

# The Rise of Islamist Extremism in Kabardino-Balkariya

GORDON M. HAHN

**Abstract:** This article examines the expansion of Russia's emerging Chechen-led revolutionary Islamist terrorist network into the central-western North Caucasian republic of Kabardino-Balkariya (the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria or KBR), which in many ways is the geopolitical and ethnopolitical gateway to the western North Caucasus. The network's expansion into the region demonstrates the ability of Chechen-based Islamism to "travel" across geography and ethnicity among Russia's Muslims. This article argues for a comprehensive, multicausal explanation of communal mobilization that includes international, institutional, and economic factors in addition to communal-political ones, especially in cases of extremist terrorist groups, such as those in Russia's growing revolutionary Islamist network. It also shows that in Russia, as elsewhere, the international jihadist movement, inspired and funded by al Qaeda, has made some progress in coopting local nationalist movements among Muslim peoples to the Islamist cause.

**Key words:** Chechnya, jihad, Kabardino-Balkariya, Islamism, terrorism

Russia's ongoing Chechen war and President Vladimir Putin's antifederalist, antidemocratic recentralizing counterrevolution are leading to the radical re-Islamization of some of Russia's Muslims and the formation of a geographically expansive, ethnically diverse, flexibly organized terrorist Islamist network across Russia, not unlike the al Qaeda model on the international level. If earlier the Islamist network of combat *jamaats* was limited first to the eastern North Caucasus—Chechnya, then Dagestan and Ingushetiya—it has recently spread to the western North Caucasus, dominated by the Circassian (or Adygei) groups. The emergence of Islamist cells, *jamaats*, or a full-fledged network node in the KBR,

---

Gordon M. Hahn is an Open Society Institute Fellow at Smolny College, St. Petersburg State University, Russia. His most recent book, *The Bear and the Crescent: Russia's Rising Muslim Challenge*, is forthcoming from Yale University Press in 2006. Copyright © 2006 Heldref Publications.

would not only reflect on the jihadist movement's geographical reach, but also on its potential multiethnic, pan-Caucasus and pan-Islamic appeal. The appearance of Islamism in the KBR seems to confirm that frustrated ethnonationalist aspirations under certain conditions can transmogrify into Islamic nationalism or revolutionary Islamist jihadism.

### **The Immediate Causes of Communalism and Islamist Mobilization under Putin**

Watershed historical turns and processes, such as war, revolution, and other forms of regime transformation, have multiple causes. They are simply too large and multifaceted to be explained by one or two causes. Long-term historical, cultural, and structural causes mix with intermediate and immediate tipping or precipitating causes to produce major events. Putting aside historical (past conflict between the parties) and cultural (tendencies toward authoritarianism, expansion, and violence among the parties) structural causes, there are at least six intermediate and immediate causes of rising communalism (the drive for isolation and self-determination based on ethnic, national, linguistic, religious, or regional identity communities), Islamic nationalism, and Islamist terrorism in Russia. First and foremost, the festering Chechnya quagmire and the penetration of international Islamist terrorists through the Chechen movement are fomenting Islamist mobilization, revolution, and war throughout many Muslim-populated regions of Russia. The ongoing Chechen war is facilitating the international Islamists' deeper infiltration into Russia by justifying radicalism in some Muslims' eyes and extending the influence of Islamists beyond Chechnya. In the new war, both sides have attained an inhumane scale of atrocity. On the Russian side, the indiscriminate use of force at the start of the war was succeeded by more precise, but still often criminal, "security sweeps," involving the seizure and murder of many thousands of innocent Chechens. On the Chechen side, there have been small-scale and unprecedented large-scale terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings and hospital and school sieges, targeting innocent citizens, including schoolchildren. However, the militarily superior side is always more capacious in its potential for committing human rights violations and war crimes. Russia's unreformed, unprofessional, corrupt, and often criminalized military and security forces have realized this potential, with systematic abuses, including summary executions, mass arrest operations (*zachistki*), torture, and rape.<sup>1</sup>

The further destruction in Chechnya from World War II rendered many towns, including the capital of Grozny, virtually uninhabitable and without basic infrastructure, such as heat and electricity. There was almost universal unemployment among young Chechen men. Sufficient reconstruction aid from Moscow never materialized, as federal and regional bureaucrats often stole those resources. The miserable socioeconomic situation offered fertile ground for criminal acts, radical ideologies, and Islamist recruitment.<sup>2</sup> Moscow has attempted to normalize Chechnya by reestablishing an administration of loyal Chechens and holding two presidential "elections" and the 2003 referendum on a constitution in a blatantly undemocratic fashion.<sup>3</sup> By late 2003 and

throughout 2004, Chechnya, like Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, was negotiating a new power-sharing treaty with Moscow, but it remains unclear how much autonomy Chechnya will receive.

During the 1994–96 war, the Chechen insurgency began to be Islamicized. Recently, it has become a largely Islamist rather than a nationalist or Islamic movement, increasingly allied with the international jihad. The 9/11 Commission report and other sources show the considerable ties between al Qaeda and Chechen terrorists in terms of funding, training, and deploying personnel. There is no doubt that Shamil Basaev and other Chechen fighters developed links with al Qaeda, that several foreign Islamists who had been running terrorist training camps in Afghanistan until late 2001 came to Chechnya, and that several thousand foreign jihadists have fought with the Chechens over time. Indeed, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who later became the deputy head of al Qaeda, and Mohammed al-Atta, who organized the September 2001 terrorist attacks, sought to join the Chechen struggle against Russia in the late 1990s. In addition, Mohammed al-Atta and several other September 11 terrorists were on their way to Chechnya when they were ordered by an Osama bin Laden operative to head for the United States instead. The two most prominent terrorists in Chechnya, besides Basaev, Ibn al-Khattab, and Abu al-Walid, who were responsible for a series of terrorist attacks in Moscow, were Saudi-born Jordanian al Qaeda operatives.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the Chechen terrorists who seized Moscow's Dubrovka theater in October 2002, had already adopted al Qaeda's communication strategy to the letter, sending a video to al-Jazeera showing the hostage scene, replete with propaganda devices.<sup>5</sup> Although Khattab was killed by Russian forces in April 2002, and al-Walid was killed in 2004, other Arabs have taken their place. The Chechens reportedly have established ties with Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, a native of Jordan who came to head Ansar al-Islam and al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad), the leading terrorist structure fighting U.S. forces in Iraq and who has sworn allegiance to bin Laden.<sup>6</sup> Thus, there is a direct link between international, Chechen, and Russia's non-Chechen Islamists that provides a conduit for tactics, material, and personnel.<sup>7</sup> The Chechen movement remains divided between nationalists seeking a Chechen state and internationalist Islamists seeking a North Caucasus Caliphate as a first step toward broader strategic goals. However, the Taliban- and al Qaeda-tied internationalists are now likely to take control over the movement after Maskhadov's death and the emergence of a new Chechen leader, Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev, who was Maskhadov's vice president and, more important, head of the ruling Majlis-Shura's Shariah Committee and Inchkeria's Shariat Court. As the Chechen war continues and terrorism mounts, the Russian government has responded by centralizing power, harshly cracking down on innocent Muslims, and increasingly violating Muslims' political, civil, and human rights, making them more open to calls for secession and Islamism.

This raises the second immediate cause of expanding Islamism in Russia. Putin's reauthoritarianizing counterrevolution has transformed Russia from a hybrid regime that was a limited, illiberal, managed democracy to one that is softly authoritarian.<sup>8</sup> Russia's Muslim republics, including the KBR, tend to be Russia's most

authoritarian regions.<sup>9</sup> The intermediate level of freedom found in such hybrid regimes produces the highest risk of producing terrorism.<sup>10</sup>

A third cause is part of, but separate from the second. Putin's defederalizing counterrevolution, including recentralization and assimilative policies, goes against the grain of what historical experience and social science theory recommend for effectively containing communalism in large, multicommunal states, with regions defined (ethnofederalism) or predominantly populated by minority communities.<sup>11</sup> There is a large amount of literature showing that either asymmetrical ethnofederalism or highly decentralized symmetric federalism, perhaps combined with corporate federalism or "consociational" (consensus-building versus majoritarian) mechanisms, such as the minority veto or grand intercommunal coalition governments, allow communities sufficient internal self-determination and autonomy so that they opt out of the search for external self-determination (separatism and secession).<sup>12</sup> In any particular multiethnic state, a certain mix of these various mechanisms is required for inducing political moderation and stability; this mix depends on the country's historical, ethnonational, confessional, and previous institutional peculiarities.<sup>13</sup>

The fourth cause is related to the third. Research suggests that attempts by imperial or federal centers to extend direct rule over peripheral regions or in ethnofederative systems, respectively, provoke nationalism.<sup>14</sup> Russia's first post-Soviet leadership under Boris Yeltsin negotiated within the elite, including the native elites of the national-territorial units inherited from the Soviet Union's pseudoethnofederal administrative structure, a nascent and potentially effective federative governance system that incorporated most of the communalism containment mechanisms noted above and employed them around the globe. It succeeded in dampening the wave of late Soviet-era nationalism that threatened to engulf post-Soviet Russia. A mixed constitution- and treaty-based asymmetrical federative system provided broad regional self-rule, especially for the thirty-two national autonomies inherited from the Soviet Union. However, Putin chose to dismantle Yeltsin's developing federative democracy and recentralize power in Moscow.

Fifth, the Kremlin conducting two contradictory approaches, which negated the benefits of the first (Yeltsin's) policy and exacerbated the downside of the second (Putin's)—a sequence that does not contain communalism but provokes it. Yeltsin's institutional (and policy) concessions to the national autonomies highlighted the communal otherness of non-Russian national and religious communities which, some scholars argue, risks strengthening and over-institutionalizing communal self-identities—a precondition for communal politicization.<sup>15</sup> Putin's revocation of Yeltsin's concessions, perceived as discrimination by communities, reinforced and offended their self-identities. Moreover, Putin deinstitutionalized intercommunal politics, forcing them underground and onto the streets.

Overall, reauthoritarianization, defederalization, and their various effects have encouraged further authoritarianism in Russia's Muslim and other republics and the rejection of previous consensus-building mechanisms. In republics such as the KBR, where Islam is an important factor and the Balkar Muslim nationality is greatly outnumbered by the Kabard Muslim group more

or less allied with the Russians, the outsider is driven to more radical ideologies. This partially explains the rise of Islamism in the KBR and elsewhere in the North Caucasus.

Sixth, although recent research shows a country's overall level of poverty is not a reliable predictor of terrorism,<sup>16</sup> the relative deprivation between regions or between one communal group and another helps explain why people rebel.<sup>17</sup> There are wide disparities between rich and poor regions and between often more ethnic Russian-populated urban and often more non-Russian rural areas within regions, especially in the Muslim republics. Russia's poorest regions are most often those heavily populated by Muslims, especially in the North Caucasus. Even in relatively developed Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the mostly ethnic Muslim villages are considerably poorer than the more Russified cities. This is also true in the KBR, which is one of Russia's poorest regions. Thus, there is much to suggest the road traveled by Russia over the last fifteen years and its present locale should provoke communalist rebellion and terror. Reality in the KBR, unfortunately, is confirming this theory.

---

***“The spread of the Islamist jamaat network to the KBR is important as it is the geographical and ethnopolitical gateway to the western and northwestern parts of the North Caucasus. . . .”***

### **Kabardino-Balkariya's Geopolitical, Ethnopolitical, and Religious Importance**

The spread of the Islamist jamaat network to the KBR is important as it is the geographical and ethnopolitical gateway to the western and northwestern parts of the North Caucasus, which include the Muslim republics of the KChR and Adygeya in addition to the KBR. The KBR is the easternmost of the three Muslim republics of the western North Caucasus, which also include the KChR and Adygeya. The KBR is home to two predominantly Muslim peoples, the Kabards and Balkars, who are the titular nationalities of the republic and together form a majority of the population. The KBR's Kabards are one of three subgroups of the Circassian ethnic group, with the other two being the KChR's Cherkess and Adygeya's Adygeis. In addition, the KBR's Balkars are closely related linguistically and culturally to the KChR's Karachais. Thus, the expansion of Islamism into the KBR opens the way to its spread into the western North Caucasus.

The KBR is home to two predominantly Muslim peoples, the Kabards and Balkars, who are the titular nationalities of the republic and together form a majority of the population. The Kabards account for 50 percent of the KBR's population, the Russians account for 32 percent, and the Karachai-Balkars account for 10 percent. The first waves of Islam's expansion through Arab conquest (600–800 AD) and trade routes of the fur and silk roads (800–1200 AD)

did not touch the North Caucasus, nor the central eastern areas of the present-day KBR. Islam first penetrated into the region through the Nogai Khanate's expansion into Kabardia in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries and expanded among the Kabards (western Circassians, along with Adygeis), Balkars, Karachais, and the eastern Circassians or Cherkess.<sup>18</sup> The Kabards, like all the Cherkess tribes, are Sunnis of the Hanafi school, but Islam sunk more shallow roots among the people in the territories of the present-day KBR, especially among the Kabards, as compared to the traditionally ethnic Muslim groups in the rest of the North Caucasus. With the Kabards being the least Muslim of the North Caucasian major Muslim groups (the titular nationalities of the other republics along with Dagestan's Avars and Dargins), there was no Sufi activity in the Circassian western North Caucasus until after the Great Patriotic War. Today there is still less of such activity and fewer mosques in that region than in western North Caucasus. However, one of the Kadiriya brotherhoods, the highly secretive Vis Haji, founded in the 1950s in response to the deportation of Chechens and Ingush to Kazakhstan, was active in Kabardia as well as in Checheno-Ingushetia, northern Dagestan, and Muslim Ossetia in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup>

A potentially useful ally of traditional Islam against the radicals in the KBR could be those indigenous Kabard and Balkar elements whose customs include ancient North Caucasian traditions, ceremonies, and the like, because the radicals propose a de-ethnicized pan-Islamic ideology that demands that purely Islamic traditions, as they divine them, should replace the remnants of North Caucasian tribal and ethnic customs.<sup>20</sup> Residual pagan beliefs are prevalent among the Kabards and the largely Christian Ossetians, and many Kabards remain polytheists like their forebears.<sup>21</sup> These factors incline many Kabards and some other Muslims against Wahhabist teaching, which rejects multitheism and other alternative belief systems.

Nevertheless, as in all the Muslim republics and other locations where ethnic Muslims reside in Russia, the KBR saw precipitous growth in Islamic faith during the perestroika era. In the mid-1980s, Bennigsen and Wimbush calculated there were no more than ten mosques in all the Kabard, Adgyei, and Cherkess territories combined.<sup>22</sup> The number of Islamic communities in the KBR reached one hundred by the late 1990s and ninety-six working mosques by 2001, mostly attended by young people ranging in age from fourteen to thirty-five.<sup>23</sup> There are now one hundred and twenty-two Muslim organizations, one hundred and eighty mullahs, and probably more than one hundred mosques.<sup>24</sup> There has also been a growth in the number of Islamic educational institutions. The first madrassah in the KBR was built in Nalchik in 1991. In 1993, it was upgraded to an institute—the Islamic Institute—and began to train young men for the Islamic clergy. There was some external involvement in the early post-Soviet growth of Islam in the KBR. The school and institute received funding from the Saudi Arabian philanthropic foundation, Salvation. The Saudis also funded a branch of their international organization for the salvation of Islam Daugat in Nalchik. By the mid-1990s, approximately one hundred KBR students were studying abroad in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey.<sup>25</sup>

The growing cultural divide between the predominantly secular and increasingly decadent postmodern Russian culture and even traditional “official” Islam in Russia, no less the more puritanical Islamist variation is further alienating Muslim believers from the predominantly secular Russian society. For example, a majority of the republic’s residents reportedly condemned the provocative conduct of Sati Kazanova, a native of the KBR and member of a popular female singing trio *Fabrika*, during a performance on Russian television, and many “declared a boycott of her family.”<sup>26</sup> Such problems are generic to relations between the West and the Islamic world, and so it seems that Russia’s embrace of postmodernism’s sexual and other forms of nihilism (particularly by the elite’s privileged offspring) is contributing to the Islamist backlash among Muslims in the KBR and elsewhere.

The Kabards and Balkars are linguistically and culturally distinct ethnic groups with somewhat varying historical experiences, particularly in relation to Russia and ethnic Russians. First of all, the KBR, along with the republics of Karachai-Cherkessia (KChR) and Adygeya, as well as the Shapsugskii raion of Krasnodar Krai (that is, the western and central North Caucasus), is the traditional homeland of the Adygei-Abkhazian or Adygei-Cherkess (or, as they are usually referred to in English, Circassian) ethnic group. The Circassians include not only the Kabards, Cherkess, and Adygeis, but also Abkhaz (largely located in Georgia), Shapsugs, and Abazins. In all three of the noted western North Caucasian republics, a Circassian group constitutes either a plurality (the Kabards in the KBR) or a minority of the population (Cherkess in the KChR and Adygeis in Adygeya), but not a majority.

The incorporation of ancient greater Kabardia into the Russian empire came as it did for many other peoples—under threat of forced conquest and subjugation. It has been celebrated by the Soviet and, more recently, by Putin’s Russian state as the “voluntary unification” of Kabardia with Russia.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the Kabards were the North Caucasian people who most easily succumbed to the expansion of Russian Imperial rule, except for the now largely Christian Ossetians.<sup>28</sup> In the mid-sixteenth century, in the wake of Ivan the Terrible’s defeat of the Golden Horde, seizure of Tatar Kazan, and incorporation of the Kazan Khanate into Russia, many Kabard princes sought favor from the Moscow state and were coopted. Some were willing to make Kabardia a protectorate of Moscow. Ivan IV married a Kabard princess, and many Kabard princes entered the Russian state service. A significant number converted from Islam to Orthodox Christianity and later resisted the penetration of the Islamic Sufi brotherhoods into the region. The Kabards, unlike their republican partner Balkars and ethnic brethren Adygeis, did not join the resistance to Russian conquest from 1824 to 1856 led by the ethnic Avar, Shamil, or the 1920–21 Dagestani-Chechen revolt against Bolshevik rule. In contrast to the Kabards, the Balkars and other North Caucasian Muslim peoples have a significant history of resisting Russian rule. Thus, their national consciousness is distinct from that of the Kabards on the issue of North Caucasian allegiance and solidarity regarding the aspirations and historical struggle for self-determination and independence from Russian rule. We

may even speak of a certain historical resentment of the Kabards (as well as Ossetians) among the other North Caucasian peoples, especially the Balkars, for facilitating Moscow's imperial rule over the North Caucasus.<sup>29</sup>

The modern KBR, like Russia's other national autonomies, is a legacy of Joseph Stalin's perfection of the tsarist regime's policy of divide and rule. Through his use of territorial-administrative schemes that purported to fulfill Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' promise of self-determination to minority peoples, Stalin divided individual ethnic groups and often paired them with others in separate territorial-administrative units to break down nationalities and prevent them from uniting into larger ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, other than by way of their ultimate merger (*sliyanie*) with ethnic Russians toward the ostensible creation of a new "Soviet man." On January 16, 1922, the Kabard and Balkar AOs were combined to form the Kabardino-Balkaria AO.<sup>30</sup> With the Soviet Union's adoption of the new Stalin constitution in 1936, Kabardino-Balkaria was upgraded to an autonomous soviet socialist republic (ASSR). With the Balkars' 1944 deportation, it was renamed the Kabardinian ASSR and territorially reconfigured with the transfer of the agriculturally rich lands of Kurinskii raion to North Ossetia. With the Balkars' rehabilitation and return to the region under Khrushchev in January 1957, it again became the Kabardino-Balkaria ASSR. However, the ASSR was again territorially reconfigured with the separation of the Nogai steppe from the ASSR and its distribution among Dagestan, Checheno-Ingushetia, and Stavropol Krai. The loss of this important economic region caused some dissatisfaction among the Kabards and the Balkars and laid the potential for territorial disputes between the KBR and its neighbors.<sup>31</sup> For this and other reasons, the KBR and the other North Caucasian national autonomies inherited by Russia from the Soviet Union are regarded by many as artificial, arbitrary, and ultimately illegitimate territorial constructs.

