What are you doing at home? It's better for you to go to the forest, in any case you won't be given the chance to live quietly!" We have the applications of such people who appealed to us, they tell in them: we are law-abiding citizens, we want to live peacefully, take care of our families. But they won't have it, we are exasperated by constant interrogations, calls, delivering to local departments, they constantly try to induce to perjure somebody, to give false testimony for someone. In case we don't consent - hence we are accomplices of war leaders (insurgents), their helpmates.

- *The same was the case with your son?*

- Yes, it was, he knew Khizri Mamayev who had been killed during special operative action in the Tankayev street two years ago. He knew him before Khizri went to the forest. For three years he was compelled to hand him over. Khizri went into hiding in the forest, while my son lived in flat in the town. But he, as it turned out, must have

Summer-2007-hunger strike: 21st August, 2007. Svetlana Isayeva (to the right) during hunger strike against abductions.

2008- picket on square:  
6th February, 2008.  
Gulnara Rustamova  
(third left) and other  
activists of the "Mothers  
of Dagestan" movement  
on the central square  
in Makhachkala protest  
against abductions  
of Djabir Kamalutdinov  
and Shamil Omarov.



intruded himself in the "jamaat" and to bring information from there. This was demanded from him. He refused and, as a result, he "was lost".

- *In what has your organization succeeded? You say about monitoring. What is shown by it?*

- According to our monitoring - whatever we do, there is no change of the situation. The first months the organization was established we hoped that if we pronounced what was taking place, people would know more and change their attitude to it. I'll tell sincerely: earlier, before my son got into problem I watched TV programs on skirmishing and special operative action without ruffle or excitement. I thought: one more insurgent is killed - that's he deserved it, and his punishment has come.

Now I know in what way it occurs. The dead bodies of people, who had been tortured during interrogations, are placed on the sites of special operative action. Today I met the parents of Gadjimagomedov, resident of Gubden town. In September last year three men were abducted within 48 hours - two of them residents of Gubden and one of Mahachkala. Then, TV news showed a car perforated by bullets, with three dead bodies, and it was declared as follows: they made resistance to militia when asked to present documents for check. For a certain time bodies were not returned to their relatives. When bodies were returned, the parents invited us to come and look upon those would-be shoot dead. The picture was horrifying. We have taken picture of all by video camera: fractures of extremities, punctured wounds, all bodies in bruises. Missile wounds don't look like this. It was clear that these men were tortured.

Relatives of the killed tell me today: "Svetlana, what is happening? We appealed to you as you work for press and throw light on all this, but no actual aid is rendered to us". As regards the lawyer - she is also not able to bring the case to the court, she told: "Here I'm powerless, this question is to be solved in Strasbourg". What remained is that we have to wait. Our work consists in stating the facts, we are neither procurator's office, nor the court, we are not able to demand anything from anybody. Yes, we write to the prosecutor's office and to other institutions: there are such and such facts according to applications forwarded to us, they cover this and this situation, we ask you to answer, within the period stipulated by the law, whether these cases took

place and what have been done in particular. The remaining does not depend on us.

- *How many people appeal to you?*

- For this not full year there were 22 applications on abductions. Five of them were found live, five of them killed and incinerated, and nothing is known about the remaining twelve.

- *Do they appeal to your organization only with regard to kidnapping?*

There are other applications as well. Early this year a woman appealed, whose house was taken away. She and her husband were absent for three weeks and when returned - at the site of their house construction of apartment building is started. Theirs was a private house in a general yard, which her husband inherited, though "Green" documents were absent. Two years this woman is taking every effort to restore her ownership rights in the court, with no result as yet. Now they live at a reception center for homeless. Quite recently I got information that flights in this apartment building are back bought by members of our government.

