

Conflict Studies Research Centre

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Prigorodnyy Rayon:

The Continuing Dispute

(The Triangular Relationship of North Osetia, Ingushetia and Russia)

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P24 Chechen Connections: "From Khasavyurt to Moscow".

P25 Chechen Connections: An End to Conflict in Chechnya?

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Prigorodnyy RAYON: THE CONTINUING DISPUTE

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Introduction

"All terrorist acts in the North Caucasus are linked to Chechnya"<sup>1</sup>. "The illness has gone on too long"<sup>2</sup>. "Again the Kremlin finds itself in the role of a 'Caucasian prisoner'. Russia has no-one with an understanding of politics in the Caucasus, and in fact Yel'tsin can only sit by the sea and hope that the storm will not happen"<sup>3</sup>.

Once again tensions have risen in the Russian republics of Ingushetia and North Osetia over the ownership and territorial status of Prigorodnyy rayon, together with the attendant vexed question of refugees, particularly those of Ingush ethnicity and Vainakh nationality. This rise in tension is attributable in part to the Chechen post-war syndrome of lawlessness, kidnapping and hostage-taking for ransom money which is gradually becoming manifest on an increasingly violent and widening scale throughout the North Caucasus, aided by the fact that this whole region from Krasnodar to Makhachkala has become an arsenal of weaponry and ammunition. This short description in January 1996 of the village of Pervomayskoye, situated away to the east on the Checheno-Daghestan border remains pertinent and demonstrates the need to hold weapons for protection and self defence, as well as for criminal and terrorist purposes, "Pervomayskoye was formerly a peaceful Avar village.

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(1) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 125 10 July 1997 page 3 "Rossiyu vytalkivayut s Kavkaza - Prestypnost' mozhnet sorvat' luybiye politicheskiye i ekonomicheskkiye plany" by Il'ya Maksakov. See also BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB) SU/2994 B/5 [18] of 11 Aug 97, report on an interview on 9 August 1997 with Akhsarbek Galazov, the North Osetian President complaining about instability in Chechnya "The influence of the Chechen factor is extremely destabilising for the entire Caucasus. . . the tense situation in the Caucasus republics will continue until the lawful authorities in Chechnya have consolidated their position. The people who have made war their profession are now trying to extend their zone of influence outside Chechnya", and SU/2986 B/4 [10] of 1 Aug 97, report on North Osetian police killing four Chechen gunmen belonging to 'Dzhokhar's Path' in the vicinity of Kartsa and Oktyarbrskoye.

(2) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 128 (1453) 15 July 1997 p3 "Akhsarbek Galazov prizval k miry - Uslyshat li ego na mestakh i v tsentrye" by Petr Pliyev. See also SWB SU/2987 B/7 [13] of 2 Aug 97 where Vyacheslav Mikhaylov, Russian Nationalities and Federal Relations Minister is quoted as saying "I have listed general facts.

I said that the region is saturated with weapons . . . There are armed gangs that are out of control in almost every single republic".

(3) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 144 (1469) 6 August 1997 p2 "Kavkazskiy plennik - Kreml' izbegayet novoy voyny na yugye, v tom chislye I iz - za 'faktora Lebnya'" under "Kart-Blansh" by Yakh'ya Akiyev, assistant to Alexandr Lebed on nationality questions.

A peaceful village if no attention is paid to the fact that almost every family had a modern infantry weapon in a 'zagashnik' 4. But this is normal in the Caucasus at the end of the 20th Century" 5.

Other factors pertinent to the latest rise in tension, which "once again has put the people of North Osetia and Ingushetia on the brink of armed conflict" 6 are as follows; first, it was just five years ago on 3 July 1992 that the Federal government imposed a moratorium on all border changes for a five year period; that period has now expired. Second, this autumn will be the fifth anniversary of the bloodshed which occurred during the period of ethnic violence between 30 October and 6 November 1992 and the resultant Ingush refugee torrent from Prigorodnyy rayon into Nazran', the capital, and other locations in Nazranovskiy, Sunzhenskiy and Malgobekskiy rayony. Third, presidential elections are required to be held in North Osetia at the end of 1997. Naturally every presidential candidate "must show himself to be a 'steadfast' protector of national interests" 7 and to retain Prigorodnyy rayon at all costs<sup>8</sup>. Fourth, the reversal by the Federal authorities of the free-trade status of Ingushetia may also be a pertinent factor. Fifth, the historical, social and ethnic reasons for the strong attachment to the soil of Prigorodnyy rayon by the Ingush are perhaps the most powerful emotionally.

Whilst the issue of Prigorodnyy rayon is again becoming strained between Ingushetia and North Osetia, there is a chance that commonsense and milder counsels will prevail for a number of reasons, the first being the still-vivid recollections of horror and trauma from 1992, together with the experience of the untidy aftermath on both sides and the recent memories of horrors and atrocities committed during the Chechen conflict.

A positive factor in the current situation is the undisputed fact that Ruslan Aushev is very much President of Ingushetia, who "in contrast to Galazov has absolute authority in his republic" 9. Aushev possesses the ability to rein in Ingush extremist elements and has an enhanced public standing through his involvement in peace-negotiations to end the Chechen conflict.

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(4) A zagashnik is something hidden away in a secret place for a "rainy day", like a "nest egg", something for a contingency which may arise some time in the future.

(5) Zavtra No 4 (112) January 1996, p 4 and see also CW Blandy "The Significance of Pervomayskoye" P19, April 1996, CSRC.

(6) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 140 (1465) 31 July 1997 p 5, "Kollizii" - "Prigorodnyy Rayon: Uregulirovaniye - V Rukakh Federal'nogo Tsentra - Sami konfliktuyshchiye storony vriyad li smogut ponyat'drug druga, tak kak ikh sotsiokul'turnyye orientatsii necovmestimy" by Eduard Skakunov.

(7) Akiyev, Op cit.

(8) Leaving history and emotive reasons aside, there are distinct economic and social reasons in the North Osetian case for the North Osetians to retain Prigorodnyy. These are covered in detail below.

(9) Akiyev Op cit. See also: "Argumenty i Fakty" No 42 (835) 15 October 1996; Blandy "Chechen Connections: An End to Conflict in Chechnya?"

There is a view that "the bloodshed which took place on the territory of Prigorodnyy rayon on the night of 30/31 October and the first days of November 1992 was in its own way a prelude to the tragic war in Chechnya in 1994-1996" 10. By extension, of course, Prigorodnyy, shown in Maps 1 and 2 below, could again herald a new wave of political crises in the North Caucasus. There is also the strong possibility that if the situation over Prigorodnyy is not eased,

then Chechnya could enter into the equation, either officially or unofficially. Perhaps this is an additional reason for a seemingly more robust approach by President Yel'tsin, indicating a greater awareness on his part. This is illustrated by: the appointment of Ramazan Abdulatipov as a Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for inter-ethnic relations<sup>11</sup>; his acknowledgement of the need for a consistent policy in the Caucasus; his definitive instructions to ministers<sup>12</sup> coupled with signs of a greater sense of urgency on the part of Russian ministers, such as Ivan Rybkin, Secretary of the Security Council and others, compared with their predecessors in 1992-94.

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(10) Skakunov Op cit.

(11) According to Petr Pliyev in Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 142 (1467) 2 August 1997 p2 "Ramazan Abdulatipov stal vitse-prem'yerom", "Ramazan Abdulatipov was born on 4 August 1946 in the village of Garguta in the Daghestan ASSR. Doctor of historical science, Professor, Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences. Recent relevant appointments includes Chairman of the State Duma Commission assisting in the liberation of forcibly detained servicemen, civilians and the search for the 'missing' during the conflict in the Chechen Republic. From January 1995 - Deputy Chairman of the Interim 'Watchdog' Commission on the Observation of Constitutional Rights and Freedom of Citizens".

(12) See SWB SU/2994 B/4 [15] of 11 Aug 97, President Yel'tsin's orders to Chernomyrdin and Rybkin to prepare a trilateral agreement between Russia, North Osetia and Ingushetia to be signed no later than 25 Aug 97 and to Kulikov to take extra measures to fight crime in the region.

Map 1 - Prigorodnyy Rayon of North Osetia<sup>13</sup>

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	18			
		19		
22				
Key:	1. Nazran	2. Bezlan		3.
Mayskoye				
	4. Chermen	5. Ol'ginskoye		
6. Dongaron				
	7. Kurtat	8. Kambileyevskoye		9.
Sunzha				
	10. Komgaron	11. Dachnoye		12.
Oktyabrskoye				
	13. Kartsa	14. Vladikavkaz		15. Tarskoye
	16. Yuzhnyy	17. Chernorechenskoye		18. Balta
	19. Terek	20. Republic of Ingushetia		
	21. Republic of North Osetia-Alania			22. Republic
of Georgia				

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(13) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 133 (1458) 22 July 1997 p1, "Sovet bezopastnosti Rossii vyslushal tochki zreniya prezidentov Severnoy Osetii i Ingushetii" by Alan Kasayev.

Map 2 - Prigorodnyy Rayon and Ingushetia in Relation to Chechnya14

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(14) Produced by the Office of the Geographic and Global Issues Bureau of Intelligence and Research, US Department of State, 2762 6 - 94.

