Discussion Article

Obstacles to Peace in Chechnya: What Scope for International Involvement?

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Abstract

Recognising the failure of both internal and external parties to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Russo–Chechen war, this article seeks to establish what scope remains for international involvement to end the violence in Chechnya. By applying theories from the disciplines of conflict resolution and counterinsurgency to the confrontation, distinctions are drawn between opportunities of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding, as well as between legitimate 'need' and exploitative 'greed' at a time of 'violent' politics. Key findings include the scope for international assistance in addressing the root contradictions of the conflict and for curtailing the influence of the 'entrepreneurs of violence'.

IN THE WINTER OF 2004–2005, AS THE CURRENT VIOLENT STAGE of the centuries-long Russo–Chechen confrontation entered its second decade, there appeared a significant number of analyses of the causes of the conflict and evaluations of the policies followed thus far by the various parties involved.[1] Less evident were comprehensive assessments of the prospects for a genuine and lasting peace in this region with or without international involvement.[2] Such an examination is now required urgently, not least because a conflict which has exceeded that in the former Yugoslavia in intensity, longevity and civilian casualties, and which has produced seemingly never-ending suffering for broad sections of both the Chechen and Russian populations, has come to represent a blot on the conscience of concerned citizens as well as an additional source of anger for disaffected Muslims throughout the world.[3] Moreover, the conflict has created a black hole of criminality, impunity and arbitrary

[1]For a comprehensive coverage of such articles, see *Johnson's Russia List*, especially 8492–8504, 10–17 December 2004.

[2]An exception was the study by Hill *et al.* (2005).

[3]For its impact in the UK, see the correspondence of April–May 2004 between the Cabinet Secretary and the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office on 'Relations with the Muslim Community', leaked to *The Sunday Times*. The full text of the correspondence is available at: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,2087-1688261,00.html, accessed 9 December 2005.

violence that threatens to spread far beyond the borders of Russia, let alone Chechnya.

With these considerations in mind, this article seeks to illustrate why a genuine process of peacebuilding cannot be effective unless the attitudes on all sides that beget, condone and encourage the violent behaviour are addressed, preferably with outside assistance. However, it is not in itself enough to apply conflict resolution theory to the Russo – Chechen conflict in order to identify optimum strategies for assisting the warring sides to extricate themselves from the impasse into which their policies and interactions have driven them. Clearly, without the requisite goodwill of the conflicting parties, including recognition that the ability to compromise is a strength and not a weakness, there is little prospect of constructing a 'win – win' situation in Chechnya. Moreover, without adequate pressure from leaders of the international community, or from other influential representatives of world public opinion who are sufficiently aware of the complexities of this multi-layered conflict, there is little real hope of doing much more than temporarily freezing the confrontation at a level of violence 'tolerable' to all except those at the receiving end.[4]

For, while it might be assumed that the goal of peace is shared by all interested parties in this conflict, the behaviour and attitudes of certain factions, on all sides, have often been such as to question whether the Russo – Chechen wars have not been instrumentalised to serve the political and economic interests of the 'entrepreneurs of violence'.[5] The inaction, indifference, double standards and self interest of the 'democratic' world and the simplistic presentation of the conflict within the parameters of a post-secular discourse of 'good versus evil' combine to distract attention away from the fact that, in a corner of Europe, thousands of ordinary people are still dying, if not from the violence itself, then from the resulting disease, poverty, ecological degradation and severe psychological trauma. This plain fact is known well enough to leaders in Russia, the West and throughout the world; at best they dismiss such protestations, urging pragmatism and the need to 'look at the bigger picture', thus emphasising the importance of 'interests' at the expense of 'values'.

In analysing the conflict I will seek to avoid, where appropriate, generalising the parties to the conflict as the 'Russians' or the 'Chechens', acknowledging both the heterogeneity of views and affiliations on either side, and the fact that individuals and groups, be they presidents, generals, warlords or leaders of a broad range of institutions at all levels, have presumed to speak and act on behalf of 'people' without seeking either a genuine mandate or troubling to find out what their constituents really want. Moreover, there is disturbing evidence, which, by its nature, is hard to either quantify or verify, of collusion at all levels between Russians and Chechens. None the less, given the significant role played in this conflict by mutual stereotyping and demonisation, the 'imagined communities' of both Russians and Chechens must be given due prominence (Russell 2005a, pp. 101 – 116).

[4]For a detailed analysis of the layers of conflict, see Russell (2005b, pp. 239 – 264).
[5]In employing this concept I acknowledge the groundbreaking work of Christoph Zürcher (see Zürcher & Koehler 2001, p. 49). James Hughes prefers the term 'conflict entrepreneurs' in his article 'Chechnya; the Causes of a Protracted Post-Soviet Conflict' (Hughes 2001, p. 40).

At the same time I am aware of the dangers of being seduced by overemphasising what has been termed 'ethnographic romanticism' or 'superficial historicity';[6] in other words attributing most of the causes of the Russo–Chechen conflict to historical and cultural factors (Tishkov 1997, p. 186; Hughes 2001, p. 20). However, while recognising the importance of both the time dynamic and the impact, for good or for ill, of modernity on Russian and Chechen perceptions, it would be foolish to underplay the role of history and cultural narrative in the current conflict, not least because of the sometimes crude manipulation of these issues by those intent on continuing and even exacerbating the war.

Identifying Galtung's conflict triangle in the Russo–Chechen conflict

Johan Galtung, one of the founding fathers of conflict resolution, identified the three components of this new discipline as peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding (Galtung 1976, pp. 282–304). Although it is generally held that these represent three consecutive stages of conflict resolution, there is some acknowledgement that sometimes peacemaking, or even peace-enforcement, has to precede peacekeeping and that there is, of necessity, a considerable overlap between all three stages (Miall *et al.* 1999, p. 22). Thus, the United Nations Organisation's concept of peacemaking is directed more at cessation of hostilities, whereas Jean Paul Lederach's vision of peacebuilding encompasses elements of both peacemaking and conflict prevention, in an attempt to transform the conflict triangle into a circle of resolution (Lederach 1997).[7]

Galtung characterised the three stages as representing different forms of violence: direct, structural and cultural, indicating that the first related to behaviour, the second to attitudes and the third to contradictions (Galtung 1996, p. 112). Figure 1 provides salient examples of these categories in the context of Russo–Chechen relations.

Even this small selection of examples illustrates how these factors, while each being largely characteristic of only one of the parties to the conflict, constitute at the same time something of a mirror image. For example, those perpetrating the sweeps (i.e. the surrounding of a village, followed by house to house searches and reprisals) and the acts of terrorism (e.g. Dubrovka, Beslan) have entirely different perceptions of and justifications for their actions from those of their victims, but in either case, the arbitrariness of the violence, the disproportionality of means and ends, and the relative impotence of both the direct and indirect victims indicate that the perpetrators of violence have more in common with each other than either do with those on the receiving end.

The prevalence of Caucasophobia (fear of 'persons of Caucasian nationality')—a form of racism—amongst the Russian population in general, and the federal forces in particular, helps to remove moral obstacles to the inhuman treatment of Chechens and

[6]'Superficial historicity' is a term also employed by Tishkov, see Hughes (2001, p. 20).

[7]See also, United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Briefing (revised 17 February 2004), available at: http://www.una-uk.org/UN&C/peacemaking.html, accessed 22 July 2005.

