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PUTIN PAINTS ROSY PICTURE OF CHECHNYA...

President Putin touched on the North Caucasus generally and Chechnya specifically in his annual State of the Nation address, which he delivered to the Russian parliament on April 25. "I hope for energetic work to strengthen security in the southern part of Russia and firmly establish the values of freedom and justice there," Putin said in the speech, a transcript of which was posted on the Kremlin's website, kremlin.ru. "Developing the economy, creating new jobs and building social and production infrastructure are prerequisites for this work. I support the idea of holding parliamentary elections in the Republic of Chechnya this year. These elections should lay the foundation for stability and for developing democracy in this region. I want to note that the North Caucasus region already has good conditions for achieving rapid economic growth. The region has one of Russia's best-developed transport infrastructures, a qualified labor force, and surveys show that the number of people in this region wanting to start up their own business is higher than the national average. At the same time, however, the shadow economy accounts for a bigger share in this region and there is criminalization of economic relations in general. In this respect, the authorities should not only work on strengthening the law enforcement and court systems in the region, but should also help develop business activity among the population."

And while Putin stressed the need to eradicate "the sources of terrorist aggression," he seemed to put the blame for the upsurge in terrorist

attacks in Russia on past "terrorist intervention" – an apparent reference to the first Chechen war of 1994-1996 – and "the Khasavyurt capitulation that followed" – a reference to the August 1996 peace accord.

Responding to Putin's speech, Vladimir Ryzhkov, an independent State Duma deputy and an outspoken critic of Kremlin policies, critiqued, among other things, the president's comments on Chechnya, the North Caucasus and terrorism. "2004 was the worst year in recent Russian history in terms of terrorist activity," Ryzhkov wrote in the April 27 edition of the *Moscow Times*. "The number of terrorist attacks doubled, as did the number of victims. The real watershed was Beslan, where the federal authorities once again demonstrated their inability to prevent major acts of terrorism. Earlier this year, Aslan Maskhadov was killed, but soldiers and police officers are still dying on a regular basis in Chechnya and neighboring republics. In Dagestan alone, 40 soldiers and policemen have died since the beginning of the year. In response, Putin talked generally about the development of the 'South' and the need for

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parliamentary elections in Chechnya this year. Apparently, there is still no strategy for bringing peace to Chechnya. Or perhaps the president did not find it necessary to discuss the details.”

Putin also talked about Chechnya in an interview he gave to the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram* on the eve of his trip to Cairo, which was also posted on kremlin.ru on April 25. Asked what can be done to change the fact that Chechnya “remains a stumbling block between Russia and public opinion in the Arab and Muslim world,” Putin responded that the situation could change “if our friends in the Arab and Muslim world become more closely acquainted with what is really happening today in Chechnya and in Russia in general.” Putin said that “dozens of mosques” have opened in Chechnya in recent years, adding that this “would not have been possible without real and direct support from the Russian leadership.” “[W]e let everyone who seeks good, happiness and prosperity for the Chechen people, regardless of their political views, take part in rebuilding the republic,” he said. Putin also stated that the Russian authorities have “granted numerous amnesties and are involving representatives of all political forces in the republic’s life, except, of course, those who seek to achieve their aims through the use of arms or through such atrocities as...the terrible terrorist act in Beslan.”

Putin also cited Chechnya’s constitutional referendum and presidential election during the last two years (observers from the Arab League and Organization of the Islamic Conference, he noted, had declared both of them “democratic”) and said that his administration is “ready to sign an agreement with Chechnya on the division of powers between the federal and local authorities, and on providing the republic with a large degree of autonomy.” He added: “I think that we could very well see parliamentary elections held this year in Chechnya with all the different political forces taking part.”