#### Current Situation In Prigorodnyy Rayon

##### Escalating Spiral of Violence

This latest round of inter-ethnic violence began as a result of events in the settlement of Verkhnyy Komgaron in Prigorodnyy rayon on 10 May 1997, when a group of bandits brutally shot a 23 year old local inhabitant and were subsequently traced to the Ingush Republic. Box 1 below describes the situation and Table 1 outlines the spiral of violence and other events.

##### Box 1 - Deteriorating Situation in Prigorodnyy Rayon - July 1997 15

"Much of what is taking place today between North Osetia and Ingushetia brings to mind the situation that took place in Prigorodnyy rayon in October 1992: murder, meetings, emotional announcements by politicians. Information abounds concerning kidnapping of people, equipment and livestock. Peaceful inhabitants are shot at, terrorist acts are carried out, people are seized as hostages. Over the last half year several tens of people have been kidnapped from North Osetia, eight of them up to this time are held as hostages. In July the situation deteriorated further". . . "All this goes round in a circle, the situation is reminiscent of 1992, when at the beginning of the conflict 26 Ingush were murdered, now already 24 have been killed". According to President Aushev, " . . . in reality a paradoxical situation has arisen: the more we talk, then the more acutely the situation deteriorates" 16.

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(15) "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" No 133 (1458) of 22 July 1997 p3 "Obstanovka prodolzhayet ukhydshat'sa - Iyul'1997 goda: obstrely I pokhishcheniya luydyey - Khronika" by Igor' Rotar'.

(16) Ibid, interview between Igor' Rotar' and President Aushev.

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Table 1 - Spiral of Violence in Prigorodny Rayon during July 1997 17

Serial and Date	Location	Details of Event
1. Night 7 Jul 97	Mayskoye: Ingush	Kidnap of 18 year-old Tat'yana live in tight group.
	Siderova, taken as hostage and held for ransom.	
2. Night 8 Jul 97	Between Beslan and Chermen	N. Osetians seized 5 in a minibus
	travelling to Groznyy.	
	Terrorists demanded return of Osetian hostages in Chechnya.	

3. Night 10 Jul 97 Kurtat - Dachnoye Automatic small arms fire  
from At 2000hrs R. Kambileyevskoye Kurtat on bank  
of R.  
Kambileyevskoye near Dachnoye.  
One Ingush woman wounded.

4. 13 Jul 97 In area of Chermen, Ingush meeting with  
calls for border between N. Osetia  
march to land of ancestors & demands for the return of  
and Ingushetia. territories of long standing.

5. 16 Jul 97 Russian TV - 'Vesti' President Aslan  
Maskhadov stated  
Chechnya had the right to use all  
means to restore order in the  
region.

6. 17 Jul 97 Dachnoye Bus with Ingush  
refugees fired on  
by 'Mukha' grenade launcher, 2  
seriously, 10 lightly wounded.

7. 17 Jul 97 Nazran', Ingush capital Meeting in  
President's residence on  
the need for direct RF Presidential  
rule.

8. 31 Jul 97 Kartsa - Oktyabrskoye 18 4 armed criminals,  
with links to in Prigorodnyy rayon  
'Army of Gen Dudayev', killed.

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(17) Ibid.

(18) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 141 (1466) 1 August 1997 p 3 "Noviye Terakty v Prigorodnom rayonye - Vladikavkaz I Nazran' po-prezhnemu imeyut raznoye mneniye po uregulirovniyu" by Vadim Il'in.  
Current Refugee Problem

Underlying the rise in violence is the additional irritant that although some 10,834 Ingush had returned to Prigorodnyy as at 1 January 1997, between 35,500-39,000 Ingush refugees from Prigorodnyy remain in Ingushetia<sup>19</sup>. From North Osetian data, some 26,000 Osetians from within Georgia and South Osetia have had leave to settle in Prigorodnyy rayon<sup>20</sup>. The return of Ingush refugees, 'forced migrants' since 1992<sup>21</sup>, to their homelands in Prigorodnyy remains an outstanding issue.

Generally, it would appear that far fewer refugees have returned home than those contained in the official figures <sup>22</sup>. According to Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 137 of 26 July 1997, the authorities in Vladikavkaz maintain that out of 16,000 Ingush who once lived in Prigorodnyy rayon, some 11,000 have returned<sup>23</sup>. One of the problems connected with the return of refugees is the rate at which new houses are being built or rebuilt, or in fact not being rebuilt. For example, Moscow allocated some 200 milliard roubles (200 x 1,000,000,000 roubles) at the beginning of this year for the restoration of damaged houses in Prigorodnyy. According to the administrative head of Prigorodnyy rayon, Pavel Tedyeyev, only 14 milliard roubles have been received. "If the means are going to be allocated at such a rate, then restoration will take 40 years"<sup>24</sup>. So it is not surprising that the reaction of people to the word, in its imperative sense, of "return!" is "To where would they go - to a snow and ice encrusted field!?" <sup>25</sup>. Whilst the unavailability of housing is certainly one reason for the Ingush not returning to Prigorodnyy rayon, the main obstacles are the safety of the individual and security of property<sup>26</sup>. Perhaps there is one further reason for

the slow rate of Ingush repatriation, which is neither unimportant nor insignificant, for approximately 10% of the population of North Osetia are refugees, not only refugees but also people who are unemployed and unproductive. After Ingushetia,

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(19) Skakunov, Op cit.

(20) SWB SU/2987 B/7 [13] 2 Aug 97 quoting Russian Nationalities and Federal Relations Minister Vyacheslav Mikhaylov on 31 July 1997 "Few people know that over 100,000 refugees have come through Ingushetia, about 800,000 through Krasnodar Kray and over 50,000 through North Osetia from regions in Georgia".

(21) A 'forced migrant' is essentially a Russian citizen, while a refugee is not. See Tatyana Regent, Head of the RF Migration Services, in Nezavisimaya Gazeta 27 June 1997 no 109.

(22) Ibid, "For example, in the village of Dachnoye, where before the conflict around 2,000 Ingush lived, supposedly 70% have already returned. In reality, at this time approximately 200 have returned. In the village of Kurtat, to where, according to official data 80% of the Ingush population had returned, in actual fact not one person was living there".

(23) This approximates to the figure quoted by Skakunov, op cit. The Osetian authorities in Vladikavkaz have always used a low figure for the Ingush in Prigorodnyy prior to the deportations. Skakunov gives the figures of some 32,100 Ingush from Prigorodnyy rayon with a further 2,300 from Vladikavkaz being deported in 1944 out of a total of 83,000. See also Table 2 and Note 29 below, and Shirin Akiner "Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union" 2nd Edition 1986, KPI Ltd, p 198 for Ingush population tables. The Ingush population: 1926 - 69,930; 1959 - 48,273; 1970 - 113,675; 1979 - 186,198.

(24) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 137 (1462) of 26 July 1997 page 3 "Krizis prodolzhayet razvivat'sa" by Igor' Rotar'

(25) Ibid.

this North Osetian numerical indicator for refugees is the highest in the whole of the Russian Federation.

Causes Of Ethnic Violence In Prigorodnyy Rayon

#### Historical Background

The situation in Prigorodnyy is rooted in history, caused by the forcible interference of the Soviet state through its nationalities policy, the establishment of quasi-territorial administrative entities in the complicated inter-ethnic framework and balance of the Caucasus, and compounded by the organised movement of peoples within the Caucasus massif and the outward mass deportations to Central Asia.

#### Tsarist Colonialism and The Caucasus Fortified Line

It is important to note that the territorial ownership of present-day Prigorodnyy rayon in the first years of Soviet power was not so much an Osetian-Ingush as a Cossack-Ingush problem. It is also impossible to ignore the fact that within the territorial bounds of Prigorodnyy rayon before the appearance in the 18th Century of the Russians, there were Ingush settlements at Bolshiye Angushty (now the village of Tarskoye), Maliye Angushty (now the village of Oktyabrskoye) and settlements around Akhki-Yurt (now the villages of Sunzha and Komgaron).

Between 1859-1865, Ingush settlements south and east of Vladikavkaz were destroyed through the Sunzha Cossack Line with stanitsi of Tarskaya, Sunzhenskaya, Vorontsovo-Dashkovskaya and Fel'dmarshal'skaya closing entrances to the gorges of Kambileyevskaya, Sunzha and Assa rivers, blocking exits to the plains, separating highland from lowland Ingushetia, and Ingushetia from Chechnya. "Departure enforced by hounding'27, the organised mass emigration of the North Caucasus mountain people to Turkey under a religious slogan in the summer of 1865, amongst which were some 2,000 Ingush" became the final act.

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(26) Ibid, "For example, in the opinion of Ingush refugees, to spend the night in the Ingush part of the village of Kurtat situated between two Osetian settlements can only be suicide".