PEACEKEEPING	PEACEMAKING	PEACEBUILDING
Direct Violence	**Structural Violence**	**Cultural Violence**
(Events)	(Processes)	(Invariants)
Behaviour	Attitudes, norms	Contradictions
Selected factors on the Russian side		
Zachistki (sweeps)	*Caucasophobia*	*Colonisation*
Selected factors on the Chechen side		
Terrorism	*Cultural narrative*	*Asymmetry*

FIGURE 1. INDICATIVE SCHEME ILLUSTRATING THE APPLICATION OF THE CONFLICT TRIANGLE TO
CHECHNYA AND TYPE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION APPROPRIATE TO EACH STAGE

their neighbours.[8] Paradoxically, this confirms the perceptions of the Caucasian peoples within the Russian Federation that they are regarded, none the less, as outsiders. This, in turn, fuels anti-Russian sentiments amongst all Caucasian peoples.[9] The Chechen cultural narrative,[10] of which most Russians are ignorant, but which commemorates both heroic defence against a vastly more numerous foe and the ethnocidal[11] policies adopted against the Chechens by successive Russian and Soviet regimes, justifies, if not legitimises, in the eyes of many Chechens (and indeed, some Western observers) acts that the Russians routinely term 'terrorist'.[12]

As regards the fundamental cultural contradictions, the Russian colonisation of Chechnya in the nineteenth century clearly failed to either co-opt or coerce the Chechens into becoming fully-fledged Russians or even *Rossiyans* [non-ethnic Russian citizens of the Empire; for an explanation of this term see Bowring (2002, pp. 229–250)]. It would not be surprising if the average ethnic Russian, influenced, perhaps, by the impressions created in both classical Russian literature and Soviet history books, still regarded the original conquest of the Caucasus as a civilising mission that brought progress to the mountain tribes and, consequently, perceived manifestations of anti-Russian sentiment as evidence of how ungrateful these peoples were. That such a view is shared neither by Chechens nor their neighbours will be apparent to anyone who has spent any time in the region. These attitudes

[8]Z. Sikevich (2002) 'The Caucasus and "Caucasus Phobia"', translated by Robin Jones for Rosbalt News Agency, 18 December, available at: http://www.rosbaltnews.com/2003/02/07/60777.html, accessed 22 July. The term in Russian is '*kavkazofobia*', see also Sikevich (1999, pp. 99–112).

[9]Y. Soshin (2005) 'Papakha s ushami' ['*Papapkha*—the traditional Caucasian headwear—with ear-flaps'], 12 July, available at: http://www.globalrus.ru/opinions/778113/, accessed 22 July 2005.

[10]For a description of cultural narrative, in this case Armenian, see Tololyan (1987, pp. 218–233).

[11]In distinguishing 'ethnocide' from 'genocide', Steven T. Katz, citing the Stalinist deportations of World War II, claims that the 'intent was to destroy a variety of minority cultures and ambitions built on them, rather than to murder all the members of a specific people' (Katz 1999, p. 280).

[12]See S. Pankratova (2004) 'Rossiya i PACE po-raznomu smotryat na bor'bu s terrorizmom' ['Russia and PACE do not see Eye-to-Eye on the Battle against Terrorism'], 7 October, available at: http://www.izvestia.ru/politic/490012, accessed 7 October 2004.

notwithstanding, a recent opinion poll indicates that a significant proportion of Russians now wishes the Russian Federation to divest itself of its rebellious southern republic.[13]

The Caucasian peoples, in common with the Balts, generally accept the asymmetry of their relationship with Russia as a fact of life and one that has to be accommodated and, at times, just tolerated. Thus, Chechnya's neighbours have all more or less resigned themselves to the fact that, however they might yearn for self-determination, if not independence, it really is not worth the suffering that would be required to achieve this. In Chechnya's case the brutality of periodic Russian attempts to crush their distinctive way of life appears to have pushed the Chechens almost uniquely towards choosing the path of resistance rather than that of resignation.[14]

The first Russo–Chechen war (1994–1996) and the *de facto* independence of Chechnya–Ichkeria from 1996 until 1999, culminating in the ill-judged 'Wahhabi' incursion into Dagestan, actually reinforced this preference for peaceful coexistence with the Russians amongst the North Caucasian peoples. Paradoxically, it is the effects of Caucasophobia on all Caucasians during the second war (1999 to date) and the extension of sweeps into neighbouring territories (Dagestan and Ingushetia) that appear to have radicalised the opposition to Russian rule across the North Caucasus.

However, elements of the Chechen resistance (from Akhmad Kadyrov to Aslan Maskhadov) came to the realisation that an accommodation with the Russians short of independence had to be made in order to save the Chechen people from further suffering and, perhaps, themselves from annihilation. This was a fully pragmatic choice in the circumstances (although both, in the event, were assassinated within a year of each other). Yet, because the Kremlin was unwilling to recognise even moderate Chechen oppositionists as anything other than terrorists, those who took a pragmatic line were caught potentially between a rock and a hard place; the Russians would target them if they did not cooperate, just as surely as would the 'irreconcilable' Chechen opposition, led by Shamil Basaev, if they did. The policy of Chechenisation of the conflict in Chechnya, begun in June 2000 with the appointment of Kadyrov as Putin's representative in the republic, offered a way out of this impasse for both the Kremlin and their Chechen allies: pro-Russian Chechens would now conduct the 'anti-terrorist' campaign (and control their share of the illicit economy that flourishes in Chechnya) and Putin would be spared much of the unwelcome, albeit half-hearted,

[13]In a poll published by Moscow's Levada Centre in July 2005, 37% stated that they would either be pleased to be rid of Chechnya (or considered they already were) and a further 17% were indifferent to the prospect of losing it (available at: http://www.levada.ru/press/2005070410.html, accessed 22 July 2005). A poll by the same organisation in September 2005 found that only 20% of Russians favoured continuing military operations in Chechnya against 68% opting for peace negotiations, 61% (against 28%) indicating that they thought the war in Chechnya was still going on (available at: http://www.levada.ru/press/2005100506.html, accessed 9 December 2005). See also Volkova (2004).

[14]Thus, of those polled recently in Chechnya, 66% thought that Chechen men and women had taken up arms to resist the violent actions of Russian forces, against only 14% who identified the struggle for independence: see Basnukhayev and Iriskhanov (2004), also available at: http://www.levada.ru/vestnik78.html, accessed 8 March 2006.

international condemnation of the inhuman treatment of Chechen civilians by Russian troops.

That the pro-Russian Chechen forces under Ramzan Kadyrov and Sulim Yamadaev continue to terrorise the Chechen population with intensified sweeps of their own, extrajudicial killings, torturing and intimidation, kidnapping relatives of known opponents, would appear to argue against Galtung's theory of structural violence.[15] Clearly these Chechens are not imbued with the same Caucasophobia that afflicts their ethnic Russian allies (many of whom, indeed, continue to look down on them) (see Muradov 2003).[16] However, insofar as these Chechens shared with their Russian allies an arrogance of power, greed to use that power to enrich themselves, and a *carte blanche* of means to achieve their ends, they could be seen to be reacting to the asymmetry in Russo – Chechen relations pragmatically by working on the side, and adopting some of the values and attitudes, of those whom they consider the more powerful against those (a significant proportion of the Chechen people) that they claim to represent.

At the same time, even these pro-Kremlin Chechens continue to share with their co-ethnics deep misgivings about the behaviour of Russian federal forces in Chechnya. Ramzan Kadyrov has spoken out forcefully against any release of Colonel Yury Budanov and, in order to survive as an effective fighting force, his *kadyrovtsy* have been obliged to swell their ranks with former Chechen *boeviki* (fighters), the loyalty of whom is suspect.[17] Some of Kadyrov's former *boeviki* are rumoured to have participated in Shamil Basaev's arms raid in Ingushetia in June 2004, which left more than 100 federal employees dead (Blandy 2004, p. 4).[18]

Some correlation has been established between the excesses of the federal side (now characterised by sweeps, but formerly by indiscriminate heavy artillery attacks and carpet bombing of inhabited areas) and those of the insurgents (characterised by acts of terror). While world leaders and the media are not inclined to equate the two, it has long been established in theories of terrorism that such repressive measures by government forces tend to provoke extreme responses from insurgents. As long ago as 1988, Alex Schmid set out the options available to state and non-state actors in a time of 'violent' politics; if the state resorted to such forms of violent repression for control of state power as assassination, state-terrorism (torture, death squads,

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[15]For an account of the main pro-Russian Chechen forces, see A. Makarkin (2004) 'Alu Alkhanov—novy chechenskii vybor Kremlya' ['Alu Alkhanov—the Kremlin's New Chechen Choice'], available at: http://www.politcom.ru/2004/analit139.php, accessed 22 July, 2005.

[16]The Russian journalist, Vadim Rechkalov, claims that 'in the many times I have been to Chechnya over the past several years I have never met a single Russian soldier or FSB official who knew the Chechen language': 'Budet lokal'nye stychki s zhertvami do 100 chelovek, a voiny ne budet' ['There will be Local Skirmishes with up to 100 Victims, but there will be No War'], *Izvestiya*, 2 August 2004.