The initial pairing of the Kabards with the Balkars was dictated by the regime's goal of dividing large and more aggressive Circassian groups from one another. The Kabards, Cherkess, and Adygeis can be regarded as one and the same Circassian people, speaking closely related dialects and sharing two literary languages (Kabardinian and Cherkess). They, like the majority of the twenty or so largest ethnic Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus, belong to the Ibero-Caucasian linguistic group.<sup>32</sup> The Kabards of the KBR were separated from their ethnic kin by locating the Cherkess in the KChR. The Kabards and Cherkess speak the same language, which is very close to that of the Adygeis. Adygei is the self-designated nomenclature used by all three of Russia's Circassian groups.<sup>33</sup> In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a movement to refashion a Great Adygeya (Circassia) and reunite the Circassians including the Abkhaz in Abkhazia (in Georgia) in a single national-territorial governance unit. This included schemes such as resettling the Balkars from the KBR to the KChR or the Cherkess from the KChR to the KBR.<sup>34</sup> This mobilization of a broader Circassian nationalism remained aloof of pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic nationalism. According to Kobishchanov, the prospects for pan-Circassian nationalism are constrained by four factors: (1) the absence for approximately 135 years of an integrated territory populated by the Circassian tribes and their separation into enclaves; (2) the significant concentra-



tion of non-Circassian populations in the territories that tie Circassian areas in the KBR, KChR, and Adygeya together; (3) the low birth rates of the Circassian tribes compared to other neighboring ethnic Muslim groups; and (4) the weakness of the Circassian diaspora's movement supporting return to the homeland.<sup>35</sup> Kabard nationalism in the Soviet era was limited to the Kabard nation, falling short of more broad Circassian nationalism. However, an Islam-dominated nationalism could overcome territorial and ethnic divisions.

The historically more revolutionary Balkars in the KBR and the Karachais of the KChR who, as one scholar has stated, "are two branches of one people," were also divided from each other.<sup>36</sup> The small Balkar ethnic group still makes up but 10 percent of the KBR's population. The Balkars and Karachais, or mountain Turks, are close in culture, belong to the Turkic-linguistic group, and are ethnically related to the Adygeis, Ossetians, and Turks.<sup>37</sup> They are descendants of the Kuban Bulgars and Kypchak (Polovtsian) tribes who moved up the Caucasian mountains to avoid the Mongol invasion and became vassals of the Kabards and Adygeis in the fifteenth century. The Kabards spread Islam to the Balkars, who imbibed the faith more deeply than the Kabards themselves.<sup>38</sup> Like the Chechens, but unlike the Circassians (Kabards, Adygeis, and Cherkess), the Balkars (and Karachais) were deported en masse to Central Asia during the Great Patriotic War and lost nearly half their population over ensuing years. On March 8, 1944, the Soviet NKVD deported east 37,713 Balkars, of which 52 percent were children and 30 percent were women. By 1948, the deportees' ranks had been reduced by 28 percent as a result of disease, starvation, and repression.<sup>39</sup> Although Stalin's charge that deported groups like the Balkars had collaborated with the Nazis has some foundation, because representatives of all ethnic groups (recall Pavlov's army) did as well, and this was expected given the Stalin regime's brutality. Moreover, the North Caucasian revolts during the war preceded and were not necessarily dictated by the German offensive into the area. German generals and military governors in the North Caucasus took advantage of the situation, backing insurgents, returning collectivized land to the locals, and staffing administrations with Kabards, Balkars, Cherkess, and Karachais. In this way, they won some support among local elders and were able to form North Caucasian military units.<sup>40</sup> In 1957, Khrushchev "rehabilitated" the Balkars, along with the Chechens, other North Caucasian nationalities, and the Crimean Tatars. From 1965 through 1969, the Balkars and other deported nationalities were returned to their native homelands.

The Balkars' and non-Kabard (Adygei and Cherkess) Circassians' more distant relationship with Russians makes the Kabards an important lynchpin in the North Caucasian politics and for the Circassians' relationship to Russia as a whole. Conservative political analyst Aleksandr Tsipko's remarks in 2000 reflected Russia's special reliance on the typically loyal Kabards: "the leader of Kabardino-Balkariya is also the leader of all the Adygei people in the North Caucasus, and the fragile national consensus on Russia's southern border depends on the loyalty shown towards Moscow by this, the largest ethnic group in the region."<sup>41</sup> This and the Kabards' majority in the republic also make the KBR a pivotal piece of the puzzle for political stability in the North Caucasus.

There is another important difference between the Kabards and Balkars. The former (along with Kumyks, some Avars, some eastern Cherkessians, and the culturally close Ossetian Digors) come from the smaller number of North Caucasian ethnic groups with societies that, according to Bennigsen and Wimbush, are more aristocratic than democratic in class structure. The Balkars (and Karachais), on the other hand, hail from more democratic and clan-based societies, as do the Chechens, Ingush, and a majority of the Dagestanis and Adygei tribes.<sup>42</sup> It was the Kabard princes who acceded to Russian rule. The hierarchical divisions and historical legacy suggest the possibility of a split between the higher and lower classes of Kabard society with regard to attitudes toward the Russian state and

separatism. Kabard allies would bolster any Balkar-based opposition, Islamic or otherwise, which would be limited in strength due to small numbers.

---

***“The largely Kabard-Balkar Muslim majority has been growing, just as the Muslim share of the overall RSFSR population is increasing.”***

The KBR’s population overall is poorly integrated into Russian society for several demographic, geographic, and cultural reasons. The KBR—like the other Circassian

(KChR and Adygeya) and North Caucasian republics (Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia, as well as titular Buddhist Kalmykia)—is largely rural, with a significant portion of the population living in inaccessible high mountain regions that pose a considerable challenge to economic development and law enforcement. In 2002, 43.4 percent of the population lived in rural areas, showing the continuation of a trend of increasing ruralization due to higher birth rates in rural areas. Unemployment among Balkars, especially in the republic’s mountainous regions, is as high as 80–90 percent in some areas, creating an environment on which criminality and radicalism can feed.<sup>43</sup> The largely Kabard-Balkar Muslim majority has been growing, just as the Muslim share of the overall RSFSR population is increasing. In three censuses taken in 1959, 1970, and 1979, the ethnic Muslim groups’ share of the KBR’s population grew from 53.4 to 56.0 percent.<sup>44</sup> The KBR’s more recent demographic explosion, from a population under 792,000 in 2000 to 901,000 in 2002, contrasts sharply with the ethnic Russian and overall Russian Federation population declines and represents a part of an overall Russian-Muslim demographic shift that forms much of Russia’s growing overall Muslim challenge.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, the population imbalance between the Kabards and the Russians, on the one hand, and the Balkars, on the other, along with differences between the Kabards and the Balkars regarding their Islamic identity and attitude toward Russian rule, translate into some interethnic tensions between the KBR’s two Muslim titular nationalities. According to Kappeler and Chervonnaya, the Balkars see all Circassians, “not as Muslim brothers, but (as) an antagonistic eth-

nic group.”<sup>46</sup> The Balkars, a distinct minority at a mere 10 percent of the KBR’s population, could direct their nationalism against both Russians and Kabards. The ethnic cleavage seems to supercede the confessional in the KBR’s intercommunal politics under Yeltsin, as Kabards and Balkars aspired to self-determination separate from each other.

### **Kabardino-Balkaria under Yeltsin**

Under Yeltsin’s ad hoc asymmetrical federative system, the KBR, like many regions (especially Russia’s titular Muslim republics), received considerable autonomy in their internal and external affairs. Although Bashkortostan’s official media organs routinely claim that Ufa’s August 1994 treaty with Moscow was the second such treaty, the KBR was in fact the first region after Tatarstan to win one.<sup>47</sup> In 1991, the KBR—along with all the other twenty republics, except Chuvashia—resisted Yeltsin’s efforts to appoint presidential representatives as they were in sixty-two other regions. The KBR, along with the Chechen, Tatarstan, and Kalmykian elites produced the strongest backlash against this attempt.<sup>48</sup> President (then KBR Communist Party First Secretary) Valerii Kokov, an ethnic Kabard, was able to maintain his power like many republic leaders by walking a tightrope between competing groups in both the republic and Moscow during the Soviet Union’s demise and Russia’s revolution from above. The balancing act often involved raising the specter of secessionism and then currying favor from Moscow by quelling it in return for republic autonomy that benefitted most of all the republic’s elite. Like most regional leaders, especially those of the national republics, Kokov was a conservative former CPSU apparatchik and *nomenklaturshchik*, and not a reformer. He supported the August 1991 coup plotters against Gorbachev and Yeltsin and sought autonomy from Moscow to protect his and the KBR *nomenklatura*’s power from the then-democratizing Yeltsin. In negotiating about Yeltsin’s 1992 Federation Treaty, which the KBR eventually signed, Kokov merely amended the republic’s Soviet-era constitution rather than adopt a new one.

On July 1, 1994, the KBR concluded a bilateral power-sharing treaty with Moscow, securing somewhat less autonomy and sovereignty, but still obtaining powers and privileges similar to those won by Kazan and Ufa.<sup>49</sup> The KBR was afforded the “the full panoply of state (legislative, executive, and judicial) power on its territory outside the limits of the competence of the Russian Federation and the joint competence” of Russia and the KBR, which offered the KBR considerable temporary sovereignty, as many spheres had still not been addressed by Russian law. The KBR was also given the power to declare a state of emergency in its territory, but only on the basis of Russian Federation legislation, an area of Russian law that remained unsettled for years forward. It was also given full control over all natural resources and state property on its territory. Finally, the territory and status of the KBR were inviolable and could not be changed without the KBR’s agreement, giving the Kabards some protection against Balkar secessionism. Articles 3.1 and 3.4 of the treaty gave the KBR full power over the adoption and amendment of the republic’s constitution and over the structure of its governmental bodies.<sup>50</sup>

The KBR (like the KChR and Dagestan) implemented consociational power-sharing by incorporating elements of a grand inter-communal coalition. The offices of president, vice-president, and premier were required to be divided according to nationality after presidential elections. If a Kabard won the presidential election (as Kokov, a Kabard, has done twice in the post-Soviet era), then the vice-presidency was given to a Russian, and the premier was given a Balkar. Also, all three groups' languages were given the status of a state language in the republic. These measures were partially necessitated as a consequence of the Soviet legacy and the imbalanced titular diarchy with the Kabards outnumbering Balkars by a factor of five. The KBR's Yeltsin-era consociational system was a way to ensure that the small Balkar community would have a share of power commensurate with its status as a titular nationality. This KBR constitution largely succeeded in balancing the interests of the communal components of its multi-ethnic society through the 1990s, and by the late 1990s there was very little interethnic tension or Muslim mobilization.

An important downside of the consensus between Nalchik and Moscow has been the preservation of the former Soviet partocratic *nomenklatura's* authoritarian form of rule. In essence, in exchange for stability in the KBR, Moscow ignored Kokov as he resisted democratization.<sup>51</sup> Although the titular Muslim republics have consistently ranked as many of the least democratic of Russia's eighty-nine regions, the KBR was one of the most authoritarian of the Muslim republics, consistently near the bottom in rankings of Russia's regions.<sup>52</sup> Kokov maintained Soviet-style pseudo-elections, beginning with his election in 1992 and reelections in 1997 with 99 percent of the vote and no competitors, and in 2002 with 87 percent and some competitors. In many ways, the more authoritarian form of rule maintained in the KBR (and in many of Russia's other national republics) throughout the Yeltsin era presaged the direction that Russian politics overall would take with Putin's rise to power, including many of its specific soft-authoritarian methodologies. Kokov (and many other republic presidents, especially in the titular Muslim republics) also presaged Putin's counterrevolution in appointing the heads of local administration, a violation of Russia's constitution, and by controlling appointments to the republic's Judicial Qualifications Commission, which examines judges' qualifications. Although, the stick often predominated over the carrot, Kokov coopted with favors many social organizations, including the important Circassian movements, the International Cherkess Association, and *Adyge khase*.<sup>53</sup>

As the Soviet Union and Russian Federation crumbled under the parade of sovereignties in 1991–92, representatives of the KBR's Kabard, Balkar, and smaller Karachai minorities repeatedly declared secessionist intentions. The outbidding contest between Gorbachev's perestroika leadership and Yeltsin's Russian revolution from above for the support of the RSFSR's national autonomies led Gorbachev to push through the April 1991 RSFSR law on the rehabilitation of oppressed peoples, which many representatives of those ethnic groups construed as a green light for demanding autonomy and even secession. In the early 1990s, Kabard nationalists founded the Congress of the Karbard People, a move-

ment that declared the idea of a Great Kabarda and began to liaise with other political organizations in the KBR with the goal of coming to power.<sup>54</sup> The Balkars launched a campaign for autonomy as well. In November 1991, an unofficial Balkar National Congress formed in March issued an appeal to the KBR Communist Party leadership to support its demands for a Balkar autonomous region within the RSFSR, which was ignored. Thus, Balkar-dominated districts and most Balkar voters boycotted the December 22, 1991, election of the republic's first president, but they voted overwhelmingly a week later for "national sovereignty" within the RSFSR in an unofficial referendum. Communist Party First Secretary and newly elected KBR President Valerii Kokov regarded the ballot as unconstitutional.<sup>55</sup>

In 1992, the republic was on the verge of mass interethnic conflict with competing Kabard and Balkar nationalist demonstrations frequently being held in close proximity and occasionally leading to scuffles burgeoning on mass violence. Many in the KBR believe that civil war was only averted when the force of an exploding grenade about to be thrown by a member of one group of demonstrators at the other was intentionally absorbed by a courageous policeman, Adalbi Shkhagoshev, who threw himself on the perpetrator and covered the explosive with his hands, which he lost.<sup>56</sup> In a 1994 referendum, 90 percent of Balkars voted for staying in the KBR and not establishing an independent republic. Until late 1996, Balkar nationalism was assuaged in part by the consociationalist approach to top political appointments. KBR President Valery Kokov's appointed premier was a Balkar, and the speaker of one house of the KBR parliament was a Balkar; the speaker of the other was a Kabard.

When the National Council of the Balkar People resumed operations in 1996, it was headed by Supyan Beppaev, retired army lieutenant-general and former commander of the Transcaucasus Military District. Beppaev had been charged with selling weapons to the Georgians in the early 1990s and had close ties with Chechen President General Dudaev, who reportedly urged Beppaev in a telephone conversation to declare an independent Balkar state to instigate a national liberation war throughout the North Caucasus.<sup>57</sup> The council convened a congress in November 1996 to choose between two separate strategies: either to call for the return to Balkar control of the four districts transferred to Kabardia in 1957 and for the creation of the office of KBR vice president to be set aside for an ethnic Balkar, or to demand the creation of a Balkar republic separate from the KBR. Delegates voted for the second option. On November 17, the congress unilaterally declared a Balkar Republic, elected a state council as its temporary government under the chairmanship of General Beppaev, and appealed to President Yeltsin to support their actions.<sup>58</sup> On November 19, the KBR Procurator's Office opened a criminal case against the council's leaders. Russian media reported on November 19 that the KBR parliament banned the council. In Moscow, Russian Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev denounced the congress's declaration as unconstitutional and the State Duma ordered a delegation to the republic.<sup>59</sup> The KBR police began cracking down on the congress with mass arrests. Beppaev backed down by resigning from the council and appealing for other delegates to repeal

the demand for a Balkar republic. The majority rejected his appeal, and the congress, the Balkar national party Tere, and other Balkar national organizations were banned, and some of their leaders were tried.<sup>60</sup>

In 1997, there was another interethnic crisis between the Balkars and Kabards, when the Balkars' nationalists again announced plans to establish a separate republic of Balkariya. Chechen rebel commanders offered military assistance in their effort.<sup>61</sup> Clearly, coercion would be necessary, because to form a united Balkar republic territory mixed districts between the many isolated Balkar enclaves would need to be ethnically cleansed or their Kabard and Russian communities subdued. The Chechens already were endeavoring to play on the interethnic rivalry between the KBR's titular Muslim nationalities and the Muslim's resentment of their co-religionist Kabards' relatively sanguine attitude toward Russian rule.

The Kabards' nationalist organization, *Adyge Hase*, remains a significant force, but a less vocal one compared to the Balkar nationalists. Although the KChR's Cherkess have been more vocal in making Circassian nationalist demands in recent years, the Kabard-dominated Adyge Hase claims a membership of five thousand, in addition to a larger group of supporters. However, it has limited its activity to the fight for the preservation of Circassian culture, language, traditions, and contacts with the five million-strong Circassian diaspora.<sup>62</sup> The cultural struggle is a formidable one. Kabard journalist Sultan Akhov claims that half of young Kabardians living in the capitol Nalchik cannot speak Kabard.<sup>63</sup> Kabard and Balkar nationalists also differ over which separated territories should be repatriated to the KBR.<sup>64</sup> Federal prosecutor in the KBR, Yurii Ketov, claimed in December 2004 that the idea of partitioning the republic along ethnic lines, despite its impracticality, remains popular.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, in the wake of the KBR's adoption of a municipal reform law in early 2005 that eliminated or subordinated three predominantly Balkar-populated districts to republic authorities, Balkar nationalists renewed their calls for the creation of a Balkar republic separate from the KBR.<sup>66</sup> In this atmosphere, many pro-Russian Cossacks of the KBR begin insisting on their status as a separate ethnic group and demanding the transfer of their compact territory of residence to Stavropol Krai.<sup>67</sup>

Kabard-Balkar divisions and tensions underscore the Muslims' historical problem of being divided along ethnic lines, which constrains the formation of a united Muslim political front and thus hampers their quest for confessional self-determination and equal rights within Russia. However, as Kobishchanov notes, interethnic competition for leadership in Muslim republics such as the KBR does not exclude the pan-Islamic idea's appeal under emerging "Muslim fanaticism."<sup>68</sup> A subordinate role in KBR politics may lead the losing ethnic group, the Balkars, to seek ideological sustenance and revival in radical Islamist ideas, which can transform fellow Muslims who do not meet radical standards into another "Other," in addition to non-Muslims. Under Yeltsin, the outnumbered Balkar movement for self-determination was a nationalist one. Under Putin, Balkar nationalism is beginning to manifest an Islamic and even Islamist character. Islam could attract some support among more radical elements in the Kabard lower classes, as well as forge

a formidable Islamist threat. In addition, a fight by both Kabards and Balkar nationalists against assimilation by the dominant ethnic Russians can unite them and reinforce any common Islam-dominated nationalism. However, the presence of indigenous radical Islam in the KBR was limited under Yeltsin. In 1996, a radical Islamist leader, A. Kazdokhov, declared himself emir of the KBR and claimed he could muster approximately six hundred armed militants.<sup>69</sup> However, neither the Kazdokhov group's threat nor any other serious Islamist threat emerged in the KBR during the Yeltsin era. KBR politics were dominated by the interplay between Kabard and Balkar nationalisms. Under Putin they have been dominated by conflict between Muslim radicals and the authorities, the result of the Chechen resistance's Islamist radicalization and expansion of its jihad beyond Chechnya's borders.

**The Chechnya Quagmire  
and the Rise of Russia's  
Islamist Network**

We can point to several types of Muslim mobilization in Putin's Russia. Some involves benign social mobilization

that can contribute to the development of civil society, ranging from efforts by official Islam and others to organize structures to protect Muslims from the state to the establishment of unregistered mosques for politically moderate autonomous Muslim communities. Malign mobilization includes that connected with radical Muslim organizations and Islamist revolutionary and terrorist activity by a growing network of combat jamaats spreading across Russia's Muslim republics and beyond. The Chechen separatists' radical re-Islamization consolidated after the 1994–96 war and growing ties with al Qaeda operatives, combined with their defeat on the traditional battlefield, prompted the Chechens to turn to an Islamist-oriented war, revolution, terrorism, and mode of organization—in short, to the global jihad. The Chechen Republic of Ichkeriya (ChRI) now sponsors the creation and expansion of an underground network of revolutionary and terrorist combat jamaats (communities in Arabic) based in Russia's other North Caucasian titular Muslim republics—Ingushetiya, Dagestan, the KChR, Adygeya, as well as the KBR—toward the establishment of a North Caucasian caliphate. It and other international Islamist revolutionary organizations, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Islami, also show signs of expanding into the two Volga area Muslim republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, as well as other Russian regions.<sup>70</sup> However, there is no evidence to date of cooperation in Russia between the ChRI Islamist network of combat jamaats and the Hizb ut-Tahrir Islami.