...AS DISAPPEARANCES CONTINUE

Kavkazky Uzel reported on April 23 that eight residents of the village of Starye Atagi in Chechnya’s Groznensky district had been kidnapped over the previous month. The website cited the Council of Chechen Non-Governmental Organizations, which in turn cited testimony from villagers, who said that the abductors seemed to be either military personnel or members of local power structures. On April 20, a 23-year-old Starye Atagi resident named Gakaev was stopped on the street by soldiers who then forced him into a car and drove off to an unknown destination. Earlier, a villager named Maaev, who currently has a business in

Moscow, was kidnapped by armed men in camouflage two days after arriving in Starye Atagi from the Russian capital. He was freed several days later after his parents paid a large ransom. On April 19, two Starye Atagi residents were seized by members of “power structures”. One of them turned out to be a policeman and was released after questioning, but the fate of the other man remains unknown.

On April 16, a 22-year-old Starye Atagi resident with the surname Yupaeva was kidnapped in front of the hospital where she worked as a nurse. On April 15, Russian troops and local security personnel detained a Ruslan Ebaev, a 50-year-old father of two, during a special operation in Starye Atagi. According to Ebaev’s relatives, he neither participated in fighting in either of Chechnya’s two wars nor belonged to any non-governmental organization or movement. On March 26, Starye Atagi resident Aslan Turluev was abducted by armed men in uniforms who were reportedly members of RUBOP, the regional anti-organized crime directorate. Turluev’s relatives claimed he was forced to sign a document saying he was rebel fighter. On March 19, a 34-year-old Starye Atagi resident, Rizvan Oibuev, was taken out of his home by kidnappers who, before driving him off to points unknown, beat his parents when they tried to block prevent his abduction.

The Russian-Chechen Friendship Society reported on April 22 that Achkoi-Martan resident Vasi Buchaev was kidnapped in the Achkoi-Martan district center by unknown persons on April 19. Relatives of Buchaev managed to trace the kidnappers to the city of Gudermes but were unable to find out where he was being held. The Prima news agency reported on April 22 that armed men had abducted a teacher at a school in the Nozhai-Yurt district.

Meanwhile, Kavkazky Uzel reported on April 26 that security forces were carrying out a number of special operations in the Shali district, including so-called “targeted” mopping-up operations in the village of Serzhen-Yurt. According to a villager, on April 25 security personnel searched several houses in Serzhen-Yurt and took one person off to an unknown destination. Also on April 25, members of Chechnya’s presidential security service carried out a special operation in the city of Shali, where they detained local inhabitants whom they suspected of belonging to rebel groups. Security operations were also carried out in the settlements of Duba-Yurt and Avtury. Several Shali district residents told Kavkazky Uzel’s correspondent that the raids in the district were connected to a “noticeable” increase in rebel activity.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE EXPRESSES CONCERN

On April 20, the Council of Europe released a report by its Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil-Robles, based on his visits to Russia over July 15-30 and September 19-29 of last year. Gil-Robles' report included an account of his trip to Chechnya over September 23-26. He said, among other things, that despite "some improvements," the situation in Chechnya "remains difficult." "I was particularly saddened to see Grozny virtually in the same state as it had been at the time of my previous visit, which is to say in ruins."

As to the issue of disappearances, Gil-Robles wrote: "I was told that although the number of disappearances had fallen, this was a vital issue. The responsibility for such disappearances would appear to divide into three: the fighters hiding in the mountains kidnap people as part of their terrorist action; some people are abducted by criminal groups seeking a ransom; and, in addition, the federal forces and the Chechen police also appear to be implicated. Instances where people simply disappear, whoever is behind it, are unacceptable. Such practices must cease and those responsible, whoever they are, must be arrested and tried." Gil-Robles added that "the missing people must be searched for and their disappearances explained," noting that Deputy Prosecutor General Sergei Fridinsky had told him that 1,749 criminal investigations into the disappearance of 2,400 people had been initiated "since the re-introduction of the Russian legal system in the Chechen Republic" but that the "overwhelming majority" of those investigations had been put on hold.

