

Gunmen Target Zyazikov's Home and Cousin

Newsru.com reported on September 11 that unidentified attackers had fired grenade launchers and machine guns at Ingush President Murat Zyazikov's home in the Nazran municipal district village of Barsuki the previous evening. A home located nearby belonging to relatives of Zyazikov was also reportedly targeted. According to Ingushetiya.ru, there was no information on whether there were any casualties from the attack, which lasted around 20 minutes. Ingushetia's Interior Ministry, meanwhile, denied that such an attack took place, Interfax reported.



Bekkhan Zyazikov

The reported attack on the homes of Ingushetia's president and his relatives in Barsuki followed the September 10 murder in Nazran of Bekkhan Zyazikov, the Ingush president's cousin. Bekkhan Zyazikov, who was in charge of Ingushetia's regional bus system, was shot in his car as he was driving home from work. Ingushetiya.ru reported that two other unidentified people were killed along with him. The website noted that September 10 was also Murat Zyazikov's 51st birthday.

Immediately after the murder of Bekkhan Zyazikov, the dean of Ingushetia's Law and Economics Institute, Sulambek Khalukhaev, was shot and seriously wounded in Nazran. According to police, unidentified gunmen armed with automatic rifles shot Khalukhaev in the head as he got into his car.

As Newsru.com noted, the murder of Bekkhan Zyazikov followed the death of Magomed Yevloev, the lawyer and owner of the Ingushetiya.ru website, by less than two weeks. Police claimed Yevloev died in police custody after trying to grab an officer's gun, but friends and relatives of Yevloev insist he was deliberately killed by police acting on the orders of President Zyazikov and Ingush Interior Ministry Musa Medov. Some allies of Yevloev claim Medov personally shot him to death. Relatives of Yevloev, including his father, have declared a blood feud with both Zyazikov and Medov (North Caucasus Weekly, September 5).

Members of Ingushetia's opposition have categorically denied that Bekkhan Zyazikov's murder was connected to Yevloev's killing. "The death of Magomed Yevloev is in no way connected to that act, and the opposition has no connection to it," Newsru.com quoted a leader of Ingushetia's opposition, Maksharip Aushev, as saying. However, Lyudmila Alekseyeva, head of the Moscow Helsinki Group, disagreed. "The murder of [Bekkhan] Zyazikov and the recent death of the owner of the Ingushetiya.ru website Magomed Yevloev are connected, [and] this is cause for great concern," Alekseyeva said, adding that she condemned the murder of Bekkhan Zyazikov. "Murder is not a way to settle scores in the 21st century," she said.

Interfax on September 11 quoted Ingushetia's prosecutor, Yury Turygin, as saying that several attacks which had taken place in the republic, including the murder of Bekkhan Zyazikov, were a response from the republic's rebels to an operation in which police reportedly killed a number of their comrades. Six suspected militants were reportedly killed in a shootout with police in Ingushetia on September 7. Interfax, quoting a law-enforcement source, reported that the shootout took place after police stopped the six men as they traveled in two cars through a village outside Nazran. The source said that all six gunmen died and at least two policemen were injured in the incident. According to RIA Novosti, the six militants opened fire from two Russian-made Zhiguli cars on police officers who were conducting a sweep of an area where a suspected militants' hideout had been earlier located. "All suspected militants have been eliminated in the exchange of fire," the news agency quoted a local police source as saying. The source did not confirm or deny reports that two police officers were wounded in the battle. RIA Novosti reported that a search of the suspects' vehicles had found a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives.

A number of other attacks aimed at high-level officials and others in Ingushetia occurred over the last week. On September 11, a bomb blew up a car belonging to Khusein Shadiey, the imam of a local mosque in the town of Malgobek. Interfax reported that Shadiey was seriously wounded in the blast and several passers-by were also injured. On September 9, unidentified gunmen in Nazran shot and seriously wounded the head of the local branch of Russia's Pension Fund, Musa Balkoev. A source in Ingushetia's Interior Ministry told Itar-Tass that the shooting took place outside Balkoev's home and that the attackers shot from a VAZ-2107 automobile.

