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POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROCESSES IN THE CHECHEN REPUBLIC IN 2003–2007

Abbaz Dogievich Osmaev (a, b)*, Ahmad Sherpuddinovich Aliev (b, c), Ali Ruslanovich Salgiriev (b, d), Aindi Eskievich Khumigov (c), Yandarbek Saidbecovich Gapaev (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State University, ul. A. Sheripova, 32, Grozny, Russia, mail@chesu.ru,

(b) Integrated Research Institute. Kh. I. Ibragimova of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 21a, Staropromyslovskoe highway, Grozny, Russia, kniiran@mail.ru,

(c) Grozny State Technical University named after Acad. M.D. Millionschikova, umoggni@yandex.ru,

(d) Academy of Sciences of the Chechen Republic, 13, M. Esambaeva str., Grozny, 364051, Russia, cademy_chr@mail.ru

Abstract

The Chechen Republic experienced radical changes in both political and socio-economic life during 2003–2007. It was able to go through the difficult path of establishing peace and the beginning of an active restoration that was destroyed in the course of hostilities. One of the important events in the political life of the republic was making a referendum in March 2003 on the new Constitution of the Chechen Republic, which decided the issue of its joining the Russian Federation, the presidential election in October 2003, which won A. Kadyrov. However, A. Kadyrov did not have time to take full advantage of the results of the successful referendum and elections organized with the support of the federal center. He ended up dead in a terrorist attack in Grozny on May 9, 2004. Ramzan Kadyrov deputy prime minister of S. Abramov after the death of his father, entered the political arena not only of the Chechen Republic, but also Russia. Despite the expectations and forecasts of a number of experts, V. Putin's policy regarding the Chechen Republic has not changed; moreover, there is a plan to restore the destroyed republic. The militants tried to turn the tide within the following events: the attack on Ingushetia on June 22, a clash in the village. Attack on Grozny on August 21, terrorist attacks on August 24 with 2 passenger aircraft crashed.

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Keywords: Chechen Republic, settlement, constitution, elections, terrorist attack, crackdown.



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1. Introduction

The period of 2003 turned out to be one of the most difficult year for the Chechen Republic with the destroyed settlements, thousands of dead, injured and immigrated residents. However, after 2003 there were a radical changes and good practices which influenced the life of the republic positively and despite all the costs, led it to the long-awaited peace and restoration.

2. Problem Statement

Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Recovery in the Chechen Republic.

3. Research Questions

The subject of the article is the socio-political and socio-economic processes in the Chechen Republic.

4. Purpose of the Study

Analysis of socio-political and socio-economic processes in the Chechen Republic in 2003-20077.

5. Research Methods

Used research methods are the principles of historicism, scientific objectivity and consistency. The work is based on the problem-chronological principle.

6. Findings

The situation in the Chechen Republic since the beginning of the “counter-terrorist operation” in 1999 and subsequent years has been important issue for historians, political scientists, and sociologists (Aliyev & Emil, 2019; Osmaev et al., 2019; Wilhelmsen, 2017).

One of the most important stages of the settlement in the Chechen Republic was the referendum on the Constitution of the Chechen Republic and the presidential election in 2003. The referendum was important both for Moscow, which for the first time took political steps to resolve the situation since the start of the counter-terrorism operation in 1999. The plans for its holding provoked a harsh reaction from the separatist leaders and vigorous criticism of Russian human rights defenders and a number of Western politicians, organizations and the media, although the idea of a referendum was not in fact disputed. According to the study assumptions, the Constitution was less crucial but the establishment of a long-awaited peace, the future of the republic. There was the Chechen diaspora in Moscow as well as other large cities of Russia, and federal-level politicians involved. A few days before the referendum, Putin (2019) himself gave a speech to the residents of the Chechen Republic, urging the Chechens to go to the referendum. On March 23, 2003, a vote was held in which, according to official figures criticized by PACE and human rights defenders, there were 89.48 % participants. Russian President V. Putin,

commented on his preliminary results “We have closed the last serious problem related to the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation” (Dakhshukaev, 2003, para. 6).

