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Abstract

After the end of Cold War new security challenges became more prominent to the international security agenda such as terrorism. This phenomenon is not new, but its international component is, i.e., terrorism was first used for ethno-nationalist purposes (domestic terrorism). The terrorist threat after the Cold War is perpetrated by terrorist organisations outside the country, or by organisations linked to foreign terrorist organisations, most of them with "religious" claims. International Terrorism became prominent in Security Studies after the terrorist attacks in the United States (US), in September 2001. Our analysis focuses on how terrorism affects the Russian foreign policy, namely the Kremlin's anti-terrorism policy, by taking into consideration the Russian domestic context of the North Caucasus. We stress that terrorism is, at the same time, an internal and external threat to the state. The Russian Federation has this premise very much present as it has been dealing with international terrorism inside its borders since 1998 officially. The Chechen secessionist movement that began as a secular movement has found inspiration in Islamist teachings and has radicalised. After the end of the First Chechen War (1996) the influence of foreign fighters was palpable not only in Chechnya, but throughout the North Caucasus region. In 2007, a terrorist organisation — the Caucasus Emirate (CE) — was created in Dagestan. Last year, it pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State of Syria and Levant (ISIL). The latter has declared *jihad* against Russia. Having territorial integrity and sovereignty as the Russia main national interests, this dissertation stresses the link between the Chechen separatist movement and the Russian anti-terrorism policy, namely how the "securitisation" of the Chechen separatism as an internal-external (IN-OUT) threat and the Russian intervention in Syria are related. In other words, this work emphasises the interconnection between the domestic and foreign policies in the face of an IN-OUT security challenge called terrorism.

Key-words: Russian Federation; Chechnya; Syria; terrorism; Securitisation; IN-OUT security nexus.

Resumo Analítico

Após o fim da Guerra Fria, novos desafios de securitários tornaram-se mais proeminentes para a a agenda internacional de segurança, como o terrorismo. Este fenómeno não é novo, mas a sua componente internacional sim, isto é, o terrorismo foi primeiramente utilizado com propósitos étnico-nacionalistas (terrorismo interno). A ameaça terrorista no pós-Guerra fria é perpetrada por organizações terroristas fora do país, ou então por organizações ligadas a organizações terroristas estrangeiras, a maioria delas com reivindicações "religiosas". O terrorismo internacional popularizou-se nos Estudos de Segurança após os ataques terroristas nos Estados Unidos, em setembro de 2001. Este estudo foca-se em como o terrorismo afeta a política externa Russa, nomeadamente a política contra-terrorista do Kremlin, tendo em consideração o contexto doméstico do Cáucaso do Norte. É nosso argumento que o terrorismo é, simultaneamente, uma ameaça interna e externa ao Estado. A Federação Russa tem esta premissa bastante presente, pois tem vindo a lidar com o terrorismo internacional dentro das suas fronteiras desde 1998 (oficialmente). O movimento secessionista checheno, que começou secular, encontrou inspiração nos ensinamentos Islamistas e radicalizou-se. Depois do fim da Primeira Guerra da Chechénia (1996), a influência dos combatentes estrangeiros era palpável não apenas na Chechénia, mas na região do Cáucaso do Norte. Em 2007 foi criada, no Daguestão, uma organização terrorista — o Emirado do Cáucaso — que recentemente (2016) se aliou ao Estado Islâmico da Síria e do Levante. O último declarou *jihad* à Rússia. Tendo a integridade territorial e a soberania como os principais interesses nacionais russos, esta dissertação estabelece a ligação entre o movimento separatista checheno e a política contra-terrorista russa, nomeadamente como é que a "securitização" do movimento separatista checheno como uma ameaça interna-externa e a intervenção russa na Síria estão relacionadas. Por outras palavras, este trabalho enfatiza a conexão entre as políticas doméstica e internacional face a uma ameaça interna-externa chamada terrorismo.

Palavras-chave: Federação Russa; Chechénia; Síria; terrorismo; Securitização; Nexo de segurança interno-externo.

List of Contents

List of Figures/Tables

Abbreviations

CE	Caucasus Emirate
ChRI	Chechen Republic of Ichkeria
CTO	Counterterrorism Operation
EU	European Union
ISIL	Islamic State of Syria and Levant
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SC	Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

Traditionally, a threat to the state's security was identified as only being perpetrated by another state (Brandão, 2010; Tomé, 2014). Since the 2001 Al-Qaeda's terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC (9/11) the whole world acknowledged the existence of other types of security challenges — soft security threats[1] — namely the ones posed by jihadist groupings with transnational ramifications (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). As a consequence, the Westphalian order, in which states are perceived as the epicentre of the security paradigm (Terrif, Craft, James & Morgan, 1999; Morgan, 2007; Caldwell & Williams, 2012), saw its foundations shaken. International Relations are entering a new era that challenges the traditional Westphalian model as new security menaces are emerging and Eriksson & Rhinard (2009:244) suggest that scholars should "turn their attention to the 'nexus', or critical connections, between the internal and external security domains and assess how those connections condition government responses". To put it in other words, in order to be able to react to that sort of threats, states must be able to understand and to adapt to this new reality.

As a result of the broadening of the concept of security and of the spectrum of security challenges, new theories have emerged on the field of security (Silva, 2014). The Theory of Securitisation was one of them. Securitisation is part of the Copenhagen School and claims that any subject can be securitised through discourse (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998; Huysmans, 1998; Stritzel, 2007). In other words, the two main contributors to the development of this theory — Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) — consider the "speech act" to be the corollary of securitisation, since it is through discourse that the securitising actor, most of the times the state, tries to convince the audience that a particular issue is an existential threat to security. Hence, it is necessary to take extraordinary measures to eradicate the threat. Securitising an issue is, however, an intersubjective process, since each one may have a different interpretation of what a threat to security is. Eriksson stresses that

> [A]nyone who classifies an issue as a 'security problem' makes a political rather than an analytical decision. Therefore, the role of the analyst cannot be to observe threats, but to determine how, by whom, under what circumstances, and with what consequences some issues are classified as existential threats but not others"(Eriksson, 1999:315).

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[1] The soft security threats are more flexible and referent to a specific object (Buzan, Waever & Wild, 1998). These new menaces are, among others, the international terrorism. As Brandão (2010:9) argues:"[d]uring the Cold War the threat was identified (political-military, intentional, state's source and target) and the conflict was predominantly interstate. In the post-Cold War, the threat and risks were diffuse, indirect, multisectoral, originated by and targeting a multitude of actors, including the non-state ones. The conflict is, predominantly, of intrastate nature, coupled with the State's fragility and/or with identity factors and potentiating transnational threats".

The 9/11 terrorist events, later replicated in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), have raised awareness to the emergence of new (and transnational) actors who have been acquiring a prominent position in the international security agenda, showing evidence that states no longer hold the monopoly of violence and/or security. Terrorism is hardly a new phenomenon. In the 1970s, terrorism was already a threat to several European countries (Staab, 2011:142) — Northern Ireland (Irish Republic Army), Germany (Booder-Meinhof) and Italy (Red Brigades). During this period, terrorist aggressions were mainly ethno-nationalist in nature (Rees, 2008) and were often diminished by other states since they were considered to be a subject of national security [2] (Zimmermann, 2006:123).

Globalisation as a consequence of the spread of the capitalist model and the development of the world economy allowed new dangers to arise (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000). Terrorism whose character was essentially ethno-nationalist (domestic terrorism) gained another component: the international one. In this research, our aim is to understand how terrorism has materialised into an internal-external (IN-OUT) security threat to the Russian Federation.

International terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda became, in the years of 2000, the source of instability and insecurity, leading the United States (US) President, George W. Bush, to head a "global war on terror" and the European Union (EU) to launch several reports and strategies regarding the threat of radicalism and terrorism. In fact, the EU considered that preventing radicalism was crucial to the EU's counter-terrorism strategy, since radicalisation provides the opportunity for terrorist cells to manipulate and recruit people to join its crusade (Council of the EU, 2005). The Russian Federation has, however, stated terrorism to be a threat before the 2001 turmoil.

Russia declared war on terrorism in 1998 (Oldberg, 2006) due to the radicalisation of the North Caucasus insurgency and its connections to the Global Jihad. The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, signed the first Russian legal framework on terrorism, entitled *On the Fight Against Terrorism*, after two major terrorist attacks in the North Caucasus region. The first occurred in 1995 in Budyonnovsk (Stavropol krai), and the second in 1996 in Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye (Dagestan). These two hostage-taking situations aimed at forcing the Kremlin into negotiations with the Chechen rebels who aspired to Chechnya's independence (Oldberg, 2006). Later in 2000, Russia claimed that fighting terrorism was a priority, since terrorism threatens not only the stability of a single state, but also of entire regions. The Kremlin has identified terrorism as "a serious threat to Russian national security. International terrorism has

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[2] Notwithstanding, the European Commission established, in 1976, an intergovernmental group entitled to fight terrorism called TREVI: Terrorisme, Radicalisme, Extremisme, Violence Internationale (Kaunert & Zwolski, 2013; Staab, 2011; Rees, 2008; Nilsson, 2007; Zimmermann, 2006; Lavenex & Wallace, 2005). The TREVI group worked outside EU's legal framework and as a forum where the foreign ministers of the member states shared information (Staab, 2011 Rees, 2008) regarding counter-terrorism cooperation (Zimmermann, 2006).

unleashed the overt campaign aimed at destabilizing the situation in Russia" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000)[3].

The desire for Chechnya's independence came as a result of several independence movements that spread throughout the Soviet territory after the end of the Cold War[4] (Freire, 2011). Boris Yeltsin, however, inherited not only economic problems, but also the new country's identity problems. Hence, during his first mandate Yeltsin's main goal was to keep the Russian Federation's integrity (Fernandes, 2006). Regardless, that integrity was being threatened by the nationalist movements whose intention was to be freed from Moscow's sphere of influence (Fernandes, 2006).

Despite Moscow's military superiority, its aspirations were frustrated by the Chechen ambition of getting free of the Russian rule. In order to revert their unfavourable situation, the Chechen side relied on unconventional tactics, namely staging a guerrilla warfare against the Russian military (Arquilla & Karasik, 1999). In addition, the Chechen movement for independence was reinforced by the Muslim foreign fighters[5], who identified with the cause of their fellow Muslims who arrived to Chechnya, many of them with connections to Al-Qaeda (Hahn, 2012). They wanted to impose their interpretation of Islam even though not all Chechens were inclined to accept the radical ideologies of the foreign fighters[6]. Islam, which was once the glue of a disperse society, started to frighten those who did not relate to Salafi interpretations of Islam (Campana, 2006). In other words, Islam ended up being instrumentalised as a catalyst of radicalism and violence (Garner, 2013), culminating on the use of terrorism by the Chechen rebels (Snetkov, 2011; 2012).

The 1995 and 1996 hostage-takings in Budyonnovsk and Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye, respectively, and the influx of foreign fighters from Arab countries preaching their radical teatchings (Hahn, 2012) — Salafism[7] — have contributed to the radicalisation of the Chechnya secular insurgent movement. These

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[3] "Russia regards as its most important foreign policy task to combat international terrorism which is capable of destabilizing the situation not only in individual states, but in entire regions.
The Russian Federation calls for the further measures to intensify cooperation among states in this area. It is the direct duty of every state to protect its citizens against terrorist encroachments, to prevent any activity on its territory aimed at organizing such acts against citizens and interests of other countries, and not to provide asylum to terrorists" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000:np.).

[4] The aftermath of the Cold War brought significant changes in world geopolitics, one of such changes being the fall of what current Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin considers the major catastrophe of the XX century: "we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself. Individual savings were depreciated, and old ideals destroyed" (Putin, 2005: np).

[5] We consider necessary to note that the majority of the North Caucasus population was Muslim, which has emphasised the divergences between both sides, and that Russia feared the growing of the Islamic radicalism inside its borders (Freire, 2013).

[6] Radical Islamists were able to manipulate young Chechens' minds by exploiting their lack of confidence in government institutions to do the necessary changes in order to promote de development of the region. In other words, "the young population who were deprived of opportunities for career growth or quality" were more easily conducted towards radicalisation because "of a lack of any exact social, economic, or political development of the North Caucasus" (Markedonov, 2010:5).

[7] The concept of Salafism will be developed in the second chapter, when analysing the role of Islam in the insurgent movement in the North Caucasus. In short, Salafism is a strict ideology of Islam practiced by radicals who believe that Islam ought to be preached as in Muhammed's era. To the Salafi movement, no other interpretation of Quran rather than theirs is valid (Pinto, 2012; Faria, 2011).

terrorist attacks and the fact that Yeltsin was worried with his reelection (Dannreuther & March, 2008) paved the way for the end of the Russo-Chechen conflict. Both sides entered negotiations — the Khassavyurt Accords — in which Chechnya acquired a special status with more autonomy (Atrokhov, 1999:383-384) and, in January 1997, held elections choosing Aslan Mashkadov[8] as its new leader. Regardless, the fear that the Chechen separatism could spread through the North Caucasus region, namely into Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria (Snetkov, 2011; Matveeva, Oliphant, Russel & Sagramoso, 2012; Garner, 2013) and jeopardise Moscow's influence (Calzini, 2005) remained[9].

The 1999 incursion of two Chechen rebel leaders into Dagestan — Shamil Basayev and Amir al-Khattb — followed by a series of bombings in the Russian cities of Buinaksk, Moscow and Volgodonsk (Reynolds, 2013), demanded the Russian authorities to show assertiveness and strength towards the rebel movement. Hence, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin initiated a second military campaign in Chechnya in September of the same year, labelled by the Kremlin as a counter-terrorism operation (CTO). A few months before being elected President of the Russian Federation, Putin declared that the North Caucasus was a decisive matter in Russia's domestic policy, since it could represent a "threat of disintegration, the perceived penetration and subversion by foreign forces, the weakening of state structures as a result of criminality and terror, and Russia's basic inability to stand up for itself and secure its core national objectives" (Dannreuther & March, 2008:99). Therefore, when he first came to power, Putin started to re-centralise the Russian state through a firm administrative control (Baev, 2006:5) in order to avoid Russia's sovereignty erosion ("vertical power").

Putin was worried with the possible consequences if the Chechen unrest spread towards the entire region. In order to prevent the "Yugoslavisation" of Russia (Putin, 2000 in Radoman, 2008:22) and to enable Russia to emerge as a "strong state", Chechnya had to be defeated (Radoman, 2008:22). The CTO[10] aimed at that. By claiming there was terrorism in Chechnya, the Kremlin settled a new moment on the Russian-Chechen conflict. The first moment began in 1991, when Dudaev declared the independence of Chechnya and created the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria as its successor. Yeltsin reacted in order to protect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the new Russian state. During the first war, the conflict was mostly about the Chechen aspiration for freedom and the Russian attempt

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[8] Aslan Mashkadov was a former Soviet military who obtained some support from the Kremlin for being a relatively moderate separatist (Melvin, 2007), unlike the foreign fighters that arrived at Chechnya.

[9] In fact, Dagestan became known as "Little Chechnya" (Wiktorowicz, 2001:25) after groupings of Salafis who fought in Chechnya returned home, in 1996, to create an Islamic State in Dagestan.

[10] It had three military stages aimed at circumscribing and destroying the terrorists but, it also had a more political component based on the principles of recentralisation and "vertical power". So, in addition to the military component, the CTO comprised the securitisation of media, the coordination of governmental structures, and a strategy called Chechenisation (Kim & Blank, 2013). All these new measures reinforced the role of the President and his centrality on the Russian politics. In 2009, President Medvedev considered the situation in Chechnya controlled, mostly due to the success of the "Chechenisation" policy (Calzini, 2005; Campana, 2006; Dunlop & Mennon, 2006; Melvin, 2007; Dannreuther & March, 2008; Predmore, 2011; Ware, 2011) and Ramzan Kadyrov's strong leadership (Ware, 2011), so he declared the end of the CTO in Chechnya.

to avoid losing more territories after the disintegration of the USSR. The second moment began when foreign fighters associated with international terrorist organisations, namely Al-Qaeda, arrived at the North Caucasus and commenced imposing their Salafi ideologies. The Chechen association with the global jihad was instrumental for Moscow to show evidence that there was terrorism in Chechnya and that it was a threat to the Russian Federation. In other words, the internal sphere of the Russian state collided with the external one, once the threats posed by regional separatism (internal) and terrorism (international) (Russian Federation National Concept, 1997) were combined in Chechnya. So, fighting international terrorism was a priority to the Russian Federation, as it has impact inside the country's borders.

The terrorist topic is still a priority to the Russian politics. Despite the end of the CTO in 2009 and the fact that violence ratings have been decreasing over the past few years, the Kremlin did not fully eradicate radicalism from the North Caucasus. The "Chechenisation model" could not be replicated on the other republics and the hub of extremism and radicalism moved from Chechnya to Dagestan, where the headquarters of the North Caucasus' terrorist organisation — the Caucasus Emirate (CE) — are located. The CE emerged as the successor of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (Hahn, 2011; 2012; Soliyev, 2014; Falkowski, 2014) and shares the same ideals of the Islamic State of Syria and Levant (ISIL), to whom it pledged allegiance in 2016 (Hahn, 2016). According to the Caucasian Knot (2016), from 2010 to 2015, 6 074 people have become victims of terrorism in the North Caucasus. The International Crisis Group estimated, in March 2016, that five thousand Russian people have left the country to join ISIL and fight in Syria, and the Kremlin has already expressed its concerns regarding this data (Putin, 2015a).

Under the rhetoric of an advocate of multilateralism and promotor of the "democratisation of international relations based on the principle of multilateralism and respect for international law" (Legvold, 2009:21), Russia has been shaping its foreign policy, namely by pursuing a multipolar world order (Rowe & Torjesen, 2009). Multilateralism is, thus, considered the legitimate basis to address peace and security problems (Legvold, 2009), and it also is a way for Russia to stress its value as an actor. The Russian intervention in Syria is an example of that. The Syrian conflict that began in 2011 as a civil war has turned into a battle against extremism and terrorism (Hahn, 2015). The Kremlin considers supporting Bashar al-Assad the lesser evil option, so Russia has accepted his request to fight terrorism in Syria (Putin in Rose, 2015b). Fighting the expansion of terrorist organisations whose aim is the creation of a pan-Islamic global caliphate connecting all Muslims in the world, such as ISIL and its associates, Boku

Haram and CE, is a priority to Russia. These terrorist organisations use the name of Allah[11] to perpetrate their acts and spread fear. Russia, who has been dealing with terrorism for a long time, has assumed itself as an actor on the global fight against international terrorism (Rowe & Torjesen, 2008; Legvold, 2008). International terrorism is a threat both at the international and domestic levels and because of that awareness, the Kremlin has been active in the fight against international terrorism, more recently by intervening in Syria.

In this dissertation, we intend to analyse not the secessionist movement per se, but how it has affected the Russian politics over the years. We aim at understanding how the Russian anti-terrorist foreign policy has been influenced by the domestic context of Chechnya's struggle for independence, i.e., in which way the North Caucasus secular movement turned into a religion-oriented one has affected the way the Kremlin has been guiding its domestic and foreign policies. So, our guiding question is: *How does the domestic context affect the foreign policy?*

In order to explore the main research question, we raise two hypotheses, both related to the IN-OUT security nexus. The narrative of the IN-OUT security nexus was developed under the European Studies and has been applied, most of the times, to the EU's reality. According to the EU, there is a general understanding that after the Cold War the internal and external aspects of security became intrinsically linked (Council of the EU, 2003; European Commission, 2005). That being said, our first hypothesis is that terrorism is, simultaneously, an internal and external security threat; and the second hypothesis is that, unlike what classical thinkers stated, there is a connection between the domestic and international realms of a state, i.e., the domestic policy has an impact on the foreign policy and vice-versa.

Separatism, ethnic conflicts, extremism and terrorism are considered a threat to the Russian Federation since Yeltsin and, ever since, they have been present in several Russian official documents (see the National Security Concepts of 1997; 2009; 2015; and the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept 2000; 2008; 2013; 2016). So, in this research we intend to understand how the Kremlin has been dealing with the Chechen separatism internally. Has the Kremlin been able to securitise the Chechen secessionist movement? Was it able to successfully portray the separatism in Chechnya as an IN-OUT security threat to the integrity of the Russian Federation?

As above-mentioned, the North Caucasus has been a complex challenge for Russia that wants to keep it as part of its territory. The Kremlin has claimed to be dealing with an international threat — international

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[11] We must note that Russia is not against religious diversity, nor Islam in particular. In fact, according to the 1993 Russian Constitution, the Russian Federation is committed to respect religious diversity and that has to do not only with the democratic aspect Russia wants the world to see, but also with the development of a practical model of Russian-Muslim relations. This is particularly evident during the Putin-Medvedev tandem where Moscow used a top-down approach (Braginskaia, 2012:614) to Islam, i.e., the "Putin-Medvedev period have closely followed the semi-authoritarian principal of vertical distribution of power", meaning that even though Islam was not portrayed as a threat, the Kremlin only supported religious organisations willing to respect the federal government and to be loyal to Russia (Filatov, 2007:42 in Braginskaia, 2012:604).

terrorism — in that specific republic, which led to the declaration of a second intervention in Chechnya, i.e., the Russian government was forced to intervene in order to prevent the Chechen radicalism from spreading to the other republics. Ramzan Kadyrov — Chechnya's president since 2007 — has been crucial to the stabilisation of the Chechen republic (Falkowski, 2014; 2015). Kadyrov has proclaimed his loyalty to the Kremlin, particularly to Vladimir Putin. His authoritarian style of leadership allowed him to gain all the support needed to take the measures he considered necessary to a new status quo to the rebellious republic. We wonder, however, if the "normalisation" of Chechnya, after Kadyrov, has changed the IN-OUT security nexus. Violence ratings in Chechnya decreased, but has the terrorist threat ceased to exist in the North Caucasus?

The jihadist fighters who settled in the North Caucasus after the first and the second Chechen wars (McFaul, 1995; Henkin, 2006; Snetkov, 2011) and the preaching of their radical view of Islam has materialised in a linkage between the North Caucasus insurgent movement and the global jihadist movement, first through Al-Qaeda and more recently through ISIL (Hahn, 2012; 2015; 2016). Exploring the North Caucasus connection to other Islamic terrorist organisations, and how that connection influences the Russian foreign policy is another goal of this dissertation, namely by trying to understand the reasons why Russia has accepted Assad's request for help, despite the Russian principle of non-intervention in the domestic matters of a state. The civil war in Syria, in which several jihadi groups have been exploiting the vulnerabilities of the country, has become a war against terrorism. So, another secondary question of this dissertation is: Is the Russian intervention in Syria linked to the domestic situation of the North Caucasus?

As we have argued before, in the traditional Westphalian world order, states are the main actors in the International System, meaning than only states could harm the security of other states (Terrif et al., 1999; Morgan, 2007; Brandão, 2010; Tomé, 2014). Terrorism, however, has proven this premise to no longer be entirely true. Terrorism has been gradually acquiring a more prominent position in the international security agenda. In this dissertation, we address the role terrorism has been playing in Russian politics. We argue that terrorism is an IN-OUT threat, as it threatens not only the state in which the terrorist event occurs, but also threatens the international peace and stability (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000; 2008; 2013; 2016). So, the goal of this dissertation is to understand how the IN-OUT security nexus applies to the Russian case, namely by exploring how the Chechen domestic context has shaped the Russian foreign policy.

Our research will be delimited by the study of the 1991-2016 period. The year of 1991 is fundamental to this research since it is the year the USSR finally collapsed being succeeded by the Russian Federation,

way smaller after the independence of fourteen Soviet Socialist Republics, and the year that Dzhokar Dudaev has, unilaterally, declared Chechnya's independence; and 2016 is the year ISIL has formally threatened the Russian territorial integrity both by accepting the CE's allegiance and by declaring jihad against the Russian state. In this research we will focus on the Chechen struggle for independence, because Chechnya is the most paradigmatic republic — it was the first republic to rebel against Russia, and the only republic in which a CTO was declared—, even though we may mention other North Caucasus' republics, especially Dagestan, when we consider appropriate.

Studying Russia is always challenging as Russia is "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma" (Churchill, 1939 in Cowell, 2008:np). Understanding Russia is not a linear process, which makes it a very compelling case study. In addition to the relevance of the Russian Federation as an actor, we address a recurrent topic to the Security Studies' agenda: the terrorist threat[12]. A lot has been said about the Russian war on terrorism and on the Russian motives to intervene in Syria, but we have found a research gap. Most of the literature on the Russian war on terrorism focuses exclusively on one of the two realms of the state, i.e., either authors access the North Caucasus separatist movement, and most of the times taking into consideration the rebel motives; or they address the Russian strategic partnerships with other states and/or international organisations. This dissertation aims at adding value by addressing the Russian point of view regarding the Chechen struggle for independence, and by acknowledging the IN-OUT security threat it represents to the Russian Federation. Also, this dissertation gives a new perspective on how the Russian anti-terrorism policy is the result of the connection of the domestic context and the foreign policy.

This dissertation produces an analysis of how the Russian anti-terrorist policy has been influenced by the domestic conflict in the North Caucasus, and how both realms of the state — the internal and the external— are linked. Regarding the methodology framework, in this research we assume a deductive posture, as we begin with the attempt to apply the theoretical framework (Marsh & Furlong, 2002) and then make considerations — the theoretical framework is the Theory of "Securitisation" that will be complemented by the IN-OUT security nexus. We also assume a post-modernist ontology, since the Theory of "Securitisation" is a derivative of Constructivism. All these postures condition not only our epistemology but also our methodology. As such, this investigation understands that concepts socially constructed are subjective and susceptible to the personal interpretations of the researcher, hence the impossibility of a totally impartial conclusion by the person investigating (Snape & Spencer 2003). In

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[12] The growing narrative of ISIL as the newest great international security threat and its expansion in Syria amplify the research value of this dissertation, as the Russian Federation has been taking an active role on fighting terrorism (not only against ISIL but also against other radical factions acting in Syria).

other words, the interpretative epistemology in addition to a post-modernist ontology offer a broader interpretation of the concepts that are socially constructed (Tadjkshkh & Chenoy, 2007), as it is the case of terrorism.

Taking into consideration that we are assuming a Constructivist lens, we must acknowledge the characteristics of the North Caucasus in order to understand what motivates the North Caucasus' people to rebel against the Russian government, and how that is related to the phenomenon of terrorism. The roots of the insurgent movement will help us to analyse how the Kremlin has been building its narrative regarding the Chechen struggle for independence and the Russian fight against terrorism. This evolution of the Chechen movement puts in evidence that the factors involved in this dissertation are not always linear, but subjective. Security is a social construct and depends on each one's interpretation of it (Eriksson, 1999), meaning that the social life process is not frozen, but changes over time.

The complexity of the North Caucasus character and evolution makes it a compelling case study. Yet, we acknowledge that a generalisation or a replication might not be possible, since the qualitative research does not rely on numerical or statistics figures (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994). In other words, we have chosen a single case study — the Russian anti-terrorist foreign policy — and our intention is to study how the evolution of this particular movement affects the internal and external decisions of the Kremlin, namely by studying how the Russian intervention in Syria is an example of terrorism as an IN-OUT security threat to Russia.

As we assume an interpretative posture, hence a more subjective research, we must also assume that our methodology — the methods and techniques — are essentially qualitative. Consulting primary sources is crucial for a more accurate interpretation of the Russian point of view on the subject in study. As for the primary sources we will analyse strategic documents, such as the Russian Constitution; the Foreign Policy Concepts of 2000, 2008, 2013 and 2016; the Concepts of National Security of 1997; 2000, 2009, and 2015; the Russian Federation Federal Law No. 130-FZ: *On the fight against terrorism*; as well as some discourses of the Presidents of the Russian Federation: Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev. The use of primary sources will help us understand the Russian narrative, but it is important to balance them with secondary sources, otherwise we may take the plunge of loosing focus. The structure of this dissertation has been built in order to provide an answer to our guiding question and it will be divided into four parts. The first chapter, entitled *Securitisation and the phenomenon of terrorism*, will address the new reality the International System is facing, namely by acknowledging the need for a broader concept of security that includes not only the military threats, or hard security threats, but also threats posed by other actors besides the state, in this particularly case terrorism. In this chapter

we will also explore the Theory of "Securitisation" in order to understand how and when a menace can be securitised; i.e., how an actor can construct the narrative of an existential threat to its security. In this first chapter, we also access the literature on IN-OUT security nexus and how terrorism is an example of an IN-OUT threat affecting both realms of the state.

In the second chapter, entitled *The North Caucasus struggle for independence: understanding the conflict*, we address the historical and sociological contexts leading to two major confrontations between the Russian and the Chechen sides. We explore the religious and cultural factors that brought the North Caucasus together and how Islam has been an instrument to unite the resistance and how the foreign fighters have contributed to the radicalisation of the Chechen secular movement seeking for independence.

The third chapter, *The Russian response to the North Caucasus insurgency*, will focus on the internal measures taken by the Russian government to control the insurgents. This chapter addresses the presidencies of Boris Yeltsin, from his first election and then declaration of war in Chechnya, until his resignation in 1999. We also analyse Vladimir Putin's first two mandates (2000-2008) and his re-centralisation policies and the strategy of "Chechenisation". We deliberately excluded a section dedicated to the presidency of Dmitri Medvedev (2008-2012) because we considered he did not have the same internal relevance as Yeltsin — who declared the first Chechen War and created a legal framework on terrorism — or as Putin — who ordered another intervention on the grounds of an anti-terrorism campaign and initiated a policy of re-centralisation of power — did. Instead, Medvedev declared the end of the counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya less than a year after assuming the Russian leadership and ten years after Putin's continuous efforts to circumscribe the insurgency. We understand that Medvedev's presidency had more impact on the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, at least when compared to the internal measures taken to stabilise the North Caucasus. In other words, he played a more significant part in re-engaging a cordial relationship with the US and Barack Obama; and then in expressing the Russian support over Assad in the Syrian crisis, and for that reason we will enhance his importance during the fourth chapter.

The support of Bashar al-Assad's regime and the subsequent election of Vladimir Putin in 2012 have contributed to another worsening of the Russia-US relations, as we sought to mirror in the fourth and last chapter, called *The Russo-Syrian coalition against terrorism*. The last chapter is about the Russian intervention in Syria. It is not our aim to comment on whether the support over Assad's government and the military intervention had been efficient or not, but what has motivated Russia to go against its policy of non-intervention on the internal affairs of a sovereign state and to answer the Syrian leader's call for

help. It is in this chapter that we establish the connection between the Russian territorial integrity (in) and the Syrian crisis (out). We will explore the North Caucasus linkage to ISIL and the Kremlin's concern regarding the Russian and neighbouring citizens who left their countries to fight in Syria for ISIL and their return home with a more radicalised perspective. In other words, if in the third chapter we address the IN on the IN-OUT security nexus, namely by analysing the consequences of the Chechen separatist movement at home, in this last chapter we will address the OUT of the IN-OUT security nexus, since we will explore the motives leading Russia to fight against terrorism in Syria.

Chapter 1. Securitisation and the phenomenon of terrorism

1.1. Security in a post-Cold War international order

Similar to several Social Sciences core concepts — power, justice, freedom, or equality (Gallie, 1962); "security" is also an "essentially contested concept". Barry Buzan considers that in addition to contested, the concept of security is also underdeveloped and relative (Buzan, 1983:2;18). The first debates concerning a definition for security consider it an absolute value (Hobbes in Ullman, 2011:12) and, until the decade of 1980, national security was dominated by two main approaches: (1) the Realist in which power is contemplated as the ultimate goal, i.e., if an actor acquires enough power its security is assured; and (2) the Idealist which, contrary to the Realist one, identifies peace as the priority of an actor who aspires for security (Buzan, 1983). Ullman (2011:11) stresses that we, traditionally, think of national security in terms of military threats arising from outside of our borders. To this author,

> [A] threat to national security is an action or a sequence of events that (1) threaten drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of state, or, (2) threaten significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to governments of a state or to, nongovernmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state.

Buzan (1983:18), in his turn, reflects that the concept of security must combine ideas of both Realist and Idealist approaches since "security":

> [T]ends to be either seen as a derivative of power, in the sense that an actor with enough power to reach a dominating position will acquire security as a result, or as a consequence of peace, in the sense that a lasting peace would provide security for all (...) We shall argue that security is more usefully viewed as a companion to, rather than a derivative of, power, and that is more usefully viewed as a prior condition of peace than a consequence of it.

Some events such as the Peloponnesian War (5th century BC), the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the First World War (1914-1918) help to understand why the Realist approach has been prevailing a preferred International Relations theory to explain the phenomena related to international (in)security. As noted by Lene Hansen (2012:96): "[r]ealism is the foundational school of thought about international politics around which all others are oriented". To put it in other words, since the end of the Thirty Years' War and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, states are considered the primary actor of the International System portraying, simultaneously, the source of reliability and fear. The Realist School understands that interests and the struggle for power are continuous on the daily basis life of states. Additionally, those are the main causes of conflict between States. Traditional thinkers argue that only states can pose a menace to each other's security and survival since they are considered the political epicentre. Hence,

security paradigm should only focus on states, as they are the provenience of both peace and insecurity (Terrif et al., 1999; Morgan, 2007; Caldwell & Williams, 2012).

The Hobbesian tradition explains that the most important obstacle to security is the human nature: "[t]he security dilemma arose, ironically, from humans themselves as intelligent, creative, rational bipeds seeking to survive and thrive in eliciting the cooperation of others on their own egoistic terms" (Kolodziej, 2005:53). The combination of egoistic feelings, continued competition and the struggle for survival — described by Thomas Hobbes as state of nature — hinders cooperation once relationships between people are essentially perceived as negative, following the Realist premise that the gain of the one is the lost of the other — zero sum game. So, when living in a state of nature, the suspicion level is elevated and everybody fear for their lives and, in order to secure them, each person is willing to enter into a social contract, alienating part of their sovereignty to a major authority that is the Leviathan — representation of the Modern State. Anarchy also plays an important role in the International System. Despite the fact that anarchy characterises the dynamics between states (Clausewitz, 1976) and that human nature condition is transferred to international relations, the same proceeding cannot be applied to states' interactions, since the Westphalian order evinces that there are major actors than the states and they obey anyone but themselves which can trigger extreme conflict between these actors (Clausewitz, 1976).

The Cold War, however, sets the beginning of the transformation of the security paradigm as it acknowledges the emergence of new transnational actors and threats (Terrif et al., 1999). Globalisation has had great impact on how these new challenges to the Westphalian order still guided by traditional aspects — sovereignty, boundaries, armed forces, national interest — affect the states' security behaviour. Despite its benefits, globalisation left states more susceptible to new and distant threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, immigration, and so on (Aldis & Herd, 2005). The traditional thinking that only states can harm states is obsolete, leading to the debate of whether expand or not the concept of security. Authors, such as Stephen Walt (1991:212-213), have shown some reluctance in widening the concept of security since he believes that Security Studies must focus on the study of war. Encompassing other matters such as poverty, the environment or economics could "destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these problems". Despite that, one cannot ignore the fact that traditional security paradigm based on the military component fails to respond to the threats of today. With globalisation states became interconnected and no state, alone, can absolutely guarantee its protection nor interests. Since the Cold War we have been experiencing a gradual decentralisation of the

state as the unitary[13] actor in the International System. Hard security threats have become less frequent while soft security threats, in which terrorism is included, have been acquiring more significance[14].

There is no consensus on security as a concept. In fact, that it is a social construct (Sheehan, 2005) in which "there are no objective threats, only attempts to saddle issues with 'security' implications" (Eriksson, 1999:315) implies that security is a concept susceptible to one's understanding.

In addition, "[d]anger is not an objective condition. It is not a thing which exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat (...) Danger is an effect of interpretation" (Campbell, 1992:1-2 in. Müller, [2009]:14). This means that security as a concept must be malleable and flexible (Aldis & Herd, 2005: 182), once by focusing solely in military issues — for instance war — we are ignoring must of the new security challenges appearing in a globalised era. Despite the difficulty [and even impossibility] of reaching a consensus regarding the definition of security, since it is a social construct (Sheehan, 2005) susceptible to plenty of interpretations. Buzan, Wæver and Wilde (1998) identify five sectors of security that one must pay attention to in order to fully understand "security": (1) military; (2) political; (3) economic; (4) societal; and (5) environment[15].

1.2. The Copenhagen School and the Theory of Securitisation

The Copenhagen School came into being in the 1980s, when scholars from the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, now known as Conflict and Peace Research Institute, struggled to move beyond a restrictive security agenda (Huysmans, 1998) based exclusively on military issues. This school of thought advocates a broader concept for security in order to exploit the gap filled with neglected and marginalised issues left during Cold War (Panic, 2009). The Copenhagen scholars, with particular focus on the work of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, back a greater attention on the "social identity" (McSweeney,1996:81).

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[13] This does not mean that states are no longer the main actors in the International System. Even though Buzan opens up the debate for new security units, units being "actors composed of various groups, organisations, communities, and many individuals and sufficiently cohesive and independent to be differentiated from others and to have standing at the higher levels (e.g., states, nations, transnational firms)" (Buzan et al., 1998:6); he considers that the state-centred paradigm is still very much present on the study of security.

[14] "Hard security in which military force ("hard power") was deployed by militaries against combatants for territorial gains or defence is increasingly perceived to be superseded by soft security — non-military threats that could be managed through recourse to the military, but more appropriately non-military instruments, such as diplomatic, economic, financial, and intelligence strategies or policies, instruments which formed the mainstay of 'soft power'" (Aldis & Herd, 2005:182).

