

CHECHNYA'S SECRET WARTIME DIPLOMACY

Aslan Maskhadov and the Quest for a Peaceful Resolution

Ilyas Akhmadov and Nicholas Daniloff



Chechnya's Secret Wartime Diplomacy

This page intentionally left blank

Chechnya's Secret Wartime Diplomacy

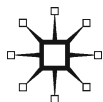
Aslan Maskhadov and the Quest for a Peaceful Resolution

Ilyas Akhmadov and Nicholas Daniloff

Translated by Anatoly Semenov

With a Preface by Mark Kramer

palgrave
macmillan



CHECHNYA'S SECRET WARTIME DIPLOMACY

Copyright © Ilyas Akhmadov and Nicholas Daniloff, 2013.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-1-137-33878-5

All rights reserved.

First published in 2013 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®

in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-46418-0 ISBN 978-1-137-33879-2 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137338792

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Akhmadov, Ilyas, 1960—

Chechnya's secret wartime diplomacy : Aslan Maskhadov and the quest for a peaceful resolution / by Ilyas Akhmadov and Nicholas Daniloff; translated by Anatoly Semenov ; with a preface by Mark Kramer.

pages cm

For the first time in English, this volume makes available transcripts and commentary from the secret correspondence between former Chechen foreign minister Ilyas Akhmatov and Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov, who would be killed by the Russians during the second Chechen-Russian War in April 2005.

1. Chechnia (Russia)—History—Civil War, 1994—Diplomatic history—Sources. 2. Chechnia (Russia)—Foreign relations—Russia (Federation)—Sources. 3. Russia (Federation)—Foreign relations—Russia (Federation)—Chechnia—Sources. 4. Maskhadov, Aslan Alievich, 1951–2005—Correspondence. 5. Akhmadov, Ilyas, 1960—Correspondence. I. Maskhadov, Aslan Alievich, 1951–2005. II. Daniloff, Nicholas, 1934— editor. III. Title.

DK511.C37A374 2013

947.5'2—dc23

2013026829

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: December 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

<i>A Note on Translation</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
Mark Kramer	
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
<i>Ilyas Akhmadov</i>	
1 Maskhadov's First Briefing	9
2 Immediate Tasks Ahead	19
3 Contact with Dr. Brzezinski	31
4 Taliban Recognition	43
5 Russian Army Disintegrating?	55
6 Election of George W. Bush	65
7 Russia Goes Authoritarian	75
8 The Mystery of Dr. Gluck	87
9 Russia Seeks to Bribe Maskhadov Out of Chechnya	97
10 Talks with Putin Suddenly Cancelled	105
11 Minister Akhmadov and the State Department	117
12 Maskhadov Hopes for CIA Support	123
13 Seeking Negotiations	129
14 The Challenge of Radical Commanders	141

15	General Gelayev in Georgia	149
16	Reaction to 9/11	159
17	Maskhadov Names a Successor	167
18	The January 27 Presidential Issue	175
19	Russia Takes Advantage of 9/11	187
20	The Problem with Lord Judd	195
21	The Russian Policy of Rape	205
22	Solving the Chechen Problem	215
23	Peace Plans Fail	227
24	Maskhadov's Last Message	241
25	The Voice from Beyond	251
	<i>Notes</i>	257
	<i>Index</i>	267

A Note on Translation

The Russian-Chechen wars have been studied mostly through official statements of the Russian government, recollections of Russian officers, and reports from Russian and Western journalists. To date, little has come out that reflects the thinking and goals within the Chechen political leadership. This is why the correspondence (1999–2003) between President Aslan Maskhadov and his Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov constitutes the first substantial and unique resource into the thinking of the rebellious Chechen leaders.

These communications were carried on by audio letters transmitted by couriers and postal services. About 60 percent of the surviving tapes were in the Chechen language and the remaining 40 percent in Russian. Akhmadov translated the Chechen parts, creating a complete collection in Russian. Dr. Anatoly Semenov of the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA, translated the whole into English. Nicholas Daniloff reviewed and edited the English translations to fit within the length of 100,000 words set by the publishers. In shortening the translations, we were guided by the following considerations:

1. Maskhadov, constantly moving around to avoid capture, spoke in a discursive and often disorganized manner, repeating sentences and thoughts. He sometimes repeated information in subsequent cassettes because he was not sure the first ones had been received. His speech was heavily larded with interjections, like the Russian particle “mol,” which can be translated as “he says” or “they say.” He frequently would close a sentence with “that’s the way it is” or the Arabic expression “Vallakhi.” We have eliminated a good number of these interjections but preserved a few to give a sense of the tone of these reports.
2. Some of the material was very sensitive because it concerned individual Chechens who subsequently fled to the West and are

wanted by the Russians for treason. We cut some of this material for their safety.

3. A good deal of Maskhadov's conversations deals with the details of internal problems. To remain within the word limit, we deleted some of this material that we judged would probably not interest a Western reader. We nevertheless made every effort to retain details pertaining to the war, the possibility of negotiations, and Maskhadov's political and military opponents.
4. Finally, we agreed that a copy of the complete collection of audio letters in Russian and Chechen would be archived for perusal by specialists after a period of at least 15 years.

Preface

*Mark Kramer**

After the Soviet Union broke apart, the Russian government fought two large-scale wars in Chechnya: the first from December 1994 until the signing of the Khasavyurt accords in August 1996 and the second from 1999 through mid-2007. The three-year interregnum between the wars was a period of *de facto* independence for Chechnya, but instead of evolving into a robust state, Chechnya during that time became plagued by violence, rampant lawlessness, warlordism, criminality, and kidnapping rings. Even though the second war did not officially end until 2009, the insurgency was largely crushed by the latter half of 2007, and it has not revived within Chechnya since then.¹ Under the iron rule of the brutal president Ramzan Kadyrov, who was appointed by Moscow in March 2007, Chechnya has experienced the first prolonged period of relative tranquility and peace in its post-Soviet history.

In neighboring regions of the North Caucasus, however, violent instability has remained acute.² In Dagestan, in particular, the situation over the past several years has been increasingly reminiscent of Chechnya in the late 1990s. Dagestani insurgents have joined with Chechen fighters based in Dagestan to foment violent turmoil and destabilize the Dagestani government. The individual fighters and groups in Dagestan are not a unified force—they often disagree about tactics and goals—but they share the basic aim of establishing an “Islamic caliphate” in some or all of the North Caucasus. Because the attacks launched by these groups are likely to be a continuing source of instability in the North Caucasus for many years to come (including during the Olympics in Sochi in 2014), it is all the more important for scholars and policymakers alike to understand the dynamics of the two major wars that occurred in Chechnya from 1994 to 2007.

* Mark Kramer is director of Cold War Studies and a senior fellow at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University.

Until now, sources on the two Russian-Chechen wars have been predominantly from the Russian side. Despite severe Russian government restrictions, a handful of talented Russian journalists covered the conflicts extensively, and many of the key military and political figures on the Russian side have spoken at length in interviews, have written memoirs, or have appeared in documentaries.³ Former servicemen from the Russian side (the low-level “grunts” who did the actual fighting) have been interviewed one or more times, including by me. Taken together, these sources have given scholars a good sense of political and military decision-making on the Russian side. But until now there has been nothing comparable on the Chechen side. Even those researchers who have gone to the North Caucasus to learn more about the wars and the way they were fought have been hindered by the lack of solid sources reflecting the views of senior Chechen fighters. Although a few former Chechen guerrillas did write memoirs, these are mostly formulaic and polemical, rather than true firsthand accounts.⁴ Ilyas Akhmadov, the Chechen foreign minister during the second war, published a very useful memoir/history in English in 2010, but he wrote the book from the perspective of someone who had fought only in the first war in Chechnya and was physically outside the republic during almost all of the second war.⁵

The publication of the transcripts of these formerly confidential audio tapes, recorded by Aslan Maskhadov during the initial years of the second war, helps to redress the imbalance of sources. Maskhadov had been elected president of Chechnya in early 1997 and remained in that post until he was killed by Russian special-operations forces in March 2005. He recorded the tapes as a means of transmitting instructions, advice, and informational updates to Akhmadov, whom he had appointed foreign minister in late July 1999, not long before the second war in Chechnya began. In 1991, just before the Soviet Union ended, Akhmadov had graduated with a degree in philosophy (*summa cum laude*) from Rostov University. When the first Chechen war broke out in late 1994, he returned to Chechnya to fight alongside one of the leading military commanders, Shamil Basayev, who subsequently referred Akhmadov to Maskhadov. Akhmadov thus emerged from the first war with links to both Basayev and Maskhadov. At the start of the second war, Maskhadov ordered Akhmadov to leave Chechnya and serve as an envoy and spokesman for Chechnya in exile. Akhmadov spent time in Azerbaijan and Turkey, where the tapes were delivered to him by courier—a hazardous task that often took a great deal of time to elude interception by Russian security

forces and border guards. In 2002, Akhmadov moved to the United States, where he was eventually granted asylum, albeit only after supporters in Congress helped him to overcome the resistance put up by the US Department of Homeland Security.

In compiling the transcripts and preparing them for publication, Akhmadov worked with Nicholas Daniloff, a distinguished journalist and former director of the Northeastern University School of Journalism. Daniloff served as Moscow bureau chief for *U.S. News and World Report* in the 1980s until he was abruptly arrested by the Soviet State Security (KGB) organs in early September 1986 on spurious grounds and incarcerated in Lefortovo Prison in Moscow.⁶ Although he was released four weeks later without being charged, the incident by then had become a cause célèbre in US-Soviet relations and had attracted worldwide attention. Over the past 20 years, Daniloff and his wife, Ruth, have meticulously followed events in Chechnya, including firsthand during a trip there. The two of them were instrumental in the publication of a riveting memoir by Khassan Baiev, a courageous Chechen surgeon who treated patients from all sides of the conflict.⁷

Aslan Maskhadov as the elected president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was not one of the guerrilla commanders during the second war and exercised no direct control over the more radical Chechen leaders like Shamil Basayev and Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev—a lack of control that Maskhadov frequently acknowledges in these tapes. Nonetheless, his comments shed invaluable light on what was going on both in the Chechen government and in the upper command of the guerrillas. It is truly a unique source and will be indispensable for scholars studying the second Russian-Chechen war. The tapes reflect the changing fortunes of the war, as Maskhadov starts out with a remarkably upbeat view of the Chechens' prospects but then gradually abandons any sense of buoyancy and optimism and becomes increasingly anxious and flustered. Many of his comments on the tapes are self-serving and exaggerated, but many other passages offer crucial insights into the Chechen fighters' side of the war.

Among other things, the tapes underscore the complexity of Maskhadov. Compared to other rebel leaders like Basayev and Yandarbiyev, Maskhadov was a notable moderate, but numerous tape segments confirm that he never fully cut his ties with guerrillas who committed terrorist acts. As the tapes show, Maskhadov was constantly reaching out (usually in vain) to Basayev, who by the time of the second war had cast his lot with radical Islamists and become a

ruthless terrorist. Even when Maskhadov talked about the necessity of negotiating with the Russians (in some very interesting and revealing passages here), the segments make clear that he took independence as a starting point. He was willing to compromise on numerous things, but not on that central point—that Chechnya must be independent. Never does Maskhadov display the slightest understanding of why after the 1996–1999 period of lawlessness and violence in Chechnya and after the armed raids launched by rebels from Chechnya into Dagestan in August 1999, many Russians would have been wary of granting independence to Chechnya. Maskhadov’s views are thus extremely revealing about the problems that would have arisen if the “final status” talks envisaged under the August 1996 Khasavyurt accords had ever taken place. “Moderation” on the Chechen separatist side did not really leave any room for compromise on the fundamental issue. (The same sorts of problems, *mutandis mutatis*, existed on the Russian side.)

Maskhadov’s comments in numerous places in the tapes about the problems of dealing with radical elements are extremely illuminating. He confirms that many ordinary Chechens were complaining to him that the Chechen “Wahhabis” had provoked a highly destructive second war rather than building strong institutions that would maintain public order and pave the way for negotiations leading to independence. Western scholars and journalists had already known and written about the reactions of ordinary Chechens to the outbreak of the second war, but it is fascinating to gauge Maskhadov’s own perspective on the matter. He was well aware that many Chechens were dismayed and angry that a new war had begun. Although he claims on the tapes that the Russians alone bear responsibility for the war by goading the Chechen extremists into confrontational actions, he seems to have had at least some sympathy for the complaints.