- *It is always underlined by you that your work is strictly within the law. But your relations with law enforcement bodies are rather tense...*

- There is explanation. When so much mire comes to the surface, when we ask questions about the same cases of abduction and no answer, when the head of the Ministry of Interior says that disappeared people are running with weapon in the forest, whereas we try to prove that these people are murdered, what kind of attitude can there be towards us? Eight dead bodies presumably from Dagestan are discovered in the Chechen Republic. This information we got from Magomed Dibirov, deputy procurator of the Republic. As told by him, his staff went to Chechnya, and he promised to inform us when the remains would be carried over. We waited for long, then, started to write letters. No answer is received till now. We appealed to Ombudsman in RF. The latter has, of course, got the answer from procurator, but only as a formal reply: this case will take plenty of time, even more than three months. In March two years have already passed from the



June-2008. picket near prosecutor's office: 27th June, 2008. Relatives of abducted Ali Zalitinov and Idris Guchakayev blocked off the roadway near prosecutor's office claiming to find the disappeared. In three days both men "were found": one in Makhachkala isolation ward for temporary stay (IWS), another in Buinaksk IWS.



date of obtaining this information. Where are the remains, what has happened to them? We don't know it till now, but we suspect that this is the remains of those people who "had been lost" in April-May 2007. Natasha Estemirova dealt with search of the disappeared and she gave us the photographs. It seemed to me that I recognized my son among the killed. I wanted to meet her in order to ask her about these photographs. Merely a week before her death we spoke by telephone and I was going to come to her. In this I did not succeed. Regarding these eight dead bodies we got nothing from our procurator's office. And since we constantly annoy by calls and writings as well as meetings - what attitude can we have?

- *This is on part of "power agencies". What about the attitude of the President, Government?*

- President says: "Yes, I'm familiar with this organization", while none of us met with him. Mothers try to come, they ask, enter their names for reception, but to no result. I can guess why. It is because nobody wants to know the truth. It is a convenient position- not to see into, keep out of everything that has nothing in common with you. Earlier I was like such people. I was living my personal life and anything beyond my family did not trouble me. Such life is lived by many, I'm sure.

- *What is your estimation of the situation which is now in Dagestan?*

- I'd like to hope that situation will improve, but there are no reasons for such a hope. Every day it worsens. For two years we are crying that kidnapping is done by power agency staff, but nobody pays any attention. Now another trend arises. There were cases of abduction at the time of the late Minister Adylgerey Magomedtagirov, but when it was possible to plug in the influential relatives or certain evidence was given by them, they were released, set free with warning. Now, as soon as a new Minister started to work, they just began to liquidate people. Bodies of the adducted are burnt so that no trace of tortures could be seen. Then, they represent such cases as: this one exploded his own blasting device by inadvertence, another one was killed by explosion of gas cylinder.

- *You mean to say that such an order was issued by a new Minister?*

- Of course, I don't know exactly, I speak only about what I see with my own eyes. Anybody has a right to disagree, each one has his own vision. However, previously, there were not so many cases of arson, burnt-out dead bodies. Now, they incinerate people one after another.

- Have you been summoned to prosecutor's office concerning leaflets with list of those to be killed? (It is the question of leaflets that appeared in September in Makhachkala. Anonymous "avengers" declared themselves to be relatives of the murdered militia officers and threatened death to "helpmates of terrorists", namely: lawyers, journalists and rights advocates, including "Mothers" - Edit.)

- *No, I was not summoned since I was away. But Gulnara and Isalmagomed have already been interrogated.*

- Have you any versions as regards the author of this leaflet?



September 2009  
abduction in Derbent:  
8th September, 2009.  
Eyewitness succeeded  
to take photo on mobile  
phone of the instant  
of abduction in Derbent  
of Sirajudin Shafiyev.  
Relatives consider  
that he was abducted  
by power agency staff.

Let's tell - it is not a single author, it's a group of employers who need to write off three burnt-out bodies of young people who were abducted 23rd August. I have the only version: this is our Ministry of Interior, our Security Service. It was them who made kidnapping, burning and writing of the leaflet in order to carry off the inquest sideways. Though, it is a big question whether the inquest is initiated. In August our office was burnt, the inquest is initiated, but no results. First, they did not want to accept our application, classifying it as a mere accident - wiring system fault. However, as stated by fire-fighter expert opinion, there was arson with use of flammable liquids. There is no suspected person, and our lawyer wants to unite this with the case of arson of Islamic shop "Sunna", its owner appealed to us, we applied to the prosecutor's office, and merely in two days - arson of our office: meaning don't meddle, where you are not asked.

