

Russia's Self-Imposed Calamities: The Case of Chechnya Today and Latvia in 1917

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Introduction

An astute Swedish observer of East Europe Richard Schwarz noted in 1989 that the mentality is the deciding factor for the about-to-be liberated eastern half of Europe to achieve democracy. Otherwise these countries will block their own way back to Europe. The problem was not only the communist dictatorship's heritage – the problem dated back to the independence era between the world wars and had its roots in the czarist era.

East Europe, now known as Northern and Central Europe, overcame the mentality problem in a decade that led to EU and NATO enlargement (it took several hundred years in Western Europe to put in place the conditions for democracy). For the Baltic states America's support for their integration in these organizations, as highlighted in President Clinton's speech at the Latvian Freedom Monument in Riga in 1994 was decisive and was instrumental in bringing about a "Europe united, whole and free." The question today is whether "the trick" can be done for the real Eastern Europe, the countries lying on the other side of Huntington's cultural divide.

Recent events in Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova indicate positive movement toward the goal of achieving a democracy that is – to paraphrase a famous Lenin saying on the nationalities question in Czarist Russia – not only in form but also in content. That is the challenge, but the problem is Russia. Russia is moving East, not West. By not coming to terms with its past, it is going back into its history. There are slim prospects for a "flower" or "color" revolution there, because it itself was an empire and still wants to remain a "partial empire" to the detriment of its closest neighbors.

Except among former soviet dissidents augmented by a small band of the liberal intelligentsia there has not been a paradigm shift in the inherited mentality from the czarist era. Teenagers go wild when listening to a pop star singing "I am made in the USSR", but the most painful return to the past is the war against Chechen separatism. The methods used differ little from czarist or Stalin methods and dramatically effect how Russian society is now being molded. It may even become the cause of the demise of Russia as we know it today just as Russia's

insensitivity to the Latvian national, social and economic situation after the fall of the Romanov dynasty in 1917 led to the triumph of communism in Russia. Similarly, radical Islam may play the role of communism in Russia's future.

I will compare the Latvian situation 88 years ago with the Chechen situation after the fall of communism in Russia in 1991 and show that Russia has failed to learn from its past and is repeating mistakes, which could have reverberations beyond Russian society itself. Two questions will emerge with regard to the role of the West with regard to Chechnya, mainly if, after September 11, the West has not walked into a carefully laid Putin trap that has implications in the struggle against global terrorism and, two, whether a common agreement on Chechnya can contribute to a revitalized transatlantic agenda.

The 1917 Latvian situation

In the stand-off between the Russian and Latvian governments over the wording of the common declaration between both countries that was to precede the long overdue signing and ratification of the Latvian-Russian border earlier this year, President Putin a day after meeting President Bush in Bratislava on February 24, brought up the Red Latvian Rifles and said that those who honored their assistance in maintaining the power of the Communists (Bolsheviks) should be respected. He crafted this into a paragraph by saying that those in the Baltics who think their countries lost independence after the end of World War Two should also be respected. He implied that Russia could not be blamed for the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states if the Latvians were responsible for establishing communism in Russia in the first place.

The legend of the Red Latvian Rifles and their support for Lenin is firmly rooted in Russia and Latvia even today and, in as much as the Rifles did give a decisive contribution to Lenin in both preparing the ground for the October *coup de etat*, beating down the sudden Socialist Revolutionary uprising in July 1918, and subsequently crushing the White Russian armies, then the legend corresponds to reality.

Yet Putin is selective in using this argument – the majority of the Rifles returned to Latvia after the Russian-Latvian peace treaty of 1920 holding high the Latvian national flag despite the opposition of the Latvian Communist Party located in Russia. Further, he sidesteps the question of *why* the Rifles supported Lenin: Lenin pronounced that Czarist Russia was a prison house of nationalities and, unlike Alexander Kerensky, the leader of short-lived democratic Russia, not to mention the generals and royalty leading the White Russia armed forces in the Civil War, who wanted nothing but a return to imperial Russia, he offered a new deal to the oppressed nationalities. Lenin supported various forms of statehood for them.