The transcripts also reveal that Maskhadov’s deeply problematic relationship with Basayev caused tensions between Maskhadov and Akhmadov. Because Maskhadov was aware of Akhmadov’s links with Basayev during the first war, the president came to suspect at certain points during the second war that Akhmadov might be secretly conspiring with Basayev against him. These suspicions were groundless, but the very fact that they arose—as is evident in the tapes—indicates the great difficulty facing the Chechen rebels during the second war. The bitter, tenacious divide between radical and more moderate figures became a crippling source of disunity.

Another very interesting and valuable point that emerges from the tapes is something that had not previously been known: namely that Maskhadov was very uneasy about the Taliban's recognition of Chechnya in January 2000. (Afghanistan under the Taliban was the only country in the world that recognized Chechnya as an independent country.) Initial contacts with Afghanistan occurred in 1998 via emissaries sent by Movladi Udugov, who at that point was Chechnya's foreign minister. Yandarbiyev then traveled to Kabul in 1999, and in a meeting with the Taliban leader Mullah Omar he pushed for official recognition of Chechnya. The Taliban delayed in proceeding with recognition and did not finally agree to it until January 2000 at the height of the second Russian-Chechen war. The Taliban's decision to recognize Chechnya caught Akhmadov off guard when he was asked about it in Washington, DC, and the tapes reveal that Maskhadov too was distinctly uneasy about the move. The Chechen president had deep misgivings about the timing of the announcement, which he saw as "playing into the Russians' hands" and tarnishing the Chechens' standing in the international community. Moreover, he and Akhmadov correctly sense that Yandarbiyev's persistent overtures to the Taliban had been designed to bolster the Chechen radicals' control of the war effort and to marginalize the more moderate elements around Maskhadov. Maskhadov undoubtedly was not fully aware of the odious nature of the Taliban regime, but even if he had been, he might have welcomed Taliban recognition of Chechnya if it had occurred in 1998 or early 1999. But by January 2000, with intense fighting under way, Maskhadov no longer saw any benefit to be gained from the Taliban's "moral support" and instead regarded it as a rash maneuver orchestrated by Yandarbiyev.

In the transcripts, Maskhadov occasionally refers to events and issues that reflect some of the larger international context at that time, especially developments in Russia's relations with the United States and West European countries. The second war in Chechnya began only a few months after the United States and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, which in early 1999 was expanded to include three new members—Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) had engaged in a prolonged bombing campaign against Serbia to drive Serbian forces out of Kosovo and establish Kosovo as a separate region under NATO auspices. NATO's war against Serbia had sparked severe tension with Russia, and this tension continued to linger in the latter half of 1999 when the war in Chechnya began. Not only were events in the Balkans still absorbing

a good deal of Western leaders' attention, but the controversy over the Kosovo war circumscribed any leverage NATO governments might have had with Russia as it reoccupied Chechnya.

The meteoric rise of Vladimir Putin in Russia—a rise that was attributable to his ruthless prosecution of the war against Chechnya—further reduced the potential for any US and West European leverage with Russia. Putin's predecessor, Boris Yeltsin, had maintained generally cordial ties with NATO governments during most of the 1990s, at least until NATO's 1999 war against Serbia, but Putin was much more scornful of Western criticism and concerns. Maskhadov seems well aware at times of the limited Western capacity for influence with Putin's Russia, but at other times he seems almost to believe that the Western countries are conspiring with Russia against Chechnya. Even though it is true that Chechnya was not a high priority for NATO governments and that they voiced only muted criticism of Russia's wantonly destructive clampdown, the notion that they were thereby complicit in Russia's actions and supportive of Putin's harsh war effort is wide of the mark. For most Western leaders, Putin's relentless military crackdown engendered deep unease about what his emergence as Russian president would mean for Russia's political system and the future of Western countries' relations with Russia.

When Chechen guerrillas were driven out of Grozny in February 2000, Putin was still only acting president in Moscow and Bill Clinton was still president in the United States. By the end of that year, when George W. Bush gained the presidency in the United States after a prolonged and bitter deadlock over the disputed November 2000 presidential election, US policy toward the former Soviet Union, including Chechnya, was shifted lower down the list of foreign policy priorities. That trend accelerated after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, which caused a far-reaching reorientation of US foreign policy priorities. In October 2001, the United States embarked on an operation in Afghanistan to uproot the Taliban, which had given safe haven to the al-Qaeda terrorists who had organized the murder of nearly 3,000 people on September 11. The subsequent US war in Iraq, starting in March 2003, caused US policymakers to focus even more disproportionately on the Middle East and Southwest Asia, giving even less attention to what was going on in Russia.

Moreover, the stark focus on radical Islam and al-Qaeda afforded Putin an opportunity to depict the war in Chechnya as an integral component of what George W. Bush's administration called the Global War on Terrorism. Putin asserted that the aims of the Chechen

rebels and al-Qaeda are “absolutely identical” and that the Chechens “have been receiving tens of millions of dollars from abroad for the training of suicide terrorists.”⁸ These accusations were not wholly unfounded, but they were selective. In the latter half of the 1990s, Basaev forged close ties with al-Qaeda-linked foreign fighters such as Ibn al-Hattab and Abu al-Walid, and some other Chechens linked up with Islamic extremists in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other countries in South Asia and the Middle East.⁹ But these Chechen Islamic extremists were fighting as individuals, not on behalf of Chechnya as a whole. The infiltration of Islamic radicals into Chechnya in 1998 and 1999 was a major problem, and Maskhadov was aware of some of the implications. But Putin’s depiction of the entire Russian war effort in Chechnya as no more than a principled campaign against Islamic terrorists was self-serving and simplistic at best.

Simplistic though Putin’s depiction may have been, it carried a certain cachet, especially after 40–50 Chechen terrorists seized the Dubrovka theater in October 2002 and took 850 people hostage. This incident and other terrorist acts, combined with the reorientation of US and NATO foreign policy priorities in 2001–2003, further reduced US and West European policymakers’ inclination to exert any pressure on Russia over Chechnya. Maskhadov displays some degree of understanding of this dynamic, notably in tape 20 in which he offers his reactions to the September 2001 terrorist attacks and their aftermath. One can sense in the final several tapes a growing feeling that Chechnya has been left on its own and that Western governments and leading international actors have abandoned it. In the final tape (from late March 2003), Maskhadov does not yet seem fully aware of how preoccupied the United States had become with Iraq and other issues in Southwest Asia, but he does realize that a *deus ex machina* is not about to materialize. His feelings of desperation come through clearly in those final tapes.

No doubt in the final two years of Maskhadov’s life, his sense of being cornered and hunted down—feelings that come through vividly in the final tapes—intensified. Although Akhmadov had some scattered indirect phone contact with Maskhadov after March 2003, the final audio tape from March 2003 is the last complete item we have attesting to Maskhadov’s sentiments and perceptions. These 24 transcripts and Akhmadov’s valuable commentaries about them provide extremely important evidence for scholars. Both Ilyas Akhmadov and Nicholas Daniloff deserve warm thanks for bringing this extraordinary collection to light.

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

Many people came to our aid in reconstructing the efforts of President Aslan Maskhadov and his search for a peaceful resolution of the second Russian-Chechen war. Prominent among them was Madame Kusama Maskhadova, widow of the fallen president, who generously gave permission for large portions of her husband's audio letters to Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov to be published. Maskhadov's comrades-in-arms Akhmed Zakayev and Husein Iskhonov also deserve our sincere appreciation.

We also would like to acknowledge Dr. Anatoly Semenov of the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, CA, who tirelessly labored over the 24 audio letters to put them into readable English. Professor Frederick Starr, chairman of the Central Asian-Caucasian Institute of Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, spurred us on with his infectious enthusiasm and support.

Quite a number of others inspired us including Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy, his colleagues Barbara Haig, Miriam Lansky, and Sally Blair. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Edward Kline, Mark Kramer, Christopher Swift evinced strong and continuing interest as the work progressed over the last three years.

Introduction

Ilyas Akhmadov

Chechnya's declaration of independence in 1991 excited many young Chechen men across the Soviet Union who rushed home to assist in the rebirth of our nation. When the Russians invaded Chechnya in December 1994, I was in St. Petersburg staying with a university friend. I decided without hesitation that this was a crucial moment for participating in the defense of the new, free, Chechnya. In a word, patriotism was driving me.

The desire for self-rule and independence from Russia has a long history. The beginning of the colonization of Chechnya along with the North Caucasus began with Peter the Great. This blood-stained period lasted until the declaration of final colonization of the Western Caucasus in 1864 during which a number of ethnic groups were completely liquidated. And naturally several generations of Chechens were born in war, lived in war, and died in war.

The problem of the Caucasus was not resolved by the appearance of Soviet power after the revolution of 1917. The liberty that Chechens longed for was not satisfied and Soviet power stimulated the appearance of resisters in the Caucasus. There were uprisings and mutinies right up to the 1940s, especially in Chechnya, and this led to the total deportation of the population in February 1944 during which one-third perished. In 1957, the Politburo under the leadership of Nikita S. Khrushchev took the decision to pardon and allow the return of deported peoples. This was, however, not a decision to rehabilitate. Naturally, 200 years of conquest by the Tsarist regime followed by 70 years of Soviet power could not but help accumulate negative feelings, and with the unraveling of Soviet power in August 1991, the Chechens were among the first to take advantage of the situation.

This was also encouraged by Yeltsin's entourage who had their own motives to urge others to talk about sovereignty. And then there was Yeltsin's famous phrase, "Take as much sovereignty as you can handle." Probably this was aimed most directly at the leaders of the constituent republics on the periphery of the USSR. The Chechens, having declared their independence under General Dzhokhar Dudayev, hoped that they would receive some understanding from the new government of a resurrected Russia. Unfortunately, this proved to be far from reality.

At that time, Yeltsin and his aides were trying to shake up the republican leaderships. They were occupied with their own internal problems: the division of power in post-Soviet space and the separation of the former Soviet republics. They were trying to make Russia the full beneficiary of the Soviet Union and were not all that interested in what was happening in some little republic to the south. I think they believed it would not cost them much trouble to resolve this problem. As it turned out, the Russian leadership did not understand that Chechnya would be quite a big problem and that it was necessary to approach it seriously and with flexibility.

For me, the problem of resolving this type of issue from the Kremlin point of view was summed up in Stalin's famous phrase: "When there are no human beings there are no problems." It was only later that the Russian leadership realized that the Chechen declaration of independence was a serious matter. After 1992 Moscow began to understand this. But the Russian leaders had no comprehensive plan and focused their energies on attacking President Dudayev. Even if you could buy off Dudayev the problem would not go away because this was a striving for independence of the entire Chechen population. Dudayev proposed many different compromise solutions but Moscow did not want seriously to solve these challenges. Moscow was working in the old Soviet way of encouraging revolutionary uprisings in the banana republics of Africa. They did not have any other political experience. Their idea was either to buy off Dudayev or overthrow him.

In those early days, there was a possibility of compromise. There were two attempts to find a resolution by the Chechen Parliament and the Russian Duma but unfortunately they found no common ground. The Chechen side demanded recognition of independence, but the Russian side was completely opposed.

In 1994, Moscow took the most primitive decision to use force, which they actually thought was realistic. So the first war began and it turned out to be one of the bloodiest in Europe since the end of World

War II and lasted 20 months. During that period more than 100,000 people were killed. The infrastructure of Chechnya was almost completely destroyed; the country was in complete ruins. The Russian army also suffered some 15,000 casualties, according to information gathered by the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, and was forced to leave Chechnya in disgrace.

Hostilities ended in August 1996 with the Khasavyurt Agreement, negotiated by General Alexander Lebed on the Russian side and General Aslan Maskhadov on the Chechen side. It called for an end to military action and the postponing of a decision on the status of Chechnya until 2001. Russia was also called on to develop a program for reconstruction. In May 1997, a further agreement was concluded, the Treaty of Peace, ending centuries of confrontation between Russia and Chechnya. Under that arrangement both sides agreed to resolve any future disagreements peacefully and in accordance with international law.