- *How do you think, what is the cause of terrorism?*

- As regards the seat of the trouble both the law enforcement bodies and authorities have the relevant evidence. They know perfectly well who makes financing of terrorists. Nevertheless, no action is applied to such people. Nobody tries to stop them because they all are tied up. They launder money - I cannot find another explanation. As a result, young people die. It is a very easy task to agitate a young man "Go ahead for faith, for truth!" A young man is not able to properly assess the situation like an adult and experienced person. If a young man has got into a complex problem, near him there always be plenty of those who will advise, provoke, call for jihad. On one side they are squeezed out from normal life, on the other side - they are welcomed. In my opinion both sides are inter-connected. It should be gainful for someone. Our Government knows who. I shall not voice any name as I'm afraid to go out of the entrance. We are accustomed to be overhead and watched, somebody is permanently keeping vigil near our office. To go in the street is not frightful, but I don't like the moment when I should come out of the entrance. One should not seek anybody responsible, just to make efforts. To stop this disaster. Our young people die as they, trying to fight for their rights, often make a wrong choice.

*Talked: Aida Gadjiyeva*

# INGUSH TRIANGLE



Ingush President Evkurov is having hard times - he has to watch his every step.

November 25, 2008 a local Akhmed Tochiyev (1980) disappeared at the gas-station "Imperial" in Malgobek on his way to Nazran.

A witness said that Tochiyev drove up between two and three in the afternoon, filled up the tank and was going to get into the car. But somebody didn't let him. Two white cars without license plates wheeled from both sides. People who looked like Slavic came out of the cars. They wore camouflage suits, like Feds wear, no masks. Tochiyev unopposed got in one of the cars and all three cars drove off towards Nazran. Since then no one saw neither the guy, nor his car.

A year has passed but the family of the disappeared guy believes that their son is alive. They have no idea who and why kidnapped Akhmed. Initiated by the Prosecutor's Office criminal case is being barely investigated. The law-enforcement agencies as if let the heart-broken parents see that the kidnapped voluntarily went to the forest. Ministry of Interior, Federal Security Service and other institutions of Ingushetia declared that they had nothing to do with this, they didn't take him in custody. They do not have the faintest idea.

Akhmed's family found out the circumstances of his disappearance thanks to a

casual bystander, a worker of the gas-station where the kidnapping took place.

September 8, 2009 another Ingushetia dweller Magomed Tsechoyev (1978) from Ali-Yurt vanished into thin air. He went to Krasnodar to pick up a relative from the hospital. Next day they lost touch with him.

- We applied to Krasnodar Department of Internal Affairs, to Krasnodar Prosecutor's Office. They say they are investigating but there are no results. We tried to find out by ourselves where he was taken to; we went to

the hospital where he was supposed to pick up our uncle, to other places where he was. But this is all we could do on our own. We asked the locals, but no one among our Ingush friends saw anything, - says Mussa, Akhmed's younger brother.

He supposes that the kidnapping was committed by the Federal Security Service Directorate officers, but he doesn't know who exactly and why. The Tsechoyevs' house was searched earlier. The searching officers said they were looking for guns. However didn't find any.

Attempts to be received by the President of Ingushetia Yunus-Beck Evkurov and ask for help were unrewarded by success.

- We think he just doesn't want to talk to us, - says Mussa.

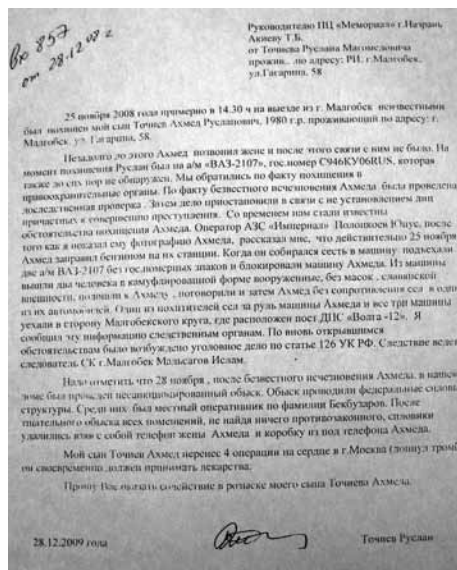
Nine Ingushetia dwellers vanished into thin air in 2009. All of them are young men. Two of the nine disappeared beyond the republic borders, in Rostov and Krasnodar, which allows the local law-enforcement agencies not to investigate the kidnappings, though the circumstances are very similar to other crimes, common for Ingushetia.

Two cases mentioned above are similar in one fact - the victims had troubles with the security agencies.

