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Will Southern Russian Studies Go the Way of Sovietology?

The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?

Matthew Evangelista, Brookings Institution Press, 2002, 244 Pages

Matthew Evangelista argues that both Chechen wars have resulted from misperceptions by Russian officials who erroneously believed that the Russian Federation was on the verge of disintegration due to the spread of popular separatism. His analytical overview of the two conflicts offers useful segments on decision-making in the Yelstin administration, the interwar years, recentralization, and a comparative study of selected Russian regions. However, the author fails to recognize key differences between the two Chechen wars, and overlooks other important distinctions. His analysis suffers from inconsistencies and errors stemming from his research methodology. These difficulties raise broader issues about the study of this strategic region.

While a handful of books have discussed the first war in Chechnya from 1994 to 1996, and while a few have described the recent situation in the war-torn republic, Matthew Evangelista's book is among the first to attempt an

analytical overview of both conflicts. He argues that the two wars were the result of an enveloping misperception on the part of Russian leaders, especially Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, a misperception that Evangelista characterizes, at times, as a catastrophic error, and at other times as an “excuse” or a cynical “pretext” for imperialist hostilities.

The misperception, according to the author, has been that Chechen separatism is the first phase of the disintegration of the Russian Federation, and that it must therefore be resisted in order to save the Russian union from the fate of its Soviet predecessor. Failure to stop it would result in a cascade of secessionist dominoes. This argument is the thread that Evangelista follows through the history of the conflict, with separate chapters devoted to decision-making in the Yeltsin administration, the first war, the interwar period, the second war, and Russian recentralization under Putin. The same thread also leads the author outward to a series of broader discussions involving the potential for secessionism in other areas of the Federation (Ingushetia, Dagestan, Tartarstan, Bashkortostan, and the Far East), and to a discussion of international responses to the conflicts, especially in the aftermath of the September 11th tragedy. The author argues that there was no significant risk of federal disintegration in these far flung regions, and concludes that Kremlin concerns about the ramifications of Chechen nationalism therefore were either uninformed or disingenuous, or both. They do not justify Moscow’s heavy-handed military response. Evangelista then argues that the response of some Western observers, including the present author, has either been misguided or morally bankrupt in its failure to

recognize this Russian error and to repudiate the brutal excesses to which it has led.

The argument is ambitious and surprisingly broad, and the book is not without its strengths. Many readers will appreciate the fresh glimpses of decision making in the Yeltsin administrations, the survey of other “regions at risk”, and the ample references to articles in the popular press. Moreover, Evangelista’s history of the interwar years, from the Russian withdrawal from Chechnya after the Khasavyurt Accord in August 1996 to the return of the Russian military three years later, addresses a prominent gap in the literature. Though concise and incomplete, the discussion is commensurate with its role in the broader project, and serves to underscore the need for a thorough treatment of this critical period. The chapter on President Putin’s efforts to overhaul Russian federalism even if it means keel hauling some of the regional governments is generally helpful if also rhetorical (for example, “Putin’s neo-tsarist/military/KGB plan for regional reform”) and selective in its presentation.ⁱ

However, the author’s central argument is based upon an elementary confusion. Evangelista conflates two fundamentally different senses in which events in Chechnya have threatened the integrity of the Russian Federation. In the early to mid 1990s some Russian leaders saw Chechen separatism as a contagion that might inspire popular separatist movements in other parts of the Federation, and this was among several reasons that Russian troops reentered Chechnya in 1994. However, by 1999 a much different fear haunted not only Russian leaders in Moscow, but also many of the Muslim inhabitants of Chechnya’s neighboring republics in the North Caucasus. This was the fear

that Islamist extremists in Chechnya might wage irredentist invasions of other territories in the region in order to impose Islamist rule upon populations who wanted no part of it, and who wished to continue their practice of traditional North Caucasian Islam as citizens of the Russian Federation. These are two substantially different concerns, for whereas the former might aim at containing nationalist mobilization and preventing secession, the latter invokes the protection of loyal citizens from terrorism, invasion, and hostile subjugation. The first suggests a potential for repression of popular movements, but the second is the moral duty of any responsible government. The author's argument is undermined by his failure to distinguish between these two dramatically different concerns that were posed by the situation in Chechnya at significantly different stages in its development over the last 12 years.

Russia Returns to Chechnya in 1994

Evangelista is on firm ground in arguing, as he sometimes does, that Kremlin anxieties about a potential maelstrom of separatism and federal disintegration were among the causes of the Russian military's return to Chechnya in 1994. However, it is more difficult to sustain his claim that such fears were the paramount cause of that conflict. If that were the case then one might expect that the conflict would have begun in 1992 or 1993. Nationalist mobilization in Chechnya increased most rapidly from 1990 through 1992, and it was March 1992 when Chechnya refused to sign the federation treaty and then

declared independence. Yet there was no war in 1992. On the contrary, the last Russian military forces withdrew from Chechnya that June,ⁱⁱ leaving half their arsenal for the nominally independent Chechen government,ⁱⁱⁱ strange behavior if fears of Chechen separatism were the paramount cause of the subsequent conflict.

Then why did Russian troops return to Chechnya in December 1994? Evangelista neglects to mention that by the late summer of 1994 Chechnya was engulfed in civil war, a civil war that followed a year of violent clashes and two years of extreme political instability. Readers find a spare description of the political turmoil that overtook Chechnya from 1992 to 1994, with little indication of the widespread intra-Chechen violence of the period, or the key role that these events played in Moscow's growing concern. In March 1993, Chechen President Dudaev vetoed a resolution by the Chechen parliament to hold a referendum on Chechen sovereignty that might have resulted in Chechnya's peaceful integration in the Russian Federation. The parliament voted no confidence in Dudaev, after which he forcibly disbanded the parliament, causing death or injury to some members. Dudaev then ignored impeachment proceedings by the remnants of the legislature; he ignored efforts by the Chechen Constitutional Court to deny his authority, and he ignored demands for his resignation by coalitions of Chechen citizens. Thereafter Dudaev's erratic extremism could be resisted only by violence, which is what immediately erupted and rapidly escalated among opposing Chechen groups.

While Evangelista notices the sharp increase in criminal activity that occurred in Chechnya in the early 1990s, he attempts implausibly to blame

this on Moscow by citing two authors who identify connections between some gangs in Moscow and some gangs in Chechnya.^{iv} While such relations certainly existed, it is as condescending as it is misleading to suggest that these connections were not reciprocal and that Chechen criminals were not responsible for their own activities. Similarly, the author is quick to cite speculation that Kremlin conniving may have been secretly to blame in July of 1994 when Chechen terrorists held hostage a busload of Russian tourists.^v

The principal cause for Russia's return to Chechnya in December 1994 was the rapid escalation of civil war and political turmoil within Chechnya, as well as the rapid escalation of the organized criminal activity and terrorism spilling beyond its borders into neighboring republics. The critical intensification of these factors, and not an intensification of Chechen nationalism, was what distinguished 1994, when the Russians went into Chechnya, from 1992, when they pulled out of Chechnya.