In 1998, Basaev and Saudi-born Jordanian al Qaeda operative Ibn al-Khattab set up terrorist training camps in Chechnya and began recruiting alienated ethnic Muslims throughout the North Caucasus, providing military training and

---

***“Malign mobilization includes that connected with radical Muslim organizations and Islamist revolutionary and terrorist activity by a growing network of combat jamaats spreading across Russia's Muslim republics and beyond.”***

politicoreligious indoctrination.<sup>71</sup> They focused considerably on the recruitment of fighters and the establishment of a diverse multiethnic jamaat network reaching across all of the North Caucasus's ethnic Muslim groups and republics.<sup>72</sup> In 1999, he did so in Dagestan, which became the target of the IIPB's invasion of Dagestan in August 1999 and was to be the beachhead for launching a large-scale Islamist national liberation war throughout the North Caucasus. More recently, jamaats have emerged in Ingushetiya, Dagestan (again), the KChR, Adygeya, the KBR, and, it appears, in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. Indeed, in February 2005, Basaev reportedly met in Krasnodar Krai with field commanders from Adygeya, Cherkessk, Krasnodar, and Stavropol Krai, and Rostov Oblast to discuss plans for extending the jihad across the entire North Caucasus during the coming year.<sup>73</sup> This suggests that even the small and isolated titular Muslim republic of Adygeya and ethnic Russian-dominated Krasnodar Krai which surrounds it are on Basaev's agenda. There is no doubt the Chechen Islamists are interested in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. Their Web sites include analytical propaganda about them.<sup>74</sup> Much as the Chechen Islamists have sought to recruit and expand across the Muslim republics and into other Muslim communities across Russia, their allied combat jamaats in the North Caucasus's multiethnic Muslim republics have tried to recruit on the basis of ethnic diversity. For instance, the KBR's now notorious United Islamic Combat Jamaat, Yarmuk, discussed in more detail below, has made a point of trying to recruit both Balkars and Kabards.

The turning point in the Chechen resistance movement's radical re-Islamization came in the summer of 2002 at an expanded meeting of the ChRI government. The meeting—which included President Maskhadov, Basaev, and other ChRI's field commanders, who according to one report, included several foreign Islamists with ties to al Qaeda—was conducted in Arabic. The meeting created a new governing body, the Madzhlisul Shura (MSh), Arabic for consultative assembly, and amended the ChRI constitution. It essentially combined or possessed the same members as the ChRI State Defense Committee (*Gosudartvennyo komitet oborony* or GKO). Subsequently, the president was identified also as the chairman of the GKO-MSh in official documents. The amendments stipulated that “(t)he Madzhlisul Shura is the ChRI's highest organ of power” and that “the Koran and Sunna are the sources of all decisions” it makes. The MSh's composition, according to another amendment, “is confirmed by the head of state with the agreement of the Supreme Shariat Court,” which is also to ensure that the MSh makes no decision that contradicts the Koran and Sunna, a principle also enshrined in the amended constitution: “The Madzhlisul Shura is not permitted to adopt decisions that contradict the Koran and Sunna.”<sup>75</sup> In the meeting's wake, Maskhadov made appointments to the Shura and its committees.<sup>76</sup> Akhmed Zakaev headed the Information Committee. Movladi Udugov headed the Foreign Information Service. Other appointments included the assumption of top ChRI military and political offices by alleged foreign Islamist operatives. One “emir Supyan” chaired the finance committee, and one “Bashir” became head of the Internal Information Service. One “emir Kamad” was appointed commander of the Northern Front, and al Qaeda operative “emir Abu Walid” was appointed to command the Eastern Front. Most importantly, Maskhadov's



future successor became the fervent Islamist, Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev, who was appointed chairman of the MSh's Shariat Committee and head of the ChRI Shariat court. The person who holds these posts, according to *Kavkaz-Tsentri*, becomes the automatic successor to the president. An Arab sheik Abu Umar (Mukhammad ben Abdallah) as-Saif was appointed Sadulaev's deputy and is regarded by Russian Islam scholar Aleksandr Ignatenko as the committee's real leader.<sup>77</sup> From this point forward, however, Sadulaev's star was on the rise, and the ChRI insurgency simultaneously took on a more pronounced revolutionary Islamist terrorist character, as the terrorists' seizure of the Dubrovka theatre in Moscow in October 2002, the in-flight explosion of two airplanes in August 2004, the Beslan school seizure in September 1–3 2004, and the expansion of openly declared jihad beyond Chechnya's borders to much of the North Caucasus all testify.

In March 2004, former ChRI Defense Minister Magomed Khambiev asserted that Sadulaev is a "Wahhabi emir," whom the radical Islamists sought to have appointed ChRI president.<sup>78</sup> In summer 2004, Maskhadov appointed Sadulaev as his vice president. Also, Maskhadov reinstated Basaev to the post of emir of the Madzhlisul Shura's Military Committee in autumn 2004, just after one of Basaev's chief projects, the September school seizure.<sup>79</sup> This is further confirmation of the Chechen leadership's embrace or at least tolerance of Basaev's criminal tactics, despite all its condemnations and claims to the contrary.

Maskhadov, caught between the Western calls for moderation and the rise of radical jihadists within his leadership circle, began shifting to a dual strategy of expanding the war beyond Chechnya, while leaving open the possibility of peace negotiations. Thus, the ostensibly moderate Maskhadov began to support openly the creation of a broad Muslim cohort of insurgents for actions throughout the North Caucasus and indeed all of Russia—the beginning of a veritable Islamist jihad targeting Russia.<sup>80</sup> Although Maskhadov's strategic goal in doing so may have remained Chechen independence, other elements within the movement sought to establish a North Caucasus caliphate, as had been Basaev's objective in the August 1999 incursion into Dagestan, which had restarted the war. In an August 1, 2004 interview given together with Sadulaev, Maskhadov took responsibility for the formation of regional combat detachments based beyond Chechnya's borders and supported waging battle across Russia. Taking responsibility for the June 2004 raid on a police station in Ingushetia, Maskhadov warned: "We are capable of carrying out such operations in Ichkeria, Ingushetia and Russia, and we will prove it."<sup>81</sup> He stated explicitly that it was on his orders that the Ichkerian government's Military Council set up an "Ingushetian Sector" and that "(s)ome 950–1,000 fighters from the Ingushetian, Sunzha, and Achkhoy-Martan Sectors, headed by Commander of Western Front Dokka Umarov, took part in the operation."<sup>82</sup> Moreover, on March 3, 2005, just days before his death at the hands of Russian security forces, Maskhadov in effect claimed that all combat jamaats in the North Caucasus networked by Basaev and involved in numerous terrorist acts were subordinate to him.<sup>83</sup> This statement cast doubt on the sincerity of Maskhadov's denial of involvement in the Beslan massacre and other terrorist operations organized by Basaev.

On the other hand, in a January 14, 2005, decree, Maskhadov ordered ChRI forces to observe “a unilateral cessation” of offensive combat actions on the territory of Chechnya and beyond for the entire month of February.<sup>84</sup> This was ostensibly intended as a goodwill gesture toward opening feelers regarding peace negotiations. However, the ceasefire was announced in two variations. The decree issued by Maskhadov stipulated that the ceasefire applied throughout the entire month, but Basaev’s order stated the ceasefire would hold only through February 22.<sup>85</sup> The fact that Basaev was allowed to deviate from Maskhadov’s order underscores Basaev’s ability to defy the ChRI president with impunity.<sup>86</sup> Three days before his death in March 2005, Maskhadov continued to deploy what can be described as none other than a two-track polemic, if not policy. On the one hand, he stated that a thirty-minute meeting between himself and Putin could end the war. On the other, he stated that should Putin fail to take up his offer of talks “mujahidin will stand to the end, and the flames of this war will embrace the whole of the North Caucasus.”<sup>87</sup>

The Russian forces’ killing of Maskhadov in March 2005 and the selection of Sadulaev brought an apparently committed Islamist to the top of the Chechen separatist movement. The ChRI’s new president and emir is young, approximately 36–37 years old. He has substantial religious education, knowledge, and authority. He received religious training at home and from Chechen theologians near his home village of Argun (his local familial clan or *teip*, Ustradoi, is considered to have been the founders of Argun), studied in Chechnya State University’s Department of Philology, has obtained good knowledge of Arabic, and has completed the hajj to Mecca once. He was chief ideologue to Shamil Basaev and Movladi Udugov, was reportedly close to the first head of the Chechen Supreme Shariat Court Shamsudin Batukaev before the second Chechen war, and was imam of an Argun mosque. During the interwar period, he organized and conducted popular Islamic programming and sermons on the Kavkaz Channel. Religiously and militarily, he headed the Islamic Jamaat in Argun, which apparently took part in the August 1999 invasion of Dagestan that helped spark the second war. His Argun People’s Militia appears to have continued operations in Chechnya through 2001. The extent of his role in military operations and command is still unclear, but it appears to have been limited as compared to others, such as Maskhadov, Basaev, Gelaev, and others. He may have turned to terrorist activity before moving into the leadership as the top religious figure. The Russian General Prosecutor’s office claims he was behind the kidnapping of the head of the humanitarian mission of Doctors Without Borders in 2001.<sup>88</sup> Some contend he led the Wahhabi underground in Chechnya and organized female suicide bombers, the so-called *shakhidki*.<sup>89</sup> In the same August 1, 2004, interview with Maskhadov, Sadulaev outlined the growing Islamist strain in the Ichkerian ideology, which now includes the goal of creating a North Caucasus caliphate: “God says that all believers are brothers. There are no separate Dagestani people. There are individual Muslim nations in that part of the Caucasus. The nations of the North Caucasus were united until Russia separated us.”<sup>87</sup> The implication is clear—the Chechens are fighting now to unite the entire North Caucasus and sep-

arate it from Russia in order to create an Islamic state and restore the caliphate. Although the Chechen movement remains divided between nationalists, who seek a Chechen state, and internationalist Islamists, who seek a North Caucasus caliphate as a first step toward broader strategic goals, the latter appear to be gaining the upper hand.

The expansion of terrorist combat jamaats throughout the North Caucasus's Muslim republics signifies the goal of creating a broad Muslim network of warriors and terrorists for jihad across Russia. Indeed, the network of Islamist militant or combat jamaats became extremely active across Russia, executing a wave of terrorist attacks, assassinations, and large-scale ambushes in the spring and summer 2004 across Russia and for nearly an entire year in the KBR. Research has shown a nearly thirtyfold increase in the number of terrorist acts, from 20 in 1999, to 135 in 2000, to 561 in 2003.<sup>91</sup> This was the prelude to an equally precipitous escalation in the scale of terrorist attacks in 2004 throughout Russia, which from the February 6 Moscow subway bombing to the September 1 school hostage-taking and massacre in Beslan, North Ossetia took approximately 700 lives and several times more injured. Residents of the KBR played significant roles in attacks in and outside the KBR. This reflected an increase in Islamist extremism in the republic and the emergence of a combat jamaat directly tied to the Chechen-led hub in the international Islamist network.

### **Kabardino-Balkaria and Putin's Counterrevolution**

Under Putin, the KBR would lose its federative rights as a result of Putin's antifederalist counterrevolution and the authoritarian instincts of KBR President Valerii Kokov were encouraged, spawning recruits for radical imams and eventually the Islamist combat jamaat network. The population would lose what remained of its political, civil, and human rights as a result of Putin's authoritarian counterreforms and Kokov's overly aggressive and generalized repression of Muslims as the Islamist threat turned on his republic as a result of Putin's deepening Chechen quagmire. Together these developments have alienated young Muslims in the KBR from the Russian state and its puppet apparatus in the KBR, and pushed them away from the regime's allies within official Islam toward more independent and often more extremist forms of Islam.

Putin's legal harmonization policy forced the KBR, and approximately sixty other regions, to bring its constitution (and numerous laws) into conformity with the federal constitution. Amendments adopted on July 19, 2001, saw the KBR's consociationalist interethnic coalition leadership system repealed, although nothing has prevented the leadership from continuing to employ it extraconstitutionally. In addition, the amended constitution now stipulated that federal laws have precedence over republic laws in the event they conflict. In particular, the power to curtail citizens' rights was described as a purely federal one in conformity with the Russian constitution. Thus, apparently with Moscow's approval, KBR authorities limited Islamic activities, including reducing the working hours or closing all mosques but the central one belonging to official Islamic clergy. At the same time, the amendments included modest gains for democracy, because the

supremacy of federal law rendered the KBR's law claiming the republic's right to ban demonstrations as unconstitutional.<sup>92</sup> Such centralized soft authoritarianism risks stability in the KBR. It is too soft to subdue Islam in the way Soviet power did, yet it depends in good part on the timely reaction from Moscow to any security threat. The latter factor, moreover, reinforces the radicals' claim that KBR authorities are Moscow's puppets and directs public ire against both levels of authority.

The Putin administration also refused to renew the Yeltsin era power-sharing treaty with the KBR, which expired on July 1, 2004. There has been no word as to whether a new one will be negotiated as there has been with Tatarstan and Chechnya. With this, the KBR's power over its internal affairs was effectively stripped of any legal basis or real meaning. The Russian constitution gives regions authority over those spheres of activity left over after the exhaustive powers listed in the constitution's Article 71 on exclusive federal powers and Article 72 on joint federal-regional powers, and gives federal law precedence over regional laws when they conflict. Since the 1994 treaty, federal law has filled the legal vacuum that existed in Russia after the Soviet state's demise. In addition, Moscow has refused to appoint a federal inspector from either titular nationality.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time, under Putin's more authoritarian form of rule, the KBR leadership has been forced to submit to increasingly stringent political demands from Moscow with no compensating economic benefits in return. President Kokov has been the republic's leader for twenty years, beginning with his tenure as the KBR Communist Party committee's first secretary in the 1980s, continuing with his election as president in 1992 and reelections in 1997 and 2002. Early on, Kokov used his position on Putin's new federal advisory State Council to keep a step ahead of Putin's efforts to strengthen the executive vertical, heralding the latter's post-Beslan counterreforms.<sup>94</sup> At a November 2002 council session, Kokov supported the termination of mayoral elections, among other things, arguing that "the people had not yet matured to such a democratic level."<sup>95</sup> With the formation of the state-supported, pro-Putin United Russia (*Yedinaya Rossiya* or *YeR*) party, Kokov went to embarrassing lengths to show his submission to Moscow. Because United Russia backed the chairman of the KBR legislature, Zaurbi Nakhushiev, during the 2003 State Duma elections, Kokov renounced the abovementioned republic hero, Shkhagoshev, whom he once called his son. Like apparatchiks across the country who joined United Russia nearly en masse and were subsequently backed by the enormous administrative resources of the state (federal and regional), Nakhushiev defeated Shkhagoshev in what was perhaps the most fraudulent of the 225 single-mandate district elections.<sup>96</sup> In the party portion of the same elections involving forty parties, Kokov delivered 77 percent of the vote for United Russia.<sup>97</sup> In the March 2004 presidential election, Kokov engineered a 96.5 percent vote for Putin in the KBR. Of eighty-nine regions, only Ingushetia, led by a former KGB operative, produced more.<sup>98</sup> Thus, Kokov is viewed increasingly in the KBR as Moscow's repressive puppet.

In addition to authoritarianism, the hallmarks of Kokov's KBR have remained poverty, alcoholism, crime, and corruption. For example, in 1998, 44.5 percent of

the KBR's population had an income level below the official poverty income level and the fourth highest poverty rate among the thirteen regions in Russia's poorest federal district (FO the Southern FO.<sup>99</sup> In 2000, the purchasing power and average wage of KBR residents ranked fifth and eleventh, respectively, in the Southern FO.<sup>100</sup> In November 2001, only Dagestan had a lower average monthly salary than the KBR among Russia's regions with significant Muslim populations, and the KBR had one of the lowest percentages of unemployed people receiving unemployment benefits.<sup>101</sup> In 2002, the average wage in the republic was only sixteen hundred rubles per month, half the national average.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, according to some reports, an elite 10–20 percent of the population have income “that exceeds all imaginable norms.” Kokov's elite—ministers, deputy ministers, and other apparatchiks—live in an exclusive Nalchik district called the noble nest.<sup>103</sup>

Yet, this elite has failed miserably in helping the republic negotiate the transition to a market economy. It clearly failed in managing the republic's key enterprise, the non-alcoholic beverage plant *Mineralnyie vody*. Once a key budget contributor, its mounting debt forced it into bankruptcy. MV squandered a \$75 million loan for renovation and capital repairs, which some experts believe could have built two similar enterprises from scratch. The republic government hired the president of an American firm to run the plant, but he embezzled funds and is on the police wanted list for his crimes. Moreover, the entire defense industry collapsed, and an enterprise merging scheme to combine profitable republic enterprises with unprofitable ones produced no results.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the KBR is a super-recipient region in the federation's budgetary system, taking in several more times the funds from the combined federal budget than it puts in.

The poor economic situation and lack of opportunity are driving young people from the region to find simple service positions, which are nearly absent in the republic. The miserable socioeconomic situation has also led to a growth of alcoholism, drug addiction, and prostitution. The official DUM's structures' inability to resolve these problems plays into the hands of alternative Muslim structures, such as the Islamist jamaats. According to one KBR source, the majority of those turning to jamaats are young people ranging in age from fourteen to twenty-five.<sup>105</sup> The natural predilection of the youth to reject their elders' allegiances is exacerbated in harsh socioeconomic conditions. With the jamaats as the only viable alternative, there should be no surprise regarding this trend.

Kokov, however, painted a very different Potemkin village-like picture of the situation in the KBR in a February 2001 article.<sup>106</sup> Using the old Soviet era indicator, physical volume, he asserted that in 2000, the KBR's industrial production increased 1.5 times. He went so far as to claim falsely that the KBR was one of ten of Russia's donor regions. Kokov also was sure to endorse Putin's “strengthening of the vertical of power” without reservations, unlike many other regional leaders. Most ironically, he touted the state of security and stability in the KBR, boasting that he had secured its borders and strengthened its passport regime to control who enters the KBR. He held up the KBR as the model of stability in a supposedly stable North Caucasus: “It is necessary to explain, given the newspapers' pages and television screens, that there is no frontal war in the Caucasus

today. The North Caucasus is regarded in the whole world as a region ablaze, but it is unstable only in Chechnya.”<sup>107</sup> When RTR aired a documentary film *Caucasian Crescent*, made by former NTV journalist Yelena Masyuk, in September and October 2000, gaining a foothold in the republic (particularly in Tynyauz, a town west of the capitol Nalchik) and the KChR, Kokov and his counterpart in the KChR, President Vladimir Semenov, complained to Putin that their republics had been slandered and appealed to federal prosecutors to bring those responsible for the broadcast up on charges of inciting interethnic conflict. The film sparked protests in the KChR and Adygeya.<sup>108</sup> Oddly, earlier Kokov had blamed a series of bombings of government buildings in Nalchik on Wahhabis.<sup>109</sup> This contradiction is explained by regional leaders’ tendency to curry favor with Moscow and its emissaries even in the face of indisputable evidence of serious problems.

In return for Kokov’s support and the stability he seemingly had preserved, the Putin regime has backed Kokov, as it has all corrupt and incompetent regional leaders, so long as they towed the Kremlin’s line and prevented an explosion of communal violence. Indeed, he has been awarded a certain measure of stature above that of many other regional and republic leaders. Kokov was seated on the second seven-member presidium of the advisory Russian State Council after the first presidium’s six-month term expired in March 2001.<sup>110</sup> When President Putin traveled to the October 2003 OIC summit, he surrounded himself with an impressive delegation that included President Kokov among other “Muslim” leaders.<sup>111</sup> As a result, Kokov often appears near the top in rankings of the most influential regional leaders.<sup>112</sup> Similarly misleading was a July 2004 evaluation from an official in pro-Moscow Chechen Republic MVD, who asserted that Islamist militants would have trouble organizing and operating in the KBR as compared to Chechnya and Ingushetia, arguing that “there are more than enough forces and resources in the republic to suppress such actions, and the special services’ operational apparati there work better.”<sup>113</sup> It was at this very moment that the KBR was about to be faced with an undeniable threat, put on a high state of alert, and soon enmeshed in violent clashes between law enforcement and an indigenous radical Islamist combat jamaat. This crisis was in part driven by far-reaching changes in the KBR resulting from a slow but sure and contested re-Islamization of the republic’s ethnic Muslim population.