[15] In short, "the military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states' perceptions of each other's intentions. Political security concerns the organizational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Economic security concerns access to resources, finance, markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom. Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend (Buzan et al.,1998:8).

The Copenhagen School is also innovative as it the result of a collective dynamic that conjures both elements of neorealism and social constructivism (Huysmans, 1998), instead of Realism exclusively.

The theory of securitisation is one of the most evident contributions of the Copenhagen School and, by recognising that any issue can be subject of securitisation through discourse (Buzan et al.,1998; Huysmans, 1998; Stritzel, 2007; Panic, 2009; Silva, 2014) allows different interpretations of security[16].

In other words, the Copenhagen School finds in the "speech act"[17] (Wæver,1995:55) a way to perform a security action with potential to structure social practices (Stritzel, 2007:360). Discourse has gain major importance on security analysis (Balzacq, 2005). Post-structuralists assign the same importance to power as realists do, though they have different referents of power: while realists assume power as the subjugation of the other, post-structuralists consider language to be power (Hansen, 2012). Jurgen Habermas has developed a theory known as Communicative Action, made known in the field of International Relations by Thomas Risse, in which he considers knowledge not to be the fundamental factor of rationality but language instead (Habermas in Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, [2014]). It is through discourse that actions are oriented — we may understand discourse as a road map of actions — and Communicative Action is a process of argumentation, deliberation and persuasion in which actors (must) engage in a truth-seeking discourse (Risse, 2000). This way, discourse can be seen as a tool for securitisation as for the Copenhagen School it is through discourse that the securitiser actor points out the presence of an existential threat (Buzan et al., 1998). Buzan & Wæver (2003:491) identify the "speech act" as the core assumption of the theory of securitisation and, for that reason, discourse plays an important part on the process of securitisation, yet it is not the only requirement[18]. It also calls for an emergency measure that will legitimise that sense of emergency and that threat as an existential threat[19]. This means that the securitising process can be seen as legitimate by one particular political community and as a paranoia by another (Buzan et al.,1998).

In other words, the securitisation process, according to Buzan et al. (1998) is a speech act through which the securitiser actor constructs the threat, enabling it with power to break the rules in the name

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[16] "Security is no longer perceived only as military security of the state. Different reference objects, economy, environmental protection, or military relations, can be subjects to the securitisation process in which socially and politically effective linguistic act of denoting an issue as security moves such issue away from the area of daily politics and identifies it as an existential threat that requires and justifies special measures" (Panic, 2009:31).

[17] "The process of securitization is what in language theory is called a speech act (...) By saying the words, something is done (...) It is important to note that the security speech is not defined by uttering the word security. What is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significance audience" (Buzan et al., 1998: 26-27).

[18] "A discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization — this is a securitizing move, but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such. (Accept does not necessarily mean in civilized, dominance-free discussion; it only means that an order always rests on coercion as well as on consent" (Buzan et al. 1998:25).

[19] "[A]n emergency measure has to be adopted, only that the existential has to argued and just gain enough resonance for a platform to be made from which it is possible to legitimize emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, point of no return, and necessity" (Buzan et al. 1998:25).

of security[20] (Bright, 2012), but only if legitimised by an audience. The Copenhagen School splits the actor, most of the times the state, in two parts: the securitising one who performs the emergency speech act, and the audience accepting, or not, the securitising move[21]. Whether the audience accepts it or not, that depends on its interpretation and on the negotiation between the securitiser and the relevant audience (Strietzel, 2007).

The Copenhagen School and the theory of securitisation provide "an innovative, sophisticated, and productive research strategy within contemporary security studies" (Williams, 2003:528) but by focusing on security as a speech act they [the Copenhagen School and securitisation theorists] are narrowing the context in which securitisation happens. The fact that securitisation is a subjective[22] phenomenon allows a panoply of interpretations of it. For instance, Rita Floyd (2011:428) argues that a moral rightness of securitisation must obey to three criteria: (1) the existence of an objective existential threat that endangers the survival of an actor; (2) the referent object of security must be morally legitimate (and concerned with the human needs); and (3) an appropriate response to the threat that takes into consideration (a) the capability of the aggressor and (b) the sincere intentions of the securitising actor.

Thierry Balzacq (2011) stresses that a "sociological" approach to securitisation is preferable to the "philosophical" based on the speech act suggested by the Copenhagen School. Balzacq (2011:1-2) believes securitisation "is better understood as a strategic (pragmatic) process that occurs within, as part of, a configuration of circumstances, including the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, and the power that both speaker and listener bring to the interaction".

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[20] "[S]ecurity is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to designated referent object (traditionally, but no necessarily the state, incorporating government, territory, and society). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them. The invocation of security has been the key to legitimizing the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats" (Buzan et al.,1998:21).

[21] "The concept of a securitizing move can thus be employed as an empirically observable indication of an initiation of a threat construction performed by a decision-maker. In terms of operationalization, a securitizing move is here defined as the public framing of an issue as a national threat, accompanied by a strategy for action. If a decision-maker has publicly declared that an issue is a threat to national security, and presents an action plan to handle this threat, a securitizing move has been initiated. If the issue is presented in more general terms or lacks a concrete strategy, there is no move. This operationalization serves to separate the securitizing move from other statements by a decision-making unit which can be employed as indications of internalization" (Sjöstedt, 2013:146).

[22] Buzan et al. (1998) establish a distinction between subjective and objective, recognising securitisation as being a subjective process that can seen as legit by one particular political community and as a paranoia by other. So, the authors define securitisation as "intersubjective and socially constructed: Does a referent object hold general legitimacy as something that should survive, which entails that actors can make reference to it, point to something as a threat, and thereby get others to follow or at least tolerate actions not otherwise legitimate? (...) Successful securitization is not decided by the securitizer but by the audience of the security speech act: Does the audience accept that something is an existential threat to a shared value?" (Buzan et al., 1998:31).

Notwithstanding, Balzacq understands that circumstances may vary in form and content. In order to make securitisation more manageable, he narrows it to three factors[23] and considers pertinent to recast securitisation as an ideal type[24] (see the table below).

TABLE 1. AN IDEAL TYPE OF SECURITIZATION

- Threats are social facts whose status depends on an **intersubjective** commitment between an **audience** and a **securitizing actor**

- **Securitizing moves** and **context** are co-dependent

- The drivers of securitizing moves are **knowledge** claims about an **existential threat** to a referent object

- **Power relations** among stakeholders structure both the processes and outcomes of securitizong moves

- Securitizing moves are engraved in **social mechanisms** (persuasion, propaganda, leaning, socialization, practices, etc.)

- Securitization instantiates **policy** changes — for example, 'deontic powers' (rights, obligations, derogations **exceptional** or otherwise, etc.)

- Securitization ascribes **responsibility**.

SOURCE: Balzacq, Thierry. 2014. "The 'Essence' of Securitization: Theory, Ideal Type, and a Sociological Science of Security." In *Forum: What Kind of Theory - If Any - Is Securitization?*, edited by Thierry Balzaq, Stefano Guzzini, Michael C. Williams, Ole Waever, and Heikki PatomäkI, 14.

So, Balzacq's definition of securitisation is:

> *an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilized by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and institutions), about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the*

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[23] "However, in order to make the analysis of securitization more tractable, I have narrowed down their number by arguing, in substance, that the conditions underlying the effectuation of securitization fall into at least three sets of factors — audience, context and securitizing agent. In short, the first of these has three components — (i) audience's frame of reference; (ii) its readiness to be convinced, which depends on whether it perceives the securitizing actor as knowing the issue and as trustworthy; and (iii) its ability to grant or deny a formal mandate to public officials. The second set of factors concerns contextual effects on the audience's responsiveness to the securitizing actor's arguments — relevant aspects of the Zeitgeist that influence the listener, and the impact of the immediate situation on the way the securitizing author's sentences are interpreted by the listener. The third set involves the capacity of the securitizing actor to use appropriate words and cogent frames of reference in a given context, in order to win the support of the target audience for political purposes" (Balzacq, 2005:192).

[24] "[A]n ideal type is formed by the one-side exaggeration ... of one or several points of view and by the synthesis of great many diffusely and discretely existing component phenomena ... which are sometimes more and sometimes less present and occasionally absent, which are in accordance with those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints, and which are arranged into an internally consistent ... thought-image" (Weber in Balzacq et al., 2014:9).

> *securitizing actor's reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customized policy must be undertaken immediately to block its development*[25](Balzacq, 2011:3).

Thierry Balzacq agrees that the "speech act" is important to a successful securitisation, but he goes beyond the founding fathers of the Theory of "Securitisation" by claiming that context matters when the main goal is to convince the audience of an existential threat. Playing with analogies, emotions and metaphors help the audience to engage on the securitising move and to legitimate it. In other words, through context the securitising actor can manipulate the audience's fears and led it to accept the referent object as an actual threat to security and to agree on taking special and customised measures to strike down the menace.

The Copenhagen School has, thus, played an important role in the defence of a widened[26] concept of security by considering that any issue can move from non-politicised to securitised[27]. Apart from that, securitisation as envisioned by the Copenhagen School might be limited, as the scholars conceptualise security solely as a speech act discrediting the importance of the context in which securitisation occurs (Wilkinson, 2011:94). Mark B. Salter (2011:116-117) stresses that securitisation does not depend exclusively on discourse, otherwise faults in the grammatical structure would jeopardise the whole process. Instead, he advocates that securitisation is more than a manifest in language, it is political and sociological process in which different securitising moves require different dynamics[28]. To that extent, securitisation cannot be seen as a linear nor an objective process — threats to national security can differ from a national decision-maker to another, and even over time and space (Sjöstedt, 2013).

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[25] Emphasis of the author.

[26] "In the post-Cold War, debate about security leading to conceptual, theoretical and empirical pluralism became widespread, resulting in its broader re-conceptualization. No longer at the centre of the realistic approach, security is conceived as a multi-sector phenomenon because it is not restricted to the traditional political and military sectors, and as a multi-level one, because it is not limited to the provider and object of state reference. In short, four central themes in the debate can be identified. First, the critical contributions of the threat's realistic setting warned of the complexity of the post-Cold War environment, characterized by multiple threats including non-state ones. Politically, the discourse about the ''changing context'', diffuse and unpredictable, became widespread. A second front of the debate focused on the referencing object of security, deconstructing the realistic equation — 'state security' equals 'security of people'? from the question, 'whose security?' One of the answers favoured the people-centred approach in the context of the 'humanizing' discourse of the nineties, also present in the field of development. The diversity both in terms of threat and object (of security) justified a third axis of the reformulation applied to the security provider: besides the state, historically enshrined as the actor of security, other actors contribute to the security of persons, ranging from supra-state organizations to nongovernmental organizations. The academic and political trend towards a holistic approach (comprehensive approach) to security is reinforced by the fourth axis of the debate: the security nexuses" (Brandão, 2015:4). The nexuses narrative will be further developed above in this chapter.

[27] Buzan et al. (1998:23-24) consider securitisation an extreme version of politicisation so, "[i]n theory, any issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from nonpoliticized (meaning the state does not deal with it and it is not in any way other made an issue of public debate and decision) through politicized (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or, more rarely, some other form of communal governance) to securitized (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure".

[28] "Securitization is a sociological and political process — manifest in language, but a complex effect of power, interest, inter-subjectivity, bureaucratic position, and process. Different securitizing moves have different effects in different settings, which provide different basic power dynamics, different linguistic rules, and different local knowledge structures" (Salter, 2011:117).

In this dissertation we stress the intersubjective character of "Securitisation". In the third chapter we can observe how Chechnya's problem has evolved over the years and how the Russian Government has been dealing with it. If on the one hand President Yeltsin was severely criticised by the 1994 military intervention (McFaul, 1995; Russell, 2002), on the other hand President Putin has successfully presented the Chechen insurgency as a threat to the Russian national security (and integrity) after the 1999 apartment bombings (Pokalova, 2015). In addition to discourse, Putin had a context that he could explore and that empowered him to portray the Chechen resistance as a threat and to convince his audience (both at home and internationally), as it will be addressed in the third chapter.

To that extent, "Securitisation" depends on a multiplicity of factors, including language — how the threat is constructed by the securitising actor and received by the audience; but also the context is important in order to convince that particular audience that we could be facing an existential threat[29].

1.3. Terrorism: an IN-OUT security threat

The realist tradition suggests security as an absolute value (Hobbes in. Ulmann, 1983:130) and most likely state-centred. As it has been stressed above, globalisation has exacerbated a myriad of actors as well as security challenges that realist paradigm finds difficult to explain. Ever since the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 events, a comprehensive approach to security has been potentiated in four areas: (1) security sectors (multisectoral security beyond political and military sectors); (2) subjects of security (multiple actors, including individuals and groups beyond the states; (3) security players, either as security providers or as sources of threat; and (4) border dynamics (transgovernmental cooperation for security; actions of transnational entities for security purposes; perverse transnational actors (Brandão, 2015:5). After the Cold War, there was a need to expand the concept of security in order to include security challenges that have becoming increasingly more important. One such example is international terrorism, which portrays a source not only of international insecurity, but also could affect the state's domestic stability and security.

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[29] "The prioritization of an issue results in speedier handling; redistributions of resources; media and public attention; policy changes; and, last but not least, a downgrading of other issues due to the so-called agenda crowding" (Sjöstedt, 2011:144).

1.3.1. The IN-OUT Security Nexus

Today's threats — mafia, terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking, border smuggling, illegal immigration — transgress national identities (Bigo, 2001:1). Securitisation has provided a different focus on other actors besides the state [and the traditional military threats to its security]. This requires new tools and methods, since traditional security actions like deterrence do not have the desired effect anymore (Weiss, 2011). In a globalised world, the perception of threat focus less on hard security threats (military) and more on soft security threats perpetrated by non-state actors (Aldis & Herd, 2005), such as terrorist organisations[30]. New transnational actors have been conquering prominence on a global security agenda as they simultaneously constitute an international threat and a menace to the politics of a state. Since the end of the Cold War, we have been experiencing a blurring of the boundaries separating the internal sphere from the external (Lutterbeck, 2005; Eriksson & Rhinard, 2009; Brandão, 2015), representing one of the consequences of globalisation[31].

The literature regarding the IN-OUT Security Nexus, has been developed mostly under European Studies with especial attention on the EU[32]. Delcour & Fernandes (2016:4) stress that the IN-OUT nexus "bears implications for the balance between normative and strategic considerations". European policy-makers recognise that there is a connection between internal economic integration and the EU's external action (Wolff, Wichmann & Mounier 2009:10), and security concerns have surpassed sovereignty and freedom (Bigo, 2001; Delcour & Fernandes, 2016). The EU's fight against terrorism[33] is an example of that, i.e., the threat posed by terrorism has been acquiring significantly more importance to international security, but also to the internal security of the EU. In order to face that menace, it is required both internal instruments and externally oriented policies, tools and structures (Ferreira-Pereira & Martins, 2012: 459).

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[30] "The complexity of the phenomenon, associated with the diversification of threats and the multitude of actors, either as providers of security or as a source of threat in the context of intense mobility and communicability worldwide, bucked the traditional paradigmatic, political and organizational separation between the internal and external dimensions of security defined by the realist legacy" (Brandão, 2015:5).

[31] The end of Cold War has catalysed a changing of perceptions regarding the nature of a threat. Traditionally the international internal sphere, or domestic security, was concerned with the inside realm of a state — crime, civil protection, law and order; while the external security focused on defence and deterrence between states (Eriksson & Rhinard, 2009:245).

[32] The EU understands that "[s]ecurity is the first condition for development (Council of the European Union, 2003:13) and that internal and external arenas of security are, now, interconnected (European Commission, 2005a), which requires a good coordination of both spheres. That way, the EU considers terrorism a determinative international security challenge with repercussion inside EU's borders, as it was acknowledged by the Amsterdam Treaty and the Tampere Summit (Zimmermann, 2006; European Commission, 2006).

[33] Prior to 2001 the EU considered asylum and illegal immigration as main priorities to its security, especially because of the instability in Central and Eastern Europe, and former Yugoslavia (Balzacq, 2008). The terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington DC had a major significance to the West, as those terrorist events were no longer ethno-nationalist but religio-political oriented (Wilkinson, 2010) and their goal was to destabilise the Westphalian order dominated by the US (Wilkinson, 2010). To put it in other words, since 2001, and especially after the terrorist attacks in two European cities - Madrid (2004) and London (2005) — the European security acknowledged terrorism as a top security priority as: "[t]errorism outs lives at risk; it imposes large costs; it seeks to undermine the openness and tolerance of our societies, and it poses a growing strategic threat to the whole Europe. Increasingly, terrorist movements are well-resourced, connected by electronic networks, and are willing to use unlimited violence to cause massive casualties (...) Europe is both a target and a base for such terrorism: European countries are targets and have been attacked (...) Concerted European action is indispensable" (European Council, 2003:3).

Didier Bigo (2006) understands there is a debate concerning the best approach to the "hyper terrorism" (Alexander & Heal, 2002) phenomenon, inaugurated after the events of the September 11, 2001. On the one hand, the Classics advocate the war on terror to be a homeland issue. On the other hand, the Moderns believe in the opposite, i.e., fighting terrorism must be a global and multidimensional effort. According to the latter narrative, global terrorism has three major consequences:

> First, it makes obsolete the conventional distinction between the two realms of war, defence, international order and strategy on the one hand, and crime, internal security, public order and police investigations on the other. Second, in the same stroke it undermines traditional state sovereignty and obliges all state agents to collaborate internationally. Third, it makes national borders effectively obsolete, as they no longer operate as effective barriers behind which the population could feel safe (Bigo, 2005:389).

In this sense, the phenomenon of terrorism has been contributing to intensify the IN-OUT security nexus narrative (Brandão, 2015:6) as it portrays a challenge threatening the peace and balance of the traditional Westphalian order. This threat obeys to the same dynamic as transboundary security issues (Eriksson & Rhinard, 2009: 247) and threatens all (Council of the European Union, 2005). In the new Westphalian order, states are connected at several levels, which means that responding to the terrorist threat requires a joint effort not only from states — state-centred — but a joint effort among all actors, namely states, International System and society (Sheehan, 2005).

International terrorism is an evidence of the mutating Westphalian order, that came into force in 1648, once states have been facing a wide range of challenges that until the end of the Cold War were not acknowledged as potentially harmful to the security of a state. Since the events of the 9/11 and the declaration of the "war on terror" by George W. Bush's Administration, international terrorism has become a priority to the global security agenda. This has to do with the global reaching of the terrorist organisations: globalisation has connected people from all sort of places through the development of technology and the social media. The distances were virtually reduced and the information was easily spread, which include radical ideologies. In other words, the recruitment, radicalisation and coordination of terrorist attacks were simplified.

The IN-OUT security nexus suggests that there is a connection between the two spheres of the state's security, which contradicts traditionalists to whom both realms do not get mixed up. International terrorism has proven precisely the opposite as the main goal of terrorists is to provoke a change of behaviour of a certain actor — mostly the state — through fear and panic. Despite the fact that terrorist organisations plan their attacks individually (depending on the location of the terrorist cell), the organisation claiming the event belongs to an international network with the ambition of interfering on

the domestic politic of the state were the attack was conduced. So, the IN-OUT security nexus means that a challenge to security do not focus exclusively on one of the two realms of the security of a state anymore. Terrorism, for instance, shows us how an international threat can, simultaneously, have impact on the way the foreign policy of a state is conduced, such as the implementation of a counter-terrorism policy; but also influence the national decision-making and the adoption of extraordinary measures to restrain the menace such as "[t]he prioritization of an issue results in speedier handling; redistributions of resources; media and public attention; policy changes; and, last but not the least, a downgrading of other issues due to so-called agenda crowding" (Sjöstedt, 2013:144); or, in other words, securitising the threat.

1.3.2. International Terrorism

Terrorism is a very challenging phenomenon to define, since it may reflect to some extent a political or ideological tendency (Gibbs, 2012). Over the time, several attempts to define terrorism have been made. The United Nations (2004) understand terrorism as any action "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act". For the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), terrorism "uses of violence or the threat of violence to create fear, and to coerce or intimidate governments or societies into acceptance of goals that are political, religious and ideological or combinations thereof" (NATO, 2002). The EU believes that terrorism are any

> intentional acts, by their nature or context, which may be seriously damaging to a country or to an international organisation, as defined under national laws, where committed with the aim of (i) seriously intimidating a population, or (ii) unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or to abstain from performing any act, or (iii) destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or international organisation (European Communities, 2001).

Notwithstanding the definitions above, countries that have been dealing with terrorism directly — the Russian Federation[34], the United States, the People's Republic of China and India — have definitions of their own (Proença Garcia, 2011). Ben Saul (2012:np) argues that:

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[34] The Russian Federation definition of terrorism will be further developed during the thrid chapter.

The best definition of terrorism is one which confine itself to violence committed to intimidate a population or coerce a governmental or international organization in the name of a political, religious or ideological purpose. At the same time, the definition should exclude legitimate forms of political protest in a democratic society which are not commonly regarded as 'terrorist' in nature.

There are many proposed definitions but no consensus has been yet achieved. In part, this has to due with the fact that "terrorism" as a phenomenon varies in accordance with social, cultural and historic contexts (Faria, 2011). In addition, terrorism is filled with political and social meaning and how we perceive the terrorist threat has influence in how we construct those conceptualisations (Hayes, 2015). This phenomenon was first associated with the "Reign of Terror" (1793-94), prior to the French Revolution, and it was used against the population by governments and regimes (Wilkinson, 2010) to keep their people under control (Rogers, 2008).

Since then, terrorist groups have been developing several tactics[35] and exploiting the benefits of globalisation such as greater access to information, finance, technology and transportation (Caldwell & Williams Jr., 2012:82). Nowadays, and particularly after the Al-Qaeda's attacks in American soil, namely towards the Pentagon in Washington DC and the World Trade Centre in New York, specialists in terrorism studies identify two main types of terrorism: the state and non-state terrorism[36] (Wilkinson, 2010).

The 9/11 incidents, perpetrated under Osama bin Laden's objective to mobilise "a coalition of jihadist network against a US-dominated world order" and to create a caliphate that would gather all Muslim (Phillips, 2013:131), rose some doubts about the Realist paradigm and the Westphalian state-centred system (Phillips, 2010). In other words, Al-Qaeda served as an example of how an organisation with no hierarchical line of command was flexible enough and able to recruit volunteers (Caruso & Schneider, 2010) from all around the globe to join this Salafi movement. Paul Wilkinson (2010:131) establishes four categories to classify non-state terrorist groupings: (1) ethno-nationalist groups; (2) ideological groups; (3) religio-political groups; and (4) state-sponsored groups. Al-Qaeda, according to this author, fits the third and Paul Rogers (2008) emphasises that this terrorist organisation combines both the revolutionary change and the religious belief in order to pursue its objectives, i.e., freeing the Ummah (the Islamic community) and the creation of a caliphate (Phillips, 2013).

That said, bin Laden and his Salafi comrades represented an attempt to conceive an "imagined community" (Wiktorowicz, 2001:20) based on a common interpretation of Islam — the "pure" Islam —

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[35] "Around the turn of the twentieth century, for example, there was a wave of assassinations by anarchists that were generally considered acts of terrorism: The president of France was assassinated in 1894; an Austrian empress and a Spanish prime minister fell in 1897; Italy's king, Umberto I, was killed in 1900; and an American president, William McKinley, was assassinated in 1901.During the 1960s, airplane hijackings, most of which ended without fatalities, became the tactic of choice for many terrorist organizations. The imposition of airport security measures and efforts toward greater international cooperation, along with a decrease in the media attention given to hijackings, eventually made hijackings rare events" (Caldwell & Williams Jr., 2012:82).

[36] For the purpose of this investigation, we will be addressing exclusively to the non-state terrorism when referring to terrorism.

(Pinto, 2012). In order to induce some political modifications they considered essential, terrorists use some violent brutal tactics namely hijacks, car bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, barricade-hostages (Merari, 1993). The violence of such approach is condemned, yet that does not necessary means that terrorists are not rational[37]. On the contrary, they perceive the gap between them and their stronger opponent — the state; and try to play with the stronger adversary through fear and by installing the panic in the society (Laqueur, 1996). That way, terrorism differs from other types of political violence, like guerrilla warfare, conventional war or riots, and constitutes a distinct strategy of insurgency (Merari, 1993:np); it is an asymmetric tactic (Zimmermann, 2003; Hayes, 2015) which appears "to be intended — (A) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (B) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (C) to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping" (Cornell University Law School, 2012).

Al-Qaeda's terrorist attacks in the US, later in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), were a "wake up call" to the West, enhancing the role of "terrorism" in the international security agenda (Lapidus, 2002; Kilcullen, 2004; Gerber & Mendelson, 2009) after Bush Administration defined terrorism as a "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (US Department of State, 2003:xii).

One way to influence the audience is through religion, as it is an important instrument of mobilisation (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006). Islam, particularly, has been associated with major terrorist attacks and networks, such as Al-Qaeda and more recently ISIL. Global jihadist networks have a restrictive and abusive interpretation of the Quran and perpetrate violent acts in the name of Allah. The Islamic radicalism continues to grow both in nature and scope:

> [I]nternational Islamic terrorism continues to evolve in nature and scope. While remnants of al Qaeda continue to exist (...) and carry on organizing acts of terrorism both regionally and globally, al Qaeda-inspired terrorism is a novel development. It involves unaffiliated individuals and groups tapping into al Qaeda's message to justify violence (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010:34).

Many homegrown movements found in Al-Qaeda's narrative a source of inspiration and saw in jihadism a political ideology in expansion (Hafez & Mullins, 2015), which constitutes a major concern for

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[37] "Conceptions of 'rationality' are not necessarily the exclusive product of early modern Western history and its culture of political thought; the processes leading to the constitution, and the criteria governing the present boundaries, of the Western system of reasoned thought are almost certainly not identical with those if other cultures (...) "rationalities" (...) are as a rule of formative processes informed, even conditioned and instilled by culturally and historically imprinted social environment" (Zimmermann, 2003:15-16).

governments and intelligence services, who actively try to scrutinise the roots that led to the radicalisation of those movements:

> Radicalization is a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence. It is both a mental and emotional that prepares and motivates an individual to pursue a violent behaviour (...) Understanding what drives violent radicalization is perhaps the most challenging aspect of confronting homegrown terrorism. Few generalizable rules seem to apply (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010:38).

When approaching the topic of radicalisation, it is important to note that we are not on the presence of a linear phenomenon (Gemmerli, 2015), there is no such thing as sequential process of steps, stages or phases on radicalism. Instead, radicalism is a puzzle that conjures several factors: (1) grievances, (2) networks, (3) ideologies, and (4) enabling environments and support structures[38].

Even though homegrown terrorism[39] and radicalisation[40] are not synonyms, it is possible to connect both concepts: radicalisation "is politically contrived concept (...) based on an attempt to understand, explain and prevent so-called-home-grown terrorism" (Gemmerli, 2015:2). To put it in other words, homegrown terrorists before becoming actually terrorists, go through a process of radicalisation and there are many factors and reasons that contribute for the motivation of an individual to radicalise himself.

Religion might be one of the factors that inspires radicalisation and differs from other motivational factors, because of the prophetic leaders who claim that the word is "fundamentally corrupt and unredeemable" (Dawson, 2009:13), and it is God's plan to make them alter the situation. In fact, the Islamist ideology has been at the centre of homegrown radicalism[41] Fundamentalists such as Osama bin Laden believe that Muslim nations are no longer following the Islam rule once they are being corrupted by Western societies (Faria, 2011) and, for that reason, they [the fundamentalists] hold on to the premise

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[38] Grievances include economic marginalization and cultural alienation, deeply held sense of victimization and cultural alienation, or strong disagreements regarding the foreign policies of states. Grievances could also entail personal disaffection, loss, or crisis that leads one to seek a new path in life. Networks refer to preexisting kinship and friendship ties between ordinary individuals and radicals that lead to diffusion on extreme beliefs. These milieus not only offer opportunities for socialization with radicals, they could also satisfy psychological needs such as the search for meaningful relationships and a quest for significance (...) Ideologies refer to master narratives about the world and one's place in it. Usually they frame personal and collective grievances into broader political critiques of the status quo. They also demonize enemies and justify violence against them, and they incentivize sacrifice by promising heroic redemption. Enabling environments and support structures encompass physical and virtual settings such as the Internet, social media, prisons, or foreign terrorist training camps that provide ideological and material aid for radicalizing individuals, as well as deepen their commitment to radical milieus (Hafez & Mullins, 2015:961).

[39] "Individuals who contemplate killing their fellow citizens in campaigns of terrorism do so in great measure because their beliefs dictate that murder is feasible and just. Political violence is rarely constructed in a vacuum" (Wilner & Dubouloz, 2010:37).

[40] Radicalization involves adopting an extremist worldview, one that is rejected by mainstream society and one that deems legitimate use of violence as a method to effect societal or political change (...) Radicalization is usually a (1) gradual "process" that entails socialization into an (2) extremist belief system that sets the stage for (3) violence even if it does not make it inevitable (Hafez & Mullins, 2015:959)

[41] Despite not all Muslims are radical or violent, Islamist radicalism is a threat as it promotes intolerance, antidemocratic attitudes, and anti-integration and isolationism (Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service, 2008).

that all Muslims have the right to call for Jihad as part of their religious duty (Wiktorowicz, 2001) in order to reconstruct the society (Pinto, 2003).

To put it in another way, radicalisation is a puzzle of factors that when interconnected produce extremism (Hafez & Mullins, 2015) and, sometimes, materialise in violent and terrorist forms. Two major examples of the use of terrorism associated with radical Muslims occurred in Russia in 2002 and 2004. The sieges of Moscow Dubrovka Theatre in October 2002 and of a school in the small town of Beslan (North Ossetia) in 2004 emphasised the fact that the instability in the North Caucasus was still a major concern to the Kremlin, once the secessionist conflict in Chechnya has produced a wave of political terrorist activity not only in that specific Russian Federation Republic, but also in other republics (Pluchinsky, 1998). Fighting radicalism and terrorism are part of the Russian national interests since 1997 (see the 1997 National Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by Boris Yeltsin, and Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020, approved by Dmitry Medvedev in 2009). Terrorism is an IN-OUT security threat, as we have argued before. It affects the way domestic and foreign policies of a state are conducted and it challenges several priorities of the Russian Federation, namely the country's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity (these are some of main foreign policy goal transversal to the Russian Federation Foreign Concepts of 2000, 2008, 2013 and 2016).

Chapter 2. Religion, independence and Chechnya: from resistance to radicalism

2.1. The North Caucasus: an ethnic and cultural mosaic

The North Caucasus region provides the bridge between Russian Federation and Central Asia, and connects Russia to the major hydrocarbons reserve of the Caspian Sea (Russo, 2007). Also it was part of the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation until 2010. Since then, and under Dmitri Medvedev's presidency, the North Caucasus became a Federal District constituted by eight republics (see the image below): Adygeya, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kamalkia, Karachai-Cherkessia and North Ossetia (Alania), placed in a mountainous region on the south of Russian Federation (Melvin, 2007). According to the infographic of the website KavKaz-Uzel [2016], the most populated republic of the North Caucasus is Dagestan[42], whose president is Ramazan Abdulatipov, has approximately 2 946 000 people in a territory of 50,300 km²; while the largest is the Stavropol region[43], whose head is Vladimir Vladimirov, with 66,160 km² and 2 791 000 people. The other republics are considerable smaller and less populated: Chechnya[44] — ruled by Ramzan Kadyrov — is 17,300 km² and has a population of 1 269 000; Kabardino-Balkaria[45] — whose head of the republic is Yuri Kokov — is 12,500 km² and has a population of 859 000; Ingushetia[46] — presided by Yunus-Bek Evkurov — has approximately 14,100 km² and a population of 492 000 people; Karachai-Cherkessia[47] — whose president is Rashid Temrezov — is 17,300 km² and has a population of 1 269 000 — ; North Ossetia[48] — presided by Tamerlan Aguzarov — has approximately 8, 000 km² and a population of 706 000 people.

Despite the low population density — approximately 9.5 million people (Dzutsati, 2011) — the region has an exceptionally high level of cultural and ethnic diversity[49] [50] (Melvin, 2007 Russo, 2007; Predmore, 2011; Souleimanov, 2015; Pokalova, 2015; Falkowski, 2015). In fact, North Caucasus is dubbed *jabal-al-aslan* the Arab expression for mountain of languages (Baddley, 1908 in Predmore, 2011:4).

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[42] See annex 1.
[43] See annex 2.
[44] See annex 3.
[45] See annex 4.
[46] See annex 5.
[47] See annex 6.
[48] See annex 7.
[49] See figure 1.
[50] "The Caucasus is culturally diverse. A glance at a political map of the region suggests that simple borders separate the political entities in the Caucasus (...) natural barriers mean that many groups in the region have existed in isolation for millennia (...) Most, including Chechen and Dagestani, are part of three distinct language families found nowhere else in the world. This linguistic diversity is accompanied by religious and political variation" (Wertsch, 2013:np).

FIGURE 1. THE ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS

The 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation identifies the North Caucasus republics as subjects[51] of Russia and the Constitution and the federal law are mandatory in the whole territory (Article 4(2)). Nonetheless, the North Caucasus has not been part of Russia since the beginning. The first incursions[52] on this province date back to the 16th century, when the Russian Empire conquered the Khanate of Astrakhan, but it was under the rule of Peter the Great (1722-1723) that a more concrete effort to integrate the North Caucasus under the influence of the Russian Empire was made (Pokalova, 2015).

Despite Russia's efforts to keep the North Caucasus under its influence and the fact that not all republics were subjugated through force, the region has generally shown evidence of being against Russian supremacy in the region. As noted by Burger & Cheloukhine (2015), the consolidation of the southern border took almost one hundred years and neither the Russian Empire nor the Soviet Union

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[51] "The Russian Federation includes the following subjects of the Russian Federation: Republic of Adygeya, Republic of Altai, Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Daghestan, Republic of Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, Republic of Kalmykia, Karachayevo-Circassian Republic, Republic of Karelia, Komi Republic, Republic of Mari El, Republic of Mordovia, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of North Ossetia - Alania, Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Tuva, Udmurtian Republic, Republic of Khakassia, Chechen Republic, Chuvash Republic; Altai Territory, Trans-Baikal Territory, Kamchatka Territory, Krasnodar Territory, Krasnoyarsk Territory, Perm Territory, Primorye Territory, Stavropol Territory, Khabarovsk Territory;

Amur Region, Arkhangelsk Region, Astrakhan Region, Belgorod Region, Bryansk Region, Chelyabinsk Region, Ivanovo Region, Irkutsk Region, Kaliningrad Region, Kaluga Region, Kemerovo Region, Kirov Region, Kostroma Region, Kurgan Region, Kursk Region, Leningrad Region, Lipetsk Region, Magadan Region, Moscow Region, Murmansk Region, Nizhny Novgorod Region, Novgorod Region, Novosibirsk Region, Omsk Region, Orenburg Region, Orel Region, Penza Region, Pskov Region, Rostov Region, Ryazan Region, Samara Region, Saratov Region, Sakhalin Region, Sverdlovsk Region, Smolensk Region, Tambov Region, Tomsk Region, Tver Region, Tula Region, Tyumen Region, Ulyanovsk Region, Vladimir Region, Volgograd Region, Vologda Region, Voronezh Region, Yaroslavl Region; Moscow, St. Petersburg - cities of federal importance; Jewish Autonomous Region; Nenets Autonomous Area, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area - Yugra, Chukotka Autonomous Area, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area" (The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 65(1)).

[52] The Chechens struggled since the sixteenth century, but eventually caved after losing the forty-seven-year Caucasian War (1817-1864) and, in 1864 they were incorporated into the Russian Empire (Petykowski, 2004:25).

were completely able to do so. Chechnya, for instance, was, and still is, one of the most rebellious republics. It was under the leadership of the Chechen born Sheikh Mansur that one of the first movements challenging the Russian rule emerged in 1785 (Melvin, 2007). Mansur blamed Russia for the "the impious way of life full of sin, evil intentions, and propensity to lie, steal, and kill, with such widespread destructive habits as drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco" (Pokalova, 2015:3). Mansur found extremely important to put an end to Russian traditions and norms, replacing them with the Sharia law (Islamic law). Hence, Sheikh Mansur became a symbol of Chechen resistance and liberty, as well as an inspiration provider for those who, similar to him, did not share the same values of the Russian Federation.

The republic of Chechnya is one of the most problematic of the entire region and one of the first to express its dissatisfaction (Cornell, 2012) with the Russian cultural and legal impositions, which eventually led to the declaration of the Chechen people as an enemy of the state by the head of USSR Joseph Stalin[53]. Officially accused of plotting with the Nazi, (Lapidus, 1998; Reynolds, 2013; Souleimanov, 2015), the Chechens were condemned to a mass deportation to Siberia and Kazakhstan in 1944. Rebellions against the Russian authority "lasted as recently as 1944, when they, along with their fellow Ingush and a number of other North Caucasus ethnicities, were collectively accused of collaboration with the Nazi armies and deported to the steppes of Central Asia" (Soleimanov, 2015:98). Russian and Soviet armies frequently used controversial counterinsurgency methods such as "annihilating entire defiant populations and devastating countryside, along with the woodlands that provided shelter to the insurgents. During the 1994 deportation alone, around a quarter of the entire Chechen population is believed to have perished (Souleimanov, 2015:98), and the survivors were resettled in Kazakhstan, only returning home in 1957, after Nikita Khrushchev recognising the mass deportations were a crime committed by Stalin[54].