Itar-Tass reported on September 9 that an unidentified attacker fired on a house in the village of Ordzhonikidzevskaya

belonging to Akhmetkhan Kukurkhaev, investigator of high-priority cases in the Investigations Department of the Russian Prosecutor's Office for Ingushetia. No one was hurt in the incident and the attacker escaped. On September 7, two members of a group of electric power linemen were shot by unidentified gunmen while working on a high-voltage power line in Ingushetia, Kavkazky Uzel reported. The victims' wounds were not life-threatening. On September 6, unidentified attackers fired on a house in Nazran belonging to Tamara Khautieva, vice speaker of Ingushetia's parliament, Itar-Tass reported. No one was hurt in the incident and the house sustained minor damage.

Also on September 6, an unidentified gunman reportedly armed with a sniper rifle fired on members of a field engineer group who were inspecting the Kavkaz highway and areas adjacent to it near the village of Barsuki. One serviceman was wounded in the attack and hospitalized, Itar-Tass reported.

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Zyazikov Accuses U.S. of Destabilizing Ingushetia

Ingush President Murat Zyazikov said that he wanted an “objective” investigation into Magomed Yelvoev’s death, Reuters reported on September 8. “By all means, this is a tragedy ... and we are interested more than anybody else to clarify this matter, and we will inform the public about what really happened,” Zyazikov said. But he also accused the United States of stirring trouble with the aim of ending Russian rule in the North Caucasus.



“Comrade Bush has all of a sudden fallen strongly in love with far-away Ingushetia,” Reuters quoted Zyazikov as telling a news conference. “The only thing(s) they would build in the Caucasus are military bases. We know what kind of democracy they brought to Iraq and Afghanistan, how they acted in Yugoslavia ... We feel attempts are made to oust Russia from the Caucasus and surround it.”

Newsru.com on September 6 quoted Zyazikov as denying that there was “unrest” of any kind in Ingushetia in the wake of Yelvoev’s killing. According to the website, the Ingush president, asked by reporters to comment on opposition demands that he step down, said such calls were from a “handful” of “adventurists” and that such people do not represent a “constructive opposition.” Zyazikov also said that “the Americans have had a hand in attempts to destabilize the situation in the republic,” Newsru.com reported. “The Americans are just waiting to destabilize [the situation],” he said. “Maybe they would like to achieve what was done in South Ossetia.”

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Shootouts in Dagestan Claim Lives of Police and Militants

A policeman and two militants were killed near the village of Mutsalaul in Dagestan's Khasavyurt district on September 10, Kavkazky Uzel reported. According to the website, the incident occurred when gunmen opened fire on a car that was being driven by a policeman, who was wounded and died on the spot. A police unit arrived at the scene a short time later and cornered the two militants, who were killed during an exchange of fire that lasted two hours.



One of the slain militants was identified as Zalimkhan Batyrov, who was accused of a number of murders, including the killing of an official of the Khasavyurt City Mosque, the director of a Khasavyurt middle school and law-enforcement officers. According to Dagestani law-enforcement sources, both militants were members of the group headed by Askhab Bidaev, who was killed in a counter-terrorist operation in Khasavyurt on September 4. In addition to Bidaev, four other militants—Kamal Ustarkhanov, Suleiman Adzhiev, Murad Gadzhimuradov and Tagir Dadaev—were killed in that operation along with a local resident. Two Federal Security Service (FSB) commandos were wounded in the operation.

On September 9, two policemen were killed and one wounded in Dagestan's capital, Makhachkala, when their patrol car came under fire. On September 8, three policemen were killed while carrying out a counter-terrorist operation in Dagestan's Tabasaransk district that targeted members of the group headed by Ilgar Malachiev, an Azerbaijani citizen who is a leader of Dagestan's rebel underground. Malachiev was killed in Dagestan's Magaramkentsk district on September 7 along with two associates, who were subsequently identified as Shikhaibek Zagirov and Emirbek Ragimkhanov.

On September 8, Dagestan's branch of the FSB claimed that Ilgar Malachiev had close connections with al-Qaeda. According to Azerbaijan's National Security Ministry and Prosecutor General's Office, Malachiev and his associate Samir Mekhtiev were behind the August 17 bombing of the Abu-Bekr Mosque, the largest Sunni mosque in Baku. That bombing killed two people and wounded 13. Kavkazky Uzel reported that an operation conducted on September 5 by special units of Azerbaijan's Internal Troops in Azerbaijan's Gusar district, which borders Dagestan, killed three members of the "Lesnye Bratya" (Forest Brothers), a terrorist group to which Malachiev reportedly also belonged (see Andrei Smirnov's article in this issue).