"This is unacceptable," Gil-Robles wrote. "Peace cannot fully return while the fate of these people remains unknown. Families need to be informed where those still alive are to be found or, where such is the case, be able to recover their bodies... Unfortunately, a large number of the missing people are no longer alive."

The publication of Gil-Robles' report coincided with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Moscow. On April 22, newsru.com, citing an article published the previous day by France's *Le Monde*, noted that while Rice during her meeting with Putin and other top officials raised the issue of Russia's retreat from democracy, particularly the absence of independent electronic media, and also expressed concern about Russia's delivery of arms to Venezuela and supply of nuclear fuel to Iran, "the subject of Chechnya, the issue that President Putin so dislikes, was not broached."

REBELS ACCUSED OF MURDER AND INTIMIDATION

Gen.-Major Ilya Shabalkin, spokesman for the Russian military operation in the North Caucasus, told Interfax on April 25 that Bukhari Gumkiev, mufti of a mosque in the village of Shelkovskaya, was murdered. According to Shabalkin, the preliminary results of an investigation into the incident indicated that the 66-year-old imam was murdered after refusing to allow separatist fighters to spend the night in his mosque. RIA Novosti quoted unnamed eyewitnesses as saying that the rebels openly threatened the mufti.

Lenta.ru reported on April 25 that there have been other reports of "extremists killing Chechen civilians who refuse to help them." The website specifically cited a report that a fighter loyal to rebel field commander Magomed Baisultanov who was captured on April 17 had shot a resident of the village of Achkoi-Martan to death in order to intimidate other villagers (see *Chechnya Weekly*, April 20).

In late March the pro-rebel daymohk.info and marsho.dk websites reported that leaflets had been circulated in Chechnya in which the rebel military command warned "of the inadmissibility of collaboration with the Russian occupiers." "Our source reports that in the run-up to the beginning of active military actions, the Chechen [rebel] military command considered it its duty to once again inform people serving the Russian occupiers that measures will be taken against them in line with wartime laws," daymohk.info reported on March 31. According to the websites, the rebel leaflets warned Chechens working for the republic's pro-Moscow authorities that only by quitting their jobs could they "hope for our leniency."

ANOTHER VIOLENT INCIDENT RAISES CHECHEN-DAGESTANI TENSIONS

Chechen First Deputy Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov claimed on April 27 that "terrorists who commit serious crimes in Chechnya" come into the republic from neighboring Dagestan, where they rest and "muster their strength" and then "drop in" to Chechnya for "the next terrorist act." Kadyrov called on law-enforcement organs of the North Caucasus to fight terrorists jointly, Ekho Moskvy radio reported.

Kadyrov's comments exacerbate growing tensions between Chechen and Dagestani law-enforcement organs. Tensions

spiked in January when Kadyrov led a convoy of armed security men from Chechnya into Dagestan and freed sister, Zulai, who had been detained along with two members of her brother's security service (see *Chechnya Weekly*, January 13).

Another confrontation reportedly took place on April 20 when, as reported by *Nezavisimaya gazeta* the following day, personnel from the Chechen branch of the Federal Security Service (FSB) together with members Kadyrov's presidential security service carried out an operation in the village of Toturby-Kala in Dagestan's Khasavyurt. Their targets were several suspected members of "illegal armed formations" who had allegedly hid in the home of Yusup Adzhiev, head of the service department of Mezhtregiongaz, an affiliate of Gazprom, Russia's natural gas monopoly. The Chechen side claimed that Adzhiev's brother, reportedly a deputy to the Dagestani rebel field commander Rappani Khalilov, was among those hiding in the house. The Dagestani side, and Chechen Interior Minister Ruslan Alkhanov, said the Chechen forces were blocked by local inhabitants who were "armed to the teeth." Abdulmanap Musaev, head of the Dagestani Interior Ministry's press department, said that Yusup Adzhiev's bodyguards started shooting at the Chechen forces simply because they saw unknown armed people in ski-masks approaching the house. Likewise, Khasavyurt district police patrol officer Magomed Omarov, who witnessed the incident, told *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that Adzhiev's bodyguards took the Chechen security men for "God knows who, all the more so given that it all took place at four in the morning, when it was still quite dark."