Marina, the mother of missing Akhmed, says:

- They took him to the militia station twice during the year. Once upon neighbor's murder. Then they searched our house. At night, before the prayer time, armored vehicles drove up, soldiers jumped over the fence. They said that according to their information we hide terrorists. They didn't have a search warrant or any other document. They behaved violently; armed people broke into the bedrooms. Our younger son is handicapped. They put a gun into his face; he got so scared. I told them: "Put the gun down, he is just a kid!" And they say: "He probably keeps a handgun under the pillow". They didn't find anything and left. Second time Akhmed was seized in Nazran where he went to buy some medicine. He was a carrier; he got handicapped after he was injured at a construction job.

And there was one more search. The Tochiyevs kept a car bought three days ago in



the yard. The officers referred to some essential information, which said that the car was used in some attack. Akhmed's father offered to go together and talk to the previous owner. The officers didn't do anything. So, they were lying.

Akhmed got married not long before the kidnapping. His son is eight months now. He went to get medicine the day he was kidnapped. And never came back.

- They took him because he prayed, he was faithful. That's why they made him Wahhabi, there is no other reason, - his mother says.

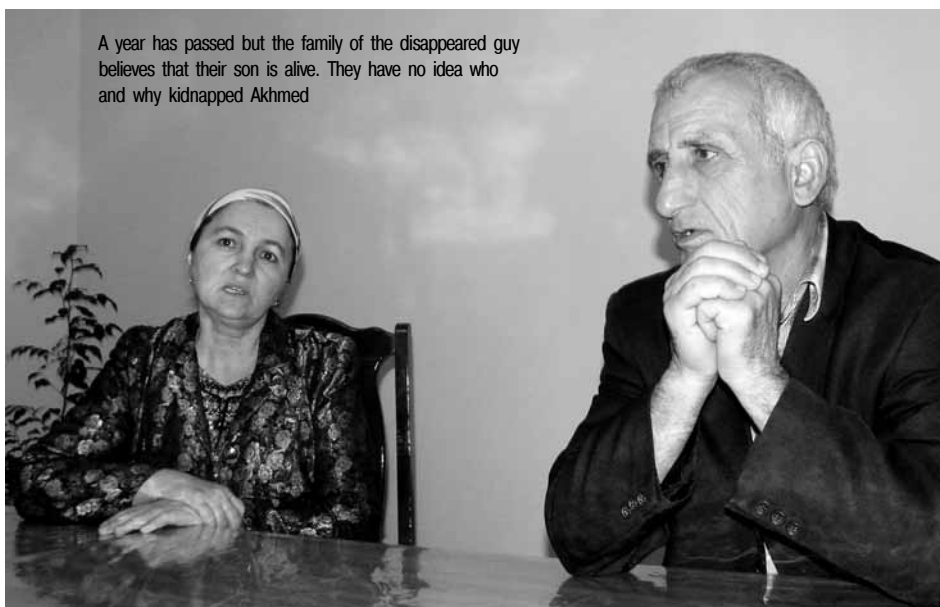
According to the human rights organization "Mashr" 179 people were kidnapped in the republic during last seven years.

The "Mashr" director Magomed Mutsolgov and his colleagues collect data on kidnappings and lynchings in Ingushetia. The shelves of his office are full of thick document cases where all data on each case are held.

All the facts state that the human rights situation in the region is getting worse. Alas, the new authorities and President Evkurov, who the people set their hopes on, didn't manage to get things under control and bring murderers and kidnappers to justice. "What are you talking about, he couldn't protect himself, he was once blown up", - ordinary people I talked to in Ingushetia sigh.

- The number of murders has increased during this year. Now they kill officers of the law-enforcement agencies as well as civilians. - Mutsolgov says. And he states facts: 2006 - 96 people killed, 2007 - 124, 2008 - 212. And today as of November 2009 it's more than 260. Those are really tragic numbers. The republic is small, not to many people live here. Murders of attached soldiers and militia officers are also a great grief. The republic dwellers suffer from those murders, because their friends and relatives from other regions will accuse the Ingush of the murders. The Russian militia often persecutes our people - students, businessmen - because their colleagues were killed here. Prisoners from Chechnya and Ingushetia suffer because many of their guards went through the war in Caucasus.