Maskhadov, the chief of the Chechen General Staff, was elected as president by a majority of 59.3 percent through democratic elections that were conducted with observers from 70 nations, including representatives of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The elections were pronounced legitimate and democratic by the West: free and fair. After the political and military defeat of Russia, it was of course unlikely that Moscow would be interested in seeing the Chechens get back on their feet.

The problem facing Maskhadov were enormous. The country was in ruins, the population had no work. The Russians in leaving abandoned a great deal of military equipment, sold off weapons, ammunition. After the peace agreement, committees were created on both sides to resolve problems that would arise and to facilitate relations between governmental bodies. Some Chechen representatives were able to resume contacts but these were based on personal relations. Furthermore, the Russian bureaucracy has long experience in sending difficult problems down long corridors, into separate units, until the issues fade away.

Maskhadov soon became the object of internal criticism. Not that there were stable opposition forces; rather, groups would come together then dissolve. So Maskhadov was put in the position of defending himself against both internal and external opposition rather than agreeing with the Russians on the issue of reconstruction. In this situation, he took the view that he should adhere strictly to the agreements with the Russians in the hope that it would yield some

results. As time went on, it became clear that Moscow was largely interested in revenge; they were not interested in defining the status of Chechnya by 2001. It was a situation where the Russian special services would seek to destabilize the situation in Chechnya to discredit the Maskhadov government.

And so the second war began again in the fall of 1999 following the raid by Chechen radicals into Dagestan. But here it is important to remember that more than half the raiders were actually Dagestanis who were in opposition to Russia as well as the Dagestan government. Also, preceding the war there was a series of explosions of apartment buildings in Russia and even today no one is quite sure who set them off although the Russian side was quick to blame the Chechens as terrorists. Yet from the information dug up by journalists and some Russian parliamentarians, you come to the conclusion that these explosions could not have taken place without the participation of the Russian special services. And most interesting is that as of today no one asks anymore who set off these explosions.

Some weeks before the second war, I was named foreign minister by Maskhadov. President Maskhadov, who had plenty of experience in negotiating the end of the first war, realized that it was important to get in touch immediately with the OSCE and Western leaders. He sent me abroad as well as other representatives to seek support and advice.

One of the big problems I encountered was the problem of communications. In the first months of the war, he would use satellite phones and we knew that these conversations would be monitored. We remembered how General Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed while using a satellite telephone. (The exact nature of his death has still not been entirely clarified.) Maskhadov knew full well that he would be a target of the Russians. If he used a satellite phone, shortly thereafter the Russians would start an artillery barrage in the direction of his triangulated position. In the end, he decided against further use of these phones and for that reason he took the Solomonic decision not to use satellite phones but to employ the most primitive but reliable method of courier mail. From the time I left Chechnya in 1999 until 2003, I received and held 24 audio letters from him. He also used couriers for internal communications within Chechnya where there was no fixed front. I am amazed at the amount of time and energy that he put into recording these tapes.

The way this system of communications worked was this: Maskhadov organized a broad courier and intelligence-gathering

service. A large number of the couriers were women because they were subject to less scrutiny at border posts than men. The courier would first have to get out of the war zone, generally to Baku, Azerbaijan, with the cassettes. There the messenger could resend the cassettes through various postal services like DHL. Occasionally, the courier have to go further afield to Istanbul where conditions were much more favorable.

There were instances when couriers were arrested and the cassettes confiscated. The courier would often have to wait for weeks for a window to open. He would have to wait for Russian control to weaken and then he would have to figure how to go from point A to point B. It depended on a lot of factors. Naturally this caused problems when you needed a quick answer to your message, or you needed to transmit a speedy message to Maskhadov, or you were about to have a meeting and you needed some instructions from him.

As for me, Baku became more or less my base operations to which I came back from Europe or from the United States after meetings with sympathetic Western officials and personalities. I shuttled between Europe and the United States and the courier would eventually contact me in Baku. This was not a system that worked like clockwork, and there were often unexpected interruptions. But this was the only means in conditions of total observation, total telephone monitoring, total control of all roads leading out of Chechnya and within Chechnya. With so many Russian soldiers and check points covering Chechnya like a spider's web, the work of the courier was very risky. Maskhadov understood this perfectly well and he had to speak in oblique ways sometimes in case the cassette fell into the wrong hands.

Let me stress that I was not assigned to Baku, the Azeri capital was simply a convenient place for me to land. After the second war broke out, I was invited to Holland to talk at a conference on Chechnya and my going to Baku was connected with trying to get a visa. I could not get a visa there and had to go to Istanbul where the Dutch Embassy issued it to me. In Holland, I gave a talk to Dutch parliamentarians and the humanitarian organization Pax Christi. One of the humanitarian leaders, the former diplomat Egbert Veselering, got in touch with the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya and I was invited to the United States. Naturally, I immediately informed Maskhadov about this. In those early days, it was still possible to use the phone and I had a short conversation with him. He was very upbeat about the invitation because he understood the possibility of getting the Chechen situation publicly discussed in the United States.

I made my first trip to Washington in January 2000 shortly after the second war began at the end of September 1999. During a one-week stay, I had lots of meetings. I was deeply impressed how important people in America were trying to understand what was going on. I met with Senators John McCain, Chuck Hagel, and Paul Wellstone. The Senate adopted a number of resolutions that expressed concern about the situation, especially about the use of force against the Chechen civilian population. And I think this had the effect of encouraging the State Department to call for a political solution. I believe this was quite effective. Maskhadov understood the importance of contacts with the American political establishment. In America, there were many possibilities of influencing the search for a political solution.

I was aided during the first trip by Lyoma Usmanov, our unofficial representative who took up residence in Washington in 1995. He was quite an effective envoy. He was well known to people in the Senate even though he was representing an unrecognized state. He could meet with congressmen who were personally interested not just in Chechnya but in the post-Soviet world. We could not work in the general political world, so we focused on concrete individuals. This turned into something of a united network and we would often meet with them.

My trip was underwritten by Chechen friends who were in business. They were among the first Soviet citizens who had gone abroad and had been successful in making money. Maskhadov simply did not have the finances to pay me a salary or travel expenses. When I left for the first time, he gave me \$500.00. I remember it so clearly; it was in the evening. I was summoned to the home of Ruslan Alikhadzhiyev, the Speaker of the Chechen parliament. The Russians were bombing the suburbs of Grozny and Maskhadov was in military uniform. Maskhadov took out his briefcase and said, "Excuse me but this is all I can give you."

I said, "Don't worry, that will be enough for me to get to my friends who will take care of me."

Leaving Chechnya in wartime was tricky. All routes were monitored by the Russians and occasionally cut off. On this occasion, I traveled with other refugees who were taking their children, two or three years old, to safety in neighboring Georgia. It was very scary moving along a very narrow, winding, mountain road. Because of the car's engine noise, we did not notice Russian helicopter gunships overhead. We witnessed one burned-out bus carrying civilians that the Russians hit causing many dead. After a long journey, most

of it at night, I was met on the Georgian side by friends sent by our representative in Azerbaijan.

They took me back to Baku, and from there I flew to Turkey, and later to Holland and the United States. I left with mixed feelings and few choices. To remain in Chechnya, I would have had to take up arms or work with Maskhadov in his closest circle. I could not remain a passive citizen: that would have been tantamount to desertion. Upon leaving my homeland, I hoped that I would be able to help in a small way by describing the atrocities that were taking place, and by seeking support from the outside world for the preservation of our people and our way of life.

Maskhadov's First Briefing

Audio letter of July 21–22, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas! This talk is meant for you, there is no possibility to speak about everything over the phone. It's regarding your work, so that you know roughly what the President thinks about this or that question on the agenda today.

So, first, the cause of the war: I think that the cause of this, and the wars in the course of 400 years, is uncertainty in relations between Russia and Chechnya. Unless we establish normal civilized relations, there will be wars, there will be genocide. We will never have peace with this barbaric state. Usually, Russian leaders and politicians do not want to say anything definite because it is more advantageous for them. It is possible to use Chechnya as a bargaining chip in the fight for power.

Causes for this war: I don't think that the causes lie in kidnapping for ransom or the invasion into Dagestan, or terrorist acts. There is a single reason: to bring the right man to power. Everything was orchestrated for Putin. In my understanding, human trafficking is a precisely used mechanism for discrediting our people, the government, and the President of Chechnya, to show the inability of our authorities to build a state of our own, to show that we are savages.

The Russians themselves brought trafficking in human beings here, during the previous war [1994–1996], and it is no secret for anyone that trafficking in people, even in corpses, the demands for ransom, started out of the check points, from the commandant's offices, from

the filtration camps. Russian officers made a big business out of it. Then, after the war, there was kidnapping of the same journalists, the same foreigners, everything was ordered from above. Where there is no ransom, there is no crime, but there was ransom and considerable—millions of dollars worth.

Even the last incident with the French press photographer Brice Fleutiaux is an illustration of how things were before the war. The journalist became a hostage, our special services got on the tracks of these criminals, found him, and apparently freed him. You do know that! In our joy we called Mr. Russell Johnston² and said: “That’s it, we give him back.” But suddenly a mediator shows up, it is [Boris] Berezovsky³ with money, offers a big ransom to these criminals. And accordingly, unwilling to refuse this big money, they hide this hostage, and then Berezovsky buys him out and takes him away from under our noses.

The same happened to Yelena Masyuk and other journalists, with all foreigners. There has always been a mediator from Dagestan: [Magomed] Tolboyev, Secretary of Security Council of Dagestan, Korigov, minister of internal affairs of Ingushetia. Berezovsky always arrived with money and bought out each one on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan, or on the border of Ingushetia and Chechnya. This is how it happened.

All these famous kidnappings of prominent high-ranking officers, politicians, or journalists were executed by two criminal gangs: the first gang headed by Adam Deniyev⁴ and the brothers Saidov. And we destroyed that criminal gang. We shot these brothers, put all their comrades-in-arms in prison. Their leader, ringleader was Adam Deniyev. They confessed to it.

When we demanded the extradition of this Adam Deniyev from the Russian leadership, they flatly refused, so we brought facts of his involvement in killing Doctors Without Borders in Nizhniye Atagi.⁵ And today, he is Moscow’s henchman, contender for leadership, Moscow’s puppet. Then a question arises, so everything that he did, everything that these brothers Saidov did, had been orchestrated by Moscow, had it not?

Just the same, Akhmad Kadyrov⁶ [onetime grand mufti of Chechnya] was the head of one of the criminal gangs, the most horrible gang—the brothers Yamadayev gang. It was Kadyrov who was literally at the head of kidnapping people from Ingushetia, from Dagestan. And just before the war, Sulim Yamadayev⁷ personally confessed, he just said that it was Kadyrov who made him kidnap people, who had made

him a gunman. Kadyrov was well informed about everything that he was doing: whom he had killed, whom he had kidnapped. Again, who is Kadyrov? Moscow's henchman. National traitor. A puppet. An agent of the FSB since 1982 under the code name Adam.

Second, the invasion into Dagestan: We say that it was collusion; collusion with the Kremlin, the financial oligarchy, and the military that lost the first war [1994–1996]. Either Vladimir Putin or Alexander Lebed⁸ was supposed to come to power. If it were Lebed, then it would be a blitzkrieg war because that man did not need a protracted war to raise his ratings. But to bring an unknown man to power meant to extend the war to the time of the election. They chose the second candidate, Putin. And the rest of it was a collusion, this war was inevitable.

Third, the terrorist acts. We are told that they do not have facts about the involvement of the Russian special services but not a single Chechen was caught red-handed. And everywhere, the mass media says that Maskhadov was caught red-handed, he blew up those buildings, that it is all about Chechens. We say that not a single Chechen was implicated. It is necessary to set up an independent inquiry; it is not difficult to investigate who blew up these buildings. We are reproached that we did not condemn terrorism, did not extradite criminals or punish them. But that is not true: we condemned terrorism, racketeering, the march into Dagestan. We condemned everything. They do not tell the truth. Here are the steps on My call went as far as Voloshin,⁹ and I was told: "He is sick," "he's not in his office," and so on. I pleaded: "Let me talk to Yeltsin for five minutes!" It was useless!

We expressed our condolences; we condemned the bombings, and there was also my statement that we were ready to give up any of our citizens if there were facts about their involvement in these terrorist acts. To present them to any independent court hearing.

There was my appeal to the leaders of the North Caucasus. And I suggested to them: "Let's sign a document, and agreement about collective security up to creating some peacekeeping forces to unite efforts against crime, to unite efforts against racketeering, terrorism."