[17]See Y. Belous (2004) 'Pomiluyet li Putin Budanova?' ['Will Putin Pardon Budanov?'], 20 September, available at: http://politics.pravda.ru/politics/2004/1/1/1/18068_BUDANOVPOMIL.html, accessed 22 July 2005.

[18]In October 2005, Alu Alkhanov admitted that 7,000 former *boeviki* made up almost half of the forces of law and order in Chechnya: 'Pochti polovina sotrudnikov militsii Chechnyi byvshiye boeviki: 7 tysyach chelovek' ['Almost Half of Those Serving in Chechnya's Police Force are Former Fighters: 7 Thousand Persons'], available at: http://www.newsru.com/russia/21oct2005/chechnya.html, accessed 9 December 2005.

disappearances, concentration camps) massacres, internal war or genocide one might expect the non-state actor to use violence to contest state power by means of terrorism, massacres, guerrilla warfare and insurgency.[19] Insofar as Russian behaviour in Chechnya may be perceived as falling within the parameters as defined by Schmid of 'state-terrorism', one might anticipate that the response from their Chechen opponents might include terrorism. Disassociating herself from the consistently expressed view of the Putin administration that all armed Chechen oppositionists are 'international terrorists', Ekaterina Stepanova has drawn a clear distinction between 'conflict-related' terrorism (such as that practised by the Chechens) and the 'super-terrorism' or 'mega-terrorism' of groups such as Al Qaeda (Stepanova 2003, p. 4).

A feature of the 'Chechenisation' phase of the conflict is that outside influences have conspired to prompt both the pro-Russian pragmatists and their 'irreconcilable' opponents to break deep-seated Chechen cultural taboos. For example, the former, influenced by Russian norms, are increasing the incidence of Chechen killing Chechen and the latter, influenced by Wahhabite ideology, in resorting to female suicide bombers. Through cognitive consonance and dissonance, each side only perceives the 'war crimes' of the other, thus intensifying the structural violence embedded in their respective attitudes.[20] This, in turn, makes it all the more difficult to dispassionately assess the fundamental contradictions in the current relationship between Chechens and Russians, and leads to the irrational prominence of such uncompromising and maximalist positions as 'freedom or death' (for the Chechens) and 'victory at all costs' (for the Russians).

Thus, identifying Galtung's conflict triangle in the context of the Russo–Chechen conflict is not difficult. Given the heterogeneity of Russian and Chechen attitudes to this war and the widespread indifference to it both inside and outside of Russia, it is proving the applicability of his theory to this confrontation that represents the more difficult task. The real challenge for the international community, however, lies in producing pragmatic proposals aimed at resolving the conflict that are acceptable to the broadest spectrum of those involved. This has by no means been easy given an environment in which the Chechen resistance has sought a degree of international intervention that currently is neither practical, nor forthcoming, and successive Russian administrations have actively tried to restrict international involvement to the spheres of financial and logistic assistance in post-conflict reconstruction.

Applying Galtung's conflict triangle to the Russo–Chechen conflict

According to Galtung, contradictions can be seen as 'invariants', the structural violence emanating from them as 'processes' and violent behaviour as 'events' (Galtung 1976, pp. 282–304; Galtung 1996, p. 112), as comprehensively illustrated in Figure 2). Whereas many of the contradictions on both the Russian and Chechen sides are manifestly not invariants (e.g. colonisation, territorial integrity, occupied

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[19]Originally published in Schmid (1988, pp. 58–59) and reproduced in Schmid (2004, p. 201).
[20]J. Galtung (2001) 'Crafting Peace: on the Psychology of the TRANSCEND Approach', available at: http://www.transcend.org/t_database/articles.php?ida=221, accessed 22 July 2005.

Events **Behaviour** (Direct Violence)	Processes **Attitudes** (Structural Violence)	Invariants **Contradictions** (Cultural Violence)
On the Russian side		
Chechen syndrome	Caucasophobia	Colonisation
'Disappearances'	Chauvinism	_Derzhavnost'_*
Disproportionate force	Demonisation	Geopolitics
Ethnocide	Intolerance of diversity	_Gosudarstvennost'_+
Indiscriminate violence	Suppression	Russian Orthodoxy
Zachistki (sweeps)	_Vertikal'_ of power	Territorial integrity
On the Chechen side		
Banditry	Cultural narrative	Asymmetry
Guerrilla warfare	Custom (_Adat_)	Diaspora
Intifada	'Freedom' cult	Islam#
Ritual beheading	Militarised clans	'Mountain' people
Terrorism	Self-Determination	Occupied homeland
Warlordism	_Shari'a_	Survival
On both sides		
Arbitrary brutality	Clientelism	Absence of _Rechstaat_
Extrajudicial killings	Corruption	Globalisation
Hostage-taking	Extremism	Post-secular discourse
Intimidation	Impunity	Underdevelopment
Protection rackets	'Might' over 'right'	War on Terror
Torture	Xenophobia	Weak civil society

* The ideology that maintains that Russia is essentially a (great) world power
+ The ideology that holds that a strong state keeps Russia together
 # Of both the Sufi and Wahhabi variants

FIGURE 2. COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FACTORS ILLUSTRATING THE APPLICATION OF GALTUNG'S CONFLICT TRIANGLE TO CHECHNYA THAT RELATE TO EITHER THE RUSSIAN OR CHECHEN SIDE, OR TO BOTH

homeland and underdevelopment) their persistence over time allows all parties concerned to regard them as permanent. Whereas the behaviour on the Russian federal side bears many of the hallmarks of 'state terrorism' and that on the Chechen rebel side those of 'insurgent terrorism', the patterns of behaviour which both sides share might be characterised as a 'rule of terror' by the entrepreneurs of violence.[21] Clearly this represents a dangerous, destabilising situation that could potentially spread well beyond Chechnya.

[21]I am using these terms as generally understood in the literature on terrorism. For a good analysis of both, see Wilkinson (2001), especially 'Insurgency and Terrorism' (pp. 1–18) and 'State Terror' (pp. 40–45).

That the representatives of the warring sides manifestly cannot reach a satisfactory resolution of their differences after more than 10 years of the most brutal conflict illustrates the need for a degree of outside involvement if the human rights violations are to end and the present danger of overspill is to be averted. However, there is currently little likelihood either of the Putin administration allowing any outside involvement that might be construed as interference in the internal affairs of the Russian Federation, or of the leaders of democratic societies in the West risking their respective interests (including energy supplies) by taking a values-based stand on the issue of Chechnya.

Here a key role could be played by European, rather than international, institutions, particularly by the Council of Europe and its Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), both of which count Russia as a member. Like the European Union, these organisations are based on principles to which most countries and people can aspire: a pluralist liberal democracy with a free market economy and a concern for the rights of all citizens. These are principles to which the Russian Federation, through its membership, has consented. Other member countries of these institutions not only have extensive experience of dealing with many of the problems that beset the Russians and the Chechens (e.g. the UK and Spain in combating separatist or irredentist movements) but also of mediating successfully in analogous conflict situations (e.g. in the former Yugoslavia). Of course, the Europeanisation of conflict situations on the 'periphery' of Europe (Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia & Montenegro) is not a recipe for success in itself; the current marked preference for the maintenance of territorial integrity can lead to unintended consequences (Coppieters *et al.* 2004, pp. 237–242).

Such involvement is likely to be most productive if outside agencies, offering experience gained in comparable conflicts, focus on those cultural contradictions that can be resolved without resort to violence. For if the violence generated by unresolved cultural contradictions creates structural violence in the form of attitudes, institutions, norms and laws, and the latter produces violent behaviour, then it would appear to be putting the cart before the horse to try to prevent direct violence without addressing the attitudes that lay at its roots. By the same token, any attempt to change violent attitudes depends upon a comprehensive understanding of the cultural contradictions that underpin them.