Whichever version of the incident is accurate, *Kommersant* on April 21 quoted Ruslan Atsaev, head of the Chechen Interior Ministry's press service, as saying that two Chechen "special-detachment servicemen," one from the presidential security service and the other from the FSB, were killed in the shootout. Chechen Interior Minister Ruslan Alkhanov told Interfax on April 20 that the deputy chief of the Nozhai-Yurt district's FSB department, Adam Uchmigov, had been killed in the operation. *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on April 21 quoted Khasavyurt city mayor Saigidpasha Umakhanov as saying that unknown gunmen in masks had recently abducted four men from Toturby-Kala, leaving local residents "exasperated" and convinced "that these were the actions of the Chechen special services."

On the day of the incident in Toturby-Kala, April 20, Ramzan Kadyrov told RIA Novosti that armed local residents had impeded the Chechen security forces attempts to "neutralize members of the band formations" and, "with the connivance

of staff of the district law-enforcement organs," had helped the three rebels allegedly hiding in Yusup Adzhiev's house to escape. Kadyrov insisted the Chechen security operations in Khasavyurt district had been conducted with the agreement of Dagestani law-enforcement and said that the incident raised many questions. "It is incomprehensible: why did a group of the most active members of Khalilov's band end up in the home of a Dagestani official?", Kadyrov asked. Interfax on April 20 quoted Kadyrov as saying: "It is impossible to establish order in the fight against terrorism in just one constituent part of the Russian Federation. If gunmen and terrorists, having committed heavy crimes in the Chechen Republic, are allowed to have a rest and restore strength in neighboring regions for some time, we will never get rid of this evil."

Dagestani Interior Ministry spokesman Abdulmanap Musaev told RIA Novosti that Dagestani law-enforcement personnel got involved in the operation in Toturby-Kala only after the Chechen personnel had already launched it. He would not, however, discuss whether the Dagestani side had been informed in advance about the operation and insisted there were "no grounds for discord" between the law-enforcement organs of Dagestan and Chechnya.

On April 24, Toturby-Kala residents held a protest against the actions of the Chechen security forces on April 20. The *Caucasus Times* reported on April 24 that the Khasavyurt district Interior Ministry department sent forces into the village "to ease the situation" and that Dagestani Interior Minister Adilgeri Magomedtagirov later visited Toturby-Kala and "managed to ease the tensions."

In another apparent attempt to defuse tensions, Magomedtagirov and Chechen Interior Minister Ruslan Alkhanov met in Khasavyurt on April 25 and agreed to continue joint special operations in Dagestan, the *Caucasus Times* reported on April 26. "From now on, not a single operation in the neighboring territory will be carried out without being agreed beforehand," Magomedtagirov said.

MASKHADOV'S BODY BURIED IN SECRET GRAVE

Deputy Prosecutor-General for the Southern Federal District Nikolai Shepel announced on April 22 in Nalchik that Aslan Maskhadov's body had been buried in accordance with the law on terrorism and that "the burial place is not to be revealed," Itar-Tass reported. "Like with the graves of other Chechen leaders, Ruslan Gelaev (who was shot by two border guards) and Salman Raduev (who was convicted and

mysteriously died in prison), on Maskhadov's grave will be only a name plate with a number," *gazeta.ru* wrote on April 22. "Thus all the recent disputes over whether or not to hand over Maskhadov's body to [his] relatives are over."