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Memorial: Government Violence in North Caucasus a “Daily” Occurrence

Kavkazky Uzel reported on September 11 that the Memorial human rights group has released a report chronicling violent incidents in the North Caucasus during August of this year. According to the report, kidnappings, attacks by unknown persons, shootings, and murder take place in the North Caucasus practically daily.

Memorial reported that on August 1, members of an unknown “power structure” in Nazran, Ingushetia’s largest city, kidnapped a native of Chechnya, Kiev Kazbek. According to the human rights group, it took until August 5 for Kazbek’s relatives to find out that he was being held in Nazran’s remand prison (SIZO) on suspicion of having committed a crime. Memorial found out that officials did not inform Kazbek’s relatives of his whereabouts for 12 hours and did not permit them to provide him with legal services.

On August 2, two Nazran residents, Khmazat Gardanov and Daud Chibiev, were shot to death by members of “federal power structures,” Memorial reported. According to witnesses, neither man put up armed resistance to the “siloviki,” who allegedly planted a pistol and three cartridges on Chibiev’s body. However, eyewitnesses were afraid to give evidence of what happened.

On August 3, Mokhmadsaloros Masaev, a native of the Chechen settlement of Itum-Kale, was kidnapped by unidentified persons wearing camouflage uniforms in Grozny, the Chechen capital. On August 5, Anzor Gadaev, a resident of the village of Mesker-Yurt in Chechnya’s Shali district, was kidnapped from his home by unknown persons. That same day, two other residents of Chechnya, Israpil Ganaev and Sulim Ismailov, disappeared. According to Memorial, Ganaev’s father said he has reliable unofficial information that both men were seen inside the police station in the town of Argun on August 11. On August 12, Amra Magomadova filed a second report with Memorial’s office in Grozny about the abduction of her son, Mairbek Magomadov, by members of Chechen power structures back in June. Magomadova said her son had returned home and asked the human rights group not to act on her first report. She refused to say where he had been during his disappearance. However, according to other relatives, he was initially held at the headquarters of Chechnya’s OMON police commandos in Grozny, transferred to the headquarters of the republic’s anti-organized crime unit (OBOP) and then back to OMON headquarters.

On August 18, Tamerlan Nasipov, a student at the Chechen State Oil Institute, was abducted by unidentified “siloviki” in Grozny’s Leninsky district. He returned home after three days but refused to talk about where had been held.

Meanwhile, Memorial also reported that on August 14, Russian troops carried out a massive bombardment of the outskirts of the mountain settlement of Zumsoi in Chechnya’s Itumkalinsky district. The bombardment reportedly came from the direction of the settlement of Borzoi and involved fire from Grad missile systems and from aviation. Meanwhile, airborne troops were also dropped in the area. At the time of the bombardment, only 15 families who had recently returned to Zumsoi were living in the settlement, which was partially destroyed during the second Chechen military campaign. Eyewitnesses said that the center of the village was not bombed, and therefore no one was hurt. The reason for the bombardment and the dispatching of troops was not determined.

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Briefs

Kadyrov Accuses U.S. of Fomenting Unrest in the Caucasus

The Moscow Times reported on September 12 that Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov accused the United States of fomenting unrest in the Caucasus and emboldening Georgia to launch an attack on South Ossetia. Kadyrov told members of the Valdai Discussion Club at his residence near Grozny that Russia's defeat of Georgian troops was the appropriate response and that Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili "was dancing to someone else's tune," the English-language daily reported. "He started a war, an inhuman war," Kadyrov said. "The United States was testing Russia through Georgia, and Russia reacted decisively." According to the Moscow Times, Kadyrov backed Moscow's recognition of South Ossetia and neighboring Abkhazia's declaration of independence from Georgia. He also said the West is "influencing" Ingushetia and Dagestan, adding: "We are ready to support the Russian Federation leadership in all areas - military and economic." On September 10, the BBC quoted Kadyrov as confirming that Chechen units and paramilitaries had fought with Russians against Georgians in South Ossetia last month. "We Chechens are obliged to be on the front line with Russia because we are warriors, and we know what war is," Kadyrov said.