There is a need, therefore, to identify the cultural contradictions in order to see where outside involvement could help construct mechanisms to accommodate and, where necessary, resolve these contradictions. Only then will it be possible to demonstrate how those obstructing this process are, in effect, the entrepreneurs of violence, exploiting these contradictions for their own narrow ends, to identify where action, advice or pressure could be brought by internal agencies, and, assuming that the latter are genuinely interested in a peaceful outcome, to address not only the violent behaviour of these parties, but also the attitudes that legitimise and prolong such violence. Outside involvement, therefore, can be proposed not only in implementing a multi-track approach to monitor the behaviour, address the attitudes and understand the contradictions but also in helping to expose and counter the influence of the entrepreneurs of violence.

Of course, this would rely heavily on a level of media independence and a capability in Russia for civic society to influence politicians that currently are manifestly

absent.[22] European involvement, therefore, might be aimed at creating a more transparent and pluralistic political process, improving press freedom and consolidating Russian civic society. Not because Europe seeks to 'interfere' in Russia's internal affairs but because it understands Russia's (and Chechnya's) predicament and genuinely believes that the experience of Council of Europe members shows that the presence of these factors offer the best guarantee of marginalising the entrepreneurs of violence and making it possible to explore ways of resolving conflicts by non-violent means (Trenin 2005, pp. 1–11).

Cultural contradictions

As events in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement have demonstrated, no matter how deep the cultural contradictions and how bitter conflicting attitudes might be, the popular attraction of an outcome that appears to offer peace after decades of the most arbitrary violence is not to be underestimated. There is evidence that both the Russian and Chechen populations would welcome precisely such an outcome.[23]

It should be emphasised that not all cultural contradictions are in themselves violent; most, however, do call for mechanisms of conflict avoidance and resolution, many of which appear to be absent in the Russo–Chechen conflict. For example, although many peoples have been more or less successfully colonised, sometimes by the most violent of means, the Chechens appear to have never accepted the finality of either the Russian occupation of their territory or the supremacy of Russian over Chechen values (Russell 2002a, pp. 73–96). The key, it seems to me, is the extent to which the peoples thus colonised are able to adapt to, flourish in, and even to some extent control their lives within the new political entity. In the Chechen case, Russian Imperial and Soviet rule did bring some benefits of modernity such as education, health care, literacy, and access to the wider world of scientific advance. However, the suppression of the distinct Caucasian way of life, the Chechen's cult of 'freedom' and the brutality that accompanied first Russian then Soviet occupation have left an open wound in Russo–Chechen relations, felt most keenly by the 'recipients', but almost totally disregarded by the 'donors' of Russia's civilising mission.

Historically, Russia has sought to impose internal stability throughout its territory by means of prescriptive ideologies: in the nineteenth century, through the three main principles of the Russian Empire (autocracy, orthodoxy and *narodnost'*—the national

[22]For an up-to-date insight into levels of press and NGO freedom in Russia, see M. Gabowitsch (2006) 'Inside the Looking Glass: A Reply to Nicolai N. Petro', 17 February, available at: http://www.opendemocracy.net, accessed 8 March 2006.

[23]In December 2005, more than two-thirds (69%) of those polled would prefer peace talks with the Chechens against 21% favouring Putin's policy of continuing the war (see http://www.levada.ru/press/2005122901.html, accessed 8 March 2006); it was reported by *Interfax* on 2 February 2006, that 86% of Chechens 'link the achievement of peace, stability, justice and order' with the activities of the current (pro-Russian) Chechen authorities. In an earlier survey of Russian and Chechen public opinion, it was found that, although 78% of Chechens polled wished to remain part of Russia, 61% of these believed that Chechnya should have a greater degree of autonomy than any other part of the Russian Federation: see Trenin (2003, p. 4).

principle); replaced in the USSR by the one-party rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy and Soviet patriotism. In both cases, however, this stability proved to be illusory and both belief systems produced instead severe repression (the Tsarist 'prison of nationalities' and Stalinist terror) and, eventually, collapse.

In the Putin era, it would appear that orthodoxy (in the sense of an intolerance of diverse opinion) has been largely restored and that the *gosurdarstvennost'* of the ruling *siloviki* has become the new 'autocracy'. The national principle appears to have been superseded, perhaps temporarily, by *derzhavnost'*.[24] Again, the aim appears to be internal stability, whereas the likely outcome will be repression, which serves the interests of neither the Russian people nor the wider international community. While Russia has every right to consider itself a world power and its enormous energy resources alone will probably ensure that it remains one, it should be discouraged, for example, from playing the 'energy' card in an attempt to regain its former hegemony over the 'Near Abroad'. More importantly, it should not be allowed to sign up to the principles of European institutions if it has no intention of observing them.

Similarly, a strong, centralised state with highly-personalised power invested in an executive leader may be held to have served well in the past the world's largest country and may be the optimum way of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Russian homeland. Yet the imposition of a Russian-style *vertikal'* of power is bound to provoke conflict in a Chechen society traditionally preferring horizontal power structures based on clan and territory.[25] It is, first and foremost, Russia's intolerance of diversity, stemming perhaps from a strict interpretation of its understanding of orthodoxy, which leads to an insistence on imposing its values—if necessary by brute force—that is preventing a lasting solution being found to the conflict in Chechnya.[26]

The dilution of *narodnost'* is well illustrated in the Russo–Chechen conflict. Imposed throughout the Russian Empire and, under the guise of 'Soviet patriotism' and 'Friendship of the Peoples', this concept has fallen foul of the 'Russia for the Russians' syndrome in the post-Soviet period.[27] Indeed, many Russians feel much

[24]The *siloviki* refer to elite leaders in the Russian ministries of law and order (FSB, MVD, MOD, SVR etc.). Putin (a former head of the FSB) has a high proportion of former security chiefs in key positions. See G. Feifer (2003) 'Russia: President Boosts Power of Security Services', *Center for Defense Information Weekly*, 248, available at: http://www.cdi.org/russia/248-16.cfm, accessed 22 July 2005; Kryshtanovskaya and White (2003, pp. 289–306).

[25]In July 2000 President Putin claimed that authority 'should rely on the law and a single, vertical line of executive power': *The Guardian*, 12 July 2000.

[26]It is instructive to note that neither Russian Orthodoxy under the Tsars nor Marxism–Leninism under the Soviets could accommodate the 'heretical' views of, respectively, Lev Tolstoi and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, arguably the most quintessentially Russian writers at either end of the twentieth century.

[27]In July 2005, 58% were moderately or decisively for the concept of 'Russia for the Russians' and 32% against. See http://www.levada.ru/press/2005070410.html, accessed 22 July 2005. A poll conducted by the Russian Academy of Sciences' Centre for the Study of Xenophobia shortly after the Beslan siege found that 55.8% of those polled regarded 'non-Russian nationalities' as a threat to the security of Russia; see report of 22 July 2005 for the 'Memorial' organisation's 'Migration and Law' network by S. A. Gannushkina (ed.) 'Polozhenie zhitelei Chechnyi v Rossiiskoi Federatsii, iyun' 2004g.—iyun' 2005g' ['The Situation of Residents of Chechnya in the Russian Federation, June 2004–June 2005'], p. 8, available at: http://www.memo.ru/hr/news/5gannush7.htm, accessed 9 December 2005.

closer to the 25 million ethnic Russians living in the 'Near Abroad' than they do to the half as numerous non-Russian citizens of the Russian Federation. Given the Chechen cultural narrative, Russian chauvinism, Caucasophobia and the attendant demonisation of the Chechens, there is little prospect of the average Chechen sharing a sense of *narodnost'* with the Russians.[28]

Finally, Russia's geopolitical view of the world must be taken into account. Clearly it is in Russia's national interest to remain the dominant player in the 'Near Abroad' and maintain an influence over Caspian energy reserves and transit routes. The events along Russia's southern border—from Abkhazia to Afghanistan—must provoke the Russians to question US strategy in the region. Having already endured Western intervention in Georgia, Tajikistan and Ukraine, President Putin must be painfully aware that a military and political victory in Chechnya is necessary to prevent similar occurrences in the Northern Caucasus. However, the brutal means by which this victory is being sought has ensured that any genuinely free and fair election in Chechnya would result in the defeat of the Kremlin's choice, a situation reminiscent of that pertaining in the Peoples' Democracies during the Cold War era.[29] This creates a window of opportunity for outside influence in the region. As was the case during periods of heightened tension in East–West relations during the Cold War, if they seek to bring an element of stability and predictability into their relations with Russia, Europe, the USA and NATO would be well advised to be more open and frank about the scope and limits of their interests in the Caucasus region. For its part, Russia needs to be reminded that internal repression not only tarnishes its reputation internationally, but also stokes up the likelihood of future domestic conflict.