There are several observations to note in a complicated set of circumstances stemming from the Russian revolution of February 1917 that have relevance today. Imperial Russia failed to consolidate democratic reform after the first revolution in 1905. The suppression of the revolution in Latvia 100 years ago was particularly brutal – a scorched earth policy, torture, and summary executions even though the Latvian revolutionaries demanded nothing more than autonomy. But to “flatten”

the Latvian provinces became the obsession of czar Nicholas II. If a European Court of Human Rights had existed then in Strasbourg, then Russia would have been found guilty on a thousand counts. Needless to say the suppression came back as a boomerang in 1917. The soldiers in the Latvian Rifles regiments were the sons of those who made the revolution. The seeds were planted – and when Russia mismanaged to implant democracy after the second revolution in 1917 the seeds burst above the ground.

Four observations must be made with which certain parallels can be drawn with the Chechen situation:

1. Russian deputies in the parliament or Duma that was convened after the 1905 revolution made highly inflammatory statements about the Latvian people in response to the petition for political autonomy on the part of the Latvian deputies in the Duma. These remarks were made after the February revolution and after the eight Latvian regiments in the Russian Imperial Army had brought the German advance to a halt in Latvia for three years. The deputies were calling for the same status to Latvia already enjoyed by Finland. Democratic Russia said that if autonomy must be given to the Latvians then Russia would have to do the same for the various “Indian tribes” in Siberia. The regiments were established after the same Latvian deputies had succeeded in gaining permission for Latvians to form their own military units. Finns were not obliged to serve in the Russian army.
2. The Latvian military units were betrayed both by imperial Russia and democratic Russia. They fought with passion, suffered high losses, but their successes were not followed up by the Russian High Command; it never expected and hence did not prepare for the eventuality that the Rifles would breach German lines. They learned to loath the Russian military for its corruption, incompetence and lack of discipline.
3. At the end of 1917 Col. Jukums Vacietis, who commanded one of the Latvian regiments on the Riga front and had earned the admiration of the Latvian Rifles, became the first commander of the Red Army and was ready to strike a deal with his erstwhile enemies the Germans after they had taken Latvia. He would bring the Latvian Rifle Regiments, who at this time formed the backbone of the Red Army, back to Latvia in exchange for political autonomy. The German High Command was not interested in autonomy for Latvia. Until he was shot by Stalin in 1938 Vacietis never became a member of the Communist Party. His wife and family lived in independent Latvia.
4. Neither Europe nor America supported independence for the new states emerging from the ruins of imperial Russia. Latvian independence was supported by Great Britain and France only because communism was a greater evil - the USA finally came around to recognizing Baltic independence in 1921, one year after international recognition and two years after the peace treaties with Lenin’s Russia, when Baltic independence was recognized by Russia “in eternity”. Finland had already been “granted” independence by Lenin at the end of 1917. Hence, the Latvian Rifles, fighting on all the fronts in the Russian civil war, indirectly helped to bring about Baltic independence and the defeat of the Russian lobby in Western capitals.

The Chechen situation

People familiar with the situation in Chechnya may have been struck by some similarities, i.e. an uncompromising stand on the part of an "indivisible Russia" regarding the national and political rights of non-Russian peoples, war and deprivation, and embracing the most radical ideology available: in 1917 it was international communism, today it is global radical Islam. We need to look closer at why many Chechen fighters and their commanders adopted radical Islam, an ideology wholly alien to the Chechen people as a whole, as, indeed, communism was for the Latvian people.