Roadside Bombing in Chechnya Wounds Two OMON Commandos

Two OMON police commandos were wounded when a roadside bomb detonated near the Chechen town of Shali on September 8. Itar-Tass quoted Chechen law-enforcement sources as saying that the policemen were traveling in an armored vehicle to the settlement of Benoi in Chechnya's Vedeno region when a bomb equivalent to five kilograms of TNT went off. The vehicle's driver and another policeman were injured and rushed to hospital. Kavkazky Uzel reported on September 10 that one of the wounded commandos had a leg amputated. Late last month, one soldier was killed and 11 were wounded when two suicide bombers rammed a jeep packed with explosives through the fence of the Interior Ministry camp in Vedeno. Reuters on August 30 quoted a Vedeno resident who saw the aftermath of the blast as saying that both attackers were killed in the blast. The woman, who saw the severed head of one of them, said he appeared to be in his teens.

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Russian and Azeri Security Forces Fight Rebels on Both Sides of the Border

By Andrei Smirnov

The recent Russian-Georgian armed conflict revealed the role of Azerbaijan as a key player in projects to supply Europe with oil and natural gas via alternative routes to the pipelines that run across Russia. It is widely known that the Russian authorities completely reject delivering natural gas from Central Asia through Azerbaijan and Georgia bypassing Russian territory. So, the speed of the implementation of the Nabucco pipeline project to supply Europe with natural gas from Central Asia through Georgia and Azerbaijan depends heavily on Russian-Azeri relations. In addition to the problems of prices and the security of transportation routes, there is also the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway region of Azerbaijan controlled by a pro-Armenian separatist government. Russia and the West are trying now to demonstrate to the Azeri authorities their ability to solve the Karabakh issue in favor of Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, another problem has tightly linked Russia and Azerbaijan recently: the problem of the North Caucasian insurgency.

When Russia initiated the first military campaign in Chechnya, the Chechen separatists found shelter in Azerbaijan, where they were allowed to conduct their political activities. During the second Chechen military campaign, which coincided with Vladimir Putin's accession as president of Russia, the government of Azerbaijan strengthened its control over Chechen refugees in the country. After a time, all political and information centers of the Chechen separatists were closed in Azerbaijan and rebel envoys started to disappear without a trace: it is most likely that they were detained by Azeri security services to be extradited to Russia. By 2007, the activities of Chechen separatists almost stopped in Azerbaijan or went deeply underground.

However, the Azeri authorities faced another problem as the Chechen rebels were replaced by rebels in Dagestan, which borders Azerbaijan. Many ethnic groups that live in Dagestan, including Lezgins, Avars, and Kumyks, also live in the northern provinces of Azerbaijan adjacent to Russia. Many Dagestanis from Azerbaijan have joined rebel groups in Dagestan. Nabi Nabiev, a Lezgin from Azerbaijan, was the right hand of Rappani Khalilov, who was the leader of the rebels in Dagestan. Nabiev was killed together with Khalilov in Dagestan in September 2007. Eldar Malachiev (aka Abdul Majid), an Avar from the Azeri city of Zakataly, became the leader of Dagestan insurgency after Khalilov's death (Interfax, September 18). This year the authorities in Dagestan noted that the center of the local insurgency was moving toward the southern region to areas not far from the Azeri border.

This summer, Dagestan's Interior Minister, Adilgeri Magomedtagirov, said police had counted 150 Islamic fundamentalists in the southern areas of the republic. "Given the extent of terrorist activities, we can safely say that their real number is much larger," he said (Kavkazky Uzel, July 24).

One could see the same trend in Azerbaijan this year. The number of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Azerbaijan has increased in recent months. They consist mostly of Dagestanis both from Dagestan and from northern Azerbaijan. In Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, the center for the Dagestan Salafi groups is the Abu Bekr Mosque. On August 17, somebody threw a hand grenade into a window of the mosque during Friday prayers. Two people were killed and 18 wounded. Immediately after that Azeri police started a massive campaign of arrests in the northern districts of the country. Dozens of Azeri Dagestanis were arrested in the Gusar, Zakataly, and Balakent districts adjacent to Dagestan (Day.az, August 19). At the same time, police in Baku started patrolling mosques where Sunni Dagestanis pray (Day.az, August 29). (Unlike Dagestanis who are Sunnis, the majority of Azeri Muslims are Shia.)

According to Azeri sources, in late August a group of Dagestani militants led by Eldar Malachiev moved from Dagestan to Azerbaijan's Gusar district. The nature of the mission of the group remains unclear; perhaps they wanted to prevent further arrests and repression against Dagestani Salafists in northern Azerbaijan. On August 29, the militants had a shoot-out with Shakhin, an Azeri special forces unit. One Azeri soldier was killed in the clash and the insurgents escaped deep into a forest.