I even said to Sergei Adamovich Kovalev¹⁰ who wrote in his article in the newspaper *Groznenskii Rabochii* something like Chechens don't have civil courage being afraid that they can be accused of lack of fear of God, or of patriotism, they do not want to tell the truth. I asked him, "Sergei Adamovich, what were we supposed to confess to? That we are gunmen, that we are terrorists, that we blew up those

buildings, that we planned this provocation in Dagestan, that we planned this war, that we began this war? Is this what Chechen courage consists of?"

About governance with the Shariat: He [Putin] says all sorts of things that they [the Chechens] shot people, our attitude towards women, Sudan, Afghanistan, Algeria. I am saying it again, that these things are twisted on purpose: both Wahhabism and driving people into a state, so that they fly off the handle the moment they see a beard. The Kadyrovs did all this. And there would not be any tragedy if I did not have this "crusader" Kadyrov near me, I would have come to terms with the young people, and I almost did it. But I was constantly reproached that this sleazebag was near me.

We have strongly rejected any Wahhabism, fundamentalism, extremism. We have always said that traditional Islam is moderate Islam that rejects Wahhabism, fundamentalism, extremism.

And besides, Kovalev says that Maskhadov wanted to accomplish the unrealizable, that is, to prevent a civil war and brought about bigger trouble. Well, again I answer him: I really did not want it! I wanted to prevent Russia's aggression, to stop this war at least for some time. I feared that if aggression began again, I worried whether my people would be able to face these bombs, shells, again three years later after that severe war. Without its state system, shaky power, army, and so on, and so forth.

I feared these things, and not a civil war. Because I knew perfectly well what a civil war means for Chechens, it is much worse than Afghanistan. And right after that, Russia's invasion, we would have lost that war. And what does it mean to be defeated by Russians? We all would be throttled for sure. I did not want a civil war to be a cause for Russia to begin its aggression, knowing that it would be a 100 percent defeat for us.

Therefore, I feared this civil war, and even more, the aggression that would come after that. And, again, why didn't I condemn, Basayev,¹¹ why didn't I condemn Udugov, Yandarbiyev, Khattab? Because there was a split, but nevertheless, the war began. The war was inevitable, whether I condemned them or I didn't condemn them. However, the war was planned in October and November [in Moscow, 1999]. The war was to begin six months before the election, it had been planned.

But if I started gangland-style shoot-outs among us, that would mean a split. Again a defeat for us, and victory for Russia. Again we would have been crushed. Did they expect this from me? Had we

enough civil courage and smarts, just the other way around, to unite. They don't like it, Kovalev doesn't like it, nor do the Kadyrovs.

On May 12, 1997, we managed to sign a Peace Treaty and we considered it a fundamental document, that there should be no more war. And on August 30, 1997, during the second meeting with Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, I did everything possible to get a comprehensive agreement signed, making major concessions to Russia, including common economic and military space. Common diplomatic obligations, and that Chechnya would build its relations with the Muslim world and in the Caucasus in Russia's interests. We were ready to sign that document, but again those hawks that surrounded Yeltsin prevented the signing.

Now, on to the military situation and what is happening here: As a serviceman, I can say the Russian generals have lost this war. Today the generals are trapped in lies, everything that they conceived has come to naught. They just took a ride along the whole territory and can't say officially that they control even a meter of our land, even the place where they're stationed. Morally, physically, financially. There is depression in the army. These generals promise them that the war would end tomorrow, then you'll go home. And again clean-up operations, again there is death behind every bush.

This Russian army is really worth seeing! It is really some gypsy encampment, like in the "Wedding in Malinovka."¹² They did everything possible, didn't spare anything, used all their ammunition, but with absolutely no result. So, today it is a disgrace to look at these generals, at these Troshevs, Manilovs. I just could not restrain myself and once I sent them a cassette where I said: "Shame on you, you wear the uniform! We studied at the same academies."

And the policemen, OMON [special Russian police], contract soldiers—if any column was fired on or an armored troop carrier or an infantry fighting vehicle was blown up near some village, they break into that village, arrest those who have money, who was into drug dealing, taking them away, then making a proposition for ransom to their relatives.

And the last incident with a suicide-bomber: it utterly brought everyone to a state of shock, specially the members of special police squad. Up to 600 members of the squad police were blown sky-high, and I am not saying it for effect. That commandant's office, those barracks in Noibery were razed to the ground, the local residents say that they [the Russians] placed those corpses on the asphalt, and it wasn't possible to count them, hundreds, and the Russians say some three people died.

In Argun, a car with explosives drove between two barracks with 450 members of the special police squad inside. Nothing remained of these buildings after the explosion went off. The same happened in Urus-Martan. And in Gudermes.

And the fact that Putin urgently left Dushanbe and arrived in Mozdok on July 5, 2000, was haphazard. He just did not know what to do and could not think of anything else but say, "We'll count on the local police." This is the most stupid decision that could be made.

And what does the Russian leader do in these cases? Well, what did they do approximately when the army was in such a state, when the politicians reached a deadlock, what did they do? They urgently found Doku Zavgayev,¹³ they fixed an election, appointed him head of the government of traitors.

The same happens today. So, the stake is on Kadyrov. Why? Kadyrov will be able to split the clergy, to win some of our fighters over to his side, and split the ranks of fighters.

Even here, the work that is being carried out by us here, has become very active. In the beginning when I could not get the television going, I sent cassettes literally by the hundreds, with appeals to clergy, the fighters, to the opposition, to everybody. I showered them with cassettes in all the villages. Then leaflets, newspapers. Now television has started working stably in Achkhoy-Martanovsky, in Shalinsky, in Kurchaloyevsky districts. There is television in Gudermesky district, it completely covers Shalinsky district as well. Generally speaking, I became a propagandist, a political scientist and president. This is what I say, addressing those who go to work in the pro-Russian police: "Be attentive, be attentive, be attentive, be attentive."

Today these mullahs who may have wanted to support Russian power, they are afraid. They say: "During the first war [1994–1996] we supported you, and when these fighters came over, you did not defend us."

And the fighters those who supported them: they are Ali Sultanov, and the brother of Lechi Khultigov, on the whole you know who he is. Then Ibragim Saidov from the "beloshapochniki"¹⁴ or "white hats" who do not allow him within shooting distance. Well, they are garbage, and whether they exist or not, people absolutely do not take it seriously at all. As far as Turpal Atgiriyeu is concerned, the Russians are making advances to him, but I think that he is stupid enough to bite on it. And even if he does, it is no skin off my nose.

But what I want to say is that we do not take all these things seriously and they cannot lead to a split among the fighters. Today our fighters

are very active, especially after such successful suicide-bombers' subversive acts. Hundreds, thousands of these maneuverable military units have not left the Russians any place where they could feel safe. Direct attacks one after another, on armored columns, roadblocks, commandant's offices. They strike very hard blows on the Russians.

Next, these ministers, having come to an agreement [among themselves] earlier there, Lom-Ali Alsultanov, Daayev, Abdurashid Zakayev, Zavgayev, on the whole, three or four defected there [to Akhmad Kadyrov], but it does not mean anything. There are also deputies [of the parliament] acting treacherously created a group of deputies headed by Rizvan Lorsanov. They thought up a ruse that there is a petition in the name of the president of Russian Federation suggesting full power should be given to the Chechen parliament, and that President [Maskhadov] must resign, and that negotiations should be held with them [the deputies].

And next, the issue regarding the opposition [he means the previous anti-Dudayev opposition in 1991–1996]. I am also carrying out such a policy here, so, there is no such opposition or diaspora, no intellectuals now who will stand behind Kadyrov—he is not Zavgyaev. They really stood behind Zavgyaev, and this one [Akhmad Kadyrov] does not have any authority among them. And I openly say this to the opposition, that opposition was against Dudayev, but when I was running for presidency, it was my electorate. My opponents reproached me that, so to speak, you were elected by the opposition. I really think that it was a normal phenomenon, it is not good if there is no opposition. Yes, I agree that maybe before that war these members of the opposition thought that Russia was all-powerful and it was useless to fight against it, but we proved that it was possible to fight against it. And those whose opinion changed were ready to stand behind us. We were ready. This is what I say, even send people to the diaspora [he means the Chechen diaspora in Russia] and pass it on to these Aslakhanovs¹⁵ and others, be vigilant, do not disgrace yourselves, do not hold silly and purposeless conversations, we will need academicians, and scientists, and intellectuals we must build a state. A revolutionary moment cannot always be as such when people with grenade launchers on their shoulders demand minister positions for themselves. Today these ministers showed by themselves that if there's no intellect, nothing can be done.

When this war was about to begin, ordinary people somehow did not understand me, and would say somehow aggressively, "What are you talking about? It was Shamil and his entourage who brought

about this war here. These Wahabbis brought about this war, and you took their side. What is with you? You acted as one!" This is how they put me in a difficult situation then. It was impossible for me to explain to them: "Come on! Everything is being done by the Russians, Basayev, Udugov, they are pawns, they were deceived." And they made me suffer a lot: that we brought this war about ourselves because we did not leave the Russians alone. It was a war against the Wahabbis. And I tell them: "Oh no, it is a war against Chechens."

When I really activated propaganda activities, and the Russians began to show their true colors, now the people are definitely on our side. What is related to meetings and other arrangements, their activity is increasing, that is, in all respects, as it seems to me, with God's permission, we have not made any strategic mistake, maybe there have been some lapses. Most importantly, we did not allow a civil war to develop.

Most importantly today is not to allow this Kadyrov to cause a split among clergy, fighters, among those who are in the cabinet of ministers or members of parliament. And as to Gantemirov,¹⁶ then not to allow people to join his police and not to allow an armed confrontation among Chechens, and also not to allow the opposition to stand behind him. If we can prevent all these things, then we solve three, we solve the third strategic problem, that is, don't make a mistake at least. If only we don't miss it, and the rest is a matter of time.

Regarding the issue of supply during the first war, I just didn't know what to do. I felt very uncomfortable before the fighters because I had no money to give them, had no provisions, luckily the villagers helped us. And today it is absolutely impossible for the villagers to help us. But when money is flowing through a single channel, thanks to our efforts, then this financial aid is of real benefit. Today I can openly declare that those who go to war with arms in their hands will be provided with three meals a day, a uniform, and I'll provide their families at home with help, such as flour or sugar. And I'll take responsibility for the wounded and severely injured, I'll also take responsibility for the family of those fighters who die in battle.

Then, about the negotiation process: so far everything is quiet. I told all our representatives who go both here and there not to display any activity at any cost, not to go anywhere, not to make phone calls anywhere, keep a low profile—the Russians themselves will come here. Let them come here themselves. Let them want it themselves. I told them so, and so far they don't send anyone. And if suddenly

a meeting takes place as to how to stop the war, then we'll do it by consulting each other.

And lastly I'd like to mention the situation with Shamil and Khattab and their group. I recently went to Basayev and told him:

"Look, you don't like Russians, do you?" I said.

"No, I don't like them."

"Do you want to fight them?"

"Yes."

"And I don't like them either," I said, "and want to fight against them. Let's fight together! Don't make statements, don't say whatever comes into one's head. Come to our organized force, let's beat these Russians together."

So, this is the conversation I had with Basayev but as long as Umarov, Udugov, and Yandarbiyev are alive, they won't let him subordinate himself to my authority and it'll be very hard for him.

Well, surely, you constantly experience problems in diplomatic activities, when there are disagreements. Of course it is important to speak about the necessity to keep order and follow state policy. And aside from this, they undoubtedly work hard, they strike blows, and there is interaction with them through the General Headquarters and Operation Department and during joint operations they strive to coordinate their actions. Generally speaking, this is how it happens. The other day Basayev called and suggested we meet.

Therefore, look through this appeal of mine, so, you can change whatever you like in English and it should be faxed around, placed on the Internet. You can set forth your thought there more precisely.

Then, about MairbekVachagayev,¹⁷ see for yourself where we could better use him. I said to Mairbek: "Go work there, what's the difference in what capacity you will be working, I also work in all capacities here." So, it is necessary to hook him up with the chief of staff, and as soon as he receives the information. So let Mairbek do this work and give him some extra work. He extricated himself, got out of the situation he found himself in with dignity. So far, with God's permission, I am very pleased with him. You can make use of him to help you there.

