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ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IN CHECHNYA: A THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND?

JOINT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

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ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IN CHECHNYA: A THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND?

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE, EURASIA, AND EMERGING THREATS AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:34 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Dana Rohrabacher (chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats) presiding.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I call to order this joint hearing of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, as well as Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. Today's topic is Islamic Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat to the U.S. Homeland? After Chairman Poe and I and the ranking members of two subcommittees, each of us will have 5 minutes to make opening statements. Each member then will have 1 minute to make an opening statement, alternating between majority and minority members. And without objection, all members may have 5 days to submit statements, questions, and extraneous material for the record. Hearing no objection, so ordered. The origins of the terrorist attack in Boston have drawn attention to a region that has not received the study that it deserves. The terrorist brothers had roots in Chechnya, even though they grew up in America, and had sought U.S. citizenship. Chechnya is part of the Northern Caucasus, which also includes Dagestan, where the father of the two brothers live.

Two major wars have been fought in Chechnya in the 1990s, as the province sought independence from Russia. Many Chechens fled to other parts of the region, and into Central Asia. Dagestan was not directly involved in the wars, but has certainly been affected by them, and is now a hotbed of radical Islamic activity. There are reports of Chechens fighting in Afghanistan against the United States and NATO troops, and Chechen networks in Europe. Al-Qaeda has made recruitment of Chechens a priority, and they are thought to have been trained in Pakistan.

The appearance of Chechen fighters outside the Northern Caucasus is ominous. The original Chechen uprising against Russia was secular and nationalist. Within this context, there would be no motive for Chechen exiles to attack the United States, especially after we had given them sanctuary. In the world view of

some Chechens, there has been—obviously, some Chechens have had their world view radicalized, as was the case of the two Boston terrorists, who have turned from young people being raised here into a jihadist mentality of global war against infidels, which includes us.

Is this happening on a regional basis, this radicalization that we saw with these two young men? And why is it happening? What outside forces have sought to transform the Northern Caucasus and Central Asia into a region of Muslim extremism which did not exist before? In particular, what impact is Saudi Arabia playing and other Islamic states played in sending money and missionaries to the region to build mosques and schools to impact the minds of young people who make up such a large portion of the population in Central Asia? Greater cooperation with Russia and the governments of Central Asia should be explored in order to properly understand and respond to this emerging threat. This part of the world is critical to the future of the human race.

If it becomes dominated by a radical version of Islam, it will change the course of history in an extremely negative way. Muslims deserve freedom and progress, but the jihadist mind-set hates freedom, and will drown progress in a sea of blood. Even as a minority viewpoint, the radicals have done great damage throughout the Muslim societies, from Pakistan to Afghanistan through the Caucasus. And they have attacked the United States as well as Russia.

Pardon me, I have a cold today, obviously. We must find ways to expand our long friendship with Muslims in order to build a better future. That future should be of peace and prosperity for all people, especially the people of Central Asia, because all of us deserve to live in such a positive world. We want to find positive ways of moving forward with these people, and thus we have gathered a panel of experts to give us their advice today. And now the ranking member, Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today we are examining a region of the world that up until a week ago most people did not know a great deal about. But the Boston Marathon bombings in my home State changed that. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the victims and their families that were forever changed by this senseless act, and thank those in Boston who worked around the clock to save lives and prevent other tragedies from occurring that week. For many, their view of the world has become much smaller as the scope of this investigation grows. Whether there is any connectivity, what happened and began in Boston and Watertown, Massachusetts, has now extended into the North Caucasus. And this committee has a responsibility to gather information about possible threats at home, and improve our counterterrorism cooperation with other nations. Although I wish that a discussion of the North Caucasus could have taken place under different circumstances, this is a discussion worth having, as it highlights why many so of us, particularly on this committee, have concerned ourselves with security, rule of law, and human rights issues abroad.

According to the 2012 report from the International Crisis Group, armed conflict in the North Caucasus is the most violent in Europe

today. Insurgents seeking a regional political unit founded in sharia attacked Russian officials and security forces whose main responsibility until recently has been a tough focus on eradicating the insurgency with a massive security presence. While this policy has had successes, some 574 insurgents, security forces, and civilians have died through September 2012 in Russia, and there are almost daily attacks in the region, and occasionally as far afield as Moscow.

It is important to understand that the description of terrorism within Russia and some of the contributing factors, as like the April 15 attack, applies back here at home as well. Simply put, what began as an epic struggle in a faraway land decades ago has fueled into an insurgency, an insurgency that presents a threat to our homeland. Our world is more interconnected than ever. And while we see great strides in bringing together international business groups and communication networks, we have yet to see at the same time the cooperation in international security matters and information sharing apparatuses.

There is undoubtedly a delicate balance between cooperation with Russia on counterterrorism and concern over Russia's human rights abuses, but in no way should this hinder working together to protect the lives of innocent people. At the end of the day, that is all we want. As the investigation of the Boston Marathon incident continues, I hope that this hearing will be insightful as we move to strengthen our international information sharing and security mechanisms. I look forward to hearing from our panel of witnesses, and am particularly excited to have Dr. Freizer, the Europe director of the International Crisis Group, here with us, who happened to be visiting here. So I want to thank you all for being here, and I look forward to your testimony. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much for that very thoughtful opening statement. And the people who were hurt and killed up in Boston, they are all part of our American family. Just like everyone who died in 9/11, we are all part of this American family. We grieve with you, and we are committed to make sure that these things don't happen to other members of the American family.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And now I recognize Mr. Poe, who is chairman of a subcommittee of his own which focuses on such threats of terrorism, as well as nonproliferation and trade. Judge Poe?

Mr. POE. First, I do want to express my sympathies to the victims of the Boston Marathon, but also praise the first responders and the citizens of Boston on Patriot's Day for their united effort to capture these bad guys. There is still much that we don't know about the Tsarnaev brothers, but I am confident that we will get to the bottom of this as the investigation unfolds.

Yesterday, we learned that the perpetrators had planned to travel to Times Square in New York after the Boston attack to unleash more mayhem and bombs. They apparently had pipe bombs and another pressure cooker bomb. American people want answers, and so do I. I do want to thank the witnesses for being here. It is unfortunate that no one from the Federal Government is here, even though they were invited to send at least one person. A lot of ques-

tions revolve around the older brother's trip to Russia. The Russians were so worried about him they asked us to look into him. Less than 3 months before he left for Russia in January 2012, the CIA successfully pushed to have him put on the U.S. counterterrorism watchlist called TIDE. But for some unknown reason, between the time he left for Russia and came back his name was not a concern of the U.S. Government, so U.S. authorities did not flag him. That meant U.S. Customs did not stop and question him, nor did they let the FBI know he was back so the FBI could talk to him. I am not sure, and I don't know why U.S. authorities would decide the older brother was not a concern while in a foreign country, under really suspicious circumstances, where known terrorist groups operate. Even the Russians were worried about this.

It looks like we may have the same old problem of information sharing, or lack of it. In fact, The Washington Post reports this morning that a single U.S. Customs and Border Protection official assigned to the Boston Joint Terrorism Task Force received a warning that the older brother, a suspected militant, had returned from a lengthy trip to Russia. Officials said there is no indication the unidentified Customs official provided that information to anybody or any other members of the task force, including the FBI, who had previously interviewed the militant.

So 10 years later after 9/11 we should not be struggling with this same issue of information sharing among American agencies, and also communication with foreign governments who are concerned about terrorism as well. We don't know if the attackers had ties directly to al-Qaeda or affiliates, but the evidence so far suggests a link to al-Qaeda's Inspire Magazine produced by al-Qaeda's group in Yemen. The magazine provides a step-by-step instruction for anyone wanting to build a device like the ones detonated in Boston. The older brother traveled to Russia, then went to Dagestan for 6 months between 2011 and 2012. He might have been radicalized there. We are not yet certain if that is true or by whom.

Both brothers were Chechens, and it now seems clear the older brother was the ringleader. Chechnya knows conflict and controversy. They have been dealing with it for the last 20 years. We can be sure there is no shortage of bad guys in places like Dagestan just waiting to get their hands on young wannabe jihadists. Bin Laden encouraged Saudis to go to Chechnya to fight Russia. Yet another outlet for extremists is against the United States and coalition forces on the battlefields of Afghanistan. Elsewhere, if a Chechen jihadist cannot attack a Russian target, then a soft target in his own city in America or Europe is the next best option. In fact, al-Qaeda has been encouraging those types of attacks for years, according to terrorism expert Bruce Riedel from the Brookings Institute. Al-Qaeda says Islam is under attack from every direction, and the jihadist answer is to strike back in New York, Madrid, London, Toulouse, and possibly Boston now. In fact, just days after the Boston attack, authorities in Canada arrested two men for allegedly plotting to blow up a train. Initial reports suggest al-Qaeda elements in Iran had provided the two men with direction, guidance, and information. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates' call to global jihad is alive and well and lives in jihadist forums, social media outlets, and the like.

So we have many questions that we need answers from. The threat from terrorist attacks around the world did not die with bin Laden. We must be realistic and understand that, and find out specifically what is taking place in Chechnya, and how that affects the United States. And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much for that very thoughtful and forceful opening statement. Does anyone else have a desire for an opening statement? If not, let me note that we did try to get a State Department representative here with us today. We wanted them to send a witness to tell us what they thought was going on in Central Asia, and Chechnya, and the Caucasus region. But they declined. And they are too busy to send someone here to the United States Congress and to speak with the American people through public hearings like this. They are just too busy on other matters.

That may well be part of the problem in that this region has not gotten the attention that it deserves. There is a map of the region over there. But let us just note that Central Asia, as we are describing, and the Caucasus, represent a huge chunk of the planet. And if that area comes under the domination of radical Islam that makes it its job to attack the United States, or to attack other countries, not just the United States, but other non-Muslim people, that will be a disaster for every person on this planet. That will usher us into an era of violence and mayhem that will be hard to get out of.

So we need to pay attention to the Caucasus, and we need to work with those people who will work with us to see that that does not happen. And I don't believe that we have, number one, paid attention here until it stung us, as it did in Boston, and as it did on 9/11. And we also have not been cooperating and working as hard as we can with those other countries, and I would put my finger on Russia, where we could have well worked a lot closer with Russia than we have been. And as the judge pointed out, and as the ranking member pointed out, we can do so without giving up our commitment to human rights, and not complain if the Russians are doing something wrong. They can accept some criticism, as we can when we do things that are wrong. But that should not prevent us from joining forces against radical Islam, which threatens to kill our children in order to terrorize the world.

If they take over and dominate an area the size of Central Asia, everybody in the world is in for trouble. With that said, we have got some very fine witnesses. Paul Goble is a professor at the Institute of World Politics. He was director of research and publications at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Earlier, he served as vice dean of the social sciences and humanities at Audentes University in Estonia, and a senior research associate at the EuroCollege at the University of Tartu, which is also in Estonia.