The "Mashr" grants legal and informational aid to the victims and their families free of charge, collects data on crimes, files claims and coordinates activities of the people going through stress because of the troubles in their families.



- Investigations upon the kidnappings in Ingushetia since 2002 are basically suspended, - Magomed comes back to the kidnapping topic. - The article is the same, 208, section one, "the person, subject to an involvement in the capacity of the accused, has not been identified". This expression was used in Adam Medov's case, who was kidnapped in 2004. He was in the trunk of the car when his kidnappers were seized. His family won the case in European Court of Justice but our law-enforcement agencies suspended the investigation because of the "failure to identify the person responsible". But all they really do is paper chase, nobody searches the man. They make inquiries to all the law-enforcement agencies of North Caucasus, morgues and get run-around replies. One can collect a hundred, two hundred papers like this and there you go - a thick file case. But in fact the investigation is not and was not held.

And what is even worse is the fact that there is not a single government case initiated against officials of the security agencies. This is the root of all evil, the reason for new untrammelled crime, - Mutsolgov believes.

The locals see all this, the people rebel, that is why the guys take up arms and go to the forest. They struggle for justice using their own methods. Because everything indicates that the authorities are corrupted or powerless.

- They say they control the situation. But it's not true. Kidnapping of Tsezdoyev proves this very well; a really scandalous thing. Despite of the President's instructions our militia officers let Chechnya militia officers take out an Ingushetia dweller

beyond the republic borders. The kidnappers were released, and the kidnapped was left with them! Later President Evkurov stated that the investigation was in process, he gave instructions. But I see no results. When the person is found, dead or alive, when somebody is convicted of the crime, only then we can say that measures were taken. People die, but those who commit the crimes remain unpunished!

Magomed Mutsolgov is also worried about the human rights activists, who bring up the problem of kidnapping. They are having rough times too.

- The authorities think that if the human rights organization becomes silent, if nobody talks about the problems, then it seems like there is no reason to be worried about anything. Inadequate use of force and participation of the law-enforcement agencies in kidnapping and murders are the main problem in Caucasus. During these years my colleagues were killed, kidnapped and taken under fire. It has always being dangerous more or less.

There cannot be any illusion cherished. Protection of human rights is entailed with constant risk. And today nobody guarantees safety of human rights activists.

- We've lived through two wars, been through times that are even worse than today, but they didn't kidnap people when Aushev was the President, - said Akhmed Tochiyev's mother at-parting. - Nobody said a word against the authorities when Zyazikov became the President, everybody was scared. Then Evkurov came, we thought we could get his attention. We are ready to go around the world just to find our son. But we don't know where to go.

# HOPE AND PATIENCE AGAINST SEVERE FROST

Leya GUREVICH

A delightful snow-white cat with big green eyes and luxurious fur is sitting by the door step. The child of the soil is not scared of the frost.



Many years passed since the war in Chechnya was officially over. However for the overwhelming majority of those who took part in this war and its victims confrontation is still on. Violence and discrimination between nationalities - this is Russia today. The Chechnya dwellers and their neighbors except for everyday severities have to cope with the offensive pressure caused by their fellow-countrymen.

The city of Yekaterinburg. Sever frost and biting wind. Southerners are not used to them. Adam Kalayev, the leader of Yekaterinburg Regional Center for Chechen Culture "Vainakh", and his friend, assistant imam, Akhmed Dzhanaraliyev are standing outside the mosque and telling about the Chechen and Ingush Diasporas lives in this north-end.

The frost makes standing outside impossible, that is why the friends invite me inside. By the way, they have

spent decades here and are used to severe cold. A delightful snow-white cat with big green eyes and luxurious fur is sitting by the door step. The child of the soil is not scared of the frost.

Akhmed says that in "Rakhman", this is the mosque name, people of different nationalities and religions find warmth and understanding. We are sitting in his cozy place at the low tea table. Technically Akhmed lives at work. His apartment is in the same building as the mosque. The door is open 24/7.

- Are you not scared of thieves and hoodlums? - I ask.

- We rely on the Almighty, - Akhmed raises his eyes and arms up. - But those who are badly in need of a shelter for the night, can find it here. Sometimes in the morning I come in and see hoboes and drunkards sleeping on the carpet by the radiator. I never banish them. We try to feed



the hungry. We have a small kitchen where we usually cook for festive occasions.