Julie Wilhelmsen at the Norwegian Institute of International Relations has provided us with a comprehensive analysis on the Islamisation of the Chechen national separatist movement, which will be presented here as a summary.¹ Her carefully researched analysis shows that Islam itself is not the key conflict-generating factor in Chechnya. The aim of the National Congress of the Chechen people in 1990 was to resolve problems the Chechen *nation* was facing, including the elimination of discrimination against Chechens in their own country and the gathering of all Chechens on their own territory. Dzhokhar Dudaev, who became president in October 1991, only began referring to Islam two years later in response to growing internal opposition and in the face of the Russian invasion in November 1994. He fell back to the slogan of *ghazawat* used by the 19th century hero Imam Shamil, but this slogan appealed to the young Chechen men more in the interpretation of a fight against the Russians than against infidels. The first foreign *jihadi* fighters arrived in 1995, and Zelimkhan Yandarbiev attempted to establish an Islamic state in the short period he acted as president after Dudaev was killed in April 1996. But he was pushed aside by Aslan Maskhadov, a moderate, who was elected to the post in 1997.

Clearly Maskhadov was the choice of the Chechen people. Nevertheless, he lost control of the Islamised warlords and was forced to introduce Islamic law in 1999. This was the year the second Chechen war was launched by Putin after Shamil Basaev led an incursion into Dagestan, and after the explosions in Moscow, Volgodonsk and Buinaksk. Putin blamed the Chechens for these explosions and the war was branded an anti-terrorist operation by him.²

It is important to note that Wilhelmsen in her portrayal of the prominent warlords who underwent radicalization observes that they do not seem to hold the same version of radical Islam. These are (or were) Shamil Basaev, Salman Raduev, the brothers Arbi and Movsar Baraev, Movladi Udugov, and Zelimkhan Yandarbiev. They embraced radical Islam during the first Chechen war. But while Yandarbiev and Udagov eventually interpreted their fight as part of the *Global Islamic* fight against the "distant enemy" Basaev interpreted his fight in the context of liberating the Caucasus. For Raduev and the brothers Baraev radical Islam never became more than useful slogans. Furthermore, radical Islam to a large extent had been adjusted to the local context – it was not directly imported. Basaev, for example, refers to himself as a Sufi, despite the fact that Sufism is a heresy to the Wahhabis and other radical Islamists.

It was the total collapse of functioning state structures during the war which allowed the introduction of Islamic policies: Yandarbaev used Islam to try to revive

the state. Wilhelmsen quotes an important statement made by Udugov, which may have implications for the future of Russia when seen today in the context of Russia's nationalities and religious policies under Putin: "communism collapsed, orthodoxy in the present situation is doomed to fail and democracy, obviously, does not work in Russia ... we have to fill the vacuum with Islam."

Then there is the question of who co-opted whom? The foreigners fighting in Chechnya have been small in numbers and Wilhelmsen suggests that it is reasonable to say that the foreigners involved over a longer period were as much co-opted to the cause of ambitious Chechen warlords as the war lords were co-opted for the *Global Jihad*. Funding from radical Islam organizations did reach the warlords, but the point Wilhelmsen makes is that the moderates under Maskhadov increasingly found themselves with diminishing funds. In other words, western organizations did not send Maskhadov money, but he was expected to reign in the radicals. The pressure of the second war and Russia's uncompromising stance against Chechnya, in the end, forced Maskhadov into an alliance with the radical Islamists. Wilhelmsen describes graphically that at one point Basaev and Khatab, the Afghan-Arab responsible for much of Wahhabi funding to Chechnya, pointed their guns at Maskhadov at a meeting – be killed or fight with us.

Looking now at Russia's policy toward Chechnya, Wilhelmsen underscores the paradox that Putin carried his war not only against the radical Islamic warlords but also against the moderates headed by the duly elected Aslan Maskhadov, who wanted a dialogue with Russia, wanted a secular state, and close cooperation with Moscow in order to rebuild Chechnya after the war. For the radicals Maskhadov was a puppet of secular Russia, but to Putin he was another Osama bin Laden! Although Maskhadov lacked the power to stop Basaev and Khatab from marching into Dagestan he did hold a rally in Grozny gathering 5000 people against the attack.