He served in various capacities in the United States State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, and at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

Next we have Andranik Migranyan. I hope I pronounced that correctly. And let me just note that I took this upon myself to reach out to the Russian Embassy and to our Russian counterparts and see if they could maybe recommend someone who could come here

and discuss this very important issue and how it is important to both of us. We appreciate you being with us today. And I am sorry that the Russian Embassy can send people but the State Department can't.

He is a director of the New York City branch of the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation. He was a member of the Presidential Council of the Russian Federation between 1993 and 2000, vice president of the Reforma Foundation. And among his many publications are the books Russia: From Chaos to Order, a Russian Search for Identity; and Democracy and Morality. He was awarded with the Russian Medal of Honor by a presidential decree in 2009.

We also have with us Dr. Craig Douglas Albert. He is a professor of political science at Georgia Regents University in Augusta, where he specializes in the study of ethnic group identity. His research has concentrated on the Chechens and the Kurds—that is very interesting—and recently working on papers entitled Things Fall Apart: A Political Opportunity Model for the Chechen Resistance. He holds an MA and a Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut.

And finally we have Dr. Sabine Freizer—is it Freizer or Freizer?

Ms. FREIZER. Freizer.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Freizer. Who joined the International Crisis Group in 2004. She currently serves as the Istanbul-based director of the European Program. In this role, Sabine oversees projects covering the Caucasus, both North and South, Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Turkey, and Cyprus. Before joining the Crisis Group, she served as political officer in the OSCE Election Observation Missions in Azerbaijan and Georgia from 2003 to 2004. She has a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and a master's from the College of Europe in Belgium, which she obtained as a Fulbright scholar.

So we welcome our witnesses today, and we would ask if you could try to keep your testimony to 5 minutes. And anything can be submitted for the record. But then we will come back and ask questions once everyone has testified. If there is a vote, it is the intention of this chair to recess, if we have not had our time to ask the questions, and then come back immediately after the last vote. And I understand there is only going to be two or three votes, so it should not be more than 20 minutes or ½ hour. So we will start with Mr. Goble.

STATEMENT OF MR. PAUL GOBLE, PROFESSOR, INSTITUTE OF WORLD POLITICS

Mr. GOBLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for inviting me, and thank you for holding a hearing on such an important topic. Allow me to begin by associating myself with what you and other members of the committee have said about our common horror at what happened in Boston and about the enormous respect we have for the people of Boston and the way they responded. It was quite impressive. I must say that I also want to associate myself with the chairman's remarks about the Department of State's representation. As late as the summer of 1989, I was the only person employed in the U.S. Government working on the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union. That was quite amazing given everything that was happening. And it was certainly my hope that after

the Soviet Union came apart, the number of people who would be working in those areas and have expertise on it would grow, and we would all benefit from it.

It is probably inevitable whenever something that we know little about, a place or a people, comes into our consciousness, that we jump rather quickly to oversimplifications based on our knowledge from elsewhere. That is certainly what has happened in the response to the horror in Boston. We have had people use terminology which has been imported without much thought about what it means. And I think it is terribly important to unpack some of this oversimplistic language and to understand what is really going on lest we be in a position to fight it, and also even more, and more immediately anyway, lest we be manipulated in a way that is against American national interests.

In my remarks I would like to focus on three elements of this oversimplification. The first has to do with Islam, the second has to do with ethnicity, specifically, in the North Caucasus, and third has the do with the experience of emigration among peoples of the North Caucasus, not only in this country, but in western Europe.

Islam in the North Caucasus is among the most varied phenomenon in the world. It came in three different ways beginning in the 8th century in Dagestan, and not until the 18th century in Chechnya. Dagestan is a vastly more Islamic place. I am much more worried about the 6 months in Dagestan than I am the Chechen background. It is also very differently in how tightly it is held by people there, and how much it motivates actions. Many of the people who are called Muslims, or call themselves Muslims in this part of the world know nothing about their faith. They are what the Soviet calls ethnic Muslims. They know they are Muslims, they don't know what it means.

President Dzhokhar Dudayev of Chechnya once told me that he was a good Muslim, he prayed three times a day. As a good Muslim would know that you pray five times a day, but he had been a member of the Communist Party since the age of 18, and major general in the Soviet Air Force, so he did not know. Unfortunately, we use the term Muslim without always an appreciation of the fact that what happened has happened in the North Caucasus, and even more in Central Asia, since 1991 reflects the experiences of a community that had an identity but had no content for that identity. And suddenly there were people available to provide that content. Prior to 1991, very few of these people could have told you the difference between one sura of the Koran or another. The Koran was published only twice in Soviet times for people there. So they didn't know very much.

I believe that the opening of the southern border of what had been the USSR may prove ultimately more fateful for the United States than the opening of the western border to Europe. First, and I want to give you four statistics, pairs of statistics. In 1991 in the Russian Federation there were 150 mosques. Today there are 8,800. In 1991, there were 40 people who went on the hajj, people who traveled to Mecca. This past year, there were 40,000, a factor of 1,000 increase. The number of missionaries coming in from the Middle East, Turkey, and Saudi, and the Turks are quite heavily involved, went from zero in 1991 to a high of about 2,500 in the

late 1990s, and it is now somewhere between 1,200 and 1,500. And the number of Muslims studying abroad in madrasas and Islamic universities went from four in 1991, at least three of whom were working for the KGB, and now to a figure of probably about 1,200, again, down from the numbers of 2,000-plus at the end of the 1990s.

Those numbers are even more dramatic in Central Asia. I hope we can come back to that, but I think that is important. Second, with respect to ethnicity. Ethnicity was constructed. These people have various experiences with what it means. Most of the Chechens were, in fact, committed ethno-nationalists. The idea that they are Islamist nationalists is simply untrue. There are some who are, but overwhelmingly, it is not the case. If you look at Central Asia, you will see that that is also true. And the experience of emigration means that people are in extremis because they are up against very difficult situations. And one thing that has not been focused on in the discussion of Boston is that many Chechens feel they are about to be returned to the Russian Federation or to Chechnya because of what has been happening, thanks to Russian pressure in Austria, Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere in Western Europe. People who fear they have no good options may do really bad things.

Three quick conclusions: First, I think we are learning that if we are going to compete in this kind of ideological contest, and it is an ideological contest, police power must be used, but it will never be sufficient to solve the problem. Second, we need to recognize that many of the problems we face now, both with regard to Islam in North Caucasus and Central Asia, and with regard no ethnicity in North Caucasus and in Central Asia, are a reflection of the actions of Moscow both before 1991 and after that time. We have to cooperate with the Russians in certain respects, but we have to recognize that they are part of the problem, too. And that has to be insisted upon.

And third, we need to understand that some of the things that are coming out in the coverage of the two terrorists shows that there are some optimistic reasons for looking at Islam, that more and more Muslims are learning the details of their faith. Forty years ago, when I started studying it, you couldn't get a translation of the Koran in English that didn't say an interpretation. Now there are discussions of what is canonical, what translations are canonical. We know what happened when the Bible was translated into German and English in the 15th century. It led to the Reformation, the Renaissance, and modernity. It is entirely possible that we will see the same kind of thing happen in the world of Islam, and we will see the same kind of troubles over the next three or four generations that the people of Western Europe understood. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. That last point you made is very interesting. I never thought of that before. And thank you.

[Mr. Goble did not submit a prepared statement.]

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Dr. Albert.

STATEMENT OF CRAIG DOUGLAS ALBERT, PH.D., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, GEORGIA REGENTS UNIVERSITY AUGUSTA

Mr. ALBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, fellow panelists, for having me here today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about Islamic extremism in Chechnya. I would also like to remark my comments are directed mostly at the Islamic extremists inside Chechnya and Dagestan, and don't reflect the general population of Chechnya as well, that is more an ethnonationalist approach, as Professor Goble said. So this pertains directly to the Islamist threat inside the area. There are some Islamist elements inside Chechnya and the surrounding Caucasus regions, although their connection to any larger global jihadist network is a question for debate. It is this author's opinion that although there is an Islamist presence in the Chechen region, it possesses little strategic threat to the United States, although it may pose a modest threat to the United States' forces worldwide.

The largest contemporary Islamist threat in Chechnya and Dagestan is the Caucasus Emirate founded in 2007. The CE is currently led by Doku Umarov, and was officially created to replace the failing separatist government of the region, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. While the former wanted an independent Chechnya, the CE wants to create an Islamic caliphate that extends beyond the Caucasus region. In fact, it appears the CE has embarked upon a philosophically grand vision of territorial expansion in the past couple of years. The CE has some reported connections to al-Qaeda, including third-party financing, mainly based in Saudi Arabia. Although there are arguments whether there are larger connections between the CE and al-Qaeda, there appears to be evidence that the two are connected, if only in a minor way. It is well documented that al-Qaeda is currently more of a leaderless organization, and thus has resulted to organizing and coordinating its efforts and networks via the Internet, which is probably the relationship it has with Chechen jihadists.

Therefore, it is more difficult to establish a clear connection between the two, but there is a connection, however small it may be. Although there are some historical links with Chechnya and al-Qaeda, there is no convincing evidence that Doku Umarov is a member of al-Qaeda, but he certainly sympathizes with its larger causes. This can perhaps be demonstrated by the Caucasus Emirate Web sites that post links to al-Qaeda documents and al-Qaeda affiliates, including links to the al-Qaeda magazine Inspire, which may have helped the Boston bombers develop and deploy their bombs.

It must also be mentioned that the tactics and bombs used in Boston resemble the attacks carried out in Chechnya, including delayed multiple explosions, although the bombs are made slightly differently. The greater jihadist threat in the Caucasus Mountains is not a nationalistic Chechen movement, and doesn't involve most of the Chechens—probably less than 1 percent of the population at all sympathize with this type of movement—but it is a larger network of jihadists connected and networked to the global jihad. It is also more of a Caucasian threat than a Chechen threat, emanating mostly from individuals of Dagestan.

It is important to emphasize that an attack on the United States' mainland from the Caucasus Emirate or other Chechen/Caucasian groups is highly unlikely. The Chechens are generally not preoccupied with the United States. However, one has to consider if the Chechens do become more involved with the larger global jihadi network, whether they may consider attacking the U.S. homeland. With that considered, one would still conclude that an attack in the U.S. is highly unlikely by these individuals. In fact, CE commanders have recently stated that the larger confederated network had nothing to do with the planning, coordinating, or financing of the attacks in Boston. Doku Umarov has also recently ordered his units and all jihadist elements inside the Caucasus not to attack civilians at all, anywhere. And he has emphasized that his organization has no conflict with the United States.

The CE and nationalist groups inside Chechnya direct most of their concerns toward combating the Russian Federation. Especially with the 2014 Winter Olympics approaching, it can be hypothesized that their efforts are being solely directed at targeting those sporting events or planning other attacks inside and around Russia, especially inside Dagestan. It is likely, however, that U.S. military, security, and perhaps government forces that are combating jihadist elements worldwide will face a continued threat from individuals from the Chechen area. The U.S. has already faced these foes from the Caucasus in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and we can also safely predict that where there is a jihadist foothold or where there is a chance of gaining ground for Islamist forces, some Chechens will be found there, as is recently reported in the Syrian civil war.