Akhmed says that the suffering and poor can also get some money and clothes, brought by the pious. On Fridays thousands of parishioners come to pray, most of them are newcomers from Central Asia. However Russian people who are Islamic come too. We have dozens of people like that.

Akhmed has wonderful books with bright illustrations for "new" Muslims. The books tell about Islam in simple language.

- Federal Security Service examines all the mosque books. They are written and edited right here and printed in the local printing-house. Once special service officers elicited what the sword drawn on the green banner under





the Arabic ornamental meant. They tried to find out if it contained a hidden wicked design. In response I asked: "What does the double-headed eagle on the Russian Emblem mean?" Everybody laughed. - tells Akhmed about one case describing relations between the local law-enforcement authorities and clerical leaders.

Alas, it does not end well every time. The local officials often treat the Chechen and Ingush with prepossession. That's probably what knits them together here, far away from their little motherland.

- The cultural center "Vainakh" exists since 1996, - says Adam. - We have to co-operate with the local officials, with all the authorities, including the Ministry of Internal and Regional Department for Combating Organized Crime. All the law-enforcement agencies take a tender interest in us. They monitor us. There was nothing of this kind before the first war in Chechnya. That war changed a lot of things.

The Chechen and Ingush meet obstacles in business and employment. Obtaining credit is extremely hard for them. And nobody tries to hide that the reason for decline is the nationality. Adam says: "One girl from Chechnya graduated from a local university, composed a resume and went for a job interview at a bank. At first they liked her, but when it turned out she was Chechen, they rejected her. She asked why and the answer was: "Young lady, this is a bank!"

**Prisoners from Chechnya and Ingushetia are the most vulnerable and unprotected part of the population. They are dispersed among forty colonies of the Sverdlovskaya Region. Their guards, correction officers, many of which went through the Chechen war, too often become butchers.**

Adam's other friend Isa from Ingushetia couldn't undertake his internship. The officials from Sberbank, where he wanted to undertake the internship, explained in a confidential talk that there was a secret "ethnic permit". It means the guy won't be allowed to work with secret and important documents and it doesn't matter how good he is.

The friends say that this is nothing compared with what is to come. The locals can get away with disorderly conduct, while Chechen or Ingush can get arrested for several years. Officers ask about nationality and immediately inform special services who search for the person in their database. Even if he is guilty in just quarrelling with a soda jerk, it's very probable that his house will be searched, something will be found and confiscated. And only later they will think what it is and why it is confiscated.

- Militia reacts on our fellow-countrymen as an angry dog breaking loose, - the men generously use metaphors and this is understandable. Over the long time their hearts burn. Their phones are constantly wire-tapped. Not being able to help the fellow-countrymen is especially depressing.



Co-ordinator of the nation-wide organization "For Human Rights" Vladimir Shacklein is one of a few legal experts who seriously struggles for the rights of prisoners.



Adam Kalayev quite often holds him up as an example to the members of the diaspora: the man is almost 70, but he works, struggles and achieves results.

Prisoners from Chechnya and Ingushetia are the most vulnerable and unprotected part of the population. They are dispersed among forty colonies of the Sverdlovskaya Region. Their guards, correction officers, many of which went through the Chechen war, too often become butchers. They torture the prisoners. Each Chechen and Ingush has a note in their case: "prison break inclined", which obviously makes their life in prison even more miserable.

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The legal expert can talk about the abuse of power by the administration of the colonies for hours; the data he has collected is enough for several thick volumes. And in some cases, such as preventing visits to prisoners, Vladimir Shaklein even won litigations.

- Sultan Dzhauchkanov from the Chechen Republic serves sentence in penal colony-47 in Kamensk-Uralsk, - Shaklein says. - He complained of abuse. In particular, they took away his rug which he used to pray, and put him into a punishment isolation cell. The deputy chief of the colony explained to the commission arrived under the complaint that "praying is something one does at home", allegedly Sultan's cellmates couldn't sleep because of his prayers. Families of the prisoners from Caucasus address to legal experts every day. They say that officers do not transfer parcels to prisoners, and the contained food rots. Besides that, when families come to visit, prisoners

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are provoked to commit misdemeanors. They are put into disciplinary cell and their relatives limited in time and money leave.

The most terrible cases of abuse of the Caucasians are observed in penal colony-18 in Sosva settlement. Moslems are forbidden to observe fasts. But this is not the most terrible.