### **The Struggle for Islam in the KBR**

The KBR witnessed a growing differentiation in the structure of Islamic politics in the late Yeltsin years and particularly under Putin that includes three main orientations: official or traditional Islam, autonomous and often radical Islamic communities (jamaats), and extremist, even terrorist Islamist combat jamaats, most notably the Yarmuk Jamaat. The second orientation consists of groups of mostly young Islamic believers who reject the traditional Islam of parents and grandparents more sanguine both about the official Islamic clergy’s support of, and cooperation with, Russian and local KBR authorities and about the fact of, if not the present lifestyle resulting from, being a Russian citizen. Both radical

Muslims and extremist Islamists are critical of official Islam, and the radicals appear to form a recruiting pool, and logistical support base for the Islamists.

### **Official Islam in the KBR: The Spiritual Board of Muslims of the KBR**

Official Islam in the KBR, as elsewhere in Russia, is caught between, on the one hand, Russia's increasingly authoritarian, corrupt, and criminalized state and regime, and on the other hand, and radical Muslims and Islamist terrorists. The KBR's official Spiritual Administration of Muslims (DUM), headed by mufti Shafik Pshikhachev, has been forced under the growing crisis to simultaneously seek support from the authorities, support the authorities in their efforts to crack-down on Islamists, and criticize the authorities for their overzealousness in doing so. At the same time, there has been tension between the authorities and official Islam, as the former seeks to control and limit Islam's development, even as they acquiesce in assisting that development to insulate traditional Islam in Russia from Islamist infiltration. For example, when KBR authorities handed over the building of the DOSAAF (the Soviet era Voluntary Organization for Assistance for the Soviet Army and Navy) to the Muslim community for its transformation into a spiritual center and central mosque for the KBR DUM in Nalchik, a major scandal erupted between the parties over the financing, which included funds from a gaming baron in the republic.<sup>114</sup> In addition, Muslim and state authorities organized a telethon, but the bankruptcy of the bank holding the funds for the construction led to an official investigation, which somewhat discredited both the KBR's then chief mufti and the KBR DUM. These scandals discredited the KBR DUM in the eyes of the KBR's Muslims.<sup>115</sup> Some imams called on their congregations to boycott Nalchik's central mosque and KBR DUM deputy mufti for ideological issues, Khizir Otarov, argued this was a protest against the dirty state financing of the mosque's construction, not a response to the authorities' closings of other KBR mosques.<sup>116</sup>

Radicals and Islamists have used these scandals in their propaganda efforts to discredit the KBR DUM. Nalchik's central mosque was also harshly criticized by Yarmuk in one of its communiqués as one "built by the enemies of God to control Muslims"; a clear attempt to taint the KBR DUM and curry favor with or support radical and other non-DUM imams who rejected the KBR DUM's reliance on the state: "Even a person unfamiliar with Islam understands that the new central mosque—built with the support of the godless authorities, on whose orders crosses are shaved out on the heads of believers and during whose rule it is not considered a sin to swear at God and his Prophet (may God bless and welcome him)—better fits into the description of a 'mosque of harm and disbelief.'"<sup>117</sup>

The KBR DUM has cooperated with the authorities, in large part because they are their only source of funding and of protection from the radicals' wrath. Therefore, even though the radical Islamists condemn official Islam's DUMs for lacking independence from the state and assisting in the repression of Islam by Russian and local authorities, official Islamic clerics continue support policies they might otherwise oppose in the hope of securing more state support in their struggle to compete with the radicals for hearts, minds, and souls. The chief imam of

the DUM of the KBR (and the KChR and Adygeya) even requested in January 2005 to have a salary established, if not paid by the state, as is already the case for imams of the DUMs of Ingushetia, Chechnya, and, less directly, in Dagestan.<sup>118</sup> At the behest of Russian authorities, the KBR DUM inspected the ranks of local Muslim clerics through “attestations,” examining the nature and extent of the Muslim clerics’ knowledge of Islam to weed out and better compete with extremists. Nearly one hundred imams in the KBR were forced to undergo retraining regarding their knowledge of Islamic theology and law at Nalchik’s Islamic Institute after an attestation found them wanting. In another, eighty-seven of one hundred and fifty of the village imams failed to demonstrate proper knowledge of Mohammed’s teachings, interpretation of the Koran, and knowledge for the performance of Islamic rites.<sup>119</sup>

The KBR DUM, like official Islam throughout Russia, has been plagued by the radicals’ advantages in proselytizing Islam. Official, traditional, and more moderate Islam was not taught in state schools, and madrassahs are strapped for cash. At the same time, radicals often receive funding from abroad and ignore state strictures by propagandizing their extremist interpretation of Islam underground. More recently, the KBR DUM was able to force a compromise after the federal education ministry attempted to impose a course on Russian Orthodox culture on Russia’s primary schools; a policy that was substantially watered down throughout Russia as traditional Muslims mobilized to fight the measure. Initially, the ministry’s letter immediately inspired the KBR’s Cossack community in Prokhladnensk and others to adopt decisions to introduce the subject by September 2003.<sup>120</sup> By August 2004, however, the KBR government approved the new federally proposed course on “The History and Culture of the Religions of the Kabardino-Balkariya Republic,” for the KBR’s schools backed by both the KBR DUM and the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>121</sup>

The KBR authorities’ closure of mosques and other measures undertaken in 2003 and 2004 to fight the growing Islamist threat created considerable tension between the KBR and DUM authorities. When official Muslim clerics complained, state officials largely ignored their pleas, further discrediting the DUM’s stature among many Muslims. KBR law enforcement, in the person of KBR prosecutor Yurii Ketov, ignored Muslims’ complaints, asserting that “in all the history of Islam’s existence in Kabardino-Balkaria there has never been a more preferential attitude toward this religion on the part of the authorities and state than there is today.”<sup>122</sup>

Thus, the radicals and Islamists were even more able to criticize credibly the KBR DUM’s cooperation with the authorities as betrayal of the nation and blasphemy against Islam. The autonomous and increasingly radical Muslim Initiative Group’s spokesman, one “Musa,” was careful in a March 2004 letter published on the ChRI Islamists’ Web site *Kavakaz-Tsentr* to discredit the very idea of the existence of official Muslim administrations and chief muftis, such as the KBR DUM and its leader, declaring that they “have no basis in Islam and were contrived by the enemies of religion to control Muslims.”<sup>123</sup> He further asserted that the 2004 elections of the KBR DUM leader Pshikhachev were held under the control of the authorities, who permitted only those it wished to enter the assembly hall set aside



for the election meeting and barring journalists from entering. Musa also directly condemned KBR chief mufti Pshikhachev for “not objecting but approving the actions of Satan’s associates”—that is, the KBR and Russian leaderships. He also charged that Pshikhachev only differs from his predecessor (who was described as a KGB agent and as an informant who provided lists of Wahhabists for the police to arrest) by his possession of a diploma from Syria. He further charged him with assisting “nonbelievers” to divide Muslims by approving their closure of other Nalchik mosques and the “herding” of Muslims to his mosque in order to “raise the authority of the DUM.”<sup>124</sup> Thus, Musa concluded that the KBR DUM is doing more than “non-believers” to harm to the KBR’s Muslims.<sup>125</sup>

It is likely that some official imams do play a role in the roundups of alleged and real radical Islamists. Indeed at a meeting of the DUM of the Republic of Adygeya and Krasnodar Krai (DUM RA KK), the rector of the Abu Khanify Cherkessk Islamic Institute, Ismail khadzhi Bostanov, practically acknowledged this, noting that “every day the authorities ask us for some radicals.”<sup>126</sup> KBR Islamist spokesman Musa subsequently attacked the efforts of the KBR authorities and official clergy to root out Islamists: “That these barbarous actions were not committed by bands of skinheads or fascist aggressors but by those who call themselves ‘traditional Muslims,’ the same ones who they bury after their death according to Muslim rites in Muslim cemeteries, causes concern.”<sup>127</sup>

Indeed, the KBR DUM seems confused about how forcefully and directly to confront the radicals, at once exaggerating and downplaying the Islamist revolutionary threat. Like all DUMs, they are engaged in a competition for souls with other official Islamic clergy, and their organizations have used the charge of Wahhabism to undercut those competitors. When the ChRI-allied combat jamaat Yet, Yarmuk clearly had emerged as a force in the KBR, DUM leader Pshikhachev had to acknowledge that he had long discounted it, stating he began to believe in its existence only after the December 2004 attack on the headquarters of the FSKN (Federal Antinarcotics Service) in Nalchik.<sup>128</sup> Given the Islamists’ eager use of terror, official clerics have reason to hesitate in openly defying the radicals. Thus, a December 16, 2004 statement was signed vaguely by “the Muslims of Kabardino,” but likely composed by traditional Muslim clerics in the KBR, condemning Yarmuk’s December 2004 attack on the FSKN office in Nalchik and was posted not on a Web site based in the KBR, but one based in Ingushetiya, *Ingushetiya.ru*.<sup>129</sup>

The KBR DUM’s position risks becoming untenable in the face of growing polarization between an increasingly authoritarian and centralized Russian state and an increasingly radical Muslim society.

### **Unofficial, Autonomous Islam in the KBR**

Under Yeltsin, the number of mosques and Muslim religious communities not registering with the KBR Justice Ministry began growing, undermining official Islam’s position and bolstering the recruiting prospects of radicals.<sup>130</sup> This is a sign of growing alienation from official Islam and state authorities. Outside official Islam’s mosques, other mosques, as well as independent madrassahs and espe-

cially unregistered ones, have become the venues for so-called young reformers, who emerged in the 1990s in the KBR and elsewhere in the Northwest and Central Caucasus. Young reformist imams set about establishing a system of Islamic education, organizing propaganda supporting a so-called Islamic ideology in general education and sports schools, and forming a contingent of literate proselytizers for spreading this ideology. Core tenets of the young reformers' Islamic ideology and strategy include: (1) "shariat law is more just and incorruptible than Russian law"; (2) shariat law can be used as a way of counterposing Islamic ways of life to the Russian (or any other); and (3) the introduction of Islamic ways of life into the lives of the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus is necessary.<sup>131</sup> The introduction of Shariat law instead of Russian law realistically presupposes only an independent North Caucasus state or caliphate.

The first signs of more organized radical Islamists emerged in the KBR with the renewal of war in Chechnya and the beginning of Putin's federative counter-reforms. In the late 1990s, radical KBR imam Musa Mukozhev created the Kabardino-Balkariya Islamic Center, which was shut down by the authorities. It is likely that he is one and the same Musa who issued the letter critical of the KBR DUM cited above. He then founded the Kabardino-Balkariya Institute for Islamic Studies.<sup>132</sup> Mukozhev produced at least one Islamist who ended up at Guantanamo for fighting U.S. forces in Afghanistan.<sup>133</sup> By 2004, Mukozhev, the unofficial Emir of Muslims of Kabardino-Balkaria, was reported to be leading approximately forty Islamic communities across the KBR, encompassing more than ten thousand followers.<sup>134</sup> Although this may be an exaggeration, Mukozhev's communities (jamaats in Arabic and increasingly in Russian usage) seem to have provided a substantial indigenous base for Islamist recruitment. The head of Mukozhev's research institute, Ruslan Nakhushev, is regarded by the authorities as the KBR's Number One Extremist.<sup>135</sup> The members of their jamaat dress in traditional Islamist garb and wear beards. In response to the mosque closures, they have performed their daily prayers openly on the streets.<sup>136</sup> Neither Mukozhev nor Nakhushev, however, had been charged with crimes as of this writing.

As the popularity of independent radicals such as Mukozhev and Nakhushev grew and reports began to appear that Basaev was visiting the republic, KBR authorities increasingly became convinced that Islamist-inspired terrorism was in the offing. Beginning in summer 2000, both the official Muslim clergy and law enforcement officials in the KBR began warning of a radical Wahhabist presence. They responded to the apparently growing threat in ways that further alienated both young rank-and-file Muslims as well as local Islamic leaders, who increasingly complained of growing oppression in the KBR. In June 2002, the administration of the city of Chegem, a district capital located five kilometers from the republic's capital, issued an order banning, among other things, Islamic prayers in mosques except on Fridays from noon until 3:00 PM. Other city administrations began to emulate Chegem. For example, Nartkaly's city administration replaced one mosque's imam with one it approved of, using pressure on relatives of the former imam to convince him to step down.<sup>137</sup> In September 2003 through November 2003, the KBR's MVD (recall that regional MVDs were strictly sub-

ordinated to the federal MVD by this time, in line with Putin's federative counterreforms) began restricting the hours of completely closing almost all mosques across the republic. Many of the mosques that were not closed altogether were allowed to be open for only fifteen to twenty minutes daily. The local MVD also began security sweeps of mosque attendees in which more than a hundred people were arrested.<sup>138</sup>

In early 2004, the KBR government issued a decree permitting Muslims to go to mosques only on Friday and limiting prayers to forty minutes, and the MVD continued to conduct sweeps in mosques, including during traditional Friday prayers throughout the republic.<sup>139</sup> In addition, KBR President Kokov set up commissions tasked with holding meetings in every town and village in the republic. Parents and relatives of alleged Wahhabi radicals were told by the commissions to encourage their young to shave off their beards, stop visiting mosques, and pray at home or suffer serious measures.<sup>140</sup> However, according to a representative of the terrorists, although republic officials threatened inhabitants to "repeat 1937," the residents of some villages and cities "rebuffed the non-believers and chased them in shame from the assemblies."<sup>141</sup> Nevertheless, the older generation in the KBR, as in other Muslim republics for the most part, continues to support the local official DUM, which is allied with the republic's authorities (as are all of the approximately sixty often competing DUMs of Russia's official traditional Islam).

The intensified restrictions and police pressures on the KBR's Muslims drove the young increasingly into imam Mukozhev's embrace, further dividing Muslims' loyalties along generational lines.<sup>142</sup> Mukozhev's and Nakhushev's research institute issued a report in June 2002 based on an "ethnographic expedition," which concluded: "coercive and administrative methods for solving problems of Islamic fundamentalism can come back as intolerance toward the Russian state, the state-forming ethnoses, and the Russian Orthodox religion. In these conditions it is not excluded that a significant portion of young Muslim[s] will be imbued with the thought that full freedom of religion will be possible only in an Islamic state. . . . In the absence of alternatives, separatism can take on religious cover and, under a sharp deterioration of the ethno-political situation in the region, a form of military jihad."<sup>143</sup>

Radical Islamists, including those from the terrorist group Yarmuk Jamaat, recount the authorities' measures in official pronouncements justifying and calling Muslims to jihad. One Islamist spokesman, identified as Musa (whether this is Mukozhev is unknown), detailed the republic leadership's violations of Muslims' rights since 2003 in one such statement:

Since fall 2003 war has been declared against Islam and Muslims in the republic. Hundreds of Muslims were subjected to physical violence and humiliation with regard to their religious sensitivities. They dragged them from mosques, beat them, and shaved crosses on their heads. All this was accompanied by an uncensored abuse of the Most High Allah and His messenger Muhammed, Allah bless and welcome him.

Attempts to call the guilty to answer by way of petitioning the judicial organs and monitoring organs produced no results. Hundreds of appeals of victimized citizens have been left without answer. . . .

Taking advantage of the lawlessness militant atheists went further. The next step was the closing of all mosques in the city of Nalchik and several mosques in other districts in the republics. Seeing that Muslims did not undertake any adequate actions even to this and instead the coercive interference they continue to console themselves with empty hopes for a good outcome of the issue, the enemies of Allah switched to the physical destruction of Muslims. They openly threatened those who did not submit to this deception. In almost all of the population centers, assemblies of local residents were conducted in the course of which representatives of the ruling higher-ups, with the participation of prosecutors and the MVD, openly threatened the families of Muslims who visit mosques with physical reprisals and promised to "repeat 1937." "Now no one will be ceremonious with you, and people will simply disappear without a trace," they said. . . . Soon Satan's servants spilled the first blood. They beat to death Khasan settlement resident Rasul Tsakoev.<sup>144</sup>

This common view of the authorities and official Islam among radicals and extremists alike suggests there is some overlap across these two orientations. Thus, it has been reported that the followers of Mukozhev and Nakhushev admire the members of the extremist Islamist combat jamaat Yarmuk, which exploded onto the KBR's political scene in 2004.<sup>145</sup>

### **The Islamist Combat Jamaat "Yarmuk"**

In late 2004 and early 2005, the highest profile combat jamaat outside of Chechnya (and therefore the jamaat about which we have the most information) was to be found in the KBR, the "United Islamic Combat Jamaat 'Yarmuk'." Yarmuk's emergence in the KBR is of particular importance because it marks the expansion of the Islamist revolutionary infrastructure into the western North Caucasus and its Circassian (Kabards, Cherkees, and Adygeis) and Balkar-Karachai ethnic groups. The Yarmuk's Islamist orientation is obvious from its name's symbolism. Yarmuk is a river that forms the border between Israel and Jordan and was the venue of one of the greatest military victories in Islam's history of expansion into non-Islamic lands. In 636 AD, a mere four years after the prophet Mohammed's death, one of his closest companions, General Khalis ibn Walid, led a force of twenty thousand Muslim troops to victory over some forty thousand troops of the Byzantine Empire that included Slavs, Armenians, and Ghassanids. The victory, which opened the way to Damascus, Jerusalem, and ultimately all of Byzantium, was Islam's first wave of Islamic expansion beyond Arabia into non-Muslim and, in particular, rival Christian lands.