Of the cultural contradictions emanating from the Chechen side many stem from the very asymmetry of their confrontation with the Russians. For example, greater clarification is required from the United Nations as to the exact trade-off in rights between the territorial integrity of existing states and the self-determination of indigenous peoples perceiving themselves to be fighting for their very survival against a more powerful occupying force. (The experiences of East Timor, Kosovo, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Palestine, Taiwan and Tibet tend to confuse rather than clarify what constitutes acceptable defence.) Moreover, it is by no means clear, in the current international system, to what extent aboriginal, nomadic and mountain-dwelling peoples are obliged to embrace unquestioningly the 'benefits' of modernisation and to what lengths they might legitimately go to defend their traditional ways of life.

[28]One of the more bizarre attempts by the Putin administration to make Chechens feel part of Russia was the official encouragement of the Terek soccer team from Grozny, which won the Russian Cup in 2004 and represented Russia in 2004–05 in the UEFA Cup. Rebel Chechen websites have likened the role of the club's patron, Ramzan Kadyrov, to that of Uday Hussein *vis à vis* the Iraqi soccer team: see Ruslan Isakov, 'We'll Beat Swords into Soccer Balls . . .' (swords and balls being a play on words in Russian), available at: http://www.kavkaz.org.uk/eng/print.php?id=3090, accessed 22 July 2005.

[29]See the monitoring accounts of the 2003 Chechen presidential election by the Moscow Helsinki Group. For example, R. Umarov, 'Otvety Akhmata Kadyrova na voprosy Internet-SMI "Kavkazskii Uzel"' ['Akhmat Kadyrov's Answers to Questions of the "Caucasian Junction" Internet Site'], available at: http://www.mhg.ru/24957D5/26E7F5C, accessed 22 July 2005.

At the same time the existence of a relatively successful and thriving Chechen diaspora indicates that the Chechens can survive and flourish in modernising societies. As has been the case with the Baltic States, Armenia, Lebanon and elsewhere, successful academics, business men and women, politicians and sporting celebrities in the Chechen diaspora can provide important alternative models for aspiring youngsters to the gun-toting warlords of the Chechen resistance. However, it must be said that far too many Russians still tend to stereotype successful Chechens as criminal *Mafiosi*.

Of course, since 9/11 the defining cultural contradiction between the Chechens and the Russians has been the former's adherence to Islam. Primarily manifested before the current round of the conflict in Sufism, a popularist and grass-roots pathway within Islam ideally suited to survival in an authoritarian system, it has been attacked both by Russian intransigence and by an uncompromising form of authoritarian Islam—Wahhabism. On an ideocratic, financial and military level, the latter has been more successful than Sufism in countering the kind of aggression unleashed on Chechnya by the Russian federal forces, a fact which has been exploited both by outside sponsors and mercenaries and by the more extremist Chechen warlords (Vachagaev 2005; Wilhelmsen 2005, pp. 35–39). The failure to re-establish Sufism at the expense of Wahhabism as the preferred form of Islam amongst Chechens represents another major obstacle in the path of peace in Chechnya.

Since 9/11, the 'Islamic factor' as a cultural contradiction has played a disproportional role in the Russo–Chechen conflict and is portrayed by the Putin administration as the single most important contributory factor to the violence in Chechnya (Russell 2002b, pp. 96–109). In this the Russian President is aided by the fact that, in three of the cultural contradictions that affect both sides (globalisation, the post-secular discourse of 'good versus evil' and the war on terror) Russia finds itself on the 'right', and Chechnya on the 'wrong' side. Arguably, however, it is the shared experience of both Russia and Chechnya of the lack of a law-governed state, a smoothly functioning market economy and a robust civil society that place both on the 'wrong' side.[30] Clearly, any significant improvement in Russia of any of these three factors would considerably increase the chance of changing attitudes in order to achieve peace in Chechnya. To the extent that Putin appears to be obstructing progress in these areas, he, too, could be portrayed as an entrepreneur of violence.

The entrepreneurs of violence in the Russo–Chechen conflict

As the peace process in Northern Ireland has demonstrated, in order to meet the popular demand for a cessation of violence, what is required is a vision of an alternative future to one plagued by violence, complemented by genuine hope that, over time, peaceful relations (positive peace) will replace a mere cessation of violence

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[30]In the Freedom House 'Nations in Transit' Democracy Scores for 2005, Russia (5.61) was sandwiched between Kosovo (5.32) and Kyrgyzstan (5.64). Here 1 represents the highest and 7 the lowest level of democracy, available at: http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/nitransit/2005/addendum2005.pdf, accessed 8 March 2005.

(negative peace).[31] In order to transform this aspiration into a reality, the need for leadership at all levels and, preferably, representing all sides of the conflict, is paramount. In comparison with the situation in Northern Ireland, such leadership has been conspicuous by its absence not only in Russia and Chechnya but, in its response to the Russo–Chechen conflict, by the international community as a whole. Lacking this leadership, such cultural contradictions as the absence of a *Rechstaat* (law-governed state) in either Russia or Chechnya, combined with extremely weak institutions of civil society operating within an underdeveloped economy inevitably increase the likelihood that entrepreneurs of violence will dominate the political scene, enabling them to perpetuate and intensify the negative attitudes that give rise to violent behaviour.

Such an outcome is less likely in a democratic state in which civil society has strong foundations than in a system in which highly personalised executive power is exercised virtually unchecked through a vertical structure, be it at the national or local level. The danger in the latter system is that the popular yearning for peace is likely to be ignored by the so-called 'entrepreneurs of violence', at all levels, who have a vested interest in prolonging the conflict. These 'entrepreneurs of violence' may be arms contractors, bureaucrats, businessmen, criminals, military personnel, politicians, religious leaders or warlords. What unites them is that directly or indirectly they profit—politically, economically or socially—from a prolongation of the conflict and are prepared to exploit cultural and structural violence to maintain their privileged position. Should this be threatened by the checks and balances ('right' as represented by a system of justice) designed to prevent or resolve conflict, they are prepared to bypass such structures by resorting to direct violence ('might'). Moreover, as experience from Afghanistan to Colombia to Northern Ireland has shown, the absence of perceived alternative economic opportunities for former combatants increases the likelihood of a reliance on criminality and/or a return to terrorism as a prime source of income.[32] This certainly applies to Chechnya today. Here, as elsewhere, a degree of outside assistance would appear to be essential in countering these trends and remedying such situations.

The entrepreneurs of structural violence

We have already noted in the analysis of cultural contradictions that, in practice, certain Russian principles have given rise to some of the most negative attitudes in the Russo–Chechen confrontation. Thus, colonisation has given rise to Caucasophobia and the demonisation of the Chechens, Orthodoxy to an intolerance of diversity, *derzhavnost'* to (Great) Russian chauvinism, *gosudarstvennost'* to the imposition in Chechnya of a *vertikal'* of power and the tendency to suppress rather than accommodate opposition. That these attitudes weaken rather than strengthen both the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and her geopolitical interests would

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[31]For an explanation of these concepts, see Galtung (1969, pp. 167–191).

[32]For case studies in Northern Ireland, the Philippines and the Middle East, see Cragin and Chalk (2003); for links between narcotics and insurgency in Afghanistan, Burma, Colombia and Peru, see Cornell (2005, pp. 751–760).

be more apparent to all were the Putin administration to be held to account more consistently by other world leaders.[33]

These attitudes, in turn, feed into and give further substance to the Chechen cultural narrative and stiffen such Chechen attitudes as self-determination, articulated as no more than a desire to be free from Russian violence and a longing for what they perceive as 'freedom'. At the same time they consolidate the militarised clans and raise the determination amongst Chechens to restore their traditional code of customs (*adat*). Here the clash within Chechen Islam between Sufism and Wahhabism comes to the fore, as the former promotes *adat*, whereas the latter advocates the strictest application of *shari'a*. The growing influence of the Wahhabites is manifested both in the failure of an intrinsic component of *adat*—blood vengeance—to deter Chechen killing Chechen and by the militarisation of the *djamaat* (a traditional political entity with a membership drawn usually from neighbouring villages).