Unless some more details are made available about the Boston bombers' possible training in the Caucasus, however, and Dagestan, I think it is highly unlikely that there is any reasonable strategic threat planned against the United States by the Chechens. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. We will have some questions for you later.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Albert follows:]

Statement before the Joint Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats
&
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade

Hearing on "Islamist Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat to the U.S. Homeland?"

Does Chechnya Represent a Strategic Terrorist Threat to the United States? A General Assessment

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The views expressed in this testimony are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of Georgia Regents University.

A Brief Description of Islamists in Chechnya

There are Islamist elements inside Chechnya and the surrounding Caucasus region although their connection to any larger, global jihadist network is a question up for debate. It is this author's opinion that although there is an Islamist presence in the Chechen region, it poses little strategic threat to the United States (US) although it may pose a modest threat to US forces worldwide. This report will demonstrate exactly the nature of Chechen Islamists, how they developed, and what threat they pose to the US.

The largest contemporary Islamist threat in Chechnya and Dagestan is the Caucasus Emirate (CE), founded in 2007. The CE is currently lead by Doku Umarov and was officially created to replace the failing, separatist government of the region, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. While the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria wanted an independent Chechnya, the CE wants to create an Islamic Caliphate (world-state) that extends beyond the Caucasus region. In fact, it appears that CE has embarked upon a philosophically grand vision of territorial expansion.[i] The CE has reported connections to Al-Qaeda (AQ)[ii], including third party financing, mainly based in Saudi Arabia. Although there are arguments whether there are larger connections between the CE and AQ, there appears to be evidence that the two are connected on more than just a superficial level.[iii] It is well documented that AQ is currently more of a leaderless organization and thus has resulted to organizing and coordinating its efforts and networks via the Internet.[iv] Therefore, it is more difficult to establish a clear connection between the two, but there is a connection, however tenuous it may be.

There are reports, however, of Osama bin Laden's chief lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri, going to Chechnya with the intent of forming a base of operations there, but was unsuccessful and detained, and later released.[v] It is also well known that chief Chechen rebel and terrorist Shamil Basayev had links to AQ as well, mainly through his chief lieutenant, Ibn al-Khattab (born Amir Saleh Abdullah Al-Suwailem).[vi] There is no convincing evidence that Doku Umarov is a member of AQ, but certainly sympathizes with its larger causes. This can perhaps be demonstrated by CE websites that post links to AQ documents and AQ affiliates, including links to the AQ magazine, *Inspire*, which *may* have helped the Boston Bombers develop and deploy their bombs. It must also be mentioned that the tactics and bombs used in Boston resemble attacks carried out in Chechnya including delayed, multiple explosions, although the bombs are made slightly different.[vii]

Additionally, in Dagestan the organization known as Shariat Jammat poses a considerable threat, and is linked or a part of the larger CE. Its goal, allied with CE, is to establish a greater Islamic

Caliphate in the Caucasus and Shariat Jammat aligns itself with jihadist/salafist movements and motivations.[viii] Together, the greater jihadist threat in the Caucasus Mountains is indeed not a nationalistic Chechen movement, but a larger network of jihadist connected and networked to the global jihad. It is also more of a Caucasian threat, than a Chechen threat, emanating mostly from individuals from Dagestan.

A Brief Historical Account of the Crisis in Chechnya

Chechnya's contemporary history becomes important to world history with the demise of the Soviet Union. As the Soviet Republics were declaring independence, forming their own states free from the control of Moscow, Chechnya too decided to declare its independence from Russia. However, since it did not have the same type of autonomous status as did the other republics (for instance, Ukraine and Latvia), Russia did not recognize their right to independence. Russia eventually invaded Chechnya's autonomous district, with deadly, but surprising results. Tens of thousands of civilians were murdered; hundreds of thousands were displaced and went missing; and more so, the Russian military suffered its most humiliating defeat since its tragic war with Afghanistan. More importantly, Chechnya received quasi-independence, the right to govern itself until a full treaty could be arranged on a later date. However, that later treaty never developed. During the inter-war era of the Russo-Chechen Wars, chaos was ripe within the Republic.

The Republic's government was a failing government; corruption was rife; political murders and extrajudicial killings were rampant; and more troubling was the arrival of Wahhabism,[ix] a form of Islam that can be very deadly. Wahhabist Islam was a surprise addition to Chechen culture. Chechnya traditionally celebrates a form of Sufi Islam, which allows for more indigenous representations of Islamic principles (for instance, it allows the celebration of ancestral "saints") and is considered one of Islam's more mystical representations. Sufism is not generally recognized by the more traditional sects. When Wahhabism made its appearance, it clashed greatly with many Chechens. An attempt was made to establish Shari'a Law, but this was met with great opposition from many ordinary Chechens. The two sides settled with an uneasy tension until 1999, when the second Russo-Chechen War began. This period is important however, because it marks the appearance of Islamic extremism within Chechnya and some of the worst terrorist acts carried out in Russia resulted from Wahhabist arrival.

The second Russo-Chechen War resulted from a group of Chechen Wahhabist terrorists invading a neighboring semi-autonomous district to Chechnya, Dagestan. Dagestan was fully under Moscow's control at this time. In combination with well-timed terrorist blasts in Russia that destroyed several apartments and killed scores, which the Russia government blamed on Chechen terrorists, Moscow invaded Chechnya for the second time. This time it resulted in thousands dead, and tens of thousands displaced and missing. However, Russia made little

mistakes militarily and bombarded Chechnya from the air and devastated and demolished its infrastructure before allowing its ground forces inside the republic (a mistake it made in the first war that contributed to its loss). This war lasted for several more years, with terrorist operations and "clean-ups" that were not officially ended until April 15, 2009, an interesting date considering the date of the Boston Bombings. Russia has been denounced worldwide by governments, NGOs, IGOs, and the United States for its human rights atrocities during this time. It must also be noted that Chechen rebels were also guilty of grave abuses.

A Chechen Threat to the United States?

It is important to emphasize that an attack on the United States' mainland from the Caucasus Emirate or other Chechen/Caucasian groups is highly unlikely. The Chechens are generally not preoccupied with the United States. However, one has to consider if the Chechens do become more involved with the larger global jihadi network, whether they may consider attacking the US homeland. With that considered, one would still conclude that an attack in the US homeland is highly unlikely and would probably be very unpopular inside Chechnya. In fact, CE's command has recently stated that the larger confederated network did not have anything to do with planning, coordinating, or financing the attacks in Boston.[x] Doku Umarov has also recently ordered his units and all jihadist elements inside the Caucasus not to attack civilians[xi] and he has emphasized that his organization has no conflict with the United States.[xii] Additionally, Chechnya's Moscow backed president, Ramzan Kadyrov has commented on the Boston attacks stating that there is no link with the suspects to Chechnya and that these actions must be blamed on American influences.[xiii] The CE, however, has reports on its website claiming that Russia is to blame for these attacks, and that Ramzan Kadyrov himself may have ordered the terrorist strike.[xiv]

Although the CE has stated that it has no conflict with the US, and will not harm any civilians, including Russians, this has not always been the case.[xv] Thus, these statements should not be trusted fully, though their implications may last at least temporarily. Soon after the establishment of the CE, Doku Umarov is noted for having stated:

> "Today in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somali and Palestine our brothers are fighting. Those who attack Muslims, whoever or wherever they are, are our enemy. Our enemy is not just Russia but also America, England, Israel, for all of them are the enemy of Islam and Muslims."[xvi]

The US has continually condemned Russia for its human rights abuses inside Chechnya. Further, Chechens have a closer and far more worrisome matter on its hands than the United States. The CE and nationalist groups inside Chechnya direct most of their concerns towards combating the Russian Federation. Especially with the 2014 Winter Olympics approaching, it can be hypothesized that their efforts are being solely directed at targeting those sporting events, or planning other attacks inside and around Russia.[xvii] It is likely, however, that US military,

security, and perhaps government forces that are combating jihadist elements worldwide will face a continued threat from individuals from the Chechen area; wherever the US goes, so too will some elements from regions of the world with jihadist connections. The US has already faced these foes from the Caucasus in both Iraq and Afghanistan,[xviii] and will perhaps continue to see so as well. We can also safely predict that where there is a jihadist foothold, or where there is a chance of gaining ground for Islamist forces, some Chechens will be found there as is recently reported in the Syrian Civil War.[xix]

The larger threat emanating from Chechnya is not against the US, but Russia itself. Chechnya is currently under the control of Moscow, which has given authoritarian powers and total control to rule Chechnya as a ruthless warlord to President Ramzan Kadyrov. He is a brutal leader and bribery, mass killings, missing persons, kid napping, narco-trafficking, sex trafficking, and Wahhabist Islam are rampant within Chechnya. Moscow keeps Kadyrov in power because he eliminates, with almost no provocation needed, any threats to Russia, which of course would be threats to his power. It is understood that any threats made to Moscow, will be mirrored by Moscow's threats to remove Kadyrov from power. To keep personal power, President Kadyrov keeps an authoritarian lid on Chechnya to prevent any attacks, and with few exceptions, he is largely successful. However, Kadyrov has his challenges, mainly from Chechens who still envision an independent country, and from more radical jihadists that believe Kadyrov is the pawn of Russian infidels. There is a greater emerging threat of an ethnic Chechen civil war where the Kadyrov regime faces off against the jihadists.[xx] His continued leadership cannot be counted to last much longer. He may also evolve more toward the Islamists vision if he believes he is losing power; if this occurs, he could turn his forces against Russia and other states. This is only a conjecture, however.

To back up this authoritarian control, Moscow pumps billions of dollars annually into Chechnya, hoping to provide a materialist and consumerist culture that will make it seem futile to attack the hand that provides food. Russia seems to hope that by buying Chechnya off and making its economy appear booming, the lure of Wahhabist influence will not be so appealing. In short, Russia is trying to make Chechnya the Abu-Dhabi of the Caucasus. However, Russia is mistaken: you cannot buy out those individuals that want to be a part of the Chechen Jihadist Network. Their ultimate goals are to establish a worldwide Islamic Caliphate, dominated by Islam under a theocratic-authoritarian government, where Shari'a law is the law of the land. These are the Chechens the US should be concerned about and these are the Chechens that cannot be bought out by any amount of money. *If* the Boston Bombers are connected to any larger group concerning Chechnya, this is the group; and if they have set their eyes on America, then we should be concerned. However, this connection is unlikely.

If the United States has any potential threat from the Caucasus, that percent is perhaps less than 1% of the total population. What is concerning to US security about this 1% is that it is not just

men who have become violently radicalized, but women (and perhaps children) too. We must not forget about the infamous black widows (women relatives of dead Chechens rebels who struck against Russia with deadly suicide terrorism.) Secondly, and very importantly, there is a centuries-long culture of personal vendetta in Chechnya. It is culturally accepted and actually even encouraged in some regions that if someone harms your family, you will harm them back. The possibility of vendetta killings against United States officials and civilians in retaliation for the death of Tamerlan Tsarnae and the capture of Dzhokhar cannot be ruled out. Even if the individuals who committed the terrorist acts in Boston were not connected with the larger Jihadist network in Chechnya, people that knew these two individuals in Boston may want revenge. This is something the Wahhabist element in Chechnya could take advantage of.