Ilyas, go ahead. May God give His blessing to everything; may God help us after the victory over our enemy when we meet with faces that are open and do not know what disgrace is!

Comment No. 1 by Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov

This first audio letter from Maskhadov was written some six months after I left Chechnya to seek help from the West. During this period when I was in the United States and Western Europe, we had intermittent telephone conversations but these were always kept to a minimum because we were certain that Russian counter-intelligence was listening in. The greatest danger was that the Russians would triangulate Maskhadov's physical position and obliterate him by firing rockets at him—the way they had killed his predecessor President Dudayev.

Since I left Chechnya, I tried to keep up to date by following the news on the Internet. But this first cassette laid out for me a wealth of background information that I found useful at the time and now, more than a decade later, I can appreciate more fully what he had to say. I found the following points of high importance at the time and they kept reoccurring during the time of my service.

- The depth of his troubles with the radical Chechen commanders, who were more interested in creating an Islamic state than a secular one. This inherent split would cast doubt on his ability as a potential negotiating partner.
- His assessment of the Russian armed forces, which he saw as poorly led, badly paid, and possibly on the point of disintegration, was for him cause for optimism.
- His belief that the political and military elite of Russia had backed the use of all-out force against Chechnya as a way of guaranteeing the election of Acting President Vladimir Putin as president.
- His negative assessment of Putin whom he viewed as a mediocre security services officer, poorly known by the mass of the Russian population.
- His desire to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Russia and willingness to make important military and political concessions for independence and dominance of Chechen traditions and laws.

Immediate Tasks Ahead

Audio letter of October 5, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, this conversation is addressed to you. Today there is a problem due to the absence of any means of communication. All the telephones that we have here, the Russians have completely shut down; they are making disturbances in the telephone line. Therefore, we should do the following: my messenger will go to Baku with the mail. In any case, once a week, and if there is a need, twice a week, he will arrive through Ossetia or through Dagestan.

Therefore, what should you do? Once every week, there should be an envelope from you with plans and an account of your work, and also with information about what you require from me. With all this stuff, there should be a letter from you.

On my behalf, make up a directive: foreign policy work should be improved and unified through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then, the so-called Maskhadov freelance representatives abroad should be told to come home immediately, stop their work, and thank them. Tell them that in the future this work will be done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So, by decision of the State Committee for Defense get them all back home!

Accordingly, everywhere in Tbilisi, Baku, Istanbul, the official representatives should have information centers. The representatives should be involved not only in humanitarian aid but in the information and political sphere. All of them should be your subordinates.

In Baku, I already told Ella,¹ whether he likes it or not, there is a huge mess and he is to blame. When Khanpasha,² who arrived from there, relates what is going on, your hair stands on end. What a disgrace before the Azeris, before their local authorities, before their Muslims!

What these people were up to here before the beginning of this war, making a laughingstock of themselves before the world and the Russians! They drove this nation [Chechnya] into a nightmare and opposed the Chechen fighters. As soon as this war began, they ran away to Baku, asserting, "I was sent here by Maskhadov, I was sent by Basayev" or by someone else. Now, they organize the same provocations they did here, spreading lies and making themselves the ridiculous in front of the people who live there.

The real situation here and what is happening in Baku is like heaven and earth. Here there is order, there is understanding, even our people who did not understand what was going on yesterday are beginning to get the picture. The people stood against these Kadyrovs and these Russians, and now they stand with us.

There are military groups, in every settlement, at least 50 of such fighters, forming in Shelkovskoy, Naursky, even in Nadterechny. I am not talking about what goes on in the mountain regions. Young people from 15 and older even reproach the fighters: Why don't you attack, why did you miss the armored troop carrier, why did you miss the Russian column? So these reserves join the ranks.

The people who did not want to obey orders yesterday are confused by those who spread lies in Baku. They said that we don't need the president, we don't need the government. Those people who yesterday were saying the president is corrupt and gave in to the Russians are now covered in sweat and in the trenches with us.

The representative for the Middle East in Istanbul is Rakhman.³ I sent one comrade there to select staff for him. His name is Khalid Khusainov,⁴ he will be an assistant. He is an educated man regarding political actions and relations with the authorities. I also told Rakhman there should not be many people, five or six men, appointed there only after discussing it with me and with my approval—be it a cashier, be it an accountant.

About Afghanistan—you should not dismiss the contacts that we have with them. I also said to you on the phone, if they recognize us, may God be pleased with them. They experienced for themselves all the horrors and barbarity of the Soviet Union, Russia. They understand all too well what is going on here, that is why they recognized us. It is simply moral support of the Chechen people.

We are grateful to all who take such steps, hope that those other Muslim states will follow this example. But we have our own conception about building a state. Talk in that vein. Do not cut off the conversation abruptly, don't say that we do not need any relations with them. It should be handled in a very restrained way.

Then, about genocide. Fayzulla⁵ has been gathering material, five volumes on genocide already. It seems to me that it is a very useful material. I will send the materials to Istanbul in the name of Abumuslimov.⁶ Therefore, you should check if they are useful for the International Court of Justice or somewhere else. You should go to Istanbul and see how they are coping with work. It is necessary to carry out this kind of work. There are very trustworthy facts about these brutalities from the Russian side.

Second, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE]. I don't know ... has our work diminished there? ... the situation looks like it. In case you do not have a reliable man there, it is necessary to place a good man there. It is a very powerful tool for us with which to pressure Russia. What they say about the decision to return the right of vote to Russia if they stop violating human rights in Chechnya—that is a lever of pressure. But, in my opinion, the fourth or the third time to do the same thing, that is sort of spinelessness of this organization with regard to Russia.

Today people are really standing up, especially young men. At the same time, they absolutely despise these Russians, barge through these roadblocks, break into Gudermes, and shoot point blank at Russian jeeps or other equipment in plain day and drive away. They'll plant a mine at any place, trigger explosions at any place, shoot the enemy. The Russians in despair have dug themselves in and do not crawl out. So, this is the situation.

But in the city of Grozny, we control this city especially after 18:00 hours. As it gets dark, the city subordinates itself to us. As before, our people arrange weddings, parties, drive around in cars. And the Russian troops dig in and are scared to utter a word. They freeze. They redeploy their troops from the high mountains of Itum-Kale, Shatoi, to the plain. They concentrate them somewhere near Khottuny, Makhkety, they gather them in big fields. They also gather them in the fields near Gudermes.

On to the domestic policy situation here. These brutalities, cruelties: I am speechless, it is a nightmare what the Russians are up to, especially these contract soldiers, these criminal mercenaries. who have been turned into mercenaries. Since the Russians cannot settle

accounts with them, have no funds, no per diem allowance, the contract soldiers who have left here surrounded the regional headquarters in Rostov went on hunger strike and are sitting there. Before withdrawing these units, the Russian commanders allowed plundering of villages. There are concrete cases in Bachi-Yurt. They break into a village and make away with people's refrigerators, spoons, mugs; they make away with the people's household belongings, like some hungry wild beasts.

As to Akhmad Kadyrov, it seems to me, even the Russians have completely given him up as a bad job. And here even children have contempt for him as doomed for shame by God. Has there ever been such a dirty creature as this one in the course of 3,000 years since the Chechen people have lived in their homeland?

No one stands behind Kadyrov except these Yamadayevs [a criminal gang]. Then there is the space bridge. Lyubimov⁷ arranged a space bridge between Gantemirov and Kadyrov. Gantemirov says to Kadyrov, "You yourself said in the last war that it was necessary to kill 150 Russians in order to win, every Chechen should kill 150 Russians. You said that it was *gazavat*."⁸ And Kadyrov replies, "It's known to Putin what happened in that war, he knows very well what I said there." He completely bowed down. He [Kadyrov] would say anything so he would be appointed by God and Putin, or he may say that he wants to look like Putin, and wants to shave off his moustache and beard to look like Putin. He has turned into a dirty sleazebag. To my mind, the Russians understood that too.

Now, the election to the State Duma. The Russians literally appointed Aslakhanov as representative of Chechnya to the State Duma. There was no real election held here. Even 5 percent did not vote in this election, but nevertheless he was appointed. In all probability, they first counted on Yusup Soslambekov.⁹ The way I see it, at first Aslakhanov refused and said that his decision to run was a mistake, since he had thought that it would be a normal election. Then the Russians dealt with Soslambekov. They killed him. He was shot. They warned this Aslakhanov, "So, the same will happen to you." On the day of the phony election, we find out that suddenly Aslakhanov won.

Then, at the last hearing on Chechnya at the [Russian] State Duma, I listened attentively to the interview that Nemtsov¹⁰ gave on "Face to Face." He said: "It's necessary to stop this war, there is no use in it, you can't solve anything by force, it is necessary to start negotiations with the legally elected parliament." They [Russian liberals] still

do not lose hope of setting the branches of government against each other: parliament versus president.

After counting seriously on it, they expended a lot of effort, even confusing Ruslan Alikhadzhiyev.¹¹ Through Kadyrov and his cohorts, they fired 22 missiles at Alikhadzhiyev's house, and still he made a statement in the name of Putin that negotiations should be carried out with the parliament. There was such a statement from Alikhadzhiyev. After that I urgently appealed to his sense of honor and dignity—he still was my comrade-in-arms, was always near me—I told him, “it is a disgrace, you are being deceived,” and he rescinded this statement. Later on they began to blackmail him. When that came to naught, the Russians made up some deputy group with Rizvan Lorsanov¹² and three or four other deputies, even including those who had never been at a session of the parliament, like Baudi Tsomayev.¹³ They even began the process of impeachment of the president, arrested him, that is, took the Speaker of the parliament hostage.

Then you remember the State Committee for Defense and the decision on additional authority for the president, the decision of the branches of power has legal validity ... And when we made it public, the Russians seemed to quiet down, without making any noise any more. After that I carried out a lot of work here with the deputies of the parliament, made them all come out once a week, I assembled the parliament for a meeting. In the end, these three or four unreliable people were squeezed a little by a majority of the parliament.

Then, today there is news about Ruslan Alikhadzhiyev that he is no longer alive. He was tortured to death. I have such information. I don't know if it's true or not. They say it is true. He had heart trouble, they say his heart failed. But the Russians say that is not true, that he didn't die at their hands. But at the same time they do not say who seized him, where he was taken, and what they did with him. They do not say despite all attempts of his relatives to find out what happened to him. Again, I do not rule out the possibility that the Russians might make some surprise at the last moment.

And again the Russians began to say that there are negotiations with the parliament. Maybe they'll try to do it. But also, as I see it, it has no future, but they'll try to make something of it. Again the Russians seem to have a desire to involve authoritative [Chechen] commanders, right up to Gelayev.¹⁴ He was supposed to get in touch with Kadyrov. Those are the sorts of things they have begun to do.

Sometimes I meet with Shamil and Khattab, but there are definite problems. In what respect? As you say, I'm not pleased with the way

they fight, I personally said it to Shamil, they could do a lot much more. Even those who stand behind Khattab and other *djamaats*¹⁵ aren't pleased. And I meet with them and say, why you don't fight, why do the Russians land their helicopters and assault troops under your nose? Why do their infantry go through the woods? What have you been doing with yourselves?

Therefore, I don't see any special problems in this respect, but most importantly in every populated area on flat land and in the mountain parts there are groups, they are taking actions, they strike crushing blows on the enemy. The enemy is suffering heavy losses with minimum losses on our side. A guerrilla war is going on, using wearing-out-the-enemy tactics. In all probability, of course, if the operation were on a larger scale it would be more considerable, but it seems to me that the Russians even do not want it, to designate the line of defense. And today I don't insist on carrying out some large-scale operation. What I say is to strike blows with small groups here, there, everywhere, day and night. Strike blows. In this manner centralize them so it is possible to carry out a larger-scale operation, when the enemy least expects it.

About the negotiation process, I don't insist on it. So, there is Kazantsev,¹⁶ there is a meeting with Maskhadov, and so on, and so forth, I categorically turned that down. Contact is okay! Contact with servicemen, contact with the government of Russia. A working group is okay! There is a government delegation—let them meet, let them discuss, let them prepare a summit, but there should be ironclad guarantees for fulfilling any agreements. These guarantees should be either by a third party or by an international group.