These two trends have come together with the recent activisation of 'Shariat' (the Islamic Djamaat of Dagestan) which is responsible for an increasing number of terrorist attacks and 'Yarmuk' (its equivalent in Kabardino–Balkaria) which carried out the attack on Nalchik in October 2005.[34] While these trends might be more effective in countering Russian violence than the more traditional forms, they represent a greater obstacle to peace. It remains to be seen whether the new Islamic militancy has been hitherto merely a tactical response to Russian aggression or whether it has already become a part of the broader anti-Western strategy of *jihad*.

For all the importance of specifically Russian and Chechen attitudes and the institutions and laws upon which they are based, it is where attitudes are shared by both sides that most blatant examples of structural violence are to be found. As noted the combination of a weak civil society, a poorly developed market economy and the absence of a law-governed state combine to produce the triumph of 'might' over 'right', widespread corruption, clientelism rather than market-led relations, and impunity for those that break the law.[35] If to this volatile mix is added the xenophobia experienced by both Russians and Chechens as a result of globalisation and extremism emanating from the war on terror and the post-secular discourse of the 'clash of civilisations', then we can see what fertile ground is provided for the entrepreneurs of violence on both sides.[36]

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[33]The illusory nature of Russian territorial integrity is examined in Markedonov (2005).

[34]For Dagestan see, 'Djamaat "Shariat": "The Territory of Jihad Extends!"' (2005) 2 July, available at: http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2005/07/02/3918.shtml, accessed 22 July 2005; for Kabardino–Balkaria see, 'Napadeniye na Nal'chik' ['The Attack on Nalchik'], available at: http://www.rian.ru/actual/nalchik_attack_131005/, accessed 9 December 2005.

[35]In 2005, Russia was rated 90th out of 146 countries for levels of corruption by Transparency International; see Moll and Gowan (2005, p. 24).

[36]A feature of the Russo–Chechen conflict is the abuse directed at those Westerners who genuinely do try to involve themselves in processes of reconciliation. Two of the authors of the Carnegie Policy Brief (Hill *et al.* 2005) have fallen foul of this syndrome; on 7 March 2005, Anatol Lieven from the Chechen side: see 'Tsirkulyar po pravil'nomy osveshcheniyu sobytii v Chechne' ['Circular on the Correct Illumination of Events in Chechnya'], available at: http://www.kavkaz.org.uk/russ/article.php?id=31149, accessed 22 July 2005; and, on 21 June 2005, Tom de Waal, this time by a Russian website: see 'Tomas de Vaal i biznes na krovi' ['Thomas de Waal and Business in Blood'], available at: http://www.chechnya.ru/view_all.php?part=pub, accessed 22 July 2005.

A feature of the current conflict has been degree of collusion between warring factions, be it at the level of federal troops selling weapons and ammunition to their opponents or accepting bribes in order to let Chechen fighters through control posts, or Russian officers and Chechen warlords dividing the spoils of the illicit economy in Chechnya (see, for example Alexseev 2004). Allowing for the lack of viable economic alternatives in the region, this would appear to be a case of 'greed' (private/criminal power) overriding 'creed' (ethnic/religious power) as the major means of achieving 'need' (economic/political/social power).[37]

Unsurprisingly, the declared motivations of the entrepreneurs of violence are invariably expressed in terms of 'need' and 'creed', rather than 'greed'. Moreover, insofar as competition for economic, political and social power is recognised generally as a legitimate 'need', those effectively excluded from this process are likely to attempt to achieve their goals through means perceived by their opponents, but crucially not by their own supporters, to be illegitimate. The recent rise in popularity amongst Palestinians of Hamas, despite its advocacy of suicide bombing, is a case in point.[38] International institutions could assist the peacemakers on both sides by establishing consistent and clear parameters of legitimate 'need' (e.g. allowing albeit some role for factions advocating Chechen independence), thereby exposing the real motives of entrepreneurs of violence on all sides. In the absence of any meaningful role in the peace process for the Chechen resistance, an 'Islamic' outcome, in the form of a *jihad* across the Northern Caucasus, appears to be replacing a 'European' scenario, Chechen national self-determination, as the major objective of the 'irreconcilables'.[39]

While it would appear self-evident that those responsible for perpetuating and exploiting these attitudes need to be held to account, neither the outside world in general nor the West in particular is currently in a particularly strong position to do so. The composite picture that emerges from the war on terror (especially the war in Iraq), globalisation and the post-secular discourse of 'good versus evil', the relative weakness of global civil society *vis-à-vis* the most powerful states, the absence of a genuinely independent and enforceable international legal framework, and the lip service given to notions of equality and fair trade with the less developed world, might lead one to conclude that the present international system, too, has its entrepreneurs of violence who are exploiting these contradictions for their own narrower interests.

[37]'The Economics of War: the Intersection of Need, Creed and Greed', organised on 10 September 2001 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC, available at: http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/econofwar.pdf, accessed 22 July 2005.

[38]The Kremlin recognition of the political wing of Hamas, while refusing to acknowledge the political legitimacy of any of the Chechen resistance, has not gone unnoticed in the West. See McGregor (2006).

[39]This interpretation has been strongly rejected by Akhmed Zakayev, whose role in the Chechen resistance was downgraded in the recent reshuffle; see 'Zapad dal sanktsiyu na dolguyu voinu v Chechne' ['The West has Sanctioned a Long War in Chechnya'], an interview on 6 February 2006, with Radio Svoboda's Andrei Babitsky, published by Chechen Press: available at: http://www.chechenpress.info/events/2006/02/09/01.shtml17936, accessed 8 March 2006. For an account of the reshuffle, see Smirnov (2006).

Yet in order to resolve the Russo–Chechen conflict, it is precisely in this, the holding to account of those responsible for this state of affairs, that the outside world, at public if not at state level, has a right and a duty to become involved. For example, PACE's recommendation 1479 of 25 January 2006, on the 'Human rights violations in the Chechen Republic: the Committee of Ministers' responsibility *vis-à-vis* the Assembly's concerns' opens by reaffirming that 'the Parliamentary Assembly stresses that the protection of human rights is the core task of all Council of Europe bodies' and closes with the complaint that 'the Assembly fears that the lack of effective reaction by the Council's executive body in the face of the most serious human rights issue in any of the Council of Europe's member states undermines the credibility of the Organisation'.[40] Yet, despite these violations, Russia has been invited not only to be chair of G8 but, in the near future, of the Council of Europe itself![41]

The entrepreneurs of direct violence

Insofar as the entrepreneurs of violence exploit attitudes that are manifested in structural violence, it is in the sphere of behaviour (direct violence) that they really come into their own. The ghastly catalogue of brutal violence has been documented sufficiently by respected human rights groups and other NGOs to avoid repeating the detail here.[42] It is worth mentioning, none the less, that it is the Chechen terrorist spectaculars (notably Dubrovka in October 2002 and Beslan in September 2004) that grab the world's attention rather than the daily diet of 'disappearances', extrajudicial killings and torture, let alone such 'hidden' violence as the Chechen syndrome, which has affected a considerable proportion of the million plus Russian soldiers who have fought in this discredited and unpopular war.[43] As noted, the behaviour of both sides might be characterised as constituting differing forms of terrorism. Undoubtedly, war crimes have been committed on both sides by those who continue to profit from its continuation. In such circumstances, one can only look to

[40]Available at: http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta06/ERES1479. htm, accessed 8 March 2006.

[41]See A. Kuchins (2006) 'Russian Democracy and Civil Society: Back to the Future', Testimony Prepared for US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 8 February, available at: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=18007&prog=zru, accessed 8 March 2006, Russia will chair the Council's Committee of Ministers in 2006.