Next, there are two potential groups of violent actors in Chechnya right now: the Chechen nationalist movement, and the Chechen Jihadist movement. The Chechen nationalist movement is, for all intent and purposes, diminished. Even the majority of the Chechen population that once supported this cause are worn out from twenty years of violence, and now, only want the appearance of peace and some stability and prosperity. The Religious Wahhabist element does not want peace and security or stability and prosperity. They want an independent Chechnya to create an Islamic Caliphate that extends to all areas the Prophet ever had any interest in. These people are the real threat and they are the ones usually found on foreign battlefields.

What the US should really fear is the "perfect storm": some event causing the two sides to join forces. Currently, they fight against one another and Chechnya has always been on the verge of an "ethnic civil war." Russia knows this, which is why they give so much power to Kadyrov and tolerate his rule. This will not last; he will eventually be overthrown, and violence will return as is usually the case when ethnic tensions are checked with totalitarian powers. There is a very small percentage of Chechens that ought to concern the U.S., who they are can be predicted based on certain indicators. They are brutally fierce warriors that usually do not back down from a fight. They do not traditionally like to use suicide bombings (though this has been changing in the last decade) because they believe that is cowardly and does not bring as much honor to their ethno-nation as does standing their ground until the last possible moment. Chechnya is a culture where honor and family name are crucially important. It is also a culture where military and martial arts are highly prized, recognized and rewarded. It is a culture where boys are taught to remember how and by whose hands their male ancestors were killed. And if necessary and opportune, they might remember these facts for sinister purposes.

The US should not fear nor be frightened by Chechnya, nor the average Chechen. However, it must not be overlooked that the Chechens are some of the fiercest warriors and if they set their targets on the United States, it must be concerned. They are not your typical terrorists, and as previously stated, they will not back down. The likelihood that the region poses a strategic terrorist threat to the United States however, is minimal if existent at all.

[i] See Gordon M. Hahn, "Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report (IIPER)." No. 66, 28, March 2013.
[ii] See for instance, Ambassador Marc Ginsberg, "A Field Guide to Jihadi Dagestan and Chechnya." Huffington Post, April 22, 2013; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amb-marc-ginsberg/a-field-guide-to-jihadi-d_b_3134852.html. Accessed on April 24, 2013.
[iii] See Hahn, Gordon M. 2011 (August). "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right: A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program." Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
[iv] Ibid.
[v] "Understanding Chechnya, Jihad, and the Region's Deep Ties with Al-Qaeda: Q&A with Leon Aron. http://www.aei-ideas.org/2013/04/understanding-chechnya-jihad-and-the-regions-deep-ties-with-al-qaeda-qa-with-leon-aron/. Accessed on April 24, 2013.
[vi] Both now deceased.
[vii] See, http://news.usni.org/2013/04/19/bombing-methodology-identical-to-chechen-rebels-motivation-unclear. Assessed April 25, 2013.
[viii] Ginsberg, "A Field Guide."
[ix] For an understanding of Chechen Wahhabism, see, Speckhard and Akhmedova, 2006. "The New Chechen Jihad: Militant Wahhabism as a Radical Movement and a Source of Suicide Terrorism in Post-War Chechen Society." Democracy and Security, 2: 103-155.
[x] See, http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2013/04/21/17679.shtml. Accessed April 24, 2013.
[xi] See, http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2012/02/03/15745.shtml. Accessed April 24, 2013.
[xii] In a statement posted on a website loyal to the CE, a commander states that, "The Command of the Province of Dagestan indicates in this regard that the Caucasian Mujahideen are not fighting against the United States of America. We are at war with Russia, which is not only responsible for the occupation of the Caucasus, but also for heinous crimes against Muslims. See, http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2013/04/21/17679.shtml. Accessed on April 24, 2013.
[xiii] See, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/19/kadyrov-chechen-president-boston-bombing_n_3116698.html. Accessed April 24, 2013.
[xiv] See, http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2013/04/23/17694.shtml. Accessed April 24, 2013.
[xv] In fact, there may be a larger connection to Caucasian jihadist in the United States, and Boston more specifically. See J.M. Berger, "Boston's Jihadi Past." Foreign Policy, April 22, 2013: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/22/bostons_jihadist_past. Accessed on April 24, 2013.
[xvi] It should be noted that there are many more examples of American threats spoken by CE leaders. See, Dmitry Shlapentokh, 2010. "The Rise of the Russian Khalifat: The View from the Jihadist Side." *Iran and the Caucasus*, 14: 120.
[xvii] I am not alone in thinking that these will be particularly dangerous games: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323735604578439053611428368.html. Accessed April 24, 2013.
[xviii] See Hahn, Gordon M. 2011 (August). "Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right: A Report of the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program." Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
[xix] See, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/06/syria-war-rebels-chechnya-islamic-militants_n_2821197.html. Assessed April 24, 2013. See also Gordon M. Hahn, "Islam, Islamism and Politics in Eurasia Report (IIPER)." No. 66, 28, March 2013.
[xx] In fact, this is already occurring in Chechnya's mountains as new operations have started with Moscow-backed Chechen forces attacking jihadist camps: http://www.refworld.org/docid/5146e97c2.html. Accessed on April 24, 2013.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And sir, and again, Mr. Migranyan.

STATEMENT OF ANDRANIK MIGRANYAN, PH.D., DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND COOPERATION

Mr. MIGRANYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. But you have to punch your button there. Thank you for joining us today. And we really appreciate hearing from a point of view that we wouldn't hear otherwise. And I think we should. So you may proceed.

Mr. MIGRANYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a privilege for me to be here and to share some views concerning Russia's perception concerning all these events which happened in Boston. First of all, I would like to emphasize that these attacks in Boston have provoked feelings of solidarity with the American people, and especially with the citizens of Boston among the Russian people and the Russian leadership. And this is the second time when President Putin, after 9/11, expressed his readiness immediately to cooperate with American authorities in order to find out what happened and how we can eradicate the reasons and causes which brought these tragedies. But what is in Russia, you know, in Russia there was, of course, a kind of, you know, uneasiness during these previous two decades when Russia was fighting against Chechen terrorists, and Russia didn't get enough understanding, empathy, and support from its western partners. And this is something which really is in the public opinion, and in the mood of politicians. And by the way, yesterday Putin, in his direct line with the people, for 5 hours he was talking to the people, he talked a lot about this event in Boston and terrorism.

And he said that Russia was the victim of international terrorism in Russia from Middle Eastern countries, from other places, Muslim radicals and terrorists were coming and supporting Chechen terrorists, and unfortunately, our western partners were very, you know, reserved in order to express their support.

And this is, I think, one of the reasons is that even now when you look at the coverage of the events in Boston, a lot of people are talking about Stalin's deportations, about psychological problems concerning these people who grew up, and about these injustices which Russian authorities executed against the people indirectly trying to justify some motives. But you know, I think America now is faced with this home-grown terrorism, I think it is becoming more and more aware that without—you know, no motives can justify the terrorism and mass killings of innocent civilians independently, because no retaliation can be justified if some governments are acting in some places like the Tsarnaev brothers were talking about America's war in Iraq or Afghanistan, and maybe that is the reason why they acted this way.

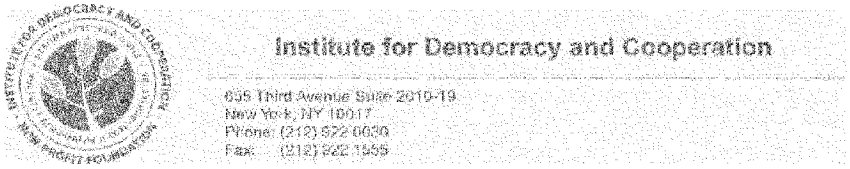
And another important problem is that, of course, Russia wanted to get back and have extradited some leaders of Chechen terrorists from the UK and from the United States. For example, Akhmed Zakayev was in United Kingdom, and now still is there. He is self-proclaimed prime minister of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Or Ilyas Akhmadov, by the way, who is the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, by the way he got asylum in Boston when he left Russia. And unfortunately, neither Amer-

ican nor British sides, you know, cooperated with Russia in order to extradite those terrorists who are considered in Russia as terrorists. But the problem is that, I would like to say, that Chechen terrorists cross the border of Russia, and now we have information in the Russian Secret Services and Russian media that Chechens are fighting in Afghanistan, and they are fighting against Americans. They are fighting against NATO.

You mentioned that they are members of some groups in Europe. They are now fighting in Syria. And American politicians and the American media are supportive of some groups of these rebels who are fighting against a legitimate government in that country, which means that we heard that some fighters over there, they are putting the signs that we are fighting today here, and if we win, then we are going to fight in Russia, returning back to Russia. But summing up what I said, in Russia, the general mood is that we have to understand that we Russians have a common interest and overlapping interests with the United States. And we have disagreements, and after Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib not everyone in Russia believes that the American Secret Services consist of knights on white horses. But our imperfections should not prevent us from realizing that we are facing a common enemy, and to cooperate against it is both common sense and inherently moral.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much for that testimony.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Migranyan follows:]



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House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats

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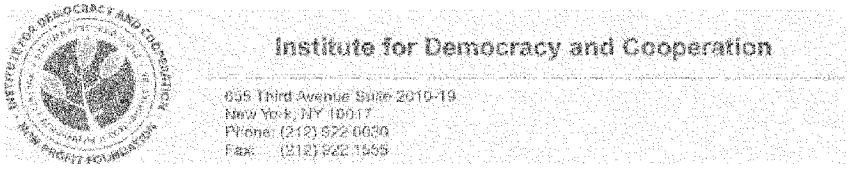

Testimony on Russian-American Relations on the Question of Chechnya

Before the U.S. Congress

A. Migranyan

U.S.-Russian relations on Chechnya have a complicated history. And, unfortunately, for a long time, there has been a common lack of understanding of the events in Chechnya. By contrast, immediately following 9/11, the Russian side expressed readiness for active cooperation with the Bush Administration against Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other Islamist terrorist groups.

America has failed to understand Chechen terrorism until it faced homegrown terrorism on its own soil: over the years, the media and political circles invoked the activities of Russian and Soviet authorities from decades past to explain Chechen acts of terrorism against Russia as retaliation for injustice. American homegrown terrorists also claim to retaliate against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, or alleged U.S. war against Islam, but no American would buy this excuse to justify the slaughter of civilians. The point of departure in our cooperation should be that terrorism against innocent civilians cannot be justified, no matter what.

The Russian side has never received full understanding on the part of its American partners of its fight against Chechen terrorism. Russian actions in Chechnya were primarily criticized in the Western media, and in Western political circles, as they were seen through the prism of human rights violations and the excessive use of force. There was a potent attempt to separate the American fight against Islamist terrorism from the Russian fight against Chechen terrorism that took place within Russia's borders.