In fact, Maskhadov's relatives, who demanded repeatedly that his body be returned, are planning to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. "We still hope that this decision will be revised and the body will be given to us," the Associated Press quoted Maskhadov's son, Anzor, as saying. "In case they don't change their mind we will have to appeal to the Strasbourg court." *Kommersant* on April 23 quoted the acting chairman of the separatist Chechen government, Selim Bashaev, who is in France, as saying that several members of the European Parliament had said they plan to demand that the Russian authorities return Maskhadov's body to his relatives. *Kavkazky Uzel* reported on April 26 that representatives of Chechen human rights and public organizations had decided to appeal to President Vladimir Putin for the return of Maskhadov's body to his relatives and to involve both Russian and international organizations in the campaign.

Taisa Isaeva, head of the information center of the Council of Chechen Non-Governmental Organizations, added that Chechen NGOs had held a roundtable on April 16 in Nazran, Ingushetia, to discuss human rights violation in Chechnya. "At that time a decision was reached to prepare an appeal to the Russian leadership and the international community calling on them to resolve the issue of delivering the Aslan Maskhadov's body to his relatives," Isaeva told *Kavkazky Uzel*. "Some of those in attendance thought it was also necessary to appeal to the mufti of Chechnya and the head of the republic, Alu Alkhanov, but that idea was rejected. The text of the appeal to the Russian president is now ready, and work is being carried out to collect signatures. More than 40 non-governmental organizations and people involved in human rights activity in Chechnya have agreed to support our appeal. Concurrently, we have sent a letter to representatives of both Russian and international human rights organizations calling on them to sign the appeal to Vladimir Putin to return Maskhadov's body. Some of them have already agreed to do so."

GROSS SUGGESTS ZAKAEV COULD JOIN FUTURE ROUNDTABLES

Andreas Gross, the Swiss parliamentarian who organized the roundtable on Chechnya held on March 21 in Strasbourg under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of the Europe (PACE), said on March 26 that it was

possible that Akhmed Zakaev, the London-based Chechen separatist envoy, could participate in a future roundtable session as a "private person," RIA Novosti reported. "I personally think there are no reasons to refuse his participation in the roundtable," Gross told the news agency. Asked whether Zakaev might participate in the next roundtable session, Gross answered: "I think his participation in the second session would be premature, but he certainly could participate in subsequent ones." Gross also said he backed the participation of "other moderate Chechen politicians" in the roundtable. The March 21 roundtable did not include representatives of the Chechen separatists (see *Chechnya Weekly*, March 23).

Gross said the date and venue for the next roundtable on Chechnya could be announced at a meeting of PACE's Political Commission scheduled to take place in Paris on May 30. During the March 21 session of the Chechnya roundtable, Chechen President Alu Alkhanov suggested the next session be held in Grozny and guaranteed complete security for participants. Gross, for his part, said it was possible that a future session could be held in Grozny. Members of PACE's Political Commission, he said, are split over the timing of the next session: "Some believe it expedient to hold this event before the parliamentary election in Chechnya; others – and the Russian delegation holds this view – insist that the [roundtable] should be held after the election." Chechnya's parliamentary election is scheduled for October of this year. Gross said he personally supports holding the next roundtable before the election. "If it is held after [the election], then it will be quite irrelevant and less representative," Gross said.

THE ROLE OF SUFISM IN THE CHECHEN RESISTANCE

By Mayrbek Vachagaev

The Sufi interpretation of Islam has been practiced in Chechnya since the end of the 18th century. The Sufism of the Naqshbandi *tariqa* (or brotherhood) was the first to make its way to Chechnya (by Sheikh Mansur, Imam Avko, Imam Tashu-Hadji and many others). In the 1850s, at the time of military defeats for the Imamate of Shamil, the Qadiri *tariqa* was introduced to Chechen society, which at the beginning advocated spiritual resistance but by no means physical confrontation. This brotherhood was represented by Sheikh Kunta-Hadji Kishiev.

The uniqueness of Sufism in Chechnya lies in the

transformation and development of the two tariqas since the 19th century. The Naqshbandiyya, known in the Caucasus as a base of support for those who resisted Russian aggression in the 18th and 19th centuries, abandoned that view and adopted a stance of peaceful coexistence with the official authorities. At the same time, the Qadiri tariqa, which had come to Chechnya promoting nonviolent resistance to Russian colonization in the 19th century, has now become the main force of Sufi opposition to the authorities.