(27) Blandy "The Chechen Conflict - Escalation and Expansion" P15, June 1995, CSRC p 16 "The Long Caucasian War finally ground to a halt in 1864. The Muslim mountain peoples of the Caucasus were to suffer further displacement, deprivation and degradation from the continuation of Tsarist colonial expansion resulting in: the mass exodus, 'departure enforced by hounding', of the western Cherkess tribes from the fertile Black Sea valleys together with Muslim Osetians (Digors), Chechens and other peoples from the central and north eastern areas of the North Caucasus in 1860-64; the suppression of the risings in Daghestan and Chechnya in 1877-78 and the subjugation of the population following unrest and local uprisings in 1905 and 1908. Their descendants today form a diaspora of one or two million people, mainly in Turkey and the Middle East". Ibid p 24. "The majority of the Ingush did not participate in the 19th Century Shamil movement and neither became involved in the rebellion of 1920-22". Figure of 2,000 Ingush refugees taken from Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 140 (1465) 31 July 1997.

The Years of Soviet Power (1921 - 1991)

Administrative Changes of Status. Table 2 below reflects the changes of administrative status of Ingushetia and North Osetia together with the ownership of Prigorodnyy rayon, not only during the years of Soviet rule but also from 1991 to the present day.

Table 2 - Changes in Administrative Status of Ingushetia and North Osetia<sup>28</sup>

Date	Status of Ingushetia	Status of North Osetia	Ownership of Prigorodnyy rayon
1920-1924 Situated in Ingush AO.	Part of Gorskaya		
		Republic as an AO.	
1924-1936	As an AO		
1924-1934	Independent AO	Situated in Ingush	
	independent AO		
1934-1937	Checheno-Ingush AO	Part of Checheno-Ingush AO	
1936-1991	As an ASSR		
1937-1944 ASSR	Checheno-Ingush Ingush ASSR	Part of Checheno-	
1944-1957 Prigorodnyy rayon, less	Deportation period.		
southern part included in territory of North Osetia.		Checheno-Ingushetia	ceased to exist
1957-1991 Remains part of North	1957 - Return of the		
Osetia but note anti-	Chechens & Ingush		
Ingush pogrom of 1958.	Checheno-Ingush ASSR		

1991 Chechen declaration of Republic in RF Still remains  
 part of independence from RF  
 North Osetia

1992 Ingushetia splits from Republic in RF Part of  
 North Osetia. Chechnya, now republic Conflict Oct-  
 Nov 92 in RF.

The Deportation of Muslim Mountain People from the Caucasus. The deportation of the Ingush was carried out on 23 February 1944, involving some 83,000 Ingush being dispatched to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. From the territory of Prigorodnyy rayon of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR (including the villages of DzheyraKhovskogo gorge) some 32,100 Ingush were deported including some 2,300 from Vladikavkaz<sup>29</sup>. The deportations were carried out in a harsh and insensitive manner; during the journey and in their new dwelling place some 40,000 Ingush perished. The deportation of the Ingush during the Great Patriotic War was part of the mass deportation inflicted on the other Muslim peoples of the Caucasus, the Karachai, Kal'myks (Buddhists), the Chechens<sup>30</sup> and the Balkars as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Summary of Deportations from the North Caucasus 1943-4431

Date	Peoples	Entrained		Reported as
		1943-44	1944-46	
Total Number of				deported
Children deported				
Nov 43	Karachai	62,267	60,139	32,557
Dec 43	Kal'myks	93,139	81,673	32,997
Feb 44	Chechens		387,229	
Feb 44	Ingush	91,250		
	Combined total of Chechen and Ingush		478,479	191,100
Mar 44	Balkars	33,773		16,386

(29) Ingush figures from Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 140 (1465) 31 July 1997 p5.

(30) See Blandy "The Chechen Conflict - Escalation and Expansion" p21, "In general terms the deportations were abrupt and violent. They were carried out with ruthlessness and extraordinary speed. In Chechnya, it was ironical that American Studebaker lorries were employed in conveying the deportees from their auls to Groznyy. The journey to their place of exile was by train in the questionable luxury of cattle trucks. The sole criteria for selection and inclusion on this unwanted and ill-advertised journey were ethnicity and religion, aided by the unfounded accusation of collaboration with the enemy".

(31) Helen Krag and Lars Funch, "The North Caucasus Minorities at the Crossroads", A Minority Rights Group International Report published in December 1994, Table 1 page 13.

A point sometimes overlooked: the South Osetians in the Georgian SSR were also subjected to the vicissitudes of organised mass movement by the Soviet authorities.

The Implementation of the Osetian 'Orgnabor' from Georgia. There was a purpose underlying the deportation of the Ingush. Following a decision of the Committee of People's commissars of 9 Mar 1944, an orgnabor, an organised work employment movement of Osetian families, took place from Georgia, including South Osetia<sup>32</sup>, with the aim of re-settling Prigorodniy rayon, and the population centres in Malgobekskiy, Achaluskiy, Nazranskiy and Psedakhskiy rayony. In 1944-56, according to Ingush sources, some 26,000 South Osetians were resettled in Prigorodnyy rayon. They took over the land, houses and property of the exiled Ingush. In 1956-59, according to Osetian data, a further 22,000 South Osetians were resettled there. An Osetian source also estimated that from 1944 up to the deterioration of the situation in South Osetia in 1990<sup>33</sup> approximately 60,000 Osetians from Georgia were resettled in the territory of Prigorodnyy rayon. Rehabilitation and Return of the Ingush. The return of the Ingush must be seen as being one item in the general rehabilitation and return from exile of the Muslim mountain peoples of the Caucasus which did not take place officially until 1957, although some of the deported peoples ventured back to their homelands after Stalin's death prior to official authorisation. The first violent clashes with the new Russian settlers took place in 1956. After official rehabilitation, Karachayevo-Cherkessia, the Kabardino-Balkar AR (autonomous district) and the Checheno-Ingush AR were re-established, but in addition to the failure of the authorities to return Prigorodnyy rayon to the Ingush, the Chechens were also deprived of their lands in the Checheno-Daghestan border areas. Russian settlers in 1958 instigated a three day program (massacre) against the returning Ingush and Chechens<sup>34</sup>.

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(32) The Osetians successively formed three territorial entities, the Muslim Sunni Digor in the west coming under Kabardin and Islamic influence, the Christian Tuallag in the southern region as part of Georgia, and the northern group, the Ironi, coming under Russian rule in 1767, which strengthened Orthodox Christianity considerably. It is open to speculation whether the orgnabor involving the Christian Tuallag in the mass move from Georgia and South Osetia to the then recently 'vacated' Muslim Ingush-owned Prigorodnyy rayon was seen to be necessary by the Soviet authorities on the grounds that Christians would be loyal to 'Mother' Russia, whereas it was perceived that Muslims had not been and would not be loyal in the future, thus strengthening Russia's southern boundaries through reinforcing Christian North Osetia, particularly in the area around Vladikavkaz (Ordzhonokidze).

(33) Civil conflict between Georgians and South Osetians over the status of the South Osetian AO, with violence breaking out in December 1990, continued until the middle of 1992. The Dagomys Accord of 24 June 1992 introduced a ceasefire, terminated active hostilities in South Osetia and made provision for the deployment of a tripartite force of Russians, Georgians and South Osetians to police the ceasefire, offering some kind of basis for a negotiated political settlement.

(34) It is perhaps ironic that the families of the former President of the Chechen Republic, Dzhokhar Dudayev, the present President of the Chechen Republic, Aslan Maskhadov and the present President of Ingushetia, Ruslan Aushev all suffered from the deportations to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. During the period of return, Aushev on his mother's side of the family lost relatives killed by the North Osetians. Two of the Presidents mentioned above became Soviet

Without doubt, the land dispute in the North Caucasus which has achieved the greatest publicity, apart from issues arising from the Chechen conflict, has been the question of Prigorodnyy rayon. In 1970, 1972 and again in 1980 the Ingush demonstrated in support of their claim against the North Osetian authorities. The ebb of Soviet power following the coup of August 1991 summoned new hopes for autonomy and full territorial rehabilitation, reinforcing and

rekindling previous Ingush hopes and aspirations derived from and already awakened by the recently enacted law of 26 April 1991 "Concerning the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples", but no effective response was forthcoming to address the method, the measures or interim structure which would be required to realise in full the Ingush claim and provision of an equitable settlement and compensation.

#### The Change to Hesitant Russian Power (1991)

Portents of Ethnic Violence in Prigorodnyy Rayon in 1992 The conflict between the Georgian Republic and the South Osetian AO between December 1991 and June 1992 initiated and maintained a large stream of South Osetian refugees fleeing to North Osetia, many being sent to and resettled in Prigorodnyy rayon, further altering the ethnic balance between Osetian and Ingush<sup>35</sup>. The emergence and involvement of a third party, the Terek Cossacks<sup>36</sup>, became an additional complication. With the de facto secession of Chechnya from the Russian Federation in the autumn of 1991, the Ingush decided to remain within the Russian Federation, as they believed that they stood a better chance of securing the return of Prigorodnyy from North Osetia through the recently approved Law of 4 June 1992 "Concerning the Formation of the Ingush Republic within the Framework of the Russian Federation". Waning hope once again became rejuvenated.