The referendum did not bring the end of the confrontation in the republic. Unfortunately, the clashes with militants were continued as well as there were organized major terrorist attacks. There was a pre-parliament formed shortly before the presidential election – the State Council of the Chechen Republic, convicted of Y. Budanov, accused of killing an 18-year-old resident of the village of Tangi-chu E. Kungaeva. Part of the deputies of the parliament of Ichkeria ousted A. Maskhadov from office, on September 24. There was money received in the Chechen branch of Rosselkhozbank to issue compensation to the first 150 applicants, and in early July in Moscow they started preparing a delineation agreement powers between the federal Center and the Chechen Republic. The politicians such as A. Aslakhanov, U. Dzhabrailov, M. Saydullaev took part in the presidential elections in the Chechen Republic. This was quite predictable after the efforts of the federal and republican authorities, but A. Kadyrov having no major competitors on October 5 won them a landslide victory. The opinion of the Washington Post newspaper can serve as the quintessential assessment of the Western media and politicians of these elections. They wrote: ‘By using violence, pressure and an obedient judiciary, the authorities left Kadyrov’s three strongest opponents behind, turning Sunday’s elections from a contest into a coronation’.

A. Kadyrov had no particular authority when he led the Head of the Administration and at the beginning of his presidency in the Chechen Republic the military did not want to limit their omnipotence there. This problem was solved by A. Kadyrov with reliance on the population of the Chechen Republic, the Muslim clergy support at the highest federal level. Nevertheless, a number of strategically important economic issues, in particular, regarding oil, have not been resolved.

A serious test for Russian citizens of Chechen nationality was the anti-Chechen hysteria of some politicians and the media after the terrorist attack on February 6, 2004 in the Moscow metro. That notorious event ended up with a lot of victims. There were demonstrations in many cities and villages of the republic condemning terrorism and the search for the notorious Chechen trace in all crimes.

At the end of February, the famous field commander R. Gelayev was killed in Dagestan, and in March the former Defense Minister M. Khambiev gave himself in charge. According to media reports, this happened after his relatives were arrested. In our opinion, A. Kadyrov’s speech at the NTV broadcast “Freedom of Speech” on February 20 made his position more reliable as he told “I must protect my people, who entrusted me with their fate . I will do this, and I will defend their rights both from the federals and gangs.”

The Chechen Republic Governance made a work to eliminate the tent camps in Ingushetia and to return the refugees living there. There were various means used: promises to pay them compensation in the first place, to provide housing until the gas was turned off, funding was stopped, and military personnel were placed in the neighborhood.

However, a relatively peaceful development of the political situation in the Chechen Republic (with sweeps, kidnappings, clashes, surrender of militants in the hope of an amnesty) was dealt a heavy blow – on May 9, President of the Chechen Republic A. Kadyrov (RIA, 2004) and the chairman of the State Council died as a result of a terrorist attack, H. Isaev, General V. Baranov was seriously wounded.

Many analysts and observers saw Putin's policy towards Chechnya in this collapse, but Putin (2019) himself, obviously, did not share this opinion, since there were no fundamental changes in this policy.

Despite the appeals of the authorities and the muftiat to the Kremlin with a request to allow R. Kadyrov to run for presidency, the latter said he would not run according to the law and the Constitution do not allow it (RIA, 2004).

Moscow also did not agree to amend the Constitution of the Chechen Republic, but it was quite obvious that the fullness of power would be retained by A. Kadyrov's fellow party which had nominated A. Alkhanov as the presidential candidate. Already on June 15, V. Putin received A. Alkhanov in the Kremlin and after this meeting there was practically no doubt who would be president of the Chechen Republic. However, the militants also tried to take advantage of the current situation and took a number of actions: an attack on Ingushetia on the night of June 22, a clash in the village. Avtury, attack on Grozny on August 21, terrorist attacks on August 24 as a result of which 2 passenger aircraft crashed. Despite this, the preparation of the presidential elections in the Chechen Republic was underway, 7 candidates were registered, but M. Saydullaev was refused registration, which could really compete with A. Alkhanov. Voting took place on August 29, its results: 82.25 % of voters took part, 73.67 % voted for A. Alkhanov.