In addition, Russian efforts to get extradition orders for some Chechen terrorist leaders that moved to the UK, such as Akhmed Zakayev, self-proclaimed Prime Minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (Chechen separatists call Chechnya "Ichkeria"), or to the U.S., such as Ilyas Akhmadov, Foreign Minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, who, by the way, was granted asylum in Boston, received neither understanding nor support by the American and British sides. As if that

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were not enough, sadly, many Western countries preferred to call the terrorists and cut-throats "freedom fighters" oppressed by the Russian authorities.

This last point was articulated by President Putin in his annual direct line with the public on April 25th. He was translated by the Russian media as having said, "I was always appalled when our Western partners and the Western media called the terrorists, who did bloody crimes in our country, 'insurgents', and almost never 'terrorists.' They [the terrorists] were receiving help, informational, financial and political support. Sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. And we were saying that we must do the job and not be content with declarations proclaiming terrorism a common threat. Those two have proved our position all too well"

The attacks by the Tsarnaev brothers in Boston, as well as the 9/11 attacks, have provoked feelings of solidarity with the American people and especially with the citizens of Boston among the Russian people and Kremlin leadership. Just as he did in 2001, President Putin expressed his readiness to cooperate with the U.S. government to uncover all the details that led to the tragedy in Boston and, as far as I know, the secret services of both countries are now actively working together on this.

It is crucial to point out that the Russian side and Russian secret services tracked the contacts of the Tsarnaevs and turned to the American authorities so that they could investigate them. Unfortunately, the evident remaining distrust between the two countries and the doubts of the American side that Russia is indeed combating Chechen terrorism in the Caucasus must have caused the authorities to not take the warning seriously enough. Today, we no longer need to strive to convince anyone that Chechen terrorism has crossed the borders of Russia. The people of Boston felt it for themselves. The Russian media and Russian secret services have information of Chechen Islamists and Islamists from other regions of the North Caucasus having joined the ranks of jihadists in various parts of the world. There is even information that they fight in Syria on the side of the opposition and against the legitimate government.

I would like to believe that after the tragedy in Boston, the two countries and their secret services will be able to overcome, even if only a little, the distrust between them when it comes to evaluating terrorist threats, and that there will no longer be a dividing of terrorists into "good" and "bad," "ours" and "theirs." I would also like to believe that our secret services will work together even

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more closely in the fight against the terrorist threat, which, like a tumor, metastasizes around much of the globe.

We have to understand that Russia and the U.S. have overlapping interests, but also disagreements. After Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, not everyone in Russia believes that American secret services consist of knights on white horses. But our imperfections should not prevent us from realizing that we are facing a common enemy, and to cooperate against it is both common sense and inherently moral.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And we recognize the frustration of someone who sees acts of terrorism being committed against his own people that are very clear, and not the outrage and attitude here that we would expect, that he would expect from a decent people such as the people of the United States. We will go into that in the question and answer section. Mr. Royce? We are very pleased to have the chairman of the full committee, Ed Royce. Ed, would you like to make a statement?

Mr. ROYCE. You know, I appreciate that opportunity, Mr. Chairman, but I think I will defer and allow the witnesses each to testify. And then if I might, I might ask a question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. We will put you up front. And finally, Dr. Freizer.

STATEMENT OF SABINE FREIZER, PH.D., DIRECTOR, EUROPE PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

Ms. FREIZER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and ranking members, for the opportunity to present today. I want to commend the subcommittee for focusing their attention on the North Caucasus during such a critical time. A few words about Crisis Group. Crisis Group is an independent, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that provides field-based analysis, policy advice, and recommendations to governments, the United Nations, the European Union, and other multilateral organizations on the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. Ambassador Thomas Pickering is our current chairman, and Louise Arbour, former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and also the former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights is our current president.

Crisis Group began a North Caucasus project in 2012, and has written two background reports that were published in October. The first report is called "The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration, Ethnicity and Conflict." And the second report is called "The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration, Islam, the Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency." I would respectfully ask that these reports be incorporated into the committee record.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Without objection.i

Ms. FREIZER. Thank you. A third report, which will come out early this summer, will look at the institutional causes of conflict in the North Caucasus. And that report will also have a series of recommendations on how to deal with the violence in the North Caucasus. I should say that our staff travels frequently to the North Caucasus, throughout the region, talking to a very large of different interlocutors. I understand that these hearings take place in the aftermath of the Boston bombings, and I would like to also express the condolences of International Crisis Group, of all our staff working around the world, for these events.

There are two primary causes for conflict in the North Caucasus. It is ethnic conflict and the Islamic insurgency. Let me discuss a little bit by talking about the ethnic conflict. During the early 1990s, separatists sought full independence for Chechnya, but the failure of their state-building project and their expanded use of armed force, including of terrorism, brought a massive, and at

times, indiscriminate Russian response during two wars in Chechnya. Since 2003, the situation in Chechnya has largely stabilized, with a process of Chechenisation by the Russian Government, which means handing over most economic and political power to local Chechen authorities. But having said that, several interethnic conflicts continue to exist in the region. Sometimes these do lead to violence. Very often they are about land and they are about control of power, local power and economic resources. But we also see some conflicts between some of the republics, for example, between Chechnya and Ingushetia, between Ingushetia and North Ossetia. So you still see tensions at the local level which are primarily ethnic-based.

The other main source of conflict, which is the one that I think is the main issue of today, is the insurgency. Now, what we should say is that the insurgency feeds off the ethnic conflicts. So a lot of young people who in the past 20 years ago might have joined ethnic movements or nationalist movements now choose instead to join the insurgency. The main organization that is mobilizing the insurgency is the Caucasus Emirates, the Imarat Kavkaz, which was proclaimed in 2007 as a final step of the transformation of the Chechen separatist movement into a regional-wide Islamist project. It is recognized as a terrorist organization by Russia and by the United States and by many others. It operates across the North Caucasus, attracting youth of all different types of ethnicities. Predominantly, it attacks Federal forces and local police, but also civil servants and religious leaders. It has a unified force, a unified cause, a very strong structure with a leadership. Predominantly it is local. Predominantly it is local funded. And it has predominantly local aspirations.

Today, rarely a day goes by without an attack in Russia. Some 750 people were killed in 2011, and almost the same number were killed in 2012. So far this year, just in the Republic of Dagestan, 67 people were killed. We will all remember, of course, the bombing of the Domodedovo Airport in Moscow in January 2011 that killed 37. The vast majority of attacks are against security services, local officials, and traditional clergy. In February 2012, the head of the Caucasus Emirates said that he will no longer be targeting civilians. However, of course, in attacks against officials and security services, there are important civilian casualties.

The government's main response until now has been a very tough focus on eradicating the insurgency with a massive security presence. For example, just a few days ago, between the 11th and 21st of April, there was a major security operation in Dagestan in the village of Guimudih, which resulted in the displacement of 5,000 people. But the Russian Government has also began to open some room, and started applying a longer term comprehensive approach to counterterrorism. And I believe that it is this approach that should be supported.

Finally, the North Caucasus integration into the rest of Russia is essential for security and for healthy ethnic relations in the country. The spread of violence from Chechnya to neighboring republics, high losses among civilians, military, and the insurgents, and deteriorating ethnic relations countrywide indicate more effec-

tive and comprehensive approaches are needed to deal with these very complex root causes of the conflict. Thank you very much.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Freizer follows:]

Testimony by Dr. Sabine Freizer, Europe Program Director, International Crisis Group to the Joint hearing on "Islamist Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat to the U.S. Homeland?" of the Subcommittees on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, and Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs

26 April, 2013

I would like to express my appreciation to Chairman Dana Rohrabacher and Ranking Member William R. Keating of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats and Chairman Ted Poe and Ranking Member Brad Sherman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade for the opportunity to testify this morning. I want to commend the subcommittees for focusing their attention on the North Caucasus during this critical time.

Crisis Group is an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that provides field-based analysis, policy advice and recommendations to governments, the United Nations, the European Union and other multilateral organizations on the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. Crisis Group was founded in 1995 by distinguished diplomats, statesmen and opinion leaders including Career Ambassador Mort Abramowitz, Nobel Prize winner and former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, late Congressman Stephen Solarz, and former UN and British diplomat Mark Malloch Brown who were deeply concerned at the international community's failure to anticipate and respond effectively to mass atrocities in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Ambassador Thomas Pickering is our current chairman. Louise Arbour, former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia, and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is our current president. In 2011, Crisis Group was awarded the Eisenhower Medal for Leadership and Service.

Crisis Group publishes around 90 reports and briefing papers annually, as well as a monthly CrisisWatch bulletin. Our staff is located on the ground in ten regional offices, and sixteen other locations, covering between them over 60 countries and focused on conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. We maintain advocacy and research offices in Brussels (our global headquarters), Washington and New York. We have liaison offices in London, Beijing and Moscow.

Crisis Group began a North Caucasus Project based out of Moscow in 2012 and produced two background reports last October, *"The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration, Ethnicity and Conflict" and "The North Caucasus: the Challenges of Integration, Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency."* I would respectfully ask that these reports be incorporated into the

Committee record. A third report will look at the institutional cases of conflict and will be published in early summer and include recommendations. Our staff has carried out field research throughout the North Caucasus region.

I understand that these hearings take place in the aftermath of the horrendous bombing that occurred in Boston on April 15 and Crisis Group joins with others to express our condolences to the many victims.

There are two primary threats to peace and security in the North Caucus: ethnic conflict and Islamist insurgency. The first involves the challenge of ethnic nationalism, most evident in Chechnya where two bloody wars caused tens of thousands of deaths in the 1990s-early 2000s. The second is the insurgency linked to fundamentalist Islam, in particular Salafism, which has been growing in the region since the end of the Soviet Union, and which is the dominant cause of violence we see today in Dagestan. Taken together, these twin threats produce deadly violence and made the North Caucasus the most dangerous region in Europe with some 700 killed in 2012. In many ways, the two conflict causes also feed off one another to complicate Moscow's effort to secure a lasting end to violent attacks and terrorism.

Let me begin by discussing the threat of ethnic conflict: During the early 1990s, separatists sought full independence for Chechnya, but the failure of their state-building project and their expanded use of armed force brought a massive and at times indiscriminate Russian response during the first Chechen war in 1994-1996. During the fight and its aftermath the Chechen nationalist cause largely transformed into an Islamist one, with a jihadi component. Skirmishes between federal forces and Chechen fighters continued after 1996 until several major acts of terror helped push Russian forces back into Chechnya and a new war that lasted from 1999-2000. After 2003, Moscow adopted a policy of Chechenisation, transferring significant political, administrative and security functions to ethnic Chechens. Today the republic has gone through a major reconstruction and loss of life has been significantly reduced.

Several inter-ethnic conflicts that developed at the end of the Soviet Union remain unresolved, continuing to fuel tensions. The Ingush-Ossetian conflict led to full-fledged war in 1992, as both groups asserted claims over the Prigorodny district. Though Russia invested large sums to return displaced persons and rehabilitate their communities, many Ingush in Prigorodny remain unintegrated in the rest of North Ossetia and want to be part of Ingushetia. Exclusionary historical narratives and competition over land and decision-making have fueled conflicts in other multi-ethnic republics, especially Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Stavropol Krai. Some of the groups maintain maximalist aspirations, wanting to change Russia's internal borders and establish new ethnically-identified entities.