However, for the Ingush with their previous experience of legislation from the Centre, this new Law, was no exception, for it made no provision for: the demarcation of the new republic's borders; the transfer of the relevant state institutions, educational facilities, centres of communication and information from the government structure and apparatus of the former Checheno-Ingush Republic in Groznyy to Nazran', the new

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generals; Maskhadov was an artillery Colonel. All three attained the leadership of their respective nation states. One of them protested vigorously about the use of Ingush space for Russian military intervention into Chechnya in 1994/1995. Two of them fought the Russians in conflicts, one in the role of president, the other as military chief of staff, military ceasefire negotiator and chief 'mover' on the Chechen side during the Khasavyurt Accords. Not only has Aushev provided moral support to Maskhadov since his election to the Chechen Presidency, (perhaps Aslan Maskhadov had him in mind, when he quoted this old Chechen saying on 25 May 97 in Groznyy "A good neighbour is better than a good brother") but Nazran' had previously figured as a suitable and acceptable meeting place for negotiations between Russia and Chechnya.

(35) Another estimate of refugees from South Osetia puts the figure at some 100,000, some housed with South Osetian relatives who had been settled there since the deportations in 1944 and others being put in temporary accommodation in Prigorodnyy rayon.

(36) The Terek Cossacks regarded Prigorodnyy as a part of their traditional lands prior to the Revolution, before the hand-over to the Ingush in 1920s by the Soviet government.

Ingush capital. On the question of borders, a typical example was the disagreement over the boundaries of Sunzhenskiy rayon<sup>37</sup>, inhabited mainly by Cossacks, occupying the space between Chechnya and Ingushetia.

The introduction of another law, the Law "Concerning the Imposition of a Transitional Period of State-Territorial Delimitation in the Russian Federation" of 3 July 1992, later confirmed in November 1992, imposed a stay of execution on any further territorial change in the Russian Federation for a five year period. The Ingush regarded this as a betrayal by Moscow, particularly as it followed so closely behind the promulgation of the "Law on the Formation of the Ingush Republic" of 4 June 1992. However, disregarding the Russian Federation government's moratorium on republic border changes, the Ingush concluded an

agreement with the Chechens on 23 July 1992 which provided an interim solution to the question of their eastern border 38, leaving them free to concentrate on the issue of their western border, namely, the one with North Osetia.

Eruption of Ethnic Violence in Prigorodnyy Rayon in 1992 Ethnic violence erupted on the night of 30/31 October and continued until 6 November 1992. It became clear that the Federal authorities were unprepared, unresponsive and backward in carrying out their responsibilities to ensure the physical safety of citizens of the Russian Federation and the security of their property. It was only on 2 November, the third day after the start of events, that Presidential Decree RF No 1327 was issued concerning "The Introduction of a State of Emergency on the territory of North Osetian SSR and the Ingush Republic". A state of complete chaos and mass violence reigned until 5 November 1992. Details of casualties, destruction and damage to property, numbers of refugees and forced migrants during this phase of ethnic conflict, and subsequent incidents and deaths since 1993 are shown in Tables 4 to 7.

(37) Detail extracted from "Demarkatsiya po-Vaynakhski" by Dmitriy Bal'burov Moskovskiy Novosti No. 6, 9 - 16 February 1997. The Gorskaya Republic (1920-24) included Groznenskaya and Ingushskaya oblasts and the Sunzhenskiy Cossack okrug centred on Vladikavkaz. Chechnya and Ingushetia had a contiguous border only in the mountains in the rayon of Bamut and Arshty. The plains settlements of Assinovskaya, Sleptovskaya and Michuriskaya were in the Cossack okrug. In early 1930s the Cossack okrug came under Chechnya. In 1934 it was passed to Ingushetia. See also Table 2 above. With the transfer in 1934 of the Cossack okrug to Ingushetia, there should have been no doubt as to the legal ownership of the settlements of Sleptovskaya, Assinovskaya and Arshty, for juridically these settlements are situated on the territory of Sunzhenskiy rayon. Other defects in law on the formation of the Ingush Republic were directly concerned with the administration of settlements such as Samashki and Assinovskaya which were subordinated to the Chechen government, but the payment of wages, salaries and pensions was carried out through Nazran'.

(38) Balburov, Op cit. With regard to mutual border alignment both Aslan Maskhadov and Ruslan Aushev believe that "sooner or later this problem requires a more concrete decision". See also Blandy "Chechen Connections: An End to Conflict in Chechnya?" Box 24. The status of the Checheno-Ingush border requires an answer to this question: to whom does Assinovskaya, Sernovodsk and Arshty belong - Chechnya or Ingushetia? This is complicated by the fact that Ingushetia is a subject of the Russian Federation, but Chechnya regards itself as independent. The Chechens want a sovereign state, but they want no quarrel with their Ingush brothers. Whilst it is unlikely the Chechen and the Ingush would become involved in armed conflict, any issue is open to exploitation by others.

Table 4 - Casualties from Ethnic Violence in Prigorodnyy Rayon 30 Oct-6 Nov 92  
39

Killed		Wounded		Hostages with Opponents	
Total: 540		Total: 606		Total: 2200	
Osetian	Ingush	Osetian	Ingush	Osetian	Ingush
105	407	148	168	600	1600
Others: 34		Others: 20			

Table 5 - Damage to Property in Prigorodnyy between 30 October - 6 November 1992  
Houses Completely Destroyed during Upsurge of Ethnic Violence: Total  
2,795

Ingush Homes	North Osetian Homes	Russian Homes
2,500	248	31
Houses partially Destroyed Total: 397		
239	138	18

Table 6 - Refugees and their Subsequent Disposal

Ingush 'Forced Migrants' Refugees From Prigorodny Within	To Ingushetia	Osetian 'Forced Migrants' and From
	Late 1980s/90s from Georgia/S. Osetia - up to 75,000 people.	

In 1992 - 50,000 to Ingushetia in and around Nazran'.	In 1992 - 50,000 accommodated in North Osetia	In 1992 - 7,500 Osetians homeless in Prigorodnyy.
Georgians/S.	1992 - 26,000 right to live	Osetians obtained in Prigorodnyy.
By 1 Jan 97 - 10,834 Ingush returned to: Kurtat, Dongaron, Dachnoye, Chermen	By 1 Jan 97 - 10,834 Ingush returned in phased system - 39,000 remain	

(39) Skakunov, Op cit, source for data in Tables 4 to 7.

Table 7 - Incidents and Deaths in Prigorodnyy Rayon since 1993

Date	Incidents	Killed
1993	135	24
1994	86	20
1995	112	18
1996	58	34
1997 (Jan-May)	18	7

### Conflicting Interests

#### Characteristics of Ingush-Osetian Relations

Whilst unlawful and tragic events are taking place in Prigorodnyy, it is important to note that neither in Osetia nor in Ingushetia is there evidence of the existence of policies or movements remotely reminiscent of the unbending, resolute and emphatic politics of Dudayev as characterised by his campaign for Chechen independence<sup>40</sup>, which more than inclined toward "a Bonapartist constitution, seeing the development of his career only on the road of military confrontation with Moscow"<sup>41</sup>. It is true that similar activists exist in both Osetia and Ingushetia<sup>42</sup>, but these extremists are neither well known nor popular figures in their own republics. It is probably true to say that the political elites of both North Osetia and Ingushetia are "rather more inclined to "play at war", to bluff, to balance on the brink of war than to seriously unleash a large scale conflict with unforeseen consequences"<sup>43</sup>. The events of 1992 brought victory to neither side, nor enhancement of political capital to either leader. Therefore the position of leaders and candidates for the presidency is likened rather, "to a mutual demonstration of 'unbending steadfastness' and readiness to go to the end 'for the sake of their own', but in reality, without battle breaking out" <sup>44</sup>.

(40) A similarity could be argued in the hounding out of the Ingush in 1992 by the Osetians. It too required organisation and was probably more violent in a shorter period than the frequent instances under the Dudayev regime of forcing out Cossacks and Russians between 1991-94.

(41) Skakunov, op cit.

(42) Ibid " . . . in this it is also necessary to bear in mind that Osetian extremists do not even think about separation from Russia, and the Ingush readily discuss the theme of separation".

(43) Ibid.

(44) Ibid.

However, according to some political analysts, the problem of Prigorodnyy has been exacerbated by three factors, namely, first, presidential elections which are due to be held in North Osetia and must take place at the end of 1997. Presidential elections must take place as well in Ingushetia, but not until May 1998. Secondly, certain negative economic factors are present in both republics, ranging from the abolition of a free economic zone in one, to the effects of the Russian government's campaign against vodka in the other. Third, there is the position of Moscow: Moscow has done little since 1992 to ease the problem. Fourth, tightly connected with Russia, North Osetia and Ingushetia are the Cossacks.

#### Position of the Ingush Republic

##### Interests and Claim

The Ingush historical claim and the importance to them of Prigorodnyy rayon rests on four main points, which are shown in Box 2.

##### Box 2 - Ingush Interests and Claims to Prigorodnyy

1. Prigorodnyy belonged to Ingushetia long before the 1944 deportations.
2. It contains 33% of Ingush historic non-mountain, ie cultivatable land<sup>45</sup>.
3. Significant Ingush populations are concentrated in key villages.
4. Vladikavkaz, especially its right bank quarter, was a primary urban area for the Ingush; the major political, economic and cultural centre.
5. Only 10,834 Ingush refugees have returned to Prigorodnyy rayon.