The first warnings of an Islamist presence in the KBR were generally not heeded by many inside and outside the republic, even as the war in Chechnya was reignited. In 2000, the official Muslim clergy, as well as law enforcement officials in the KBR, began warning of radical Wahhabist presence. In early 2001, KBR MVD chief Khachim Shogenov claimed there were three to four hundred militant Muslims in the republic. Approximately half of these Islamists were in Chechnya where they underwent guerilla warfare training and fought against the Russian army. Some of these reportedly fought in a Kabardin branch or unit under the command of one Abduldzhabar organized by the notorious Khattab under Basaev's command.<sup>146</sup> Reportedly, more than fifty returned to the republic after the war.<sup>147</sup> By mid-2001, Russian security forces reportedly had

uncovered Islamists' plans to seize power by force in both the KBR and KChR.<sup>148</sup>

The growing tensions in the KBR seem to have encouraged the Chechens to activate the Yarmuk Jamaat. In August 2003, police were alerted to Basaev's presence in the KBR village of Baksan. Special police and FSB units surrounded Basaev's hideout, but he and two associates managed to escape. In the process, Basaev was wounded in both legs and his nephew Hadim, who was also chief of Basaev's personal guards, blew himself up while attacking the local police chief. Rumors had it that Basaev was in the KBR to form a local network of underground Islamic paramilitary jamaats.<sup>149</sup> During this visit to the KBR, Basaev put his imprimatur on the indigenous KBR Islamist combat Yarmuk Jamaat. The claim by one FSB general that Basaev's close associate, the late Saudi Arabian terrorist Khattab, "increasingly withdrew from the Chechens and came increasingly to trust Karachais and Kabards" suggests that Yarmuk's emergence was part of a Chechen strategy to expand the war to the western North Caucasus Muslim republics.<sup>150</sup>

The Yarmuk Jamaat, according to the KBR MVD, was formed in summer 2002 in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge by KBR residents who had joined Basaev-allied Chechen separatist field commander Ruslan Gelayev's detachment there. Its original members are said to hail from the village of Kendelen (population six thousand) in the mountainous Balkar-dominated Elbrus district. Kendelen is one of the poorest villages in Kabardino-Balkaria, with 99 percent of working-age adults considered unemployed and surviving on subsistence farming.<sup>151</sup> Gelayev reportedly appointed Kendelen inhabitant Muslim Atayev to form Yarmuk because he had enjoyed great authority among local young Muslims as the military emir of a jamaat once known as the Kabardino-Balkaria Battalion. By all accounts talented and capable, Atayev took the name Seifullah and would lead Yarmuk until his death at the hands of the Russian security services in January 2005.<sup>152</sup>

Atayev recruited approximately thirty like-minded Muslims, some of whom had taken part in fighting against Russian forces in Chechnya and undergone sabotage training in Khattab's camps. In November 2002, as part of Gelayev's detachment, they crossed the Georgian-Russian border and joined battle with federal forces in the region of Galashki in Ingushetia. When Gelayev's unit returned to Chechnya, Atayev-Seifullah's unit was ordered to the KBR where they were to go into hiding, try to strengthen the detachment with new recruits and weapons, and await further orders. Yarmuk's eleven core members led by Atayev returned to the republic, and the others followed individually to avoid detection. Atayev developed new ties among the local radicals and through them managed to contact Basaev with whom, according to one report, he met in Baksan during summer 2003. Reportedly, Yarmuk subordinated itself to the Chechen field commander at that time.<sup>153</sup> Thus, it has repeatedly used the Chechens' Web sites to issue its propaganda as well as to express its solidarity with the Chechen militants, mourning and hailing Ichkeria President Maskhadov after he was killed by Russian law enforcement officials and congratulating his successor, Sheik Halim.<sup>154</sup> Yarmuk is reportedly well trained and expert in target shooting.<sup>155</sup>

Yarmuk appears to be a multiethnic organization. However, having emerged from the predominantly Balkar Elbrus raion, Balkars appear to outnumber the Kabards.<sup>156</sup> Its first leader, Atayev-Seifullah, hailed from the Balkar village of Kendelen in mountainous Balkar-dominated Elbrus mountain resort district, the location of Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain peak in western Eurasia and Europe.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, Yarmuk appears to have a strong non-Balkar component and appears to actively reach out to non-Balkars.<sup>158</sup> It published a letter on December 19, 2004, from a group of Kabards supporting its activities. In addition, it praised Atayev-Seifullah's ethnic Russian wife, Olesya, as a martyr for fighting Russian forces to the death during the siege in which her husband was also killed.<sup>159</sup> The multiethnic character of the Islamist movement was confirmed when Atayev-Seifullah was succeeded after his death by a Kabard who also took the name Seifullah.<sup>160</sup>

Official claim that Yarmuk has links to the al-Qaeda network are accurate given Gelaev's and Basaev's roles in its establishment. Russian MVD chief Rashid Nurgaliyev, a Tatar by nationality, has now branded the KBR a "breeding ground for Wahhabis."<sup>161</sup> According to one scholar, it relies on the Hanafite interpretation of Shariat law (one of the four schools of Sunni Islamic law), which is traditional in the North Caucasus and less rigid and inflexible than the Hanbalite legal school followed in Wahhabite Saudi Arabia, which calls Muslims to an obligatory, "defensive jihad," emphasizing a "moral revolution," "personal reasoning," and "exercise of judgment."<sup>162</sup> However, there is little or no evidence for this, and such an assumption based on ethnicity and traditional strains of Islam in the area seems to underestimate the growing influence of extremist international Islamism, Wahhabite, Salafist, or otherwise, in the North Caucasus. Yarmuk's ideology, tactics, strategy, and some of its goals bear a striking resemblance to those of the various international jihadists tied to al-Qaeda, including the constant invocation of martyrdom and Shariat law and a one-sided interpretation of the Koran and other Islamic texts.<sup>163</sup>

Yarmuk and its allies' statements are replete with references to Allah and the ideology of international terrorist jihad, such as: "All this was accompanied by an uncensored abuse of the Most High Allah and His messenger Muhammed, Allah bless and welcome him. . . . Soon Satan's servants spilled the first blood."<sup>164</sup> The abovementioned Musa described the death of Yarmuk's Atayev-Seifullah, his wife and two-year old son in terms of jihadist martyrdom: "Amir Seifullah showed a fine example of how a Muslim should defend his family and honor from the Russian aggressors and their loyal dogs. He concluded an advantageous deal and received a great profit which Allah promises those who carry out a true trade in the name of Jihad." With Atayev-Seifullah's death, all Muslims were now required by Shariah law as interpreted by Islamic scholars, according to Musa, to join in jihad against nonbelievers. The sin of abstention from jihad, according to Musa, renders Muslims nonbelievers, who having "left Islam," worthy only of death as are original nonbelievers.<sup>165</sup> Musa has also stipulated how best to organize jihadist terror and conduct partisan or guerilla warfare, basing his instructions on Shariah law.<sup>166</sup>

On August 18, the Islamist United Islamic Combat Jamaat Yarmuk emerged from the shadows.<sup>167</sup> Armed with automatic weapons and grenade throwers, eight Yarmuk militants engaged as many as four hundred members of the security forces equipped with armored vehicles and two helicopters for eight hours in forests near Chegem. Chegem authorities had been aggressive in interfering in the work of local mosques and otherwise restricting Muslims' rights. Six Yarmuk fighters managed to escape.<sup>168</sup> The Chechen connection to Yarmuk was confirmed when the separatists' Web site, *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, posted Yarmuk's declaration regarding its first battle in "the war that Putin unleashed in Chechnya," which was now "taking on the nature of a national liberation fight by the Caucasus nations for their freedom, and the scope of the war operations is expanding. Now the mujahedin have started active military operations in Kabardino-Balkariya."<sup>169</sup> On August 23, the Chechens' *Kavkaz-Tsentr* Web site posted another message from "the information centre of the Kabardino-Balkariya Yarmuk Jamaat," which clearly joined Yarmuk with the ChRI Islamists expanding cause:

We wish to inform everyone that today, by favor of God, the Kabardino-Balkariya "Yarmuk Jamaat" has been established. Units of the jamaat have been deployed on the territory of Kabarda-Balkariya and are starting to carry out their combat tasks according to the requirements of a jihad. We want to state that "Yarmuk" fighters took part in a recent combat operation in Chegem District. . . We are *mujahedin!* We are the soldiers of God! We are not fighting against peaceful citizens, never mind peaceful guests. We are not fighting women and children as the Russian occupation forces are doing in Ichkeriya. We are not blowing up inhabitants in their sleep, as the Russian FSB is doing.

We wish to state that terrorist acts which may occur in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkariya against innocent civilians are the hand of the Russian FSB and the Kabardino-Balkariya Interior Ministry. We are fighting against tyrants and parasites who have placed the interests of their mafia clans above the interests of their own peoples. We are fighting those who are growing fat at the expense of the impoverished and intimidated people of Kabardino-Balkariya who have been brought to their knees. We are fighting the occupation forces and aggressors who have seized Muslim land and are playing master over it. . . .

Citizens of Kabardino-Balkariya! Your apologies for rulers, who have sold themselves to the occupation forces, have reached the point where drug-dealing, prostitution, poverty, crime, debauchery, drunkenness and unemployment are rife in our republic. Their depraved policy has divided our daughters and sisters and led them to a path of depravity and permissiveness. Together with their Moscow masters and their criminal and unjust rule, they are provoking ethnic discord in the Kabardino-Balkariya Republic. On their orders they are abducting and torturing Muslims of the Kabardino-Balkariya Republic, closing our mosques and preventing in every way possible the spread of the Islamic religion, the religion of truth and justice. Probably for the first time in Islam's 1,400-year history, a mosque has been built which they have called not a mosque, but some sort of building of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Kabardino-Balkariya Republic. This means that the ordinary Muslims of the republic cannot enter the mosque without special permission! With their consent, over 200,000 Muslims of Ichkeriya have been annihilated, and 50,000 children have become orphans. On the Day of Judgment you also will pay for this genocide.<sup>170</sup>

Clearly, the militants' call to arms sought to capitalize on the alienation created by the crackdown in the KBR; a crackdown facilitated by the federalists' general full-court press on the national autonomies, in particular the Muslim national republics.

In September 2004, days after Beslan, the KBR was thrown into panic by what appeared to be a Yarmuk-sponsored article on the Chechens' "Kavkazweb" site—"End of the World: How Chechen Separatists Are Planning to Destroy Kabardino-Balkariya and Karachai-Cherkessiya"—which warned that Basaev, who had already claimed responsibility for Beslan, soon would do the same thing at Nalchik's school no. 2, and this would lead to an interethnic North Caucasus war taking tens of thousands of lives. In response, the KBR MVD offered a reward for information about Yarmuk members.<sup>171</sup> Coming on the eve of Putin's post-Beslan call for emergency institutional reforms and security measures, this prompted regional authorities to further tighten the screws on Muslims, resulting in more consternation in the Muslim community.

KBR prosecutors demanded stepped-up investigations of "Wahhabis," checking local officials' compliance with the demands of the law "On Counteracting Extremist Activity."<sup>172</sup> In mid-September, the administration of Nalchik decided to limit the capital to one open mosque, the city's central mosque.<sup>173</sup> Authorities had already ordered the halt of construction of six mosques for each of the city's six districts a month earlier. The announcement was met with complaints by representatives of KBR's DUM about the unjustified closing of mosques and police pressure on believers who were not involved in extremism.<sup>174</sup> Indeed, the KBR security officials' aggressiveness quickly led to tragedy. On September 27, an apparently innocent young man was detained by police on suspicion of participating in radical Islamic groups and beaten to death.<sup>175</sup> By February 2005, there were reports of the detainment of children at block posts in the KBR.<sup>176</sup>

To be sure, Russian authorities have legitimate security concerns, and even in an advanced democracy such as the United States some civil liberties have been curtailed in favor of empowering law enforcement bodies to root out terrorists. The fact remains, however, that because of successive Russian presidents' failure to substantially reform Russia's law enforcement bodies and their train their forces sufficiently in democratic-oriented policing methods and security tactics, Russian law enforcement bodies are corrupt, overly aggressive, and often operationally ineffective. Thus, federal prosecutor in the KBR, Yurii Ketov, has stated that the special services receive information about Yarmuk Jamaat "not from operational sources, but from the media."<sup>177</sup> In the face of repeated failure to secure the civilian population and indeed their own officials, including law enforcement operatives and installations, many Russian officials seek to scapegoat benign domestic and foreign elements rather than question their policies and methods. Typically some security officials could do no better than blame foreign intelligence services. Sergei Ushakov, head of the FSB directorate for Kabardino-Balkaria, charged that the special services and other organizations of the United States, Turkey, and "Middle Eastern countries" were increasing intelligence and "sabotage" in the KBR.



In October 2004, FSB chief Patrushev claimed to have intelligence that Russia's public enemy number one, Basaev, had been sighted again in the KBR. Indeed, winter 2004–05 saw more bold Yarmuk operations. In early December, it attacked a representative of KBR administration for the Federal Anti-Narcotics Service (FSNK) and the chief of a strict regime penal colony in the KBR.<sup>180</sup> On the evening of December 13–14, 2004, Yarmuk executed its boldest operation by raiding the Nalchik headquarters of the FSNK and killing four people, including three police officers, and seizing 182 pistols of various kinds and 79 assault and sniper rifles.<sup>181</sup> Most disconcerting for the authorities was the evidence that Yarmuk appeared to get assistance from someone inside the FSNK. A source close to the investigation when it was still operating under the theory that the attack could also have been undertaken by a drug ring stated that there is “no doubt” that someone from the KBR FSNK's ranks was among the attackers, since the eight to ten militants appeared to have been acquainted with the administration building's layout. Claiming responsibility for the attack, Yarmuk declared in an Internet posting that the “doors of Jihad” would close in the region only when Sharia law is established and the “occupied land belongs to our peoples.”<sup>183</sup> Jihad was declared specifically in the KBR, KChR, and Adygeya, again suggesting that the Yarmuk is part of the Islamist network's broader strategy of spreading jihad to the three western North Caucasus Muslim republics through the Circassian (Adygei-Cherkessian-Kabardin) tribes that populate part of each.

Russian security forces' methods are not completely unsuccessful in attaining narrow objectives. In late January 2005, Russian law enforcement officials tracked down and killed Yarmuk leader Atayev-Sei-fullah and six accomplices, including his Russian wife and one or two of his children in a three-day siege of an apartment complex on the outskirts of Nalchik. The militants reportedly tried to shoot at a passenger aircraft at the local airport, forcing the cancellation of all flights during the siege. Russian Deputy Interior Minister Arkadii Edelev told journalists that two to four of the seven were female suicide bombers being prepared to commit acts of terrorism.<sup>184</sup> During the siege, a Yarmuk Jamaat Internet message on the Chechen rebels' Web site declared for the first of three times that jihad was “now mandatory for every Muslim in the (North) Caucasus.”<sup>185</sup> Indeed, Yarmuk quickly bounced back, announcing it had selected a new emir and adopted operational plans for the KBR and the entire North Caucasus in 2005.<sup>186</sup> On the UK-based Chechen insurgents' Web site *Kavkaz-Tsentr* Yarmuk promised to target the children of the MVD and FSB in retaliation for the killing of Atayev-Seifullah and his family. They declared their strategic task to break Russia's two “pillars” in the North Caucasus: Nalchik and Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia.<sup>187</sup> Yarmuk's new emir, Rustam Bekanov, also renamed Seifullah, was identified as a former deputy (naib) of Atayev-Seifullah and an ethnic Kabard from Chegem.<sup>188</sup>

Nevertheless, Yarmuk continued to suffer setbacks. On February 18 and 19, Russian security forces uncovered more activity when it killed two more Yarmuk members in another apartment siege and apprehended three more, including two females, and found sixty-nine detonators elsewhere in Nalchik.

Commenting on the successful February operations at a government meeting on February 21, President Putin ordered Russian MVD chief Rashid Nurgaliev to “be tougher” in cracking down on militants in the Caucasus.<sup>189</sup> On March 15, three powerful and ready-to-use explosive devices (thirty-six kilograms) were seized in the outskirts of Nalchik.<sup>190</sup> At this point, Yarmuk has still not succeeded in carrying out a terrorist attack, as far as we know. KBR authorities ratcheted up the pressure. In mid-March, there was a heavy police and military presence in the Elbrus district. There were major security exercises conducted against terrorist threats in mid-April involving joint operations by FSB, MVD, and Emergency Situations Ministry (MChS) forces.<sup>191</sup> In late April, Russian forces found and killed Atayev’s successor, Bekanov-Seifullah, along with three other militants, beheading Yarmuk for the second time in 2005. Russian media declared Yarmuk finished.<sup>192</sup> Two detainees taken by police during the operation claimed that Basaev was dissatisfied with Yarmuk’s supposed inactivity and was demanding terrorist acts.<sup>193</sup>

Rumors of Yarmuk’s and Islamism’s demise in the KBR would prove premature, however. Indeed, the pool for potential militants and supporters may be growing thanks again to KBR authorities’ authoritarian inclinations. In mid-April, the KBR MVD committed an outrage that is sure to alienate Muslims further and increase Yarmuk’s recruitment opportunities. Nine female Muslim students were detained for reading the Koran on the premises of Kabardino-Balkariya State University. During their detention they were forced to lift up their dresses and endure questions from militia regarding Muslim sex practices, according to reports. The next day, the university’s deans announced that group reading of the Koran was banned on campus.<sup>194</sup>

By summer 2005, there were new terrorist attacks, although Yarmuk claimed but a few of them and issued web messages rarely. In addition, a new Web site, Samagat.com, apparently belonging to ethnic Balkar and Karachi Islamists from the KBR and KChr, respectively, appeared touting the Chechen cause and recent attacks on KBR MVD and police officers. At the same time, KBR authorities began provoking Balkar nationalism by a series of missteps intended to address the Islamist threat, raising the specter of Balkar nationalism fueling the republic’s indigenous Islamist movement.

### **The Islamist Threat and Nationalism in the KBR**

There is little likelihood that the KBR’s Kabard-dominated elite would lead a separatist or Islamist movement in the republic, given its present nomenclature origins and more russified culture. However, important or even critical defections by ranking republic or clerical leaders to a nationalist or Islamist opposition are possible. Putin’s centralization policies could be accelerating such a process in unexpected ways. Thus, as soon as the Kremlin began to push for the merger of regions and floated various trial balloons on this in 2002, the KBR’s elite spoke out. The KBR parliament expressed its dissatisfaction with this trend and characterized the idea as dangerous. One deputy warned that its authors “do not understand that they may wind up with eighty-nine Chechen Republics.”<sup>195</sup>

However, Balkar nationalism could more readily be converted into Islamic nationalism, given the minority and outsider status of this small Muslim ethnic group in the republic. This can be seen again in events following the authorities' killing of Yarmuk's second leader Bekanov-Seifullah. In response to the Yarmuk threat, President Kokov attempted to take control of Elbrus by centralizing in a way reminiscent of the federal authorities's approach to the regions. According to the London-based pro-Chechen Web site *Chechen Press*, on March 4, the KBR government assembled the village administration heads of Elbrus raion and demanded they sign a pledge "not to support Wahhabites and take all responsibility for their activity." They reportedly threatened Elbrus administration head Khyzyr Makitov personally if he did not maintain loyalty. On March 10, according to *Chechen Press*, military forces of the North Caucasus VO and MVD OMON began a major sweeping operation in Elbrus; armed officials of the law enforcement forces had been concentrated in Nalchik and armored personnel carriers were located at almost every traffic light in the town of Tynyiauz, a suspected radical stronghold.<sup>196</sup>

At the same time, a new law, "On the Status and Borders of Municipal Formations in the KBR," adopted in early March, transferred the ski resort town of Prielbrusye and its revenues from the jurisdiction of the Elbrus raion administration to that of the capital Nalchik, one hundred and twenty kilometers away. This suggests that Nalchik suspects the loyalty of the Balkar-dominated area and may fear it could be a source of funding for the Elbrus-originated Yarmuk.<sup>197</sup> The municipal reform law also incorporated four districts adjacent to Nalchik into the capital. The two that were predominantly Kabard-populated remained calm. However, the two predominantly Balkar-populated districts, in addition to Elbrus, became the base of support for a revived movement to form a Balkar republic separate from the KBR. Artur Zakoev, the former head of the Khasan village administration, organized an initiative committee in one of the two Balkar-dominated villages Khasan to be incorporated into Nalchik to oppose the municipal reform. On the evening of May 14–15, initiative committee head Zakoev was murdered. Later, the committee lost two failed appeals in the KBR's courts, which effectively scuttled the Balkars' hopes of blocking the municipal reform.<sup>198</sup> On May 28, more than a thousand demonstrators went onto Nalchik's central square to condemn Zakoev's assassination and call for a Balkar Republic separate from the KBR, including the transfer of four districts that belonged to Balkaria until 1944 from Kabard to Balkar jurisdiction.<sup>199</sup> Indeed, the demonstrations condemned the arbitrariness of MVD operations to root out terrorists.<sup>200</sup> At the same time, the Balkar-Karachai Islamist Web site *Samagat.com* emerged supporting both KBR Islamists' attacks on the authorities and the ChRI Islamists' cause. On July 21, 2005, it announced that a "mudzhahid" had killed two "criminals" from the "so-called militia" and "illegal armed formations calling themselves the DPS UGIBB-DD (Traffic Patrol Service) under the MVD." The communiqué also charged "head of the Putin puppet regime in Kabardino-Balkariya V. Kokov" with the murder of Khasan village administration head Artur Zokaev, emphasizing that Zokaev was "a well-meaning Muslim and independent politician . . . and the only admin-

istration head who performed the *namaz* (Muslim daily prayers) as is proper for a Muslim. . . . He firmly defended the interests of the Balkar people and openly came out against the genocide of the Chechen people by the Russian occupiers, and for that he was killed.”<sup>201</sup> The emphasis on the Balkar people along with the Chechen cause suggests the nationalist aspect of Islamism’s emergence in the KBR. These developments, still unresolved as of this article, underscore how the Islamist threat interacts with interethnic tensions and boosts Islamists’ prospects for destabilizing the region in the hope of coming to power and inflaming war across the North Caucasus.

### Conclusion

Authoritarian repression of Muslims’ political, human, and religious rights has produced what journalist Thomas De Waal aptly termed “a small model of Uzbekistan” in the KBR.<sup>202</sup> Shortly after this observation was made, Uzbekistan saw a revolt sparked by the authorities’ apparent overreaction to a radical Muslim movement. President Islam Karimov’s decision to fire on thousands of demonstrators, killing hundreds, ensures that the cycle of alienation and radicalization will continue in Uzbekistan. A continuation of Putin’s present policy mix promises Russia similar Muslim-state conflict in a cycle of centralization, instability, and more centralization and instability—something that is already becoming a mainstay in North Caucasus and KBR politics. This is severely taxing the resources of an already shaky Russian state.