Wilhelmsen's bottom line is that Moscow did not choose to align with Maskhadov against the radical forces, but rather opted for a full-scale war against Chechnya and thereby forced Maskhadov into an alliance with the radicals. Initially Maskhadov desisted from joining his army troops to those commanders resisting the advancing Russian troops. He offered to hand over Basaev and Khatab as Moscow demanded, but on the very same day he made the offer Putin declared that he was not the legitimate president of Chechnya. Maskhadov countered by calling on the religious leaders of Chechnya to declare a holy war "to defend the country's sovereignty". In the end, as Wilhelmsen concludes, the strategy of non-negotiation and the alienation of Maskhadov by Moscow and isolation on the part of the West was probably an important factor in tipping the balance of power in favor of the radicals within the Chechen separatist movement.

After the assassination of Maskhadov on March 8, we can conclude that Russia, and by implication also the West, has succeeded in bringing about not only enormous destruction to the Chechen people for the third time in their history, but also left two power poles on the battlefield in Chechnya – the radical Islamists and the criminalized puppet regime of Kadirov the Younger with very little in between. Further, in killing both Dudaev and Maskhadov Russia destroyed the only two "Europeans" in the Chechen separatist movement: both were high-ranking officers in the Soviet armed forces stationed in the Baltic states. Dudaev

even had an Estonian wife. There is no doubt that both men were influenced by the local environment – which, even though the Baltic states were then under the Soviet Union and heavily russified – nevertheless still maintained a strong European identity and cultural outlook. These men could not be but moderate nationalists, who were ready to defend the national interests of their country but also ready to live with Russia.

The EU, after one of the Putin-Schroeder meetings, has said it is willing to rebuild Chechnya. But what is its political strategy? Is it based on the legitimacy of the puppet Kadirov and the physical annihilation of both nationalists and Islam radicals? And who will get the money? Before we analyze the present situation in Chechnya and look for possible solutions to be derived from the Latvian situation a critical view from Russia should be briefly looked at.

The Russian dissident viewpoint

Two years ago just before the outbreak of the Iraq war one of the foremost former Soviet dissidents Vladimir Bukovsky, together with Elena Bonner, the wife of Andrei Sacharov, wrote an open letter to President Bush.³ They asked: why must we condone near extermination of some nations in order to liberate others? Is it not an unacceptable price to pay for a dubious advantage such alliances may bring? They quote Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister: “Russia has such a vast experience in fighting terrorism,” and wonder if he has forgotten that Russia invented modern political terrorism elevated to level of state policy. What was the point of putting Milosevich on trial if he fought Muslim terrorism in Bosnia and Kosova? In the war of ideas nothing was more dangerous than the *Realpolitik* approach, which has brought so many disasters in the past. They end by asking why the US government is not as smart as its weapons are?

This is particularly painful for me to read. In 1985 on the very eve of the birth of the Baltic popular front movements I shared a cabin with Bukovsky, and two other former dissidents from Lithuania and Latvia expelled, like Bukovsky, from the Soviet Union. We were on board a ship chartered by the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise organization of Baltic exile groups that was traveling along the Baltic coast to Helsinki to mark the tenth anniversary of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, now OSCE) taking place in Helsinki. Today I have returned to a free Latvia but Bukovsky is denied a visa to his own country!

The Chechen spokesman in the West Akhmed Zakaev in an open letter to president Bush just before the Bush-Putin meeting in Slovenia on February 24 echoed the Bukovsky/Bonner letter, except that it also carried a warning in the message.⁴ He claimed that Bush gave the green light to Putin for pacification of Chechnya but the only outcome was the emboldening of radicals at the expense of the moderate leadership, and the spread of militant ideology throughout the Caucasus. Bukovsky should realize that his hands-off policy in Chechnya does not increase security but, instead, breeds terrorism. The warning is that Maskhadov's unilateral ceasefire was a “unique opportunity, perhaps the last, to break the viscous circle of hatred, death and destruction.” If it is lost, the responsibility for the escalation of the conflict will fall on those who persist in the failed policy of appeasing Putin. As we know, the unique opportunity was lost – Russia responded

by killing Maskhadov. Was it a unique opportunity? Has the window of opportunity been lost?