##### Factors Limiting Attainment of Ingush Claim

1. Failure of North Osetian government to address Ingush demands proceeding from the Law "Concerning the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" of 26 April 1991.
2. Territorial aspirations of Terek Cossacks for Prigorodnyy rayon.
3. From Ingush perspective, Russians biased against Ingush but biased toward North Osetians.
4. Inter-ethnic relationships further complicated by mix and perceptions of other relationships:
  - a. Chechen-Ingush - related and generally supportive of Ingush.
  - b. Osetian-Chechen - believe Chechen support Ingush and Chechens also anti-Russian.
  - c. Russian-Chechen - believe Chechen support Ingush.

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(45) To this must also be added the salient point that for the Ingush, with their still active perception of ancestral (teip) tenure, the relationship towards territory reproduces a degree of personal idolisation of the "soil", founded not only prosperity, but also in which lies the physical life and death of their ancestor.

- d. Russian-Ingush - believe Ingush would always support Chechens.

##### Further Complications

1. Some 35,000-39,000 Ingush refugees from Prigorodnyy still living in Ingushetia, some forced to live in railway carriages, containers and wagons at Nazran' main railway station.
2. Some 25,000 Chechen refugees in Ingushetia<sup>46</sup>, as result of Russian actions at Samashki, Sernovodsk, Orekho, Bamut and elsewhere in Chechnya between 11 Dec 94 - 31 Aug 96.
3. All categories of refugees continuing to put pressure on economy with demand for housing, health care and social welfare outstripping availability of resources.

4. The reversal of 'free trade' status of Ingushetia by Russian authorities is detrimental to aspirations of Ingush and Ingush refugees/'forced migrants'.

#### Economic Crisis

In Ingushetia an economic crisis is about to materialise in the very near future which has a connection with the decision taken by Chubays to terminate the 'free economic zone' in the Republic. Free trade with imported goods, in particular with duty free cars, comprised the main part of the republic's national income. As soon as this channel is closed the standard of living will inevitably begin to fall<sup>47</sup>. This is well understood by President Aushev, who, according to experts, is close to retirement. There are rumours that a high post in the Ministry of Defence, on the General Staff (Deputy Chief of the General Staff) or in Land Forces Command, is being offered to Lieutenant General Aushev.

#### Presidential Election and Candidates

In contrast to Galazov in North Osetia, Ruslan Aushev possesses absolute authority in 'his' republic. Even in the event of his retirement, his words will continue to have great significance. At present there are three possible presidential candidates in the event of Aushev resigning or not standing for a second term. One is a deputy in the Russian State Duma, bearing the same family name as the President, Mukhabek Aushev. However, he is a political enemy of President Aushev, and his chances of being elected are not very great. Another candidate is Mikhail Gutseriyev, Vice Speaker of the Duma and head of the "BIN" consortium<sup>48</sup>. After the termination of the free economic zone in

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(46) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 136 (1461) 25 July 1997 p3 "Bezhtentsy dolzhny vozbrashchatsya dobrovol'no" by Petr Pliyev.

(47) Akiyev, Op cit.

(48) Ibid.

Ingushetia the affairs of the consortium fell into decline. It is possible that with election to high office Gutseriyev's commercial concern may achieve success. But despite the fact that relations between him and Aushev are not unsatisfactory, Gutseriyev is little liked by the Ingush people, marking down his election chances. Finally, there is General Issa Kostoyev in the Russian Federation's Procurator General's Office. Kostoyev is popular in the republic, but he has not announced his intentions. His relations with President Aushev are said to be neutral.

#### Views of President Aushev

The Supply of Arms for the Continuation of the War The fact that the North Caucasus is awash with weapons of course leads to great problems in trying to either 'normalise' or 'regularise' a situation following a conflict, as in Chechnya, or in preventing or attempting to prevent outbreaks of lawlessness in other places which hitherto have not been touched by conflict. President Aushev believes that there is evidence of a movement to foment conflict throughout the Caucasus, as shown in Box 3:

Box 3 - Views of President Aushev of Ingushetia - 4 July 1997 49

1. "All the illegally supplied weapons are for the continuation of the war in the Caucasus. Weapons are supplied to one side and not to the other, as it was in Chechnya. From the beginning the Federal 'spetsorgany' armed the opposition, and then a civil war began, which grew into a Russian-Chechen one. Such a large quantity of weapons was delivered to Osetia (both South and North) . And war began there: first, between South Osetia and Georgia, secondly, between North Osetia and Ingushetia". 2. On Russian imperial ambitions, Aushev replied, "I know that President Yel'tsin is a greater democrat than several of his assistants. And who made the suggestion about preparing for a Chechen war 50? When I met Boris Yel'tsin he expressed a desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict. But others such as Grachev, Shakhray and Filatov<sup>51</sup> convinced him to solve the problem by a rapid military way"<sup>52</sup> .

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(49) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 122 (1447) 5 July 1997 p3 "Oruzhiye postavlayetsya dlya prodolzheniya voyny - Est' opastnost' protivopostavleniya khristyanstva i musul'manstva na Kavkazye, schitayet Ruslan Aushev" by Asya Gadzhizadye.

(50) Stephen Blank, Professor of Strategic Studies, US Army War College, in "Yel'tsin's Folly: The Russian Invasion of Chechnya", Mediterranean Quarterly, Summer 1995, p101: "All these sources indicate that the overall authorship and supervision of the plot against Chechnya came from Russia's Ministry of Nationalities, under Sergei Shakhrai, the Foreign Intelligence Service (Federativnyi Sluzhba Kontrrazvedki, or FSK), and Vladimir Lozovoy, head of the North Osetian and Ingushi Interim Administration. The latter organisation reputedly operates under the direction of Sergei Filatov, chief of Yel'tsin's administration".

(51) Dr Mark Galeotti, "Decline and Fall - Moscow's Chechen War", Janes Intelligence Review, February 1995, Volume 7, No 2, p50 "As with the decision to intervene in Afghanistan in 1979, policy over Chechnya seems to have been the product of informal "kitchen cabinet" deliberations by a handful of grandees driven above all by personal and institutional self-interests".

(52) C W Blandy, "The Chechen Conflict" Janes Intelligence Review Special Report No 11, 1995. "The situation was further complicated by the various rival factions within the Kremlin in their

An additional aspect of interest surfaced during this interview, namely the question of whether there was a Christian-Muslim element in the problems surfacing in the North Caucasus. Aushev's reply is in Box 4.

Box 4 - Views of President Aushev on Christian-Muslim Relations

"I do not like to believe in this, but I know that there is a request for assistance from certain leaders of subjects of the Federation to the Federal power organs since they are surrounded by Muslim republics. It is argued that they are supposedly the bulwark of Russia in the Caucasus<sup>53</sup>. It is interesting to know, a bulwark against what? Who is intending to fight? We are not intending to fight". "In any religion extremism exists, it is necessary to simply cut it out".

President Aushev has maintained the view that it is vital for direct Russian Presidential rule to be introduced in Prigorodnyy rayon as this could provide a way out of the crisis, particularly in relations between his republic and neighbouring North Osetia, enabling Ingush refugees to return to their former homes<sup>54</sup>. However, it is noteworthy that having despaired of obtaining the imposition of direct Presidential rule from the Kremlin, President Aushev formally changed his demands and requested Russian peacemakers from the Ministry of the Interior's subunits.

". . . understanding full well the title is not important, but the result. And the commitment of Russian peacemakers, and the introduction of direct Presidential rule provide one and the same effect: the return of refugees will happen at an incomparably quicker rate than today" <sup>55</sup>.

On 12 August 1997 in Nazran', President Aushev again stated categorically that he would not sign any documents which connected the return of Ingush refugees, forced migrants, to Prigorodnyy rayon with a renunciation by the Ingush side of their claim to the territory of Prigorodnyy. In his opinion the 1996 agreement between Ingushetia and North Osetia, which had not been formally signed, envisaged such a link. Furthermore, he again emphasised that "only the Russian President was able to take effective measures to stabilise the situation in the zone of conflict"<sup>56</sup>.

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bids to retain power, influence and in particular unrestricted funding during a period of financial stringency and cuts. The emergence of an increasingly influential and hard-line group, consisting of Major General Aleksandr Korzhakov, Head of the Presidential Security Service (PSB), Sergei Stepashin, Director of the Federal Counter-Intelligence Service (FSK), Viktor Yerin, Minister of Internal Affairs and Nikolai Yegorov, nominated as Yel'tsin's special representative in Chechnya, was to have profound implications for

Russian politics, for the influence of this cabal came to be beyond parliamentary control".

(53) A reference to North Osetia perhaps.

(54) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 137 (1462) of 26 July 1997 page 3.

(55) Ibid.

(56) Gadzhizadye, Op cit.

Position of the Republic of North Osetia - Alania  
Interests and Claims

Box 5 contains details of North Osetian reasons, interests and claims for the retention of Prigorodnyy rayon.