Faced with similar conditions of rampant criminality, hostage taking, and civil war on their southern borders many other powers would also have sent in the troops to restore order. Faced with much less extreme and threatening situations in Grenada and Panama, the United States did much the same. Similar comparisons could be made to a host of other Latin American engagements throughout American history. Given Evangelista's emphasis on normative considerations it must be said that this point is neither an attempt to justify Russia's intervention in Chechnya in 1994 nor American intervention in Latin America. It is simply an observation that, faced with situations less extreme than that which Russia faced in Chechnya in the autumn of 1994, many states have elected to intervene. Perhaps all states should avoid such

interventions, but that is not what Evangelista argues. Given the propensity of many other states to do the same, it is never clear why the author finds Russia's actions particularly reprehensible.

In the case of Chechnya there were additional considerations that went beyond the rapid escalation of criminality, violence and instability. These included oil reserves, oil routes, and Russian political maneuvering. Certainly fears of rampant separatism played a role, but apart from a selective presentation of facts Evangelista offers little basis for accepting this as the paramount cause of the first war, and if it is necessary to identify a primary cause then it seems that there are much more plausible candidates.

A Second War in Chechnya

Yet if an epidemic of popular separatism was a secondary concern in 1994 it was all the more peripheral by 1999. Of course, in 1999 Russian leaders, such as Vladimir Putin, were concerned about prospects for Russia's fragmentation, and Evangelista has the quotes to prove it. The problem for his interpretation of those quotes is that the officials who pronounced them were not, as he supposes, concerned about Chechnya as an inspiration for popular separatist uprisings in far flung Russian regions. Rather they were concerned with Chechnya as a base for internationally supported irredentist attacks aimed at the violent separation of the North Caucasian republics from the Russian Federation and the imposition of Wahhabite Islamist fundamentalism upon

their unwilling inhabitants. Consider the following passage in which Evangelista quotes Putin:

Vladimir Putin ... justified the resort to force as a means of maintaining control of regions at risk of separation. “I have never for a second believed that Chechnya would limit itself to its own independence. It would become a beachhead for further attacks on Russia. If the Chechen rebels had remained in power “they would have swallowed up Dagestan, and that would be the beginning of the end. The entire North Caucasus would have followed...”^{vi}

Putin’s concerns were not, as Evangelista claims, cynical acts of “fear-mongering” intended as a “pretext” for the second “invasion” of Chechnya. Rather they were an accurate reflection of intentions clearly stated by Chechen militants, for example, at the Congress of Peoples of Chechnya and Dagestan convened in Grozny in April 1999.^{vii} They also accurately reflect statements by militants during their two invasions of Dagestan, in August and September 1999, from bases in Chechnya that were supported by Al Qaida.^{viii} Those invasions involved approximately 2,000 insurgents, resulted in dozens of deaths, displaced 32,000 Dagestanis, and were potentially genocidal in that they attacked mountain villages accommodating entire populations of small ethno-linguistic groups. It is misleading for Evangelista to claim that these remarks by Putin were a justification of “the resort to force as a means of maintaining control of regions at risk of separation.”

In March and April 2000, I led a group of researchers who conducted a population survey of 1001 respondents throughout Dagestan. We asked respondents what sort of state they would prefer to inhabit. Less than 11 percent wished to live in an Islamic state, while over 63 percent preferred to return to a socialist state. We asked them to identify the greatest external threat to Dagestan: Russia, Chechnya, Eastern Countries, or Western Countries. Chechnya was identified as the greatest threat by far. Russia was least threatening for all Dagestani ethnic groups except Dagestan's indigenous Chechen-Akkins. When we asked "Who would you trust in case of an acute crisis?", nearly two thirds of the Dagestani respondents said that they would place their trust in the "Russian federal leadership," far more than those who would trust personal networks of family and friends, on the one hand, or Dagestani officials, on the other, and way ahead of those who would place their trust in religious leaders or leaders of social groups. Elite interviews conducted in Dagestan during the following month provide detailed support for these views. In the case of Dagestan, it is clear that Putin was not resorting to force in order to forestall separatism. Dagestanis clearly view Chechnya as a threat and look to federal officials for help.

The results of this study are available in print, and were available since September 2001 in a report to one of the funding organizations, and as a paper presented at a major academic conference and subsequently posted on the web.^{ix} Curiously, though these results were studied in advance by the author and discussed in personal communications with me prior to the publication of this book, though the study is referenced in his notes, and though the results

are pertinent to his argument, neither the text nor the notes contains any discussion of these results.

No less curiously, the author insists that Putin was “breaking the peace agreements (with Chechnya that) his predecessor (Boris Yeltsin) had signed”^x when Russian troops returned to Chechnya in 1999. At that time, a Russian republic had just endured two invasions from militants based in Chechnya under the leadership of Shamil Basaev and Emir Khattab. People were murdered, and villages were destroyed. Those invasions were only the latest in a long series of incursions from Chechnya that regularly involved attacks upon civilians and Dagestani police, and that, in December 1997, culminated in an attack on a federal garrison near the Dagestani town of Buinaksk. During the same years hundreds of Dagestanis were kidnapped and transported to Chechnya, where they were tortured and dismembered on videotape or sold into slavery, as were thousands of citizens from other Russian republics in the region. Yet somehow the author fails to consider that the peace agreement may have been broken prior to Putin’s decision.

Of course, there is room for equivocation. Since the invasions of Dagestan were neither resisted nor supported by the legitimate government of Chechnya, headed by President Aslan Maskhadov, should they be regarded as treaty violations or as criminal acts? If they were criminal acts they were clearly massive in their scale. Nevertheless, as Evangelista points out, Putin was prepared to avoid war by negotiating the crisis in essentially criminal terms prior to ordering troops to return to Chechnya: “On September 29, 1999, Putin expressed willingness to begin negotiations with the Chechen leadership, but only on condition that (1) Maskhadov condemn terrorism ‘clearly and

firmly;’ (2) he rid Chechen territory of armed bands; and (3) he be willing to extradite ‘criminals’ to Moscow.” Far from using the invasions of Dagestan as a “pretext” for the “invasion” of Chechnya, Putin offered Maskhadov an opportunity to treat the preceding invasions of Dagestan as a criminal matter and to negotiate a peaceful solution. Evangelista also recounts Maskhadov’s response: “... when the interviewer asked why Maskhadov would not arrest Basaev, Raduev^{xi}, and Khattab, ‘or at least strip them of their operational bases in the Chechen mountains,’ Maskhadov responded: ‘I cannot simply have Basaev arrested as a gangster; people here would not understand that. After all, we fought together for our country’s independence.’”^{xii} When Maskhadov says that “people would not understand” Evangelista interprets him to mean not that Chechen public opinion supported Basaev, but “as a way of avoiding admitting that (Maskhadov) would be powerless to do something because his enemies still commanded considerable influence.”^{xiii} Hence, it appears that Evangelista agrees that Maskhadov, faced with an opportunity to prevent war by opposing Basaev, chose not to oppose Basaev, nor to restrict the military activities of these warlords, nor to preserve his own government by joining with the Russians to restrict the warlords. Since these warlords were, at the time, promising violently to separate the North Caucasian republics from the Russian Federation and forcibly to subjugate their inhabitants to Islamist rule, it is difficult to see that Putin had any choice other than a military return to Chechnya. Certainly most heads of government would have made the same choice that Putin made. Moreover, it is difficult to understand why Putin did not have a moral obligation to do so in order to protect Russian citizens from further invasions, as they clearly wished to be

protected. In similar circumstances most leaders would see themselves as having such a moral obligation; yet Evangelista never explains why that obligation did not apply to Putin.