[42]See, for example, The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (2002) and Amnesty International's report of 23 June 2004, '"Normalization" in Whose Eyes?', available at: http://web.amnesty.org/library/print/ ENGEUR460272004, accessed 22 July 2006; in March 2005, Human Rights Watch published a briefing paper entitled 'Worse than a War: "Disappearances" in Chechnya—a Crime Against Humanity', available at: http://hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/chechnya0305/, accessed 22 July; the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) also reported in 2004 on 'The Political Situation in the Chechen Republic: Measures to Increase Democratic Stability in Accordance with Council of Europe Standards', available at: http://assembly.coe.int/documents/WorkingDocs/doc04/ EDOC10276.htm, accessed 22 July 2005.

[43]For the 'Chechen syndrome', see Y. Zarakhovich (2003) 'Chechnya's Walking Wounded', *Time Europe*, 28 September, available at: http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/031006/syndrome.html, accessed 22 July 2005.

enlightened leaders who are prepared to represent the interests of the many rather than those of the few.

In this respect neither Russia nor Chechnya has been blessed with individuals possessing the qualities needed to achieve peace. In May 1999, a simple majority of the Russian Duma voted to impeach President Boris Yel'tsin for launching an illegitimate war on Chechnya in 1994.[44] Although falling short of an admission that the Russian leader had committed war crimes (not least the air and heavy artillery bombardment of Grozny at the beginning of the first war that left up to 25,000 mostly Chechen and Russian civilians dead), this vote did recognise that Yel'tsin had blundered into an unnecessarily bloody conflict (Kovalev 1995). He and Chechen President Dzokhar Dudayev never met; although most observers noted that a face-to-face meeting would probably have averted or stopped the war.[45] Although, arguably, the inflated ego of each was equally to blame for this (vanity, arguably, being another form of 'greed'), the very asymmetry of the confrontation surely placed more responsibility on the Russian President.[46]

Yel'tsin himself has agreed with both his predecessor Mikhail Gorbachev and his successor Vladimir Putin that the first war was a mistake (Eismont 1995). None the less, there was no major Western leader at that time prepared to put sufficient pressure on Yel'tsin to stop his forces destroying one of their own cities with a population the size of Edinburgh's. The 'bigger picture' then was the need for Yel'tsin to defeat the communists in the Russian presidential elections of 1996 and thus prevent any going back on the privatisation of Russian industry. The cost of the means employed—the lives of thousands of Russian soldiers and tens of thousands of mainly Chechen civilians—to achieve this end appears to have been perceived by many world leaders as regrettable, but unavoidable, collateral damage.[47]

This might be held to represent a triumph in contemporary international politics of the 'consequentialist' approach (arguing that the consequences of an action determine whether it is moral) over the 'deontologist' approach (based on fundamental moral principles).[48] As the insensitive (by Western standards) Russian response to both the Dubrovka and Beslan hostage situations demonstrates, Putin, too, evidently believes firmly that in dealing with Chechnya the ends justify the means. The fact that current

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[44]The vote fell just 17 short of the two-thirds majority (300) needed to impeach the President; see BBC News (1999) 16 May, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/344805.stm, accessed 22 July 2005.

[45]Sergei Stepashin, Yel'tsin's FSB chief in 1994, is one of the few to reject this scenario, placing the blame for the impasse squarely on Dudayev's intransigence. See his interview of 11 May 2002, in L. Telen (2002) 'Last but One Hero', available at: http://english.mn.ru/english/issue.php?2002-50-11, accessed 22 July 2005.

[46]Articulated, for example, by Robert Parsons, the former BBC correspondent covering the Chechen conflict, in the film *Chechen Lullaby* by Nino Kirtadze (Arte, Paris, 2000).

[47]For the lack of idealism in the search for peace in either the United Nations or the European Union, see Lloyd (2005, p. 8); for Western leaders, see Glucksmann (2005).

[48]For an application of this debate to the Iraq War, see K. Burgess-Jackson (2003) 'Bush's Critics as Repeat Offenders', *TCS Daily*, 3 July, available at: http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=070303A, accessed 8 March 2006.

Western leaders, and to some extent the civic societies that they represent, have demonstrably shifted significantly towards this viewpoint since 9/11 seriously undermines the chances of success of any values-based approach to the Russo–Chechen conflict.

The paradox of Vladimir Putin is that, although no liberal himself (despite being called a 'flawless democrat' by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder),[49] he is reputedly more of a liberal and a democrat than at least 70% of his population.[50] Insofar as the population of Russia, since the Moscow apartment bombings of 1999, like that of Israel and the USA after their 'Black Septembers', appears to be sufficiently 'traumatised' that a substantial proportion of the voters tend to adopt more hard-line attitudes than their leaders, Putin is faced with a genuine political dilemma.

However, despite being the one leader who could end the violence, he appears reluctant to do so except on terms of total surrender by the entire opposition, reminiscent of the questionable approach adopted towards the Palestinians under Yasser Arafat by successive Israeli governments under Ariel Sharon. Putin's failure to engage with any of the Chechen opposition, from the late rebel leader Abdul-Salim Sadulayev to the Moscow-based businessman Malik Saidullayev, and to stake instead his entire policy of Chechenisation on a Russian-style *vertikal'* of power represents the single greatest flaw of his Chechen policy. Thus, the federal forces' response to Maskhadov's final appeal for a ceasefire (and just 30 minutes with the Russian president in order to halt the war) was to assassinate the rebel Chechen leader, an act that even some Russian journalists characterised as a 'political murder'.[51] That Putin exacerbated the fall-out from this killing by refusing to release Maskhadov's body for a proper Muslim burial demonstrates the cultural arrogance and insensitivity of his administration.[52]

The 'bigger picture' nowadays is the post-9/11 'war on terror' and the vast natural energy resources controlled by Russia at a time of uncertainty in areas of traditional supply. Not only has no major Western leader put any serious pressure on Putin to make peace in Chechnya, but, despite his unsatisfactory handling of the Dubrovka and Beslan hostage sieges and the immoderate attacks of his spokespersons on both the US and UK justice systems for granting political asylum to so-called Chechen

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[49]See *Spiegel Online* (2004) 'Moscow Mon Amour: Gerhard Schroeder's Dangerous Liaison', 1 December, available at: http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,330461,00.html, accessed 22 July 2005. In December 2005, the former German Chancellor was appointed Chairman of Gazprom's Baltic pipeline subsidiary; see http://www.mosnews.com/news/2005/12/10/gerschr.shtml, accessed 8 March 2006.

[50]This claim was made by Mikhail Khodorkovsky in his article 'Crisis of Russian Liberalism', 29 March 2004, available at: http://www.mosnews.com/column/2004/03/29/khodorkovsky.shtml, accessed 9 December 2005.

[51]See Channel 4 Dispatches, *Chechnya: the Dirty War*, screened 25 July 2005; Dubnov (2005, pp. 6–10); and for Maskhadov's last interview, published on the day before his death, see L. Fuller (2005) 'Chechen Leader Gives Exclusive Interview to RFE/RL', available at: http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/03/C8BF5CC0-D91F-4DAC-9185-A451B1124B1D.html, accessed 22 July 2005.

[52]A poll conducted on 24 March 2005 indicated that 62% of Russians felt that Maskhadov's body should be returned to his relatives; see http://www.levada/ru/press/2005032402.html, accessed 22 July 2005.

'terrorists', he has been feted as being in the forefront of the battle between 'good' and 'evil' in the post-9/11 world. Such gestures increase Putin's standing domestically, deflecting the attention of the Russian public from the shortcomings of his administration.

Given the asymmetry of the conflicting sides and the character of the Russian leadership, it is hard to imagine what extraordinary qualities would be required by their Chechen equivalents in order for peace to be achieved. Yet even here, there has been a disappointing lack of vision, a lack of realism and an inflated sense of self-importance. As with the Viet Cong in Vietnam and the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan, there was inevitable euphoria at the defeat of a superpower, even one in such dire straits as post-Soviet Russia. Yet, far from pulling their country up by the bootstraps as the Vietnamese had done, far too many Chechen leaders took Afghanistan as their example and saw their future in terms of warlordism and criminality, controlling economic resources, territory and even ideology for their own enrichment and political gain. If one adds to this the ideologically driven impact of the Wahhabis on post-war Chechnya then one can see any prospect of a new Islamic state appearing in the Caucasus was regarded, particularly in the West, more with alarm and caution than with open arms.