Inter-ethnic tensions do not today threaten major violence, but they may grow with the recent revival of national movements that were particularly strong in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Though political parties based on national or religious identity are prohibited, a new law simplifying registration is likely to make it easier for politicians with nationalist agendas to infiltrate small parties. Already groups such as the Nogays, Kumyks, and Lezgins in Dagestan, the Circassians and the Cossacks are sharpening their organizational capacities. Their political demands largely focus on rehabilitation and justice, state support for native language and culture, greater support for economic development, greater autonomy and access to land. Tensions are

beginning to appear where the legal framework is not sufficient to address complaints, existing laws are not implemented, and police and local administrative capacity are perceived as ethnically biased and corrupt.

Many of these disputes and tensions feed into the Islamist insurgency. Some members of the younger generation -- who twenty years ago would have joined nationalist movements to address their grievances -- have become disenchanted with those movements and are instead joining the Islamist insurgency.

The second threat of Islamist insurgency: The Caucasus Emirate (Imarat Kavkaz) was proclaimed in 2007 as a final step of the transformation of the Chechen separatist movement into a region-wide radical Islamist project. It is recognized as a terrorist organization by Russia and the U.S. among others. It operates across the North Caucasus, attracting youth of all ethnicities, and attacking not only federal forces and local police, but also civil servants and elites who disagree with its fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. This unified force, with its own cause, modes of operation and communication, funding sources, leadership and cadre is behind most of the armed clashes and terrorist acts that haunt local communities.

A day rarely goes by without an attack on a Russian security official or the killing of an alleged insurgent in a counter-terrorist operation. Some 750 people were killed in 2011, and almost the same number again in 2012. Much of the original Islamist insurgency leadership has been killed by security forces and replaced with a much younger, less experienced and unified cadre. The insurgency is less able to carry out large, spectacular acts of terror or engage in lengthy battles with Russian military forces. But since 1996 at least 26 major attacks have been committed in Moscow with at least 627 killed and 934 injured in Moscow alone. As recently as January 2011 a suicide bomber killed 37 at Moscow's Domodedovo airport. In May 2012 a double bombing in Dagestan's capital Makhachkala killed thirteen civilians and injured over 100.

The vast majority of attacks now occur in the North Caucasus and are against security services, local officials and traditional clergy. They tend to involve improvised explosive devices (IEDs), shootings and, at times, suicide bombers. In February 2012 the head of the Caucasus Emirate, Doku Umarov, said that his movement would no longer target civilians. Nevertheless, many attacks against officials and security services also result in civilian casualties.

Government Response: The government's main response until recently has been a tough focus on eradicating the insurgency with a massive security presence, but recently has opened some room for dialogue. While this policy has had successes, the continuing numbers of attacks and loss of life clearly demonstrate that something more is required.

To succeed in conflict resolution, Russia needs to design and implement a long-term comprehensive approach joining ethnic policies, intra-confessional dialogue between traditional Muslims and non-violent Salafis, efforts to engage and provide opportunities for young people and non-discriminatory access to services, and support the work of committees to reintegrate ex-fighters. For those who break the law through violence, intimidation and terrorism, strengthening the capacities of the police, prosecutors and judiciary also remains essential.

Some in the Russian government have come to understand the limitations of a counter-insurgency policy based solely on hard security measures. Local authorities in Dagestan have been testing a novel approach that includes dialogue with and more tolerance of moderate Salafis and negotiations to encourage insurgents to lay down their weapons and reintegrate into peaceful life. A similar approach in Ingushetia has significantly improved the situation since 2009.

The North Caucasus's authentic integration with the rest of Russia is essential for security and healthy ethnic relations in the country. The spread of violence from Chechnya to neighboring republics; high losses among civilians, military and the insurgents; and deteriorating ethnic relations countrywide indicate that more effective and comprehensive approaches are needed to deal with the root causes of deadly conflict.

Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And we appreciate all of our witnesses today. And I am going to recognize now the chairman of the full committee for a statement or questions, whichever he chooses, and what time he would like to consume.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. One of the observations I would make is that in my conversations with Duma members from southern Russia, two physicians that I can think of, both Muslims from Dagestan, they shared with me the way in which this Chechen al-Qaeda-linked organization was going house to house in their state, which neighbors Chechnya, and giving young men an option of either joining the movement, the jihad, as they called it, or killing them.

And as they related to me, this was much more than just a movement for Chechen independence, indeed it was much more ambitious, because the idea was a caliphate for the whole region, right? A caliphate—well, you see Chechens are now fighting in Afghanistan; you see them carrying out assassinations in Pakistan, certainly all over Central Asia.

And in terms of the violence in all of this, the al-Qaeda-linked groups have developed really a methodology with the use of suicide bombings that they have carried to quite an extent. You have talked about the attack on the school, where you have over 500 casualties or dead, most of them children. But this is a fairly regular occurrence in southern Russia today. Even in Moscow, when these Chechen al-Qaeda-linked fighters get into the city, it is pretty horrific what they do on the subways or in government buildings, the number of people killed.

The question going forward is with this commitment now to a wider caliphate, and given that it encompasses such a large geographical area, the attempt to convert moderate Muslims I think is a major challenge. I talked to a village leader who was Kyrgyz, and he told me about the situation in his village, where 12 young men were receiving instruction in jihad, they had agreed to go to a madrasa to get an education, but all 12 were decapitated. And he said this is not a local Kyrgyz custom in Kyrgyzstan. This is the importation or the change of a culture.

And gradually we are changing our culture to this al-Qaeda, you know, psychology, and that it is a Gulf state culture, in his mind. That is what he said. It is a Gulf state culture in terms of decapitation. But with that and with the kinds of mass killings that we are doing, we are changing culture.

I was going to ask you about that, because it is really a struggle within these societies. And the two physicians that I knew serving in the Duma felt they were losing that struggle. Just your insights.

Mr. MIGRANYAN. You know, thank you for raising this question. I would like to say that Dr. Goble was absolutely right. The situation is now much worse in Dagestan rather than in Chechnya. The problem is that Dagestan is multiethnic. There is serious strained relationships between different ethnics groups. It is more prone to Wahhabism. And Wahhabism is coming from Saudi Arabia. And the money is coming, the people are coming from there. And the power is very weak. And this is the problem which you, I think, can understand. You have a strong man in Chechnya, Akhmad Kadyrov, and no terrorist acts, or at least almost no terrorist acts.

And you have weak institutions with power in Dagestan, and you have a lot of them every day practically, and a lot of losses. Which means this is the problem of security and democracy.

Mr. ROYCE. I think it might be a little more complicated than that. Because we are looking at terrorist attacks not just in these two states, but in many states across southern Russia, and in Moscow as well. And with all the security in Moscow, they are not able to protect the subways, they are not able to protect—you had an observation.

Mr. GOBLE. I just want to say that what we are seeing——

Mr. ROYCE. Push your button.

Mr. GOBLE. Excuse me. What we are seeing is an effort to recruit people who identify themselves as Muslims. But the effort to recruit people who are committed Muslims, that is people who really know about Islam, has failed, even in Dagestan. That where the Saudi missionaries have been most successful is in areas where people don't know very much about Islam. They identify as Islam, but someone else is telling them what it means. This is a huge problem, because if you see people acquire more Islamic knowledge—there is a view here in this country that as people learn more about a religion, they will tend to become more fundamentalist. The fact is as people learn more about a religion, they become more committed to whatever the religion teaches, and they become protected against efforts to change their direction.

In the case of the people of the North Caucasus and Central Asia, and the something between 15 and 18 million Muslim population elsewhere in the Russian Federation, what we have are people who do not have that kind of training, and therefore are more susceptible for recruitment. I think it is very important to understand that, that there is a process of immunization. I know many, many Muslims in Tatarstan in the Middle Volga. Those who know a very great deal about Islam are able to say absolutely no to the missionaries coming from Saudi Arabia. The people who know much less about Islam are far more likely to be recruited because they are waiting for someone to tell them what it means.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Goble. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes. And we now recognize Mr. Brad Sherman, ranking member on the Terrorism Subcommittee, for his opening statement.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Those who have seen me on this committee have seen me use my question time to pontificate. When I am just filled with so many questions, I am going to lay some out now using my pontification time to lay out some questions, and I will invite the panel to respond later.

One relates to the history of the area where we are told that Stalin deported the entire Chechen population, but this raises the question how many people were deported, how many returned, and who in the heck was living in Chechnya in the meantime, and how were they persuaded to leave?

We see an over 200-year alliance between the bin Saud family and Wahhabi Islam. And I think it may go beyond this hearing, I mean, but this is both an alliance and very dangerous to the Saudi royal family since most of those who want to kill the leaders of

Saudi Arabia are motivated by an Islam that seems also indistinguishable, to me, to the Islam that is being funded by and propagated by money that comes from the gulf and either with the permission of or out of the pockets of the Saudi royal family.

I am going to be asking what are the training facilities in Chechnya and Dagestan? We all knew that al-Qaeda was operating in Afghanistan, taking in people from all over the world, training thousands of them. Is there anything even on a smaller scale in Chechnya, Dagestan? We saw these brothers be, unfortunately, effective in the bombing and incredibly amateurish after the bombing, and so it would be interesting so see whether they got any training beyond what they saw on the Internet for the bombing. And we won't know that in these hearings, but perhaps we will know whether there is a mini al-Qaeda, which means the base—is there a training base for extremist Islam in the Chechen region.

I am—I think I will save the rest of my questions for question time and yield back.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

And we will now proceed to our questions and dialogue. Let me begin by saying that years ago—and just to relay the story, years ago, I think it was in 2004, the Chechen terrorists took over a school—is it Beslan, is that how you pronounce it—in Russia, Chechnya—is that city part of Chechnya, or is it just part of Russia? It is a Russian city, a Russia school. And the terrorists there murdered—in the end 180 children lost their lives, children.

And I remember calling the White House personally, and I talked directly to Condoleezza Rice and told her, now is the time that we can establish a close, and new, and positive relationship with Russia and recruit them to work with us in areas of mutual interest that we couldn't do before; now is the time for us to stand with these folks. And I said, send President Bush over there to stand next to Putin and say that Americans stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Russia and, yes, the Government of Russia in opposing and defeating those who had murdered children in order to obtain their political ends. As we have seen in Boston, the young man who put the bomb down did so right behind an 8-year-old boy.

Now, the answer was evident that, no, the President didn't go there. Let us also note that how many people here know that the Russians have built a monument in memory of the people who were killed, the Americans killed in 9/11—how many know that right across from where the World Trade Center was looking across the bay there is beautiful monument that was built by the Russian people and the Russian Government expressing solidarity, and the sorrow and heartache of seeing their people, ordinary people, Americans and citizens, old people and young people losing their lives like this to a terrorist attack?

Well, today I would hope that what happened in Boston and the fact that it related directly back to Russia and Chechnya in terms of there is a line we can draw, that I hope that that will motivate us to work with Russia in order to defeat those who would murder children in order to obtain their goals.