At the same time, the Russian security forces started a large-scale counterinsurgency operation in the districts of Dagestan adjacent to Azerbaijan. On September 2, a rebel was arrested in Magaramkent district of Dagestan. Russian officials declared that he had taken part in the rebel raid into Azerbaijan (Day.az, September 2).

On September 8, also in Dagestan's Magaramkent district, Russian special forces blocked a car with four insurgents in it, including the top Dagestani rebel leader Malachiev. All four militants were killed. That same day Russian police forces surrounded several villages in the Tabasaran and Derbent districts in southern Dagestan about fifty miles from the border with Azerbaijan. According to official statements, about 40 Dagestani rebels were hiding there. On September 8, three Russian officers from a police special task unit were killed in an ambush near Syrtych, one of the surrounding villages (Interfax, September 8).

While Russian troops and police forces were combing the Russian side, the Azeri policemen tracked the rebels on their side of the border. On September 8, Azeri police declared that two rebels had been killed and one wounded in Gusar district. According to the official version, these militants had participated in the shootout with the Azeri Shakhin unit on August 29 (Day.az, September 8). Azeri officials also declared that an assault rifle belonging to a slain Azeri soldier, a member of the Shakhin unit, had been found among the dead rebels' weaponry.

As one can see, the Russian-Azeri border has become an unstable buffer zone where Russians and Azerbaijanis have one enemy: local Dagestani insurgents. Most likely in the near future the government of Azerbaijan will need closer coordination with Russian security services to secure its volatile north. This will provide Russia with yet another opportunity to exert influence on Azeri foreign and domestic policy.

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The Chechen Reaction to the Georgian Crisis

By Mairbek Vatchagaev

The August 2008 events in Georgia have been interpreted in various ways both in the world generally and in the republics of Russia's North Caucasus that neighbor Georgia. Leaving aside the official propaganda campaign, on the societal level there were major disagreements with regard to how to react and who to blame as the aggressor. It is possible to conditionally identify three opinion groups on this subject. The first group consists of Vainakh peoples (Chechens and Ingush), who sympathized with Georgia. The second group is represented by those who supported the Russian variant for resolving the problem (this group is comprised of the Adyg-Cherkess peoples, who are related to the Abkhaz, and Ossetians from North Ossetia, who have natural kinship and family ties with their brethren in South Ossetia). The third group is represented by the peoples populating Dagestan, for whom the problems of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are less important at present. The Karachais and Balkars, who have always been close to the Svans, an ethnic group from the Georgian highlands, deserve a separate mention because lately they have been searching for common roots with the Ossetians dating back to antiquity. The Ossetians, Karachais and Balkars belong to different ethnic groups. Ossetians belong to the Iranian-speaking linguistic group, whereas the Karachais and Balkars are members of the Turkic-speaking linguistic group. This circumstance invariably makes the argument about their alleged common ancient ancestry highly debatable.

Be that as it may, each North Caucasian ethnos apparently relied on its historical past in calibrating the response to the conflict in Georgia. Throughout the centuries Georgia was a natural center of gravity for highlanders populating the Caucasus. After the Caucasus peoples were incorporated into Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Tiflis became the center of the Caucasus Gubernia. In the Soviet period Tbilisi remained the center of scientific and cultural life for the peoples of Caucasus. However, with the breakup of the Soviet Union, Georgia recklessly severed its ties with its neighbors. Thus, the center for the highlanders of the North Caucasus shifted to the city of Rostov-on-Don, which is far from an example of a typical Caucasian urban area.

The actions by Chechens were determined by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's shortsighted policy towards the Chechens. After his first visit to Moscow, Saakashvili agreed with Russia on a common course of actions against Chechens (Day.az, August 25). The Chechens were unaware of this tacit agreement, but they saw that with Saakashvili's assumption of power, the authorities in Tbilisi began police operations in the Pankisi Gorge. Moreover, the Georgians allowed officers of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) into the Pankisi Gorge (see Vyacheslav Izmailov's interview with an officer from Georgia's Ministry of State Security, Novaya Gazeta, December 23, 2004). Soon thereafter the Chechen refugees in Georgia began to disappear, which naturally alerted the Chechen Diaspora as well as refugees from Chechnya, which by then was already a sizeable group (Giorgi Sepashvili, "Chechens living in Georgia 'are afraid of secret extradition'," Civil.ge, March 1, 2004).