Throughout the history of Sufism in Chechnya, the Sufi brotherhoods preserved structures bearing a resemblance to the military organizations of Chechen *murids* (disciples), individual followers of a Sufi leader or sheikh. Each village was divided into blocks, the leaders of which had to coordinate their actions with the heads of other blocks. They, in turn, were united in groups of one hundred. Thus, the blocks – villages – districts were led by a *turkh* (leader), and there was a leader of the Republic (most often a descendant of a Sufi sheikh), who coordinated the actions of the whole brotherhood.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the members of the Sufi brotherhoods encountered for the first time active propaganda by members of the Islamic Party of Renaissance, who encouraged Chechens to reject Sufism and follow a radical interpretation of Islam, pejoratively referred to as Salafism or Wahhabism. Adam Deniev (who later, having realized the absence of prospects for this ideology in Chechnya, realigned with the Sufis), Islam Halimov and Isa Umarov (Movlady Udugov's brother), were the first to try to impugn the foundations of Sufism as incompatible with the dogmas of Islam as a whole. But their activity came to naught due to the flat refusal by the majority of Chechens to recognize their ideology. The activity of these "reformers" was viewed as hostile and alien to Chechens: it was considered anti-Islamic, as Sufism meant Islam to Chechens.

Time has demonstrated that the Sufis were not prepared for such intrusions; that the murids unconditionally believed everything that the sheikhs told them. This is a paradox, as the murids managed to survive and strengthen their ranks due to their own counter-propaganda against the communist regime. Perhaps, that was the result of Islam's seclusion within the boundaries of Chechnya and Dagestan, its isolation from the world Islamic centers, and from the higher education centers of the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya, all of which undoubtedly affected the nature of Sufism in Chechnya.

Speaking about the relative sizes of the Sufi brotherhoods of Naqshbandiyya and Qadiriyya, some mistakenly define the latter of comprising a great majority of the Chechen population. Unlike the Qadiris, the Naqshbandis practice their ways covertly, which limits the participation by those who are not members of the brotherhoods. Most likely, however, the ratio of participation between the two is 1 to 1.

The Qadiri tariqa, which never concealed its attitude toward the communist authorities, became a base of support for Djokhar Dudaev, who once was a member of the Naqshbandi tariqa, but later decided that he would find a reliable ally in the Qadiris. But choosing a tariqa as an ally is not enough; the most difficult task is to avoid a division in society. The Chechen authorities failed to achieve that: choosing the Qadiri tariqa created a counterbalance through which the Naqshbandis took the side of the opposition and assumed a stance of non-recognition of the new authorities led by Djokhar Dudaev. Among those who joined the opposition were the descendants of Deni Arsanov, whereas the descendants of Dokku Shaptukaev and Sheikh Solsa-Hadji Yandarov, most of whom live in the plains around Grozny, ignored the government of Djokhar Dudaev without openly condemning it. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that not all the Naqshbandis were in opposition to Dudaev: the members of the brotherhood of Imam Tashu-Hadji and Ghazy-Hadji Zandaksky (who live in the eastern part of Chechnya on the border with Dagestan) supported the new authorities and gave all military aid possible.

During the first Russian military campaign in Chechnya (1994 – 1996), Chechen military units were formed according to membership within a particular tariqa group (*wird*) – Kunt-Hadji, Ali Mitaev, Ghazi-Hadji Zandaksky, Tashu-Hadji Sayasanovsky and so on. That reflected the mood of people and was natural for that time. But it was also during that time (in 1995) that militarized detachments were formed under the leadership of an ethnic Chechen from Jordan, Sheikh Fathi, which presented themselves as representatives of pure Islam. Later they were known as jamaats (see April 6, 2005 issue of Chechnya Weekly).