Today the situation is like this: the Russian generals understood that the war is lost, it is useless to use force! The army is demoralized, the army has stalled, the army is decaying, the soldiers don't want to fight. These contract soldiers—they've gotten completely out of hand and are looting, making money. Making money. And if they're making money, it means that they set the Chechen people against themselves.

We are in a stalemate situation, when the Russian military understood that it is time to get out of Chechnya. Accordingly, Putin continues to fight tooth and nail, one moment he clutches at Kadyrov, then at Aslakhanov, then at Gantemirov. He has revealed his whole espionage ring of traitors, even down to the district units. He went for broke using them, but it is also useless. There is no accord among these Kadyrov supporters.

And Putin understood that it would also be absolutely fruitless to count on them. Counting on force also is fruitless; it is a dead end. And now he is facing the necessity to stop the war, to withdraw the troops. The only reasonable decision is to get down to negotiations, but it is suicide for him. It was much easier even for Yeltsin to make a decision to stop the war because he came to power on a wave of euphoria. Putin's poll ratings have dropped a great deal after these submarine and TV towers accidents [two major catastrophes during the early Putin years]. It practically makes him history. And all these tycoons and mass media outlets that he is fighting with will pounce on him.

Therefore, today he is afraid of stopping the war. If I were in his shoes, it would be very difficult for me too. Very difficult. And there is absolutely nothing else that has a future.

The policy of the West: perhaps they too feel and see what is going on. They are sitting tight. Clinton cannot reduce to zero what he has done during his two terms; everything was connected with Russia, then everything went wrong. Other governments also make advances to him, Putin, knowing that he [Putin] is a short-sighted politician, not the most politically literate. To my mind, he is uneducated. It means that one shouldn't discuss foolish things with him and pressure him. He himself will ruin this Russia. He is doing it now. In my opinion, the West will stick pretty much to this policy like this in the future. It does not seem to me that they'll do anything dramatic [with regard to Russia].

In this case we have the human rights groups, general public, all these judicial international organizations, through them they constantly bother both Western states and Russia. We shouldn't abandon them, saying that we have already worked with them; we should constantly provide them with new facts, and reasons for pressure, pressure, pressure. We must be very active in this respect. That is also kind of moral wearing down our enemy.

Go ahead, generally speaking, there's nothing to worry much about here, except for the refugees, ordinary people, they suffer. Frankly speaking, I am sorry for them, if again they get under the control of the Russians. Of course the situation is critical there. They're tired of living in these tents, in these pigsties and stables. And as I say, do everything possible to exert constant pressure. The first thing that we have to do now, is to improve our interactions, communication, mail, timely reports, dispatches, as military men call it, and it is necessary to improve our contact.

Second, the General Representation Office in Istanbul should be brought to order; they have to start working, because if the money stops coming from there, the situation here will be poor. One more time, our priority is contact, mail. It means that once a week at least, we must speak, consult each other by means of a cassette or a letter.

Then, shut down all these freelancers in Baku; throw them out. The Istanbul representative: he represents the president, the information center, correspondents' offices. The humanitarian aid that comes through the man appointed by the president is to help the refugees and wounded if there are any. We have to find a way. Everything abroad is under your supervision.

May God help us!

Akhmadov Comment No. 2

Looking over my conversations with President Maskhadov during my first year abroad, I would be amiss if I did not say something about him personally. We are all products of our experience and, obviously, Maskhadov grew up in Soviet times. As such he had absorbed a number of typical Soviet stereotypes that he could not abandon. For example, he tended to see "the long arms" of the CIA capable of taking many covert, subversive actions and getting away with them. This view was particularly reinforced by the US supply of Stinger missiles to the mujahedeen resisting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. I think it is fair to say, too, that he did not have a clear understanding of how Western governments worked in practice although he generally approved of "democracy" in which the people had a voice in government. The fact that he was holed up in secret hiding places, constantly moving about under threat of assassination, trying to manage a guerrilla war against Russia, made it difficult for him to absorb all the peculiarities of the Western world. On occasion I found it hard to get him to understand the motives of Western maneuvering.

Maskhadov was born in 1951 of Chechen parents who had been forcibly moved during the Great Deportation of February 23, 1944. Stalin had rounded up the entire Chechen population of 600,000 in one day and shipped them by cattle cars to Kazakhstan on the grounds that they were collaborating with Nazi invaders. The charge of collaboration was a total lie; Chechnya was never under occupation by the Nazis. Maskhadov had a very difficult childhood and a rough time as a youth. To succeed in the Soviet Union, a Chechen person had to

demonstrate that he was two heads better than his Russian peers. He made a reputation as someone with an iron will and acute sense of honor.

Maskhadov received an excellent military education at the Tbilisi Higher Artillery School and the Leningrad Artillery Academy. He was appointed to several important commands. When he became more widely known, you could often hear his military contemporaries praise him as an outstanding leader who believed in the importance of keeping your word.

Even though he was the chief of the Chechen military staff, events pushed him forward as a major peacemaker. In the negotiations to end the first Russian-Chechen war (1994–1996), General Alexander Lebed and his associates were pleased to deal with Maskhadov because they knew he would be true to the decisions he took. He was a good negotiating partner. Like his predecessor General Dzhokhar Dudayev, he occasionally traveled abroad and in those situations he had a tendency to idealize his homeland. Maskhadov, who was used to tough military discipline, sometimes found it hard to be leading a guerrilla army, that is, leading people with no military experience. Thanks in part to Dudayev and Chechen commanders Basayev and Gelayev, he was able to convert Chechen youth into a fighting force.

In this second audio conversation, President Maskhadov describes the difficulties of communications during the second war (beginning in 1999). It was clear to him that the Russians now considered him a terrorist and therefore a target for assassination. This, despite the fact that he was elected president in 1997 through elections that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) considered free and fair. The Kremlin, however, never considered these elections legitimate because they were organized under the 1992 Chechen Constitution in which Chechnya was not part of the Russian Federation.

If Maskhadov talked on a satellite phone, the conversation would be monitored by the Russians and they would trace the signal back to its point of origin. Almost always, he needed to give much more information to his representatives abroad than a short phone conversation permitted. For that reason, he resorted to recording audio cassettes that were taken by couriers abroad. He used mini-cassettes because they were easier to hide in cigarette packs or elsewhere than ordinary cassettes. His observations and instructions were largely in Chechen mixed with Russian. The quality of these missives varied, sometimes

they were poor, but other times very clear including background noises from radio and TV and even birds tweeting.

The Russians understood that Baku was an important transit point for Maskhadov's messengers. For that reason they kept very strict control over the network of routes from Dagestan, Georgia, Southern Ossetia into Baku. Even though it was not a long distance from Grozny to Baku during ordinary times, a messenger might take up to a week to make the journey because of Russian interference. If I was in Europe or in the United States, it would take more time for the cassette to reach me and for me to reply. Still, this was the only reliable way to transmit and exchange detailed information in carrying out an agreed policy.

This second tape contains much important information that Maskhadov wanted to bring to my attention. At the start of the second war, many Chechens fled abroad but not all of them had been assigned to represent the Maskhadov government. It was important to bring this situation of freelancers into some sort of order because they were capable of producing misunderstandings as well as a bad image of Chechnya.

The Azeri capital of Baku was a special problem. There were several thousand Chechen refugee families who need all sorts of help, from medical assistance to education for their young children. Under Russian pressure, the Azeri government would not issue birth certificates to children born to Chechen refugee families, thereby creating an incentive for Chechens to return to their homes. The Azeris, who had thousands of their own refugees from the Azeri-Armenian conflicts after the break up of the Soviet Union, offered little or no help to our people.

Furthermore, some of the politically active Chechens began to create their own newspapers, including views that opposed Maskhadov's willingness to negotiate an end to the conflict. These tended to be supporters of Movladi Udugov, a radical and brilliant propagandist, or Zemlikhan Yandarbiyev, the former hard-line vice president, who became acting president after Dudayev's death. This troubled Maskhadov, but neither he nor his representative Ella Asayev in Baku were able to do much about it.

This final segment of the tape contains quite a lot of information stressing the views of Maskhadov in favor of negotiations at the right moment, and predicting that the Russian military was on the road to collapse. He sees Putin being forced into a corner, but afraid of ending the war in Chechnya because that would undermine his

political position in Russia. He also reflects on US policy, believing that President Clinton got too cozy with the Russians. We were particularly distressed by Clinton's statement that Russia was using force as President Lincoln did during the American civil war.

That statement would seem to justify the Russian use of force in Chechnya; but Chechnya and the problem of the American South were very different situations. We were upset, too, by the pronouncement of one high Clinton official that the Russians should clear up the mess in Chechnya quickly with as little bloodshed as possible.

Having listened to this the second tape and heard Maskhadov's concern about our refugees abroad, I began contacting our unofficial representatives in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Poland, Denmark, and the Baltic states to inform them of the president's thinking. We would sometimes gather in the offices of our representative in Baku. It is quite possible these offices were bugged, but our conversations did not concern highly secret matters. I did not always meet with everyone, and on occasion it made more sense to have our local representative act on instructions I passed on. The whole process was cumbersome and slow-moving, putting us at a considerable disadvantage with the Russians who had a powerful propaganda voice and many ways to influence foreign opinion.

Contact with Dr. Brzezinski

Audio letter of November 7, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas! This recording is directed to you. I received the letters sent by you. I read them and thought them over. You did a great job, may God be pleased with you! We should understand one thing right away: we should never assume that there is space left in big politics for such a small nation as the Chechens. All the places have already been divided among the big states. All these human rights organizations, international organizations are the same instruments for conducting the politics of the governments of big states. And nothing else.

They speak eloquently, make nice speeches, but with only one aim, to blackmail this or that state or government if they need something. That is, first they blackmail Chechnya, let the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE] and the Council of Europe in there, there is extreme violence, military crime. But when that government on which they are putting pressure agrees to make the slightest concession in something relating to their relations, they are ready to sacrifice Chechnya and the Chechens.

I only fear another thing, that Russia will do everything possible to counter NATO's expansion to the East; having nothing to oppose it, Russia puts on a show of resistance for its people. In Central Asia, they blackmail the republics of Central Asia with the Taliban, and Israel with Palestine. These trips to Beijing, India [the Russian message is]: there is a threat of Islamic extremism and accordingly, this is

a common problem for all the republics of Central Asia, and Russia, and Israel, and for India there is also Kashmir. So, it is as if they are uniting against this threat of Islamic extremism but in reality it is against a possible advance of NATO to the East. Isn't that the crux of the whole thing?

If this is really so, then it is advantageous for Russia to keep this hotbed of tension going. So, if Chechens haven't been finally smashed, this is a threat against everyone.

Our only salvation in this case is to show there is really a war going on, a real war. To show that hundreds of Russian soldiers, officers, members of police force die daily. But again, today there's a total information blockade. On the whole, the Russians shut up these Babitskys very professionally. Andrei Babitsky¹ is not heard of, nor seen. The holding company Media-Most, all these Gusinskys [media mogul], there is no sight of them. They have their tails between their legs, including Berezovsky, ORT, all of them! This new leader Putin, he is an ordinary FSB lieutenant colonel.

The day before yesterday their GRU agents and contract soldiers carried out a very dirty cleaning-up operation between Gansolchu and Aleroy, having done a lot of torturing in Shuani, Aleroy, Gansolchu, and being 100 percent sure that I was there. Three times, again and again, they would get back to Gansolchu and carry out cleaning-up operations; my chief of guards broke out of encirclement by a miracle. They ran into each other head-on, but decided to part peacefully without victims.

When their long armored column was leaving, our guys set up a deadly ambush for them—planted three or four land mines and a couple of MON-100 directional mines. They shot that column up literally point-blank. Twenty-five or 30 corpses with torn off heads and arms were left; it was something terrible—and not a single word in the Russian mass media.

The phones that we have here—just try to make literally two or three calls, and they immediately identify this number and shut it down. The Russians have completely shut down all the phones. There is practically no opportunity to distribute information from here.

If we pin certain hopes on that state [United States] which you visited, then it will be necessary to find out exactly what they want from us whoever comes to power. So, they want something from us, right? We must be ready for it. If there is something they can take from us, it means that it is likely there will be pressure from there, and it is not France, not even Great Britain, there is much more. It's very important.

Therefore, this haggling is very important. If you say confidently that something will change there, then you should have grounds for that, not that you just had talked with a senator or someone else—they talk very nicely. Most importantly, what do they want from us? If they can take advantage of us for themselves, then they will go for it, but if there is nothing to gain, then they would not care less that there are just Chechens fighting or that the purpose of their struggle security guarantees for their people.