Nor was this the first time that Maskhadov was warned. When Major-General Gennadii Shpigun was kidnapped in Grozny in March 1999, Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin warned that further “terrorist acts” would prompt Russian military intervention aimed at the destruction of bases occupied by the “criminal formations.”^{xiv} Indeed, those like Evangelista, who are currently urging Moscow to negotiate a settlement of the conflict might recall that Shpigun was not the first high-level Russian official to be kidnapped in those years. The Russian presidential envoy to Chechnya, Valentin Vlasov, was also held hostage for six months.^{xv} When Moscow attempted to negotiate with Chechen officials its negotiators were taken as hostages.

Following Shpigun’s kidnapping, Stepashin drew up plans for an invasion of Chechnya, and prior existence of these plans is one of the reasons for Evangelista’s claim that the invasions of Dagestan were a “pretext” for a Russian “invasion” of Chechnya. Evangelista dismisses my suggestion that, alongside Stepashin’s warning to Maskhadov, these should be regarded as the sort of contingency plans that most other governments would make under similar circumstances.^{xvi} Yet Evangelista explains that Chechen President Dudaev had drawn plans for a war with Russia in 1992,^{xvii} so it would seem that if Evangelista equates planning with the intentional execution of a war then he must consistently hold Chechnya responsible for the first war and

count Russia's 1994 "invasion" as a pretext for the realization of Dudaev's war plans.

Given Moscow's decision to act, the author would prefer that the Russian military had actually followed those earlier plans, which would have limited its occupation to lowland Chechnya, north of the Terek River, or, alternatively, that it had created a cordon sanitaire along the Chechen border. Yet that is essentially what Stepashin tried to do in April 1999 when a series of killings and kidnappings in the Stavropol region, near Chechnya, prompted him to close the Chechen border.^{xviii} That same month, in Grozny at the Congress of the Peoples of Chechnya and Dagestan, Shamil Basaev vowed to invade Dagestan.^{xix}

Regions and Risks

The author believes that Russian military actions in Chechnya have been based upon Russian fears that Chechen nationalism was a contagion that would inspire separatist movements in other regions of Russia. In his chapter on "Regions at Risk?" he seeks to show that these fears were groundless and that Russian military actions in Chechnya were therefore without reason. Yet throughout the 1990s, Moscow's fears were based not only upon the potential spread of popular separatism, but on realistic assessments of instability and violence spilling across Chechnya's borders. By 1999, they were also based upon militant statements about the forcible conquest of Russian republics culminating with the invasions of Dagestan. Hence, Evangelista's chapter on "Regions at Risk" is reduced to a red herring. This is unfortunate because, on

its surface, the chapter is one of the most engaging in the book, and points, if nothing else, to the need for a thorough comparison of these regions.

The strength of this chapter is its comparative history of four regions “typically considered at risk for secession, the ones many observers claimed were most likely to follow the Chechen example: Dagestan, Tartarstan, Bashkortostan, and the regions of the Far East.”^{xx} In the following chapter on Russian recentralization, Evangelista gives similar treatment to Ingushetia. These are inherently interesting studies that the author, or someone else, might well expand to a separate monograph. Any chapter summarizing the histories of four Russian regions will be limited in the information that it is able to provide on each, and difficult choices must inevitably be faced. That being said, the author’s choices, at least in his discussion of some regions, seem to favor his thesis. For example, he offers recent evidence in favor of Dagestan’s federal fidelities, but fails to consider how different the picture might have appeared ten years ago when neighboring Chechnya was first asserting independence.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Dagestan’s political elites found themselves suddenly without federal support and sought new bases for their power. At the same time, many ordinary Dagestanis were seeking a new framework for social organization. Both leaders and followers turned to Dagestan’s traditional social and political structures. Dagestan’s traditional political unit is the *djamaat*, or village, and while the social structure is complex, it is prominently divided among more than 30 ethno-linguistic groups. With the collapse of the central authority, in the early 1990s, ethnicity became the primary vehicle for political mobilization in Dagestan, and when

political competition is played out in ethnic terms a certain amount of nationalist rhetoric is inevitable. Most of Dagestan's ethnic groups can point to some legitimate grievances, and for some groups these gave rise to a separatist agenda. This was the case for the ethnic organization of the Kumyks, known as *Berlik*, the Lezgin organization, called *Sadval*, and was, if nothing else, a rhetorical focus for the Avar organization, known as the Imam Shamil Front.^{xxi} As the demands of each organization caused other ethnic groups to mobilize in order to protect their interests it appeared for a time as though Dagestan, let alone Russia, might go the fragmentary way of the Soviet Union. However, this changed rapidly after 1994 when Dagestan adopted a new constitution providing a set of innovative institutions that successfully defused ethnic issues.^{xxii}

In March/April 2000, our population survey found that Dagestan and Russia respectively were the two most important referents of identification for most Dagestanis.^{xxiii} All Dagestani ethnic groups, including (by a slight margin) indigenous Chechen-Akkins, wanted closer relations between Dagestan and Russia. Evangelista suggests that such affinities are due to the increase in central subsidies following the invasions of 1999. Yet while Dagestan's economic dependence on the Federation is a key factor, our survey was conducted before these increases had begun to offer appreciable benefits.

Thus while Evangelista is correct in observing that Dagestan is unlikely to secede from the Russian Federation, this was much less clear in 1994 when Russian officials were deciding whether or not to reenter Chechnya. There is a similar sense of crystalline hindsight and selectivity about some of the other sections of this chapter.

About these regions, the author concludes that “Their movements for autonomy did not pose any serious threat of secession that could not be handled by peaceful negotiations, elite-level bargaining, and concessions—the same recipe that could have avoided the wars in Chechnya as well.”^{xxiv} Here Evangelista comes perilously close to proving the contradictory of his claim. For if Russian officials, particularly Boris Yeltsin, negotiated peaceful settlements with each of these diverse regions then this is proof that they were willing and able to do so. As Evangelista observes with reference to Chechnya, “The Yeltsin administration had dealt with similar bids for autonomy from strategically more important regions, such as Tartarstan and Bashkortostan, and had worked out a modus vivendi by negotiation and conciliation....”^{xxv} The author never seriously considers the obvious question: If the Yeltsin administration was capable of settlements in other regions, then why not Chechnya? Without offering evidence or explanation, Evangelista simply suggests that in the case of Chechnya Russian officials were unwilling to do so.

However, this suggestion is misleading. The author neglects to mention that in December 1992, Yeltsin offered Chechen President Dudaev an autonomy treaty that had been drafted by Moscow officials in conjunction with the Chechen legislature. This treaty might have been the basis for negotiations similar to those which Moscow successfully concluded with Tartarstan after Tartarstan, like Chechnya, refused to sign the federation treaty in March 1992. Unlike Tartar leaders, however, Dudaev flatly rejected Yeltsin’s offer. In March 1993, the Chechen parliament opened another window on a Tartarstan-style settlement when it resolved to hold a resolution

on Chechen sovereignty. That was when Dudaev had the members of the parliament beaten and murdered, after which Chechnya descended into political chaos and intra-Chechen violence. Moscow cannot seriously be blamed for this. It would be more plausible to argue that Moscow was, in fact, capable of peacefully settling separatist or quasi-separatist issues since that is what it did in all of the other regions that Evangelista surveys.