After the war, from 1996 to 1998, Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov changed his position toward Sufism several times. Having come to power as a representative of Sufism, he immediately came to terms with the radicals, thereby trying to neutralize them as a possible opposition. Representatives of the so-called radical wing were appointed to a number of important posts in the government at the insistence of Islam Halimov. For example, Islam Halimov headed the

Interior Ministry, which he renamed the Ministry of Sharia Security; Abdul-Wahab Hussainov was appointed Minister of Education; and Movlady Udugov was made Foreign Minister.

However, the military clash in the summer of 1998 in the town of Gudermes between Sufi adherents and the radicals brought Aslan Maskhadov back to the side of the Sufis. But Maskhadov, a follower of the Naqshbandi tariqa (the brotherhood of Usman-Hadji), repeated the same mistake made by Dudaev, who had counted on the Qadiris as allies. Unlike Dudaev however, Maskhadov's policy of conciliation between Sufis brought about an incredible outpouring of enthusiasm among the followers of Sufism in Chechnya.

Sufis probably make up 90 to 95 percent of the population of Chechnya, but those numbers should not lead one to underestimate the threat posed by the radicals. Radicals, even though they represent a minority of 2-3 percent, are an active minority advancing their own interests not only in Chechnya, but also throughout the whole North Caucasus region. They have rigid discipline and large financial capabilities, but most importantly they know what they want: power.

The majority of the followers of Sufism are made up of various disunited, competing brotherhoods that do not recognize each other and have no political ambitions. Their weakness also on theological issues may add to the shift of a part of the electorate from them to the radicals.

The Sufi element is poorly represented in the current military campaign; at least it is impossible to define them visually as it was in the first war (1994 – 1996). That speaks not so much to their weakness as to the fact that the Chechen Sufis are not prepared to react quickly to changes in the situation in Chechnya. Information sources advocating the interests of the radicals depict the situation in Chechnya as if only the jamaats are fighting there. This is at odds with the reality on the ground in Chechnya. However, the defeat of Sufi brotherhoods in the information war is evident as never before.

The Russians, for their part, are trying to drive a wedge between the resistance movement and Sufism by saying that all those who fight against them with weapons in their hands are radicals. It goes without saying, however, that any attempt to force an opinion on the Chechens from above is doomed to fail. Mistrust of the authorities, and of everything that has to do with Russia, is so strong in Chechnya that the opposing side has no need to take counter measures. There is

a new young generation of Chechen Sufis, who received Sufi education in Syria and Turkey, and there is a new ideology – or, more accurately, the rebirth of a forgotten ideology of resistance to Russia – which makes Sufism in Chechnya more vibrant and pure than it was ten years ago.

The policy of terror unleashed by Russia in Chechnya today works against the Russians the same way it did in the past against the communist authorities. Chechens are “retreating” into their inner selves. Sufis have again left the streets. Islam has again returned to Chechnya; it contains a mystery that is inaccessible to those who are not in the Sufi brotherhoods. Russia's actions in Chechnya have failed to understand and recognize the force of Sufism, an indication that the Russians may have difficulty taming or suppressing the new generation of separatist fighters.

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BRIEFS

--RAMZAN SAYS HE KNOWS WHO KILLED HIS FATHER

Chechen First Deputy Prime Minister Ramzan Kadyrov claimed on April 27 that the identities of both those who ordered and those who carried out the bombing which killed his father, the late Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov, last May 9 have been fully established. “I know 100 percent who did it, and who detonated it, who placed the mine, how it was organized,” Interfax quoted him as telling journalists in his home village of Tsentoroi. “We have completely uncovered this. One of those who carried out the terrorist act remains alive – it is a person from among those who placed the land mine and directly participated in committing the terrorist act. The rest – except for the one who ordered it, [Chechen rebel warlord Shamil] Basaev – have been killed.” “Those who remain at liberty will be captured,” and “we will officially announce it,” Kadyrov said.