I have chosen as an answer the reflections put forward by Emil Pain, director of the Russian Academy of Sciences Center for the Study of Xenophobia and the Problems of Extremism, who in an interview earlier in January says that while Putin may get away with his methods in Chechnya in the short term, Russia will ultimately be the loser.⁵ The real "horror" of the Chechen conflict is not just the violence and suffering of the people in the north Caucasus or the terrorism connected with the conflict there, but the extension of the use of force rather than negotiations, and staged elections rather than genuine votes to the Russian Federation as a whole. Pain does not mention the million Russian Chechnya war veterans, but their political impact on future developments in Russia cannot be ignored as pointed out by other Russian thinkers. The West's interest in having Moscow as an ally in the war against terrorism not only provides Putin with a kind of legitimacy in the eyes of his own people but also gives him a plausible justification for using force in Chechnya. Together with the continuing flood of petro-dollars into Russia there is no one likely to challenge Putin.

But this situation cannot last forever, and when it ends, the consequences both for those now in power and for the country as a whole will be "truly frightening" according to Paine. He compares the situation with that of Nicholas I in the 19th century and Brezhnev's rule. Putin, like these rulers, is driving out the thinking people of an expanding state apparatus in the name of building "an autocratic vertical of power" and seeking to generate support by exploiting the resentments of the country's ethnic majority against certain minorities. Bad feelings will grow. Pain concludes that the outcome is almost inevitable as if this is determined by Russian history.

Udugov, as quoted above, has a point. Islam is a growing factor in Russia, and there is a growing body of evidence that indicates that Russia's reaction to radical Islam could be fanning its appeal. That Russia deep inside is afraid of this was made clear to me ten days after the theater siege in Moscow in October 2002. Speaking to a group of young Russians I compared the Red Latvian Rifles situation to that of the Chechen separatist movement – the room immediately fell silent and remained so throughout my talk. There were no arguments or questions after my presentation. I myself was struck that here was the only country in the world where young people did not have to be told who the Latvian Rifles were. Now we must return to the Latvian situation to see if lessons can be drawn for the purposes of our paper.

A Common Western approach?

Though there are huge differences with the Latvian situation in 1917 there are certain instructive parallels with today's Chechnya that can be readily seen. Although the situation may seem hopeless in Chechnya, the situation was also hopeless in Latvia but, nevertheless, out of the chaos, turmoil and devastation caused by war a small country was born that later helped to bring down the Soviet Union together with the two other Baltic states and today serves as a positive example for the post-Soviet states. The peaceful "color" revolutions in Ukraine

and Georgia are but a continuation of the "singing revolutions" in the Baltic states more than a decade ago.

How was the question of independence resolved in Latvia if the Latvian national army had been "robbed" of almost all men because they had embraced communism? The answer lay in the support given to the nationalists by Great Britain and France at a decisive point in the struggle for independence. This, coupled with a reign of terror instigated by the communist regime, and the realization that the nationalists were not German puppets, dissolved the Latvian Red Rifles fighting the nationalist army in Latvia - they simply deserted to the Latvian National Army. Other regiments were kept inside Russia by Lenin and Trotsky to defeat the mortal enemy - Old Russia.

If we compare the Latvian and Chechen situations and interchange Latvian communist soldiers with radical Islam fighters and national army soldiers with moderate or nationalist Chechen fighters we can not only see the similarities but also the solution, i.e. Chechen independence - or political autonomy, if it is not too late for that. Russia's attempts to destabilize Georgia, especially in its successful bid to put an end to the OSCE border mission on the Chechen border, is a calculation based on Stalinist thinking - a people could get fully fledged "Soviet Socialist Republic" status only if the "republic" bordered a foreign country: if Georgia truly became independent and managed to regain its territorial integrity, then Chechnya could accordingly become an independent national republic together with Ingushia. In that case the Chechens will have been gathered together in one land and no longer persecuted by Russia. Can the EU and the USA reach agreement for rebuilding Chechnya on this basis?