On September 1, 2004, a group of terrorists seized a school in Beslan, a wave of rallies took place in Chechnya condemning the terrorists and demanding the release of hostages, the leadership of the republic addressed the people of North Ossetia, condemning the crime and offering all possible assistance. The tragedy of Beslan finally buried the hopes of the separatists for the possibility of any negotiations with them, except for the lay down of weapons.

In 2004, 5599 crimes were recorded, of which 116 cases of banditry, 14 facts of terrorism, 357 intentional killings, and 168 kidnappings. The republic continued to pay compensations for lost housing and property in the amount of 350 thousand rubles, begun at the end of 2003. It was associated with many violations and abuses, both from officials of different ranks and from those who like to profit from someone else's expense, which led to the dissolution, and more than once, compensation commissions. 40 thousand people were officially included in the lists for compensation, but later they were specified in the direction of the supplement.

Due to hostilities, difficult living conditions, and sometimes the actual squeezing out of local residents by the military, a number of mountain Chechen villages were completely deserted, and some families remained, some of them had a massive population outflow.

In January 2005, a special Agreement was developed by the federal center and the leadership of the Chechen Republic under which over the next ten years Chechen Republic will be able to freely dispose of all the natural resources and means from their use, transportation, and sale. However, the adoption of this document was postponed all the time and, apparently, the Kremlin was not going to accept it.

In March 8, 2005 in Tolstoy-Yurt, Grozny District, 54-year-old president of the already defunct Chechen Republic of Ichkeria A. Maskhadov was killed, A.-H. became Acting President of the CRI. Sadulayev, killed in Argun on June 17. He was replaced by D. Umarov, who announced at the end of 2007 the proclamation of the Caucasus Emirate.

Financing of the restoration processes left much to be desired: for the entire post-war period, only about 15 billion rubles were allocated for these purposes. Along with the peaceful reconstruction, clashes continued with separate groups of militants, who sometimes entered various villages, and killed Interior Ministry officials and heads of administrations.

One of the significant events of 2005 was the organization "Friendship Trains" with a delegation of the Chechen Republic, which included leaders of the republic, artists, scientists, representatives of public organizations, and journalists who traveled through 21 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

In August 2005, V. Putin signed a decree on the parliamentary elections of the Chechen Republic that took place in November 2005. The expected victory was won by the United Russia party, representatives of the Communist Party and the Union of Right Forces passed into parliament. At the first meeting of the Chechen parliament on December 12, 2005, Vladimir Putin took part, noting that the legal process to restore the constitutional order in the republic was completed.

Since November 18, 2005 R. Kadyrov has been acting Chairman of the Government of the Chechen Republic, and on March 4, 2006 he was appointed Chairman of the Government of the Chechen Republic. It is an indisputable fact that the power in the republic after the death of A. Kadyrov was concentrated in the hands of R. Kadyrov, regardless of his position. He managed to move from the dead point a mountain of accumulated problems in the restoration process of the republic. R. Kadyrov set himself clearly defined goals – solving the main problems in the field of education, healthcare, reducing unemployment by creating new jobs and ensuring public safety. “A city without traces of war” – under this motto was the restoration of Gudermes. Argun took its symbolic trowel of the building relay from the Gudermes. At the same time, the Prime Minister rigidly set the deadline for the completion of the work – three months. During this time, builders restored 128 objects of a social orientation. 2006 was declared by the Prime Minister the Year of Grozny. In just twenty days, Victory Avenue was restored and rebuilt almost anew. The streets of Mayakovsky, Zhukovsky, Pervomaiskaya, Khmelnitsky also gained a new look. At the restored facilities, work did not stop at night. The full-scale reconstruction of the central artery of Grozny – Akhmat-Hadji Kadyrov Avenue, which became a kind of visiting card of the revived Chechen capital, was completed.