Russian lack of understanding of Chechen society[55] and the use of extreme measures to suppress national resistance led to the formation of fundamentalist groups (Wertsch, 2013). While Russian

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[53] "[T]he Chechens stood accused of cooperating with the Fascists, but in this war, their fault lies in being in league with the forces of international terrorism. Grozny, a city of 400,000, was wiped off the map while the leaders of those countries supposedly championing human rights stood by and applauded. People were killed everywhere and in all possible ways, while all of European society watched in confusion as the might of the Russian rulers was directed against women, children and the aged, all of whom were deemed terrorists (Vatchagaev, 1970:np).

[54] "The collective trauma of exile was a key formative experience for many members of the present Chechen elite, including future President Dzhokhar Dudayev, who made their way back to the Caucasus only after Nikita Khrushchev denounced the deportations in 1957 as one of the crimes of the Stalin era, and allowed the 'punished peoples' to return to their homeland" (Lapidus, 1998:9).

[55] In the everyday life of the Chechens is still very much present the archaic social organisation based con complex values. Souleimanov (2015:96) explains that "Chechens identify themselves as part of around 150 teyps, or clans, of which the largest number around a 100,000 members (i.e., nearly one-tenth of the entire Chechen population). Teyps are subdivided into branches (gar), which are further subdivided into patronymic families (nekye). These patronymic families are then sub-divided into groups of related families into atomic families (dözal). An individual is thus never perceived without regard to his or her fellow clan members: whether he or she desires or not, teyp or more broadly clan identity is projected onto the individual by public consciousness".

Federation is a democratic state (Article 1 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation) and a secular state[56] where the Constitution and the federal law have supremacy; in Chechnya, and the North Caucasus in general, religion is a very important feature of resistance[57].

2.2. The role of Islam in the North Caucasus resistance

Resistance and independence are two words that describe the North Caucasus struggle to break out from Moscow's sphere of influence, i.e., the Caucasian people aspires self-preservation (Russell, 2002:86). Despite being generally characterised as mountain men/highlanders, their ethnic diversity may, sometimes, drive them apart (Council of Europe, 2006; Gerber & Mendelson, 2009). To that extent, Islam plays an important role on the unification of the Caucasian people (Petykowvski, 2004; Russo, 2007; Melvin, 2007; Swirszcz, 2009; Abramson, 2010; Markedonov, 2012; Logvinov, 2012; Munster, 2014; Pokalova, 2015), since it is the most practiced religion[58], especially the Sunni branch of Islam. The North Caucasus has three major Islamic hubs: Dagestan (Shia), Chechnya and Karachai-Cherkessia (Sunni).

The combination of fierce leaders, both political and religious, like Sheikh Mansur (1760-1794) and a strong national identity of the republics constituted a concern for the Kremlin, once religion and nationalism associated to the notion of identity may lead to conflict and are, simultaneously, traditional sources of political legitimacy (Garner, 2013). Another vital figure for the Caucasian resistance was Ghazi Muhammad or Ghazi Mullah (1795-1832), who called for a holy war against the Russian (Pokalova, 2015). The *Grazavat* (Arab expression used by the Chechen when referring to holy war) occurred between 1829 and 1859, and prompted the local communities to express their willingness to, whether or not, align with the Russian leadership (Gammer, 2006). This holy war led to the creation of the Caucasus Imamate, a theocratic organisation containing the republics of Chechnya and Dagestan, which instigated

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In addition, the lack of robust legal framework and social stratification allowed customary law to have significant impact on the day-to-day of the Chechens: the "customary law based on the archaic concept of honor (siy) continues to constitute an important component of Chechen society, regulating the relationships between males and females, young and old, and between individuals. Siy also implies a strict etiquette that is embedded in the related social code, called nickhchalla (Chechenness): this is based on principles of self-restraint, sobriety, and respect for the individual. Even though the efficacy of norms related to this body of customary law has gradually weakened with the advent of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization in the aftermath of World War II and during the post-Soviet decades, some remnants of it (centered on the notion of honer and honor-related obligations) still persist, shaping the socio-cultural landscape of Chechnya".

[56] "No religion may be established as a State or obligatory one" (Article 4 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

[57] Religion, in this case Islam, was important to brought the North Caucasus citizens together, despite their divergences and cultures. They had a common religion and a common propose: to be freed from the Russian rule and get their independence. Nevertheless, the first Chechen War had not a religious character, at least not initially. It was not until the arrival of foreign radical fighters that the secessionist movement in Chechnya turned into a radical and religious one, i.e., the Russo-Chechen conflict in 1994 had a secular purpose, even thought the Chechen population find in Islam and their leaders a source of inspiration to fight the Russian influence. The shift from a secular to an extremist movement will be further developed in this chapter.

[58] The only exceptions are the Abkhaz and the Ossetians (Council of Europe, 2006).

the independence from Russia and its leaders. This resistance became known as "Murid resistance" and, in 1834, Iman Shamil assumed the control of the Caucasus Imamate having a great impact on the future of the North Caucasus resistance[59]. Religion has, thus, played an important role in mobilising the Caucasian people towards a common goal in the 19th century: standing up against the Russian Empire. This goal will later be revived by a Chechen rebel leader — Dzhokar Dudaev — whose aspiration is to free Chechnya from the Russians and, once more, religion will be a cornerstone to instigate a rebellion against the central government.

The association of Islam to nationalist and insurgent movements in the North Caucasus drove Staline and other Russian leaders to take severe measures against the practice of this religion like deportations — besides the Chechens, other people such as the Balkar, the Karachai and the Ingush were deported too — and even the prohibition of practicing of Islam (Melvin, 2007). As a result, Islam was seen as a menace to state's integrity, so it should be detained (Fernandes, 2006). The fact that religious leaders took advantage of religious traditions to gain more influence in the political arena in Muslim-majority induced federal authorities to apply more restrictive measures against this "Islamist opposition" (Malashenko, 2008:2).

Nevertheless, in the 1990s a religious revival was observed in the advent of USSR's collapse (Garner, 2013), and the emergence of newly formed independent republics. Hence, during this period, the federal authorities sought to establish political activism with Islam support:

> Demanding that the Muslims remain loyal to the state; Subordinating the Muslim leadership to the state; exerting oversight over the activities of religious and political-religious organizations, including religious educational organizations, and monitoring foreign contacts *with the goal of countering their internal influence*[60] (Malashenko, 2008:2).

Despite Moscow's coercive measures, it was not possible to control the insurgent wave associated with Islam from spreading into the North Caucasus, especially in Chechnya. Aside from having Islam as a unifying factor, the Caucasus population found motivation on Russia's path towards democracy and wanted to join the country on the creation of democratic institutions during Yeltsin's Presidency. Instead, rather than promoting democratisation, the Kremlin helped to perpetuate fiefdoms and, consequently, worsened regional problems of patronage and corruption (Melvin, 2007). Therefore, the region was becoming increasingly less integrated within the Russian parameters, which contributed to the rise of the

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[59] "Shamil's Murid struggle occupies a significant place in the history of the North Caucasus. His most significant achievement became the consolidation of rebellious territories in the Caucasus Imamate, a theocratic state based on sharia law. The Caucasus Imamate was first established by Shamil's predecessors in 1828, but it was Shamil's effective administrative reform of the lands under his control that united Dagestan and Chechnya in a statehood project that served as an alternative to the administrative divisions imposed by Russia" (Pokalova, 2015:7).
[60] Emphasis of the author.

instability (Kuchins, Malarkey & Markedonov, 2011). The separatist rebels appealed to universal values such as justice and the right to self-determination in order to mobilise North Caucasus population against colonialism and Russian Federation (Calzini, 2005). In 1991, Chechnya declared its independence from Russian Federation and became "Chechen Republic of Ichkeria" (Predmore, 2011), under Dzhokar Dudaev's command. As referred previously, the principal concern of Russian Federation, in it's early years, were to reconstruct the Russian national identity, so it was crucial to keep the state as a whole (Fernandes, 2006:69-70). That said, President Yeltsin's priorities involved dealing with this secessionist wave initiated in Chechnya and preventing it from spreading into the entire region. To do so, President Yeltsin ordered a military campaign in the rebellious republic in 1994 (Predmore, 2011).

2.2.1. Sufism versus Salafism

During the first Chechen War, more precisely in early 1995, Islamic volunteers started to appear in Chechnya to fight alongside their fellow Muslim (Henkin, 2006). These foreign fighters came mostly from Afghanistan, but there were many other sympathisers with the global jihad movement — which their mission was to help freeing the Muslim people being oppressed by the Russian (Wiktorowicz, 2001). Calling for a defensive jihad — against the oppressors — is a relatively common practice[61]. Jihad has frequently a negative connotation as it is associated with violent/terrorist acts (Rubin, 2010) and with the Islamist movements who understand Islam not only as a political ideology based on the application of the Sharia law as the legal framework, but also the creation of an Islamic state (Roy, 2004). This is not entirely accurate since not all Islamist movements are violent (Magda, 2008; Rubin, 2010). Jihad means effort towards the path of faith and can be seen as the sixth pilar of Islam, the one responsible for the protection of Islam from the infidels (Almeida e Silva, 2014). To that extent, Jihad has several principles: (1) defending Islam; (2) fighting the enemies; (3) fighting corruption and injustice (4) each Muslim must be prepared for Jihad — this does not necessary mean that each one must be ready to go to/stage a war; any Muslim can help by money donations or praying; and (5) the norms against the enemy must obey to the limits of moral and the law, meaning that forbidden nocturne raids, biologic

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[61] "This call for a defensive jihad to protect Muslim populations continued to resonate with Salafi jihadist long after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, and the Salafi Arab Afghans searched for new venues of combat (...) after the fall of Kabuk in the war in Afghanistan, Arab Salafis considerer a jihad in the Phillipines or Kashmir as part of the individual responsibility to protect Muslim countries and populations, but the sense of urgency produced by ethnic cleansing in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 redirected efforts toward the formar Yugoslav republic" (Wiktorowicz, 2001:24).

wars, cattle burning, murder or assault unarmed people are forbidden[62] (Almeida e Silva, 2014:278-279).

The experienced fighters (mujaheddin) were initially welcomed to Chechnya by Akhmad Kadyrov — Mufti of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Howerver divergences between the Chechen and the mujaheddin started to appear, leading to internal bickering. Despite both parties were essentially Sunni-Muslims, each had different interpretations of Islam. On the one hand, the majority of Chechen population prefers Sufism, while on the other hand, foreign fighters are advocates of Wahhabism and Salafism (Speckhard & Akmedova, 2006). Event though Chechens were not understood as infidels, Sufism was particularly seen as heretic practices and rituals (Wilhelmsen, 2005).

The Sufi order spread to the North Caucasus in the 18th century, and Sufi sheiks guided their people towards spiritual purification, that is a life away from impurities such as tobacco, alcohol, blood feuds (Pokalova, 2015:5). Sufism was appealing because

> Sufism aligns itself with formal Islam: a Muslim is connected to the *umma* through both the commands of God and the mystical experience (...) Sufism proved to be more tolerant of the local customs and traditions [and] Throughout history, Sufi have been protagonists against injustices, and have been deeply involved in social struggles (Swirszcz, 2009:64-65).

Foreign fighters, on their turn, call for a stricter interpretation of Islam known as Salafism. This is an extremist branch of Islam that emphasises the need for all Muslims to follow the Quran and the Sharia law the same way the Salafi (founding fathers) did, i.e., the same way as it was preached in Prophet Mohammed's era (Pinto, 2012). Salafism rejects any idea arising from the infidels, once they are perceived as a threat to the purity of Islam (Pinto, 2012:13) and in the Salafi's point of view holy figures as intermediaries of God are forbidden by the Quran (Wiktorowicz, 2001). Salafi movements find inspiration on the Wahhabi doctrine, named after the Sheik Abdul al-Wahhab. He believed that Muslims must return to the teachings of the founding fathers and that Sharia law must be the legal framework governing the Muslim society (Faria, 2011). Yet, Wahhabism "can be a portal to Islamism because it trains people to believe that a stricter, less tolerant, form of Islam is normative" (Rubin, 2010:xix).

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[62] Five principles of Jihad: "1. Defending Islam. The most important of Jihad is the defence of the truth, justice and Islam. So, every time sovereignty, independence or integrity of a Muslim country is threaten, it is the duty of all Muslims to unite to help. 2. Fighting the enemies. Defenders of Jihad consider that Islam has the right to spread through preaching. And, if few elements try to stop that expansion, it is legitimate to reach for (just) war for that to happen. 3 Fighting injustice and corruption. 4. Be prepared to Jihad. To believers is asked to be prepared to Jihad in case a Muslim state is victim of an aggression, since, on the perspective of radical activists, violence continues to be a dominant factor in international relations. Yet, being prepared to Jihad does not mean that all should head-on to the battle in case of an attack to a Muslim country. Each believer can contribute to Jihad by praying or financial support. 5. Observation of norms regarding the enemy. Islam does not allow that any conflict surpass the limits of the moral and the current laws, once that would be against the principles of Allah. Thereby, in theory, it is forbidden nocturne assaults, biologic war, cattle burning and muder or aggression of unarmed people" (Almeida e Silva, 2014: 278-279).

TABLE 2. SALAFISM AND SUFISM IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Salafism — an Islamic religious movement of global nature. It focuses on the need for religious and moral revival in the spirit of 'pure' Islam, i.e. based solely and uncompromisingly on the Quran and the classical tradition (sunnah and hadith). It is a grassroots movement — it needs no organisation structures and has no uniform, consistent and binding socio-political agenda. However, Salafis are allowed to become engaged in various political and social activities, both legal and, for example, terrorist.

In the post-Soviet area, Salafism is frequently — and erroneously — identified with Wahhabism, which is understood not as the historic school of Quranic law and political which had laid the foundations for modern Saudi Arabia, but as armed and terrorist movements drawing upon Islam, mainly in the Northern Caucasus (it is de facto a synonym of terrorism). In the Caucasian context, Salafis can be divided into moderate and radical; the measure for this being their attitude to armed struggle. The moderate peaceful Salfis do not take part in the jihad, believing that — given the circumstances — its is not part of their religious obligations. In turn, the radical warring Salafis, want to fulfil their fundamentalist demands through armed struggle and the use of violence (the need for jihad). Thus the term 'warring Salafis' can be used with regard to the militants fighting under the banner of the Caucasus Emirate.

Sufism — a mystical trend within Islam, which is externally manifested through the operation of Sufi brotherhoods. This trend is deeply rooted in the Caucasus, and is viewed there as 'traditional' Islam as opposed to 'non-traditional' Salafism. In the 19th century, Sufism was the driving force for Islamic revival in the region, for 'purifying' Islam of non-canonical local in influences and the ideological base for Caucasian insurgents fighting against Russia (Imam Shamil was a member of the Naqshbandiya brotherhood). Islam survived in the Caucasus in the Soviet times mainly owing to the operation of underground Sufi brotherhoods. When the USSR collapsed, the brotherhoods loyal to the state and supported by the governments, which were combating Salafis, gained power and in fact took control of o official Islam in Dagestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia (the spiritual boards of Muslims, muftiyats). Being the government's close ally and a serious political force, Sufism is fiercely combating Salafis, who in turn see Sufis as heretics who, for example, through their cult of Sufi leaders, sheikhs, violate the main pillar of Islam – monotheism (the unity and indivisibility of God).

SOURCE: Falkowski, Maciej. 2014. "On the Periphery of Global Jihad- The North Caucasus: The Illusion of Stabilisation." *Point of View* 45, 19-20.

The Chechens, and the North Caucasus in general, are Sufi Muslims which collides with the Salafi ideals. Nevertheless, it is possible to find some breaches related to the Chechen traditions that ought to be explored by the foreign fighters during and after the first Chechen War. Despite the fact that Salafis consider Sufis to be heretic (Falkowski, 2014), both share the sense of family. Family is just as important to Muslims (Pinto, 2012) as it is to the Chechen people. The latter considered the importance of family even before the arrival of Islam in the region during the 16th century. In fact, justice in Chechnya was based on the sense of revenge against those who attempted on a life or injured a family member. According to this, Chechen justice system was inspired by seven principles[63] and laid its foundations in

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[63] "(1) Murder should be punished with murder; (2) Only males may revenge, females may only take actions to revenge if there are no males in her gamily and among her relatives to do so; (3) For the murder of a female two males should be killed: the murderer and a member of the murderer's family; (4)

vengeance. During the first Russo-Chechen war, the foreign fighters were able to exploit this behavioural characteristic of the Chechen society and to take it against the enemy, the Russians in the particular case. In other words, they used the vindictive aspect of the Chechen people and the pretext that a death of a family member was itself a death of a member of the Islamic community[64] to recruit.

After the first Chechen War ended — with the Chechen's insurgent movement being victorious — some Wahhabists settled in and, if in an initial phase they respected the local customs[65], gradually they started replacing the moderate Islam practiced in the North Caucasus with their fundamentalist views, rejecting Chechnya's history and social and political life (Akmadov in Henkin, 2006:106).

Speckhard & Akmedova acknowledge seven major conflicts that emerged from the clash of ideologies among traditional Chechen Muslims and Wahhabi foreign fighters right after the end of the first Chechen War. First, traditional Chechen Muslims respect the Ustazies. The latter were the priests who brought and spread Islam throughout the North Caucasus, and the ideals of pacifism, mercy, and compassion. Ustazies, unlike Wahhabists, were against violence, warfare, and martyrdom. The second divergence is about traditional Chechen praying rituals named *zikr* and their devotion to one God — Allah — but also to some prophets and the Ustazies. Wahhabists, on their turn, condemn these practices and claiming that to be idolatry. The third is liked to the second, as Wahhabists have distributed several religious publications advocating the "oneness of God", disclaiming Chechen practices, namely the use of intermediaries to God. The fourth point of divergence regards the way of dressing. If Chechens were allowed to choose their clothes (they dressed like Europeans but with the modesty congruent with Muslim values); Wahhabists imposed to their followers significant chances. The women had to cover themselves and the men had to let grow their hair, beard, moustache, and to wear Arabic clothing. The fifth main difference concerns family ties. For the Chechens, the father was the most important figure, as he was the head of the family. The Wahhabists, however, gave special focus to the Muslim Brotherhoods (fictive

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Revenge should be directed only to the murderer, not to others, even to his family members or close associates; (5) The revenge is not limited in time, it can be realized many years after a murder; (6) The revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene with the victim's family asking them to forgive the murderer and reach agreement to stop the revenge; (7) Revenge never calls for the avenger to kill himself in order to murder the other" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:131).

[64] "Recently however, with widespread war, traumatization and bereavement, revenge is becoming generalized in the minds of many. This is partly due to the militant Wahhabi ideology which encourages revenging upon the entire group and acting against civilian targets, but there are some other factors that contribute as well. It is for instance difficult, if not impossible, for a Chechen citizen to find the murderer of his or her family members among professional military, police and paid soldiers in the war situation. These actors generally operate anonymously. In many cases victims do not know who has tortured or been the executioner of their family members. Likewise Russian forces in Chechnya are well known to be heavily involved in corruption (selling weapons, taking prisoners for bribes, accepting bribes at checkpoints, stealing from citizens during raids, etc.) and for dispensing "justice" as they see fit. All of these things contribute to a view that unfortunately results in all members of the forces being implicated as roaming freely without regard to human rights or legal concerns. Terrorist organizations capitalize upon this fact, transforming the personal evil-doer to a larger enemy group and connecting the longstanding ideology and cultural duty to revenge with the newly introduced ideology of militant jihad against the corrupt and godless west, Russia in particular. Terrorists changed the postulate of 'my revenge is to my enemy for killing my family member' to that of 'our revenge is to our enemies for killing our community members — the we being the Muslim brothers'." (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:131-132).

[65] "Typically, numbers of Wahhbists settled in villages and towns. At first they were respectful of local customs. They paid well for food and everything they bought. Their charity funds assisted the needy. As the time passed, they began to preach 'true' Islam, condemning the traditional version and trying to enforce or encourage 'Islamic manners' (...) Although most Chechens did not adopt the Wahhabist world-view" (Henkin, 2006:197).

kin) and Muslim Brothers became more important than bloodline. The sixth divergence relates to justice, i.e., traditionally justice was served under the banner of government courts and public condemnation would only be possible in a case of moral trespass. With the Wahhabists and their Sharia Courts, people was condemned in public for drinking alcohol, using drugs, and other crimes against Islamic principles. The seventh and last point of conflict takes into account the lack of support of the Chechen people over the Wahhabi doctrine. The majority of the Chechen people did not support Wahhabism and those Muslim leaders who expressed their opposition were killed (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:110-111).

Despite internal divergence between foreign fighters and Chechen population, and the fact that foreign fighters wanted to impose their interpretation of Islam to Chechnya, the main goal was achieved: Chechnya had won the war and was in an advantage point to start negotiations. Both parties had difficulties in reaching a political outcome for the Chechen republic, so the decision was formally postponed until December 31, 2001. Meanwhile, both sides agreed on a "special status" for Chechnya, in which the Yeltsin's administration agreed to "to Chechens' desire to take over most government functions (...) as long as a single defense and economy are preserved" (Atrokhov, 1999:383-384).

In January 1997, held elections choosing the former Soviet military, Aslan Mashkadov, as its new leader (Kramer, 2005). Mashkadov was perceived as comparably moderate separatist; hence he received support from Russian Federation (Melvin, 2007). Yet, he was unable to create order and "[t]he more chaos in and around Chechnya the greater the popular desire for some order, even that of crudely applied sharia" (Reynolds, 2013:5). This was a consequence of the adoption of a more radical form of Islam which interfered in the way moderate and secularist Chechens were trying to build state structures (Garner, 2013).

Sagramoso (2012) claims that the idea of creating an Islamic caliphate ruled in accordance with the strict principals of Salafism emerged in the North Caucasus after the collapse of USSR, but he also states that the majority of those advocating the pan-Islamic region had a peaceful agenda[66]. The turning over was more visible after the end of the first Chechen War, when radical Islamists took advantage of a devastated Chechnya to allure its people to join their mosques and to recruit them (Predmore, 2011). The socioeconomic problems of the region and the lack of opportunities for the younger generation have contributed for young fighters to identify with the global jihadist movement and to join it:

> These jihadists were supported by many young Muslim fighters from neighbouring
> North Caucasian republics who sympathised with the Chechen cause. Shocked by the
> horrors of war, and inspired by the ideas of violent jihad, these young individuals

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[66] "Initially, the majority of Salafi jamaats espoused a peaceful Islamic agenda. Islamic preachers such as Akhmad-kadi Akhtaev in Dagestan and Musa Mukozhev in Kabardino-Balkariya focused most of their efforts on the pursuit of educational and proselytising activities to convey the word of Salafi Islam to Muslims in the North Caucasus" Sagramoso, 2012:562).

decided to support their Muslim brothers and join in the fight against Russian forces in Chechnya. In addition, during this period, many leading Salafi religious figures also went to Chechnya to support and advance the jihadist cause (Sagramoso, 2012:652).

Not all Chechens, however, were inclined to radicalise themselves and Islam, that once was the glue of a disperse society, was starting to frighten those who did not relate to Salafi interpretations of Islam (Campana, 2006). In fact, many of the Chechens who were against Moscow during the first Chechen War, started to redefine their position, as Wahhabists and their radicalism started to become more of a threat than Moscow (Henkin, 2006), as it was the case of the Chechen Mufti Aslan Kadyrov, who during the first Chechen War stood by Chechnya's insurgency movement but fought by Moscow's side during the second war. To put in other words, the Russian rule became understood as less of a threat than the Chechen movement for independence that had become increasingly more radicalised and linked to international terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda, and more recently ISIL. These organisations find inspiration in Salafism and Wahhabism (note that both are radical views of the Sunni branch of Islam [Gelles, McFadden, Borum & Vossekuil, 2006]) to perpetrate their acts and to expand their sphere of influence as one can see for the civil war in Syria turned into an international war against terrorism.

2.3. The Caucasus Emirate: An Islamic Caliphate inside the Russian Federation

2.3.1. The "Afghanisation" of the North Caucasus

The North Caucasus desire of independence did not get support from any state, at least not officially. Even the states from the Middle East and North Africa did not express their support despite their shared faith. That has to do with the fact that they do not have a common policy towards the North Caucasus and President Yeltsin had shown his willingness to improve Russian relations with the Arab world (Fernandes, 2006). The Chechen resistance, however, found the support needed — money and arms — from countries like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, Libya, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia. The growing radicalisation of the North Caucasus — note that the first Chechen War was mostly a secular conflict; it only started to change after the influx of jihadist foreign fighters into Chechnya — was something that President Yeltsin did not predict in 1996:

> No such danger ever existed because specific conditions that brought about the conflict in Chechnya did not exist in any of the republics neighboring on Chechnya. Neither were there any social groups there that for the sake of criminal interests would be prepared to start such conflicts. Last but not least, both the peoples and the

> governments of those republics did everything to prevent themselves from being drawn into the Dudayev regime's bloody ventures. As the plan of settlement in Chechnya, that I announced on March 31 of this year, is being realized, the possibility of an internationalization of that conflict will be reduced to zero altogether (Yeltsin,1996 in Pokalova, 2015:143).

Nevertheless, the Salafi jihadists were confident in their capability to help free the Muslim population oppressed by other regimes. Winning the battle in Afghanistan (1979-1989) from the late Soviet Union has had great impact in this confidence[67].

The path towards radicalism was eased due to the socio-economic characteristics of the region. The Caucasian republics have been the poorest since the Soviet era and their situation has not improved significantly, on the contrary, in some cases it only got worse (Pokalova, 2015). Radical Islamists took advantage of "the young population who were deprived of opportunities for career growth or quality" to conduct them towards a path of radicalism since they could not foresee more than the "lack of any exact social, economic, or political development of the North Caucasus" (Markedonov, 2012:5). In addition, the newcomer fighters had a better knowledge of the Arabic language and Islam than the Chechen elder generations[68]. According to Sagramoso, the Chechen younger generation has lost contact with its roots and Salafism not

> emphasise social justice and equality, it also allows young Muslims to break with existing traditions, domineering clan structures and deeply-ingrained social hierarchies. Moreover, by overcoming national and ethnic barriers, Salafi Islam permits young Muslims in the North Caucasus to interact easily (2012:593).

Religion has been associated as an instrument for political and military mobilisation (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006) and, in the North Caucasus, Islam ended up being instrumentalised as a catalyst of radicalism and violence (Garner, 2013). The separatist movement that started in Chechnya as secular turned into an Islamist one with connexion to a diffuse network of insurgents[69] (Snetkov, 2011) in the Middle East and South Asia (Münster, 2014). As a consequence, the Federal Government feared that

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[67] "As the Russian forces invaded, the salafi jihadists who had just won the war with the Soviet Union in Afghanistan turned their concern to other conflict zones involving Muslims. The plight of the Chechens during the war and the numerous human rights abuses that occurred at the hands of the Russians were well publicized; hence Chechnya became identified by this jihadi groups as one of the most important new battlegrounds. Money which had already been pouring from foreign countries to rebuild Islamic institutions now became much more tightly focused on the perceived oppression of the Chechens who were caught up in armed conflict to win their independence; the militant form of Wahhabism which had sustained the Afghan jihadists began its journey to Chechnya" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:106).

[68] "Salafi ideas also provided an attractive alternative to the discredited 'traditional' forms of Islam (...) The younger imams spoke fluent Arabic, and were much better trained and much more knowledgeable on Islam than the older generations, as they had often studied Islam in the Arab Middle East. They were thus better able to provide answers to the queries and concerns of young individuals in the Caucasus who felt disoriented after the fall of communism and who were dismayed at the high levels of corruption and crime that had engulfed the region" (Sagramoso, 2012:568).

[69] According to Pokalova (2015:144), "[f]urther complicating the poor economic conditions was the staggering growth of corruption across the region. Corruption impacted many spheres of life and eroded trust in government institutions. Poor socio-economic conditions, rampant corruption, and the lack of a functioning government infrastructure, combined with persecution of the opposition and violations of religious freedoms, facilitated the spread of the insurgency from Chechnya to other regions in the North Caucasus".

the secessionist movement initiated in Chechnya would trigger a separatist trend that could jeopardise Moscow's influence in the region (Calzini, 2005). The fear became more real when a wave of violence started spreading beyond Chechnya, namely into Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria (Snetkov, 2011; Matveeva et al., 2012; Garner, 2013). In fact, Dagestan became known as "Little Chechnya" (Wiktorowicz, 2001:25) after groupings of Salafi who fought in Chechnya returned home, in 1996, to create an Islamic State in Dagestan. Later, in 1997, the incursion of two Chechen rebel leaders into Dagestan — Shamil Basayev and Amir al-Khattab[70] — followed by a series of bombings in Russian cities of Buinaksk, Moscow and Volgodonsk (Reynolds, 2013); demanded a strong attitude from the Russian authorities. Hence, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin initiated a second military campaign in Chechnya in September 1999.

Cornell links the North Caucasus' republics to the "Afghanization" phenomenon which he describes as

> [A] combination of war, human suffering, poverty, organized crime, and externally sponsored Islamic radicalism combined to generate an explosive situation, which the authorities are increasingly unable to respond to—and which, failing to understand the web of problems correctly and suffering from the constraints of their own system, they end up exacerbating (2012:122).

The sieges of the Dubrovka Theatre and of a school in Beslan are two examples of the violence perpetrated by the North Caucasus' radicals, but there have been more. Chechen warlords like Shamil Basaev, Salman Rudaev, Arbi Baraev, Movsar Baraev, Movladi Udugov and Zelimkhan Yandarbiev are some of the main contributors for the Islamisation of the Chechen republic. After winning the first Russo-Chechen war, these fighters acquired a special status, especially Basaev who became a national hero[71] (Williams, 2001), and started spreading radical ideas based on the radicalisation process they went through during the first Chechen War[72].

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[70] Al-Khattab arrived to Chechnya after participating in the Afghanistani jihad and his role in the North Caucasus insurgency had been gradually increasing and, eventually, he became the leader of a training camp in Chechnya named "KavKaz". Al-Khattab was also responsible for the forging of sponsorship ties with Middle East and local pro-Wahhabi groups in this region. In 1997, the North Caucasus watched the arrival of Wahhabi instructors from several Arab countries — Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Syria — but also from Great Britain and France. The KavKaz training camp operated from 1997 to 1999, at least legally and it "recruited young Chechens, making use of the Wahhabist mosques and schools that still at this time operated openly to indoctrinate and recruit potential members to their training camps. The training program of the KavKaz center is similar to what is reported in al Qaeda operations manuals in many aspects. They allow for and justify kidnapping, beating, and killing of civilians and hostages for achievement of "holy" goals. The "KavKaz" Center includes the Majlis al-Shura (i.e. the Military Consultation Council). Likewise, similar to other Islamic related terrorist organizations, the Wahhabist center uses the concept of "brotherhood" (i.e. fictive kin) which creates a strong as blood bond between those who pledge loyalty to one another—being willing to fight for each other to the death" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:111).
[71] Shamil Basaev "[r]eturned from the war he was hailed as a great hero and greatly loved by Chechens of all ages, but particularly by young boys and men who admired how the great Russia army had been repelled through his leadership during the war. Basayev harbored great ambitions for freedom. Even before the first war he announced the Chechen leadership that the independence movement beginning in Chechnya would spread throughout the entire Caucasus region and that not only Chechnya but the entire region would ultimately be freed from the Russians (Speckhard & Akmedova, 2006:105-106).
[72] Basaev before and at the beginning of the first war, his main goal and motivation for fighting was Chechen independence and the idea of uniting the North Caucasus, particularly Chechnya and Dagestan (...) by the end of the first war Basaev claimed 'I was the first to introduce Shari'ah courts on Chechen territory' and 'we see ourselves as warriors of Islam and therefore don't fear death'. Similarly, Salman Rudaev (...) gradually adopted the rhetoric of Islamism.

2.3.2. The Caucasus Emirate

2.3.2.1. Creation the Caucasus Emirate

Doku Umarov presented, in 2007, the Caucasus Emirate[73][74], as the successor of the late Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (Hahn, 2011; 2012; Soliyev, 2014; Falkowski, 2014). Shamil Basaev — the leading operative of the self-proclaimed independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria during the first Russo-Chechen war — is one of the most important figures when speaking about the radicalisation/Afghanisation of the North Caucasus (Cornell,2012)[75]. He had already been associated with the global jihadist movement prior to the outburst of the first Chechen War. His friendship with the Arab Wahhabist Ibn al Katthab was a strategic partnership or as Pokalova referred to it, an "opportunistic alliance" (2015:37).

Through this friendship, Basaev was able to assure the funding of Chechnya's independence, for instance, in 1994 he took 30 men of his battalion to receive training at Al-Qaeda's training camps in Khost (Afghanistan[76]) under the leadership of Osama bin Laden (Hahn, 2012); but he felt the need to clarify that his religious beliefs were not affected by his friendship, and that he was still a Sufi practitioner.

During the first war, more precisely in June 1995, he staged one of the first major terrorist events in the history of the recently formed Russian Federation: the hostage-taking of a hospital in Budyonnovsk, Stavropol krai (Russell, 2002; 2008; Kramer, 2005; Dannreuther & March, 2008; Pokalova, 2015). Other terrorist attacks of massive proportions were the 2002 siege of a school in Beslan, and the 2004 Moscow's Dubrovka Theatre, whose responsible was Shamil Basaev. This Chechen Islamic radical used Islam to serve his own goals and to justify his terrorist actions. By 1999, year marked by the Vladimir Putin's decision to intervene in Chechnya for the second time, Basaev was ready to wage a "holy war"

Just a few months after the arrival of his first jihadi fighters in Chechnya in 1995 he was talking about 'jihad as Allah's path' and the 'duty of every Muslim to die while following that path' (...) Yandarbiev started out as a radical Chechen nationalist. This worldview was clearly expressed in his book published in 1996, Chechnya—the fight for freedom, which contains little Radical Islamic rhetoric but many references to the 'nation'. After the first war, however, Yandarbiev promoted the establishment of an Islamic state in Chechnya and eventually he represented the violent fight as a Muslim duty (Wilhelmsen, 2005:37-38)

[73] Also known as Imarat Kavkaz.

[74] It is also is "a decentralized organization or network and that some of its local jamaats might be formed on the basis of local grievances, it would be wrong to see it as driven solely by local concerns and lacking central control or hierarchy. The foundation of the CE's structure and hierarchy was laid as early as 2005 with the ChRI's formation of the Caucasus and Dagestan Fronts, the amirs of which were appointed by the ChRI president/amir, Abdul-Khalim Sadulaev. Today, the CE'a amir Dokku 'Abu Usman' Umarov appoints the amirs of all of the CE networks' basic nodes, though there has been one exception to this rule. All amirs take the Islamic loyalty oath or bayat to him. The CE's organizational structure is determined by Umarov by decree (omra in Arabic) and is a mix of typical network forms. Its nodes, the so-called vilaiyats (Arabic for governate or province), are based, for the most part, along the lines of the North Caucasus republics" (Hahn, 2011:14).

[75] The term "Afghanisation" evokes "a combination of war, human suffering, poverty, organized crime, and externally sponsored Islamic radicalism combined to generate an explosive situation, which the authorities are increasingly unable to respond to" (Cornell, 2012:122).

[76] Igor Ivanov stressed the Russian support over the Anti-Taliban United Front, and that support to be part of accomplishing the Russian national interests. The then Minister of Forein Addairs claimed that the USSR's direct intervention was a mistake with huge proportions "which opened the way for the eventual capture of power in Afghanistan by the Taliban". According to Ivanov (2002), the Taliban and international extremists led by Bin Laden were deployed in Afghanistan and the territory has become the training camp of thousands of professional terrorists, including from Chechnya" whose aim was to create a 'world caliphate' that would forcibly gobbled up dozens of states, including a considerable part of Russian territory".

against Russia. This Chechen Islamic radical was also responsible for other terrorist attacks of massive proportions: the 2002 siege of a school in Beslan, or the 2004 Moscow's Dubrovka Theatre.

Basaev ran twice for the Chechen presidential elections: the first time was in October 1991 against Dzhokar Dudaev. After losing to Dudaev, he supported the newly Chechen president and brought together a military unit to back his campaign for independence. After Dudaev's death being confirmed in the advent of a successful Russian special operation in April 21, 1996, Basaev ran once more for president this time up against the moderate separatist Aslan Maskhadov (Wilhelmen, 2005) in January 1997. Subsequently a second loss, Basaev[77] was appointed prime minister by his opponent. Their divergent points of view for the future of Chechnya — Maskhadov, unlike Basaev, was not an apologist of waging a war beyond its borders nor perpetrating terrorist attacks — soon drove them apart. When Maskhadov came to power in 1997, his primary concern was to figure out a way to bring stability to Chechnya but he was not considered a good candidate by the Kremlin and he did not succeed in controlling the pressure imposed by those who stand up for the Islamisation of Chechnya such as Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, Movladi Udugov, Ibn al-Khattab, Salman Raduyev (Spekhard & Akhmedova, 2006), and Shamil Basaev who resigned his position as prime minister (Pokalova, 2015). Maskhadov eventually caved[78] to the Wahhabites and, in 1999, announced that Sharia law would be the legal framework of Chechnya in three years. Although, he never regained control over the Wahhabi influence[79].