Putin’s reauthoritarianizing counterrevolution, the ongoing Chechen war, and the post-Beslan crackdown on real and imagined Muslim extremists by unreformed regional leaders and security forces are radicalizing of the KBR’s Muslims. That radicalization, combined with internationally connected Chechens’ recruitment efforts and training in the region, has mobilized the KBR’s radical Islamists and brought them into an alliance with the international Islamist jihad. Indeed, the number of militant Islamists joining the Yarmuk combat and Mukozhev-Nakhushev jamaats appears to be growing. If earlier estimates in 2001 reported that Islamists in the KBR numbered near four hundred, by late 2004, Southern FO Prosecutor Shepel said the number of radical Islamists in the KBR was fluctuating between five hundred and two thousand.<sup>203</sup> As long as the Chechen insurgency festers and Putin endeavors to run a hyperdiverse Russia from Moscow using the unreformed *siloviki* as his main instrument for stabilizing the KBR and the North Caucasus, the Islamist network will deepen across the area and is likely to take root in other Muslim republics and communities across Russia. This raises the specter of a broader Islamic or Islamist revolution or civil war, with the ensuing implications for international security that could emanate from this WMD-laden and geostrategically pivotal state.

### NOTES

1. Chechens had been involved in kidnapping for ransom, preventing civilians from fleeing battle zones, and deliberately locating military equipment and forces in civilian areas. Both sides’ abuses have been documented by numerous independent outside organizations. For information on the first Chechen war, 1994–96, see the Russian Human

Rights Center “Memorial” publication, *Rossiia-Chechnya: tsep’ oshibok i prestuplenii* (Moscow: Zvenya, 1998). For information on the second war, see Human Rights Watch (HRW), *The “Dirty War” in Chechnya: Forced Disappearances, Torture, and Summary Executions* (New York: HRW, 2001); Human Rights Watch, *Swept Under: Torture, Forced Disappearances, and Extrajudicial Killings during Sweep Operations in Chechnya* (New York: HRW, 2002); 107th U.S. Congress 2nd Session and Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Democracy and Human Rights Trends in Eurasia and East Europe: A Decade of Membership in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002), 49; Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Situation in Chechnya: Briefing Paper to the 59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights* (New York: HRW, 2003); “Russia” in U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2003* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2004); and Human Rights Center, *Deceptive Justice: Situation on the Investigation of Crimes against Civilians Committed by Members of the Federal Forces in the Chechen Republic during Military Operations, 1999–2003* (Moscow: Memorial, 2003).

2. On life in today’s Chechnya, see Médecins Sans Frontières, *The Trauma of Ongoing War in Chechnya: Quantitative Assessment of Living Conditions and Psychosocial and General Health Status among the War-displaced in Chechnya and Ingushetia* (Amsterdam: MSF, 2004).

3. In elections that were neither free nor fair, an official figure of 80 percent elected former chief mufti of Chechnya Akhmed Kadyrov as the republic’s president, and 90 percent approved a new republic constitution in 2002. In April 2004, Kadyrov was assassinated by Chechen rebels. Chechen MVD Chief Alu Alkhanov was backed by the Kremlin and elected Kadyrov’s successor with 73 percent of the votes.

4. See U.S. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), 58–59, 64, 109, 125, 149, 160, 165–66, 191, 222, 233, 524; October 30, 2004, declassified portions of the top-secret U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency report, “Intelligence Information Report/Swift Knight—Usama Ben Laden’s Current and Historical Activities,” (October 1998); Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 135, 179–80; and C. J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers, “Chechen Rebels Mainly Driven by Nationalism,” *New York Times*, September 12, 2004, 1, 9.

5. The video showed female suicide bombers wearing Islamic veils before a green banner inscribed with the Arabic words “Allahu akhbar” [God is great]. Throughout the video, the captors used bin Laden’s slogan: “We desire death even more than you desire life.”

6. See Faye Bowers, “Al Qaeda’s New Young Guard: A Shift in Tactics,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 13, 2004, 1; Walter Pincus, “Zarqawi Is Said to Swear Allegiance to Bin Laden,” *Washington Post*, October 19, 2004, A10; and Don Van Natta, Jr., “Who Is Abu Musab al-Zarqawi?” *New York Times*, October 10, 2004, E3.

7. That link includes the exchange of guerilla tactics and experience. Russian officers claim that the main reason that Chechen guerrillas developed great expertise in the use of mines and other explosives is the assistance they have received from foreign Islamists. The U.S. intelligence unit known as the Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC), which has been studying bomb shrapnel from around the world, has determined that an Islamist bomb-making network spreading across Chechnya, Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East appears to be sharing designs and materials for car bombs and improvised explosive devices. David Johnston, “U.S. Agency Sees Global Network for Bomb Making,” *New York Times*, February 22, 2004, 1, 9. On TEDAC, see U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *FBI Laboratory 2003 Report* (Quantico, VA: FBI, 2004), 17.

8. On limited illiberal democracy under Yeltsin see Gordon M. Hahn, *Russia’s Revolution From Above: Reform, Transition, and Revolution in the Fall of the Soviet Communist Regime, 1985–2000* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2002), chap. 11. On aspects of

Putin's soft authoritarian counterrevolution, see Gordon M. Hahn, "Putin's 'Stealth Authoritarianism' and Russia's Second Revolutionary Wave," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Regional Analysis*, <http://www.regionalanalysis.org/publications/regionalvoices/en/2004/04/616B350A-D9CD-49F59416ECAD7F5F1EAE.ASP> (accessed April 21, 2004); and Harley Balzer, "Managed Pluralism: Vladimir Putin's Emerging Regime," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19, no. 3 (July–September 2003): 189–227. On the limits of de-democratization, see Leon Aron, "Institutions, and Restoration, and Revolution," *Russia Outlook* (April 15, 2005), [http://www.aei.org/docLib/20050415\\_ROInstitutions\\_g18264.pdf](http://www.aei.org/docLib/20050415_ROInstitutions_g18264.pdf).

9. See the results of the 2004 Russian presidential elections in Muslim republics as compared to other republics in Hahn, "Putin's 'Stealth Authoritarianism.'"

10. Consolidated democracies experience little terrorism. Harsh authoritarian regimes have a somewhat higher risk of terrorism. Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 10589* (October 2004), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w10589>.

11. A partial list of Putin's antifederalist policies includes: (1) the creation of extra-constitutional federal districts [FOs] to restore the "executive vertical" and coordinate federal authorities' interference in regional politics, especially elections through the use of administrative resources (police, courts, tax collection, finances, state mass media); (2) hypercentralization of lawmaking by requiring regional laws to comply with federal law under a federal constitution that renders federal law supreme in all spheres of life that it chooses to address; (3) the creation of a mechanism for "federal intervention" allowing the president, with court approval, to call elections to a regional parliament should it refuse to follow court findings that regional executive branch decrees or orders, legislative acts, or constitutions violate the constitution or federal law; (4) termination of most, if not all, power-sharing treaties between the federal government and individual regions, ending regional autonomy and official federative asymmetry; (5) counterreform of the Federation Council from a legislative body composed of elected officials to one of officials appointed by the Russian president; (6) recentralization of budget revenues; (7) dissolution of the national autonomous okrugs, making the national republics, including the titular Muslim republics, nervous; (8) virtual elimination of consociational minority veto for regional legislatures over federal legislation; (9) presidential appointment rather than popular election of regional governors and republic presidents (and perhaps city mayors and district heads); and (10) elimination of no single-mandate districts seats in the State Duma and a switch to a fully PR or party list voting system. Assimilative policies have included: (11) a ban of ethnic and religious parties; (12) ban of the use of non-Cyrillic alphabets in response to Muslim Tatarstan's decision to Latinize the Tatar language; and ultimately watered-down proposals to (13) introduce a course on Russian Christian Orthodox "culture" into Russia's schools and (14) forbid Muslim women from wearing the *khidzhab* (veil) in passport photographs. See Gordon M. Hahn, "Russian Federalism under Putin," in *Current Developments in Russian Politics*, vol. 6, ed. Stephen White, Zvi Gitelman, and Richard Sakwa, 148–67 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). See also Gordon M. Hahn, "The Past, Present, and Future of the Russian Federal State," *Demokratizatsiya* 11, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 343–62; Gordon M. Hahn, "Putin's Federal Reforms: Integrating Russia's Legal Space or Destabilizing Russian Federalism," *Demokratizatsiya* 9, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 498–530; Gordon M. Hahn, "The Impact of Putin's Federative Reforms on Democratization in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19, no. 2 (April–June 2003): 114–53; and Jeffrey Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

12. Traditional federalist theory and various elaborations posit territorial federalism—a usually constitution-based division of power between the national level and subnational governments—or a more extensive "asymmetric" federalism, which gives special autonomy (self-rule, self-governance) to regional governments that are often ethno- or religioterritorial governance units, so-called ethnofederalism. William H. Riker, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance* (Boston: Little Brown, 1964); and Carl J. Freidrich,

*Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1968). This can include special authority for some territorial subunits (asymmetry) either institutionalized in a constitution as in India or by renewable agreements between federal and regional governments as in Spain and early post-Soviet Russia. Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, ed., *The Self-Determination of Peoples: Community, Nation, and State in an Interdependent World* (London: Lynn/Riener, 2002). Arend Lijphart argued the effectiveness of Belgian, Swiss, and Indian consociational or consensus-based federative governance, which gives special power-sharing rights to national minorities or their regional autonomies through mechanisms such as intercommunal “grand coalitions” and the minority veto. According to Lijphart, consociational federative mechanisms preclude tyrannies of the majority that frustrate ethnonational minorities’ aspirations to protect their cultural, linguistic, and confessional identities from assimilative policies and their territories’ natural resources from expropriation by the Center. Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-one Countries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Arend Lijphart, “The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation,” *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (June 1996): 258–68. Democratic socialists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner proposed for the Austro-Hungarian Empire a rarely applied “corporate federalism” or non-territorial cultural autonomy for minority communities to allow extra-territorial self-governance on cultural, religious, and linguistic issues. Freidrich, *Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice*; and Lijphart, *Democracies*, 183–84.

13. David Sisk, “Power Sharing in Multiethnic Societies: Principal Approaches and Practices,” in *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Strategies and Institutions, Proceedings of a Conference in Moscow, Russian Federation, August, 14–16, 1996*, ed. Gail W. Lapidus and Svetlana Tsalik, 34–67 (New York: Carnegie, 1998).

14. Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 145–49.

15. Horowitz counterposes the prescriptions noted above with “integrative” ones, arguing that by “over-institutionalizing” interethnic and interconfessional cleavages, the state and intercommunal comity are weakened. See Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Donald L. Horowitz, “Making Moderation Pay,” in *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, ed. Joseph Montville (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990).

16. The studies by Alan Krueger and David Laitin and by J. A. Piazza overlook the subregional level, however. See Alan Krueger and David Laitin, “Kto Kogo? A Cross-country Study of the Origins and Targets of Terrorism,” mimeo, November 2003; and J. A. Piazza, “Rooted in Poverty? Terrorism, Poor Economic Development and Social Cleavages,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Spring 2005.

17. Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970).

18. The Muslim Crimean Khanate’s activities brought Islam to the entire Cherkess, western Ossetia, and farther southwest to Abkhazia (a secessionist republic of present-day Georgia) and further entrenched Islam among the Kabards, Balkars, and their neighbors. The Ottoman Turks also assisted in the spread of Islam among the Cherkess. Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 7.

19. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 159.

20. Pagan beliefs put a break on radical Islamicization, since the latter rejects the former as heretical and cause for severe punishment including death, as they are interpreted as a sign of nonbelief. Thus, some local councils of elders in the KBR have already mobilized to protect youth from the influence of Islamist “pseudoreligious extremism.” In the largest high mountain settlement in the KBR, Verkhnyaya Balkariya, the council of elders and Verkhnyaya Balkaria’s imam, Mukhamed-khadzhi Tsikanov, took on this responsibility. “Sovet stareishin Verkhnei Balkarii vospitaet molodezh v dukhe Islama,” *Islam.ru* (March 25, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-03-25/#7718>.

21. Remnants of pagan beliefs can be found among all of Russia's ethnic Muslims and such beliefs intermixed with Islamic elements to produce uniquely North Caucasian and more narrowly ethnic-based customs tied to and separate from Islam. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 251–53.

22. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 199.

23. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 255–56; and Shireen T. Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), 65.

24. Oleg Guseinov, "Stroite'stvo khrama Marii Magdaliny priostanovlena iz-za otsutsviya sredstv," *Gazeta yuga*, (April 21, 2005), <http://www.gazetayuga.ru/archive/2005/16.htm>. Although to some extent, the growth in the number of mosques is not a direct indication of the growth of Islamic belief, since some official muftis build mosques in anticipation of worshippers or as a way to attract funding, nevertheless, there is a rough correlation.

25. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 254–56.

26. See "'Polufabrikat' S. Kazanova schitaet musulman 'nebmnyaemymi i 'sektantami,'" *Islam.ru* (February 28, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-02-28/#7440>.

27. For example, on August 30, 2001, the official Russian news service, Interfax, reported that the leaders and people of Kabardino-Balkaria on August 30 were marking the eightieth anniversary of their "statehood" granted by the then young Soviet regime and the 444th anniversary of their 1557 "union" with Russia. *RFE/RL, Newslines* 5, no. 166 (August 31, 2001).

28. Although Kabardinian society included tribal, clan, and feudal features, its most pivotal feature was a nine-class structure, ranging from princes to slaves. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide*, 195.

29. Bilal Laipanov, "Islam v istorii i samosoznanii karachaevskogo naroda," in *Islam v Evrazii: sovremennye etnicheskie i esteticheskie kontseptsii sunnitskogo Islam, ikh transformatsiya v massovom soznanii i vyrazhenie v iskusstve musulmanskikh narodov Rossii*, ed. M. V. Iordan, R. G. Kuzeev, and S. M. Chervonnaya, 170–98 (Moscow: Progress-Traditsiya, 2001).

30. Initially, during the Russian civil war of 1918–21, Muslims of the North Caucasus declared an independent state, the United Mountain Republic. In the course of the civil war, the Mountain Republic was incorporated into Bolshevik Russia by force. Lenin's promise of self-determination to Russia's national minorities, one that was specifically made to the Muslims as well, was shown to have been a tactic for seizing power, not a strategy for building a new state or brave new world. The Mountain Republic was replaced by the Bolsheviks in January 1920 with the Mountain (Gorskaya) Autonomous Republic (GAR) by decree of the Soviet Central Executive Committee on the recommendation of the Stalin's Commissariat of Nationalities. Following Dagestan, Kabarda was separated from the GAR on September 21, 1921, and established as an autonomous oblast' (AO). In 1922, the Balkar and Karachaev-Cherkessia AOs were carved out of the GAR.

31. "Mezhnatsionalnyie konflikty glavnaya ugroza edinstvu," *Obozrevatel—Rossiya segodnya: Realnyi shans*, [http://www.nasledie.ru/oboz/N21-24\\_94/013.htm](http://www.nasledie.ru/oboz/N21-24_94/013.htm).

32. In addition to the three main Adygei-Abkhazian or Circassian peoples and the Abazins, the Iber-Caucasian linguistic group includes the Chechens, Avars, Lezghins, Dardhins, Ingush, Laks, Tabasarans, Rutuls, Tsakhurs, and Aguls. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide*, 148–49.

33. "Cherkess" is a name of Turkish origin for the three groups. "Kabard" is not an ethnic group, but the local geographical designation. The traditional English-language designation is "Circassian." Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 190, 197–98.

34. On this and the obstacles precluding the success of any such Adygei national project, see Yu. M. Kobishchanov, "Muslulmane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musulmane i



russkie-muslimane,” in *Musulmane izmneyayushcheysya Rossii*, ed. Yu. M. Kobishchanov, 61–112 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002).

35. Kobishchanov, “Muslul’ mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul’ mane i russkie-musli’ mane,” 96.

36. Approximately 90 percent of Russia’s Balkars live in the KBR, a slightly lesser concentration in the republic than that of the Kabards, who are almost entirely placed within the KBR. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 201–2.

37. Kobishchanov, “Muslul’ mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul’ mane i russkie-musli’ mane,” 72–74; and Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 148. One reliable version of the Balkar and Karachai peoples’ origins holds that they lie in the Alan state (Alania is the Ossetians’ preferred title for the Republic of North Ossetia), which emerged and expanded in the North Caucasus from the fifth and sixth centuries to the thirteenth century and was made up of two basic ethnocultural components: the Karachai-Balkar and Oset-Digor. Laipanov, “Islam v istorii i samosoznanii karachaevskogo naroda,” 174.

38. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 201–4.

39. “V KBR pominayut zhertv depotatsii Balkarskogo naroda,” *Islam.ru* (March 9, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-03-09/#7540>.

40. Rajan Menon, “Russia’s Quagmire: On Ending the Standoff in Chechnya,” *Boston Review*, Summer 2004, <http://www.bostonreview.net/>.

41. Aleksandr Tsipko, “The Weaknesses and Shortcomings of Putin’s State Reforms,” *Jamestown Foundation Prism* 6, no. 10, (October 2000).

42. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 159, 202.

43. Liz Fuller, “Balkars Launch New Campaign for Their Own Republic,” *RFE/RL Russian Political Weekly* 5, no. 22 (June 3, 2005).

44. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 195. There is a small community of Christian Kabards in Mozdok and the vicinity in North Ossetia. Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire*, 199.

45. The urban population’s percentage of the overall population peaked in the KBR in 1992 at 481,000 (61.4 percent) and declined steadily to 452,400 by 2000 (57.2 percent), while the overall population increased during the same period from 784,000 in 1992 to 791,600 in 2000. According to the October 2002 census results, the urban population’s share of the overall KBR population fell to 56.6 percent. For the 2002 census results for KBR, see “Chislennost naseleniya KBR,” *Elbrusoid.ru*, <http://www.elbrusoid.ru/content/kbr/p2688.shtml>. For previous years, see “Demografiya,” *Elbrusoid.ru*, <http://www.elbrusoid.ru/content/kbr/p524.shtml>.

46. Andreas Kappeler and Svetlana Chervonnaya, “Musulmanskie narody Rossii: istoricheskoe vvedenie,” in *Islam v Evrazii*, ed. Iordan, Kuzeev, and Chervonnaya, 98–119.

47. The Russia-KBR power-sharing treaty can be found in M. N. Gobuglo, *Federalizm vlasti i vlasti federalizma* (Moscow: IntelTekh, 1997), 252–58.

48. Nikolai Petrov, “Razdelennyi suverenitet po-rossiiski: vzaimootnosheniya Moskvyy i regionov,” in *Poiski alternative dlya Gruzii i Abkhazii*, ed. B. Koppiters, D. Darchiashvili, and N. Akaba, 133–71 (Moscow: Ves Mir, 1999).

49. Altogether, the KBR’s treaty enumerated twenty-three rights under exclusive KBR jurisdiction, whereas Kazan’s treaty gave it only fifteen, and Bashkiria’s treaty gave Ufa only eighteen. Although Tatarstan was referred to in its treaty as “a state united with the Russian Federation” that conducted its own international affairs, the KBR was defined as “a state in the Russian Federation” without the right to conduct international affairs. Gobuglo, *Federalizm vlasti i vlasti federalizma*, 247–49, 253–55, 260–61.

50. Gobuglo, *Federalizm vlasti i vlasti federalizma*, 254.

51. Hunter, *Islam in Russia*, 272 and Petrov, “Razdelennyi suverenitet po-rossiiski: vzaimootnosheniya Moskvyy i regionov,” 137.