--REBEL “EMIRS” CAPTURED AND KILLED...

A Chechen law-enforcement source told RIA Novosti on April 27 that the rebel “emir” of Chechnya's Naursk district, Roman Tolkhadov, had been arrested. On April 26, Gen.-Major Ilya Shabalkin, spokesman for the Russian military operation in the North Caucasus, reported that a member of rebel field commander Salman Mastaev's group was detained in Grozny's Staropromyslovsky district. The detainee is suspected of involvement in attacks on local residents, administration officials and law-enforcement

officers, Shabalkin said. He also said that a rebel loyal to field commander Selim Bimurzaev was captured in the Shali district village of Serzhen-Yurt and that a member of Kyuri Iriskhanov's group wanted for railway bombings in 2001-2002 had been detained. On April 22, Shabalkin reported that the "emir" of the towns of Shelkovskaya and Chervlyonnaya, Suleyman Dakaev, had been killed in Grozny. Dakaev's group was allegedly planning terrorist attacks in Grozny to coincide with May 9th Victory Day celebrations.

...AS REBELS BOMB SECURITY FORCES

On April 22, a roadside bomb was detonated near the village of Dzhalka in Chechnya's Gudermes district as a convoy of Interior Ministry troops drove by, Itar-Tass reported. The blast caused a ferro-concrete pole to fall on a truck carrying personnel, leaving one serviceman with arm and hip fractures. On April 21, a large explosion took place at a Chechen Interior Ministry OMON special forces base in Grozny's Leninsk district, RIA Novosti reported. The blast, which was caused by a car that had been abandoned by rebel fighters and taken to the base for inspection, killed one serviceman and wounded four others. Unknown attackers had the previous day fired on the OMON base with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons, wounding one serviceman.

--CHECHEN BIRTHRATE HIGHEST IN RUSSIA

Novye izvestia reported on April 21 that a conference, "The Chechen Republic and Chechens: history and modernity," organized by the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in conjunction with the Chechen Republics' Academy of Sciences, had noted that around half of Chechnya's gross domestic product remains in the "shadow economy" but that the republic has the highest birthrate in Russia. According to Aleksandr Granberg, chairman of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Council for the Study of Productive Forces, reported that despite all of Chechnya's "misfortunes" and economic "ruins," the republic's birthrate in 2003 was 24.9 per 1,000, compared with 10.2 per 1,000 for Russian as a whole.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"My goal is to return a smile to Chechnya." -- Ramzan Kadyrov, as quoted in *Moskovsky komosomolets* on April 26.

"The 'Kadyrov Jr.' project has been going on for almost a year. Judging by formal indications, it is going as well as possible. The formations of the first deputy premier of

the Chechen government are actively fighting against the separatists. Their commander, and not the president of the republic Alu Alkhanov, represents Chechnya as part of the Russian Federation on the federal and international levels. Judging by reports, things are going so well that Ramzan Kadyrov can permit himself not only to fight, but also to visit the most fashionable Moscow clubs. And, of course, the first deputy premier is always a welcome guest in the Kremlin. The crown of the goodwill toward Kadyrov Jr. was the Hero of Russia award conferred on him. Through the glossy photograph of the patriot and order holder, however, there appears another, much less pleasant personage. Today, Ramzan Kadyrov informally controls all of the economic aid that comes into the republic from the center. Under his command are large, well-armed formations accountable only to him. Support from the Kremlin exempts the first deputy premier from any kind of controls or oversight... Today the very idea that Ramzan Kadyrov can hang up his ax, ceding his position to another person, looks quasi-fantastic. Tomorrow it will be even less possible. By allowing Kadyrov everything, the federal authorities are forgetting that the first leader of the separatists, Djokhar Dudaev, received blessings to start his political career from the Russian leadership, which considered the dashing general the best candidate to purge Checheno-Ingushetia's Communist authorities." - from a commentary published by the gazeta.ru website on April 21.