After the 1999 summer house blocks bombings in the heart of Russia, a second military campaign in Chechnya was ordered by then prime minister Vladimir Putin. Basaev's name was discredited by the Russian press (Russell, 2002) due to his proximity with the Wahhabite al-Khattab. In fact, Basaev became a top terrorist in Russia and this status was corroborated in 2004 the US Department of State (Pokalova, 2015). Basaev came back to the political life as Chechnya's vice-president in 2006 (Perovic, 2006).

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[77] Both Basaev and Maskhadov have participated in the first Chechen War by the side of the insurgents and, even though Basaev emerged from the war as a national hero for exploiting the Russian weaknesses, the Chechens preferred the leadership of the Islam moderate Aslan Maskhadov: "Basaev was hailed as a national hero for his exploits against the Russian occupiers and any action against him would be regarded as unpatriotic in the Chechen national creed. However, he was not widely trusted amongst ordinary Chechens, who clearly preferred a leader such as Mashadov much more than they did Basaev or other leaders of the Wahhabite persuasion (...) This ambiguity in the popular attitude towards Basaev was to present both the warlord and his president with a dilemma that effectively stymied the latter's attempt to fulfil the basic need of the Chechen people of building a sustainable and prosperous state in Chechnya-Ichkeria" (Russell, 2011:1079).

[78] "Rather than accepting the people's verdict, and being anxious to retain as much power, resourced and influence in ravaged post-war Chechnya-Ichkeria that gad been cut off effectively from the outside world, many Chechen field commanders instead behaved more like Afghan warlords, opposing their president with arms as well as ideology. As a result, Chechnya's descent into a spiral of criminality nit only compromised Maskhadov's regime in the perceptions of the international community, but forced the Chechen president to make major concessions to the religious radicals, championed by Basaev, that were ranged against him. Although Maskhadov was supported by the leading Sufi, the anti-Wahhabi Chechens — Akhmet Kadyrov, the Grand Mufti — he was caught between the irreconcilables on both the Russian and the Chechen fundamentalist sides, neither of whom had any interest in assisnting the beleaguered president of Chechnya-Ichkeria in his attempts at rebuilding his shattered country" (Russell, 2011:1079).

[79] "Despite playing into the Wahhabists' hand Maskhadov never regained control and the interim period between the two wars was marked by instability, criminalization, and insecurity as well as a marked increase in the Wahhabist influence in limited yet important sectors of Chechen society. In 1999 the fragile peace was broken. In September 1999 a series of apartment bombings occurred in Moscow that were attributed to Chechen terrorists although that account is still under dispute in some circles. Likewise in August, 1999 rebel leaders Shamil Basayev and Ibn Khattab led a rebel incursion into neighboring Dagestan to recover former Chechen ethnic territory and to declare a reunited Islamic state" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:112).

Then Chechen president Doku Umarov[80] (June 2006 - October 2007) became known for his association with Basaev's 2004 terrorist attack at the Dubrovka Theatre. Similarly to what happened to Basaev before, Umarov also stated that he was not a Wahhabiste, despite his participation in the 2004 event: "[t]hey say I am a Wahhabi or a follower of radical Islam. That is laughable. I have a whole front. I go along that front and I don't see people fighting to bring to the world Wahhabism or terror" (Umarov in Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:114).

Doku Umrov became president after the death of then president Abdul Halim Sadulaev in June 2006 — until then, Umarov was Chechnya's vice-president. He assumed the leadership of the North Caucasus insurgency and carried out Sadulaev's aspiration of consolidating the North Caucasus into a single Islamic state (Pokalova, 2015). So he initiated a series of transformations and urged his comrades to fight anyone against Islam and to declare jihad against the Russian Federation, the US and Israel: "Chechens today are not the only people fighting against the imperial ambitions of Russia. The best sons of all North Caucasus peoples rose up against the colonial dependence (...) With every day the fraternity of the North Caucasus mujahedeen is gaining strength" (Umarov, 2006 in Pokalova, 2015).

The killings of two major symbols of the North Caucasus resistance — al-Khattab (2002) and Basaev (2006) — by the Russian military did not have the desired effect of shredding the insurgency movement (Swirszcz, 2009). As a matter of fact, the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria ceased to exist under the leadership of Doku Umarov, after the presidencies of Dudaev (1991-1996), Yandarbiev (1996-1997), Maskhadov (1997-2004) and Saludaev (2004-2006).

The Caucasus Emirate's main goal is to create an Islamic caliphate inside Russian Federation's borders under the green banner of radical Islam (Markedonov, 2012), symbolising the evolution of the ideology of the North Caucasus struggle, i.e., Chechnya's separatist movement has evolved towards a pan-Caucasian jihad (Falkowski, 2014) or, as described by Hahn (2012:2), "an explicitly self-identified global jihadist organization" recognised by the US State Department as an international terrorist organisation since 2011.

2.3.2.2. On the Caucasus Emirate

In this chapter we have been acknowledging the evolution of the Russo-Chechen conflict from a separatism movement into a jihadist one. To this metamorphosis has contributed the influx of foreign

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[80] "In Russia, Umarov's name became known due to associations with the 2004 Ingushetia raid and in connection with the 2004 terrorist act in Beslan. In Chechnya, Umarov emerged as a prominent field commander who rose in the ranks to become second in command to Basayev" (Pokalova, 2015:159).

radical fighters since the first Chechen War, many of whom have connections to Al-Qaeda[81]. According to the Swift Knight Report, Al-Qaeda has plans for the Russian Muslims and the North Caucasus:

> [R]adical Islamic (predominantly Sunni) regimes are to be established and supported everywhere possible, including (...) Chechnya, Dagestan, the entire North Caucasus "from sea to sea" (...) Terrorist activities are to be conducted against Americans and Westerners, Israelis, Russians (predominantly Cossacks), Serbs, Chinese, Armenians, and disloyal Muslims (...) Special attention should be given to the North Caucasus, and especially Chechnya since they are regarded as areas unreachable by strikes from the West. The intent is to create a newly developed base for training terrorists, Amir Khattab and nine other militants of Usam Ben (sic) Laden were sent there with passports of Arab countries. They work as military instructors in Khattab's three schools; they also work as instructors in the army of Chechnya. Two more schools are being organized in Ingushetiya and Dagestan (DIA, [2016]:2-4)[82].

The political map of the Caucasus Emirate is divided according vilayats, some sort of provinces (Falkowski, 2014) — the most important being the Nokchicho (Chechnya) Vilaiyat (NV), the Galgaiche (Ingushetiya) Vilaiyat (GV), the Dagestan Vilaiyat (DV), and the United Vilaiyat of Kabardiya, Balkariya and Karachai or OVKBK (Hahn, 2011:4). The image bellow puts in evidence this division of the North Caucasus according to Caucasus Emirate' perspective.

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[81] So, by 1995, Al-Qaeda had already sent approximately 300 "Afghan" Arabs to fight in Chechnya but the North Caucasus also sent men to combat in other global jihad's fronts (Hahn, 2011:3). In addition to fighters, Al-Qaeda has also been funding the insurgent/jihadist movement in the North Caucasus through money funding and training (camps), in order to spread the message of Salafism and the jihadist ideology (Hahn, 2012).

[82] Defense Intelligence Agency Declassi ed Swift Knight Report, Document No. 3095345, no date, Judicial Watch.

FIGURE 2. PLANNING THE CAUCASUS EMIRATE

SOURCE: Falkowski, Maciej. 2014. "On the Periphery of Global Jihad- The North Caucasus: The Illusion of Stabilisation." *Point of View* 45, 31.

The Caucasus Emirate is an attempt to create a state-building political strategy that provides an alternative to the Russian authority in the region under the leadership of an amir[83] — the amir's authority cannot be challenged. In other words, he can decide on any issue except if a qadi considers he is deviating from the Sharia law. This state-building strategy is based in four pillars (Hahn, 2012:12): (1) the establishment of a judicial system based on Sharia courts and qadis (judges and magisters); (2) the enforcement of the Sharia law in the commerce of gaming, prostitution, drinking, and alcohol-selling establishments; (3) tax collection to fund the military and police forces, and judicial functions; and (4) proselytising the Salafi theology and the jihadist ideology through Caucasus Emirate-affiliated websites. In other words, the Caucasus Emirate is an attempt to create a theocratic state ruled by the Sharia law and the Salafi teachings which, as above mentioned, goes against the historical practices of Sufism in the North Caucasus. Salafis are inspired by the *tawid* — strict monotheism — and Muslim might worship

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[83] "[T]he amirs, advised by Sharia court qadis, possess dictatorial powers to take unilateral decisions on the most important questions (...) The CE amir holds the ultimate reins in a circular flow of power, as he appoints the amirs and qadis for each of its largest substructures — the CE vilaiyats (...) the amir cannot be challenged on any decision unless he is deemed by a qadi to have deviated from Sharia law as interpreted by the qadi whom he has appointed. The qadis' authority to advise and confirm the decisions of the amirs gives them great power" (Hahn, 2012:6-7).

only Allah; while Sufis respect the worship of Sufi saints and teaches supporting other religious practices that Salafism condemns.

In short, the Caucasus Emirate is listed as a terrorist organisation by the US and the United Nations, despite of never having perpetrated any terrorist action outside Russia (Pokalova, 2015) whose leader, Doku Umarov, has been implicated in several recent terrorist events, such as the bombings of the Nevsky Express train, the 2010 suicide bombings at the Moscow metro stations of Lubianka and Park Kultury, and the 2011 suicide attack at the International Domodedovo Airport in 2011 (Pokalova, 2015:viii). As a consequence, the radical group has been losing the population's support (Soliyev, 2014). According to Swirszcz (2009:77): "[m]ost Chechens feel that radical ideas, proclamations of jihad, and the desire for a Caucasus Emirate are not within the Chechen character. Most citizens have realized that fundamentalist tendencies have caused much of the violence, and want to separate themselves from such ideology". Nevertheless, Umarov considered his mission as being accomplished and there was no need to rush[84].

More recently, Doku Umarov asked people to boycott the Winter Olympic Games that Russia hosted in February 2014 in Sochi (Pokalova, 2015), located in the South Federal District, near the North Caucasus' region. This event's motto was "Citius, altius, fortius" which means "faster, higher, stronger" (Müller, 2014:153) and had great importance[85] to the Russian Federation since "[m]ore than 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin is eager to show Russia's "reemergence" as a world power" and "a successful hosting will undoubtedly improve Russia's image globally, the Sochi Olympics are a critical test for Moscow" (Solieyv, 2014:2).

Despite Umarov's appeal, the 2014 Winter Olympics passed off without turbulence. That does not mean, however, that Umarov and Caucasus Emirate had stopped from being a threat to the Russian security and integrity. Russia has been the stage of two recent incidents — August 2016 — with North Caucasus citizens involving the use of violence against Russian police officers in two of the most prominent cities: Moscow and St. Petersburg. In Moscow, two Russian police officers were attacked by two men armed with firearms and axes, when they asked to stop because their vehicle seemed suspicious

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[84] "We are not in a hurry. The path has been chosen, we know our tasks, and we will not turn back, Insha'Allah, from this path. Today, the battlefield is not just Chechnya or the Caucasus Emirate, but also the whole [of] Russia. The situation is visible to everybody who has eyes. The Jihad is spreading, steadily and inevitably, everywhere (...) I sometimes think that Allah has called these young people to the Jihad, so that we, the older generation, could not stray from the right path. Now we know that we should not be divided, and must unite with our brothers in faith. We must reconquer Astrakhan, Idel-Ural, Sibera — these are indigenous Muslim lands. And then, God willing, we shall deal with [the] Moscow District" (Umarov, 2011 in Hahn, 2012:10).

[85] Nevertheless, Umarov considers there is no need to rush his mission: "[w]e are not in a hurry. The path has been chosen, we know our tasks, and we will not turn back, Insha'Allah, from this path. Today, the battlefield is not just Chechnya or the Caucasus Emirate, but also the whole [of] Russia. The situation is visible to everybody who has eyes. The Jihad is spreading, steadily and inevitably, everywhere (...) I sometimes think that Allah has called these young people to the Jihad, so that we, the older generation, could not stray from the right path. Now we know that we should not be divided, and must unite with our brothers in faith. We must reconquer Astrakhan, Idel-Ural, Sibera — these are indigenous Muslim lands. And then, God willing, we shall deal with [the] Moscow District" (Umarov, 2011 in Hahn, 2012:10).

(Observador, 2016). In St. Petersburg, while the Russian special forces were raiding an apartment block, when they were shot at. Three of the four suspected militants were killed and their names — Zalim Shebzukhov, Astemir Sheriev and Vyacheslav Nyrov — appear on the Russian Counter-Terrorism Committee and were wanted for being connected to several assassination attempts and terror acts. According to the Counter-Terrorism Committee, they were the leaders of a "terrorist underground" based in the North Caucasus republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (BBC, 2016).

The threat of terrorism has been present in Russia for a long time. In 1998, Boris Yeltsin (president at the time) approved the first legal framework in the fight against terrorism and, ever since, terrorism has featured regularly in official strategic documents and speeches. Chechnya and the wave of unrest that spread from this to other North Caucasus' republics have had a substantial impact in Russian politics. The fall of USSR has allowed the secessionist movement in Chechnya to grow and to expand towards its vicinity. In this chapter we addressed the religious character of the North Caucasus, and how Islam was instrumentalised by the foreign fighters to convert and recruit citizens for their cause. Hence, terrorism has become a source of concern to the Russian Federation both at a domestic level, as one can observe in the 1997, 2009 and 2015 Concepts of National Security, and at an international basis. Terrorism has become a transversal topic to the Foreign Policy Concepts (2000, 2008, 2013 and 2016). Russian Federation (and its citizens) has been the stage of several terrorist plots, making the Russian leadership eager to engage the global war against terrorism and to play a major role in it. The next chapter will address how Russian Federation and its leaders (Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin) have been dealing with the Chechen unrest and terrorism over the years.

Chapter 3. The Russian response to the North Caucasus insurgency

3.1. The Boris Yeltsin's Presidencies

Prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, the state led by Mikhail Gorbachev initiated a range of transformations both at the political and economic levels (Swirzcsz, 2009; Fernandes, 2013). Through Perestroika and Glasnost, Gorbachev intended "the restoration of the Communist regime and the authority of the Soviet centre, the ideological renovation and the modernisation of the planned economy, indispensable to strengthen the state in world politics"[86] (Gaspar, 2013:64). In other words, it was during the attempt of fortifying the pillars of Communism that the Russian leader adopted a cluster of reforms that, eventually, dictated the destruction of the system Gorbachev so thoroughly wanted to preserve (Priestland, 2013).

Boris Yeltsin was skeptical about Gobarchev's leadership and, when he rose to power, after winning three popular elections — (1) to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies (March 1989); (2) to the RSFSR[87] Congress of People's Deputies (March 1990); and (3) to the Presidency of the RSFSR (June 1991) —; Yeltsin endorsed local elites to take all the sovereignty they could swallow (Erlanger, 1992; Breslauer, 1995; Ashour, 2004; The Economist, 2010) and, that way, conquer their loyalty on his struggle against Gorbachev and the USSR "centre" (Lapidus, 1998). Yeltsin claimed that the Communist system's nomenclature had been corrupted, needing a radical reform or, even, a replacement. Plus, the Russian Republic president argued that Moscow's influence over USSR's republics was hindering Russia from growing as a liberalised economy and as a democracy (Breslauer, 1995). Yeltsin was not in favour of the disruption of the Soviet Union; he had even promised a confederation, but by encouraging independence movements in the Baltic and Ukraine, he contributed to the eventual collapse of the USSR (Breslauer, 1995). Gorbachev's reforms[88] and Yeltsin support of independence movements eventually led to the decline of the USSR.

The Soviet Union fell on Christmas Day and the year of 1991 turned out to be "a triple putsch to Moscow, for losing the Cold War, the external empire and the internal empire. Losing territories and the heritage of the foreign policy of a superpower (regional hegemony) influenced the reformulation of the Russian National interest" [89] (Fernandes, 2013:127). Boris Yeltsin became the president of an

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[86] Free translation from the original: "a restauração do regime comunista e da autoridade do centro soviético, a renovação ideológica e a modernização da economia planificada, indispensável para fortalecer o Estado na política internacional" (Gaspar, 2013:64).

[87] Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

[88] "Gorbachev's reforms, with their emphasis on glasnost and democratization, had far-reaching, though unintended, consequences in the non-Russian republics of the USSR, In the Russian republic, perestroika was associated above all with economic and political reform. In many of non-Russian regions, however, glasnost and democratiation brought issues of identity to the forefront, permitting the expression of long-simmering grievances and precipitating a growing wave of self-assertion" (Lapidus, 1998:11).

[89] Free translation from the original: "um triplo golpe para Moscovo, por ter perdido a Guerra Fria, o império exterior e o império interior. A perda de terrotórios e a herança da política externa de uma superpotência (hegemonia regional) influenciaram a reformulação do interesse nacional russo" (Fernandes, 2013:127).

independent state, with his approval rating polls ranging between 80 and 90% (Breslauer, 1995) not for a long time, though. In addition to the unpopular decision to implement the "shock therapy"[90] for economic reforms in the newly Russian Federation, he inherited several requests for sovereignty or independence that deflagrated into regional wars — Tajikistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Transdniester, South Ossetia, and Chechnya (Lapidus, 1998).

Yeltsin was convinced that once the Russian Federation emerged as the successor of the doomed USSR, the other republics would summit to his leadership. Instead, he had to deal with the problem of reconstructing the national identity and the flourishing number of nationalist movements which, similarly to the fifteen recent independent republics, wanted to be separated from Russia; especially Chechnya and Tatarstan. These two republics did not accept the "federal contract" which would introduce a temporary legal framework until the first constitution of the Russian Federation became official, in December 1993 (Fernandes, 2006). Besides the construction of the national identity, the nationalist movements, "Russia fears the growing of Islamic fundamentalism in its periphery, as well as within its borders (...) The North Caucasus region, mostly Muslim, has been an area of difficulties for the central government in Moscow"[91] (Freire, 2013:115)[92].

The following years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin, were marked by the necessity of defining the Russian identity, so Yeltsin's

> [P]rimary concern was to maintain the newly created state after the dissolution of the USSR, due to the internal nationalist movements (...) the internal difficulties are therefore particularly relevant, because it is the period of the state's formation due to the dissolution of the USSR and the definition of the Russian sovereignty (Fernandes, 2006:69-70).

To put it in other words, right after the dissolution of USSR, President Yeltsin's main goal was to preserve the territorial integrity of the recently created state. By taking advantage of the independence wave spreading after Soviet Union's dissolution, a few Russian republics, from the Ural's to the Far East, threatened the so wanted stability by deciding to declare their independence (McFaul, 1995). Chechnya and Tatarstan were the most complicated autonomous republics to deal with, since both refused to sign

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[90] The shock therapy was implemented in a sudden and radical way, not looking at Russian society and institutions (Petykowski, 2004). According to Breslauer (1995:2), "[h]e [Yelstin] launched a variant of "shock therapy" for the economy in January 1992, averring that the short-term pain, while severe, would subside within a year. He continued the pro-Western foreign policy launched by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, promising that it would result in large-scale Western economic assistance and investment that would help Russia turn around its economy, and Western good will that would help integrate Russia into Western institutions without sacrificing Russian security, autonomy or great power status".

[91] Free translation from the original: "a Rússia receia o crescimento do fundamentalismo islâmico na sua sua periferia, bem como dentro das suas fronteiras(...) A região do Cáucaso do Norte, maioritariamente muçulmana, tem constituído uma área de dificuldades para o governo central em Moscovo" (Freire, 2013:115).

[92] Whether the Russian-Chechen conflict is a matter of domestic politics is contested since the Chechen President Dzhokar Dudaev refused to agree with the 19943 Russian Constitution and had the support of his population (Burger & Cheloukhine, 2015).

the 1992 Federation Treaty (Petykowski, 2004). In February 1994, Moscow and Kazan reached an understanding that gave the last an exceptional high level of autonomy. Chechen President, Dzhokhar Dudaev, however, refused to take the same conditions as he aspired Chechnya's independence (Breslauer, 1995).

From 1991 to 1994 former Soviet air force general and Chechen President Dzhokar Dudaev — after declaring Chechnya's independence from Russia and establishing the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria — tried to build a functioning state by ascribing each Chechen male the right to acquire arms and to be his own president (Reynolds, 2013). Although, he was not succeeded and soon faced real problems due to the lack of political structures and organisation (Petykowski, 2004). The lack of political experience and provocative behaviour were also a fundamental for Chechnya not to prosper as a state[93].

In addition to the fragility of Dudaev's government, Chechnya had severely problems regarding the criminal and corruption rates (Melvin, 2007), particularly drug and weapons trafficking (Petykowski, 2004). The rise of criminality has had a direct impact on the social-economic levels, fuelling insurgent movements. The floundering Chechen economy, plus the high unemployment rates especially among the youth and the shadow economy are three factors that led the Chechens to express their dissatisfaction (Predmore, 2011), since they tainted the path towards stabilisation and development of the region. In fact, social discontent combined with the political ideology vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union (Predmore, 2011) allowed Islam and radical factions of Islam to fill in those breaches (Wiktorowicz, 2001; Melvin, 2007; Russo, 2007; Swirszcz, 2009; Predmore, 2011; Snetkov, 2011) and to play a role with increasingly more importance and prominence on the daily life of Chechnya (see chapter 2).

In other words, nationalist movements craving for independence associated with the growing Islamic fundamentalism, left alone, could jeopardise Russian Federation's security and President Yeltsin's aspirations of keeping the newly created state as a whole, as well as preventing a new redefinition of Russian borders[94]. Therefore, Yeltsin launched a military campaign in Chechnya to overthrow Dudaev — who had been stimulating Chechen population to rebel against Russian rule since the 1980s — and restore normalisation on the turbulent republic.

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[93] "In short, an erratic and weakly institutionalized political process in both capitals resulted in a highly personalized and subjective style of decision making that gave exceptional weight to the views and actions of two authoritarian presidents and their immediate entourages. The successful effort by political figures around Yeltsin to turn him against Dudayev and to delegitimate Dudayev's rule effectively blocked the prospect of high-level negotiations between the two presidents to seek a political solution" (Lapidus, 1998:15).

[94] When the USSR collapsed, Chechnya declared its independence similarly to other republics such as Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan yet, "the main difference between them was that Chechnya had been a state inside the Russian Federation whereas the others had never been part of the Russian Federation. They were independent republics of a now disintegrated union. The Russians were ready to accept the collapse of the Soviet Union but not of their own Federation" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:105).

3.1.1. The First Chechen War

If, one time, Dudaev had received Yeltsin's support, as the Russian President wanted to overthrow Gorbachev and end his influence in the USSR for good (Lapidus, 1998), the increasingly radical tactics (see chapter 2) applied by the Chechen president drop an acquaintance between the two. Different views and goals among Grozny and Moscow were crucial to determine the fate of the two capitals relations. Since the collapse of USSR and his election as Russian Federation president, in 1991, that Yeltsin had been dealing with Dudaev's demand for independence. He tried by all means to avoid war, but the divergences prevented six months of negotiations from being successful (Breslauer, 1995). From mid-1992 to the summer of 1994, Yeltsin endorsed four couvert operations against Chechnya and, once more, he failed (Blank & Tilford Jr., 1995). Then, Russian Federation president decided to support anti-Dudaev opposition (Petykowski, 2004) and staged a fifth coup in November 1994[95]. Another failed attempt but, this time, Dudaev was able to use the presence of Russian troops on Chechen soil to prove the world Russian involvement in Chechnya, contradicting Defence Minister Pavel Grachev's declarations (Blank & Tilford Jr., 1995). On December 1994, President Yeltsin officially ordered a military intervention to restore the constitutional order on Chechnya and unseat Dudaev (Breslauer, 1995; Lapidus, 1998; Williams, 2001; Russell, 2005). Yeltsin and his advisers were convinced that it would be an easy win in Chechnya; a "surgical strike" (Lapidus, 1998) but that did not happen[96].

The decision to intervene in Chechnya was connected to Yeltsin's main goal of keeping the Russian state as a whole. The Chechen secessionism was being the object of a securitising move, i.e., the Kremlin (the securitising actor) was trying to convince the audience (the Russian population) that the Chechens were a threat to the security of the Russian Federation, as they were challenging several national interests of the state, namely (1) the inviolability of the constitutional system; (2) sovereignty and territorial integration; (3) political, economic and social stability; and (4) the safeguarding of the law and order (Russian Federation National Concept, 1997). This way, the Russian government tried to persuade its population that invading Chechnya and regain control over Grozny was the appropriate response to the existential threat portrayed by the insurgents. In other words, the war in Chechnya was part of Moscow's moral obligation to restore peace and stability to the country, especially when extremist foreign fighters

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[95] This coup consisted in masquerading Russian tanks as from Chechen opposition forces (Russell, 2005).
[96] "Once it was obvious that Yeltsin would not achieve the quick victory in Chechnya that he sought, public opinion in both Russia and the West turned sharply against the Russian federal forces. The disproportionate use of massive air power and artillery to flatten Grozny, ostensibly to 'save' its citizens, the incompetence of the Russian army and the heroic resistance of the Chechen defenders were all played out in front of the world's (and Russia's) media, with the result that support for the Chechen 'underdog' against the Russian 'top dog' was widespread" (Russell, 2005:105).

linked to a terrorist organisation (Al-Qaeda) arrived at Chechnya to help their Muslim fellows (Hahn, 2012).

Despite the Chechen connection to international terrorism, the Russian government was extremely criticised[97] due to the level of brutality: "[f]or eight weeks thereafter, the Russian military waged a poorly organized but brutally destructive assault on the Chechen capital of Grozny" (McFaul, 1995:149). Although Yeltsin's objectives were, in general, supported: "(i) the desire to curb and contain throughout Russia the power of Chechen mafia; (ii) to re-establish government control over the oil pipelines running through Chechnya; and (iii) to counter in Russia the centrifugal forces that had brought the collapse of the USSR" (Russell, 2002:83).

During the first two months of the conflict, almost 2,000 Russian soldiers had already been killed (Williams, 2001). Another source of criticism is the non-declaration of state of emergency or martial law (Lapidus, 1998). This damaged the credibility of the Russian legal framework, since Yeltsin's 1993 Constitution foresees that any president of the Russian Federation can declare state of emergency for three days if he immediately notifies the Duma and the Federation Council. After those days the Council decides wether to extend or not the decision to declare state of emergency (Blank & Tilford Jr., 1995). Boris Yeltsin did not follow the protocol — neither did he declare state of emergency nor martial law — and, in July 1995, the Russian Constitutional Court approved the empowerment[98] of the President as a commander-in-chief to call upon his armed forces to intervene in case of terrorist events and/or to suppress domestic insurgencies, even if there is no declaration of state of emergency or state of war (Burger & Cheloukhine, 2015). Despite the legal justification to invade Chechnya being clouded (Blank & Tilford Jr., 1995:5), the Russians organised a strategy with two aims: (1) overthrow Dudaev, and (2) capture Grozny.

Russian military forces indeed conquered Grozny: in March 1995, Russian troops in Chechnya rounded 38,000 and a deployment of 15,500 additional men was ordered by the Interior Minister. The Russian military contingent successfully pushed Chechen fighters to the mountains and to Ingushetia (McFaul, 1995), but their linear and sequential approach was not enough to eradicate the insurgents

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[97] "Yeltsin had to contend with the mass media covering Russia's first televised war, a public that was generally hostile to that war, an active and vocal opposition reminding the Kremlin of the contradiction in an internal civil war of bombing and shelling one's 'own' citizens and cities on such massive scale, and armed forces that were poorly paid and poorly equipped for the task in hand. Moreover, the Russians were being faced, and killed, with their own equipment, obtained for the most part from the former Soviet military bases in the country" (Russell, 2002:82-83).

[98] The empowerment of the Russian President later resumed with Vladimir Putin. The 1993 crisis between the President (Yeltsin) and the Parliament (Soviet Supreme) led Yeltsin to sign a presidential decree dissolving the Parliament, and the Parliament, in its turn, issued an impeachment on Yeltsin. Yeltsin's side won, and the new Russian Constitution was based on the power of the President. In other words, the hybrid political regime of Russia began with Yeltsin, but it was Putin who focused on the "verticality of power" and on the role of the President as the main political figure of the Russian political system — hyper-presidentialism. See Fernandes, 2015; for more information.

who, despite being outnumbered, were well-equipped and chose to wage a guerrilla-like warfare[99] against the Russian army (Arquilla & Karasik, 1999). Their approach was based on their societal structure of *teyps* or clans, i.e., Chechen fighters share a sense of kinship and a stronger connection that Russian soldiers did. However, the Russian effectiveness during the first Chechen War was considerable low[100], and there was not an easy win as expected; Russia underestimated the opponent. Russian generals were frustrated with the Chechen resilience and started an indiscriminate aerial and artillery bombardment on the Chechen capital (Williams, 2001)[101].

The Russian conquest of Grozny forced the Chechens to adopt a more defensive posture inside Chechnya, but the fighters did not lowered down for long. Chechens went offensive outside Chechnya and, in June 14, 1995, a group led by Shamil Basaev took over 1,500 hostages in a hospital in the city of Budennovsk[102] (Stavropol krai). This was the first major terrorist[103] operation during the war, but was followed by another hostage-taking situation, this time led by Salman Rudaev in Pervomayskaya[104] [105] (Dagestan) in 1996. In both cases, Chechen fighters demanded the war in Chechnya to stop and the Russian troops withdrawal[106].

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[99] "The Chechens organized well for the kind of war they were developing. Their basic combat group consisted of fifteen to twenty personnel, subdivided into three- or four-man fighting cells. These cells consisted of an anti-tank gunner (normally armed with the RPG-7 or RPG-18 shoulder-fired anti-tank rocket launcher), a machine or submachine gunner, and a sniper. Chechen combat groups deployed these cells as anti-armor hunter-killer teams. The sniper and machine gunner would pin down Russian supporting infantry, while the anti-tank gunner would engage the armored target. The teams deployed at ground level, and also in second and third stories and in basements. Normally, five or six hunter-killer teams attacked an armored vehicle in unison. Kill shots were generally made, as noted above, against the top, rear, and sides of vehicles. The Chechens also dropped bottles filled with gasoline or jellied fuel on top of vehicles" (Arquilla & Karasik, 1999:214).

[100] "Observers of the military had long known that draftees were increasingly deficient in health, physical training, education, character (probably about one-third being criminals), and morale. Significant numbers of Russian troops surrendering, the widespread evidence of a breakdown of logistics, poor training, troops being transported in sealed cars with no briefing concerning conditions at the front, or not being given sufficient food, and the widespread desire not to fight in this war all point to severe limitations on the army's reliability and competence" (Blank & Tilford Jr., 1995:9).

[101] As Brian Glyn Williams (2001:129) notes, "[w]hat started off as a military "intervention" designed to topple the eccentric president of a wayward republic quickly developed into full-scale warfare against the entire Chechen people. By invading the republic and brutally bombing civilian areas in their clumsy attempt to overthrow the Dudayev regime, the Russians inadvertently awoke the long-dormant fighting spirit of the Caucasian highlanders" (Williams, 2001:129).

[102] This place was chosen accidentally: "[t]he plan had been for Basayev and his group of about 100 to 200 fighters to bring the war as far as they could into Russia where they would take hostages, but when surprised by the police in the village of Budyonnovsk they gathered more than a thou-sand hostages from the town, held them in the local hospital and engaged in a bloody stand-off with Russian troops" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:107).

[103] In June 1996, after being adopted by the State Duma (May 24) and by the Federation Council (June 5), President Yeltsin signed the Federal Law No. 63-FZ, also known as the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. There, the article 205 explains what is considered to be an act of terrorism according to the Russian standards. So, to Russia, a terrorist act is "[t]he carrying out of an explosion, arson or other actions intimidating the population, and creating the threat of human death, of infliction of significant property damage or the onset of other grave consequences, for the purpose of influencing the taking of a decision by authorities or international organisations, and also the threat of commission of the said actions for the same purposes" (Russian Federation, 1996).

[104] In January 1996, the Chechen rebels kept 3,400 hostage for two weeks in Dagestan. Between the events in Budennovsk and Pervomayskaya several hijackings and assassinations were committed by the Chechens: the hijack of a Russian Black Sea ferry, or the hijack of a Turkish Cypriot Airlines Boing 727; the targeting and assassination of Russian politicians and military officials (Arquilla & Karasik, 1999).

[105] "In each of these cases the Chechen rebels garnered mass media attention for the war in Chechnya and in the former they succeeded in forcing the Russians to give them safe passage back to Chechnya in exchange for the release of hostages. At this time, Basayev was already starting to pick up militant jihadist ideology from his Saudi fellow fighter and Wahhabist Khattab and reflected this in his increased use of Islamic rhetoric — telling his fighters they could become "martyrs" for Islam etc. Likewise Basayev's audience was increasingly not the only Chechens and Russians but also foreign funders who were likely impressed by his daring success and ability to back the Russians down" (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006:107).

[106] As Baseaev did at Budennovsk, "Rudayev and his men escaped with at least 100 hostages. But this time their return to Chechnya was held up by a Russian counterattack to free the hostages at the town of Pervomaiskoye, located on the border with Chechnya. The Russians hoped to avoid the humiliation that they suffered in the wake of Budennovsk by standing firm here (...) How did the Chechens do so well in this seemingly hopeless siege? First, they created brick perimeters, dug trenches, and placed machine guns on roofs to improve their defensive positions. To reduce the risk of successful rescue of the hostages, and to try to deter Russian attacks, the Chechens repeatedly shuttled the hostages between houses as they awaited the Russians. The Chechens also had a bit of a technological edge, as they were intercepting (frequently en clair) Russian radio communications concerning movements and actions that

Terrorism was not the preferred[107] method during the first Chechen War, even though foreign fighters with radical ideologies started to join the Chechen cause in early 1995 (Henkin, 2006). But, terrorist situations created by the Chechens to globalise their cause, the incapability of the Russian troops to deal with those and the unpopular war, were doing serious damage to Boris Yeltsin's reputation, jeopardising his chance of being reelected. So, Yeltsin decided to enter into negotiations with the rebels in order to reach a cease-fire.

On April 22, 1996, Chechen president Dudaev was killed in a Russian attack (Moore & Tumelty, 2009) and the negotiating process stalled. After being reelected, President Yeltsin ordered another strike on Grozny, and he felt there was no other way but to destroy the city to retake it. Though, on August 6, the unthinkable happened and Yeltsin felt desperate to sign another cease-fire and start the withdrawal of his military[108]. Russia had lost the war.

Yeltsin appointed the Russian Security Council secretary, Alexander Lebed, to be the Kremlin's special envoy to negotiate with the Chechen chief field commander, Aslan Maskhadov, a peace treaty in the town of Khasavyurt (Lapidus, 1998; Arquilla & Karasik, 1999; Williams, 2001).

In short, the first Chechen War was an attempt to avoid the Chechen rebellion from spreading into the entire North Caucasus. Dozens of thousands of casualties and hundreds of thousands of refugees after, President Yeltsin was forced into a humiliating agreement with the Chechen rebels in order to secure his re-election in 1996 (Dannreuther & March, 2008:97). The Russian army underestimated the adversary and the capability of Chechen field commanders such as Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basaev to face the Russian authorities — the latter did not receive conventional military training, instead he was part of Soviet military intelligence (Russell, 2002). Yeltsin chose the wrong approach to contain the insurgent movement and that caused him to lose the war. According to Souleimanov (2015:98) there are four reasons leading to the Russian defeat: (1) the unpopularity of the war; (2) the tactics employed

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[106] were or would soon be underway. But these factors alone cannot explain how they with- stood the heavy assault that ensued, and how they made good their escape. To understand this, one has to look to the Russian troops who, for the first time seemed to be losing their will to keep on fighting" (Arquilla & Karasik, 1999:221).

[107] Even though terrorism was not the preferential tactic for Chechens to win the war, it indeed help to force the Kremlin to get into negotiations: "[a]s the first Chechen war started in 1994, the separatist tactic of terrorism was instrumental in forcing the Kremlin to negotiate with Grozny. Moreover, the tactic of terrorism helped the Chechen separatists secure in August 1996 the Khasavyurt peace agreement. The Khasavyurt Accords marked the beginning of Chechnya's de facto independence that lasted till 1999. While not explicitly religious, separatist terrorism of the first Chechen war exhibited certain religious connotations. For instance, former Soviet general Dzhokhar Dudayev declared jihad against Russia back in the early 1990s. Green headbands with inscriptions from the Quran became widely known to the Russian public from the Budennovsk attack of 1995. By the mid-1990s Shamil Basayev already described himself as a warrior of Islam (Pokalova, 2015:x).

[108] "On August 6, 1996, thousands of Chechen fighters under the control of Shamil Basayev and Aslan Maskhadov, the head of the Chechen army, came out of the mountains and infiltrated Russian-occupied Grozny. Once inside Grozny, the Chechen bands were able to surround and pin down the approximately 12,000 Russian troops (...) The trapped Russian soldiers (...) were in effect made the prisoners of the smaller number of battle-hardened and determined Chechen fighters. A checkmate had been achieved" (Williams, 2001:131).

by the insurgents; (3) the determination of the Chechen population; and (4) the support of locals. Predmore (2011:9) stresses that

> Russia rushed headlong into Chechnya using a conventional military attack with the expectation of an easy victory. The Chechens, on the other hand — aware of their own limited resources — adopted a strategy of guerrilla warfare from the outset and were able to inflict major damage on the ill-prepared Russian units. Chechen success on the battlefield led to a stalemate which resulted in de facto of independence from Russia according to the peace accords of Khassaviurt in August 1996" (Predmore, (2011:9).

