

# Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism: Analyzing Political Violence in the North Caucasus

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## Lecture Today

- From Political Violence & Conflict to Terrorism: A Historical Survey
- Chechnya: Nationalism, Separatism, Salafism
- Russian Counter-Insurgency (CI) & Counter-Terrorism (CT) strategies
- How can analysis of political violence in the North Caucasus inform research about terrorism?

## The First War

- Lasted from 1994-1996
- Russian Tactics (Armoured Convoys, Aerial Bombardment...)
- Chechen Tactics (Separatism, Sufism...)

## The Inter-War Years, 1996-1999

- Warlordism
- Lawlessness and Rise of Criminal Groups
- Lack of External Support
- Failure to Realize Independence

## The Second War

- Lasted from 1999-2003
- Chechen Groups, networked & interwoven, to include:
  - Warlords
  - Military jamaats (inter-ethnic units)
  - Maskhadov loyalists

## Russian Command Structure

- Unified Grouping of Federal Forces or OGV: Operational Sectors (North, South, East and West)
- Counter-Terror Operations overseen by MVD, 'Regional Staff Control of CT Operations in North Caucasus'
- Includes, OMON, anti-riot police, FSB special forces, SVR Foreign Intelligence Service, Reconnaissance from the GRU main intelligence Directorate

## Chechen Approach: Traditional Low Intensity Conflict (LIC)

- Ambushes
- IEDs, targeting air-support & air-supported elements
- Low intensity warfare
- Establishment of regional support groups

## Moscow Theatre Siege



- Removal of troops from Chechnya
- Militarized nabegs (strategic hostage taking; quick, small, highly mobile raids; and targeting Russian sympathetic villages & towns) - ?
- Mass hostage-taking with suicidal intent

## Chechen Separatism

- Targeted assassinations
- IED attacks and ambushes
- Suicide attacks
- Basayev: operation 'anti-terrorism'/operation 'Boomerang'

## Russian Counter-Insurgency

- Normalization: Use of pro-Kremlin Chechen militias (Zapad as an example)
- Information War
- Zachistka (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> War)

## Countering and/or Combating Terrorism

- Mobile forces, Krontakniki
- Isolate and Eliminate (Intelligence Led Isolation of Foreign Fighters)
- Hard Responses (Assassination in Chechnya and Abroad, Counter Hostage-Taking, Counter-Financial Support Networks)

## Political Implications

- Centralization of Power
- Role of the Siloviki
- Role of Judiciary
- Culture and Policing

## Events in 2004

- Death of Abu Walid/Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev/Ruslan Gelayev
- Death of Akhmed Kadyrov
- Attack on Nazran
- Escalation of Terror Attacks in the run up to the election



## Prigorodny – Ossetia & Ingushetia 1992

- Around 2,000 killed + around 1,000 hostages
- 30,000 Ingush refugees – ethnic tension
- 1992-2004 : High concentration of arms + state of emergency
- High concentration of kidnapping, hostage-taking and criminal activities
- Continued state of emergency
- Nazran attack, June 2004

## Beslan Attack – Sept 2004 334 Civilians Killed, incl. 186 Children



## Beslan, Overview

- Third largest city/town in the Republic.
- Population, by Sept 2004, estimated at 36,000-38,000.
- N. Ossetia seen as “loyal” to Moscow & Russia.





## General Themes

- Internal Problems / “Chechenization”
- Control Media + NGOs
- Widespread use of force + Regional Instability
- Amnesty Former Fighters/Stabilization
- Regional Terrorism?
- Counter-Insurgency and Counter-Terrorism

### Analyzing Political Violence: Lessons – ***What Does This Case Teach Us About Radicalization & Rise of Terror Tactics?***

- Detailed Understanding of Chechen Culture, History, & Politics
- Centralization of Power (by Putin)
- Detailed Understanding of Russian Culture, History, & Politics
- Different Experience of Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism (CT) in Russia
- Different Political System values (esp. with emerging democracies)
- See article on IS regarding Beslan siege, raid