- The most horrible is that before the people met me, they were exposed to tortures and abasement of human dignity. The butchers threatened them: "Shaklein will come and go, but you'll stay here!" Not only the colony authority, but even an ordinary security guard directly declares to a prisoner: "I am your small tsar! If I want to do something to you, I'll do it!" After such intimidation what can a prisoner tell to a person who came for a couple of minutes? - the legal expert says.

However one of the prisoners, his name is Hudi, did not get scared and told the truth about slaughter of three prisoners. After that he was locked in a punishment isolation cell. Two other men scared to death, asserted that they had no problems.



The legal expert didn't manage to avoid troubles as well - his caustic observation embittered authorities of some colonies. In revenge he was accused of delivering drugs.

Complaints about the total neglect of law to management of the Federal Correctional Service of Russia bring no results. Every day we find out about new villainous facts of mockeries at prisoners. So, a cellmate of Chechen Hasan T. told us that Hasan was taken out at night, beaten, undressed and threatened with rape. Later he was brought back and forced to keep silence.

Those who try to help the unfortunate and deprived of civil rights prisoners, get into traps of the criminal system at times. Alexey Sokolov, a member of the Public Supervising Committee on Human Rights in Correctional Facilities, has already spent over six months in prison on an artificial charge. Last spring Lyudmila Alekseyeva, the head of the Moscow Helsinki group, organized a picket by the General Prosecutor's Office demanding to release Alexey Sokolov, but she wasn't able to get anywhere.

Accordingly, those Ural prisoners who Alexey could be helping now, remained without protection.

All that these people and their families have now is patience and hope.

# OSSETIAN FAIRYTALE

"Thank you, Russia", - this inscription made with letters a meter tall can be seen right on the mountain when you drive to South Ossetia through the Roksky tunnel. Behind are fantastically beautiful gorges - the Zugskoye gorge and district Nizhny Zaramag, Ardonskoye with the Ardon river at the bottom. "Ardon" means "mad", so quick and strong its flow is.

The Roksky tunnel is wide, long and dark. They say, during the war in August, 2008 Georgia wanted to blow it up to divide South Ossetia and Russia.

I hardly have time to take pictures hanging out of the car window. The nature is amazingly colorful. The forests around are so pied - claret, yellow, crimson, pink, green. Clouds lay down between the rocks, snow is visible here and there. The temperature behind the ridge sharply goes down, highland chill is felt.

Vladikavkaz and Tskhinval are separated by 175 kilometers. There is no public transportation. The people use their own cars to go somewhere. We are carried by Eduard - an excellent guide, native of Kvaisa in South Ossetia, aboriginal of the places.

During the war in August Eduard, as well as many of his fellows, went to protect the motherland. He says, though it was scary to be under the hail of bullets from



the Georgian side but what can a man do? After all it is even worse to be killed at home. But as for the sensational idea of the republic's independence, he doesn't understand it and doesn't support:

"Nobody needs all the symbols of independence in South Ossetia. Ordinary people don't need it; this is just public relations which have been thought up by those who only strive not to let out power from their hands. Independence from whom? From Russia? All the people need is quiet life. In terms of economy nothing has improved since last August. At first people were very excited after the war, but even then I realized, farce it was. Only the brass who get the money live better".

Though as Eduard marks, and we, sitting in the car, agree, - the roads here are well-constructed. They were made by Russia, and Russia continues the construction. On the way we often see different kinds of maintenance vehicles - bulldozers, dredges. The highway is new and smooth. During the war all the roads were broken by tanks, and now they are in the best possible way. One of the parts of the road is designed for launching of a small plane.

Our interlocutor comments this: "Any realistically thinking person understands that this soil behind the Caucasian ridge is very important to Russia, to have military bases there, otherwise forwarding equipment every time you need it there, is extremely inconvenient. During the war on the route towards Tskhinval great traffic jams were formed. And in winter reinforcement forwarding would be almost impossible. Russia needs this soil for strategic targets. The Americans don't have a point in holding the bases in South Ossetia if Russia has them, and Russia has them already. There are a lot of troops and equipment, they have helicopters too. Ready!"

Thus, it seems that the blessings, wasted by the Russian authorities to South Ossetia basically serve to their own interests.