Now, the Chechen independence movement was originally secular and nationalist. What I am talking about is I do not understand how radical Islam talking about God and Allah, as they say,

that they seem to be the ones who justify acts and make legitimate acts of murdering innocent people who are noncombatants and targeting noncombatants; not targeting the army of someone, but targeting noncombatants. That is being done to terrorize us into submitting to some of their radical religious thought, I guess. But in the beginning the Chechen independence movement was secular and nationalist. Now it appears that radical Islamists' ideology is pretty much dominating that independence movement.

These are people who now this radical Islamic ideology makes a common jihad against Christians, Jews and Hindus throughout the world. Where did that come from? How did that happen? I am asking the panel. And was this—the financing of Wahhabi extremism and financing of these mosques, did that have something to do with this? And what kind of threat in the future?

And also let me note they didn't permit in Uzbekistan the Saudis to come in and build their mosques. They were criticized here as that is a violation of their human rights. But we know that the Saudi purpose of doing this was to develop a brand of Islam that will target and kill children.

So, number one, how did it become this radical ideology, and is there a way to counter that? And is Uzbekistan wrong, and are we right to condemn Uzbekistan for not allowing them to build their mosques?

Mr. Goble is really anxious here. Go right ahead.

Mr. GOBLE. As someone who was quite involved with Dzhokhar Dudayev, who, after all, prevented the killing of Boris Yeltsin in January 1991 and also prevented the killing—extension killings from Vilnius and Riga to go to Tallinn at that time, I can testify that the Chechen national movement was completely secular.

The process by which you saw a change is not that the entire movement changed, but the part that got attention changed. It was a product of, I believe, three different factors. The first was that the Chechen national movement, as articulated by Dzhokhar Dudayev, believed that Chechens as a nation had a right to independence, the same way the Estonians or the Latvians or anyone else. That was his personal belief. When the Chechens did not get any support for their position in the West, they began looking for support elsewhere. Disappointed in our not having supported us, they turned to look at the people—the only people who were prepared to say they were supporting them.

Second, I mentioned some numbers about the people, the number of people going on the haj. This is a good indication of how intense you have. Over the last 22 years, Chechens have formed roughly 40 percent of hajis coming from the Russian Federation, even though the Chechens form less than 1 percent of population of the Russian Federation. So you have a lot of people being exposed.

And third thing is there has been money, real money, coming in from the Saudis, and not just the Saudis, a number of other people, too, to build various kinds of things.

I would argue that there is still a Chechen national movement which is committed to a secular and free Chechnya. Unfortunately, it gets very little attention, and it gets very little attention in Chechnya because it has been so unsuccessful. When people are unsuccessful, when the people they hope will be their allies don't

turn out to be, it is not surprising that they turn to other people who were willing to support them. And, unfortunately, some of the people they turn to in this instance have, as you have quite properly pointed out, truly criminal and immoral agendas.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me just note, and then I will go to the ranking member, just say I can't imagine if a number of Western countries where people would be so committed to their national independence, and they were so frustrated that they weren't getting outside support, that they would go to ally themselves with those who want them and help them murder large numbers of children. I don't—you know, this is not an excuse. Them not getting supports from the United States or from people who believe in democracy is no excuse to help people who are willing to murder—to target children.

Mr. GOBLE. Mr. Chairman, I was not seeking to find an excuse. I am just trying to provide and explanation, an answer, because it is absolutely true. What was tragic is that those people who recognized what was going on were almost entirely ignored, and that there was a lot that could have been done and should have been done and wasn't done.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. All right.

Mr. GOBLE. I certainly do not believe that we are—we bear responsibility, either then or now, for what happened.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Keating.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Migranyan, given your familiarity actually with the Russian Government, I have a question. The FBI investigating the Boston Marathon bombing received information from Russia, but then they sought additional information after their investigation. Can you speak or shed some light on maybe the culture that exists with law enforcement and with security officials in both countries? And can you comment on how it could be improved perhaps?

Mr. MIGRANYAN. My opinion is that—but this is my guess—when I called to Moscow yesterday to talk to some high-ranking people over there because CNN wanted me to comment about these contacts between security forces, they said, no, no, they are working now, they are cooperating, and we are not going to make any comments on this.

But my personal guess is that this is the problem of distrust between our countries and our security forces. I am afraid that when Russian security and law enforcement agencies asked FBI to look at these guys, by inertia, you know, in this country and in the West still is the dominant idea that the Russian authorities are oppressing them; this is some Russian plot; this is not terrorism, it is something else. That is why I am afraid that they just didn't pay enough attention to these warnings on behalf of Russia. As a result of this—as I said in my preliminary statement, there is a kind of among Russian law enforcement authorities and especially the political circles—and I know them very well, being in Presidential Council and working with all this administration—since 2001, there is a deep feeling of betrayal, you know, because Putin was the first to talk to Bush. Putin offered every opportunity which Russia had and very strongly cooperated in fighting against Taliban and al-Qaeda, and in response Russia—I remember the

spirit showed the situation in Russia at that time. Everybody was thinking that at least we are finishing it and putting back this Cold War, all our distrust, and we are going to cooperate.

Mr. KEATING. I understand. One of the things we want to perhaps come of this is a better opportunity to have security advisors and law enforcement work more closely despite our differences, as difficult as they can be at times, because on both—in both countries lives could be lost in the homeland as well, particularly with groups like the Caucasus Emirates, they are terrorist groups.

I had a quick question, though, for Dr. Freizer if I could, too. We are getting reports that—you know, there are posters coming up in the North Caucasus area and actual support or support for the terrorists that conducted the Boston Marathon bombings. I don't know what information you might have in those reports, but this is unusual that there is so much attention focused on the U.S., negative attention. Can you comment on what you might think, in your opinion, in your work with your group; is there a different viewpoint now toward the United States?

Ms. FREIZER. In our reporting so far, we have not really looked at the Russian-United States relationship as relates to the North Caucasus, so I can only answer this question partially.

What I can say is that in its statement of last week, what the Caucasus Emirates clearly said is that they are not at war with the United States. So it is not the ambition of the North Caucasus insurgency and terrorist organization Caucasus Emirates to extend its war to the United States, or really to extend it beyond the region of the Caucasus, including perhaps Central Asia.

I think that the posters that you are seeing today are, of course, very troubling, very disturbing to see that there are people in this region who are taking pleasure of what happened in Boston. Some of this might just be kind of local—local pride in terms of just family links, but, of course, this is highly unfortunate, and I don't think it really reflects on the feelings of the general population in the region.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you.

Just in closing I do appreciate Mr. Goble's efforts to distinguish Muslim religious individuals from some of these extremist groups. It is an important thing to do.

With that I will turn it back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And now Judge Poe, chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Nonproliferation.

Mr. POE. Thank you again for being here. I am a little irritated that the State Department is not here, this is an important topic. I am sure they don't have all the information yet, but they should at least show up. And it is ironic that the Russian Government helped us get a witness here to help us from that perspective. Mr. Goble, you may be the last person in the State Department that worked on this issue. Maybe that is why you are the only one here today.

But I do have some concerns. I think we have learned that radical Islamic jihadists do not come from one area in the world. They come from all over the world, and some are homegrown. Chechnya is one of those areas that we need to focus on. And we need to work with the Russian Government on what has taken place there, be-

cause what takes place there obviously has been taking place here as well, with the influence and a red line from Dagestan to the United States as far as what criminal activity, terrorist activity is taking place in our own country.

It is interesting that if Dagestan is a place where it is known it is a haven for jihadist philosophy, and it is growing, why we would not be concerned about someone that is in the United States going to that area for 6 months. I mean, what was he doing for 6 months? Who would this person—the older brother, let us call him—who could he have been meeting with to get influenced by al-Qaeda or from al-Qaeda jihadist movements? Enlighten me on that. I can tell, Mr. Goble, you want to start.

Mr. GOBLE. Well, I just want to suggest that one of the insights that Americans have brought to the appearance of terrorism is that it often—it is often bred in failed states, where there are no political institutions to run things.

It is worth noting that a week ago the new Acting President of Dagestan, Ramazan Abdulatipov, described his Republic as a failed state, as a state where political and legal institutions did not work and where he could not control the situation. This gives—this opens the door to the kinds of things we have seen elsewhere. failed states, states that cannot control their own population, that cannot operate as a state normally does, inevitably open spaces which are exploited by radicals of various kinds, and there are places, I am absolutely sure, in highland Dagestan where no outside official has ever been. It is that kind of a place, both topographically and demographically. So the possibility of someone going there for 6 months and not being exposed to radicals in one way or another strikes me as slim to none, and that is why——

Mr. POE. It is not the place you would go fishing or take a fishing trip?

Mr. GOBLE. Among other things, that is right. And it is also a place where you would expect that someone who went—that had the troubled biography this gentleman did would end up being an object of interest of not the right kind of people were he there. I am much more concerned about the 6 months in Dagestan than the fact that the man is an ethnic Chechen.

Mr. POE. Let me reclaim my time, because I don't have but 1½ minutes.

Would you think that maybe we ought to be concerned about that, especially if the Russian Government tells us two times that this is somebody that we ought to be concerned about, and all of a sudden he comes back to the United States; maybe a Customs official knew it, maybe he didn't. But wouldn't you think in the area of intelligence that ought to raise a red flag? This is not something that should have slipped under the rug, just snuck in.

Dr. Albert, I will just let you just weigh in on that question.

Mr. ALBERT. It definitely poses a concern if we didn't communicate properly that he was visiting the area to Dagestan.

I want to address the original point also of who could this person have been meeting with in Dagestan that would pose a threat, and this is particularly the organization known Shariat Jamaat, which could be a subset——

Mr. POE. How large is that organization?

Mr. ALBERT. It is not very large, but it is probably the most——

Mr. POE. How large? Give me some numbers.

Mr. ALBERT. Maybe less than 1,000 individuals, but that is just reasonable conjecture. I don't have much evidence of that, but probably around 1,000 individuals. They are actively recruiting throughout the area as well. It could be larger because it is attached to the Caucasus Emirate, as well it is a confederation of alliances around there.

Mr. POE. I am sorry, Dr. Albert, I need to interrupt you for one last question.

Is the influence of the radical jihadist movement, let us just use that phrase, in Dagestan on the increase, or is it decreasing? I know that it is something that the Russian Government is concerned about. Is it something we should be concerned about as well? Is it on the increase? That is my last question.

Mr. ALBERT. Yes, it is on the increase in Dagestan, and it is something we should be concerned about.

Mr. POE. All right. I am out of time. Sorry, Doctor.

Mr. MIGRANYAN. Not a problem.

Mr. POE. I yield back.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let us just note that I don't believe that any Americans are concerned if a country decides to have leadership that is religious, and they decide to have groups of people. What we need to be concerned about is if it happens to be a religion that convinces people that part of their faith is to go off and murder other people's children. So if they were taking over that part of that country, and they were just people who wanted to exercise their religion and worship God as they see fit, nobody here would have any objection to that at all, or their independence and their right to vote, et cetera.

Now Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. Perhaps they could reset the clock.