52. In a survey of Russian experts, the KBR was ranked eighty-fifth of eighty-eight

Russian regions (Chechnya not included in the survey) on its overall level of democracy in the period from 1991 to 2001. For information about the different levels of democratization in the national republics and the nonnational "Russian" regions, see Nikolai Petrov's detailed analysis in "Po rezul'tatam issledovaniia Permskaya Oblast' okazalas' demokratichee Moskvyy i Sankt Peterburga," *Regions.ru* (October 16, 2002), <http://www.regions.ru/>. In an index including various indicators of electoral democracy from 1999–2002, it ranked last of eighty-eight regions (Chechnya again not included). From an unpublished manuscript by Nikolai Petrov, "Democracy in Russia's Regions" in *The White Book of Russian Democracy*, ed. Michael McFaul and Nikolai Petrov (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, 2004). In January 2001, the Moscow-based Glasnost Defense Fund rated the KBR eighty-second out of eighty-seven regions. Chechnya and Ingushetiya were excluded from the study. *RFE/RL Russian Federation Report* 3, no. 5 (January 31, 2001).

53. Kokov was and remains the republic's human rights ombudsman, heading its Human Rights Committee. Lyudmilla Maratova, "Kabardino-Balkariya President Continues to Influence Judicial System," *EastWest Institute Russian Regional Report* 7, no. 26 (September 3, 2003).

54. "Mezhnatsionalnyie konflikty glavnyia ugroza edinstvu."

55. Sergei Markedonov, "Kabardino-Balkariya kak model dlia sborki RF," *Kavkaz-Forum—Rekonstruktsiia Chechni* (June 14, 2005), <http://www.kavkaz-forum.ru/politics/10704.html>.

56. Igor Nadeinov, "Syn protiv ottsa," *Moskovskie novosti* 27 (July 13–29, 2004): 15.

57. Robert Ortung, "Separatism Threatens Kabardino-Balkaria," *EastWest Institute Russian Regional Report* (October 27, 1996), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/researchpub/rrr/docs/rrr961227.pdf>.

58. Liz Fuller, "Balkars Launch New Campaign for Their Own Republic," *RFE/RL Russian Political Weekly* 5, no. 22 (June 3, 2005).

59. *RFE/RL Newline*, no. 225 (November 20, 1996).

60. Fuller, "Balkars Launch New Campaign for Their Own Republic."

61. Igor Rotar, "Chechen Spark, Caucasian Powderkeg," *Perspective* 10, no. 2, (November–December 1999).

62. "Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika: Lider 'Adyge Hase' gotov ko vtoromu sroku," *Regions.ru* (April 10, 2003), <http://www.regions.ru/newsarticle/news/id/1064080.html>.

63. "Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika: Chinovnik dolzhen znat' vse tri gosudarstvennykhazyky," *Regions.ru* (August 7, 2003), <http://www.regions.ru/newsarticle/news/id/1193430.html>.

64. "Mezhnatsionalnyie konflikty glavnyia ugroza edinstvu."

65. ITAR-TASS (December 30, 2004).

66. Fatima Tlisova, "Zemlya nevoli," *Novaya gazeta* 41 (June 9, 2005), <http://2005.novaya gazeta.ru/nomer/2005/41n/n41n-s27.shtml>.

67. In March 2003, Ataman of the Prokhladnyii Cossack community, Mikhail Koncharenko, managed to get his Cossacks to promise to refrain from calls for redrawing the North Caucasus's borders. However, the same Cossacks rejected a proposal to accept status as a "subethnos" of the ethnic Russians. See "Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika: Kazaki ne khotyat byt' subetnosom," *Regions.ru* (March 6, 2003), <http://www.regions.ru/newsarticle/news/id/1021026.html>.

68. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 96.

69. Chief mufti of the KBR Shafiq Pshikhachev cites this as the first appearance of Wahhabist terrorists in the KBR, and the origins of the secret organization of Wahhabist structures for a new Islamist regime in selected cities and villages later on. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 257–58.

70. See Gordon M. Hahn, "The Rise of Russia's Islamist Revolutionary Terrorist Network," unpublished paper available on request from [GordonHahn@fulbrightweb.org](mailto:GordonHahn@fulbrightweb.org).

71. On the details of the establishment and operation of Basaev's camps, see the declassified version of the top secret U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report, "Intelligence Information Report/Swift Knight—Usama Ben Laden's Current and Historical Activities," (October 1998, released October 30, 2004); and Valerii Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhenom konflikte: Etnografiya chechenskoi voiny* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), 297–303.

72. Basaev himself stressed the ethnic diversity of the terrorists who seized Beslan's School No. 1, noting that "twelve Chechens, two Chechen women, nine Ingush, three Russians, two Arabs, two Ossetians, a Tatar, a Kabard, and a Guran" took part in seizing the hostages. "Abdallakh Shamil: 'Operatsiya Nord-Vest v Beslane,'" *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (September 17, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2004/09/17/25985.shtml>.

73. Basaev, after a month-long course of medical treatment in Krasnodar Krai, reportedly married a Kuban Cossack woman there. Chechen authorities rejected the report as propaganda. "Separatisty utverzhdayut, chto Basaev zhenilsya," *Kavkazskii uzel* (February 23, 2005), <http://www.kavkaz.memo.ru/newstext/news/id/771121.html>.

74. See "'Tsentrmskom' prodolzhaet deistvovat," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (May 2, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/05/02/33401.shtml>.

75. For a brief summary, although perhaps slightly exaggerated interpretation of the meeting and the constitutional changes, see Aleksandr Ignatenko, "Vakhkhabitskoe kvazigosudarstvo," *Russkii Zhurnal*, <http://www.russ.ru/publish/96073701>, citing the Chechen militants' Web site *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (September 10, 2002). The author's attempts in September 2005 to find the item cited by Ignatenko at the Chechen militants' Web site *Kavkaz-Tsentr* produced no results. Ignatenko also refers to an Internet videoclip of the meeting.

76. "Prezident ChRI Sheik Abdul-Khalim. Kto On?" *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 12, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/03/12/31285.shtml>.

77. Ignatenko, "Vakhkhabitskoe kvazigosudarstvo." Again, this item was no longer in the site's archive by fall 2005. See also *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (October 8, 2002).

78. *Utro.ru* (March 16, 2004), <http://www.utro.ru/>.

79. In a revealing June 2005 interview with Radio Liberty, Sadulaev claimed that shortly before his death, Maskhadov had reinstated Basaev to the ChRI Shura from which he had resigned shortly after he claimed responsibility for the October 2002 Nord-Ost theatre hostage-taking in central Moscow. "A.-Kh. Sadulaev: 'Obeshaem russkim voinu do pobednogo kontsa,'" *Otveti Prezidenta ChRI Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev na voprosy korrespondentov radio 'Svoboda,' Kavkaz Tsentr*, (July 6, 2005) <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/07/06/35833.shtml>.

80. For the interview with Ichkeria Republic President Aslan Maskhadov and Chairman of the Shariat Committee of Ichkeria Republic's State Defense Committee Abdul-Khalim (Sadulaev), see "'My perenosim voinu na territoriyu vraga. . .,'" *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, (August 1, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2004/08/01/24101.shtml>.

81. Interview with Maskhadov and Khalim, "'My perenosim voinu na territoriyu vraga.'"

82. Interview with Maskhadov and Khalim, "'My perenosim voinu na territoriyu vraga.'"

83. He stated: "I do not think there is a detachment on Chechnya's territory that would ignore my order. In my opinion, there are no such units even on the territories of Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkariya, and Karachaevo-Cherkessiya. These are not empty words, but reality. All combat detachments on Chechnya's territory and in neighboring republics are subordinated to the Chechen Resistance." From the Information-Analytical Center under the President of ChRI, March 3, 2005, as cited in *Chechen Press* (March 4, 2005), <http://chechenpress.co.uk/index.shtml>.

84. "Prezident Maskhadov priostanovil voinu," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (February 3, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/02/03/29846.shtml/>.

85. Basaev's high profile participation in the ceasefire also casts a strong shadow of doubt over its purpose having been to promote the possibility of peace, because Basaev has always rejected negotiating with the Russians. Thus, there are less benign interpretations of the purpose behind this move. One interpretation made by pro-Russian sources

was that it could have been an attempt to give the Islamist network an opportunity to marshal its resources toward preparations for a future wave of guerilla and terrorist operations. Another possible explanation is that Russian forces had moved in on someone or something important to the Chechens, and the latter sought to dissipate their energies. Indeed, one week after Mashkhadov's ceasefire term had expired, so did he at the hands of Russian forces. In short, there is a question as to whether the Chechens were as interested in talks with the Russians as they were in regaining points lost with the international community at Beslan, especially as no other concrete proposals came with the unilateral ceasefire. "Prezident Maskhadov priostanovil voynu."

86. Indeed, Maskhadov and Basaev seemed on very friendly terms in a photograph showing the two men seated together published on the *Kavkaz-Tsentr* Web site along with the ceasefire announcement. See "Prezident Maskhadov priostanovil voynu."

87. "Maskhadov za mir, Putin za voynu," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 5, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/03/05/31101.shtml>.

88. The Chechen rebel's Web site reported he was born in 1967. "Prezident ChRI Sheik Abdul-Khalim. Kto On?" *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, (March 12, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/03/12/31285.shtml>. See also *Interfax* (March 10, 2005).

89. "V Chechnya poyavilsya preemnik Maskhadova—na saite chechenskih separatistov 'Kavkaz-Tsentr novym liderom boevikov nazval Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev,'" *Ekho Moskvy* (March 10, 2005), [http://www.echo.msk.ru/news/\\_236585.html](http://www.echo.msk.ru/news/_236585.html).

90. Interview with Maskhadov and Khalim, "My perenosim voynu na territoriyu vraga."

91. Nataliya Lopashenko, director of the Saratov branch of the Center for Transnational Crime and Corruption at American University in Washington, DC, provided this data in a presentation in Togliatti, Samara Oblast in April 2004. Her report was excerpted in *Russian Regional Report* 9, no. 17 (September 17, 2004).

92. *RFE/RL Newsline*, (July 24, 2001). However, in 2004, the federal government adopted a new law that put some restrictions on the locations where demonstrations could occur and established the rules for registering planned demonstrations with government bodies.

93. Valerii Kalabugin, "Severnyie kadry ne prizhilis na yuge," *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (July 2, 2004), 5.

94. The State Council was created as an advisory body composed of the then eighty-nine regions' chief executives as compensation for their loss of seats in the upper house of the Federal Assembly, the Federation Council, after Putin reorganized it.

95. Pavel Isaev, "GosSovet obsudil kontseptsiyu reformy, predlozhennoi komissiei D. Kozaka," *Rossiiskii regionalnyi byulleten* 4, no. 20, (November 4, 2002).

96. Igor Nadeinov, "Syn protiv ottsa."

97. See the KBR Web site, *Elbrusoid.ru*, <http://www.elbrusoid.ru/content/kbr/p20934.shtml>.

98. Election results from the Russian Central Election Commission Web site, <http://www.cikrf.ru>.

99. Hunter, *Islam in Russia*, 99. A figure of 46 percent of the population living below the poverty line was cited in 2001. See Lyudmilla Maratova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Prepares to Re-elect Unpopular President," *EastWest Institute Russian Regional Report* 6, no. 34 (October 3, 2001).

100. *RFE/RL Russian Federation Report* 2, no. 9 (March 7, 2001).

101. Hunter, *Islam in Russia*, 100–1.

102. Lyudmila Maratova, "Kokov Lacks Ideas on Fixing Kabardino-Balkaria Economy," *EastWest Institute Russian Regional Report* 7, no. 15 (April 24, 2002).

103. Maratova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Prepares to Re-elect Unpopular President."

104. Lyudmila Maratova, "Kokov Lacks Ideas on Fixing Kabardino-Balkariya Economy."

105. *Kabardino-Balkarskaya pravda*, November 1, 2000, cited in Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 258–59.

106. Valerii Kokov, "Arifmetika sotsialnogo spokoistviya," *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (February 15, 2001), 3.

107. Kokov, "Arifmetika sotsialnogo spokoistviya."

108. On the film see Yurii Akbashev, "Dokumentalnyy film vyzvalvozmushcheniye," Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) *Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 55 (October 27, 2000), [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau\\_200010\\_55\\_04\\_rus.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_200010_55_04_rus.txt). For information on the protests, see Zarina Kanukova, "Otvét Adygeya," *IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 57 (November 11, 2000), [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau\\_2000\\_11\\_57\\_01\\_rus.txt](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_2000_11_57_01_rus.txt).

109. Anna Matveeva, *The North Caucasus: Russia's Fragile Borderland* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1999), 37.

110. The other new members were: Bashkortostan President Rakhimov, Jewish Autonomous Oblast head Nikolai Volkov, Karelia Republic head Sergei Katanandov, Yaroslavl Governor Anatolii Lisitsyn, Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhaev, and Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug Governor Aleksandr Filipenko. RFE/RL, *Newsline* 5, no. 50, (March 13, 2001).

111. The delegation to the OIC, at which Putin proposed Russia's joining the organization under observer status, also included the presidents of Chechnya, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan as well as Muslim officials in the federal government. RFE/RL, *Newsline*, October 17, 2003.

112. For example, in January 2002, before the rise of the combat jamaat in the KBR, Kokov was ranked sixth among Russia's eighty-nine regional leaders. RFE/RL, *Russian Federation Report* 4, no. 13 (April 10, 2002).

113. Shamil Basayev vystupil, chto delaetsya," *Kommersant Daily*, (July 5, 2004), 4.

114. "DUM Kabardino-Balkarii ishet puti k dialogu s oppozitsionnymi imamami," *Islam.ru* (December 28, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2004-12-28/#6932>.

115. The Spiritual Center is replete with a mosque, a fifteen-hundred-seat auditorium, a wedding hall, conference hall, library, book preservation laboratory, and printing press. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 255.

116. "DUM Kabardino-Balkarii ishet puti k dialogu s oppozitsionnymi imamami," *Islam.ru* (December 28, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2004-12-28/#6932>.

117. "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen," *Kavkaz-tsentr* (March 24, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/03/24/31762.shtml>.

118. The imams of the KChR already had been requesting this for six months. Milrad Fatullaev, "Muftiyaty vstayut na kazennoe dovolstvie," *Nezavisimaya gazeta* (January 31, 2005), [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2005-01-31/9\\_caucasus.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2005-01-31/9_caucasus.html); and "Imamy 3 respublik Severnogo Kavkaza prosyat vlasti vzyat' ikh na sodержanie," *Islam.ru* (January 31, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/>.

119. *Islam.ru* (February 9, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-02-09/#7266> and "Selskie imamy KBR nauchatsya rabotat s prikhozhanami mecheti," *Islam.ru* (February 16, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-02-16/#7342>.

120. "Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika: V Prokhladnenskoj shkole nacali prepodavat' 'Osnovy pravoslavnoi kultury,'" *Regions.ru* (September 26, 2003), <http://www.regions.ru>.

121. "Shkolniki Kabardino-Balkarii budet izuchat' Islam," *Islam.ru* (August 23, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/>; and "Kabardino-Balkarskaya Respublika: Pravoslavnyaya tserkov' odobрила vvedenie v shkolnuyu programm novogo predmeta," *Regions.ru* (August 18, 2005), <http://www.regions.ru/>.

122. *Regions.ru*, October 11, 2004 cited in "KBR: veryushchie i siloviki poka govoryat na raznykh yaykakh," *Islam.ru* (October 11, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/> and in the author's archive.

123. "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen."

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. Fatullaev, "Muftiyaty vstayut na kazennoe dovolstvie"; and "Imamy 3 respublik

Severnogo Kavkaza prosyat vlasti vzyat' ikh na sodержanie," *Islam.ru* (January 3, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/>.

127. See "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen." For his follow-up interview see "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen (prodolzhenie)," *Kavkaz-sentr* (March 25, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/03/25/31816.shtml>.

128. See his comment in Fatima Tlisova, "Islamist Group Destroyed in Kabardino-Balkariya," *IWPR Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 272, (February 3, 2005).

129. It read in part: "We want to declare that you, 'Yarmuk,' have nothing at all to do with Islam and the republic's Muslims. . . . You act according to your own personal motives and do not consider the opinions of the Islamic population. Thus your words are not valid among Muslims. For us, you are simply bandits. Last night, four brave Muslims who were fighting against the spread of narcotics were murdered. With that you committed a grave sin—killing of a Muslim for the sake of personal gain. . . . We know who you are and will look for you until the end of your days." Charles Gurin, "Authorities Suspect Islamists Murdered Drug Agents in Kabardino-Balkaria," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1, no. 149 (December 17, 2004), <http://www.jamestownfoundation.org/>.

130. Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 259.

131. Irina L. Babich, "Ideologicheskii fundament vozrozhdeniya obychnogo i musul'manskogo prava v Kabardino-Balkarii," *IslaminkBR.ru*, <http://www.islaminkbr.com/kbr/in.php?mode=004>.

132. See the interview with Igor Dobaev, "Pro vakhkhabitov i ne tolko," *Religare.ru* (December 23, 2004), <http://www.religare.ru/>.

133. Ruslan Odigov was detained by Russian security forces in 2000, accused of supporting the Chechen rebellion, and physically abused for two weeks before being released. He then absconded to Afghanistan where, after initially being distrusted by the Taliban, he was captured by the Northern Alliance, although he insists he was not involved in fighting. Back in the KBR after Guantanamo, Odigov claimed he and other supporters of Mukozhev were on the authorities' extremist list. RFE/RL, *Newsline* 7, no. 60 (March 28, 2003); RFE/RL, *Russian Federation Report* 4, no. 14 (April 17, 2002); and "Russia's 'Taliban' Faces Uneasy Future after Guantanamo Torment," *AFP* (August 1, 2004).

134. Fatima Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror," *IWPR's Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 255 (September 29, 2004).

135. Alexander Raskin and Sergei Kuklev, "Chechnya Metastasis," *Newsweek Russia*, no. 1 (January 14, 2005).

136. "V MVD KBR nedoumevayut, pochemu musul'mane prodolzhayut molit'sya u zakrytoi mecheti," *Islam.ru* (April 27, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-04-27/#8075>; and Raskin and Kuklev, "Chechnya Metastasis."

137. The order also categorically banned the organization of study for school and preschool children in mosques, appointed an assistant (Khasan Tutovich Khalishov) to the head imam of the city of Chegem to be responsible for enforcing the new regime, and assigned the monitoring of the mosque to the Chegem city administration deputy head. When Chegem's Muslims petitioned the city's prosecutor, he ruled the city administration's order a violation of the Russian constitution. However, the city issued a "new" order, which differed from the original only in that it reduced the working hours of the mosque by half. R. B. Nakhushiev, "O pravovom polozhenii musul'man v Kabardino-Balkarii," *IslaminkKBR.ru* (April 5, 2005), <http://www.islaminkbr.com/kbr/in.php?mode=002>.

138. Nakhushiev, "O pravovom polozhenii musul'man v Kabardino-Balkarii."

139. NTV's Namedni Program and Gazeta, July 19, 2004, cited in "Martial Law Declared in Kabardino-Balkaria," *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1, no. 63 (July 30, 2004).

140. Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror."

141. See "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen."

142. Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror."

143. For the results of the research conducted by scholars from the KBR government's Institute of Humanitarian Studies and the Russian Academy of Science's Kabardino-Balkaria Science Center and Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, see Nakhushev, "O pravovom polozhenii musul'man v Kabardino-Balkarii." This article was based on another one written by one of the leaders of the field expedition, see Valerii Kazharov, "Etnograficheskaya ekspeditsiya poproblemam islama v KBR," *Gazeta Yuga* (June 5, 2003).

144. Musa, described as a spokesman for the "Initiative Group of Muslims of the KBR" (Initsiativnaya gruppa musulman KBR or IGM KBR) and a KBR resident, is likely associated with or even a member of the Yarmuk Jamaat, because he was laying out what had become a central point of Yarmuk statements at the time—that jihad had become obligatory for all Muslims in the KBR and the North Caucasus. See "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen."

145. Raskin and Kuklev, "Chechnya Metastasis."

146. By November 2000, KBR Chief Prosecutor Anatolii Tkhaapsoev asserted there were 382 militant Wahhabis in the KBR, and 167 in Nalchik. For August 2000 information about KBR DUM Chairman Pshikhachev's August 2000 warning and the Council of Muftis of Russia's June 2000 warning regarding the presence of militant Wahhabism in the republic, see, respectively, "Vakhkhabizm—eto otritsanie narodnykh obychev. Otvet mufti KBR Shafiga Pshikhacheva na zayavlenie predstavitelei 'musulmanskikh dzhamatov,'" *Severnyi Kavkaz* 6, no. 512 (February 2001); and Kobishchanov, "Muslul'mane Rossii, korennyye rossiiskie musul'mane i russkie-musli'mane," 257–59.