All of this caused disbelief and anxiety among Chechens. However, during the August events in South Ossetia, Chechens interviewed by Kavkazky Uzel journalist Muslim Ibragimov expressed an almost unanimous support for Georgia's actions and were convinced that Georgia's actions were provoked by Russia (Kavkazky Uzel, August 7). Moreover, the Georgians noticed that Chechens from the Vostok battalion were the ones who saved many Georgian civilians from revenge attacks by Ossetians and Russians (<http://abkhaziya.net/2008/09/03/war-2/>). A French-German television channel even aired footage in which the residents of Georgian villages thanked Chechens for protecting them from others.

Even pro-Moscow officials in Grozny, did not know how to react to the events in Georgia and initially there were statements of good will from Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who suggested that everything be resolved at the negotiating table (Itar-Tass, August 8). At the time the Russian leadership's position on South Ossetia was probably not clear to Kadyrov. When he understood what Russia's interest was he made a new statement offering to send 10,000 Chechen fighters (Vesti.ru, August 12). Furthermore, by then he knew that his implacable foe, Sulim Yamadaev, the Vostok battalion's commander, was among the Russian troops in South Ossetia. It is worth noting here that Yamadaev's participation was later rewarded when all charges against him produced under pressure from Ramzan Kadyrov were dropped and he was discharged with the title of lieutenant colonel of the Russian Federation's armed forces.

Prior to his discharge from military service, Sulim Yamadaev managed to upset the plans of his enemies in Chechnya: he declared in an interview that, according to his information, 20 young Chechen girls had joined the ranks of militants hiding in the mountains and said there were many other instances of departures by young people eager to participate in the resistance movement (Utro.ru, August 22). Ramzan Kadyrov publicly acknowledged this fact on Chechen television without identifying the exact number. He admitted that girls had joined the ranks of those who are fighting against Russia. In response, Kadyrov's supporters began implementing measures aimed against the parents of young men and women who had joined the ranks of resistance fighters in the mountains. At a meeting with such parents, the mayor of Argun gave them a two-week ultimatum, telling them that if their children were not back within two weeks, their families would be forced out of their houses and banished from the town. Similar actions took place on August 28 in the town of Shali, where two families were thrown out onto the street at dawn. They were not allowed to take any of their possessions, they were told to leave the town immediately and their houses were burnt down.

It was evident that in Chechen resistance circles, nobody was ready for such turn of events in the region. The democratic wing of the Chechen resistance limited itself to ambiguous statements of support for Georgia based not on the principle of territorial integrity but on criticism of Russia for its hypocritical position regarding those who had been struggling for independence for close to two decades (Chechenews.com, August 27). The radical wing of the Chechen resistance movement, as represented by its leader Dokka Umarov, criticized Russia and appealed to the Caucasian peoples not to succumb to Russia's intrigues (Kavkaz.tv, August 16). It is peculiar that, in general, both democrats and radicals assumed a wait-and-see position. This strongly resembles the position of Imam Shamil during the Russian-Turkish war of 1853-1856, when instead of redoubling his efforts in the region, Imam Shamil allowed the Russian army to transfer additional troops to the military theater of operations against Turkey, which in the end allowed the Russian Army to defeat Turkey and its allies and to crush Shamil's army later.

This time around no additional troops were transferred from Chechnya to the Georgian theater of operations. On the contrary, two suicide bombings occurred in the vicinity of the Russian structures in Chechnya recently (on August 15 and August 29). This was quite unexpected because suicide bombings have not occurred since Basaev's departure from the political arena. If these are not uncoordinated actions by aggrieved individuals who decided to take revenge for the death or humiliation of family members, then we ought to anticipate the corresponding changes in the tactics of the Chechen resistance movement, although increased use of suicide bombings would undoubtedly be perceived negatively by the Chechen mentality.

On August 18, resistance fighters attacked the commandant's office in the village of Dai in Chechnya's mountains (Kavkaz-Center, August 19). In another daring demonstration of their capabilities, the militants entered the village of Goi-chu, where police officers were targets of the attack (www.nohchi.vu/news/detail.php?ID=44875). Bombings and individual acts of terror against contract police officers have become daily occurrences that no longer surprise anyone.

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