Box 5 - North Osetian Reasons for Retaining Prigorodnyy Rayon  
Background Data

1. North Osetia is a small republic territorially, covering only 8,000 km, with a population of 632,428 people<sup>57</sup>, broken down into: Osetians - 61%; Russians - 30%; Ingush: - 10-15%<sup>58</sup>.

2. High density of population of 76.5 people per sq km, compared to average population density of Russian Federation of 8.4 per sq km. According to North Osetian government statistics produced in 1994<sup>59</sup>, 70% of republic's population were concentrated in urban centres.

3. Influx of refugees from Georgia including South Osetia:

a. 1944 to start of Georgian/South Osetian conflict in 1990 - 60,000 Osetian refugees.

b. 1990-1992 - from Georgian/South Osetian conflict further 75,000 Osetian refugees.

c. Post 1992 - 26,000 Osetian refugees obtained right of residence in Prigorodnyy rayon.

4. Conflict with Ingush in 1992 over Prigorodnyy hardened attitude of North Osetians and South Osetian settlers causing yet more refugees and Ingush 'forced migrants'.

Prigorodnyy Rayon - Vital Piece of Land for North Osetia

1. Loss of Prigorodnyy, in view of North Osetian authorities, would be serious and:

a. Require relocation of large numbers of Osetian population to the River Terek left bank.

b. Increase population to an unacceptable level straining resources to breaking point.

2. Unlike the Ingush "the Osetians are orientated on the ideals of a traditional society, territory is associated with space, in the confines of which not only does economic activity exist but also the functioning of state power"<sup>60</sup>.

Complicating Factors

1. Dilemma for North Osetian political leadership: to follow Moscow orientated policy or policy of active integration in the North Caucasus, with the outcome probably dependent on:

a. Russian ability to find a solution to Prigorodnyy dispute.

b. Whether Russia allows Georgia to reintegrate South Osetia.

2. Majority of North Osetians were Christians, facilitating relations with Cossack and Russian.

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(57) Population Census of 1989, which does not reflect dramatic refugee and 'forced migrant' population movements.

(58) Most Ingush have fled to Ingushetia proper.

(59) Fiona Hill "Russia's Tinderbox" Harvard University, 1995.

(60) Skakunov, Op cit.

Presidential Elections and Candidates

The successful presidential candidate must demonstrate to the North Osetian electorate that he is strong in defence of national interests. The main candidate is the current President Akhsarbek Galazov<sup>61</sup>. Despite his age (68) he has begun a vigorous election campaign. However, Galazov is not the only potential political leader in North Osetia. Aleksandr Dzasokhov enjoys the greatest popularity<sup>62</sup> and by reputation is said to be an 'honest politician'.

At the present time he is a deputy of the State Duma and represents Russian interests in the European Parliament at Strasbourg. He has already been asked to return home, but the cautious Dzasokhov is vacillating. In the opinion of analysts, if he was to return home the chances of Galazov beating him would be slight. Meanwhile, apart from Dzasokhov, Galazov already has a number of strong competitors arrayed against him, such as for example, Sergey Khetagurov. A number of local politicians also wish to provoke the situation in Prigorodnyy. Their aim is evidently to demonstrate the impotency of Galazov, or in the instance of firm action by him, to illustrate the 'extremism' of the current President. In this situation, clearly defined steps are important for Galazov to demonstrate that he is a reliable 'defender of the nation', above all from the 'perfidious Ingush', and moreover, one who is able to deal firmly with Moscow.

#### Economic Crisis

The situation is exacerbated by the beginning of the Russian government's restrictive campaign over the consumption and production of vodka. Vodka is one of the republic's main sources of income. Naturally, a campaign against the vodka business aggravates the economic situation, lowering the standard of living. "The sources of social-economic crisis are seen in the main in North Osetia as the measures which were recently imposed by the Federal authorities on the removal of alcohol production"<sup>63</sup>. There is also the feeling in North Osetia that instead of introducing Presidential rule, steps such as bolstering the economy would be far more effective, particularly with the establishment of an active customs post on the soil of North Osetia.

#### Insight into Views of President Galazov

President Akhsarbek of North Osetia in his turn considers that the conflict has arisen as a result of Ingush claims on North Osetian territory. Furthermore, President Galazov is against direct Presidential rule because in his opinion, "It is an anti-constitutional norm, and the introduction of Presidential rule leads to the desire to solve problems by forceful methods"<sup>64</sup>. Additionally, the introduction of direct Presidential rule by the Kremlin would tend to undermine Galazov's authority. The views of President Galazov are contained in Box 6.

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(61) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 144 6 Aug 1997 p2 "Kavkazskiy plennik" by Yakh'ya Akiyev. Galazov has led the republic since March 1990.

(62) Ibid. Aleksandr Dzasokhov was born in 1934, former First Secretary of North Osetian Regional Committee (1988-1990), then Secretary CC CPSS and member of the Politburo CC.

(63) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 134 (1459) 23 July 1997 p1, "Separatizm porozhdayetsya deystviyami tsentra" by Viktor Timoshenko and Oleg Sergeev.

(64) Ibid.

#### Box 6 - Views of President Galazov on the North Caucasus and Prigorodnyy<sup>65</sup>

1. The region is multi-national and because of this disputes happen. In the region there are representatives of 100 nationalities and problems can only be solved by the results of negotiations, compromises and agreements.
2. It was necessary in his opinion to stop the intensification of the situation, remove the proposal for direct Presidential or Federal rule in the region<sup>66</sup>.
3. It was for the Federal government to finance a solution to the social problems of the peoples living in Prigorodnyy rayon.
4. The strength of all politicians must be united against the appearance of violence.
5. All citizens of North Osetia are equal under the law and conjectures about the discrimination of the Ingush in the republic are formed by the overall critical economic position in North Osetia.

There is one further point of concern for the North Osetian authorities. Due to a total lack of security in Prigorodnyy rayon for the Ingush, they tend to live in very compact reservations for mutual support. One effect of this is that Ingush reservations in Prigorodnyy bordering Ingushetia, which are full of

refugees, for all practical purposes come from under the jurisdiction of Vladikavkaz. So gradually, the return of Ingush refugees is slowly removing territory from North Osetia in and around Prigorodnyy. The gradual levering away of the flat part of Prigorodnyy, ending up with its loss to the North Osetians would be an economic catastrophe for them as the rest of Prigorodnyy consists of mountains.

#### Position of Moscow and the Russian Federation

##### Interests and Objectives

Some factors possibly affecting Russia's objectives are listed in Box 7.

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(65) Ibid.

(66) Ibid, "In the republic an opinion is being formed that the idea concerning the introduction of Presidential rule in Prigorodnyy rayon is the same as the measures of the government on tightening the administrative restrictions on the production of vodka, likely to engender unhelpful North Osetian tendencies in view of separatist ideas held by part of the population".

#### Box 7 - Factors Tending to Shape Russia's Objectives over Prigorodnyy Rayon

1 The key to Russian security of tenure in the Transcaucasus remains firm undisputed Russian control, security, freedom of movement, maintenance of law and order in the North Caucasus<sup>67</sup>.

2 Russia needs to: (a) Reduce damage of Chechen conflict, possible secession of Chechnya, limit and neutralise any other bids for secession amongst North Caucasus Republics. (b) Bolster pro-Russian support in the North Caucasus, hence seeming adherence and bias toward North Osetians<sup>68</sup>. 3 North Osetia is of strategic importance for security and control in the North Caucasus, and by extension the Transcaucasus, through: (a) Northern entry to the Georgian Military Highway at Vladikavkaz. (b) Mozdok - a main base-depot of North Caucasus Military District (NCMD). Mozdok in Dec 94 was the main logistic base for Russian armed intervention into Chechnya. Earlier, Mozdok was an important Forward Operating Base during covert operations by the FSB against the Chechen Interim Council.

##### Complicating Factors

(1) The unsatisfactory outcome of the Chechen war, the insecure settlement and nebulous status of Chechnya, with Chechnya regarded as victor. (2) Position of Moscow weakened by lack of mechanism for settlement of disputes in North Caucasus. (3) Situation complicated by positions of Abkhazia and South Osetia - South Osetia wants to be part of North Osetia; Abkhaz are related to North Caucasus peoples not Georgians (4) A settlement favourable to Ingush would upset not only North Osetia but Cossacks as well. (5) Dilemma over direct Presidential rule: Ingush in favour, North Osetians against. (6) Previous biased approach by Russia, due to contempt for Muslim mountain people has worsened situation. (7) Need for unbiased Russian mediation - Ingushetia and North Osetia are equal subjects of R F under the Constitution. (8) Need for return of free-trade economic zone.

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(67) The Russian government from 1991 was preoccupied by Chechnya's secession bid from the RF in preventing a "virus of separatism". The North Caucasus Muslim arc from the Kuban' to Makhachkala has always concerned Moscow, hence the need to bolster any peoples that could be considered pro-Russian, such as the North Osetians. On "the virus of separatism" and similar matters see "Zavtra" No 37 (145), 10 September 1996, page 1 "Groznyy: Khmuraya Osen'" and pages 1 and 3, "Voyna, Kotoruy Oni Proigrali" both by Vladislav Shurygin.