The problem is that there is no power in the West to support the moderate forces in Chechnya to whom the radicals could desert to. The other problem is that Putin's Russia is not the greatest evil to the West, as was communism in Russia in the Latvian situation. Therefore nobody will support the national Chechens. Yet if Putin is leading Russia down the road to another revolution, the West would be well advised to think about the implications of such a Russian policy and change its policy toward Chechnya.

This is also the problem with the solution put forward by Fiona Hill and Anatol Lieven calling upon the Russian government to show that it is committed to a legitimate political process in Chechnya.⁶ It is not, as we have seen, and cannot even theoretically be committed because it itself has evolved into a hybrid model of Czarist and Soviet Russia, and hence committed to the policies of these former empires. If there is no genuine democratic process in Russia how can Russia promote a genuine democratic political process in Chechnya? If it does so in its "Chechenization" policy and actually allows free and fair parliamentary elections, then this can go back as a boomerang to Russia: if democracy is possible in Chechnya - why not in Belarus, Russia's closest ally. Indeed, why not in Russia itself?

But Hill and Lieven are right about the need to create a mass political-nationalist party or an effective political-military movement by the Chechens. This is what the Irish and Tamil nationalists succeeded in doing. This is what the Latvians succeeded in doing in 1917-1918 by bringing together the different political forces together under one roof to defend Latvian independence.

But then Putin would have to bite the bullet and open a dialogue with the "terrorists" as the British did when they started talks with Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA, and as the "transformed" Sharon is now doing with the PLO by pulling back Jewish settlements from the occupied territories. The British, after making a very difficult decision, certainly succeeded. The IRA was split, it gradually lost its support among the people, and is now degenerating into a criminal organization while Sinn Fein itself is coming under pressure to come clean all the way.⁷ Apparently the British thought this approach would be instructive to the Russians, as the Institute of International and Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, before September 11, organized field trips to Northern Ireland for Russian interested parties, but nothing seems to have resulted from this.

It is an open question why Tony Blair did not insist on the successful British experience in fighting terrorism based on respect for human rights for Putin to follow, but no doubt the shock of September 11 is to be blamed for the resultant short-sighted *Realpolitik*. This also holds true for the USA. There was probably an understanding on this matter reached between Bush and Blair, which may well be regretted now by both of them as seen by their statements recently on Russia. Perhaps Russian pressure tactics on the British government to deliver Akhmed Zakaev, who has found refuge in London, have helped in this.

According to a Washington insider, however, the Bush administration's policy toward Chechnya may have been more sophisticated than appeared in public. Washington has pursued a subtle, behind-the-scenes effort to nudge Putin toward seeking a political solution in Chechnya, which only Maskhadov might have been able to deliver.⁸ After all, the unilateral peace declaration on the part of Maskhadov actually was enforced. But that is why Putin wanted him to be killed. According to reports from independent sources in Russia, Maskhadov fell into a trap because he thought there would be peace talks facilitated by Germany and Switzerland. But killing Maskhadov, however, only twelve days after Bush talked to Putin in Bratislava at the February meeting, previously mentioned, on the need for peace talks with Maskhadov, must have political implications in US-Russian relations.⁹ No implications seem to be apparent after the Zapatero, Schroeder, Chirac, Putin meeting in Paris ten days later on March 18. But no news have filtered out from this meeting that Putin was taken to task for killing Maskhadov.

Conclusion

Can the USA and EU agree on a common approach to the simmering Chechnya conflict that is corroding the credibility of European and Transatlantic values, even though this may not be apparent today? Can the EU countries agree between themselves on this issue? The EU was not able to do so for tabling a resolution on Chechnya in March for the meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights. One cannot but note the marked difference between the call for an independent inquiry into the recent killings involving hundreds of demonstrators in Uzbekistan by the UN, strongly backed by the EU and NATO, and the killing of tens of thousands of civilians in Chechnya that has gone on for several years.