Why didn't it happen in Chechnya? Without a doubt the Yeltsin administration made serious mistakes, but it can be reasonably argued that nothing Moscow might have done would have deterred Dudaev and his followers from their course of nationalist radicalism. Clearly they were prepared to kill those of their fellow Chechens who stood in their path. What accounts for Chechen exceptionalism?

Why Chechnya?

Perhaps Chechnya's instability is due to the history of bitter grievance and brutal warfare between Russians and Chechens. Yet the Dagestani case seems to undermine this explanation. The Dagestanis led the Chechens in their long war against Russian expansionism in the early to mid nineteenth century, but settled thereafter into a relatively comfortable accommodation with Moscow. Perhaps Chechnya's instability follows from the brutal deportation of the Chechen people to Central Asia in February 1944. Without question this deportation was a crucially formative experience for the Chechen nation and remains a source of deep resentment among Chechens today. Yet once again,

this cannot be accepted as sufficient cause for Chechen instability since the neighboring Ingush and other Caucasian nationalities endured the same mass deportation without also suffering bloody conflicts throughout the last decade. Indeed when Dagestani Laks and Avars were forcibly resettled onto the lands vacated by the Chechen deportation, and when their traditional villages were subsequently destroyed, the result was an enduring sense of dislocation, which however did not culminate in protracted ethnic conflicts. While these historical grievances undoubtedly have contributed to Chechnya's problems they provide an insufficient explanation for Chechnya's recent conflicts.

Evangelista briefly considers my argument that Chechen social structure is among the principal causes of Chechen radicalism, whether nationalist or Islamist.^{xxvi} In Dagestan, the political structure of the *djamaat*, or village, has subsumed Dagestani clans and trumped other kinship structures for the past five hundred years. This tradition is one of the reasons why Dagestan's current political system has successfully embraced more than thirty ethnic groups, since ethnicity is, of course, a kinship structure. From a traditional Dagestani perspective, the Republic of Dagestan, and even the Russian Federation, both of which embrace numerous kinship structures, are, in a sense, the *djamaat* writ large. However, Chechen society is traditionally organized around a complex, seven-level kinship structure, in which the *teip*, or clan, is the preeminent organization. Chechen society lacks a tradition of an authoritative, overarching political structure that encompasses kinship groups and reconciles their differences. Instead it is chronically fragmented among more than 150 *teips*.

I have argued that this chronic social fragmentation breeds radicalism as competing leaders seek to justify their ambitions in ideological terms that transcend Chechen social fragmentation, then escalate extremist rhetoric and commit extremist acts in order to attract attention, demonstrate prowess, and appeal for supporters. In the early 1990s this intra-Chechen extremist escalation was played out in nationalistic terms that exploited opposition with Russia and interfered with opportunities for compromise with Russian officials. In the late 1990s it was played out in terms of Islamist rhetoric and ties to international Islamist organizations. From 1991 to 1994, these dynamics favored, and thereby encouraged, the radical nationalist appeals of Dudaev and his supporters. From 1997 to 1999, similar dynamics favored, and thereby encouraged, the Islamist extremist appeals of those such as Shamil Basaev and Movladi Udugov. Either in the case of their nationalist rhetoric or their Islamist rhetoric, Chechen leaders appealed to values that transcended the inherent fragmentation of Chechen society by emphasizing, and to some extent inventing, causes with which all Chechens might identify. In both cases, intra-Chechen social dynamics favored the most radical appeals.

These tendencies are exacerbated by Chechen warrior mythology, which fulfills and perpetuates itself through cycles of conflict. On the one hand, a defeat is a bitter and enduring affront to the Chechen self-conception, which demands violent retribution. On the other hand, a victory, such as that in 1996, confirms the mythology of Chechen culture, and thereby encourages further violence.

After the victory in 1996, the endemic fragmentation of Chechen society prevented the consolidation of an overarching political structure

capable of supporting the rule of law and legitimate economic activity. The regime of Aslan Maskhadov was never able to control the warlords and *teip* leaders who confronted one another, nor to prevent Chechnya's rapid descent into chaos and criminality.

Clearly there is a reciprocity among these factors. If Chechen social fragmentation tends toward the radicalism that was a contributing cause of both wars, then the desperation, devastation, and bitterness resulting from both wars has also contributed to the fragmentation and radicalization of Chechen society. Yet if there is truth in the preceding argument then Chechen society tends toward violent extremism by virtue of its inherent dynamics regardless of external factors.

Evangelista rightly notes that this argument is controversial and difficult either to confirm or to refute. One of the difficulties for the argument may be that people in the region, whether Chechen or Dagestani, are reluctant to discuss traditional structures with outsiders for fear that they may be regarded as atavistic. Certainly traditional North Caucasian structures, such as the *teip* and the *djamaat*, are important topics for future research.

It is unappealing to consider the prospect of inherent structural problems in a society that has suffered as much as that of Chechnya. Especially while Chechens are suffering horrible abuse at the hands of Russian troops it is easier to blame Moscow for all, or most, of the problems in Chechnya, which is essentially Evangelista's strategy. This strategy may provide satisfaction to Western observers, but neither has it thus far contributed to peace in the Caucasus, nor is it likely to do so. There will never be a lasting peace without truth, and there will never be truth without a careful

consideration of all reasonable possibilities. Evangelista's viewpoint does not appear to be shared by many in Chechnya's neighboring Muslim republics. Our interviews in Dagestan and anecdotal information from regular visits to the region suggest that while many locals sympathize with suffering in Chechnya, most of them hold the people of Chechnya responsible for their situation.

Thus far, Western observers who blame Russia first and last for problems in the Caucasus can point to the following accomplishments: Their rhetoric has undercut Russian moderates and strengthened the hand of Russian hard-liners. It has condoned terrorism, encouraged militancy, and excused the people of Chechnya from taking responsibility for themselves and for the order of their society, which is the only way that they and their neighbors will ever have any peace. In short, Russia bashing in the West has encouraged Russians and Chechens to continue bashing each other. It has prolonged the suffering of people in Chechnya, and prolonged instability in the region.

Warriors and Criminals

The author expands upon a much-rehearsed argument about the impact of September 11 on the international response to Russian abuses in Chechnya. According to the argument, Western criticism of Russian abuses has been muted since September 11 because Western leaders have callously, even cynically, traded their moral responsibility toward Chechnya for Russian support, initially in the fight against Al Qaida and subsequently in other international efforts. Yet this argument has a flipside. For if events of

September 11 contributed to the West's reluctance to criticize Russian actions in Chechnya, then it is also true that West's readiness to criticize Russian actions in Chechnya contributed to the events of September 11.

During the summer of 2001, FBI agents in Minneapolis sought a warrant against accused 9/11 conspirator, Zacarias Moussaoui. Had they been issued a warrant it is plausible that it would have revealed information about Al Qaida conspiracies in America as early as August 2001. At that point in their investigation, the Minneapolis agents were able to connect Moussaoui to Chechen organizations.^{xxvii} However, the agents were not issued a warrant on the ground that these Chechen groups had no recognized terrorist affiliations. Had the US government recognized terrorist acts committed by Chechen militants prior to the summer of 2001 it is possible that the 9/11 tragedy might have been avoided. Instead, it was the readiness of American officials to criticize Russian military actions in Chechnya, and a corresponding reluctance either to credit Russia's consistent claims about Chechen terrorism or to criticize Chechen militants, that impeded American law enforcement efforts which otherwise might have led to advance revelations about the 9/11 conspiracy.