The Muslim world, the Middle East, the Russians have worked there very well too. They shoved Kadyrov [Akhmad] in front of them, Wahabbism, fundamentalism: everywhere this is a threat and in these countries with half-European manners, like Turkey and others, they get scared when Wahabbism, fundamentalism are mentioned. They go crazy. Do you know that?

Putin's meeting with the president of Turkey, then Kasyanov's² visit—it was not for nothing. And today the Russians say: "We shut down the ways to render aid to the bandits, the militants and so forth, and we're even sure of it." So, we should expect these states to turn their backs on us. To my mind, they are already turning their backs: they even do not allow us to withdraw money from the accounts. That is, Russia blackmails the West, with the energy crisis, and about the meeting [Putin's meeting] with Jacques Chirac, the Russians say: "Here's gas, oil for 20 years, be our guests, but just leave us and Chechnya to ourselves." The same with Turkey, Putin promises everything to them, if only they gave him time to finish us off here. And we should be ready for it.

The professor³ you are talking to about treaty commitments relating to money: all these things are very interrelated with the situation that shaped up in Turkey. That is, the Russian government puts obstacles in the way of withdrawing money from our accounts, saying that they'll forward it through the Red Cross.

We don't ask you for weapons, and we don't ask for an army, leave us one-to-one with Russia. They don't give us those pennies that ordinary people collected for us. We should think of something, through other accounts or through other states, or directly through these humanitarian organizations. To come to an agreement with the leaders of these committees, urgently seek another channel for the inflow of this financial aid.

There may be other channels, in America, Great Britain and others, maybe even through Jordan, through United Arab Emirates, through Qatar. But it should be done very fast. We need these means

here, winter is coming, more and more fighters arrive. The demands are big.

So here is a purely military situation. I don't know, all this is on a mass scale, the redeployment of the equipment from Itum-Kale, Shatoy, then Tyovzany from there to Vedenov, then Tsentsroy, up to 1,000, up to 2,000 armored units in the mud, generally speaking, the devil knows what the Russians are doing. This show of blockading the woodlands, well, there's absolutely no damage for us from that, but the Russians suffer. Our small maneuverable groups, even Khattab's group and others, easily leave for another place, move to another place, get away from fire.

But today, as it seems to me, the [Russian] army is on its last legs. It is exhausted and it is 100 percent clear. They are even too lazy to fire the artillery there. But OMON [Russian special police], contract soldiers, GRU [Russian military intelligence]—they are all a pack of swindlers, who were driven here under the cover of contract soldiers, promising them 1,000 dollars a month, "combat" allowances, assignment allowances, "one year for three." Now it turns out that they [the Russian command] cannot settle accounts with them, even with those whose mission is over.

They are in Rostov, where their district headquarters is located, sitting, and on hunger strike. Now the command says they will not pay combat allowances, and again, it's indignation. Accordingly, OMON, contract soldiers don't want to come here. And if they don't come, then the local police are not ready to substitute for them, because the local police are Gantemirov and those who are with him. Their only concern is to rip off drivers of gasoline tankers going on the road, drives taking out non-ferrous metals, equipment—well, they are making money. And they have no desire at all to declare a war on our mujahedeen fighters. And the Russians know that, however many times they try to set that confrontation. And, perhaps, there's nothing else left for the political leadership of Russia to do but withdraw this shameful army, again, the same has been promised many times, there was so much publicity. To stop; to remain? That means to sit down at the negotiating table with us—it is also impossible.

And how can these contract soldiers, these looters, these members of police squad be kept? So they found the most reasonable way out. They were officially allowed everything: "Do whatever you like there!" So, perhaps, you read that even in Middle Ages when a town was taken, it was condemned to robbery for three days—"do whatever you like"—something like this. So, it's necessary to conduct a

cleaning-up operation in a village, and do whatever you like. So, they were given a right “to make money” and they’re making money!

And everyone is making money: the generals are taking out oil by troop trains, the commandant’s offices, with our secret informers, sell people. They detain a person without a stamp in the passport, take him or her away and then sell that person to his or her relatives. The OMON with “our” ethnic Chechen police let out light oil by columns of oil tankers through the roadblocks to Dagestan. There they have their own rates.

The Chechen police take out everything without exception: equipment, non-ferrous metals, to make money. The contract soldiers, as I said, literally break into a village under cover of conducting a cleaning-up operation, and seize a spoon, a mug, everything. They don’t give a damn whether there is anyone inside or not. Who has a richer house, has a Mercedes in the yard, who has documents or doesn’t have, who sold marijuana, those from whom they can take the money—there is a hunt for them.

And this drunken, hungry gang jump all over our miserable people; they are literally skinning them alive. May God not consider it a sin, but the people have gone crazy, they look at these so-called soldiers differently from yesterday. The people are set against them. On the other hand, I feel sorry for them [Russian soldiers], worn-out, hungry, they rip people off, it’s a terrible state. Putin didn’t find another way out but to allow this: “Go ahead, just stay there, don’t leave, do whatever you like, I’m responsible for everything, I take all the responsibility.”

Our fighters, our mujahedeen, our sub-units, take around 50 or more corpses of Russian soldiers and officers a day. Absolutely insolently, right at the market, our guys pull out pistols and shoot their FSB agents point-blank. Starting with evening, the city comes into our hands, they do whatever they like. As before, with these mine detectors ... and even the telegraph poles that stand along the roads, they remove them, because TNT is also planted there.

And these suicide-bombers at every step, literally the other day [October 31, 2000] a suicide-bomber was waiting for this traitor Akhmad Kadyrov at the administration building. He just seemed suspicious, the OMON guard came up to him, there were many people around, he stepped aside and blew himself up. So this is the situation. They make ambushes, blow up armored personal carriers, fire at columns—it’s a nightmare. And with such zest.

Then, Kadyrov and Gantemirov, perhaps, themselves aren’t pleased that the Russians appointed them, it could be seen that there

would be no use of them, just commonplace ruffraff without peculiar intelligence. They couldn't give the Russians anything that they had promised. They're sitting and lying to this Putin that when winter comes, when snow falls, there will be only ten fighters left in Maskhadov's hands.

And our "great military leaders," Gelayev, for example, to my mind I absolutely don't conceal it, not without prompting from Moscow, he is conducting such tactics so as to divert at least one soldier from this war. So what is he up to now? So far he has said that he's organizing a "training unit" for young conscripts, he led the fighters in circles around woods for two or three months not letting them take a single shot. And now he says, we'll move to Georgia, we will improve our health, conduct combat training, and then we'll come back and will fight in spring.

First, move at least one fighter there from here, in order to reduce the number of groups of fighters located here. And there [in Georgia] make them commit acts of extreme violence, set the Georgian authorities against us. I think that what this comrade got involved into has two meanings. I have sent cassettes everywhere and openly spoke about it and don't feel any pangs of remorse before them. They are working in agreement with the Russians, and today isn't the first time!

And second, what surprises me, Shamil reserved his position. I don't know why, for what reasons. I have met with him more than once, suggested to him, let's organize "a movement" with you, strike a joint blow, seize the city of Grozny; we have enough force, we have everything, let's seize Gudermes, let's take away the Vedensky region.

And he suggests tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and it seems he doesn't refuse, but somehow he delays, delays, drags his feet. Even the fighters around him and even those who are with Khattab and others, are itching because they can't do anything independently. Sometimes if they run into the Russians, they go into action, but they don't get involved in any active offensives. I don't know why.

So, this is his [Basayev's] position. But today, there's an absolutely different contingent of people, different leaders, different commanders. And besides, they're more active, more disciplined, in the Shchelkovsky region, Naursky, in Nadterechny, in Gundermesky, in Nojay-Yurt regions. They are everywhere: in villages, in the woods on the opposite side of Terek, and on this side—everywhere. Painstakingly they try to do their best. So far, we haven't had any problems with striking blows at Russians by means of guerrilla war methods.

Next, I don't know what kind of court is there, which court prosecuted you, who took you to court. It must be said that this is opposition to the government, they did it before the war also, and they are doing it today, we are not surprised at it. You should say, don't take it seriously and leave it at that. Basayev hinted to me a couple of times that they say that the minister of foreign affairs made a statement on Afghanistan that there is no need to deal with them, well, on the whole, you made a statement, that nothing connects us to them.

I told him that the position of our government in relation to Afghanistan, in relation to that agreement on our recognition—well, thanks, very nice that we were recognized. It was a purely moral support. That is number one. Second, maybe others will take over the initiative from Afghani-Taliban members. Afghans were the first to recognize us because they themselves experienced the barbarism of the Russian empire.

But again, the development of events in Afghanistan, the bloody civil war that is going on even today, isn't an example for Chechens. On the contrary, it frightens Muslims off from jihad. So this is the politics. There, in all probability, they say talk about "Western orientation." Of course, Isa Umarov,⁴ Udugov, they curse all this. But, to my mind, we shouldn't pay attention to it. In the conversation that we had, I'm always your supporter—you do everything while consulting me.

About Asayev, the fact that I reprimand him has grounds, because there is a great mess, and you can't but notice it. It's not just gossip. These Nukhayev, Yandarbiyev, Udugov each of them has his own headquarters. Well, if they do it just so, we shouldn't be surprised, but it's somewhat awkward before Azeris. Because it seems to them that we're integrated Chechen people since we confront Russia. Well, it looks improper before them.

Therefore, the only way of communication is a cassette once a week. But again, we should have a strict order to it. Every week you have to send me a letter, take an envelope and put it in it. For example, if you haven't done anything, write, "I've been resting this week" or "here I met with this or that, here we've made progress." But you must send a note with an account of what you managed to do, what help you need from me, and what problems you have.

You must give it there on a Friday evening to a man, his name is Khan. On Saturday my messenger arrives, takes this envelope and if I send you a paper or an envelope, Khan gives it to you, and Khan gives it to the courier and sends me what you passed on. So, there must be this traffic. Only through it we can keep in touch.

Next, about negotiations. So far, we don't have any contact with the Russians. So far, it's absolutely out of the question. I don't know why, but if they used to mention it casually, a possibility of negotiations, for the moment there's absolute silence. If something comes up, we'll see. But it would be very useful, all the same you'll have enough time when you aren't on a trip, if you're in your office, so, even if these negotiations begin, the Russian should be told beforehand not just that "you'll sit down at the negotiating table with us" but constantly make hints, "Well, what fools you are, how many times should you be told? We could live so and so, have such and such relations. There's a model in world practice, there's an example for imitation."

Therefore, what variants are there in world experience? If you study thoroughly and consult lawyers, international lawyers there ... Tell Brzezinski, "Well, okay, Russia agreed to stop this war and we were forced to sit down at the negotiating table. What's the most we could propose to Russia?"

So, seek for these variants, all the same we'll have to sit down at the negotiating table, and you'll be in charge there. We should have several variants. And literally tempt Russia, saying "such fools, it's better than fighting." I'm also looking forward to such suggestions from you. Sergei Kovalev said: "Chechens jump at tanks like cats; they are brave, desperate, but they lack civic courage. They always fear that people might think that they're bad Muslims or bad patriots."

That is really true. For example, if you seat a so-called field commander and ask him: "Well, if the Russians stopped this war, and we had to establish some relations with them, and some legal basis should be found, what do you think about it?" Everyone would raise the standard to the maximum, although one-to-one with you, he could say this: "Yes, here we could make a concession, and here this or that could be done." But when everyone is around he will do his best to look most radical, most of all concerned, most of all patriotic, most of all Muslim. It is also our trouble. We should take a realistic view of things. Seek for variants as well.

May God help you! May God be pleased with all our deeds! Go ahead, work, keep working. Send Ferzauli⁵ on a mission ... there must be a statement before the next PACE, so, go ahead ... just hurt the PACE deputies' self-esteem. Maybe I'll send a video cassette in the name of the leader of PACE with reproaches to him and the account of the situation here. So, in January we should make some progress at all costs. And go to Turkey and straighten out this problem, so that they arrange a way through customs, a way to transfer the wounded,

and a possibility to withdraw money from accounts there. This way should be found as soon as possible. If the Turkish authorities pull the plug on all these things, we should immediately seek other ways out.