(68) From the outset of the Prigorodnyy problem, the Russian press and government showed a bias for the North Osetians to the detriment of the Ingush, despite the rightfulness of the Ingush claim and the moral impetus contained in

the law "Concerning the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples". The Prigorodnyy conflict was used by Russia as a pretext for an attempted assault on Chechnya in December 1992 to prevent the Chechen supporting their Ingush relatives. See also 'Moskovskiy Novosti' No 6, 9 - 16 February 1997, "Demarkatsiya po-Vainakhskiy" by Dmitriy Bal'byrov, "During the time of the Osetian-Ingush conflict in the autumn of 1992, Russian troops stopped at the unconfirmed Chechen border immediately behind Samashki and Assinovskaya".

#### Position of Moscow

The danger now, as opposed to the situation in 1992, is that if the situation is not eased over Prigordniy, the possibility exists that Chechnya could well step into the territorial dispute on the side of Ingushetia. There is a view that the position of Moscow is one of complete, utter physical and mental exhaustion, with the Chechen syndrome hanging over the thought processes of all the politicians in Moscow, where they live in dread of a new military conflict, "Their natural waking dream, perhaps it will go away and not intensify" 69. The allegation of doing nothing is partially refuted by the fact that when President Yeltsin returned from his holiday, on 8 August 1997, "as planned, he immediately turned his attention to the problems of the Caucasus"70. The nomination of Ramazan Abdulatipov as a deputy prime minister for nationalities policy and affairs in the Russian government provides further evidence toward the view that the Russian government, certainly the President, see the need to take positive measures now to avoid a slide into another wave of ethnic conflict. It could well be that in the first place, Abdulatipov will concentrate on Caucasian affairs, helping to determine and implement a consistent Kremlin policy in the North Caucasus, but as informed people contend, Abdulatipov's elevation to deputy prime minister for nationalities affairs was made mainly from the prompting of the Daghestani authorities who are afraid of competition from him and his supporters in the campaign "for the armchair of the top person in Makhachkala"71.

Besides the nomination of Abdulatipov, there is another factor which looms, namely the powerful figure of Alexandr Lebed, famous with enhanced authority for his handling and termination of the Russo-Chechen conflict, respected and trusted by people in the North Caucasus. Should a new military conflict flare up, at the instigation and invitation of Moscow, Lebed could again be "trampling down the fire of war" and obtain further laurels as a peacemaker, "but, to allow such a thing would undoubtedly install Lebed in the Kremlin" 72. However, in this complicated situation Moscow has to tread very carefully, particularly on the question of direct Presidential rule or the alternative put forward by President Aushev of deploying peacemaking subunits from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Kremlin, having dismissed the concept of direct Presidential rule, still risks raising objections from the North Osetian government concerning the Aushev proposal. Here lies the greater danger for Russia of jeopardising a relationship with one of the most devoted subjects of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus.

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(69) Ya Akiyev in Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 144, 6 August 1997 p2, but note that the author is an assistant to Alexandr Lebed on nationality questions..

(70) Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 147 (1472) 9 August 1997 p1 "U Boris Yel'tsina nashlis'argumenty dlya prinuzhdeniya k miry Nazran' i Vladikavkaza" by Il'ya Maksakov. "Yesterday morning he held a meeting with the Presidents of North Osetia and Ingushetia Akhsarbek Galazov and Ruslan Aushev. In turn, negotiations with the Chechen leader Aslan Maskhadov and a conversation with the Presidents of Georgia and Abkhazia Eduard Shevardnadze and Vladislav Ardzinba".

(71) Akiyev, Op cit.

(72) Ibid.

Any procrastination, allowing this dispute between the Ingush and the North Osetians to continue, could lead to Ingushetia reorientating itself on Groznyy or alternatively the Ingush refugees could turn for assistance to "uncontrollable but influential Chechen field commanders"73. Dwelling on this point, the President of Chechnya, Aslan Maskhadov and some of the Chechens in

his immediate circle did not exclude the possibility of liberating Chechen hostages in North Osetia by force and even considered the creation of a republic peacemaking force. Furthermore, the off stated intention of Raduyev should also not be forgotten, namely, the 'liberation' of the whole of the North Caucasus from Russian hands<sup>74</sup>. The presence in the hands of the population of a large quantity of weapons, the concept of the possible creation in Chechnya of a certain operational group for solving the problem of Chechen hostages in North Osetia, the implacable obduracy of the Osetian population and leadership in not agreeing to a revision of territory and a re-alignment of borders, the steadfast desire and determination of thousands of Ingush refugees to return to their former dwelling place are factors which are in the process of generating a highly volatile and explosive mixture. This could explode as a result of ill-conceived interference or armed intervention from outside, however, the latter event is unlikely as Moscow has unhappy memories of the Chechen conflict and military intervention and involvement. Moscow is in a difficult position: any concession to one of the hostile republics will sharply destabilise the situation in the other.

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(73) Rotar, Nezavisimaya Gazeta No 137 (1462) 26 July 1997 p3.

(74) See Blandy "The Significance of Pervomayskoye" pages 46 to 50. In particular this wish to continue the war is found in Chechens such as Salman Raduyev. The name of Raduyev is regarded with shame by the Muslim mountain peoples of the Caucasus as a result of the Kizlyar raid in January 1996. After Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye he suffered serious injury, either from Chechens or Russian Special Forces, resulting in him going abroad for treatment. There were also stories of large sums of US dollars 'going absent'. "General Dudayev's Army" is the Military Section of the so-called movement "Dzhokar's Path" of which Raduyev would appear to be the main publicist/leader.

#### Position of The Cossacks

#### Interests and Objectives

#### Box 8 - Cossack Interests, Objectives and Attitudes

#### Background

(1) The Gorskaya Republic (1921-24) included Groznenskaya and Ingushskaya oblasts. Sunzhenskiy Cossack okrug, centred on Vladikavkaz, included settlements of Assinovskaya, Sleptsovskaya and Michuriskaya. In 1930s, Cossack okrug was under Chechnya, but in 1934 passed to Ingushetia. (2) Checheno-Ingush ASSR re-established in 1957 under protests from North Osetia, Daghestan and Georgia, Stavropol' Kray had no objections, but Ingush Prigorodnyy remained within the North Osetia. (3) The Cossack tended to side with North Osetian, due to specialities of Russo-North Osetian relations, the traditional Cossack role of defending Russia, and their history and practice of shared worship through the Christian Orthodox religion.

#### Cossack Territorial Aspirations

(1) Territory of the Sundzhenskiy Terek Cossacks in Chechnya, Ingushetia and North Osetia to revert back to the 1928 borders and the transfer of the enclave to Stavropol' Kray. (2) Terek Cossacks have a claim on Prigorodnyy rayon, wanting autonomy in Mozdok rayon with its transfer from North Osetia to

Stavropol', and the 1957 transfer of Naurskiy and Shelkovskiy rayony to be reversed and returned to Stavropol' Kray. (3) Cossacks are involved in other territorial disputes in the North Caucasus<sup>75</sup>. (4) Cossacks demand that both the federal government and local authorities give firm guarantees that land in the region will not be sold or transferred as a result of privatisation without agreement of local Cossacks to sale of land to non-Russian North Caucasus groups.

Complicating Factors

(1) From 1989-90 onwards, Cossack activity became more pronounced, militant and widespread in response to nationalist demands for increased political status and territorial change which began to emanate from the indigenous Muslim mountain peoples of the North Caucasus. (2) Ambivalent Cossack attitude to Russia: on one hand - defender of Russia, on the other - a member of the repressed indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus. (3) Increasing Cossack militancy and gradual incorporation into Russian military concepts for security and protection in North Caucasus, making up for numerical deficiencies/combat effectiveness of Russian military manpower<sup>76</sup>. (4) Debate continues on control; independent Cossack formations as seen by Atamans or controlled by Russian military/Internal authorities as seen by State Duma.

(75) Other Cossack aspirations for land transfers: territorial Pre-Revolution Cossack rayony of Zelenchuksko-Urupskiy and Batapashinskiy in Karachayevo-Cherkessia; Cossack autonomy in Maikop rayon in Adygeya; Cossack Don oblasts extending across Krasnodar and Stavropol' Krays; creation of a Kuban' Cossack Republic in Krasnodar Kray, including the entire territory of Adygeya with parts of Stavropol' and Karachayevo-Cherkessia.

(76) See Blandy "Chechen Connections: An end to Conflict in Chechnya?" CSRC July 1997.

Putative Solutions To The Problem Of Prigorodnyy Rayon

Positions of Ingushetia, North Osetia and Russia

The positions of the three main 'players' in the Prigorodnyy situation have been summarised in Table 8 below.

Table 8 - Positions of Ingushetia, North Osetia and Russia on Prigorodnyy

Administrative Territorial Federation Entity	Ingush Republic	Russian North Osetia	
First Position Presidential	Russian Presidential Rule	Negotiations and compromises.	No be
rule. Treaty to drafted by 25	No Federal Rule.	No Presidential Rule.	August 1997.
Second Position	Peacemaking Sub-Units from Internal Ministry.		
Dangers 1. Muslim strife	1. Ingush refugees seek help of independent Chechen	1. E. Prigorodnyy creep to Ingushetia.	2. Possible
Chechen	2. Lose loyalest		

subject in the N.	field command.	intervention.
by Caucasus, N.	2. Ingushetia could	3. Aggravation
factors. Osetia.	could become	economic
orientated toward	3. Cossacks	
	Groznyy.	demands.
	3. Aggravation by	
	economic factors.	