In fact, there was plenty of evidence for a terrorist classification of some Chechen groups in 1999, more than two years before the 9/11 tragedy. Islamist elements appeared in Chechnya as early as 1993, and had acquired influence by 1994 when Basaev trained at one of Bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan. Four years later, Islamists were competing for control of Chechnya and were a serious destabilizing force in Dagestan. In February 1999, President Aslan Maskhadov placed Chechnya under the rule of Sharia'

law, an indication that he had effectively surrendered Chechnya to Islamist control. At that time, there were hundreds of Arab gunmen in Chechnya, especially near Urus-Martan and at a military training camp in Serzhen-Yurt.^{xxviii} Many of these fighters had Al Qaida connections, and Al Qaida money underwrote the camp's expenses.

While there has been, until recently, a steady stream of foreign fighters into Chechnya, and while these fighters have played a major role in the fighting especially since the fall of Grozny in 2000, international extremist organizations have primarily played a financial role. The scale of international support would have to be rated as substantial not only because it involved large financial transfers, but also because it has largely sustained militant forces throughout the last three years. Nevertheless, international funding has significantly decreased in the last year, thanks in part to American action.

Moreover, Chechen groups committed clear acts of terrorism from 1991 (when Basaev hijacked a Turkish airliner) onward. For example, in June 1995 Shamil Basaev and about 150 gunmen took more than a thousand hostages in a maternity hospital in the Russian town of Budenovsk. In January 1996, Chechen warlord, Salman Raduev, took 3,000 Dagestani men, women, and children as hostages in a hospital in the city of Kizlyar. The invasions of Dagestan in August and September of 1999 from Al Qaida supported bases in Chechnya resulted in numerous murders and the displacement of 32,000 Dagestanis.^{xxix} In September 1999, a bomb killed 64 residents of an apartment block in the Dagestani town of Buinaksk. Five local Dagestani Wahhrites were convicted of the blast in 2001. The leader had worked as a cook for Basaev and Khattab at a terrorist training camps in Chechnya, and, in

testimony that he later recanted, he stated that the explosives used in the blast had been supplied to him by Chechen militants.

For years, some members of these groups had been financing themselves in part by kidnapping thousands of people in the Caucasus region and torturing them on videotape in order to extract ransoms. Those were acts of terrorism too since the acts were intended to intimidate peaceful people in neighboring republics in advance of Islamist political expansion, and since some of the ransom money was used to finance terrorist groups.

For example, the Baraev family was notorious for kidnapping and cruelty. In December 1998, Arbi Baraev beheaded four hostages, three from Britain and one from New Zealand, even after their British employer, Granger Telecom, had offered Baraev a ransom of seven million dollars. In 2001, the BBC's Money Program examined evidence that Baraev had received 30 million from Bin Laden to kill the captives, in addition to procuring nuclear material from former Soviet weapons specialists. Arbi's nephew, Movsar Baraev led the Nord Ost terrorists during the Moscow hostage crisis in October 1992. Until 2002, these groups were also partially financed by an Illinois-based organization known as the "Benevolence Foundation", which was unwittingly supported by several large American companies, including Microsoft.

Yet while Evangelista attacks Western observers whom, he believes, have maintained double standards and consequently have been lax in their criticism of Russian abuses in Chechnya, he criticizes none of these acts committed by Chechen terrorists.^{xxx} He describes both the Budenovsk^{xxxi} and the Kizlyar raids in detail, and discusses the latter in three separate chapters of

the book.^{xxxii} In the case of both of these terrorist incidents, he appreciates the efficacy of the terrorists particularly with regard to the ends that they achieved^{xxxiii} and largely blames the Russians, suggesting in both cases that it was they who provoked the violence. Without criticism or condemnation, the author describes a rally held in Chechnya in March 1997 to honor the terrorist acts in Kizlyar as a “day of historic Chechen combat glory”, which reached a climax, according to Evangelista, when “(t)wo hundred of Raduev’s armed supporters paraded through central Grozny, and attracted a crowd of some 3,000 people.”^{xxxiv} Ironically, that is about the same number of men, women, and children that Raduev held hostage. If the author is opposed to double standards, then where is his condemnation of these terrorist acts?

The author acknowledges that, during the interwar years from 1996 to 1999, much of Chechnya’s hostage industry was either directly or indirectly political in its effects without going on to consider that, by many standards, this would qualify much of the rampant kidnapping in the region as a form of terrorism. With reference to Mexico and Columbia, he adds that, “Nevertheless, although Russia is not the only country to have experienced a kidnapping epidemic, few others have responded with all-out war.”^{xxxv} Much can be said about this disturbing remark.

Of course, much of the kidnapping in Columbia is connected to war. In Chechnya and Columbia, but not (for the most part) in Mexico, many of the kidnappings have been carried out by armed groups which devote part of their ransom income to the support of their military activities. In Chechnya, the military objectives of those armed groups included the conquest of Russia’s North Caucasian republics and the forcible subjugation of their inhabitants.

Therefore what actually distinguishes Chechnya from Columbia and Mexico is not simply the presence of warfare. It is the fact that neither Columbia nor Mexico has operated as an effectively independent state with militant leaders who systematically prey upon thousands of citizens from a neighboring country in order to extort ransom payments, part of which are applied toward the invasion and subjugation of regions in that neighboring country. So perhaps, as a political thought experiment, it would be useful to follow the author's lead and to try to imagine what might happen if a country like Columbia or Mexico were actually to have followed Chechnya's path.

What would happen if there were a sovereign, or semi-sovereign, country to the south of the United States that was kidnapping thousands of American citizens, including men, women, and children of all ages? Suppose that after being kidnapped from their homes in the United States Americans were transported to this country where some of them were sold into slavery and treated thereafter in the cruelest conceivable manner. Most of the other American hostages were chained in dark holes, sometimes flooded, where they were regularly beaten, sometimes starved, and then tortured and dismembered on videotapes that were subsequently sent to their families in the United States in order to extort exorbitant ransoms. Now suppose that the United States government sent two high level emissaries to this country at different times to negotiate issues, including the kidnapping epidemic, and that both these emissaries were kidnapped. Suppose that nearly every day saw cross-border raids from this country into the United States resulting not only in kidnapping, but in plundering and other property crimes, as well as regular attacks upon American police forces, and on one occasion a US military base. Finally,

suppose that two thousand gunmen invaded the United States from Al Qaida-supported terrorist training camps in this southern neighbor, murdering dozens and driving more than 30,000 Americans from their homes. Suppose that after all of that our American president asked the ruler of that southern country to extradite the leaders of those invasions and close the international terrorist bases in his country, and suppose the southern leader refused. What would happen?

We all know what would happen. The United States invaded Grenada and Panama for much less. Russia had about as much justification for going to war with Chechnya in 1999 as the United States had for going to war with Japan in 1941, and who can say that what was happening inside Germany in 1941 was more evil than what was happening inside Chechnya in 1999?