In thinking about post-Maskhadov Chechnya we might find another clue from the revolutionary history of Latvia under the Czars. After the crushing of the 1905 revolution, the Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, which had consolidated

the majority of the Latvian population under its leadership, suspended its guerrilla activities in the forests and cities of Latvia in 1907. The armed resistance was showing signs of degeneration that was beginning to harm the image of the party and the interests of the Latvian people. The guerrillas were disarmed and smuggled out of Latvia to countries as far away as the USA and Australia, where they and their offspring became good, law-abiding citizens. The nationalist branch of the Chechen resistance might also do this, leaving the field open to the Islam radicals. But, as we saw in the case of the Latvian Rifles, the nationalists certainly will return in one guise or another. Putin's Chechenization policy guarantees this.

What is lacking today on the part of the West is the political will in confronting Russia over the Chechnya issue. Yet the war has spread beyond Chechnya as witnessed by Basaev's attack on government security forces in Nalcik, the capital of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic this October. Furthermore, the intensity of the fighting now is higher in Dagestan, where Basaev made his first ill-fated incursion six years ago, than in Chechnya itself. This has led analysts to conclude that perhaps the Chechens have succeeded where they have failed for 200 years – mainly to unite the many disparate ethnic groups and nationalities of the North Caucasus against Russia under the banner of radical Islam! If so, can this be ignored on the part of Europe and the USA? But what can be done?

If we recall that the late George Kennan said in his Long Telegram of February 1946, when the USA was perplexed by Stalin's behavior: "Soviet power was "impervious to the logic of reason," but it was "highly sensitive to the logic of force." The policy of containment was the result, and where the Soviet Union stepped over the line, as in Afghanistan in 1979, then arms were given to the Afghans to push back the Soviet army in 1989. This had the unintended consequence of contributing enormously to the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

Today, of course, the situation is completely different with Russia, but, as we have noted, the Russian leadership mental map has not basically changed much. The logic of force has to be replaced by the logic of persuasion for the good of Russia itself and by standing firm where Russia tries to repeat its expansionist policies as, for example, in Ukraine and Georgia.

The logic of reason was very strong and compelling in President Bush's speech in Riga on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War Two, when he renounced the Yalta agreement because it followed in the unjust tradition of Munich and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Russia could be persuaded that, as a signatory of both the latter two agreements, to follow the American example, even though America was responsible for only one agreement, and Russia for two. Were Russia to do that, it would help very much in changing the mental map in Russia's approach to the bloody conflict in the North Caucasus and hence raise the prospects of ending it. Russia would be the first country to benefit from this.

Footnotes

¹ Julie Wilhelmson, „ Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Islamisation of the Chechen Separatist Movement”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.57, No.1, January 2005, 35–59.

² There still is no evidence that the Chechens were responsible for these explosions. At that time, the Russian press was rife with speculation that the Russian secret service

was behind them. For a thorough analysis of the 2002 theater hostage taking drama in Moscow by Movsar Baraev and attempts by Russia to discredit Maskhadov see John Dunlop, *Organized Crime and Terrorism Watch*, <http://www.rferl.org/reports/corruptionwatch/2003/12/42-181203.asp>

- ³ Valdimir Bukovsky and Elena Bonner, "Open Letter to President Bush," March 10, 2003, *FrontPageMagazine.com*.
- ⁴ Akhmed Zakaev, "Stop Appeasing Putin in Chechnya," *International Herald Tribune*, Febr.16, 2005.
- ⁵ *Druzhba narodov*, January 2005 issue, as reviewed by Paul Goble, „Window on Euroasia: The Real ‘Horror’ of Chechnya.”
- ⁶ Fiona Hill and Anatol Lieven, "Now let the Chechens select their leaders," *International Herald Tribune*, March 12-13, 2005.
- ⁷ See, for example, John Murray Brown, "A leader under fire," *Financial Times*, March 12/13, 2005.
- ⁸ Jim Hoagland, "Reassessing Putin," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2005.
- ⁹ See note 7.