And here is one more small, but a characteristic example. A Moscow building company "CV-155" erected







a small town in Tskhinval area. For a year and a half it has been joyfully sending press releases: this is what we do for people! But the people in South Ossetia say absolutely different things. That small town is forbidden and the Russian military, not ordinary citizens, live there; and it's not easy to get there. Nevertheless, huge posters along the road shout about the new residential area. And a local cafe has got a pathos, but odd name "Podmoskovie" (Moscow suburbs).

Tskhinval is recovering and this is true. Things are humming here. Taxi drivers fuss at the station area, the market is full of people. We read inscriptions on city fences "United Ossetia together with Russia and Putin" or "Saakashvili - the murderer". Evident propaganda, to be short.

We are in a cafe having Ossetian pies incomparable in taste "sakharadzhi" with beet leaves. Meanwhile the owner highly praises the Russian military men: "They are like sons to me. They come to us sometimes, always polite and behave very well. So we are with Russia forever. They



rescued us from the Georgians, who constantly tormented us. We were scared just to pass by their villages".

I am thinking to myself: "At least somebody loves my country". As for relations with the Georgians, the locals say they didn't have problems in everyday life. Neighbors of different nationalities lived together amicably in Tskhinval, the children went to school together.

But two Georgian settlements, Kekhvi and Tamarasheni situated in South Ossetia, have always created problems: "Now and then they were shooting from there, - the locals say. - And later the official Tbilisi

declared that it did not supervise the settlements. But we are sure that those were intended provocations. When the war began many Georgians were killed by the own bombs".

Sergey from Dzhava tells: "It happened a couple of years ago. I got detained, when I was driving by Kekhvi. They told me: "We'll shoot you". They took me aside from road; they searched the car but couldn't open the trunk. I was ordered to open it. I had spirit inside, a whole canister. They started drinking right away, so there was some delay. It saved me. A local old man appeared, he shamed my attackers. As a result I managed to escape".

Now Kekhvi and Tamarasheni are ruined, the houses are destroyed by bombs and finished off by bulldozers. The orchards are abandoned, the gardens are empty.



Lack of official information is a very vexed problem in South Ossetia. Public relations and propagation - more than enough. Alas, there is no information. Three times we tried to talk to somebody from the local officials, just to ask about the life in republic. We even asked their friends and relatives to help. But every time we were asked to get accreditation at the ministry of information. Once we were sent on Television. On the part of the authorities of the Caucasian republic loving Russia, actions like these looked weird.

But we saw with our own eyes a lot of such things which a newsmaker wouldn't be able to describe.

After visiting the capital of the republic we went to the city of Kvaisa situated 40 km away from the main road of Dzhava-Tskhinval. As soon as we drove down from the road we immediately felt that here the Russian construction blessings come to an end.



An hour and a half of jolting on potholes - and we are in Kvaisa.

No facilities, it's worse than just chilly in the house. We are burning wood in the stove. But the nature is beautiful; it's so quiet you can hear the river murmuring in the Kodorskoye gorge. Kvaisa lies at the bottom of the huge oblong bowl formed by the adjacent mountains. From above, at long range the city looks like a usual settlement. But once you come down, it becomes clear that you are in the backyard of the big and once powerful empire, on ruins of one of the "Atlantises". It had everything. Everything that nowadays lies in ruins. In the centre of the town there is a big park with majestic avenues and curbstones. The curbstones cracked, the avenues got covered with grass, the flowerbeds lop-sided. However, they are still standing. The pool and the fountain at the city



square are dead, cows walk about. Instead of the road - there are splinters of asphalt and enormous pools.

For the last 19 years this city was tormented by several earthquakes, then, the war added its strokes. Nobody repaired, restored or fixed anything. People's wastefulness finishes Kvaisa off just as well as the nature. The present image of the city testifies this unambiguously.

There is no school; it was destroyed by the September earthquake. The children study in the carriages brought by the Emergency Control Ministry of the Russian Federation. The residents of the five-storey buildings, which also suffered from the tremors, huddle in tents next to the houses. They are scared to step into the buildings to pick up their belongings - the houses can collapse any moment. Elderly women cry: "They promised us to restore our dwellings! And nothing has been done!"

All I can do is to make photograph of my interlocutors for memory; I am embodying the landscapes around. Among the sightseeing places of this southern town only the nature is left.