Evangelista cannot say because he never set foot in the Caucasus, not during the interwar years and not at any other time. In his book, the author explains that while he was interviewing a Dagestani official in Moscow in 1998 the official invited him to visit Mahachkala, Dagestan's capital city and one of the safer locations in the region.^{xxxvi} The author explains that he declined the invitation because he was concerned about the "risks" of being kidnapped, a fear for which he found some support on the next day when an American teacher was kidnapped in Mahachkala.^{xxxvii} Evangelista does not explain that the American's Chechen captors subsequently videotaped themselves sawing off the his finger with a knife.

Dagestan was a dangerous place in 1998, and it was reasonable, perhaps prudent, to fear kidnapping, even in Mahachkala. Yet what is particularly striking is that Evangelista is prepared, in the citation above, to

abandon millions of local residents to risks, indeed to a reality, that he was not prepared to accept for himself, even in the capital city, even for a couple of days. Nevertheless, Evangelista is someone who is prepared to criticize other Western observers for what he believes are their double standards.

There are also “risks” in writing a book about a Russian region that one has never visited. If one’s “field work” is confined to Moscow, then one is likely to see all issues in terms of relations between the center and the periphery, while remaining naive about intra-regional issues and relationships. Perhaps this is the reason for the author’s confusion regarding the causes of the two wars, and his failure to understand that the second war was caused primarily by militants bent upon the invasion, conquest, and subjugation of Russian republics.

Perhaps as a result of his inexperience with the region, the author relies heavily upon reports in the popular media. The difficulty with this strategy is that most of these reports are not in any way rigorous, most are incomplete, and some are imbalanced and misleading. For example, in his chapter on “War Crimes and International Standing,” Evangelista draws upon popular media reports, and upon two longer articles that are themselves based upon popular media reports, in order to make strong assertions concerning events surrounding Radio Liberty reporter, Andrei Babitskii. Evangelista claims: “In order to demonstrate that he (Babitskii) was a traitor, the Russian authorities set up a fraudulent exchange of Babitskii to a bogus group of Chechen ‘rebels’ in return for supposed Russian prisoners of war.”^{xxxviii} My friend, Sasha, is a Mahachkala scientist who was kidnapped in August 1999 along with another Dagestani scientist and two female scientists from Poland. He told me that he

was held in Chechnya, in a cellar that frequently flooded by the Akhmadov brothers, a notorious Chechen kidnapping clan. With him were nine other captives, including the two Russian prisoners of war who were traded for Babitskii. Sasha told me that the two Russians were frequently beaten by their captors as was another hostage, a Muslim cleric from Azerbaijan. Sasha is sufficiently convinced by the circumstances of his captivity, in which he observed the torture of the Russian prisoners, and consequently does not join Evangelista in regarding Babitskii's transfer as a "fraudulent exchange." Of course, it is more difficult to find people like Sasha in Moscow than in Dagestan, and one will not read Sasha's story in the popular media since no journalist has interviewed him. In order to talk to people like Sasha about their experiences in Chechen captivity one must visit the region.

Another problem that his lack of field experience presents for Evangelista is that he ends up attacking two of the researchers upon whose fieldwork his argument depends at other points in the book. At the heart of his chapter on "War Crimes and the International Response" is what one reviewer has described as a "curiously emotional"^{xxxix} attack upon writers including Anatol Lieven and the present author. Evangelista's charges that the two of us have "sought to rationalize" Russian brutality in Chechnya. He believes that our "poor understanding in general of international law" has led to our "ready acceptance" of indiscriminate bombing, civilian deaths, and human rights violations. The author's argument depends upon a selective use of quotations, and a tendency to level a series of charges in rapid succession without a conclusive discussion of any. Both strategies are misleading.

Despite his claim that Lieven and I have failed to understand the application of international law to the current war in Chechnya, Evangelista is, himself, unclear about that very application. This is because of his uncertainty as to whether it is an anti-terrorist operation, an internal conflict, a colonial conflict, or a conflict between two sovereign entities. Legal implications vary with these categories, and if it is an anti-terrorist operation, perhaps comparable to the American engagement in Afghanistan, then the legal ramifications are particularly murky, for example, regarding the treatment of enemy combatants. No one, including the present author, would wish to argue that the Russian military has not been guilty of serious, substantial, and sustained criminal activity in Chechnya. Yet it is extraordinary that Evangelista would level allegations of our failure to understand international law as a basis for his attacks upon Lieven and myself, when Evangelista is himself incapable of clarifying the applications of international law to the conflict in Chechnya.

The author's discussion in this chapter proceeds rapidly and inconclusively through a series of different claims and charges that may leave some readers with the mistaken impression that Lieven and I have condoned human rights abuses in Chechnya. Both Lieven and I have consistently condemned these abuses. Evangelista does a disservice to all concerned in his failure to make this clear, and in his failure to provide a balanced summary of our positions.

Evangelista is particularly concerned about what he regards as justifications for Russia's indiscriminate bombardment of Grozny from December 1999 and to February 2000, which he finds in passages from

articles that Lieven and I have published independently. He also believes that I have argued that ends justify means in Chechnya, and that this argument ignores Just War theories. In support of these charges, Evangelista presents a brief passage from a lengthy article that appeared on an internet list in February 2000.^{xl} In that passage, I argued that Russia's involvement in Chechnya was justified not only because Russia was fighting a defensive war following repeated unprovoked attacks upon its territory and citizens, but also in order to put an end to massive human rights abuses resulting from the hostage industry. I agreed that some of Russia's methods were "unconscionable," but argued that if we accept that Russia has just objectives then "we must tolerate some of the methods, for it is unlikely that the objectives could be achieved with methods that were substantially different." Russian objectives could not be achieved without the bombardment of Grozny, I argued, because Chechen militants purposefully take refuge among civilians, because Russia lacks the capability of remote precision attacks, and because it would be difficult or impossible for Russia to achieve its objectives by fighting in close quarters.

Evangelista never clearly states why Russia's attack on Grozny constitutes a war crime, or violates international law, or contravenes Just War theories. In fact, *Jus in bello* distinguishes between unlawful attacks designed to kill civilians and legitimate attacks on military targets that result in civilian deaths. It permits massive assaults against an array of military targets, even when these result in substantial amounts of civilian fatalities.^{xli} While Russian troops besieged Grozny in December 1999, Russian officials dropped leaflets and aired broadcasts urging civilians to evacuate Grozny prior to their attack.

Corridors of safe passage were provided and were successfully used by many civilians. An indeterminate number of civilians, including the elderly and infirm, remained in the city. No doubt many of them perished, and that is deeply regrettable. Yet Grozny was an important military objective. Russia could not have put an end to Chechen incursions and human rights violations without it.

It is regrettable that the author did not make this aspect of my argument clearer to his readers since it might then have been easier to see that his ends/means argument cuts both ways. Evangelista contends that I am advocating the achievement of a worthy objective (an end to Chechen invasions and human rights abuses) by wicked means (the indiscriminate bombardment of Grozny), though Evangelista fails to clarify exactly how the latter was a violation of either international law or the requirements of a just war. On the other hand, I might also argue that Evangelista advocates the achievement of a worthy objective by clearly wicked means. Evangelista would like to have spared Grozny from bombardment. While this is clearly a worthy goal its realization would have substantially reduced prospects for Russian troops to occupy Grozny. If Russian troops had not taken Grozny then warlords and criminal gangs would have remained in control of Chechen society, and Chechen human rights abuses would have continued. So it would seem that in order to achieve his objective of avoiding an attack on Grozny (or upholding international law) Evangelista is implicitly willing to accept as his means the torture, mutilation, and enslavement of thousands of people, including women and children. It is a bold argument for an author who was not willing to accept the “risks” of even a brief visit to the region.