The victory of the rebellious faction was an important step in Chechen's cause and it was possible only because Russian troops performed poorly on the field, underestimating the Chechen ability to fight for its ambitions. By 1996, "Chechnya was allowed its own constitution and control over financial and natural resources with the understanding that a final political status for Chechnya would be decided upon in five years. By January 1997, Russian troops had completely withdrawn from Chechen territory" (Petykowski, 2004:27). As a result of the Accords of Khassavyurt, Chechnya managed to get its *de facto* independence from the Russian Federation. In other words, the first two Chechen presidents — Dudaev (1991-1996) and Yanderbiyev (1996-1997) — were advocates of an "Islamic Model" as the future of Chechnya. This model consisted not only in making the Arabic language and the Islamic law (based on Sharia) compulsory, but also to distance the republic from the Russian authority and sphere of influence: "By taking this step, Grozny emphasized the validity of its own legislature (Shari'a) in its territory, since having one's own legislature is considered an integral attribute of a sovereign state" (Souleimanov, 2005:69).

3.1.2. The lessons from the first Chechen War: a definition of terrorism for Russia

The use of hijackings, hostage-taking situations and other forms of terrorism acts by the Chechen rebels to force the withdrawal of the Russian soldiers in Chechnya and to end the war urged the development of the counter-terrorist legislation in Russia (Omelicheva, 2009). To that extent, Boris Yeltsin signed the Russian Federation Federal Law No. 130-FZ — *On the fight against terrorism* — on July 25, 1998. This federal law became the principal legal and operational framework for Russian counter-terrorist operations (Burger & Cheloukhine, 2015). The implementation of this legal framework aims at (1) protecting the individual, society and the state from terrorism; (2) prevent, disclose and finish the terrorist

activity and minimise its consequences; and (3) uncover and eliminate factors that may lead to terrorist activities[109].

According to the Federal Law No. 130-FZ, the Russian fight against terrorism is based one nine principles: (1) legality; (2) the priority of measures to prevent terrorism; (3) the inevitability of punishment for terrorist activity; (4) the combination of overt [glasnyy] and covert [neglasnyy] methods of fighting terrorism; (5) the integrated use of legal, political, socioeconomic, and propaganda preventive measures; (6) the priority of defending the rights of persons exposed to danger as a result of terrorist action; (7) minimum concessions to terrorists; (8) one-man command in the leadership of forces and resources involved in conducting counterterrorist operations; (9) minimum disclosure of technical methods and tactics for the conduct of counterterrorist operations, and also of the list of participants in the aforementioned operations. Therefore, the 1998 Russian definition of terrorism is, according to the Article 3[110]:

> violence or the threat of violence against individuals or organizations, and also the destruction (damaging) of or threat to destroy (damage) property and other material objects, such as threaten to cause loss of life, significant damage to property, or other socially dangerous consequences and are implemented with a view to violating public security, intimidating the population, or influencing the adoption of decisions advantageous to terrorists by organs of power, or satisfying their unlawful material and (or) other interests; attempts on the lives of statesmen or public figures perpetrated with a view to ending their state or other political activity or out of revenge for such activity; attacks on representatives of foreign states or staffers of international organizations enjoying international protection, and also on the official premises or vehicles of persons enjoying international protection if these actions are committed with a view to provoking war or complicating international relations (Russian Federation, 1998).

In addition, a

> terrorist action is the direct commission of a terrorist crime in the shape of explosion, arson, or the use of or threat to use nuclear explosive devices or radioactive, chemical, biological, explosive, toxic, noxious [otravlyayushchiy], aggressive [silnodeystvuyushchiy], or poisonous [yadovityy] substances; the destruction, damaging, or seizure of vehicles or other facilities; an attempt on the life of a statesman or public figure or representative of national, ethnic, religious, or other population groups; the seizure of hostages and kidnapping; the creation of a danger of harm to the life, health, or property of a nonspecific range of people by creating the conditions

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[109] See Article 5 of the Russian Federation Federal Law No. 130-FZ.

[110] The third article also establishes what Russian Federation considers to be a terrorist activity: "1) the organization, planning, preparation, and implementation of terrorist action; (2) incitement to terrorist action, to violence against individuals or organizations, or to the destruction of material objects for terrorist purposes; (3) the organization of an illegal armed formation, criminal association (criminal organization), or organized group in order to perpetrate terrorist action, and also participation in such action; (4) the recruitment, armament, training, and use of terrorists; (5) the funding of a known terrorist organization or terrorist group or other assistance to them"; and to happens to be an international terrorist activity and how it is carried on: an "international terrorist activity is terrorist activity carried out: (1) by a terrorist or terrorist organization on the territory of more than one state or detrimental to the interests of more than one state; (2) by citizens of one state against citizens of another state or on the territory of another state; (3) in the case where both the terrorist and the victim of terrorism are citizens of the same state or different states but the crime is committed outside the territories of these states" (Russian Federation,1998).

for accidents and man-made disasters or the real threat of the creation of such a danger; the dissemination of threats in any form and by any means; other actions creating a danger of loss of life, significant damage to property, or other socially dangerous consequences (Russian Federation, 1998).

3.2. The inter-war period: a failed test for state-building in form of radicalism

The first Russo-Chechen conflict was severely criticised, not only by the International Community, but also by the Russian media. The violence employed[111] during the war led most of journalists in the field to feel compassionate with the Chechen struggle for independence and to side with the Chechens rather than with the Russian military (Russell, 2005). As the war went on and no easy win could be expected, President Yeltsin began to think this conflict differently. He was afraid about the situation in Chechnya would turn into a "second Afghanistan" (Peuch, 2004), where 13,000 Soviet soldiers died amid the 10-year occupation (see chapter 2). Yeltsin's image was acutely damaged by the war and, in order to spare human lives, he decided to sent Alexender Lebed to Grozny to negotiate a peace settlement with the Chechen field commander Aslan Maskhadov, in which Russia agreed to gradually remove its military and to a self-government in Chechnya (Lieven, 2000).

By December 1996, Russia had already withdrew all of its troops and Chechnya held presidential elections on the January 27. The legitimacy of the elections was duly certified by the OSCE and foreign advisers (Lapidus, 1998; Rivas & Tarin, 2016). As briefed on the previous chapter, Maskhadov won the elections and asked Shamil Basaev to join his administration as Prime Minister. In that same year, Chechnya and Russia signed another arrangement, the Treaty of Peace and Principles of Mutual Relations[112]. The results of the elections were very much appreciated by Yeltsin, who sent his congratulations to Maskhadov (Pokalova, 2015), as he was perceived to be a more moderate and reasonable leader than Basaev, or even the former Chechen-Ichkeria Republic President Dzhokar Dudaev[113] (Lieven, 2000).

Despite Maskhadov's popularity at the time of the 1997 presidential elections, soon his administration started to face serious challenges, many of them related with the religious revival Chechnya had been

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[111] "The first war was characterized by numerous occasions when the Russians would take a city, but find their hold on it tenuous at best. The Chechens constantly harassed, ambushed, and attacked troops in towns under Russian 'control'. Casualty figures vary greatly for the first war. Lebed claimed that some 80,000–100,000 civilians had been killed and as many as 250,000 wounded. Federal forces lost perhaps 4,500 or more, though the government claimed losses of 2,837 dead and 13,270 wounded to Chechen rebel losses of 15,000 (Hodgson, 2003:67)".

[112] The Khassavyurt Accords recognised Chechnya' de facto independence, while Treaty of Peace and Principles of Mutual Relations acknowledged the Chechen state as a de jure independent state, even tough that was postponed for a period of five years (Lieven, 2000).

[113] Dzhokar Dudaev was killed in April 1996 (Williams, 2001; Hodgson, 2003; Rivas & Tarin, 2016).

experiencing in the 1990s (Pokalova, 2015). Prime Minister Basaev was one of the thorns on Maskhadov's[114] rule.

In other words, Maskhadov's popularity had to do with him being a secular-nationalist who intended to begin a national project, rather than an advocate of radical Islam (see pages 53 and 54). Nevertheless, he could not prevent the influence of warlords like Khattab and Basaev and their Islamist ideals from spreading, which led to clashes between the traditional Sufism and this new doctrine — Salafism — in the North Caucasus. So, when "[f]aced with the collapse of society, in 1999 Maskhadov chose to implement Shari'a law in an effort to bring unity to Chechnya's de facto state, but this failed to bring real order" (Moore & Tumelty, 2009:85).

3.3. The Vladimir Putin's Presidencies

3.3.1. The Second Chechen War: not war but counter-terrorism

During the summer of 1999 two major events conduct Russia to change its position regarding Chechnya: (1) the incursion into Dagestan, which Prime Minister Vladimir Putin considered to be the beginning of a plan to separate the North Caucasus from Russia and then to annex Bashkiria and Tatarstan (Ashour, 2004); and (2) the September series of building blocks bombings in four Russian cities — Buinaksk, Machkala, Moscow and Volgodonsk (Pokalova, 2015). In these bombings were killed approximately 300 people and injured 2,100 (Kramer, 2005); also they provided the justification to revert Chechnya's independence and reassert Moscow's control over the rebellious republic. As a matter of fact, Basaev himself believed there was a great possibility of a Russian intervention to stop the 2001 negotiations of the republic's independence, wether there was an incursion into Dagestan or not[115].

After the five apartment buildings bombings that occurred between September 4 and 16, Russia started bombing Grozny later that month (September 23) and, by the end of the month, ground troops arrived at Chechnya's capital (Pokalova, 2015). The apartment bombings had a great impact in Russia, since terrorism was threatening Russia's security and integrity. Even though Putin was confident there would be no second Chechen War (Pokalova, 2015); a counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya (Lapidus, 2002; Russell, 2002; 2005; 2009; Petykowski, 2004; Fedorov in Blank, 2013; Falkowski, 2015;

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[114]Aslan Maskhadov was "unable to suppress Basayev's and Hattab's forces, and the power of warlords, criminal gangs, and Islamic extremists (including foreign terrorists) increased. The Islamic fundamentalists set up terrorist training camps in Chechnya and recruited aspiring jihadists (holy warriors) from all over southern Russia and Central Asia, giving them military training as well as political and religious in-doctrination" (Kramer, 2005:7).

[115] "Basayev confirmed the statement to justify his incursions in 1999. He stated that Russia was going to invade Chechnya again in the period between 1999 and 2000 to prevent the negotiations of 2001 regarding Chechen independence" (Ashour, 2004:134).

Pokalova, 2015) was mandatory, once extremists were transforming "Chechnya into a killing field" and that no one would like to/could live in the same place as "murders and kidnappers" (Putin, 1999).

The 1999 bombings had an impact on the Russian population, leaving it more susceptible to the securitising move. Vladimir Putin, whilst still Prime Minister, was in a position to exploit the context of fear and concern after a major terrorist attack. That make him able to portray the Chechen resistance as an existential threat to the country's security and integrity, but also as a menace to any Russian citizen. Terrorism is a phenomenon in which unpredictability and randomisation are key factors to frighten the society and to force the government to take actions, meaning that anyone could be a possible target of the Chechen radical movement. By portraying it as "murders and kidnappers", Putin was able to revert the criticism the Russian government was the object of in 1994, and to convince the audience that Russia was dealing with an existential threat to its security.

The fact that the 1999 military intervention followed a major terrorist attack may have granted him some support, putting him in a better position than Yeltsin during the 1994 intervention, in which the Chechens were able to conquer the support of the audience (Hodgson, 2003). In addition, Putin chose a different approach to the media coverage. Unlike what happened in the first conflict, in which the Kremlin was not able to win the "hearts and minds" of the population because of the unrestricted media coverage of the conflict[116], in the second military campaign Putin had control over what the media could show of the conflict, i.e., the national and international press could only transmit what the Kremlin approved, in order gain approval of his audience and, as a consequence, the legitimacy of securitisation over the Chechen insurgency.

Chechen resistance indeed aspired for independence, but the secular nationalism movement of the first Chechen War turned into a wave of different and contrasting ideologies and aims when the Salafi jihadist theo-ideology (Hahn, 2011:1) arrived at the North Caucasus to help fighting the "continuing Russian corruption, misrule, oppression, and brutality" (Kim & Blank, 2013:921). The resistance movement became affiliated to other extremist groupings who found inspiration in Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda. According to Gordon M. Hahn (2012), ever since the influx of foreign fighters into the Caucasus, the Chechen cause has been a mix of various ideals and, the secular one has been replaced by the ultimate aspiration of a pan-islamic region. This pan-islamic dream in the North Caucasus has, however, been blurring the line dividing the Chechen secessionism and terrorism (see the table below). To this

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[116] "During the First Chechen War, liberal intellectuals supported the Chechen cause to a great degree. They sympathized with the Chechen aspiration for independence and self-government. 1994 was, after all, not that far removed from 1991 and the ideals that drove the Russian opposition to the putsch. Liberal opinion changed greatly during the ensuing years, however, as Chechnya descended into criminal anarchy. Criminal groups in Chechnya, often led by veteran field commanders, engaged in the narcotics trade, kidnapped for profit, sold oil illegally siphoned from pipelines and have even been accused of engaging in the slave trade (...) With the incursion into Dagestan, the liberals turned their back completely on the Chechens" (Hodgson, 2003:76).

conflicted view, we add the fact that Chechen president, who was elected for being the less extreme option, yield to religious extremists and warlords and decided to declare martial law in Chechnya, calling for jihad against Russia on October 6, 1999 (Pokalova, 2015).

TABLE 4. KEY FACTORS IN THE RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT

Conflict Initiation (1991-94)	Russian metropolitan politics: intra-elite power struggle Chechen peripheral nationalism Russian energy and military section interests Chechen regional interests
Conflict Cessation (1996-97)	Russian metropolitan politics: presidential election Chechen military success War weariness OSCE 'presence'
Conflict Resumption (1999-)	Russian metropolitan politics: presidential alternance Chechnya as a failed regime Chechen ideocratic interests Radicalisation Dual radicalisation

SOURCE: Hughes, James. 2001. "Chechnya: The Causes of a Protracted Post-Soviet Conflict." *Civil Wars* 4 (4): 48. doi:10.1080/13698240108402486

By the early of the year 2000, President Putin stated at the News Conference Following Security Council Session that he never refused negotiations with the Chechen counterparts, and that a political solution was on the table as long as the Chechen President agreed on his demands[117]. Maskhadov was willing to enter the negotiations (Putin, 2001a) but he had virtually no power in Chechnya (Henkin, 2006; Tarin & Rivas, 2016), becoming a "hostage" of the Islamist groups who were claiming increasingly more power. The concessions he granted to Islamists (Henkin, 2006) only exacerbated power discrepancies and Chechnya's struggle not to become a failed state. Several attacks had been orchestrated without Chechen president knowledge[118], including the summer of 1999 apartment bombings in several Russian

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[117] "Russia has openly stated its conditions to beginning political negotiations: immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held to this day in some mountain areas in Chechnya. There are more than two hundred hostages, according to our calculations and the estimates of our law enforcement agencies and special services.

[Another condition is that militants are handed over to us.] The names of those militants and terrorists are well known to us. Now, if Mr Maskhadov is willing to do all that but cannot, if he has developed a disease called political impotence, we are ready to help him. Let him come to the negotiating table and meet the conditions I have mentioned. If, however, he cannot hand over the militants and terrorists, let him join us as we track them down and catch them. Let him make the men who are victimising his people flee Chechnya or go behind bars" (Putin, 2000a).

[118] "To the gradual Islamization of the institutions—a reflection of what was happening in Chechen society—must be added the inability of the government to achieve the monopoly of the legitimate use of force in the territory (...) This enabled the constant activity of organized crime and Islamist guerrilla groups, culminating in the invasion of Dagestan in 1999; the hostage crisis at the Dubrovka theater in Moscow in 2002; the high-profile assassination of pro-Russian leader Akhmad Kadyrov in 2004; and in the same year, the massacre at Beslan school. All were planned and carried out without Maskhadov's involvement" (Rivas & Tarin, 2016:5).

cities and the incursion into Dagestan, that led Prime Minister Putin to call upon another intervention in Chechnya.

Boris Yeltsin formally announced his resignation on 2000 New Year's Eve and appointed Vladimir Putin his successor (Kramer, 2005; Ware, 2011). Choosing Putin as his successor did not surprise as many as naming him Prime Minister in 1999. The appointment of Putin as Prime Minister was not expected, but his strong and secure posture towards the Dagestani crisis — two Chechen radicals named Basaev and Khattab led an incursion into Dagestan   (Russell, 2005) — and series of apartment bombings in the same year granted him the support from the Russian population[119]. Naming Putin as the next Russian Federation President had to do with the fact that the state Duma (the Russian Parliament) had announced its intention to prosecute Yeltsin after his retirement, and he needed someone that would not only stop the Duma's intentions, but also grant him legal immunity[120].

Regardless Yeltsin's intentions, Putin's confidence and strong posture regarding the Chechen crisis worked out in his favour during the elections, even though Putin claimed that the Chechen situation and him winning the elections were not the reason he was elected: "I am absolutely convinced that it was not the war in Chechnya or the anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya that brought me to the Kremlin" (Putin *in* ARD & ZDF, 2000: np.). Instead he claims that his election came as a result of combination of factors, the weakness of the state structures (to deal with the Chechen situation) and the citizens' feelings of uncertainty and insecurity as a consequence[121]. Putin's assertiveness and lack of intention to negotiate with terrorists[122], as well as his rhetoric — his speeches on terrorist events such as the November 14, 1999, "Why We Must Act" — allowed him to raise his popularity. In this New York Times article, Putin argued that Russia had been experiencing terrorism in first hand, and criticised the US for its lack of understanding, i.e., Russia wanted the American support and cared about their impression of Russia, so Putin tried to explain to Bill Clinton's administration the seriousness of the threat posed by terrorism[123]:

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[119] "Putin seemed an unlikely prime minister; yet his self-assured approach to the military operation in Dagestan won immediate public approval, as did his belligerent reaction to apartment bombings in Moscow and Volgodansk that September (...) Whatever the tendency in Putin's earlier career toward values of national security, military strength, and centralised control, these were brought to the fore as critical imperatives during Russia's defence of Dagestan in August and September of 1999, and in its subsequent invasion of Chechnya" (Ware, 2011:494).

[120] "On 13 May 1999 (4 months and 17 days before the campaign against Chechnya began), the Russian Duma decided to discuss five charges against the Russian President in three parliamentary sessions and then vote for initiating an impeachment process. These charges were: (1) demolishing the Soviet Union; (2) suspending the constitution and bombarding the White House (building of the Russian Parliament) in 1993; (3) violating the constitution by launching a war and sending the army against a Russian Federal Republic (Chechnya) in 1994; (4) weakening the army and the defensive capabilities of the state; and (5) committing genocide against the Russian people through pursuing changes that led to the collapse of the economy and to looting the state's resources" (Ashour, 2004:137).

[121] Our people are weary of the muddled way in which the state institutions are run. What is happening in the Caucasus generally and what is happening in Chechnya is just one element of the weakening of the state. The weakness of state institutions has come to worry our citizens who see this weakness in their daily lives. They feel unprotected, they feel insecure, they are not sure about tomorrow in economic terms.
And all this has led to the evident result: the voter wanted to see and feel that the state is turning into an institution that will guarantee the rights of every citizen in any part of Russia (Putin in ARD & ZDF, 2000:np.).

[122] In a conversation with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliev, Putin stressed that Russia does not negotiate with terrorists, instead it destroys them (Kremlin, 2004a).

[123] In November 1999, Prime Minister Putin appeal to all parties to understand the seriousness of terrorism as a global threat, since terrorism knows no boundaries.

Russians do not need to view the latest James Bond movie to see that macabre story unfold. Rather, we saw it in all-too-real life as guerrillas based in Chechnya mounted bloody raids on neighboring Dagestan. They forcibly occupied several communities, terrorizing the inhabitants. The stated goal was to establish an ''Islamic republic,'' an idea thoroughly alien to the vast majority of local citizens.

To Americans, these scenarios must seem rather far-fetched. The notion of armed guerrillas roaming through the countryside, intimidating citizens, is something to be found in bad movies or second-rate novels. Yet in the southern corner of my country, they are as real as the freshly turned cemetery plots that have chronicled the violence over the last several years.

No government can stand idly by when terrorism strikes (Putin, 1999).

After Vladimir Putin's election in 2000, Maskhadov, who had once received the support from Boris Yeltsin and the Kremlin for being a moderate separatist (Melvin, 2007), became a *persona non grata* in Russia. Putin, known for being a hard-liner (Williams, 2001:134), stopped all negotiations with him, refusing another "second Khassavyurt" accord, especially after two high-profile terrorist events — the 2002 Dubrovka Theatre siege and the 2004 massacre at the No.1 School in Beslan. Putin and Maskhadov never entered negotiations (Kremlin, 2004a), even though Maskhadov's representative was invited to Moscow in 2001. Negotiations have already been held in 1996 with Yelstin, but the Chechen situation did not improve much[124]. Putin had no intention to negotiate, not after the 1996 Khassavyurt Accords:

Are we supposed to negotiate with them again? Negotiate on what? We had already agreed with them on everything. We had given them everything. What is there to discuss with them? Or shall we just slightly reprimand them for the mischief that they had done? (...) No, we have had enough. It won't happen again. With whom can we negotiate? There are international terrorists there who work for money and just plain bandits. It is impossible to agree on anything with terrorists and bandits (Kremlin, 2002:np.).

Putin (2002) stressed that Maskhadov's election happened "on the crest of a euphoria" and he was very critical of the way the Chechen republic was being ruled. According to the Russian Federation President, Chechnya was "[u]nder that criminal regime local [where] people were publicly executed in the squares. And I am not speaking about the atrocities perpetrated against the members of the federal services and soldiers and so on". He also highlighted that Maskhadov's government not only lost control over the Chechen republic to international terrorists, but also that the creation of a world caliphate has been its goal all along:

They quickly lost control over the republic and a very different lot stood behind them who proceeded to use the Chechens to attempt to achieve their goals which have nothing to do with the interests of the Chechen people. The creation of the much-touted

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[124] "Let it be said that there are some people whom we describe as separatists who have sought to break the Chechen Republic away from the Russian Federation. We have already had talks with them. In 1996 we met all their demands. In fact, we had agreed to the independence of Chechnya by signing the Khasavyurt Agreement. We all know what it led to, the attack on Dagestan and the expansion of aggression" (Kremlin, 2002:np.).

world Caliphate, which we have mentioned — this was the goal of the Maskhadov regime. Otherwise there would have been no attack on Dagestan (Kremlin, 2002:np.).

Putin considered Maskhadov a murderer who "opted for terrorism" (Putin in Radio Free Europe, 2002). Despite Islam being connected to terrorism and representing a key factor mobilising the population in the North Caucasus, Vladimir Putin claimed that Islam was not the problem. Instead, terrorism was. So, he promised to "wipe out the terrorist and bandits" (Komsomolskaya pravda, 2000:2 in Kramer, 2005:8) who were using Islamic slogans and misinterpreting Islam's principles of "humanism and love of man". To the Russian leader, those using terrorism and spreading radical ideologies have the intention of causing "discord between the peoples and faiths in the Russian Federation" for money (Kremlin, 2002:np.).

As above referred, Putin considered that the weakness of state structures were causing insecurity and uncertainty among the populations, and that Russia's existence was being damaged by the vacuum of power at the centre of the political system[125]. The spread of a wave of unrest from Chechnya to other North Caucasus republics — namely Basaev's and Khattab's incursion into Dagestan — had to do with Maskhadov's inability to rule (Hodgson, 2003) and with the loose control of the Kremlin over the Chechen transition and Maskhadov's government. Putin, who declared that solving the North Caucasus situation would be his mission for life, argued that Chechnya had become a state filled with problems, namely by becoming (1) a chaotic failed state; (2) a safe-haven for organised crime and banditry; (3) a base for Islamic terrorism; and (4) a threat to Russia and its control of neighbouring regions (Lieven, 2000).

The continuum spectrum of violence and radicalism gave Putin the favourable circumstances to intervene under the justification that state-building in Chechnya had failed[126] and to begin a programme to revert Yeltsin's policies of decentralisation[127]. In this new programme, Putin enforced his new policy

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[125] "Vladimir Putin arrived to the Kremlin with a clear (and insightful) perception that Russia's very existence was threatened by an unprecedented erosion of the very center of the state system: regional "barons" were pursuing their parochial agendas, paying little attention to the federal legislation; "oligarchs" were busy plundering Russia's riches, not bothering to share with tax authorities; and each ministry was conducting its own foreign and domestic policy, having long forgotten about any central coordination or guidelines" (Baev, 2004: 340).

[126] "[T]he emphasis on the failure of Ichkerian–Chechen state-building fulfilled a double function. First, it provided a justification for the intervention—since the regime was unable to police its territory and live in peace with the rest of the country—and, later on, the establishment of a new political order. Second, it completely undermined the Ichkerian political project. According to this discourse, the Chechen attempt at state-building had clearly failed, and there was no room for a second chance. Putin summarized this argument in the following fashion: 'Chechens had their chance to establish their autonomy—de facto independence led to a terrorist regime'" (Campana & Légaré, 2010:53).

[127] A few months before being elected President of the Russian Federation, Putin declared that the North Caucasus was a decisive matter in Russia's domestic policy, since it could represent a "threat of disintegration, the perceived penetration and subversion by foreign forces, the weakening of state structures as a result of criminality and terror, and Russia's basic inability to stand up for itself and secure its core national objectives" (Dannreuther & March, 2008:99). So, he declared that solving the North Caucasus' situation would be his mission for life and that Chechnya should not be abandoned as it did before, even if direct presidential rule was needed to accomplish that (Putin in. Bohlen, 2000). Putin's firm attitude towards the North Caucasus granted him with a significant public's acceptance, essential to win the election (Radoman, 2008) and start a different path for Russia from the one set by President Yeltsin. As declared by Ross (2011:361), "Putin's primary objectives were to create a unified economic, legal and security space in the federation and to tighten federal government's controls over the regions". Therefore, when he first came to power, President Putin started to re-centralise the Russian state through a firm administrative control (Baev, 2006:5) in order to avoid Russia's erosion. In fact, President Putin believed that Russia could only emerge as a "strong state" if Chechnya was defeated, otherwise it would be possible for the unrest to spread into the entire North Caucasus (Radoman, 2008:22) which could lead to the "Yugoslavisation" of Russia (Putin, 2000:141 in. Radoman, 2008:22). Thereby, Putin established a policy called ""Chechenisation"" (Calzini, 2005; Campana, 2006; Dunlop & Mennon, 2006; Melvin, 2007; Dannreuther & March, 2008; Predmore, 2011; Ware, 2011).

based in three pillars: (1) the enforcement mechanisms or power structures; (2) the business interest or oligarchs; and (3) the regional elites or barons (Baev, 2003; 2004; 2006), and to begin "revolution" within the "power structures" (see figures 3 and 4). In other words, Putin, who never ignored his KGB background, relied on the special services to fulfil that mission. So, he encouraged active and retired people from "power structures" to join the state machinery — a militocracy according to Baev (2004:342).

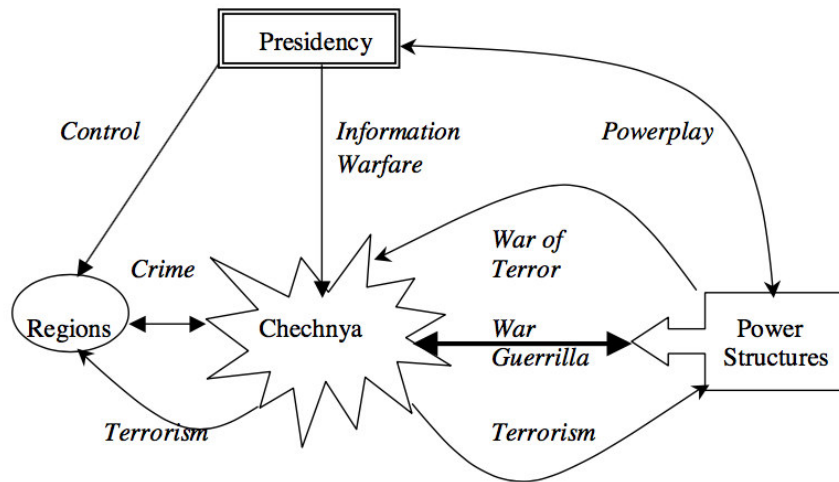**FIGURE 3. CHECHNYA IN PUTIN'S SYSTEM OF POWER**
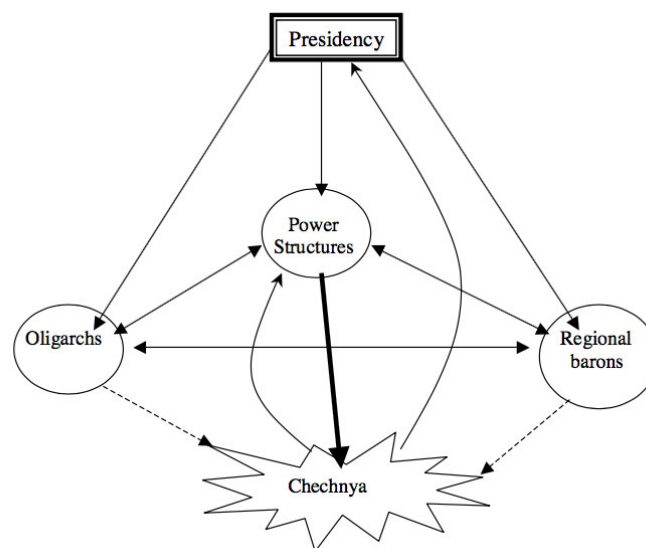
SOURCE: Baev, Pavel. 2003. "Examining the 'terrorism–war' Dichotomy in the 'Russia–Chechnya' Case." *Contemporary Security Policy* 24 (2). Routledge: 35.

As above mentioned, the second intervention in Chechnya was described as being part of a counter-terrorism operation but, at the same time, it was a confirmation of the motives that led Yeltsin to declare war in Chechnya, i.e., the geopolitical and national security concerns were essentially the same[128].

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[128] In 1999, the Russian goals were: "1. to discourage any other autonomous republic from following the "Chechen path"; 2. to exert full military control on geostrategically important Chechnya; 3. to prevent historical rivals, especially the Turks, from acquiring significant influence in the North Caucasus through an independent Chechnya; and 4. to stop any potential logistical, political, military, or moral support granted by Chechen private militias to any secessionist movement within the Russian Federation" (Ashour, 2004:133).

FIGURE 4. THE WAR-TERRORISM INTERPLAY IN CHECHNYA

Though, contrary to the first war, planned with inadequacy, this campaign promised a no-bloodless and no-large scale conflict, aiming only at destroying all the terrorists (Hodgson, 2003) and prevent the spillover of terrorism to other parts of the North Caucasus. In addition to military measures, it was important to face the main Chechen grievances — (1) ethnic tensions; (2) unemployment; (3) poverty; (4) population growth; (5) economic problems; (6) crime; (7) corruption; (8) bombings and assassinations; (9) kidnappings; among other problems — and provide a good governance and an attractive national project (Menon & Fuller, 2000:35-36).

For this second military intervention Russian troops were better-prepared than they were in the first one[129]. Putin proved to be a strong leader by letting Russian soldiers know what they were fighting for, which allowed them to fight with purpose and determination. The repression and violence of the first Chechen War compelled most of the media to feel compassionate with the Chechen movement (Russell, 2005) rather than with the central government trying to avoid territorial erosion. Regardless, the second Chechen intervention was portrayed as a counter-terrorism operation aimed at stabilising the region and to deal with the Chechen grievances.

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[129] "Political propaganda meetings for soldiers were made mandatory, daily and weekly newspapers, bulletins, flyers and leaflets with anti-Chechen agitation and tales of Russian gallantry and bravery were distributed to boost morale. Psychological preparation courses were provided for troops before they entered Chechnya, including simulated combat scenarios and drills on self-regulation and self-motivation; additional medical and psychiatric personnel were at hand, and mobile groups of psychologists, specializing in psychoanalysis, psychodiagnostics and rehabilitation, neurologists and counselors were present in much higher numbers" (Janeczko, 2012:1).

The intervention followed a series of terrorist attacks in several Russian cities after the Khassavyurt Accords (1996), in which Chechnya got a special status to be revised in 2001 (see page 48). We have already addressed how critical Putin (first as Prime Minister and then as President) was of the Chechen government and how Maskhadov was not being able to control the extremism in Chechnya nor to avoid it from spilling over towards other republics (see pages 74-78). This fact has paved the way for President Putin to successfully portray the Chechens as "bandits" and "terrorists" who had put Russia under a siege threatening its sovereignty and integrity (Campana & Légaré, 2010).

By using the words — terrorists, bandits, criminals, wahhabites — the Kremlin securitised several types of activities before his population and the Chechens in general who were not pleased with the growing fundamentalist banner in the region (Menon & Fuller, 2000). In other words, terrorism, extremism and separatism represented a threat to the Russian national security (Campana & Légaré, 2010:51), and something had to be done to stop the whirlwind of unrest from spreading to the rest of the region. Nevertheless, Putin did not just launch a securitising move in his population. He has exploited the connection between the North Caucasus insurgency to the global jihad (see chapter 2) to build a bridge between the situation in Chechnya and international terrorism, i.e., the weakening state in Chechnya was just one example of what was happening in the North Caucasus, and that the terrorism in that republic was, in fact, an international threat that could spread beyond the Caucasus. As so, it should be detained:

> Chechnya is just one episode in the common threat that is creeping up on Europe. But Europe is not realizing it yet. That threat is called the "terrorist international" which is emerging in that region (...) When the bandits came to these villages — by the way, it is also a Muslim republic — they murdered people, destroyed houses, stole property, they took things out of homes by the truckload (...) Of course, we have no choice but to prevent the use of Chechnya as a bridgehead for attacking Russia (Putin, 2000 in ARD & ZDF, 2000:np.).

At the Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, in April 2001, Putin announced that progress was being made in Chechnya after he formally institutionalised an operational headquarters on managing counter-terrorist operations under the tutelage of the FSB director (January 2001), but he remained cautious in case any setback happened (Russian Federation, 2001)[130]. Despite the physical and mental improvement of the Russian military, they were fighting against insurgents who

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[130] Even though Putin denied he was trying to re-centralise power (Putin, 2000 in ARD & ZDF, 2000), in an interview, by creating seven, now eight, federal districts — (1) Central Federal District; (2) Northwestern Federal District; (3) Far Eastern Federal District; (4) Siberian Federal District; (5) Ural Federal District; (6) Volga Federal District; (7) Southern Federal District; (8)North Caucasian Federal District — he confided in the special services to do so, and to be in charge of counter-terrorism operations. Yet, he had to remain alert for possible attempts of hijacking his presidency, both by the FSB or other "power structures" (Baev, 2004).

staged a guerrilla warfare, while the government troops still relied on a Soviet-style of operations which, many times, resulted in a lack of coordination among the branches and the commanders[131]. In other words, the Russian military had to abide to a strict bureaucracy at the same time the Chechens replicated the same tactics used during the first conflict and multiplied the number of terrorist events.

The second intervention in Chechnya started in Dagestan, in 1999, when Putin was still Prime Minister. The military phase of the conflict had three essential stages: (1) the establishment of a *cordon sanitaire* (Hodgson, 2003; Kim & Blank, 2013) whose aim was to cut off Chechen mobility, i.e., the Russian strategy consisted in circumscribing the Chechen terrorist groups from the Terek River and closing the borders to Georgia, North Ossetia and Dagestan, and attacking them from distance, not necessarily with precision[132]; (2) from October to November 1999 the plan was to isolate the terrorist groups; (3) and then their destruction and of their operational bases (Hodgson, 2003).

By learning from errors from the past, namely the first Russo-Chechen war, Putin opted for another strategy; a more congruent and comprehensive approach to this particular conflict (Kim & Blank, 2013). In addition to the military campaign or the use of force, the Kremlin's new game plan consisted in other additional three stages: (1) the "Unity of Command", i.e., the conflict in Chechnya was coordinated among several governmental structures, such as the FSB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but it was the Ministry of Defence that occupied the top of the pyramid, allowing a more flexible but synchronised response; (2) the "Information War", or the securitisation of media — Putin had practically unlimited powers, enabling him to control who could or could not be on the ground. Moscow was able to employ all the means considered necessary without worrying about the repercussions in the press (either national or international), nor jeopardising the audience's support, as it occurred with Yeltsin in the first Chechen War; and (3) "Chechenization" (Kim & Blank, 2013:923-925).

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[131] "One problem on the part of the Russian command was the reliance upon Soviet-style top-heavy bureaucracy to run an over-crowded and poorly organized operation. The number of federal agencies, organizations, departments and branches — often with three letter acronyms — is enough to make the most efficient bureaucrat cringe. The newly-created OGV, or 'Unified Grouping of Federal Forces' was comprised of units from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), anti-riot Police, the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Federal Border Patrol, special forces (spetznaz), all military branches, the Federal Service of Railway Troops (FSZhV) and even surveillance specialists from the Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information (FAPSI).
To make matters even more confusing and disorganized, the chain-of-command in Chechnya included the Commander of the OGV, commander of the North Caucasus Military District, head of MVD Regional Operational Staff for Control of Counterterrorist Operations in the North Caucasus, First Deputy Minister responsible for Counterterrorist Training and Combat Operations, and FSB Deputy Director responsible for the North Caucasus" (Janeczko, 2012:3).
[132] "The Russians are particularly enamored of helicopter gunships, which can make approaches into areas that planes find more difficult to reach, such as urban and mountainous regions" (Hodgson, 2003:72).