147. Timur Samedov, "Nad Nalchikom navisla 'oranzhevaya revolyutsiya,'" *Kommer-sant Daily* (August 20, 2004), 3.

148. Federal prosecutors' investigation into the March 2001 car bomb explosions in Mineralnye Vody, Yessentuki, and the KChR and the 1999 apartment bombings in Moscow and Volgograd that helped spark the second Chechen war led to the arrests of eleven alleged Islamic militants and reportedly uncovered a radical Islamist network that the federal prosecutor-general's office stated was planning armed seizures of power in both republics. Timofei Borisov, "Pervorot gotovili amiry," *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (August 18, 2001), 1; and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 5, no. 156 (August 17, 2001). Newspapers reported that senior security officials in the republics, however, had claimed they had no idea to what the statement referred. See *Izvestiya* and *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on August 17, 2001, cited in RFE/RL, *Newsline* 5, no. 156 (August 17, 2001).

149. See Aleksandra Larintseva, Timur Samedov, and Olga Allenova, "Koltso kavkazskoi natsionalnosti," *Kommersant-Vlast* (September 29–October 5, 2003), 20; Valerii Khatazhukov, "Kabardino-Balkariya Crackdown on Islamists," *IWPR's Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 199 (August 2003); and Samedov, "Nad Nalchikom navisla 'oranzhevaya revolyutsiya.'" Basaev's presence was revealed to police and security officers during testimony by Zarema Mahadzueva, a Chechen woman who had attempted to blow herself up in Moscow. *Russkiy kurier*, August 2003, cited in "Martial Law Declared in Kabardino-Balkaria." In a November 2004 interview, Basaev himself claimed that he is constantly on the move and mentioned stays in Kabardino-Balkariya. RFE/RL, *Caucasus Report* (November 5, 2004).

150. See the interview with FSB Lieutenant General Ivan Mironov in *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (September 10, 2002).

151. Tlisova, "Islamist Group Destroyed in Kabardino-Balkariya."

152. According to Valery Kanukov, chief prosecutor in the Elbrus district, Ataev was one of the best students at Kendelen's school, before being accepted to Kabardino-Balkaria University. Tlisova, "Islamist Group Destroyed in Kabardino-Balkariya." Born in 1974, Ataev reportedly distinguished himself in Gelayev's eyes through his exceptional organizational abilities and good physical condition. Timur Samedov, "Podozrevaemyie iz 'Yarmuka'," *Kommersant Daily* (December 15, 2004), 4; Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror," Ksenya Solyanskaya, "Oni vozneslis na nebo," *Gazeta.ru* (Janu-

ary 28, 2005), [http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/01/28/oa\\_146501.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/01/28/oa_146501.shtml); and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 21 (February 2, 2005).

153. Atayev's telephone number was recorded on the SIM card of one of two mobile telephones discovered in the house in Baksan where Basaev had been hiding and on a mobile telephone found at the scene of the fighting near Chegem. It maintained a link to him through an inhabitant of a Nalchik suburban settlement of Khasan. Samedov, "Podozrevaemye iz 'Yarmuka.'"

154. *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 10, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/>; and "Dzhamaat 'Yarmuk': Prinyat plan boevykh operatsii v KBR na 2005 g.," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 12, 2005), <http://www.kavkaz.org.uk/russ/content/2005/03/12/31292.shtml>.

155. Timur Samedov, "Prishol, uvidel, i ushol," *Kommersant Daily* (August 20, 2004), 1 and 6; *ITAR-TASS* (August 19, 2004); Marina Chernysheva, "Militants Suspected of Killing Tourists Slain in Kabardino-Balkaria," *ITAR-TASS* (August 20, 2004); Vadim Rechkalov, "Eti mestnyie rebyaty, no yavno pobyvali v Chechne," *Izvestiya* (August 20, 2004); and *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, August 20, 2004, cited in RFE/RL, *Newsline* 8, no. 159 (August 20, 2004).

156. Indeed, after a January 2005 operation that ended in killing Ataev (a Balkar), his family, and five other members of the jamaat, an unnamed KBR official involved in planning the raid said that there was a thirty-six-hour delay in launching the operation because the militants were Balkars, and the republic's leadership feared their deaths would have a negative effect on interethnic relations in the KBR. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, January 28, 2005, cited in RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 18 (January 28, 2005). Two other insurgents killed during the first major skirmish with Yarmuk fighters near Chegem in summer 2004 were Balkars from Kendelen. *Rossiiskaya gazeta* (December 16, 2004). However, the insurgency network in Kabardino-Balkaria, out of which Yarmuk apparently emerged, was originally established by two Kabard brothers who first arranged for Basaev to visit the KBR and were soon killed. Andrei Smirnov, "Who Is Behind Yarmuk Jamaat: Balkars or Kabardins?" *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, no. 23 (February 2, 2005).

157. Timur Samedov, "Podozrevaemye iz 'Yarmuka,'" *Kommersant* (December 15, 2004): 4; Fatima Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror," *IWPR'S Caucasus Reporting Service*, no. 255 (September 29, 2004); Ksenya Solyanskaya, "Oni vozneslis na nebo," *Gazeta.ru* (January 28, 2005), [http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/01/28/oa\\_146501.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/2005/01/28/oa_146501.shtml); and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 21 (February 2, 2005).

158. Yarmuk recently published a letter on December 19, 2004, from a group of Kabards supporting its activities. Also, Yarmuk praised Atayev's ethnic Russian wife, Olesya, as a martyr for fighting Russian forces to the death during the siege in which her husband was killed. Andrei Smirnov, "Who Is Behind Yarmuk Jamaat: Balkars or Kabardins?" *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor* 2, no. 23 (February 2, 2005).

159. Yarmuk claims that Russian security forces posted a letter supposedly from Yarmuk claiming it was planning a Beslan-style siege of a Kabard school. Smirnov, "Who Is Behind Yarmuk Jamaat: Balkars or Kabardins?"

160. Dzhamaat 'Yarmuk': Prinyat plan boevykh operatsii v KBR na 2005g," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 12, 2005), <http://www.kavkaz.org.uk/russ/content/2005/03/12/31292.shtml>. KBR MVD officials also noted that two of those killed were would-be *shakhidki* female martyrs being trained to conduct suicide bombings, one of them a resident of the KChR. Solyanskaya, "Oni vozneslis na nebo."

161. Jeremy Page, "Rebel Attacks Spread from Chechnya," *Times* (UK) (January 28, 2005).

162. Andrew McGregor, "The Jamaat Movement in Kabardino-Balkaria," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 3, no. 7 (April 7, 2005).

163. See Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2004); and Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003), 22–23.

164. Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen."



165. Ibid.

166. Musa states: "According to Shari'ah, groups of mujahadin, depending on the scale and type of scheduled operations planned, should coordinate their actions and notify one another about them whenever possible. If individual combat actions are carried out, coordination is not obligatory. If, however, carrying out a medium-scale operation requires the involvement of a group of mujahadin, they should seek advice from the group's amir, who makes the decision and acts according to the circumstances. Carrying out major operations, which require the participation of two or more groups, is impossible without coordination of actions. Shari'ah envisages the creation of an advisory body headed by one amir and two of his naibs. The general assembly of the coordination council (Shura) with the participation of the amirs of the groups or their naibs will be held as needed. We are not murderers or bandits. Therefore, the actions of each mujahadin should meet the requirement of Islamic law, Shari'ah. To ensure this, and to resolve controversial issues that might arise, a Shari'ah oversight body should be created under the Coordination Council (Shura) according to the kada'u-d-darura principle (court as needed, or military tribunal)." See "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelyen (prodolzhenie)."

167. Members of Yarmuk already had been charged with the July 2004 murder of tourists in Stavropol Krai. Samedov, "Prishol, uvidel, i ushol," *ITAR-TASS* (August 19, 2004); and Chernysheva, "Militants Suspected of Killing Tourists Slain in Kabardino-Balkaria."

168. Two militants and two members of the security forces were killed and four police were wounded. One report had it that the band had been targeting the *siloviki*, in this case the KBR's MVD chief Lieutenant General Khachim Shogenov, whose dacha is not far from the scene of the battle. Other police sources said that ten kilograms of TNT found in the group's car may have been intended for a terrorist act at Nalchik airport. Samedov, "Prishol, uvidel, i ushol," *ITAR-TASS* (August 19, 2004); Chernysheva, "Militants Suspected of Killing Tourists Slain in Kabardino-Balkaria," *ITAR-TASS* (August 20, 2004); Rechkalov, "Eti mestnyie rebyaty, no yavno pobывali v Chechne"; and *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, August 20, 2004, cited in RFE/RL, *Newsline* 8, no. 159 (August 20, 2004).

169. Roman Kiloyev, "'Day of Ingushetia' for Kabardino-Balkaria," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (August 22, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/>.

170. The statement was made in clearly Islamist terms: "We may die but others will follow. The Muslims of the Caucasus will live on. Finally, we pay homage to God, the Lord of the worlds. We ask for His help and pray for His forgiveness. God is Great!" It also denied KBR police allegations that elements from "Yarmuk" were responsible for the murder of tourists in Stavropol. "Kabardino-Balkarskii Jamaat Obyavlyayet Jihad," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (August 23, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/>.

171. The population was reportedly on edge in fear of another terrorist act and kindergartens, schools, and colleges were frequently closed in response to that fear. Parents stopped sending their children to school. Marianna Kalmykova, a journalist and mother in Nalchik who kept her son away from school no. 2 for several days, stated: "(E)verybody is waiting for a terrorist attack," she said. Attendance was so low because of fears of an attack that there were no classes for days. Tlisova, "Kabardino-Balkariya Fears Spread of Terror."

172. "Nal'chik. Dzhamaaty sozdayutsya uzhe i v mestakh lisheniya svobody," *Regions.ru* (September 15, 2004), <http://www.regions.ru/>.

173. "Administratsiya Nal'chika razreshaet lish' odnoi meechti goroda," *Islam.ru* (September 15, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/>.

174. "Kabardino-Balkariya: vlasti ugrozhayut 'Beslanom,' musul'mane zhaluyutsya na pritesneniya," *Islam.ru* (September 21, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/>.

175. "Deistviya silovikov na Severnom Kavkaze vyzyvayut ozabochennost' musul'man," *Islam.ru* (October 18, 2004), <http://www.islam.ru/> and the author's archive.

176. "Zhurnalisty zayavlyayut o narushenii prav cheloveka," *Islam.ru* (February 24, 2005), <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-02-24/#7417>.

177. *ITAR-TASS* (December 30, 2004).
178. *ITAR-TASS*, December 16, 2004, as cited in Gurin, "Authorities Suspect Islamists Murdered Drug Agents in Kabardino-Balkaria."
179. RFE/RL, *Newsline* 8, no. 190 (October 6, 2004).
180. "Napadenie na Upravlenie Narkontrolya KBR sovershila, po versii sledstviya, gruppa 'Yarmuk,'" *Izvestiya* (December 14, 2005), <http://www.izvestia.ru/conflict/article833264> and Oleg Fochkin and Lina Panchenko, "Rasstrel s dalnym pritselom," *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* (December 15, 2004): 1–2. In the attack on the latter, MVD Colonel Mukhtar Altuyev was seriously wounded but survived. However, his sixteen-year-old son was killed in the attack. Timur Samedov, "Vakhkhabity otomstili svoemu tyuremschiku," *Kommersant Daily* (December 9, 2004): 6.
181. Gurin, "Authorities Suspect Islamists Murdered Drug Agents in Kabardino-Balkaria." Another source claimed thirty-six machine guns, one hundred thirty-six pistols, and a "large quantity of ammunition" for these was stolen. "Napadenie na Upravlenie Narkontrolya KBR sovershila, po versii sledstviya, gruppa 'Yarmuk.'" See also RFE/RL, *Newsline* (December 15–16, 2004). In a message posted on the Chechen separatist Web site *Daymohk.info* on December 14, Yarmuk claimed responsibility for the attack and claimed that, in addition to weapons, it came away with sensitive intelligence information and the addresses and hideouts of informers from among the drug addicts. "Kabardino-Balkarskii Dzhamaat Yarmuk provyol spetsoperatsiyu v Nalchike," *Daymohk.info* (December 15, 2005), <http://www.daymohk.info/cgi-bin/archieve/archieve.cgi?choice=15200412>. In a later Web site posting, a Yarmuk representative devoted considerable attention to warning potential recruits and supporters to be wary of provocateurs and informants from the Russian security services while organizing guerilla cells and operations. *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (December 16, 2004), <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/> and "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen (prodolzhenie)." This also may have been connected to the surrender to the authorities in November of four Yarmuk activists. *ITAR-TASS* (December 15, 2004).
182. It was also reported that guards opened the door casually at the sound of a familiar voice. Fochkin and Panchenko, "Chuzhie sredi svoikh," *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* (December 16, 2004): 5; and Gurin, "Authorities Suspect Islamists Murdered Drug Agents in Kabardino-Balkaria."
183. "Yarmuk Declares Jihad," *Chechnya Weekly* 6, no. 2 (January 13, 2005), <http://www.jamestown.org/>.
184. Some controversy arose as to whether Atayev's daughter was killed, whether he had a son, and whether he was killed in the siege. See Tlisova, "Islamist Group Destroyed in Kabardino-Balkariya"; *Interfax*, January 27, 2005, cited in RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 18 (January 28, 2005); Page, "Rebel Attacks Spread from Chechnya"; and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 16 (January 26, 2005).
185. The site also reported that five Russian troops were killed and ten wounded in the first four hours of the siege. "Dzhamaat 'Yarmuk': 'My prinimaem boi!'" *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (January 26, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/01/26/29537.shtml>. For Yarmuk's two subsequent warnings that jihad was now obligatory for all Muslims in the KBR and North Caucasus, see "Dzhikhad v Kabardino-Balkarii prodolzhitsya," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (February 2, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/>; RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 21 (February 2, 2005); and "Dzhikhad dlya musulman Kabardino-Balkarii obyazatelen."
186. *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 10, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/>.
187. "Dzhikhad v Kabardino-Balkarii prodolzhitsya" and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 21 (February 2, 2005).
188. "Dzhamaat 'Yarmuk': Prinyat plan boevykh operatsii v KBR na 2005 g.," *Kavkaz-Tsentr* (March 12, 2005), <http://www.kavkaz.org.uk/russ/content/2005/03/12/31292.shtml>; and "Dvum boevikam, zaderzhannym v Nalchike, predyavleny obvineniya" (May 5, 2005), [http://www.rian.ru/defense\\_safety/investigations/20050505/39936220.html](http://www.rian.ru/defense_safety/investigations/20050505/39936220.html).

189. However, Putin also rebuked Nurgaliev for referring to the militants by their preferred designation of “jamaat.” RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 34 (February 22, 2005). Muslim leaders and others have cautioned that this term simply means “community” and should not become a synonym for “militant group.” Putin’s political correctness in rhetoric here, however, cannot compensate for his heavy-handed policies.

190. Vesti newscast, RTR TV (March 16, 2005) and Channel One TV, Moscow (March 16, 2005). In a later report, *ITAR-TASS* quoted the press service: “On 15 March, the KBR MVD reported that the cache found in this operation included ninety-two detonators, ninety-two fuses for VOG-25P fragmentation rounds, one hundred seventy-one electronic explosive devices based on Casio watches using Krona batteries, two bags of electric fuses, forty-one TNT blocks, over seven hundred cartridges, and a bomb making lab was found.” *ITAR-TASS* (March 16, 2004).

191. “Grazhdanskuyu oboronu Kabardino-Balkaria perevedut v rezhim voennoro vremeni,” *Kavkaz-tsentr* (April 9, 2005), <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/04/09/32515.shtml>.

192. “‘Yarmuk’ vnov’ obezglavlen,” *Izvestiya* (April 29, 2005), <http://www.izvestia.ru/conflict/article1703491> and “V Nalchike ubit lider bandy ‘Yarmuk’ i eshyo boevika,” *Regions.ru* (April 29, 2005), <http://www.regions.ru/article/any/id/1799883.html>; Yelena Denisova, “Prikonchennyi dzhamaat,” *Smi.ru* (April 29, 2005), <http://www.smi.ru/05/04/29/3516327.html>.

193. “Dvum boevikam, zaderzhannym v Nalchike, predyavleny obvineniya” (May 5, 2005), [http://www.rian.ru/defense\\_safety/investigations/20050505/39936220.html](http://www.rian.ru/defense_safety/investigations/20050505/39936220.html). See also Yelena Denisova, “Prikonchennyi dzhamaat,” *Smi.ru*, April 29, 2005, <http://www.smi.ru/05/04/29/3516327.html>; and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 82 (May 2, 2005).

194. *Regnum.ru* cited in “Za chtenie Korana studentok-musulmanok v militsii zastavili zadirat’ yubki,” *Islam.ru*, April 20, 2005, <http://www.islam.ru/press/rus/2005-04-20/#7985>. The Chechen militants’ Web site *Kavkaz-Tsentr* did not fail to report this as well. See “Militsiya v Nalchike zastablyala musulmanok zadirat’ yubki v otmetku za chtenie Korana,” *Kavkaz-Tsentr*, April 21, 2005, <http://www.kavkazcenter.net/russ/content/2005/04/21/33024.shtml>.

195. Akhmat Shavayev, “V KBR styanuty rossiiskie okkupanty: Idut repressii protiv balkartsev,” *Chechen Press*, March 12, 2005, <http://chechenpress.co.uk/news/2005/03/12/08.shtml>.

196. Shavayev, “V KBR styanuty rossiiskie okkupanty: Idut repressii protiv balkartsev.”

197. On May 24, the KBR Supreme Court dismissed Zokaev’s brief that the municipal reform violated the Russian constitution. On May 23, the Nalchik City Court satisfied a request by the KBR prosecutor to declare as illegal and ban holding a planned referendum in which the residents of Khasanya would have voted to approve or disapprove the village’s incorporation into Nalchik. Fuller, “Balkars Launch New Campaign for Their Own Republic.”

198. Mariya Bondarenko, “Balkartsy zadumali otdelyatsya,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, May 30, 2005, [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2005-05-30/1\\_balkaria.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2005-05-30/1_balkaria.html); and RFE/RL, *Newsline* 9, no. 102 (May 31, 2005).

199. Tlisova, “Zemlya nevoli.”

200. Jean-Christophe Peuch, “North Caucasus Republics Enter Circle of Violence,” RFE/RL, February 23, 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/02/021f2f06-0c2e-41cb-be1e-2fe3d61e505d.html>.

201. See Abdu Rrakhman, “Vnov’ poteri sredi nezakonnykh bandformirovaniy v Kabardino-Balkarii,” *Samagat.com*, July 21, 2005, <http://www.camagat.com/sitebiz/arhiv/2005/07/07.21/20%20unechtojeni%20%20bandita.html>. For a similar report which emphasizes the Balkar factor, see “V Kabardino-Balkarii prokhorodit krupnaya terroristicheskaya operatsiya po ustrasheniyu Balkarskogo naroda,” *Samagat.com*, July 30, 2005, [http://www.camagat.com/sitebiz/arhiv/2005/07/07.03/terror\\_v\\_kb.html](http://www.camagat.com/sitebiz/arhiv/2005/07/07.03/terror_v_kb.html).

202. Jean-Christophe Peuch, “North Caucasus Republics Enter Circle of Violence.”

RFE/RL (February 23, 2005), <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/02/021f2f060c2e-41cb-be1e-2fe3d61e505d.html>.

203. See Gurin, "Authorities Suspect Islamists Murdered Drug Agents in Kabardino-Balkaria." In other reports, police have been quoted as saying they have information that 437 residents of the KBR are "adherents of radical Islam." See "V MVD KBR nedoumevayut, pochemu musul'mane prodolzhayut molit'sya u zakrytoi mecheti." In September 2004, senior assistant to Nalchik's chief prosecutor reported that the KBR MVD's database listed only 389 participants in "illegal armed formations," including 71 Nal'chik residents. "Nal'chik. Dzhamaaty sozdayusya uzhe i v mestakh lisheniya svobody," *Regions.ru*, September 15, 2004, <http://www.regions.ru/>.