According to the author: “Russian leaders justified the bombing as a means of achieving a certain end—the eradication of terror and kidnapping in Chechnya. But if the means—bombardment of defenseless cities—not only fails to achieve the declared end, but meanwhile destroys thousands of innocent lives, should not that fact figure somehow into the moral and legal calculus? Even a simplistic ends-justifies-the-means argument would expect the means to contribute to achieving the ends.”^{xlii} First, Grozny was clearly not “defenseless,” but was in fact fiercely defended by thousands of well-armed militants. On the other hand, Chechnya’s second city, Gudermes, was not defended, and, for that reason, Russia did not attack it. It is astonishing that the author would publish a book on this topic without grasping this fundamental fact. Perhaps it is because Evangelista does not understand that Grozny was defended militarily that he mistakes its bombardment for a war crime.

Secondly, Evangelista provides no support for his claim that Russia failed “in achieving the ends” that it sought. In fact, Chechnya is largely pacified. Kidnapping in Dagestan, which increased by 310 percent from 1995 to 1999,^{xliii} dropped dramatically after Russian troops returned to Chechnya as did many other forms of crime. Overall there has been a dramatic improvement in law enforcement in the region since the Russian military returned at the end of 1999. For example, according to data provided by the Dagestani Committee on Statistics for 2001^{xliiv}, 89.8 percent of crimes committed in Dagestan were solved, the second highest rate in the Russian Federation, after Ingushetia. For 2001, law enforcement indices in Dagestan were among the best in Russia, with lower levels of crime than in most of the

rest of the federation. This is despite the fact that between 4,000 and 5,000 Dagestani police are stationed along the border with Chechnya responding to provocations by militants and trans-border crime. Moreover, on my visits since the end of 1999, I have found a mood of increasing optimism and vitality in Dagestani society in stark contrast to the pervasive atmosphere of tension and dread that I found on my visits during the interwar years.

Since Evangelista never visited the region he has no frame of reference for understanding the full horror of hostage industry and how much it terrorized societies surrounding Chechnya, nor for appreciating the extent to which life has improved for most residents of the region since the Russian Federation recognized its responsibility to protect them. Certainly he has not achieved an understanding of the problem from either Western journalists or Western human rights workers.

In the West, relatively little is known about what happened in the Northeast Caucasus between 1996, when the Russian military withdrew from Chechnya, and 1999, when it returned. During that period the region became so dangerous that most Western journalists, rights, and relief workers abandoned the people of the region to horrific suffering and abuse at the hands of criminals and extremists. Most journalists, and all major NGOs found the courage to return to the area only in the wake of the Russian military, making it safe for them to criticize Russians without admitting that were afraid to go there before the Russian military returned.

Western human rights organizations say that they focus on Russian abuses while ignoring many Chechen abuses because they are only concerned with abuses that are committed by states, and they are not concerned with

abuses committed by non-state actors. For their purposes, Chechnya was not considered as a state from 1996 to 1999. As a result, these organizations have published many reports based upon their interviews with Chechen refugees, yet not one Western human rights organization has interviewed the 32,000 Dagestani refugees displaced by the invasions of Dagestan in 1999. Nor has any of these organizations released a report on the massive human rights abuses resulting from the hostage industry, nor interviewed the victims thereof. Yet without a balanced account of abuses in the region it is impossible to understand Russia's responsibility to protect its citizens.

One would have thought that the events of September 11th might have helped Western organizations to appreciate that serious human rights abuses can also be committed by non-state actors, such as Al Qaida. Indeed, it is ironic that there are so many who wish to consider Chechnya an independent state at all times except those times when it would mean that people in Chechnya would be held responsible for the abuses that they have committed. Recently, some Western human rights organizations have increased their condemnation of abuses committed by Chechens against other Chechens, but it is unlikely that these groups will ever recognize the scale of abuses committed by Chechens against their neighbors. If journalists and rights workers have not provided a balanced account of events in the region in recent years then what about scholars?

Sovietology's Last Stand

There was a time when Soviet regulations restricted fieldwork in many regions of Russia, and most Western scholars could do little more than interview officials in Moscow and Leningrad and scrutinize the faces on top of Lenin's corpse. Fortunately that time has passed, and important fieldwork is now being accomplished in most of Russia's regions. Yet only a handful of Western scholars has conducted fieldwork in the North Caucasus, and most of those who write about the region have never visited it. Evangelista's book on Chechnya is not the first by an American scholar who has never set foot in the region, while many peer-reviewed articles and most popular commentaries are equally uninitiated. It is difficult to think of any other realm of empirical study, apart from cosmology, where such a glaring lack of field experience would be tolerated.

Will the North Caucasus be Sovietology's last stand? As was often the case with Sovietology, most of the scholarly writing on this region substitutes ideological predispositions for firsthand field experience. Russia is commonly presumed not simply to be wrong, but to be maliciously wrong on all counts. Such assumptions remain conveniently unruffled by regional complexities when writers make no attempt to acquire a genuine familiarity with the region. Problems varying from over-simplification to sloppiness have resulted historically whenever science has proceeded without empirical verification. These problems have beset much of the scholarship on the North Caucasus during last decade, and they undermine the present monograph.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union more information has been available on this region (with the exception of the interwar years) from journalists and rights workers. However, due to risks of working in the region most scholars have stayed away. Hence, they have neither verified that these more or less popular accounts are sufficiently rigorous, balanced, and authoritative to serve as a basis for scholarship, nor have they supplemented these reports with their own rigorous fieldwork. Instead most scholars have simply taken these reports at face value. Then, after they have lent these reports the mantle of their scholarly credentials and the reputations of academic publishers, these popular reports acquire a false air of scholarly authority. In fact, most of these popular reports have been as imbalanced as their scholarly consecration has been misleading.

It is especially important that readers should not be misled on these points because the region is full of families who had nowhere else to go from 1996 to 1999 when the journalists and NGOs retreated to the safety of Moscow, and so many Western scholars had more important things to do. My fieldwork shows that most of those families are glad that the Russian military has returned. Clearly, the prevalence of, and the reasons for, such views must be investigated and understood by anyone claiming scholarly authority on this region.

The Chechnya-based hostage industry has attached clear risks to fieldwork in this area, and fear is not a crime. The crime is in the masquerade that presents fear and naiveté in the guise of authoritative scholarship and righteous indignation. Clearly, if one has been afraid to conduct field investigations in the region because of the disorder that has reigned there then

one is in poor position to criticize Russian efforts to overcome that disorder, however much those efforts may deserve criticism.

This is not to argue that field experience is a litmus test for scholarship, but rather that, in the construction of his argument, any serious scholar would be careful to avoid biased or otherwise imbalanced selection from available field research. Evangelista places himself in a difficult position since he bases parts of his argument on fieldwork conducted by Lieven and myself while ignoring or attacking aspects of our fieldwork that are inconvenient for his assumptions. Curiously, the author's indexing for my name lists all of those pages in which he disagrees with me, but does not list the pages on which he refers to my field work in order to support his argument.^{xlv} In a study that is marred by excessive selectivity, can it be that even the indexing is selective? If Evangelista thinks that Lieven and I are right in some aspects of our research then how does he know that we are wrong in others? He has not visited the region in order to verify or improve upon our field work. Like a trained Sovietologist, the author's field research has consisted of interviews with officials in Moscow. This yields some worthwhile segments when his discussion focuses upon issues, such as decision-making in the Yeltsin administration, that are appropriate to his methodology. However, these passages are lost among a flood of simplicities, obscurities, and inconsistencies, springing from the author's failure to grasp the fundamental realities of the region.