3.2.2. "Chechenisation": a political solution for the North Caucasus?

Chechnya had become the symbol of weakness for Russia and a military win this time was even more mandatory. The aftermath of the military intervention, indeed, was favourable to Moscow, though President Putin was not able to fully eradicate the resistance (Falkowski, 2015). It became clear that more measures had to be taken in addition to fighting terrorists and condemn them for their actions. So, Putin claimed it was necessary to restore local and federal authorities in Chechnya, as well as help the population that has been the most sacrificed. The "enormous problems" the North Caucasus was facing should be followed by the building up of social an economic spheres, since "[a]ll institutions of state authority and management have been destroyed, because the quasi-bodies that have been set up there cannot be compared with those that have been developed over thousands of years of world history" (Putin, 2000b).

By claiming that Chechnya should be rebuilt, especially the state structures, Putin re-opened the debate regarding "Chechenisation". This is a policy in which the Kremlin chooses the Chechen authoritarian leaders (Russell, 2008:661) willing to support Moscow's demands and to commit in breaking the Chechen resistance in order to bring stability to the republic (Falkowski, 2015). During the first Chechen War, President Yeltsin made an attempt at "Chechenisation" by supporting the authority of Doku Zavagayev (Pokalova, 2015). Putin, on his turn, relied on the Chechen parliament struggle for revival and on its request for assistance, which further isolated Aslan Maskhadov[133] to introduce the first presidential rule and naming Akmhad Kadyrov[134] as President of Chechnya in June 2000, i.e., Kadyrov was the first Chechen leader to both assume the presidency of Chechnya and gather the support of the Kremlin. Appointing Kadyrov had symbolic meaning, once this Mufti of Chechnya was also a former Chechen rebel who fought against Russia during the first war (Fisher & Otorashvili, 2014), and to whom was granted amnesty. Kadyrov served as an example that the Kremlin was willing to grant amnesty to those of fought in the first Chechen War and regret their decision or were not willing to engage in future conflicts with the Russian Federation (Pokalova, 2015).

In other words, the strategy of "Chechenisation" intended to enable the Kremlin to regain control over the rebellious republic of Chechnya and to prevent the dissemination of the insurrection. In order to make that possible, Federal Authorities strengthen their ties with pro-Russian Chechen population against the

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[133] "Similar to Yeltsin's attempts to prop up a loyal Chechen administration, in October 1999 Putin turned his attention to the government structures in Chechnya. At that time in Moscow members of the 1996 legislature of the Chechen Republic tried to revive the parliament and requested assistance from the Kremlin. The Kremlin immediately recognized this institution, which further marginalized Maskhadov" (Pokalova, 2015:109).

[134] The former rebel and Mufti of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, Akhmad Kadyrov, switched sides, aligning himself with the Kremlin (Reynolds, 2013), after his companion Aslan Maskhadov started a policy of compromises with the Chechen radicals (Campana, 2006). Akhmad Kadyrov, who fought against the Russian state during the first Chechen War, did not accept the Islamist ideology that has contributed to the Chechen society fragmentation.

rebels (Predmore, 2011), and started to persecute important Chechen rebels (Predmore, 2011; Melvin, 2007) such as Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basayev. Another part of Vladimir Putin's plan for the stabilisation of Chechnya was to replace local leaders with others loyal to Moscow's rule and susceptible to follow its directives — "If 'Chechenisation' was to provide a political settlement in Chechnya, Putin wanted to ensure that it would be one controlled by his 'Chechens' and his 'Russians' from the outset" (Russell, 2005:110). So, as part of the "Chechenisation" strategy, Kadyrov was appointed head of the Chechen state and later in 2003 elected president (Falkowski, 2015).

By June 2002, Putin announced that the military stage was over (Russell, 2008) and five months later Russia suffered a major terrorist event at its heart: in October, 50 armed militants took the Moscow's Dubrovka Theatre under siege during the Nord-ost musical performance taking more than 700 people hostage. The militants claimed they were seizing the Theatre in the name of their land's freedom[135]. Less than two years later, the Chechen militants stroke again, this time by sieging the School No. 1 in Beslan (North Ossetia), being this the fourth large-scale terrorist event[136]. This terrorist attack was exceptional (Cherkasov, 2006:2) because "[n]ever before had there been so many deaths (according to the preliminary Duma report, 331 hostages were killed), and, above all, the loss of so many children's lives (officially, 186 children were killed)".

The terrorist attacks of the Dubrovka Theatre and of a school in Beslan helped to raise awareness to the threat the Russian Federation was living inside its borders. In November 2002 Putin met with Luxembourg's Prime Minister — Jean-Claude Juncker (now President of the European Commission) —, and with the Ukrainian President — Leonid Kuchma. The leaders of those countries expressed their condolences over the Dubrovka massacre and highlighted their willingness to straight cooperation to fight terrorism. Almost two years later another major terrorist attack happened in Beslan. Following this advent, President Putin cancelled an official visit to Turkey and announced a period of mourning (Russian Federation, 2004b). In September, Putin held a joint declaration on the fight against terrorism with the German Chancellor — Gerhard Schroeder —, and had a meeting on the same topic with President of Poland — Aleksander Kwasniewski. In addition, he received several phone calls from other international leaders[137] expressing their condolences and to stress the international character of the threat terrorism is. In other words, these terrorist attacks had an international range and the brutality of them has

[135] The journalist Anna Politkovskaya tried to reason with the militants, but they were strongly convinced they were doing it for the freedom of their land and felt confident they were doing it the right way: "You won't believe it, but for the first time in many years we feel calm here"; "You won't believe it but we want it very much. Our names will remain in the history of Chechnya", he said (Politkovskaya, 2002).
[136] The first two major terrorist attacks happened during the first Chechen War, namely in Budennovsk and Kizlar; and the third was the Dubrovka Theatre.
[137] President Pervez Musharraf (Pakistan), President Muammar Gaddafi (Libya), Prime Minister Tony Blair (United Kingdom), President Nursultan Nazarbaev (Kazakhstan), Prince Abdullah Ben Abdel Aziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia), President Leonid Kuchma (Ukrain) all called the Russian leader after the Beslan tragedy to express their solidarity.

contributed for world leaders to understand/or relate to the situation Russian Federation was dealing. In other words, after the 1999 apartment bombings the Kremlin was able securitise the Chechen secessionist movement by convince his audience at home (the vast majority of the Chechen population did not relate to the extremist model the rebels were trying to implement [Menon & Fuller, 2000]), and after Dubrovka and Beslan it was able to renew that securitisation by conquering another audience (an international one) that expressed its recognition of terrorism as an international threat and its willingness to strengthen cooperation on the fight against terrorism.

Also the assassination of Akhmad Kadyrov, who had just been elected President of Chechnya in 2003 (Falkowski, 2015), in a terrorist attack on a stadium in Grozny on May 2004, helped to grow acceptance on the Kremlin's rhetoric of the Chechen resistance as "bandits" and "terrorists" (Russell, 2008). On the one hand, Akhmad Kadyrov set the beginning of the "Chechenisation" policy because he was the combination of a Sufi Muslim loyal to his faith and to the Kremlin, condemning the expansion of the Wahhabi ideology in the North Caucasus (Sakwa, 2010). The Chechen president even began a campaign to eliminate the Wahhabi opposition and to ban the practicing of this ideology in mosques and education centres (Pokalova, 2005).

Akhmad Kadyrov's assassination in May 2004 (Chivers, 2006), on the other hand, constituted a major setback on the implementation of the "Chechenisation". In order for Chechnya to become more stable, the Kremlin needed to fulfil the position of the late president with someone worthy of trust and who would continue to answer to Moscow. That someone was Akhmad's younger son, Ramzan.

Ramzan Kadyrov was 28 years old when his father was killed and President Putin became a father figure to him[138]. Kadyrov could only run for the Chechen presidency at the age of 30 so, in the mean time, that position was taken temporarily by Sergey Abramov and then Alu Alkhanov (from 2004 to 2007) while Kadyrov became Prime Minister (Russell, 2008; Pokalova, 2015). This is an example of Putin's vertical power, and that he has, indeed, began to revert Yeltsin's policies of decentralisation. On February 15, 2007, President Putin met with Alkhanov to accept his request to move from his position of president of Chechnya. He was then appointed deputy Russian justice minister (Kremlin, 2007a) and Kadyrov became acting president. Less than a month after Alkhanov's resignation, Putin summoned Kadyrov to endorse him as president if the Chechen parliament agreed.

According to the Kremlin (2006; 2007b), Chechnya had been showing significant signs of improvement and that had to do, in part, with Kadyrov's commitment and effort:

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[138] "[H]e took Ramzan under his wing, acting as a substitute father figure to protect the young Kadyrov at a time when the latter was at his most vulnerable and giving him the confidence to make a bid for supreme power in Chechnya" (Russell, 2008:664).

I made this decision based on the fact that you have done so much to help reconstruct Chechnya over the past few years, both as deputy Prime Minister and as head of government.

All indicators show that Chechnya has really made significant and tangible steps forward. I very much expect that your nomination to this honourable position, if it does happen — and I hope that the deputies of the Chechen parliament will support me — will result in your expending all possible efforts so that Chechnya's recovery proceeds at the same rate. This includes social and economic recovery, so that people feel more secure, so that each resident of Chechnya is motivated to develop their own Republic, is motivated to strengthen the Russian Federation (Putin, 2007:np).

Despite Putin's confidence in Kadyrov to rule, Chechnya's recovery has been a difficult aim to achieve. The two wars have destroyed the country's economic structures. Oil refineries were destroyed and Chechnya could no longer be Russia's main aviation fuel supplier (Routledge, 2016). Since the 2000s that Moscow has been injecting substantial amounts of money in the republic (Hille, 2015), yet corruption steps in the way. According to a 2007 Freedom House report (year Kadyrov became head of the Chechen government), funds from the Kremlin to rebuild Chechen were embezzled to fulfil other purposes. This report also stresses that corruption extends to other several domestic sectors, including education: "[c]orruption in the North Caucasus education system makes it prohibitively expensive for many youth to get the kind of training they want, threatening stability and economic development" (Freedom House, 2007).

In 2009, the last Freedom House report addressing to Chechnya as an independent part of the Russian Federation, states that despite high levels of corruption and unemployment (this was 65.3% in 2009) the overall economic situation has improved, and that many refugees that fled the country during the wars have returned:

Residents who have found work are employed mostly by the local police, the administration, the oil and construction sectors, or small enterprises. Despite numerous problems, the Kadyrov government's rebuilding efforts have improved the overall economic situation, and local business activity has picked up. Most of the ethnic Chechens who fled the republic have now returned home, though many live in sub-standard housing conditions (Freedom House, 2009a).

This improvement had to do with several federal programmes whose aim was to rebuild Chechnya and support the unemployed[139]. As the economic crisis hit Russia in 2012 and federal incomes decreased, it was expected from Kadyrov to deliver economic development with less cash influx from the Kremlin. Unemployment rates continued to decrease (in 2013 it was 21.5%), but most of the workforce was

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[139] "Over the past decade, that worked reasonably well. Under a federal programme started in 2002, the bulk of Chechnya's regional budget came via federal transfers. Almost all of it went into the reconstruction of homes, schools, hospitals, roads and other infrastructure and support for the unemployed" (Hille, 2015).

unqualified (47.9%). Agriculture represented 18.7% of the labour, industry and manufacturing were 23.4% and 5.8%, respectively. Moreover, Chechnya has the lowest gross general product (GRP) in Russia. The Chechen GPR per head is 88,462 (Routledge, 2016:150).

Regardless the inconstant socio-economic path of Chechnya, violence ratings have been decreasing over the past few years (see annex 8), and this as to do with the Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov.

Kadyrov is an unconventional leader: he was a charismatic Chechen born, son of a former president. Russell (2008:665) argues that his authoritarian style of leadership is better described as sultanism. His strong leadership, and even violent[140], proved effective. Plus, his social media popularity helps him to maintain his "hegemonic control"[141] (Avedissian, 2016). Kadyrov has 1.7 million followers on Instagram (Freedom House, 2016). The kadyrovstsy's terror was "perhaps even more horrible than the federals' terror" (Ruzov, 2004:25 in Souleimanov, 2015:107). Kadyrov supports Vladimir Putin unconditionally and he must prove himself loyal, irreplaceable and useful to the Kremlin in order to secure the "special status" Chechnya has been enjoying since 2005 (Avedissian, 2016). In other words, Kadyrov enjoys a "free rein"[142] (Hille, 2015) in Chechnya with financial aid from the central government as long as he proves to be useful in the process of stabilising the unrest in the Chechen republic. Despite being a controversial leader — Kadyrov "has been identified as, on the one hand, a "fake" dictator, a potential Stalin, a "bandit," a traitor (*munafiq*), and an opportunistic entrepreneur of violence while, on the other, a genuine patriot and successful fighter for his people's rights" (Russell, 2008:659-660) — he has indeed been able to restore some stability in this tumultuous republic.

According to Dubnov (2016:np.), Kadyrov was able to eliminate nationalism and to bring Chechnya closer to the Russian Federation which contributed to "a form of co-dependency in which the stronger player, Moscow, grew more and more dependent on its junior partner". His personality and the support from the Kremlin allowed him to take all the measures considered necessary to repress the nationalist feelings. Chechnya figures on the list of the "Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies" of 2009 (Freedom House, 2009b). Kadyrov was accused of pursuing the families of suspected rebels, and to have escalated his counter-terrorism campaign.

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[140] "[V]iolent measures were taken against those who continued to resist [to his leadership]: murder, torture, reprisals against relatives (taking them as hostages, demolishing their houses, etc.)" (Falkowski, 2015:13).

[141] Falkowski (2015:24) stresses that: "[o]ne extremely important and skilfully played area of the Chechen leader's activity is his use of propaganda, which builds up his image as a strong, religious politician, fanatically faithful to the Russian president, but still with his own, often controversial opinions, as both a Chechen and Russian patriot. Kadyrov is very active on social media (mainly through his own profile on the Instagram site), and constantly appears in the Russian mass media (he frequently participates in talk shows, gives interviews to journalists, invites them to Chechnya). The Chechen leader's presence in the media is not only political in nature; Kadyrov can be described as a Chechen and Russian popular celebrity. He attracts attention by inviting well-known public figures to the republic (athletes, actors, singers) from Russia and abroad (including Mike Tyson, Gerard Depardieu, and Vanessa Mae); he promotes healthy living (sports, struggle with alcoholism and drug addiction, etc.), and 'traditional' Chechen and Islamic values. It is important to note here that Kadyrov is presented mostly positively in the Russian media, and he is seen as such by many Russians (despite the fact that Chechens generally have a negative image in Russia)".

[142] Even if it is through repression or arbitrariness (Freedom House, 2016.

Kadyrov's authoritarian style of leadership and violence enabled him to reduce criminality in Chechnya, which led the Kremlin and President Medvedev (with Putin as Russian Prime Minister) to believe that the situation in Chechnya was under control and to decide to cancel the counter-terrorism operation in 2009 in Chechnya. Regardless, Chechnya continues to lack economic and social development, which are key factors to fuel unrest and social discontentment. Fear and repression have been working out in Chechnya, but one cannot forget that it was not possible for the replication of "Chechenisation" model into other North Caucasus republics and that a spiral of terrorism has hit other North Caucasian republics, with Kabardino-Balkaria being dubbed "sleeping beauty" (Markedonov, 2012:100). In other words, Chechnya stopped being the most problematic republic, being surpassed by Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, but the same way unrest spread from Chechnya towards the other republics, the same can happen and Chechnya be hit back by terrorism and unrest.

Chapter 4. The Russo-Syrian coalition against terrorism

4.1. Russia's international fight against terrorism

In the previous chapter, we stressed that the counter-terrorism operation that began in 1999 has come to an end ten years later. This decision was taken after violence ratings, in Chechnya, have significantly dropped. Nevertheless, that did not mean that terrorism as a threat to the Russian Federation's integrity and security has ceased to exist. Russia has been dealing with terrorism for a long time, particularly inside its borders. The use of terrorist tactics by the end of the first Russo-Chechen war — Budyonnovsk and Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye — forced Boris Yeltsin into negotiations with the Chechen rebels and led the Russian President to develop a legal framework on terrorism, in 1998 (Oldberg, 2006). *On the fight against terrorism* was, and still is, the primary Russian legislation on terrorism and, in 2009, President Dmitri Medvedev approved the Counterterrorism Concept of the Russian Federation where are established the seven most preeminent factors contributing to the spread of terrorism in Russia:

A.   ethnic, religious or other social antagonisms
B.   conditions facilitating the activities of extremist individuals and groups;
C.   suboptimal effectiveness of law-enforcement, administrative, legal and other counterterrorist
D.   measures;
E.   lack of proper control over the dissemination of radical ideologies and the encouraging violence and cruelty within Russia's information environment;
F.   insufficiently effective struggle against organized crime and corruption and against illegal
G.   traffic in weapons, ammunition and explosives (National Antiterrorism Committee, 2010: 11-12).

The North Caucasus is an ethnic and cultural mosaic who has the common goal of independence. It has been connected to the global jihad, especially after the terrorist events during the first Chechen War (see chapter 2). Terrorist organisations were able to exploit the aspirations of the Chechen separatist movement to perpetrate terrorist attacks in Russia. Those attacks aimed at weaken the Russian Federation in front of the international community and, for that reason, the Kremlin felt the need to identify the nine most problematic factors to the emergence in Russia. In other words, the seven factors above and the nine below put in evidence how terrorism is, simultaneously, an IN-OUT security threat to Russia. So, the external factors threatening the integrity of the Russian Federation are:

A.   attempts by international terrorist organizations to penetrate specific regions of the Russian Federation;
B.   hotbeds of terrorist activity situated within the immediate proximity of the state borders of the Russian Federation and its allies;

C. foreign states harboring camps for training militant cadres for international terrorist and extremist organizations, including those targeting Russia, and theological educational institutions disseminating extremist religious ideologies;

D. financial support for terrorist and extremist organizations operating within the Russian Federation provided by international terrorist and extremist organizations;

E. the desire of certain foreign states, in some instances using counterterrorism as a pretext, to weaken the Russian Federation and undermine its positions internationally, and to establish their political, economie or other forms of influence in specific regions of the Russian Federation;

F. terrorist and extremist propaganda disseminated via infocommunication networks (the Internet) and mass media;

G. terrorist elements welcoming broad coverage of their activities in the media for greater public effect;

H. lack of consistency among the international community in determining the causes of the emergence and spreading of terrorism and its driving forces, double standards in the law-enforcement practices of counterterrorism;

I. lack of a single antiterrorist information environment, both internationally and domestically (National Antiterrorism Committee, 2010: 12-13).

This strategic document enhances the importance of multi and bilateral coalitions in order to effectively fight terrorism (National Antiterrorism Committee, 2010), since it can simultaneously be a threat to the country where the attacks are perpetrated, as well as to the security of the International Community. Prior to the approval of this document, President Putin expressed several times his concern regarding this growing menace and tried to acquire support on his journey, but he only got some reconnaissance after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 in New York and Washington.

Putin was the first world leader to send his condolences to his American counterpart[143]. Yet, he also seized the opportunity to remember George W. Bush that Russia had alerted several times for the menace terrorism. Russia had been experiencing its consequences for approximately five years. Terrorism was great matter on the Russian security agenda since the end of the first Chechen War, and as figured as a major threat to the country's integrity and security in every official strategic document (see the Russian National Security Strategies of 1997,2009, and 2015, and the Foreign Policy Concepts of 2000, 2008, 2013 and 2016). The Kremlin made two securitising moves towards the Chechen separatism, but only the last was successful. The 1999 intervention in Chechnya received the support at home, as it happened in the advent of a series of terrorist attacks and the Russian population, the North Caucasus included, was still shocked by the atrocities committed in the name of freedom. Regardless, in addition to support at home, Moscow considered international support a priority and a way to legitimise the 1999 intervention

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[143] "I am deeply shocked by the reports of the tragic events that occurred today in the United States. The barbaric terrorist attacks against innocent people evoked the anger and indignation of the Russian people.
Please convey our most sincere condolences to the relatives of the victims of this tragedy, to all the injured, and to the entire American nation. We understand your grief and pain. The Russian people have also experienced the horrors of terrorism.
No doubt, such inhuman actions cannot be left unpunished. The entire international community must rally against terrorism" (Putin, 2001b:np.).

in Chechnya. So, the 9/11 terrorist events in the US were a meaningful opportunity for Putin to reinforce his position on terrorism, and to present Russia as a European and Western great power[144] and ally on combating terrorism. Russia wanted to be considered an actor with relevance in this mater, which led the Russian Foreign Minister at the time, Igor Ivanov, to held a meeting in April 2002 with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Walter Schwimmer, in which he emphasised the role of Russia was assuming in the fight against terrorism, namely by taking action in the North Caucasus region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2002). In other words, the Kremlin wanted to convince the international community that Russia was an important actor in fighting terrorism not only because of Russia's relevance itself, but also because the Chechen situation and the 9/11 events were connected to international terrorism, i.e., an international threat with repercussions at home.

4.1.1 The US-Russian strategic partnership after 9/11

For a brief period after the disintegration of Soviet Union, the US were viewed as a role model from which Russia learnt; the Russians also believed on the possibility of a co-managed "new world order" but, by the late 1990s "Russia's power was at its weakest, and U.S. unipolar dominance arguably at its peak" (Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012:153). This led Yeltsin's administration to balance against the West. Though, when Putin came into power, with the high hope of seeing Russia recognised as a great power[145], he considered crucial a "reset" in US-Russia relations.

The 9/11 events paved the way[146] for an understanding between the two countries and, in November 13, 2001, Presidents Bush and Putin released a joint declaration on combating international terrorism. George W. Bush welcomed Vladimir Putin to the White House and stated that that meeting was the setting up of a new page on the US-Russia relations:

> The United States and Russia are in the midst of a transformation of a relationship that will yield peace and progress. We're transforming our relationship from one of hostility and suspicion to one based on cooperation and trust, that will enhance opportunities for peace and progress for our citizens and for people all around the world.
> The challenge of terrorism makes our close cooperation on all issues even more urgent. Russia and America share the same threat and the same resolve. We will fight and defeat terrorist networks wherever they exist (Bush, 2001).

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[144] "Although Putin insisted on Russia's priority of preserving great power status, his strategy for achieving this objective differed considerably from Primakov's. Instead of continuing the policy of balancing against the West, Putin explicitly sided with Europe and the United States and insisted that Russia was a country of European and Western, rather than Asian, identity" (Tsygankov, 2016:20).

[145] This argument was fortified by the exceptional growth of the Russian economy, especially due to the oil prices (see Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012).

[146] Even though the 9/11 events are a clear turning point on the turbulent US-Russian relations, Vladimir Putin had already been thoroughly planning the re-shaping of this relations even before his first presidential election. In February 2000 Putin invited NATO's General Secretary — George Robertson — to visit Moscow, and in the summer of 2001 he developed a cordial relationship with George W. Bush that would, eventually, be reinforced in September 11, 2001 (Freire, 2011).

In the same joint conference, Putin bolstered the progress held during the meetings and his openness to erase any "vestiges of the Cold War" and seek for a long term partnership with Washington:

> The tragic developments of September 11th demonstrated vividly the need for a joint effort to counter this global threat. We consider this threat as a global threat, indeed, and the terrorists and those who help them should know that the justice is inescapable and it will reach them, wherever they try to hide (Putin, 2001b).

The improvement of US-Russia relations was exacerbated by the Russian support of the US-led war in Afghanistan. Putin stressed that "[o]ver many years terrorists did not only de facto buy the whole of Afghanistan on the cheap, they dug in there, and they had been thoroughly preparing for what is happening today" (Putin, 2001b); and Bush affirmed that both nations were committed with the Afghani reconstruction after the defeat of the Taliban[147]. Russia, in addition to the sharing of information, equipped the anti-Taliban United Front and provided humanitarian assistance (Petykowski, 2004). Despite being on the same page regarding the threat posed by international terrorism, both leaders stressed that not all problems driving the two countries apart were solved[148] [149]. Those divergences started to appear during 2002, when the Bush administration began to consider a military action in Iraq[150]. Despite Russia's tendency, under Putin to integrate into the West (Fernandes, 2014:24) it was not possible to fully erase or forget the Cold War past.

Suspicion and scepticism reign on US-Russia relations. Washington's unilateral decision to intervene in Iraq under the justification that there was a direct link between international terrorism and the supposedly Iraqi production of weapons of mass destruction did not please Moscow, which led Russia (and China) to veto, in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Bush's proposal to invade Iraq (Bjola, 2005). Moscow was disappointed with Bush's policies[151] and the way the US was treating Russia. Instead of being treated as an equal, the Kremlin was being treated "as a strategic partner outside NATO and against the US (inside the Alliance, this division was also evident with the institutionalization of Russia-NATO relations and the functioning of the NATO-Russia Council)" (Fernandes, 2014:25).

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[147] "Both nations are committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, once hostilities there have ceased and the Taliban are no longer in control" (Bush, 2001).

[148] "Russia and the United States will continue to face complex and difficult issues. Yet, we've made great progress in a very short period of time. Today, because we are working together, both our countries and the world are more secure and safe" (Bush, 2001).

[149] "Of course, the capabilities embedded in the bilateral relationship have not been fully implemented. Here like in other areas, we have quite a lot of things to do, but we are confident that the success is by and large predetermined by our resolve to cooperate energetically and constructively. That, and I'm confident, would benefit both countries. And which is reflected, also, in our visit to this country today" (Putin, 2001c).

[150] "The US was concerned with Russia's resumption of trade negotiations with Iraq and expansion of nuclear assistance to Iran. Russia felt it was conceding on too many issues, including the US presence in Central Asia, NATO enlargement, and ABM treaty withdrawal" (Petykowski, 2004:7).

[151] "Russia's circumstances started to change in the mid-2000s, but at least as importantly, Moscow's disappointment with the Bush administration's policies led to Putin's increasing willingness to oppose Washington on a number of issues. Russian public opinion grew more negative on the U.S. role, but this was fairly consistent with the rest of the world, including Washington's NATO allies" (Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012:155).

During a meeting with senior Government and Presidential Executive Office, officials and security-agency chiefs, President Putin expressed concern with respect to the consequences of the US-British coalition. The military intervention did not receive the approval of the UNSC, which was mandatory. In other words, the US-led coalition did not respect the United Nations Charter nor the International law (Kremlin, 2003; Bjola, 2005). According to Putin (2003:np), Iraq posed no threat and there was no evidence justifying such an extreme decision, especially if that decision could endanger the United Nations Charter:

> Nothing can justify this military action — neither accusations of Iraq of supporting international terrorism (we have never had and do not have information of this kind) nor the desire to change the political regime in that country which is in direct contradiction to international law and should be determined only by the citizens of this or that state (...) I would like to note that joint work at the UN Security Council, including joint work with the United States, the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1441 that does not authorize the use of force but that has made it possible to resume the activities of international inspectors as well as the set of other measures to influence the Iraqi leadership marked the start of practical activities to disarm Iraq by peaceful means.

Russia sees the strategic relation with the US as an important instrument to present itself as a world superpower, but the general perception of the US as the leader of a unipolar world order frustrates Russian intentions. Even though Putin had the desire of closing ties with his American counterpart, he had to be pragmatic, i.e., if the Russian Federation wanted to be recognised as a world superpower, it must advocate for a multipolar world order in which there is no hegemonic superpower, the US hegemony in this case. So, according to the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept, Russia considers unilateral actions dangerous[152] and that the UNSC role was diminished by the Western supremacy[153]. Russia was being treated by the US as a "junior partner" (Freire, 2011:169) rather than an equal partner, despite the declarations of the NATO Heads of State and Government of the member states and Russian Federation at the first Russia-NATO Summit[154]. Russian Foreign Policy Concepts more recent (2013 and 2016)

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[152] "The strategy of unilateral actions can destabilize the international situation, provoke tensions and the arms race, aggravate interstate contradictions, national and religious strife. The use of power methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underlie conflicts, and can only undermine the foundations of law and order" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000).

[153] "There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the U.N. Security Council" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2000).

[154] Russia had always expressed its reluctance regarding NATO's expansion (FPC, 2000). Nevertheless, the year of 2002 was a golden year on the US-Russia relations as they partnered up on energetic terms (Freire, 2011), and Russia has shown some openness to integrate a new security system, not as member of NATO but as a partner. In May 2002 it was held the first Russia-NATO Summit in Rome, where all the parties involved expressed their willingness to cooperate in a wide range of security issues: "In the NATO-Russia Council, NATO member states and Russia will work as equal partners in areas of common interest. Building on the Founding Act and its wide range of cooperation, the NATO-Russia Council will intensify efforts in the struggle against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defence reform, and civil emergencies, as well as in other areas. We are united in our resolve to overcome the threats and challenges of our time" (NATO-Russia Council).

continue to portray Russia as an advocate of a multipolar world order and that by taking unilateral decisions outside the UNSC's framework endangers international peace and stability[155] [156].

The US-Russian relations have always been marked by periods of ups and downs — a rollercoaster ride (Petykowski, 2004:2), and the US unilateral decision to invade Iraq was another down. Ever since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the Russian Federation as the successor of the USSR, that Russia has claimed to be an advocate of a multipolar world order. Russia believes that it is through multilateralism that Russia can its status as a global great power (Rowe & Wilson, 2008:7). The United Nations are a prestigious multilateral forum, especially the UNSC, and Russia argues that these institutions should not be a facade for other states to intervene on the domestic politics of other states, nor the fight against terrorism should have "double standards" (Legvold, 2008:26). The Russian Federation has, however, "double standards" itself. It did not support the US intervention in Iraq but has aligned with the Americans in Afghanistan (1979-1989) when it served the Russian purposes — eradicate a source of instability near Russian borders (Freire, 2011).

The US decision to wage a war in Iraq did not respect the UNSC will, and Russia did not take that decision lightly and, since the US-led invasion of Iraq that the US-Russia relations stagnated. The economic growth restored Russia's confidence to defy the US unipolar hegemony and to advocate, in 2007, once more, for a multipolar order[157]. Plus the expansion of NATO to the South Caucasus, that led the Five Days War in Georgia, was another factor driving the two countries apart, and Russia to accept its Eurasian character and to embrace new partnerships[158].

On his Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, in April 2002, President Putin expressed that Russia was entering a new phase: "Our major goal in foreign policy is to ensure strategic stability in the world. To do this, we are participating in the creation of a new system of security, we maintain constant dialogue with the United States, and work on changing the quality of our relations with NATO.

On the whole I would like to note: Russia is being actively integrated into the international community. And despite the harsh competition that I have already discussed, it is particularly important for our country to find allies and itself to be a reliable ally for others" (Putin, 2002).

[155] "Another risk to world peace and stability is presented by attempts to manage crises through unilateral sanctions and other coercive measures, including armed aggression, outside the framework of the UN Security Council. There are instances of blatant neglect of fundamental principles of international law, such as the non-use of force, and of the prerogatives of the UN Security Council when arbitrary interpretation of its resolutions is allowed. Some concepts that are being implemented are aimed at overthrowing legitimate authorities in sovereign states under the pretext of protecting civilian population. The use of coercive measures and military force bypassing the UN Charter and the UN Security Council is unable to eliminate profound socioeconomic, ethnic and other antagonisms that cause conflicts. Such measures only lead to the expansion of the conflict area, provoke tensions and arms race, aggravates interstate controversies and incite ethnic and religious strife" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2013: np.).

[156] " Russia consistently advocates strengthening the legal foundation of international relations and complies with its international legal obligations in good faith. Maintaining and strengthening international rule of law is among its priorities in the international arena. The rule of law in international relations is intended to ensure peaceful and fruitful cooperation among States while seeking to balance their interests, as well as to guarantee the overall stability of the global community. Russia intends (...) e. to continue efforts to improve the UN sanctions mechanism, specifically, proceeding from the premise that decisions to impose such sanctions should be taken by the UN Security Council jointly following comprehensive discussions, primarily taking into consideration how effectively sanctions accomplish the tasks of maintaining international peace and security and preventing the deterioration of the humanitarian situation; contribute to eliminating from international relations illegal, unilateral coercive measures adopted in violation of the UN Charter and other norms of international law" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2016:np.).

[157] "Putin's position moved from a first-term centrist power balancer with Western inclinations to more of a second-term effort to appeal to Russian nationalism and opposition to U.S. policy" (Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012:155).

[158] See Freire (2011) "A Rússia de Putin: Vectores estruturantes de política externa".

4.1.2. The Civil War in Syria: a war against terrorism

4.1.2.1. The Syrian Civil War in overview

Syria has been the stage of violent confrontations between those loyal to Bashar al-Assad's regime and the opposition forces. The ongoing civil war Syria is currently facing started in 2011 when some university student leaders demanded greater civic, political and social rights, as well as the end of the political repression exercised by an ethnic minority. The Syrian population is

> [T]ired of decades of political repression by an ethnic minority that has been allowing the deepening of social and political inequalities. It was, then, an attempt to open a new path towards the resolution of a problem enhanced by a failed economy, a discredited ideology by the lack of progress, the absence of social responsiveness to the fast population growth, generalised corruption, and the brutal violence of the security services (Reis Rodrigues, 2014:1).

Inspired by the Arab Spring ideals, the Syrian population protested peacefully, but Assad's regime violence and repression soon transformed a pacific manifestation into one of the biggest humanitarian crisis since Ruanda, according to the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres (Guterres in. TSF, 2013:np).

Back to 2011, when the Arab Spring reached Syria, no one expected that peaceful protests led by Syrian university students at a local level similar to other occurred in other countries where the Arab Spring had woken, would turn into a gigantic bloodshed. During the first stage, students engaged in a manifestation of their intention to claim more social and political rights. It was not their intention to overthrow Assad's regime, but to lift the state of emergency declared by Bashar al-Assad's father — Hafez — in 1963 (Kerkkänen, 2014). Nevertheless, Assad's forces responded with extreme violence to the protests in the city of Dara'a (United Nations, 2015) which compelled the demonstrators to decentralise and soon a wave of unrest spread through the entire country in order to avoid the government's intention of silencing the demands of the Syrian population (Slim & Trombetta, 2014) and prevent their ideals to fall into oblivion.

The widespread of protests resulted on the adoption of a new constitution and press and electoral laws. Notwithstanding, these measures exacerbated the level of repression imposed by the government, only worsening the public dissatisfaction: "[n]either the new constitution nor the new laws change the essential relationship between the regime and the Syrian citizens. Martial law was replaced by a new counter-terrorism law. A new media law maintained restrictions on local and foreign journalists" (Slim & Trombetta, 2014:23). The Syrian people believed that after the death of Hafez al-Assad they would have

a prosperous future, as the freeing of political prisoners announced. Yet, the protests and the fear of their possible meaning led Bashar al-Assad to take extreme measures to restrain the demonstrators. Soon, those that started as peaceful protests escalade and demonstrators became opponents to the government. A year after the beginning of the uprising, Reis Rodrigues (2012:1) claimed that "there is nothing missing for us to classify the situation as a dramatic humanitarian crisis" (Reis Rodrigues, 2012:1), once Syria became the stage of a violent civil war, where the goal of the parties was to bring down the enemy. To that great extent, Syria is "sliced, reaped, lacerated, burned, butchered, between a strip under Assad's domain and a very wide-range of territory disputed by anti-regime combatants supported by the exterior, troops loyal to the president and terrorist groupings increasingly well trained and armed" (Pires de Lima 2015:36).

The initial tactic employed by Assad's forces — the Syrian Armed Army composed by intelligence forces, local and foreign militias associated to the Hezbollah (United Nations, 2015) — consisted in land attacks, perpetrating mass assassinations of the population. Meanwhile, that tactic started to become less effective due to the high propensity to Syrian soldiers to desert and join the opposition. The desertion of government's military was seen several times and that happened, greatly, because Syria was ruled by an ethnic minority while most of its citizens are Sunni Muslims. Assad's family comes from a lineage of Alawites partitioners, a derivation form of the Shia branch of Islam that even shiites perceive as heretic. The table bellow establishes the main differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

TABLE 3. TWO TRADITIONS, ONE RELIGION

Sunni Muslim	Shi'a Muslim
Historically accept all four caliphs as successors to Muhammed, including the caliph Ali, Muhammed's son-in-law and cousin.	Historically rejects the first three caliphs before Ali as being illegitimate successors to Muhammed.
Only the prophet Muhammed and the holy Quran are authorities on questions on religion. The Shi'a succession of imams is rejected	As the first legitimate caliph, Ali was also the first in a historical line of imams, or leaders within Muslim communities.
Historically, leaders within the Islamic world have been political leaders and heads of governments rather than religious leaders.	Imams serve as both political and religious leaders.
There is no strictly organized clergy. For example, no single religious leader can claim ultimate authority, and nonclergy may lead prayers.	Imams have strict authority, and their pronouncements must be obeyed. Imams are with sin and appoint their successors.

SOURCE: Martin, Gus. 2011. "Violence in the Name of the Faith: Religious Terrorism." In *Terrorism and Homeland Security*, 148. Sage Publications. http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/33557_6.pdf.