Thus, even the legitimacy that Aslan Maskhadov gained upon winning the Chechen–Ichkerian presidential election in January 1997 was diluted not only by the refusal of states (except the Taliban in Afghanistan) to recognise the newly inde-pendent country, but also by the criminal and anti-Western behaviour of some of the most powerful warlords in Chechnya. We will never know how things would have turned out (a) if Maskhadov had won the support of Western powers; (b) if Russia had been less obstructive in the crucial first few years of Chechen independence; and (c) had the Chechen factions united behind their newly-elected leader. Whatever his well-documented shortcomings as a political leader, the blame for the failure to negotiate peace in Chechnya, clearly, was not Maskhadov's alone.

It remains to be seen whether a leader can be found in Chechnya or in the Chechen diaspora who could unite these factions and be accepted by the current Russian administration. The record thus far indicates that this is virtually impossible without outside involvement. Instead the Kremlin will insist on imposing a leader on Chechnya through rigged Soviet-style elections. In the absence of any pressure from without, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is simply because the Putin administration knows that any independent candidate would defeat his nominee and that, for regional and domestic geopolitical and economic reasons, this is an outcome to be avoided as long as he is able. As for Russia, it is not impossible that Putin will have the Constitution amended to allow him to run for a third time in 2008, thus ensuring the continuation in power of the *siloviki* attitudes, institutions and modes of behaviour that have allowed entrepreneurs of violence to flourish in Chechnya.

Conclusions

I have sought to demonstrate in this article that, however many well-intentioned peace plans are put forward in order to stop the violence in Chechnya, all will founder as long as the situation is controlled by the entrepreneurs of violence on all sides.

However much the United Nations, the OSCE, PACE, the European Court of Human Rights, NGOs and human rights organisations call for this or that international norm or convention to be observed, in order to stop the manifestations of direct violence occurring, unless real sanctions are threatened they are likely to be ignored. For as long as sanctions can only be imposed with the agreement of major world powers, then the 'need to look at the big picture' (the war on terror, globalisation, and 'good versus evil') will prevail every time.

The scope for international involvement in such circumstances is, therefore, extremely limited. Although this is due, primarily, to Russian intransigence, the situation is undoubtedly exacerbated by the passivity of Western governments. The latter, unlike the former, however, can still be held to account by those that elect them. There appears to be such a lack of leadership favouring compromise rather than strength in the international community at present that one could be forgiven for identifying most current leaders of major powers as entrepreneurs of violence on a global scale.

Yet the danger presented by the indifference to such a tragedy as that unfolding in Chechnya is that relatively healthy, hitherto secure societies, with a law-governed state, independent media and a strong civil society, appear unwilling to hold leaders to account for their passivity. The insecurity bred by the war on terror and discourse of 'good versus evil' seems to have dissuaded the general public from engaging with the complex processes and unresolved cultural contradictions involved, basing their perceptions exclusively on events involving direct violence, and usually only those perpetrated by the 'other' side.

However, as the war in Iraq has demonstrated, 'violent politics' have a nasty habit of boomeranging back on the initiators and it might not be until the situation in Chechnya spills over throughout the Northern Caucasus that the world will sit up and pay attention. The sad truth of the matter is that, in the Russo–Chechen conflict, too many of the powerful are the immediate beneficiaries of the continuing conflict, the victims of which have neither the might nor the voice to counter the power of the entrepreneurs of violence.

For the reasons stated above, therefore, a greater degree of outside involvement than hitherto found in the Russo–Chechen conflict would appear to be essential. Rather than concentrating initially on direct violence alone, a multi-track approach is required that places the behaviour of all sides involved in the context of the attitudes, institutions and processes that create structural violence. At the same time, a clear analysis should be made of how the cultural contradictions that give rise to these attitudes can be managed so as to avoid or resolve the conflicts contained therein. Some of these may be medium to long-term initiatives; others may lend themselves to more immediate measures.

A key role could be played by European institutions. As has been demonstrated by the accession of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, it is possible to move from an authoritarian to a democratic system with outside assistance within a relatively short time frame. It would not be surprising if the people of Georgia and the Ukraine were also to see their future increasingly as within the European family of nations. Russia, meanwhile, appears to be heading in the opposite direction, her traditional emphasis on executive power producing a perception of its national interest that is closer to that

of China's; perhaps currently even closer to that, in foreign policy at least, of the USA, than it is to those of European states. At the institutional level it is within Europe's reach, preferably with American support, to encourage Russia to see that, in terms of stability, prosperity and progress, both her best interests and those of the wider world community are served by rejecting her authoritarian past. If Russia's traditional concerns about following the European path prove too much of an obstacle, Japan might offer an alternative role model.

Where, then, does this leave the Northern Caucasus in general and Chechnya in particular? Russia's move away from federalism, in effect, seems to torpedo the one immediately possible compromise of an autonomous Chechnya within a genuine Russian Federation. After all, it is hard to imagine the rebellious Chechens being afforded this distinction, while the more compliant Dagestanis, Ossetians and Tatars are not.

Moreover, as has been stated above, the Kremlin is not about to allow, any time soon, a genuinely free and fair election in Chechnya for they are bound to be saddled with a less amenable leader than one they pick for themselves. This in turn is hardly surprising, given that as many as one-fifth of Chechens have been eliminated or displaced by the conflict and that the territory of Chechnya has been transformed into a ruined ecological disaster zone.[53]

However, the Chechens are not the only victims of this conflict; Russian civilians have suffered too, not only in acts of terrorism, nor even due to the aforementioned Chechen syndrome. Instead, under first Yel'tsin then Putin, the Russians have suffered a setback in their dreams of prosperity and progress and appear to have abandoned this for the delusion of great power status and a Russia for the Russians. Although such nationalistic sentiments are understandable in a people traumatised by their recent history, it is worth pointing out to Russian leaders and their public alike that this runs contrary to their own best interests. While painfully slow and imperfect, the moves towards a resolution of such long-running conflicts as those in Northern Ireland and the Middle East do highlight both the central and positive role of outside mediation and the absolute necessity for compromise.

In the final analysis, outside involvement (I have avoided deliberately the use of the word 'intervention') to change attitudes in the Russo–Chechen conflict, can work only if the advisors, donors and mediators are fully aware of the cultural contradictions between Russia, Chechnya and the outside world and are confident that their own attitudes not only reflect a genuine desire to reconcile and assist rather than an attempt to further their self interest, but are perceived as such by the conflicting parties.

The elaboration of a step-by-step programme for the resolution of the conflict in Chechnya could be based therefore on: (a) a recognition of the heterogeneity of views on both the Russian and Chechen 'sides' to this conflict against a background of an overwhelming desire for an end to the violence; (b) an identification of those cultural contradictions between Russia and Chechnya, as well as between both and the outside world, which can be resolved without resort to violence; and (c) differentiating

[53]For example, an estimated 500,000 landmines have been deployed in Chechnya; see Kramer (2004/5, p. 26).

between the 'need' and 'greed' of the parties involved and thus recognising that the role of the 'entrepreneurs of violence' is to serve their own private interests rather than those of the people they claim to represent.

For, neither Putin's 'military victory at all costs' nor Basayev's 'freedom or death' is likely to reconcile the Russian and Chechen peoples, who fate has decreed must live as neighbours. One senses that Putin has realised already that his primary political objective of keeping Chechnya part of Russian territory can be achieved only by allowing his chosen Chechen entrepreneur of violence, Ramzan Kadyrov, to pacify its recalcitrant population—a decision virtually guaranteed to perpetuate the conflict, prolong the human rights violations and spread resistance throughout the Northern Caucasus.

Paradoxically, in terms of the triumph of might over right, more of Russia is in danger of becoming like Chechnya, just as, through indifference and excessive caution, civic societies in the West run the risk of becoming as ineffectual as ordinary Russian citizens in restraining their own entrepreneurs of violence. Perhaps, as in Iraq, 'violent' politics need to be tried and seen to fail in Chechnya before it becomes apparent that a comprehensive internationally backed programme of peacebuilding really does represent the best way to assist both Russians and Chechens to extricate themselves from the impasse in which they currently find themselves entrenched.

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