Moscow's Traditional Formula of "Carrot and Stick"

It must be said that at the moment, President Boris Yel'tsin "has no intention of increasing MVD or Army forces in the region"<sup>77</sup>, preferring to achieve the normalisation of the situation in Prigorodnyy by applying pressure on Nazran' and Vladikavkaz in two spheres. The first point of leverage for Yel'tsin is the fact that the Presidents of North Osetia and Ingushetia need additional funding for their own Presidential elections. The message from President Yel'tsin to the two North Caucasus Presidents is quite clear "agree". . . You wish to have support from us and personally from the President of the RF in the period of the pre-election campaign, agree or you forfeit this support" <sup>78</sup>.

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(77) Maksakov, op cit.

(78) Ibid.

The Kremlin has other strong points of pressure to apply to Nazran' and Vladikavkaz which are linked to their vitally important interests, but control of these interests of course lies in the hands of the Kremlin. Thus for the Ingush side, the continuation of a favourable economic regime depends on their behaviour. North Osetia could obtain concessions or privileges in the areas of customs duty on the border with Georgia and duty in the production of vodka and alcoholic drinks.

As a result the two North Caucasus Presidents are said to have signed an agreement which envisaged that "For 15-20 years both republics within the Russian Federation would not have any territorial claims towards each other" <sup>79</sup>. The signing ceremony took place on 4 September in Moscow and was attended by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. The text of this agreement is yet to be published. In any case, it is unlikely to form the basis of a lasting settlement. There are too many unresolved issues to be addressed. Akiyev<sup>80</sup> highlighted some of the dangers:

Box 9 - Akiyev's Argument

A massive military conflict can be successfully avoided under the following conditions:

1. Aushev remains as President of Ingushetia. His authority will restrain the extremists.
2. Moscow relaxes economic pressure on North Osetia and Ingushetia. Only then will the economically hopeless situation stop inciting people to take up arms.
3. It is manifest that Moscow cannot support any one side in the conflict, which in itself will:
  - a. Engender the hatred of the opposing side.
  - b. Raise the hopes of the favourite to solve its problems by force.
4. If these conditions are not observed, the risk of military conflict is sharply increased. But the consequences could be more serious than in 1992, since Chechnya will step into the affair.

Longer Term Solution

Eduard Skakunov<sup>81</sup> makes proposals not only covering the territorial ownership question of Prigorodnyy rayon but it also has suggestions with regard to refugees or forced migrants.

(79) Ibid.

(80) Op cit.

(81) Op cit.

#### Principles for Control over Conflict

First, he articulates the principles by which safety of the individual and security of property in Prigorodnyy can be achieved, as shown in Box 10.

#### Box 10 - Skakunov Principles

Control over the conflict in Prigorodnyy must be based on the following principles:

1. Monopolisation of the function of security by the Federal authorities up to the final political 'normalisation' of the Osetian-Ingush conflict.
2. The recognition by the Republic of North Osetia - Alania of the superior authority of the Federal powers in the sphere of maintaining security in Prigorodnyy rayon.
3. The provision to the Ingush public of Prigorodnyy rayon Federal guarantees of security.

Quite simply, this means that until a political solution is found, achieved and implemented the task of ensuring and guaranteeing state and public security must be firmly placed on the Federal authorities. This is a point which they have not exactly grasped with enthusiasm, though the Commander of MVD troops did visit Vladikavkaz recently<sup>82</sup>. From this point it is necessary to strengthen and widen the functions, up to and including those of the military, the stationing of a contingent of MVD Troops in the rayon, the reformation of the rayon militia and the banning of North Osetian military-civilian formations - vigilantes. On the termination of the present crisis situation in the rayon it will be necessary to begin the creation of new structures of public protection, enlisting people from both Osetian and Ingush nationalities. The implementation of these principles would possibly reduce the fears of returning refugees and forced migrants, but further measures are needed to facilitate the return of refugees to their original dwelling places.

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(82) SWB SU/3013 B/5 [14] of 2 Sep 97 carries a report on the familiarisation visit to Vladikavkaz of General Leonty Shevtsov, Commander MVD troops, on 31 Aug 97.

#### The Refugee Problem

Skakunov puts forward the view that the refugee problem can be solved by the following steps:

#### Box 11 - Skakunov's Measures to Relieve Refugee Problem

1. Recognition by the Federal authorities that the solution to the internal conflict in the Republic of North Osetia - Alania is connected to the problem of forced migrants and refugees from South Osetia, especially those who found themselves in Prigorodnyy rayon in the Soviet years as a result of "Orgnabor" from Georgia and the events of the Georgia-Osetian conflict of 1989-1992.
2. The right of the Republic of North Osetia - Alania to obtain Federal assistance for the fitting out of forced migrants and refugees from South Osetia, as a condition for the denial of the principle of combined residency of Osetian and Ingush nationality in Prigorodnyy rayon.
3. The right of the Ingush Republic in participation in the socio-economic fitting out of the Ingush community in Prigorodnyy rayon and in obtaining

Federal assistance in the fitting out of forced migrants from Prigorodnyy rayon not wishing to return to their former dwelling place.

4. The right of forced migrants and refugees from Prigorodnyy rayon to return to their former dwelling place, and to the remaining population points of North Osetia - Alania, including the town of Vladikavkaz.

Following on from these measures, there is a requirement to include a separate provision within the Federal budget to cover the socio-economic consequences of the Osetian-Ingush conflict and the problems of forced migrants and refugees from South Osetia; furthermore there is a need to reinforce these means through an authoritative representative of the President of the Russian Federation. There is also the necessity to devise a procedure for the return of forced migrants and refugees of Ingush origin who earlier had lived in Prigorodnyy rayon, based on a parity of North Osetian and Ingush society of the area, and to stress the right of the Federal authorities to make the final decision.

Political 'Normalisation' of Prigorodnyy Rayon  
Skakunov's proposals for the 'normalisation' of the situation between North Osetia and Ingushetia are set out in Box 12.

Box 12 - Skakunov Proposals for Political 'Normalisation' of Prigorodnyy Dispute

1. Direct, active mediation of the Federal authorities between the sides on the basis of:
  - a. Strict observance of the Constitution of the Russian Federation.
  - b. Repudiation of racial discrimination.
  - c. Respect for basic rights and freedoms of all citizens of the Russian Federation.
2. The provision of additional guarantees for the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of North Osetia - Alania.
3. The repudiation by the republic of Ingushetia of territorial claims on Prigorodnyy rayon.

These measures also envisage the active participation of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation in giving a judgment on the territorial rights of the conflicting claimants. It remains open to question whether it would now be feasible and practical to give a judgement on the return of territory to its rightful owners after such a long period of time, including a period of great turmoil and turbulence. The Constitutional Court would also be required to pronounce a judgement that the legislatures of the North Osetian Republic and the Ingush Republic must conform to the Constitution of the Russian Federation<sup>83</sup>.

The adoption, by both sides and by the Federal Centre, of the proposed principles in the package can begin to normalise the conflict, in as much as each participant can in this instance calculate the positive sum of gains and losses in the conflict: Ingushetia - on the guaranteed securing of rights of its community in Prigorodnyy rayon, North Osetia - on the preservation of its borders.

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(83) Article 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ingushetia demands "The return by political means of the illegally seized Ingush territory and the preservation of the territorial integrity of Ingushetia". Doubtless this will be found to be not in agreement with the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the apparent spectacle of industrious activity, resolve and energy on the part of the President of the Russian Federation on his return from holiday, there has been little real progress.

It is doubtful whether the 'arm-twisting' of the two North Caucasus Presidents by the Russian President and a moratorium for 15 to 20 years on territorial claims will produce any far-reaching concrete results in 'normalising' the situation between North Osetia and Ingushetia. The time bomb is still there with its mixture of highly inflammable materials, for there was nothing new in the Yel'tsin proposal and agreement and they do nothing to alleviate the near-conflict situation - neither the territorial question, nor the refugee problem. Had the meeting between Yel'tsin and the North Caucasus Presidents of North Osetia and Ingushetia produced a wide-ranging agreement, then it would be possible to have sanguine hopes for the future, not only on a solution to Prigorodnyy but for the North Caucasus in general.

Unless some radical and far reaching agreement is reached, other parties will become involved, unofficial Chechen extremist field commanders, official action sanctioned by Groznyy. The Ingush may once again turn to Groznyy, as a result of the increasing desperation of Ingush forced migrants and refugees.

The Chechens will also have taken note of the sudden abolition of Ingushetia's free trade zone status. One of the proposals to cater for Chechnya's special status vis a vis the RF was the creation of a special economic zone. The change in Russian policy can hardly have enhanced the Chechens' confidence that they have achieved a lasting settlement.

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(28) Skakunov, Op cit. AO administrative region, ASSR Autoumous republic.