Hence, the new tactic of Assad consisted in: (1) establishing sieges that would interrupt the flux of food, medical supplies and, sometimes, even electricity and water; (2) ground and aerial bombardments in those areas; and (3) the imprisonment and disappearance of wounded people who tried to flee the siege looking for medical help (United Nations, 2015). The government strategies to deal with the unrest in the country go beyond that; the population is being targeted by indiscriminate bombings and major human rights violations. The Syrian people are living under a constant climate of fear and uncertainty, as their lives are threaten everyday not only by the government forces, but also by the opposition to Assad.

There is no safe place in Syria (Kerkkänen, 2014); anyone can be seen as a possible target of violence. People can be targeted if the government suspects of their loyalty to the regime or if it suspects the involvement of a person with the opposition forces. Once a that happens, a person can bee imprisoned, tortured, raped, and even disappear or get killed. Nevertheless, the opposition forces to Bashar al-Assad's regime also use the population as a way to retaliate against the government in areas which had express their support for Assad (United Nations, 2015). Syrian citizens are exposed to the excruciating consequences of the civil war on a daily basis. Young men who are perceived able to fight are recruited if they are in a pro-Assad area; or arrested and sexually assaulted as a way of punishing or lowering them, if not. Women without men became more vulnerable to being kidnapped or raped. Children are killed, wounded or maimed and, frequently, imprisoned on the same prison cells where adults are being humiliated and abused. To prisoners who are sexually assaulted and/or tortured, basic medical assistance is denied (United Nations,2015), leaving them to their fate.

By indiscriminate bombings one must acknowledge the use, by President Assad's supporters, of barrel bombs — improvised explosive devices provided with chemical weapons launched by helicopters — and chemical weapons (Pinheiro, 2015; United Nations, 2015; Adams, 2015; BBC, 2015a). Bashar al-Assad categorically denies the use of chemical weapons and barrel bombs against his own population, although he admits having other kind of bombs and that there are no "benign wars" and that every war has casualties (Assad in BBC, 2015a).

4.1.2.2. From a civil War to a War against terrorism

The ongoing war in Syria began as a conflict between the Syrian citizens against the government. Imbued by the spirit of the Arab Spring, demonstrators demanded more political and civil rights. This ongoing conflict has, however, evolved to a war against terrorism with presence of several opposition

groups being connected to the global jihad (Hahn, 2015). The situation in Syria became even more chaotic when ISIL arrived with the goal of creating a global caliphate that would bring up together all Muslim brothers, including the Russian North Caucasus people.

The Syrian civil war marked the last year of Medvedev's mandate as president, but despite different positions regarding the conflict's resolution, Medvedev still hopped for Obama's re-election (Medvedev, 2011 in Financial Times, 2011). In April 6, 2011, President Medvedev called his Syrian counterpart, Bashar al-Assad to express his support (Kremlin, 2011a; 2011b). When asked about Syria, Medvedev expressed his solidarity with the Syrian president, who was in a difficult position. According to President Medvedev, Assad announced he was ready for a political change, but simultaneously he confirmed being late on implementing those reforms. Medvedev showed confidence on Assad's ability to manage the situation in his country[159], since he was not open to approve another 1973 UNSC resolution like Libya[160].

The 1973 UNSC resolution was the result of the 6 498th meeting of the Security Council. In March 17, 2011, the fifteen members of the SC approved a resolution (with 10 votes in favour, none against and five abstentions - Brazil, China, India, Russian Federation and Germany) allowing the International Community to take all measures considered necessary to a ceasefire and to stop the attack of civilians by the Libyan government (United Nations, 2011). Muammar Gaddafi and his regime were acting against the population in Libya instead of protecting it, as it was their responsibility. The International Community could not go along with the situation in Libya and three weeks after asking Gaddafi to stop the killing, the SC approved the 1973 resolution anchored on the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The R2P was first mentioned in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). The main argument of this report was to acknowledge that the state was main responsible for the security of its citizens but, if the state does not fulfil its duty, the International Community must act:

> [S]overeign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe — from mass murder and rape, from starvation — but that when they are unwilling or unable to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the broader community of states (ICISS, 2001:viii).

R2P and human security are new concepts that clash with the traditional security paradigm in which the state is the main actor. Human security focuses on the individual as the centre of the security

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[159] "I have called him and told him personally that I counted very much that he would be consistent in his reforms, that the end of the state of emergency would be followed by normal elections and that there will be a dialogue with all political forces. It seems to me that he strives for this, but he is in a difficult situation at the same time" (Medvedev, 2011 in Financial Times, 2011).

[160] "However, what I am not ready to support is a dead-ringer for Resolution 1973 on Libya, because I am firmly convinced that a good resolution was turned into a scrap of paper to cover up a pointless military operation. In any case, if my counterparts had asked me then to abstain at the least so that they could bomb various targets in Libya, I would have certainly issued different instructions to our diplomats in the United Nations" (Medvedev, 2011 in Financial Times, 2011).

referential, which might challenge the role of state's sovereignty (Tadjhakshsh & Chenoy, 2007). Human security and the responsibility to protect helped spreading the ideals of "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" (United Nations, 1994), and the principles of dignity, equality and solidarity (Tadjhakshsh & Chenoy, 2007). In other words, these concepts are complements to the traditional thinking of state's security. The state is not secure unless its population is secure (Commission on Human Security, 2003)[161]. The doctrine of R2P emerged as a way to protect the citizens and assure the respect of international human rights (Labonte, 2012). Regardless, this is a highly contested concept, as the vast majority of Social Sciences' are. According to the ICISS, there are three pillars guiding the R2P doctrine[162] and, the second is, perhaps, the most controversial as it is the one responsible for the way International Community is going to respond to the situation of human need (the response varies from sanctions to military intervention). Libya had, in 2011, a military intervention aimed at stoping the bloodshed the country was turning into.

In military terms, the intervention was successful, but it was considered abusive, once the limits of a neutral intervention were surpassed when the mission started to support the rebels in a regime transition (Thakur, 2015). However, Russia and China looked at this intervention with suspicion: they another refuse to accept another R2P resolution in Syria, since they consider that the interpretation of the R2P doctrine as abusive in Libya. In 2011, Russia's and China's abstention allowed the Resolution 1973 to be approved which meant the implementation of a no-fly zone and all measures considered necessary to stop Muhammad Gaddafi's regime and restore the population's safety (Nuruzzam, 2013). From the Russian point of view, all US-led interventions resulted in regime changes, as are the examples of Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. Instead of contributing for the stability of the region, the American hegemonic foreign policy had done worse[163]. Moscow strongly stands against regime changes or foreign intervention on internal matters, as it considers "state sovereignty" the building block of international law (Follebouckt, 2012). Russia, as well as China, fear opening a precedent that could backfire on them[164].

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[161] "Human security complements state security, enhances human rights and strengthens human development. It seeks to protect people against a broad range of threats to individuals and communities and, further, to empower them to act on their own behalf. And it seeks to forge a global alliance to strengthen the institutional policies that link individuals and the state—and the state with a global world. Human security thus brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development (Commission on Human Security, 2003:1/3).

[162] "A. The responsibility to prevent: to address both the root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk. B. The responsibility to react: to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention. C. The responsibility to rebuild: to provide, particularly after a military intervention, full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert" (ICISS, 2001:xi).

[163] "All US War-on-Terror military actions have resulted in power vacuums in an already volatile region that borders Russia's near-abroad. Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya have been transformed into stateless zones of anarchic violence that have already spilled over into neighboring countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Syria. For Russia, these failed states are a direct consequence of American hegemonic foreign policy. Daesh's takeover of northwestern Iraq and northeastern Syria is a serious destabilizing factor in the region" (Guerisoli, 2015:np.).

[164] "It is no surprise that Russia and China hold international law and state sovereignty so dearly since their own regimes can hardly be considered democratic. If foreign intervention becomes a habit, then who's to say that Moscow and Beijing won't be the next targets?..." (Follebouckt, 2012:3).

The number of casualties, refugees, internal displaced, and wounded peoples does not stop from growing and the precarious situation the Syrian state is facing raised some questions about the existence of an International Community. Bernardo Pires de Lima (2015) dubbed the International Community as a myth due to the its inoperativeness to solve this crisis that lasts for five years, and to which there is no solution in a foreseeable future (Adams, 2015). Angelina Jolie (2015), as a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Goodwill Ambassador, was invited to address a discourse at the 7433rd UNSC meeting regarding the topic of the Syrian crisis. She also criticised the involvement of the International Community in this particular conflict, stating that "we are failing" in seeking for diplomatic solutions to save lives.

The lives of Syrian citizens are being threatened on a daily basis, and the uncertainty hovers Syria. However, the government forces are not the only to be blamed for it; the opposition is more concerned in achieving the goal of overthrowing Assad than to spare the lives of innocents[165] (Adams, 2015; United Nations, 2015; Pinheiro, 2015). If the Syrian people once were hopeful that the International Community would find an international solution to the crisis, that hope just turned into anger and resignation (Jolie, 2015).

Finding an option fitting all the parts involved is complicated, if not impossible: "[s]ince the uprising began, some States have endeavoured to influence the conduct of various parts according to their geopolitical interests. Their support extended to financial and military realms" (United Nations, 2015:18). Various attempts for a political solution have been made, but interests of the states always got in the way[166].

In fact, one may think that the Syrian crisis fits the criteria for a UNSC resolution approving a military intervention under the R2P doctrine though, once more, states do not seem to find a common ground. In other words, political, economic and diplomatic sanctions did not have the desired effect and a military intervention cannot receive positive votes from China and Russia (Williams, Ulbrick & Worboys, 2012; Reis Rodrigues; Prazeres, 2013; van As, 2013; Nuruzzaman, 2013; Adams, 2015). Russia has used its right to veto five times since the beginning of the conflict.

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[165] "Since 2012, indiscriminate and disproportionate bombardments have been the primary cause of civilian casualties and mass displacement in the Syrian Arab Republic (...) Indiscriminate bombardments have also damed homes, medical facilities, schools, water and electrical facilities, bakeries and crops (...) all parties to the Syrian civil war, with no exception, have used heavy weaponry in their possession to target populated areas (...) None has shown any willingness to spare civilian lives" (Pinheiro, 2015:np).

[166] "Critical financial and military assistance injected by different States into the conflict has fuelled the warring parties' unwillingness to compromise as they continued to believe that they could prevail militarily (...) The consistent support provided to the Government by its international backers, in terms of military equipment, advice and training, encouraged it to persist in its military and security approach based on the excessive use of force (...) States supporting the opposition have also provided various groups and coalitions with lethal and non-lethal military equipment (...) the support given to the so-called 'moderates' has ultimately consolidated the dominance of extremist groups such as ISIS, and Jabhat Al-Nusra, which managed to overrun the positions of moderates and to gain loyalties among their ranks" (United Nations, 2015:18).

The first time was at the 6627th UNSC Meeting, in October 2011. The Russian representative Vitaly Churkin expressed his dissatisfaction with the draft proposed, as it expressed a "philosophy of confrontation" (Churkin, 2011 in UNSC, 2011:3). Tough condemning the violence used against the demonstrators, Churkin urged against the violation of "the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as the principle of non-intervention, including military, in its affairs". The second veto occurred a few months later, in February 2012. Once more, Churkin criticised the role of the UNSC, once the draft in voting did not express the reality with accuracy nor did take into consideration the Russian suggestions[167]. The UNSC reunited once more to discuss and approve another draft on the Syrian crisis, but once more the perspectives were frustrated. Russia vetoed another resolution based on the lack of Western intention to find a commitment[168]. The fourth veto occurred in May 2014. Churkin stressed the importance of unity among the UNSC permanent members, the P5. He also accused the West of an attempt to use the International Criminal Court to catalyse a military intervention[169]. This disregarded both the Russian and Chinese claims about the importance of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The five and so far last veto occurred in October 2016. During the UNSC meeting, to which Churkin presided, he reflected, regarding Syria, on the difficulty of reaching an understanding. He put the blame on anti-Russian sentiments, but also expressed his commitment to achieve a settlement pleasing all the parties:

> We realize that our draft resolution will not get enough votes today. Some will be guided by anti-Russian sentiments, others by false notions of prestige, and some will simply not have the courage. Russia will nonetheless continue to work to achieve a settlement in Syria with all interested international and regional stakeholders (Churkin, 2016 in UNSC, 2016:5).

Another important factor that has been present in most of Churkins addresses to the UNSC was the intervention in Libya, and its lack of transparence. The broader interpretation of the UNSC 1973 resolution that resulted on the overthrown of Gaddafi's regime hardens the path for a political solution

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[167] "The work of the Security Council was not taken to its conclusion. The draft resolution put to the vote (S/2012/77) did not adequately reflect the true state of affairs in Syria and sent a biased signal to the Syrian sides. The sponsors of the draft resolution did not take into account our proposed amendments to the draft resolution to the effect that the Syrian opposition must distance itself from extremist groups that are committing acts of violence, and calling on States and all those with any relevant opportunity to use their influence to stop those groups committing acts of violence. Nor has account been taken of our proposals that along with the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from the cities, there should be an end to attacks by armed groups on State institutions and neighbourhoods. Nor has there been support for the proposal to show more flexibility for the intermediary efforts of the League of Arab States, which would increase the chances for the success of an inclusive Syrian political process" (Churkin, 2012a in UNSC, 2012a:9).
[168] "The Russian delegation had very clearly and consistently explained that we simply cannot accept a document, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, that would open the way for the pressure of sanctions and later for external military involvement in Syrian domestic affairs. The Western members of the Security Council denied such intentions (...) to further their plans of imposing their own designs on sovereign States will not prevail (...) The Western members of the Council have refused to work on the text of the draft resolution (S/2012/547, Rev.2) submitted by the Russian delegation (...) We believe that continued confrontation in the Security Council is useless and counter-productive" Churkin, 2012b in UNSC, 2012b:8-9).
[169] "The draft resolution rejected today reveals an attempt to use the ICC to further inflame political passions and lay the ultimate groundwork for eventual outside military intervention" (Churkin, 2014 in UNSC, 2014:13).

for the Syrian crisis[170] and, as time passes by, a growing multitude of armed actors on the ground threatens even more the stability of the region. The Syrian Civil War has metamorphosed — from a civil war to a war against terrorism — and all states seemed to agree that fighting terrorism has become a priority to the international security agenda.

In Syria, the opposition to Assad's regime is not united (Pires de Lima, 2015) and, in addition to ISIL, "the other revolutionary forces are almost solely jihadi groups — Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), Ahrar al-Sham (AS), the Islamic Front (JI), etc., etc. — which often fight side-by-side with that supposedly 'moderate' revolutionary force, the Free Syrian Army (FSA). In fact, the FSA is dominated by fighters tied to the Muslim Brotherhood" (Hahn, 2015:np).

The year of 2012 marked the return of Vladimir Putin to the leadership of the Russian Federation. During this year, Putin reinforced the Kremlin's support over Assad and looked for an understanding with Obama on this matter during a meeting in Los Cabos (Kremlin, 2012a). Reaching a consensus on the best way to solve the Syrian crisis is far from being achieved. US President Barack Obama was being very cautious due to the unpopular wars of Iraq and Afghanistan conducted by the US. So, alongside with the West and some regional actors in August 2014, the US-led coalition started an air strike in Syria, against ISIL. The Russian Federation, in its turn, only began its air strikes later in September 2015, after the formal request of Syrian President (BBC News, 2015a). Both, Russia and the US, have different views and strategies to fix this situation. The primary divergence is whether to keep or not President Assad in power.

On the one hand, President Putin considers Assad's regime to be the legitimate Government of Syria and "any actions to contrary in order to destroy the legitimate government will create a situation which you can witness in other countries (...) for instance in Libya where all the state institutions are disintegrated" (Putin 2015 *in* Rose, 2015b:np). On the other hand, President Obama argued that Assad is part of the problem so, he must be ousted (Mufson, 2015). According to former U.S. ambassador to Syria Edward P. Djerejian, in an interview to Bernard Gwertzman (2015:np), the US is backing the secular opposition, although proven ineffective, while Assad is firmly supported by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah.

President Putin defends he is not an advocate of Assad's family. Actually, he stresses that after forty years in power, changes are mandatory (Kremlin, 2012b). However, Putin is worried about the

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[170] "However, we proceed from the premise that resolutions should be interpreted literally, rather than broadly. If the resolution mentions no-fly zones, there must be no-fly zones and nothing more. However, nobody flies there now save for NATO warplanes. Only they fly there and only they drop bombs there. OK, Gaddafi's planes used to fly there, so at least there was an excuse there. This by no means changes my attitude to what he did and to the fact that I, together with the other G8 leaders, supported the joint declaration on Libya issued in Deauville recently. However, getting back to Syria, I would very much not like a Syrian resolution to be pulled off in a similar manner. For this reason, the Syrian resolution will not be like that. Russia shall use its right to veto it as a permanent UN Security Council member. However, other calls and statements on Syria, including those via UNSC, are possible" (Medvedev, 2011 in Financial Times, 2011).

consequences of Bashar al-Assad's departure, i.e., about "what will happen to Syria in the future" (Putin, 2012b:np). Putin goes even further: he endorses a democratic system, one that respects the will of the Syrian people, but at the same time he asks for caution, as "we really would not want any of the changes in Syria to bring chaos that we see in some other nations in the region" (Putin, 2012:np.).

The cauldron Syria is plunged into and the uncertainty of it future are factors Putin cannot ignore, and he blames the West for the power vacuum in the Middle East and North Africa region[171]. The situation in Syria has grown out of proportions with nationalist movements who aspire at overthrowing Bashar al-Assad's regime and, terrorist factions that threaten the lives of the Syrian people, such as ISIL. Putin finds "no other solution to the Syrian crisis than strengthening the effective government structures and rendering them help in fighting terrorism" (Putin *in* Rose, 2015).

The absence of a moderate opposition raises the question: "if Assad falls, who is going to replace him?". So, Putin firmly stands against a military intervention that, just like what happened in Libya, might lead to deposing Assad which Putin considers to be the lesser evil option. Putin is aware of the consequences of a radical extremist rising to power. Russia has experienced it in first hand when Dzhokar Dudaev became Chechnya's president and declared the creation of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Chechnya embraced a path o unrest and terrorism, and even when a "moderate" separatist — Aslan Maskhadov — was elected president in 1997, he was not able to revert the chaotic situation in Chechnya nor to avoid terrorism from spreading to other republics of the North Caucasus.

Chechnya was a lesson to Russia and has, ever since, been present in the way the Kremlin conducts its foreign policy, especially the fight against international terrorism. That way, by supporting Assad despite all international criticism, Putin believes that he is not making the same mistake Russia once made. Assad is a better option than leaving Syria be ruled by terrorists as once Chechnya was.

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[171] "Instead of bringing about reforms, aggressive intervention rashly destroyed government institutions and local way of life. Instead of democracy and progress, there is now violence, poverty, social disasters and total disregard for human rights, including even the right of life (...) Power vacuum in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa obviously resulted in the emergence of areas of anarchy, which were quickly filled with extremists and terrorists. The so-called Islamic State has tens of thousands of militants fighting for it, including former Iraqi soldiers who were left on the streets after de 2003 invasion. Many recruits come from Libya whose statehood was destroyed as a result of gross violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973. And now, radical groups are joined by members of so-called "moderate" Syrian opposition backed by the West. They get weapons and training, and they defect and join the so called Islamic State" (Putin, 2015 in. Charlie Rose, 2015a:np).

4.2. Syria, the North Caucasus, and the Russian territorial integrity

On October 21, 2015, President Bashar al-Assad was received in the Kremlin by President Putin with a "warm welcome" (Putin, 2015a:np.). This visit, after a speech that[172] Putin addressed to the United Nations General Assembly, can be seen as a symbol of the setting of a partnership among the two nations against international terrorism.

President Putin worries about the consequences of Assad's stepping down for several reasons, but one expressed in 2012 is the proximity of Syria to the Russian borders (Putin, 2012b). In addition, Putin fears the spreading of Islamic radicalism towards Russian borders, namely to the powder keg the North Caucasus is (Kallb, 2015). In fact, during Assad's visitation, the Russian President expressed his concern regarding the 4,000 former Soviet people who left to fight against the Syrian government, and wondered about the meaning of their return to Russia:

> This is a matter of concern for Russia too, given that sadly, people from the former Soviet Union, around 4,000 people at least, have taken up arms and are fighting on Syrian territory against the government forces. Of course, we cannot let these people gain combat experience and go through ideological indoctrination and then return to Russia (Putin, 2015a: np.).

Russia has approximately 20 million Sunni Muslims (Charap, 2013), and it is very hard to accurately estimate how many of them are supporters of ISIL's ideology and methodology, and how many of them are fighting by the terrorist organisation's side. In March 2016, International Crisis Group estimated that 5 thousand Russians were fighting in Syria, and Ramzan Kadyrov stated that 484 Chechens left (Youngman, 2016), 104 of them died and 44 returned home (International Crisis Group, 2016). Since the beginning of the second Chechen War, Russia has suffered 75 major terrorist events (International Crisis Group, 2016), despite the Caucasus Emirate's decline and FSB's success in infiltrating and dismantle radical groups, as well as the fact that charismatic Caucasian leaders had been killed (Chatham House, 2015). Due to that decline, the Caucasus Emirate pledged alliance to ISIL in June 2015. Rustam Aselderov expressed his affinity with ISIL and called other Caucasus Emirate commanders to support the caliphate, in December 2014 (Youngman, 2016), though that took some time because

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[172] During the commemorations of 70th anniversary of the United Nations, President Putin addressed the General Assembly and expressed the necessity of a global response towards international terrorism, which represents a threat to all: "Relying on international law, we must join efforts to address the problems that all of us are facing, and create a genuinely broad international coalition against terrorism. Similar to the anti-Hitler coalition, it could unite a broad range of parties willing to stand firm against those who, just lithe the Nazis, sow evil and hatred of humankind. And of course, Muslim nations should play a key role in such coalition, since Islamic State not only poses a direct threat to them, but also tarnishes one of the greatest world religions with its atrocities" (Putin, 2015b: np).

the Caucasus Emirate leader, Aliaskhab Kebekov, was a strong advocate of Al-Qaeda. Only after his assassination, in April 2015, a pro-ISIL tendency was strengthened (International Crisis Group, 2016).

In short, the North Caucasus region has connections to the Global Jihad, especially through Dagestan where are located the Caucasus Emirate's headquarters, and Putin exhibits some concern regarding the possible consequences of the returning mujaheddin who travelled to Syria to fight by ISIL's side. Despite several Russian support over Assad's regime has resulted in several promises of bloodshed in Russia, an attempt to assassinate Ramzan Kadyrov, and other nine of its associates (International Crisis Group, 2016), Russia did not cave and remain supportive of Assad's regime. So, when the Syrian President called for the Russian help, Putin promptly accepted stating that "Syria is Russia's friend and we are ready to make our contribution not only to the military operations and the fight against terrorism, but also to the political process" (Putin, 2015a:np).

The Syrian government was not in a good position in the International System, as many world leaders shared the same idea of President Obama: Assad must be replaced. Putin, otherwise, believed in the opposite. So, Assad found in Putin an ally to keep in power. Putin, in his turn, saw the uncontrolled situation in Syria, despite the American presence, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it was an opportunity for Russia to reassert its position on a partner against terrorism and get the so wanted reconnaissance as a key actor in world politics. On the other hand, by claiming the proximity of the Syrian to the Russian borders and the concerns of the possibility of a spill over of terrorism to the turbulent region of the North Caucasus, Moscow found another motive to intervene in Syria, despite the Russian principle of non-interference on domestic affairs of a sovereign state[173].

In late September 2015, Russia began a military campaign to restore the region's stability and the survival of Assad's regime (Guerisoli, 2015). In an interview to Vladimir Solovyov, President Putin claimed that he had given notice of his intentions to other countries:

> First, let me confirm what is already known, namely, that we informed our partners of our plans beforehand. We informed our American partners and many others, especially the countries in the region concerned, of our plans and intentions.
> Some say that we made this too late, but let me point out that others, when planning and commencing their operations, never inform us, but we informed them (Putin, 2015 in Solovyov, 2015: np.).

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[173] Russia believes being its duty to "counter attempts by some States or groups of States to revise the generally accepted principles of international law enshrined in the UN Charter, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations of October 24, 1970, as well as in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe of August 1, 1975; counter politically motivated and self-interested attempts by some States to arbitrarily interpret the fundamental international legal norms and principles such as non-use of force or threat of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, right of peoples to self-determination; counter attempts to represent violations of international law as "creative" applications of such norms; counter attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of States with the aim of unconstitutional change of regime, including by supporting non-State actors, such as terrorist and extremist groups" and "to prevent military interventions or other forms of outside interference contrary to international law, specifically the principle of sovereign equality of States, under the pretext of implementing the 'responsibility to protect' concept" (Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, 2016: np.).

In addition, he also claimed that he was in full compliance with the International Law, since the official Syrian Arab Republic's leader asked for his help, unlike other parties that are intervening in Syria without Bashar al-Assad's request:

> All other countries that have so far taken part in operations in Syria are acting unlawfully, because there is no UN Security Council resolution on these operations, and no official request from the Syrian authorities.
> Let me note that when we began our operation, 11 countries were already taking part in one form or another in various strikes against Syrian territory. This has been going on for more than a year now. Realising and understanding this situation, we informed our partners of our plans and proposed that we work together (Putin, 2015 in Solovyov, 2015: np.).

As a consequence of Russian strikes in Syria, ISIL has claimed responsibility for the bomb planted on the Airbus A321 (of Russian airline the Kogalymavia), causing the crash over the Sinai Peninsula (Egypt) and killing 224 people (BBC, 2015b), in October 31, 2015. President Putin declared the day before a day of mourning[174] and instructed Prime Minister Medvedev to establish a state commission that would investigate the causes of the crash of the Russian aircraft that was linking Sharm el-Sheikh to St Petersburg (Kremlin, 2015). ISIL only confirmed its involvement a few days after the incident (International Crisis Group, 2016). Meanwhile, other small terrorist attacks have been occurring in the North Caucasus after ISIL declared jihad on Russia in July 2016. Russia has several motives to get involved on the war against terrorism, one of them being the domestic context of the North Caucasus. Before its decision to support Assad, Russia suffered diverse terrorist attacks, but most of them were inside the Russian territory. Now, Russia has become, officially, a target of international terrorism, namely by ISIL's declaration of jihad against Russia. This is a recognition of the Russian Federation not only as an enemy of the pan-Islamic caliphate, but also as an actor who has been disturbing and hindering ISIL's aim, i.e., Russia is an important actor on the fight against terrorism.

ISIL's declaration of jihad on Russia happened for several reasons: Russian strikes against jihadist movements outside its borders, namely in Syria; ISIL's intention to establish a worldwide caliphate; the CE's allegiance. In addition, Gordon M. Hahn[175] stresses the existence of a new fundamentalist branch of Islam in the North Caucasus — the Caucasus Vilaiyat of the Islamic State — formed by Chechens and Dagestanis who decided to separate themselves from the CE.

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[174] "On the day of mourning, national flags are to be lowered throughout the country. Cultural institutions and television and radio stations should cancel entertainment shows and events scheduled for the day of mourning. The Government, together with the state authorities of the Russian regions, is to take the necessary steps to provide assistance to the victims' families" (Putin, 2015c:np.).

[175] This author also considers that despite the fact that radicals constitute only 5% of the population, Moscow should take into consideration that call for jihad (Hahn 2016 *in* Netesova, 2016).

Conclusion

More than twenty years after the end of the first Chechen War, Chechnya continues to be a complex matter to the leaders of the Russian Federation. In fact, the North Caucasus has been a sensitive matter in the Russian politics for centuries. From the 16th century, when the region was integrated in the Russian Empire, passing by the 1944 Staline's deportations, until now, the North Caucasus has been constantly challenging the Russian rule.

The primary aim of this dissertation was to understand how the Chechen struggle for independence movement has influenced the Russian Federation's anti-terrorism foreign policy, namely if the Russian decision to support Bashar al-Assad's regime and intervene at his request in Syria had been motivated, in part, by the domestic context of the North Caucasus. Russia has a long tradition of fighting terrorism. In 1998, Boris Yeltsin signed the first Russian legal framework on this matter named *On the fight against terrorism* and it happened after the end of the first Russo-Chechen conflict. This conflict was marked by the clash of two incompatible aspirations: (1) the Chechen ambition to become free of the Russian rule; and (2) the Russian national interest of territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Kremlin has presented the Chechen secessionist movement as an existential threat to the security of the Russian Federation ever since Dzhokar Dudaev (Chechen rebel later President of Chechnya) declared Chechnya's independence, later reinforced by the declaration of a CTO in Chechnya after several terrorist attacks on the Russian soil.

In order to understand the complexity of the thematic of this research, we have chosen two theoretical frameworks: the Theory of Securitisation and the IN-OUT security nexus. We intended to understand if the Chechen secessionist had been securitised as an IN-OUT threat to the Russian territorial integrity and sovereignty and, as a consequence, to its security. So, in the first chapter we addressed the evolution of the concept of security to embrace new security threats, in which we gave particular focus to the terrorist one. It is our understanding that security, despite being a social construct, is still a major topic to the state's agenda and that it still has a great ton of influence on the behaviour of a state. The IN-OUT security nexus narrative puts in evidence that a threat like terrorism is a transboundary threat that has no respect for the physical frontiers of a state, meaning that the threat may come from the outside and still have impact on the domestic politics of a state. Unlike to what was advocated by traditional thinkers, especially the Realist scholars, states no longer detain the monopoly

of violence. The end of the Cold War marks a point of no return on the understanding of security, as it puts in evidence that (national) security is no longer contemplated solely on hard security terms (military terms).

In the first chapter we have shown evidence that hard security threats are being supplanted by soft security threats[176]. Terrorism, which is considered a soft security threat (Aldis & Herd, 2005), is a plain example of how an international threat can affect the internal security of an actor. The Chechen rebels have, indeed, explored the phenomenon of terrorism two times during the first Chechen War, but it was after 1999 that they began to use it on a regular basis against the Russian government to make it yield and concede Chechnya its independence. In order to understand how the rebels have exploited terrorism against Russia, and how that has shaped the Russian politics both at the internal and external levels, we must have knowledge of the context in which the Russo-Chechen conflict began, and how it has evolved over time. To that extent, in the second chapter we addressed the rebellious character of the North Caucasus with special focus on Chechnya, and how it strived to be understood by its own identity and not as part of the Russian Federation.

The people from the Caucasus do not share the same ethno-cultural and historic values as the Russians, and they did not shy away from underlining their dissatisfaction. The North Caucasus population is mainly Muslim and wish to live under the rule of Quran. So, the independence wave spreading through Russia after the end of the Cold War was seen as an opportunity to restore their control over their territory and revive their religious and cultural traditions. Religion is an important instrument of mobilisation and, in the North Caucasus religion — in this case Islam — has always had a great influence on the region's daily life. The North Caucasus is a multicultural and ethnic mosaic that also has a variety of spoken languages, which could have isolated its people more that the sinuous mountains. It was through Islam that this cultural puzzle was brought together. It was through Islam that the Caucasus' people found the strength to fight the Kremlin's influence.

Notwithstanding, Islam was also used by rebels connected to radical ideologies such as Salafism. These ideals found some acceptance especially between the younger generations. These people had little contact with the religious traditions of the North Caucasus — Sufi traditions — and Salafism provided an attractive alternative (Sagramoso, 2012:568) for those

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[176] For more information on hard and soft security threats see Aldis & Herd (2005).

who did not foresee a prosperous future, i.e., many of the Chechen rebels found inspiration and purpose in Al-Qaeda and its terrorist acts. Even though it was not the preferred method, the Chechen movement resorted to terrorism during the first Chechen War — Budyonnovsk (1995) and Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye (1996). The arrival of foreign fighters contributed to the metamorphosis of the Chechen secessionist movement, later confirmed by the 1999 series of bombings in several Russian cities and the same year's incursion into Dagestan.

Chechnya was the first North Caucasus republic to express its unwillingness to keep under Moscow's control and to exacerbate its increasingly less integration within the Russian parameters. The collapse of the USSR was seen as an opportunity for Chechnya to restore its freedom and Dzhokar Dudaev — the Chechen President — took that opportunity and created the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Boris Yeltsin, on his turn, inherited a panoply of economic and identity problems in the aftermath of the Cold War and maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Russian Federation was his primary goal. Dudaev's declaration of independence, however, challenged the primary goal of Yeltsin's domestic politics. In order to prevent the erosion of the newly created state, the Russian President waged a war in December 1994 to reinforce Russia's control over Chechnya. That did not happen, though.

The year of 1996 was a milestone for Russia: in addition to losing the first Chechen War — marked by the signing of the Khassavyurt Accords — and Chechnya's special status of automomy as a result, Russia had to deal with the aftermath of the influx of the foreign mujaheddin who came to the North Caucasus to free their fellow Muslims and to help them get rid of the Russian "infidels". Even though the first Chechen War was asymmetrical — and the Chechens used guerrilla warfare tactics since they were outnumbered — it was not until the arrival of these foreign fighters that terrorist tactics were employed in Russia to make the Government yield. During the last year of the war and the period before another military campaign in Grozny being ordered, some Islamist fighters settled in the North Caucasus to teach the population fighting tactics and radical ideologies, or the pure Islam as they addressed to it. Also, they promoted a programme of exchange, i.e., the Chechens interested in expanding their knowledge in Islam (the "pure one") or to further develop their fighting skills were welcomed to join the jihadi camps in Arab countries.

It was after to the arrival of these foreign fighters that major terrorist events started to occur throughout Russia, two of them being highly covered by the media — the 2002

Dubrovka Theatre and the 2004 Beslan sieges. As we have argued in the third chapter, terrorism was not the preferred method during the first Chechen War, but the socioeconomic problems allied to the religious character of the region enabled radicalism to grow and to the foreign fighters to have followers. It was this radicalism that transformed the Chechen secular movement[177] into a religion-oriented one based on a radical interpretation of Islam, and way different from the Chechen tradition of Sufi Islam. Plus, this radicalism materialised in several terrorist attacks has allowed the Kremlin to stress the IN-OUT threat posed by the Chechen movement.

After the two Chechen rebel's incursion into Dagestan (1999), and, fearing the younger generations' acceptance of that radical ideals and of what they could mean to the security of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin decided that a new military campaign was necessary in order to prevent the unrest in Chechnya from spreading through the entire region. Putin blamed the Chechen President, Aslan Maskhadov, for the spiral of crime and instability Chechnya dived into. According to him, Mashkadov was a weak leader who could not prevent radicalism from spreading towards the other North Caucasus republics.

Russia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin — he was elected President in 2000 — was more assertive than under Yeltsin, and that was palpable by the way Putin approached the crisis in Chechnya. Yeltsin's military campaign was doomed from the beginning: in addition to the lack of planning and preparation of the military campaign itself, Boris Yeltsin allowed a fully media coverage of the conflict. Instead of playing in favour of the Russian Federation, it played against it. The Chechens were able to conquer the hearts and minds of the International Community, and Yeltsin ended up being severely criticised. In other words, Yeltsin was not able to convince his population nor the International Community that the Chechen insurgent movement was an existential threat to the security of the Russian Federation. Declaring war on Chechnya was a securitising move that was not legitimised by the audience, meaning there was no securitisation. People inside and outside Russia related to the United Nations Charter principle of self-determination, so they legitimised the Chechen struggle for independence and rejected the Kremlin's rhetoric and military intervention.

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[177] It is important to, once more, reinforce that the Islam was a unifying factor of the North Caucasus people and that the independence ideal was not directly linked to religion. The North Caucasus people did not share the same cultural and religious nor principles of the Russian Federation. The vast majority is Sunni Muslim and believes in the Sharia law. It is our understanding that the desire for independence has mostly to do with a matter of identity, since the North Caucasus several identities already existed prior to the integration of the region inside the borders of the Russian Empire, i.e., the Chechen aspiration for freedom had to do with the fact that the Chechen people wanted to get back the control over its territory.

Putin, in his turn, learnt from the previous president's mistakes and opted for a more comprehensive approach to the conflict based on a military intervention in Chechnya — this time the Russian army was better-prepared and informed. Vladimir Putin also understood that a parallel strategy should be outlined, namely by establishing a better coordination between the FSB and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence; selection of the media present in Chechnya — Putin did not grant full access to the second Chechen War, instead he controlled everyone who could cover the conflict in order to prevent the world to side once more with the Chechen insurgents —; and the "Chechenisation" strategy — this measure consisted in naming President of Chechnya a person that the Kremlin considered to rule the republic according to Moscow's directives, i.e., naming someone loyal to the Federal Government. "Chechenisation" was crucial to calm things down in Chechnya. "Chechenisation" allowed the Kremlin to re-centralise power and enabled Putin to select those people he knew would follow Moscow's guiding lines/directives as it was the case of Akhmad and Ramzan Kadyrov (father and son, respectively). The current Chechen President, Ramzan Kadyrov, has been in power since 2007 and enjoys a special status of autonomy. This has to do with the progress Chechnya has undergone since his election, but also because of his unconditional support[178] over Vladimir Putin. Ramzan Kadyrov's public adoration and loyalty to Putin has extended to Dmitri Medvedev, since the Russian President from 2008 to 2012 was Putin's protégée.