Does anyone have a little quick history lesson for us as to the Chechen deportations? Dr. Albert, how many people were kicked out, et cetera?

Mr. ALBERT. The entire population in 1944 was deported by Stalin. I think the numbers would be around 800,000. I believe a quarter of those died in transit, or they were deported to Central Asia. They were allowed to return—who occupied their homes earlier, I think, was a question. Russia resettled some people from the Russian mainland to their homes inside Chechnya at that time. Khrushchev eventually allowed the Chechens to come back. Some of them, for obvious reasons, chose to stay where they were. Many of them came back.

There were issues and ethnic tensions within Chechnya with the people that had resettled in their homes, as you could imagine. This is known as a great trauma or great tragedy to the ethnic identity of Chechens that this event occurred. It is something very strong in their historical memory.

Mr. SHERMAN. In 1944, there were Russians living in these homes in an area that had supported 800,000 people. Today in Chechnya how many of those Russians are still there?

Mr. MIGRANYAN. It is a good question. You know, after all these wars, there was huge propaganda comparing that the Russians are

killing and massacring all the Chechens; now practically no Russians left in Chechnya. They terrorized all of them and kicked them out.

Mr. SHERMAN. So there were tens or hundreds of thousands of Russians in Chechnya——

Mr. MIGRANYAN. 300,000 Russians lived in Chechnya.

Mr. SHERMAN [continuing]. Cleansed by this.

I want to join Mr. Rohrabacher in his call for better relations between the United States and Moscow, and point out that we granted refugee status to this family. That is something we would do only if we are claiming that they are oppressed by the Russian Government, and we see the outcome.

Who can answer the question as to what level of—you know, what are the training bases for extremist Islam in the Dagestan, Chechnya area? Is there, like, a particular site where they have hundreds of people getting military training?

Mr. MIGRANYAN. Short answer is that in 1990s, they were training over there in Chechnya, in Ingushetia, in other places because the central government was very weak. Now they are limited because practically in Chechnya—Chechnya totally is under the control of Kadyrov, and this Sufi Islam is over there traditional, which means that are limiting.

Russia's central government is trying to strengthen local presidents and local authorities, putting the security guys in Ingushetia, and now Ramazan Abdulatipov, whom I know very well. But this is a long-lasting process.

Mr. SHERMAN. One thing the Russian Government told us to watch Tamerlan. He spent 6 months in the Russian Federation. How robust is the Russian intelligence and law enforcement system in the Dagestan town where the parents live? Would we expect the Russians to keep track of this individual during those 6 months, or is this an area where the writ of the government doesn't——

Mr. MIGRANYAN. The fact that almost 2 months ago that the President of Dagestan was changed proves that really this is a failed state. Institutions are very weak. Bribery is very high, and ethnic alliance are too, too many, because too many ethnic groups, it is very hard to get lost in that mountainous places where from village to village different languages and different ethnic groups are living.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Goble.

Mr. GOBLE. There are within Dagestan 30 different mutually nonintelligible language groups. In an area of——

Mr. SHERMAN. Just in Dagestan? Not the Caucasus.

Mr. GOBLE. No, this is just in Dagestan. There are 30 different nations speaking not mutually intelligible languages. Most Dagestanis are tri- or quadrilingual as a result, because it is the only way you can function. But what that means is that in many areas it is very, very difficult from someone from the center, be it Moscow or locally from Makhachkala, to penetrate those language communities, and so a lot goes on that, quite frankly, I think no one either in Makhachkala or Moscow knows.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Meeks, you have time for a 1-minute statement on your part, and then we are going to be adjourning this hearing.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was paying attention closely to the testimony in my office and trying to multitask, but I felt compelled to come.

I had a question for Mr. Goble, because the issue is—I was listening to a lot—when you talk about the wipe open territory and the terrain that is not manageable reminded me somewhat of what was taking place in the Western Hemisphere in Colombia at a time, and where we tried to demil—bring some of those individuals back into society again, whether or not there was something that was being done, or, you know, my issue, in the middle, so that those who are being taken toward terrorists and terrorist actions, to bring them back into society so that they can reassimilate into culture.

Mr. Goble, real quick.

Mr. GOBLE. The single best predictor of when you get terrorism is the unemployment rate among 18-year-old males around the world. Everything else, that trumps everything.

In parts of the North Caucasus, unemployment rates overall are ranging from 50 to 70 percent, and among young people they are, in many cases, 100 percent in terms of the officially recognized economy.

What is the best thing that can be done, and the Russian Government is doing some of this, and it is also being helped by Azerbaijan, is trying to build factories to give people jobs. People who are employed and who are integrated into society in that way are far less likely to listen to any missionary from al-Qaeda.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. I am sorry, we have 3 minutes left, and it will be ½ hour before—30 seconds.

Ms. FREIZER. Thank you. In the 30 seconds I just want to say that the mention of these committees in Colombia, in Russia they have started setting up similar committees for the rehabilitation of former fighters, and this is something that I would say would be an area where the U.S. Government and Russia would be able to share experiences.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Thank you very much. We appreciate all of the witnesses.

And let us just note at the end, during the Cold War, I was the Soviet Union's worst enemy and nemesis because I believe that free people need to determine who their number one enemies are and work to try to defeat them. That doesn't mean that the people you work with are perfect, et cetera. And we did bring down the Soviet Union. We worked with a lot of people who have had a lot of faults.

Today radical Islam, radical Islam and China appear to be the main adversaries of people in the free world and the main threat to the free world. I hope we all work together against a religion that will motivate people to murder children and other threats to us and to civilization.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-6128

Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats
Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Chairman

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade
Ted Poe (R-TX), Chairman

April 25, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held jointly by the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats and the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Friday, April 26, 2013

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: Islamist Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat to the U.S. Homeland?

WITNESSES: Mr. Paul Goble
Professor
Institute of World Politics

Craig Douglas Albert, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Georgia Regents University Augusta

Andranik Migranyan, Ph.D.
Director
Institute for Democracy and Cooperation

Sabine Freizer, Ph.D.
Director
Europe Program
International Crisis Group

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats & Terrorism, Trade and Nonproliferation* HEARING

Day *Friday* Date *4/26/13* Room *2172*

Starting Time *10:34 am* Ending Time *12:00 noon*

Recesses *n/a* (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Dana Rohrabacher

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Islamist Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat To The U.S. Homeland?

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Rohrabacher, Chairman Ted Poe, Ranking Member Keating, Ranking Member Sherman, Rep. Meeks, Rep. Kennedy, Rep. Wilson, Rep. Cook, Rep. Yoho, Rep. Loventhal, and Rep. Kinzinger.

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

Chairman Ed Royce

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Prepared statement of Mr. Paul Goble
Prepared statement of Mr. Craig Douglas Albert, Ph.D.
Prepared statement of Mr. Andranik Migranyan, Ph.D.
Prepared statement of Ms. Sabine Freizer, Ph.D.
Question for the Record from Rep. Cook
"The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict" submitted by Chairman Rohrabacher
"The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency" submitted by Chairman Rohrabacher

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:00 noon*

Subcommittee Staff Director

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY SABINE FREIZER, PH.D., DIRECTOR, EUROPE PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (I), ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT

Europe Report N°220 – 19 October 2012

International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

[NOTE: The above report is not reprinted here in its entirety but is available in committee records or may be accessed on the Internet at: http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/north-caucasus/220-the-north-caucasus-the-challenges-of-integration-i-ethnicity-and-conflict.aspx (accessed 6/5/13).]

THE NORTH CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION (I), ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT

Europe Report N°220 – 19 October 2012

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QUESTION SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE PAUL COOK, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND RESPONSES FROM ANDRANIK MIGRANYAN, PH.D., DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND COOPERATION, AND SABINE FREIZER, PH.D., DIRECTOR, EUROPE PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

Questions for the Record of the Honorable Paul Cook
Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives
Hearing: "Islamist Extremism in Chechnya: A Threat to the U.S. Homeland?"
4/26/2013

To all witnesses: Given the ongoing conflicts in the Caucasus, I'm concerned about the security situation for next year's Sochi Olympics. How likely is it that separatists and Islamist terrorists will target the Olympics, and what security measures are being taken in response?

Institute for Democracy and Cooperation

655 Third Avenue Suite 2010-19
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 922 0030
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Andranik Migranyan

Answer to Congressman Paul Cook's Question on the Olympic Games:

Dear Congressman Cook,

The Russian side is feeling utterly confident that no one, Islamist or separatist, will attack the Sochi Olympic games.

First of all, there are no ongoing conflicts in the Caucasus. From time to time the terrorist acts take place in that region. The most restive region is located far from Sochi: it is in Dagestan, located all the way on the Caspian Sea, while Sochi is on the Black Sea.

Second, the Russian authorities are taking all measures possible to secure the entire city of Sochi, not just the locations of the games, and harden any potential targets. As you might understand, however, most of the measures are classified: it is considered imprudent to trumpet them and allow potential terrorists any loophole ideas. The Russian side is working with international partners on that issue, including with the United States, and has the utmost confidence in its surveillance and protection efforts.

Additionally, the Olympics Committee regularly sends a Commission to inspect the progress on the build-up of the Olympic sites, and those inspections also include monitoring security. So far, the Commission has been completely satisfied with the progress of Russia's preparation, including with security measures.

Russia has a very good record of imposing tight security measures on mass events, so I would like to assure you and the American people that every precaution is being taken with regard to the Sochi Olympics.

Web Site: www.indemco.org
E-mail: info@indemco.org

Reply to QFR from Rep. Paul Cook from Ms. Sabine Freizer

Considering the extreme violence undermining security in Russia's North Caucasus there are good reasons to be concerned about security at the Sochi Olympics. The Russian government has pledged that it will guarantee secure games, and has apparently dedicated significant resources to this effect, but it would be useful for US security services and those of other countries to get a full a briefing from Russian partners on the measures being applied.

While security is a key part of the Olympics, the Russian government should ensure that its approach prioritizes law enforcement rather than military means. Any preventive counter terrorist operations launched before the Games should also consider the rights and security of the local population -- forced displacement of large numbers of villagers near Olympics infrastructure in the run up to the Games would for example be more likely to exacerbate tensions than effectively deal with any security threat.

The Caucasus Emirate -- the main Salafi inspired insurgency group in the North Caucasus -- does not however make claims to a sharia governed Caliphate in Krasnodar Krai where Sochi is located. The leader of the Emirate Doku Omarov also stated in early 2013 that his group will no longer be attacking civilian targets. This suggests that the Caucasus Emirate is not planning to attack sport facilities, athletes or observers of the Games.

The main ethnic group with claims on Sochi are the Circassian. Some of their activists, mainly outside Russia, are seeking recognition of their 1864-1867 deportation from the Russian to the Ottoman Empire as genocide, especially as the Sochi Olympics are occurring on or near their historical homeland. Krasnaya Polyana, where the opening ceremony will be held, was the 1864 site of the final battle between Russian imperial and Circassian fighters. While the Circassians may organize protests at the Games, it is highly unlikely that they will constitute a hard security threat.