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ⁱ The quote is from p. 132. The author misleadingly claims that the Chair of Dagestan's State Council, Magomedali Magomedov "engaged in fraud or other undemocratic means to maintain (his) power" (p. 126). While Magomedov has, on three occasions, manipulated the Dagestani constitution in order to retain his position he has done so openly and legally through regular institutional channels. Nevertheless, it appears that his incumbency has outlived its usefulness. Federal elections in Dagestan have typically been fraudulent, but local elections, such as those of the State Council, have involved relatively few irregularities. See Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "Dagestan's Chief Executive," under consideration by *Eastern European Constitutional Review*; "Ethnic Parity and Political Stability in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53, 1, January 2001; "A Summer of Innuendo: Contraction and Competition Among Dagestan's Political Elite," *Central Asian Survey*, 20, 2, June, 2001; "Russian Recentralization Arrives in the Republic of Dagestan: Implications for Institutional Integrity and Political Stability", with Kisriev, E., *Eastern European Constitutional Review*, 10, 1, Winter, 2001; "Who Stole Russia's Election?", *Christian Science Monitor*, October 18, 2000

ⁱⁱ Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002) p. 22.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p. 22.

^v *Ibid.*, p. 30.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

^{vii} Kisriev and Ware, “Conflict and Catharsis: A Report on Developments in Dagestan following the Incursions of August and September 1999”, *Nationalities Papers*, 28, 3, September 2000.

^{viii} Ibid. p. 73

^{ix} Robert Ware, Enver Kisriev, Werner Patzelt, and Ute Roericht, “Russia and Chechnya from a Dagestani Perspective”, with Kisriev, E., Patzelt, W., and Roericht, U., *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 4, December 2002; “Stability in the Caucasus: The Perspective from Dagestan” with Kisriev, Patzelt, and Roericht, *Problems of Post-Communism* 50, 2, March/April 2003; “Political Islam in Dagestan”, with Kisriev, Patzelt, and Roericht, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55, 2, March 2003. “Democratization in Dagestan”, presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2001, on the web at <http://pro.harvard.edu/papers/013/013014WareRobert.pdf>: report to the National Council for Eastern European and Eurasian Research, 2001.

^x Evangelista, p. 4.

^{xi} In January 1996, Chechen warlord Salman Raduev led a party of fighters on a raid that culminated in their holding as hostages more than 3,000 men, women, and children in a hospital in Kizlyar, Dagestan. The raid appeared to mimic that of Shamil Basaev who held more than a thousand hostages in a maternity hospital in the Russian town of Budenovsk.

^{xii} Ibid. p. 68.

^{xiii} Ibid. pp. 68-9.

^{xiv} Ibid. p. 58.

^{xv} Ibid. p. 57.

^{xvi} Ibid. p. 79.

^{xvii} Ibid. p. 35.

^{xviii} Ibid. pp 59-60.

^{xix} Kisriev and Ware, “Conflict and Catharsis: A Report on Developments in Dagestan following the Incursions of August and September 1999”, *Nationalities Papers*, 28, 3, September 2000.

^{xx} Ibid. p. 87.

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- ^{xxi} Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "After Chechnya: New Dangers in Dagestan," with Kisriev, E., *Central Asian Survey*, 16, 3 Autumn 1997.
- ^{xxii} Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "'Ethnic Parity and Political Stability in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach'", *Europe and Asia Studies*, 53, 1, January 2001; "Conflict and Catharsis: A Report on Developments in Dagestan following the Incursions of August and September 1999", *Nationalities Papers*, 28, 3, September 2000.
- ^{xxiii} Ware, Kisriev, Patzelt, Roericht, "Dagestani Perspectives on Russia and Chechnya," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 4, October, 2002.
- ^{xxiv} Evangelista, p. 87.
- ^{xxv} Ibid. 45.
- ^{xxvi} Robert Ware and Enver Kisriev, "Political Stability in Dagestan: Ethnic Parity and Religious Polarization", *Problems of Post-Communism*, March/April 2000, 47, 2; "Ethnic Parity and Political Stability in Dagestan: A Consociational Approach", *Europe and Asia Studies*, 53, 1, January 2001.
- ^{xxvii} "Hill Probers Upgrade Evidence Gathered From Moussaoui" *Washington Post*, 6 June 2002.
- ^{xxviii} Evangelista, p. 73.
- ^{xxix} According to figures from the Moscow office of the UNHCR.
- ^{xxx} Presumably, the book had gone to print prior to the Moscow hostage crisis.
- ^{xxxi} Evangelista, p. 40.
- ^{xxxii} Ibid. pp. 41, 49, 151.
- ^{xxxiii} Ibid. See especially pp. 40, 41, 151
- ^{xxxiv} Ibid. p. 49.
- ^{xxxv} Ibid. p. 166.
- ^{xxxvi} Ibid. p. 94.
- ^{xxxvii} Herbert Gregg was a Protestant missionary from the United States, who also taught English at the Dagestan Pedagogical University.
- ^{xxxviii} Evangelista, p. 162.

^{xxxix} Charles King “A New Look at Russia's Chechen Impasse,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2003.

^{xi} Robert Bruce Ware, “Was There a Kremlin Conspiracy in the Caucasus?,” *Johnson's Russia List*, 4092, 6 February 2000.

^{xli} For an interesting application of Just War Theory to recent conflicts see David B. Rivkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey, “That's Why They Call It War,” *Washington Post*, 16 March 2003.

^{xlii} Evangelista, p. 175.

^{xliii} *1999: The Socio-economic Situation in The Republic of Dagestan*, published by the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Dagestan, Makhachkala, 1999. pp. 267-274.

^{xliiv} *2001: The Socio-economic situation in the Republic of Dagestan*, published by the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Dagestan, Makhachkala, 2002.

^{xliv} The author attacks two of the few Western scholars who have conducted fieldwork in the Northeast Caucasus since the end of the first Chechen war, that is, during the period in which Lieven and I have argued that the situation in the region altered so dramatically that the justification for the second conflict must be regarded as substantially different from that of the first. Yet at the same time, the author wishes to base key elements of his argument on our field work. Evangelista provides no reasons for supposing that some of our work is reliable and some of it is unreliable. Instead, in my case, it appears that he attempts to avoid the appearance of selectivity or inconsistency by incompletely revealing his reliance upon my work at key junctures in his argument. Thus, I am indexed for pages 78-79 and 166-167, when the author criticizes my work. However, much of the discussion on pages 92-96 and 137 draws constructively upon my work without notation in the index. Indeed, there is no indexing whatsoever for my collaborator, Enver Kisriev, Senior Sociologist at the Dagestan Scientific Center, although Evangelista draws no less substantially upon his work, and although his name appears in the text. An author who is concerned about justice for people of this region might begin by ensuring that they are duly credited for contributions to his book. Dedicated students might find references in the endnotes. Yet it would be more straightforward fully to acknowledge his reliance upon the same fieldwork that he is rejecting.