Putin has the highest approving rates, and he has always been a popular President. This is, in part, because of the way he faced the Chechen crisis. His confidence and strong posture allowed him to act differently from Yeltsin. He was successful in portraying the Chechen insurgency as an immediate threat to the Russian integrity. The series of terrorist attacks preceding his first election — the 1999 incursion into Dagestan and apartment block bombings in Moscow and other four Russian cities — plus the sieges of the Dubrovka Theatre (2002) and of the school in Beslan (2004) helped Putin to build his rhetoric that the North Caucasus insurgency had been progressively connecting with international terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda. These events helped him to convince his audience — both at home and externally —that international terrorism had no respect for boundaries and that the danger coming from outside was jeopardising Russia's integrity by taking advantage of the insurgent

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[178] As long as Ramzan Kadyrov shows that the nationalist movements are being handled, he can do whatever he considers necessary and receive support from the Kremlin.

movement urging for independence since the beginning of the 1990s. That is to say that Vladimir Putin was successful in portraying that the secular movement of the North Caucasus has metamorphosed into terrorism, fruit from the influence of the foreign fighters' ideology imprinted on the rebels.

The Kremlin's securitising move was accepted both at home and internationally. The 1999 bombings were a cornerstone for the Russian government to convince its population that the Chechens were a threat to Russia and to the lives of its citizens. At an international level, it was the year of 2001 that made a significant change on the world's perception of Russia. By labelling the second Chechen War not a war but a CTO, and through discourse and through the historic and socio-cultural context — the several terrorist attacks in which Russia was the target and its association with 9/11 events — Russia was able to securitised the Chechen rebellion turned into a terrorist one as an IN-OUT threat. More, George W. Bush expressed, after 9/11, his understanding regarding the Chechen situation and invited Putin to join his global war on terrorism and to reset the Russian-US relations. The reconnaissance of Russia as a fitting partner on the fight against terrorism granted the Kremlin legitimacy to take upon the extraordinary measures considered necessary, such as the centralisation of power, although putting under jeopardy liberal democracy in Russia.

The CTO in Chechnya has come to an end in 2009, under Dmitri Medvedev's Presidency. The authoritarian leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov and the violence applied by him and those loyal to him led Chechnya to decrease its violence ratings, though the threat of terrorism did not suddenly vanish. Instead, the locus of the threat moved from Chechnya to Dagestan in 2007. As we have already acknowledged, Al-Qaeda has become a source of inspiration for many homegrown terrorist groups. This has to do, in part, with the phenomenon of globalisation, which allowed an easier propagation of the radical ideas preached and the recruitment of new members to join the jihadi cause. Something similar happened in the North Caucasus. The authoritarian style of Ramzan Kadyrov and his persecution of those intended at disrupting the ongoing process of "Chechenisation" obliged the rebels to move away from Chechen and to establish the CE's headquarters in the neighbouring Dagestan.

The CE is the successor of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria created by Dzhokar Dudaev in 1991. The CE intends the creation of an Islamic caliphate inside the Russian Federation whose foundations lay on Islam, i.e., the North Caucasus is divided in vilayats or provinces that must follow the Emir — Doku Umarov was the first Emir (2007) — and the Sharia law. This

represented another attempt of the rebels at state-building. It is important to note that they aspired the creation of a function body just like any other state, but the rebels understood that the pillars of the caliphate must ascribe to the Islamic laws. The supporters of the CE believed in monotheism and in the Salafi teachings, which may connect them with Al-Qaeda but diverge from the majority of the Caucasus' people who is Sufi. The Caucasus Emirate never demarcated from its association with Al-Qaeda, and has been implicated in several terrorist plots inside Russian borders. Even though no terrorist attack outside Russia has been claimed by the CE, this is considered a terrorist organisation by Russia, the US and the United Nations. More recently, more specifically since the summer of 2015, the CE has been gradually transferring its loyalty to ISIL, another Sunni-inspired radical and terrorist organisation.

The CE's allegiance to ISIL in addition to the Russian citizens (many of them being from the North Caucasus) who left Russia to fight against the Syrian government have raised concern to the Kremlin, i.e., the connection between the North Caucasus and the global jihadist groups worries the Kremlin. The North Caucasus has always proven to be a difficult region to deal with, even when the insurgents waged a secular rebellious movement against Russia. Despite being able to create more stability in Chechnya, the Kremlin was not able to replicate with success the "Chechenisation" process in other republics, nor to fully eradicate the menace portrayed by the insurgents, even though violence rates have been decreasing over the last few years. The expansion of ISIL in Syria and in Iraq, and the recruitment of new members to join the jihadist movement, is a concern to the Kremlin not just because of those who left the North Caucasus and the former Soviet republics to join ISIL, but also because of the possible consequences of their return.

Russia has dealt with terrorism inside its borders, especially after 1999, but this kind of terrorism is not similar to the ethno-nationalist terrorism of the Irish Republic Army, nor the Red Brigades nor the Booder-Meinhof movement. The ethno-nationalist movement of the North Caucasus has evolved by its connection to the global jihadist groupings, meaning that terrorism in Russia has been a fusion of separatist aspirations and international terrorist ideologies. The IN-OUT character of this threat has bound Moscow to coordinate its anti-terrorism foreign policy in accordance to the domestic situation in the North Caucasus. The Russian intervention in Syria is a reflex of such coordination. Despite the Russian principle of non-intervention in the domestic politics of other states, it has accepted Bashar al-Assad's

request to help him fight against terrorism. The lack of unity of the opposition to Assad's regime and the fact that most of the factions fighting in Syria were radical and terrorist organisations led first Medvedev and then Putin to show support to Assad, whom Russia affirms to be the legitimate government in Syria, despite all the international criticism.

Moscow does not find that any part of the opposition is fit to take Assad's place, so supporting Assad is the best option available, even though Putin has stressed that a political change was needed in Syria. As a consequence, Russia has used its right to veto all the resolutions under the UNSC that might result on another R2P intervention such as the one that occurred in Libya. The last time Russia let a R2P intervention pass (with the Russian abstention), the regime fell. There was an abusive interpretation of the R2P doctrine and Libya's regime of Muammar Gaddafi was deposed. Russia put the blame on the US and, ever since, has vetoed every possible resolution that could have the same ending. If Assad is deposed, who is going to be his successor? The void left by Assad's removal would lead Syria to a vacuum of power and to a spiral of extremism and terrorism. Russia learnt its lesson with Aslan Maskhadov in Chechnya. His rule only deepened the chaotic situation in which Chechnya was dived into and enabled the unrest to spread throughout the North Caucasus region.

As above-mentioned, the decision to support Bashar al-Assad has granted Russia with serious international criticism. However, we cannot ignore that terrorism is indeed a threat to security and it has occupied a particularly relevant role in the Russian security agenda for a while. Since 1998, three years prior to 9/11 and the US-led coalition against international terrorism, Russia declared war on terrorism (Oldberg, 2006). In addition to international reconnaissance of Russia as a major actor in the International System, Russia has security concerns regarding international and the volatile situation in the North Caucasus. The Russian leadership looks at the spiral of terrorism in Syria with apprehension, as it could fuel the North Caucasus insurgent movement and re-energise another wave of unrest and terrorism hitting Russia.

Vladimir Putin has already expressed his concern regarding the comeback of Russians who went to Syria to receive jihadist training and, as a consequence, acquired more experience on fighting "infidels". The second intervention in Chechnya was considered a success, since the Kadyrovs (both father and son) were crucial to the process of stabilising the republic, even if it was through violence and fear. The fact that many North Caucasus people left the country

to fight for an international terrorist organisation whose aim is the creation of a global caliphate could jeopardise the Kremlin's efforts to bring a relative peace to Chechnya and the North Caucasus and stimulate a new wave of unrest and instability.

Russia has been the stage of over 75 terrorist attacks since the beginning of the second Chechen War. The two more recent and high profile terrorist attacks happened after Russia started to actively fight terrorism in Syria. The first was the plane crash whose destination was St. Petersburg. The plane was operated by a Russian airline company and plummet when flying over the Sinai Peninsula, in October 31, 2015. 224 people died in this terrorist event, later claimed by an affiliate of ISIL. The second, and despite being outside the timeline of this dissertation, was the St. Petersburg metro explosions in April 3, 2017. Putin stated there was an ongoing investigation to determine the causes and who was responsible for it:

> The reasons behind it are not clear yet, and so it would be premature to speak about them. The investigation is ongoing. Of course, we always consider all scenarios, including accidental or criminal action, and above all, those of a terrorist nature. The ongoing investigation will soon provide answers regarding the causes of this tragedy (Putin, 2017).

However, later that day, the Russian Investigative Committee confirmed it to be a terrorist attack, and the National Antiterrorist Committee announced that 11 people were killed and 45 were injured during the explosion (Kremlin, 2017).

Terrorism has proven to be an IN-OUT security threat to Russia, which confirms our initial hypotheses. Also, it affects both realms of the Russian politics, meaning that the security and stability of the country are, constantly, being challenged. However, in a future research, we consider pertinent to explore the motives of the Russian Federation to engage on a war against terrorism from another point of view. We have argued that the Russian intervention in Syria was interconnected to the domestic context of the North Caucasus, but we must acknowledge that being recognised as a centre of influence and a key actor in the International System has been an aim of the Russian Federation since its creation. This leads to the question: in addition to an IN-OUT security threat, is terrorism an opportunity for Russia to remerge as a key player in the International System?

This aspiration is reflected in every Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concepts and other strategic documents and, the global fight against terrorism was the opportunity Russia was waiting for, especially Vladimir Putin. When Putin first came to power he considered that the Russian State was falling apart and attributed the blame to terrorism and, "[a]s a result, Putin

launched a large-scale securitisation of Russia's domestic situation with a prioritisation of internal security threats over external ones" but "[a] victory over international terrorism was hailed as a key stepping stone towards Russia asserting its sovereign rights over its territory, and regaining its status as a confident and strong domestic and international actor" (Snetkov, 2012:524-525). Vladimir Putin has been particularly efficient in constructing a narrative in why the Chechen rebellious movement should be securitised as an IN-OUT threat, and the fact that several terrorist attacks happened all over Russia helped the Kremlin receive general acceptance, but we suggest further researches to take into consideration the Russian war on terror and the re-emergence of Russia as an important actor after the end of Cold War.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: The main foreign policy goals of the Russian Federation in overview

The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation	The 2008 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation	The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation	The 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation
- Security of the country; - Preservation and strength of sovereignty and territorial integrity; - To achieve a prestigious position in the world community, consistent with Russia as a great power.	- Security of the country; - Preservation and strength of sovereignty and territorial integrity; - To achieve a prestigious position in the world community, consistent with Russia as a great power.	- Security of the country; - Preservation and strength of sovereignty and territorial integrity; - To secure Russia's high position in the internationational community.	- Security of the country; - Preservation and strength of sovereignty and territorial integrity; - To strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions.
- To be able to influence the general world processes.	- To be able to influence the general world processes.	- Creation of external conditions that will allow a steady and dynamic growth of the Russian economy and its technological modernizations.	- Creation of external conditions that will allow a steady and dynamic growth of the Russian economy and its technological modernizations.
- Creation of external conditions that will promote a steady developement of Russia.	- Creation of external conditions that will promote the modernization of Russia and, consequently, enusure its competitiveness in a globalising world.	- Promotion of international peace, security and stability to establish an international system just and democratic.	- Consolidation of the Russian Federation as a centre of influence.
- Promotion of a good neighbourhood in order to eliminate and prevent potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts near the Russian borders.	- Promotion of a good neighbourhood in order to eliminate and prevent potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts near the Russian borders.	- Promotion of a good neighbourhood in order to prevent tensions and conflicts near the Russian Federation.	- To strength the Russian economic relations and to prevent any discrimination against Russian goods, services and investments.
- To build a system of alliances and partnerships to improve international cooperation.	- Establishment of bilateral and multilateral partnerships.	- Development of bilateral and multilateral partnerships.	- Promotion of international peace, security and stability to establish an international system just and democratic.

- The respect of the rights and interests of the Russian citizens: inside and outside Russia.	- The respect of the rights and interests of the Russian citizens: inside and outside Russia.	- To strengthen Russia's position in the global trade and economic system.	- Promotion of a good neighbourhood in order to prevent tensions and conflicts near the Russian Federation.
- Promotion of Russia in the world: a positive image of the country, of the language and culture.	- Promotion of Russia as a democratic and market economy orientated state.	- Protection of the rights and legitimate interests of their citizens and those living abroad.	- Promotion of bilateral and multilateral partnerships.
	- Promotion of Russia in the world: a positive image of the country, of the language and culture.	- Promotion of the Russian language.	- Protection of the rights and legitimate interests of their citizens and those living abroad.
		- Development of a constructive dialogue and relations between civilizations.	- Promotion of Russia in the world: a positive image of the country, of the language and culture.
			- Bolstering the Russian mass media and communication position in the world in order to promote the Russian perspective to a wider international community.
			- Development of a constructive dialogue and relations between civilizations.

SOURCE: production of the author based on the Russian Foreign Policy Concepts of the Russian Federation.

Appendix 2: Chechen rebel leaders throughout Russian Presidents
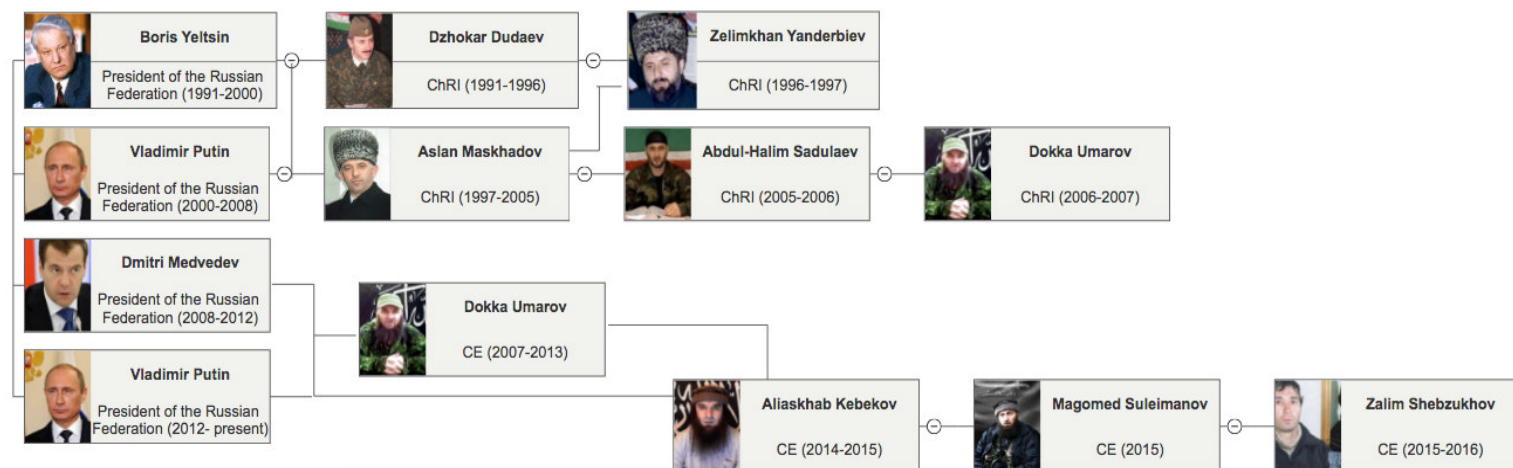
SOURCE: production of the author based on the bibliography of this dissertation.

Appendix 3: Contrasting the two Chechen Wars

	First Chechen War	Second Chechen War
Duration	1994-1996	1999-2009
Motives/Justifications	- Chechnya's demand for independece (Dudaev). - Defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity; - Restore constitutional order in Chechnya; - Overthrow Dudaev.	- Summer of 1999 housebuilding bombings in four Russian cities; - To revert the special status of Chechnya; - North Caucasus' connection to Al-Qaeda.
Before the war	- Four couvert operations from 1992 to 1994; - Support of the anti-Dudaev opposition; - Fifth operation in Chechnya (November) that led to the declaration of war in December 1994.	- Chechnya failed state building attempt. - Chechnya became a hub of crime and banditry susceptible to terrorism and a threat to Russia;
Stages of war	Military intervention - March 1995: 53,500 soldiers arrived at Chechnya; - The Chechen rebels were pushed back to the mountains and to Ingushetia; - The rebels used guerrilla-war tactics;	Military intervention - *cordon sanitaire* to circumscribe the rebels; - isolate the terrorists; - to destroy the terrorist bases;
	Influx of foreign fighters - June 1995: Budyonnovsk hospital crisis - January 1996: Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye hostage crisis.	Political intervention - Securitisation of the media; - Re-centralisation of power ("vertical power"); - "Chechenisation".

Post-war	- 1996: negotiations between Grozny and Moscow: the Khassavyurt Accords that enabled Chechnya a special status; - 1997: election of Maskhadov as President of Chechnya; - 1998: adoption of a legal framework on terrorism.	- 2004: Putin named Akhmad Kadyrov president of Chechnya. - 2007: Ramzan Kadyrov (Akmad's son) became head of Chechnya; - Decrease of violence ratings in Chechnya; - Spillover of the unrest to other North Caucasus' republics; - Creation of the CE (2007); - Allegiance of the CE to ISIL (2016)

SOURCE: production of the author based on the bibliography of this dissertation.
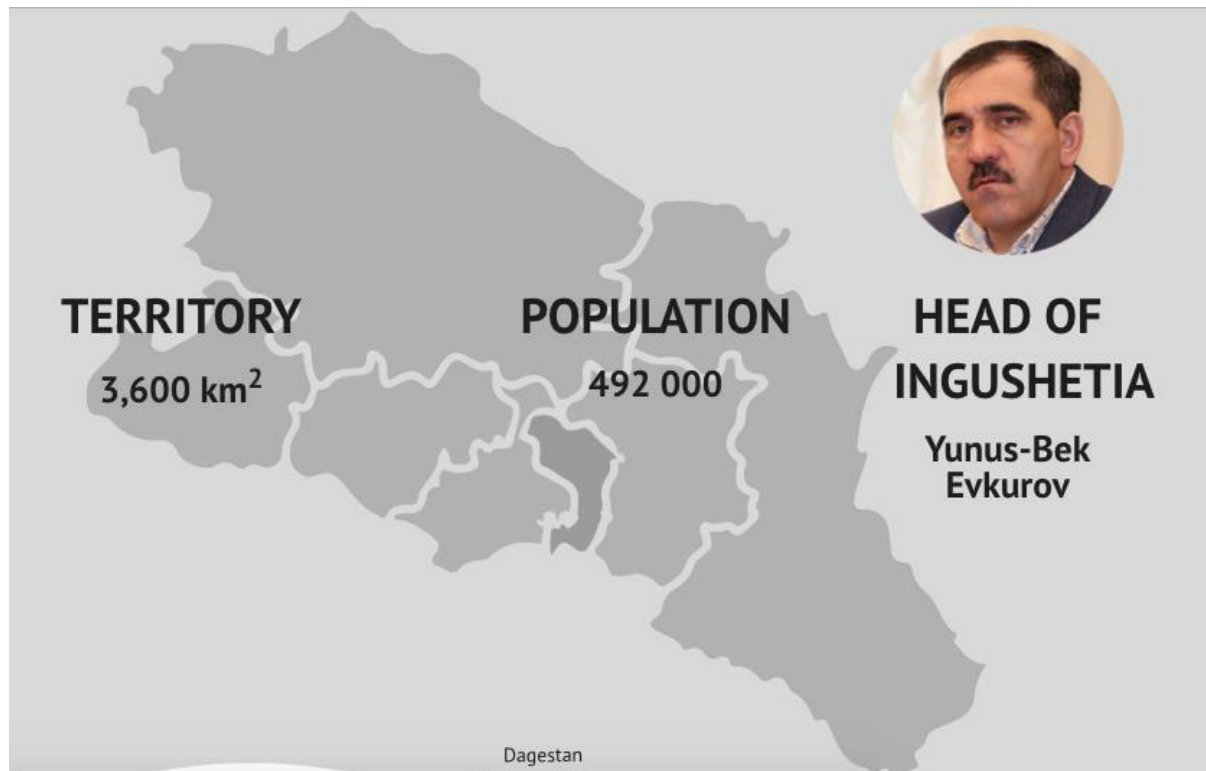
Annexes

Annex 1: The Republic of Dagestan

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .
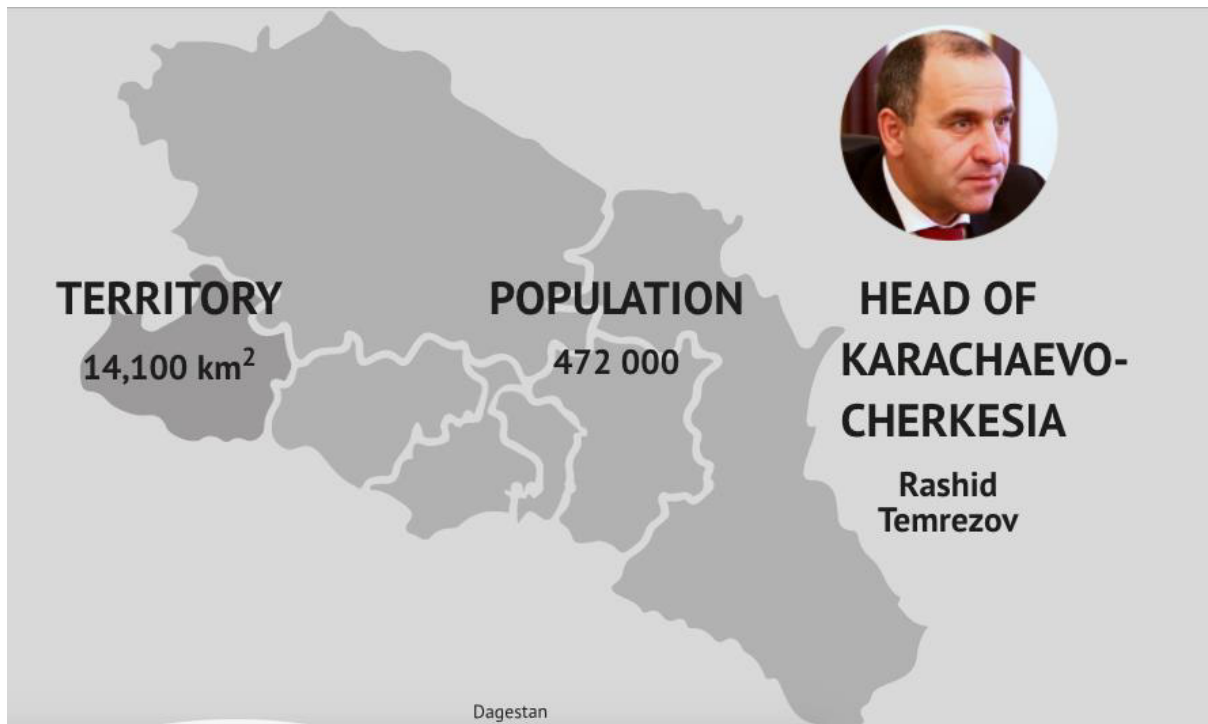
Annex 2: The Region of Stavropol
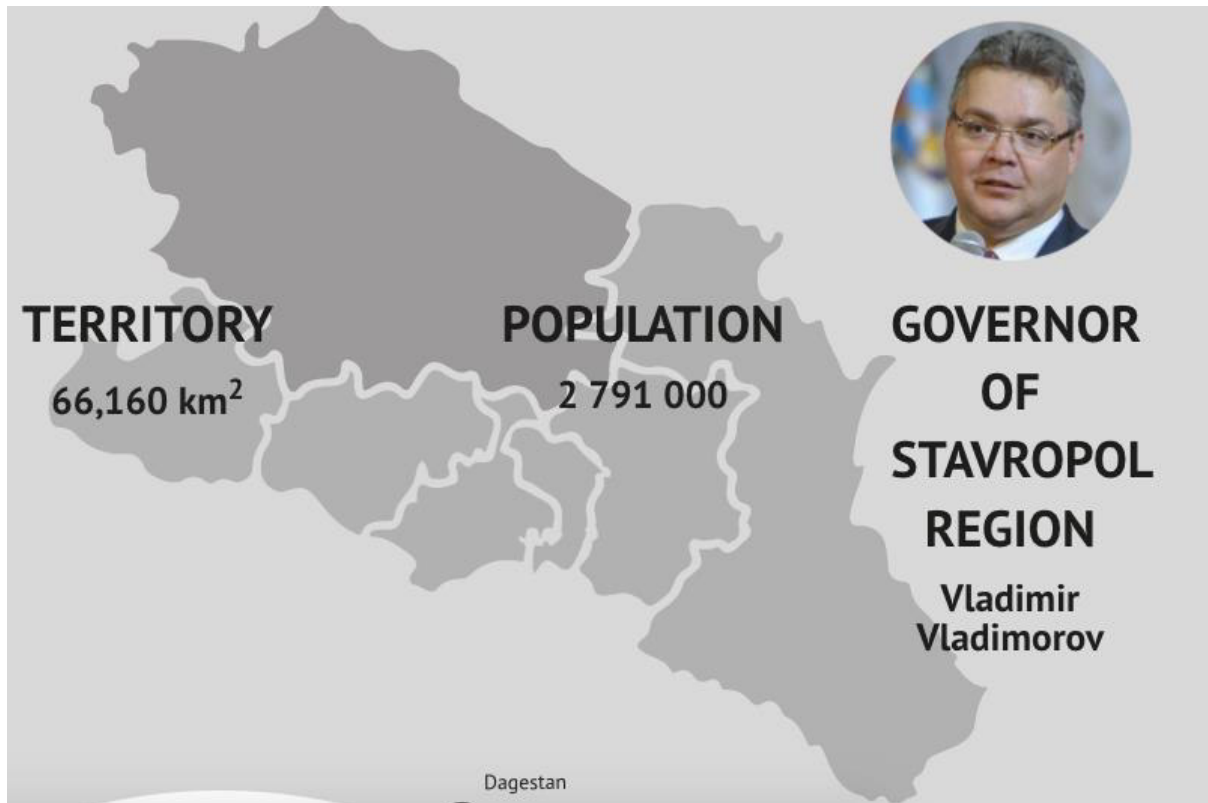
SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .

Annex 3: The Republic of Chechnya

SOURCE Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .
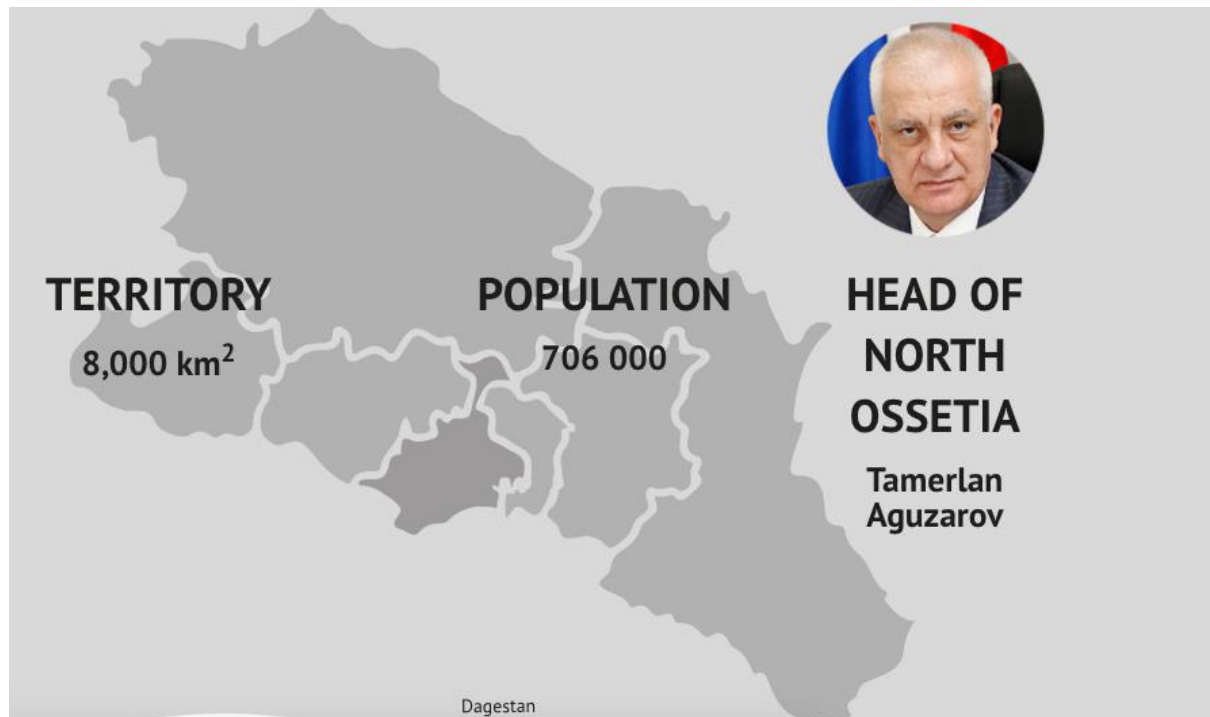
Annex 4: The Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .
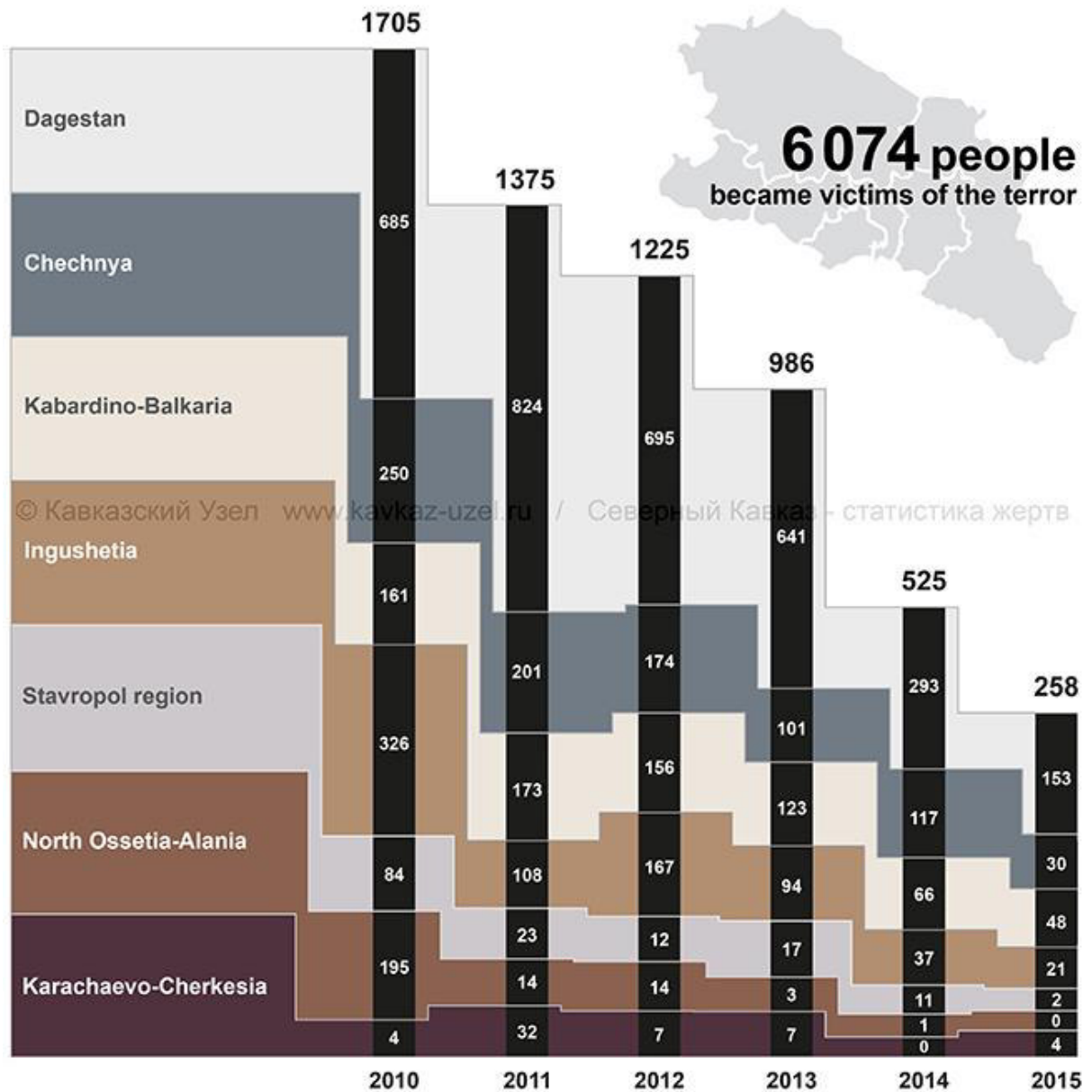
Annex 5: The Republic of Ingushetia

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .

Annex 6: The Republic of Karachai-Cherkessia

TERRITORY
14,100 km^2

POPULATION
472 000

HEAD OF KARACHAEVO-CHERKESIA

Rashid Temrezov

Dagestan

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .

Annex 7: The Republic of North Ossetia

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for the Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/statistics_victims_2010_2015.html?l=en [Accessed in March 8, 2017] .

Annex 8: Victims of terrorism in the North Caucasus from 2010-2015

SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Infographics. The Statistics of the Number of Victims in the North Caucasian Federal District Regions for a Period of 6 Years." *Kavkaz Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/34546/. [Accessed in March 8, 2017].

Annex 9: Firearm incidents and explosions and terror acts in the North Caucasus
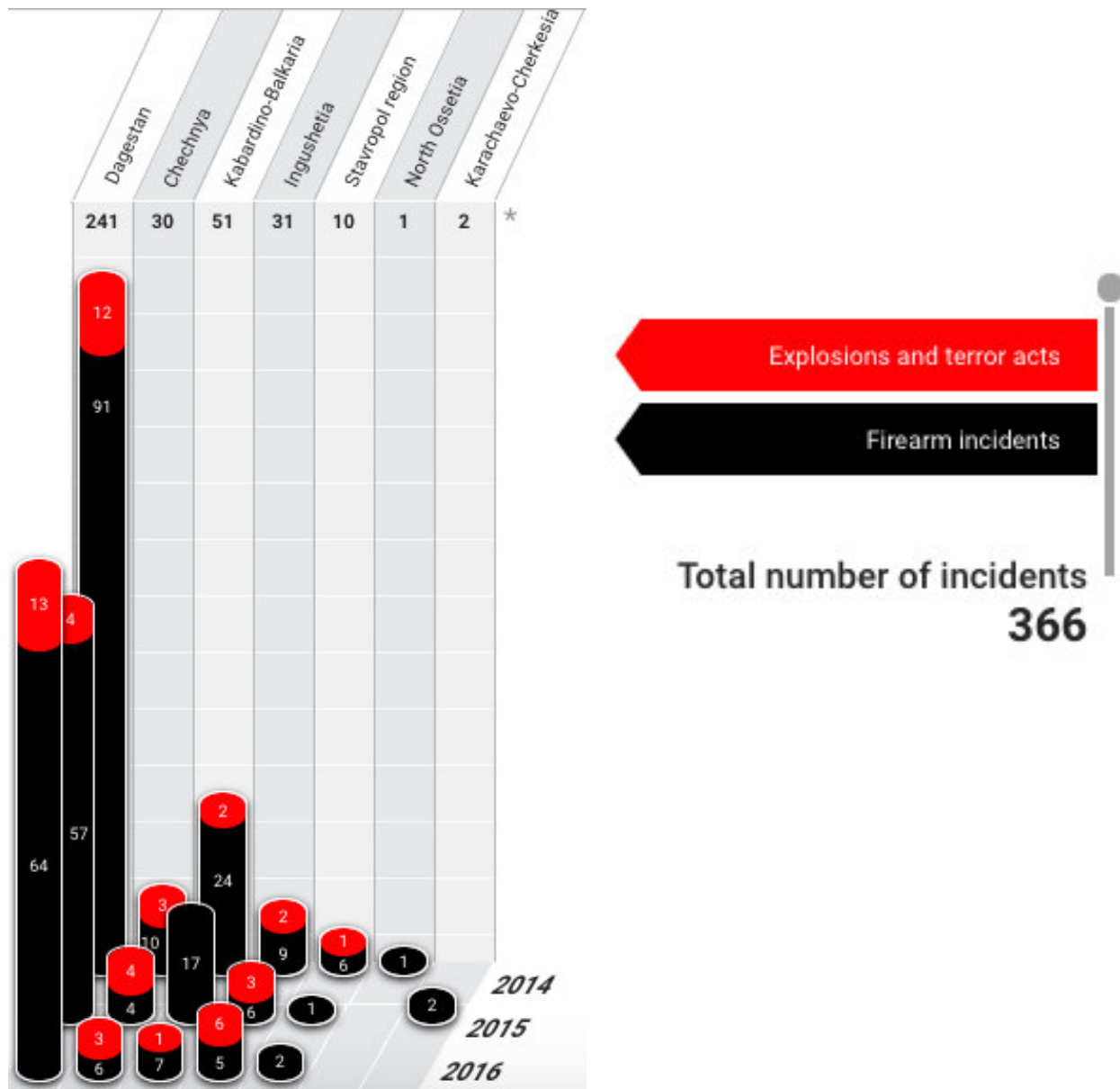
SOURCE: Caucasian Knot. 2017. "Firearm Incidents and Explosions and Terror Acts in the North Caucaus." *Kavkaz* *Uzel*. http://www.eng.kavkazuzel.eu/articles/firearm_incidents_victims_2014_2015.html . [Accessed in March 8, 2017].

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