Compared with 2005, the growth of domestic commodity production in 2006 amounted to 128%. This was facilitated by the restored Transmash plant, the completely new enterprises Elektropult and Technoprom, which produce metal-polymer pipes. Thanks to the construction boom and the creation of new jobs in 2006, the number of employed able-bodied people as of April 1 increased by 12.9 thousand people and reached 164.3 thousand people, despite the practical lack of centralized funding in practice, the money came from bank loans, own working capital of general contracting organizations. R. Kadyrov was initiated, and the work of state authorities to return to the republic all its former citizens, regardless of nationality and religion.

The logical result of the stormy creative activity of the young Prime Minister of the republic was his introduction by V. Putin to the post of President of the Chechen Republic after the resignation of A. Alkhanov and the vesting of the Presidential powers for four years on March 2, 2007 by the Parliament of the Chechen Republic. Almost immediately after the approval, the President of the Chechen Republic

began to form a vertical of power: he replaced the Mayor of Grozny, appointed a new Secretary of the Security Council, Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Minister of Labor and Social Development and proposed O. Baysultanov to the post of Chairman of the Government of the Chechen Republic. On April 11, R. Kadyrov approved the Concept of State National Policy of the Chechen Republic (RIA, 2004). The appointment to a new position led to the identification of new strategic tasks: "We are moving to the level of large-scale global changes, the Chechen Republic will become an example of rapid economic growth for all of Russia," Kadyrov said during the round table "New Economic Strategy of the Chechen Republic."

There he promised to restore Grozny and the whole Republic by the end of 2008, announced that Chechnya could very well become a donor region, making money from the development of oil production and petrochemicals, the construction and operation of hydraulic facilities, the widespread adoption of high technology.

The amount of 4.6 billion rubles were allocated for restoration work in 2007, including 2.8 billion rubles for housing restoration. An important point in the policy of the President of the Chechen Republic was the cancellation of the agreement on the division of powers with the federal center, which, like oil, for several years was a stumbling block in relations between the two parties. R. Kadyrov took a weighted position on the extremely painful issue for the center on the formation of a parliamentary commission to calculate the damage caused to the republic by two military campaigns. This idea of the deputies of the Chechen National Assembly provoked a sharply negative reaction of the center expressed by D. Kozak. A program was developed for the development of inaccessible areas of Chechnya with the revival of the tourist infrastructure of Lake Kezenoi-Am. In August, the President of the Chechen Republic decided to quickly restore the infrastructure of the Shali district, one of the largest in the republic, by October 1, 2007.

Particular attention was paid to spiritual development, in his message to the people and parliament of the Chechen Republic in July 2007, the President of the Chechen Republic noted that we attach great importance to moral purity in society. An important role is given to Islamic values, customs and traditions of the peoples of the Chechen Republic. In June, in Grozny, Graduation Ball-2007 was held with the participation of Russian pop stars. On July 26, ambassadors of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the League of Arab States arrived in the republic. In August, Gudermes hosted the International Peacemaking Forum "Islam is the Religion of Peace and Creation," which was attended by Islamic religious leaders from Russia, Saudi Arabia, the USA, Austria, Poland, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and other states. In September, the Chechen Republic hosted about 600 participants of the Peace to the Caucasus festival. The visits of the President of the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov to Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan gave an additional impetus to the development of relations between the republic and foreign countries, attracting investors.

All these measures became possible as a result of the purposeful activities of the republic to achieve peace and stability. The President of the Chechen Republic was able to find a common language not only with the militants (about 500 of them took advantage of the amnesty only in 2006–2007), but with businessmen and politicians. The notorious policy of "Chechenization", begun under A. Kadyrov,

yielded results, although, as noted by Western media and organizations, its implementation was associated with violations of human rights.

7. Conclusion

Thus, in 2003-2007. dramatic changes in the political and socio-economic life have taken place in the Chechen Republic, a difficult path has begun to establish peace and the beginning of an active restoration destroyed during the hostilities: referendum on the Constitution of the Chechen Republic, presidential elections in 2003 and 2004, election of the parliament of the Chechen Republic of 2005, the beginning of the political activity of R. Kadyrov and his election as president in 2007 on the proposal of V. Putin.

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