So, I appointed Khan by decree as special representative to humanitarian organizations. Write it on letterhead and hand it to him. His functions consist of ... so he won't in any way interfere with Asayev in the representational office, he is not tied to him, the only thing is that everything should be coordinated between them, there should be mutual understanding and consent. He has had contact with my messengers who come from me. He knows them and so on.

When money is transferred from there, it is through a middle man between the representative in Istanbul and my messenger. He takes money from them there and transfers it here. So this is the task he has been entrusted with. Then, he should also get in touch in Baku, on behalf of the president, to render some assistance. And the rest is the wounded, refugees, to render assistance in humanitarian sphere. All these issues are solved by the representational office. So, they should work so that there are no mutual grievances, without interfering with each other, having a constant contact.

Second, the order. The order about the appointment of Khalid Khusainov, to the position of assistant to the general representative in the Middle East. He will be in Istanbul, he will be with Rakhman; he will be working with the government agencies there. Give them these two documents. Then, here's an appeal—it is a letter to the president of Turkey and to their prime minister. Maybe it is written confusingly. If you like, change it, making it tougher and with reproaches to them, so they feel ashamed. Do everything possible that it gets into their hands. With reproaches to both of them. Do it! Go ahead!

May God grant help!

Akhmadov Comment No. 3

President Maskhadov had enough experience to know that wars need to end at the negotiation table. His view was that a bad peace was better than a good war. Despite the indifference of the West, lack of interest of the Russians and the terrible human rights abuses they were committing, he stood firmly for negotiations. This caused him serious problems with his internal opponents like Shamil Basayev, Movladi Udugov, and Zemlikhan Yandarbyiev. They were opposed to peace negotiations with the Russians, saying talks were only a distraction from their aim of creating an Islamic state.

Maskhadov, nonetheless, urged me to get in touch with many leading figures in the West for advice, including Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski. He regarded Brzezinski as a leading strategist, as someone who could give us good counsel. It is clear that the issue of negotiations was one of the most important things on his mind. This was for me a clear directive and I was always focused on the issue of a peaceful resolution of the problem. We understood very well that if this was to happen it would need the support of international institutions. Upon arrival in Washington in January 2000, I immediately contacted Brzezinski through the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, which began setting up for me a series of meetings with Congressional figures and influential personalities.

Brzezinski insisted that we be realistic. He pointed out how difficult it would be to find a real sponsor who would participate in the negotiating process without the agreement of the Russians. The Russians were not very interested in talking because they felt they were making some progress on the ground. They acknowledged they had 150,000 troops deployed, were bombing incessantly, had established check points throughout the republic. This was a full occupation of Chechnya managed by the Russian military while fighting was still going on. They controlled the situation during the day. But at night it was a different story. By their brutality, they were radicalizing the Chechens, they were wounding possible talking partners, and pushing the situation into a dead end. The eventual killing of Maskhadov in 2005 would spell the end of our wing of peaceseekers. The Russians got, in return, die-hard opponents who were willing to meet terror with terror.

I do not think the Russians (even today in 2013) understand at all the situation in the North Caucasus. They began the process of “Chechenization” under which they created a Moscow-imposed government to rival the elected Maskhadov government, which was forced to live underground. In the end, the Russians ironically turned themselves into dependents of the pro-Russian Chechens they eventually put in power. I am thinking of the likes of Kadyrov-father and Kadyrov-son who demanded large sums of money and relative autonomy for Chechnya.

Russian Defense Minister Marshal Pavel Grachev’s statement in 1994 that one-parachute assault regiment could restore order in Chechnya in two hours was typical of the lack of understanding. Today a large number of the Russian population would like to wash their hands of the North Caucasus, where Islam is on the rise, because the cost of staying there is too high.

We have often been accused of receiving financing from al-Qaeda for the war. The Russians, particularly, tried to exploit every opportunity to make it seem we were pawns of al-Qaeda or the Taliban in Afghanistan. It is possible that some Chechen radicals did receive some monies from them, but I had no knowledge of such deals if they existed. Listening to Maskhadov's audio letters it is clear he was hard pressed for money. I never received any salary for my work as foreign minister. I had an agreement with Maskhadov not to involve me in any money matters because I felt it would disrupt my work.

Maskhadov's representatives abroad did collect relatively small sums of money, like \$3,000–\$4,000 and, occasionally, perhaps up to \$25,000 a time. In Turkey, support committees were created and sometimes Turkish women would take off their earrings and donate them for our cause. These committees received money from congregations in mosques but the effort was not systematic. This audio letter makes clear that the American-led effort to shut down bank transfers to such places as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates for the war effort was having its effect. That is why Maskhadov asked me to be on the look out for other channels.

I sent my next tape off a lengthy report to Maskhadov from Baku because in the first half of 2000, I traveled a lot through France, Belgium, and Holland where I had meetings with various parliamentary groups discussing what might be done to help Chechnya. He was pleased with my work but he also repeated that we should harbor no illusions. Even though we could not expect much from the West, he felt nevertheless that this was valuable work. His view was that Chechnya was probably small change for Western leaders and human rights organizations.

Maskhadov kept coming back to the internal situation in Chechnya where the Russians, who had hoped for a quick victory were committing mass abuses of human rights. The Chechen population was doing more and more to confront the Russians. He commented too on the desirability of peace negotiations but noted that at the present time no contacts were in progress. If the Russians previously had hinted about negotiations, particularly when we held the capital city Grozny through January 2000, now there was complete silence.

Taliban Recognition

Audio letter of November 11, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas! The cassette you sent me reached me, I listened to it. The documents with the account of the work done in the far-off state [the USA] earlier also reached me. I said on the previous cassette that it was a very important and elegantly done work. May God be pleased with you! What else should be done is only known to God, none of us know what He has in store for us.

Later I'll tell you what the real situation here is like, so that you're in the swim of things and could size up things the right way. It won't do any harm if sometimes you give press conferences. If, for example, the cassette with my interview gets there, you may say: "The president says this but the mass media in Russia says that." You may emphasize that.

Even when I had a telephone that worked, I managed to reach Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle and speak with them for a bit. Now I don't have such an opportunity, therefore, you have to get the state policy, our approach, our position across completely on behalf of the president all the time. If you like, do it by saying: "The president says this," you know better. But they have to have a clear idea of what we want, what we strive for.

Then, speaking of the situation here, the Russians have completely redeployed the detachments of the Shamanovskaya 58th army from Itum-Kale, Shatoy to the Nojay-Yurt, and the Vedensky districts to the populated areas of Tsentoroy, Belgatoy, Dargo, Benoy, in that direction. They [the Russians] state that they're carrying out a

large-scale operation there under the code name “Autumn Leaves.” With the fall of leaves, they’ve become very busy. Today battles are being fought there.

Khattab and the detachments with him are dispersed in these districts, in the mountains, in the woodlands, in villages. Mokhmad Khanbiev,¹ the subunits of the president’s guard, Aidamir Abalayev,² are also located in that area. Our subunits are there. I don’t know how they [the Russians] will succeed in it and how it was conceived, but I think that it’s being done to report that with fall and cold weather arriving, they’ve done something effective and successful. Or that the last strike smashed our main forces leaving only saboteurs and diversionary forces. Maybe it’s being done with this purpose.

Then, they are conducting clean-up operations in practically every populated area on flat land. I can tell you approximately how they conduct a clean-up operation. It’s mainly all contract soldiers who are involved in these clean-up operations. They used to show this in the movies—you seize a city, and for three days everything there is yours to plunder. They entirely disregard the orders of the generals. What concerns them is that they are not paid—they were promised 1,000 dollars a month, plus “combat pay.” In all probability, their leaders can’t afford to pay. They [the contract soldiers] understood that.

I tell the residents of villages when I speak with them: “See, when this war began and while it was going on, you cursed the Chechen fighters.” If an aircraft dropped a bomb, people would say that it’s because there was a [Chechen] fighter there—you blame him for the bombardment. If the Russians’ column comes under fire, you curse the fighters. You, yourselves, remove the mine planted by fighters and give it to the Russians. And now you see, God made much bigger trouble of these enemies for you than our fighters did.

Then second, off the record, I am telling you personally: this maneuver Gelayev did recently, it seems to me that it was treacherous. Having taken the fighters from the Itumkalinsky and Shatoyevsky districts, he moved them to Chemulga on the border with Ingushetia. He said he was going to organize an “uchebka” [training camp for young soldiers] and keep them there for two or three months.

And accordingly, the 58th army, sees there’s no resistance, so they transfer 1,500 armor vehicles to Vedeno, Nojay-Yurt. Yet if there were at least a small amount of our fighters, they [the Russians] would have kept the troops there. Because of this rascal’s fault, the Russians managed to transfer and concentrate in one place a huge quantity of troops. That’s the first thing!

The second thing that he did: he transferred around 200 or 300 of our mujahedeen to Georgia by deception. He would say, “winter is coming, we will improve our health, get some rest, and make preparations for fighting.” The way I see it, it was coordinated with the Russians. To transfer one fighter of ours there from this country is to weaken our positions here. And, accordingly, to raise the level of crime there [in Georgia] and make them a problem for the Georgian authorities and spoil our relations with Georgia.

Then about Basayev. I visited him four times and I tried to convince him: “Leave everything alone, leave these politics and the past alone. Let’s beat the Russians together! Here’s the enemy, here’s the opponent—let’s beat him! Together. Hammer away at the same point. Do you agree?”

“Yes, I do.”

“I want to take back the city [Grozny], I want to enter the city.”

“Want to move in? Fine!”

“Let me involve my chief of staff and the head of the operation department, work out a secret plan. How many [fighters] do you need to help? 500? 1,000? I’ll order prompt preparations. When you go there, it’ll be necessary to carry out diversionary tactics in some other place and I’ll prepare it.”

So we agreed. And three or four months passed with promises like tomorrow—the day after tomorrow and nothing came out of it. Then he said that he had no communications, and so on, and so forth.

Then I understood that in his utterances there were such thoughts: “We don’t have to hurry, we have to play for time. It’s not advantageous for Russia to drag this war out, Russia’s become weaker. We need to reserve our strength.” Then I understood that is roughly what [Ruslan] Gelayev is doing.

Of course, I don’t agree to such an approach. In what respect don’t I agree? We can’t drag it out. If we start dragging it out, they [Western countries] forget about us and then it becomes more difficult for you to talk over there, it becomes more difficult for me to talk. We have a 100 percent opportunity to strike a blow at some place at least once a month, make a lot of noise about it. But it’s the behavior of these two commanders that suggests to me that they want to drag out this war by any means.

Then, there is the case of Commander Vakha Arsanov,³ who asserted that there were 3,000 or 4,000 fighters with him and today he is silent and no one knows where he is. Once in three or four months he sends an audio cassette, saying I’m here, yet he wouldn’t even once

say something on television, or on the radio or give an interview to some newspaper, or scold Kadyrov or the Russians—absolutely nothing is heard from him. And in all probability, the fighters who were with him have dispersed.

About the Taliban and Afghanistan. The Russians want to show that we have bases there, that we receive financial aid from them, armaments too, that Afghans fight here, that Arabs fight here, that “negroes” fight here. They would be happy if weapons were sent to us from there. And you noticed correctly that today Yandarbiyev wants to look like a hero, that he forced someone to recognize the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. At the most unsuitable moment for us ... maybe it would seem worth waiting ... at this time, it is playing into the Russians’ hands.

Although right after that war, as soon as I became president, I sent people to the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar, with a request for official recognition and he agreed. And then, when active combat operations started up there again, they put it off, saying hold on, in effect, America won’t help if we recognize you.

But what kind of propaganda do they, Basayev and Yandarbiyev, spread? Everyone here, those who are in *djamaats*, have completely obeyed my orders and are fighting. Now this is what they [Basayev and Yandarbiyev] are telling them: look we’ve been recognized by Muslims, and Maskhadov and Akhmadov said that we shouldn’t be recognized and they are asking the Americans to help stop the war here. They [Basayev and Yandarbiyev] try to persuade these guys in order to ensure that they do not obey me.

The most important thing is not to give them a reason to confuse and deceive the guys who fight as part of *djamaats* here. Every nation has a right to self-determination. Afghanistan was the first to recognize us because it experienced the same thing itself—what the Russian army is like! It’s moral support for us. We have no bases in Afghanistan, no armaments, we don’t need their help. We can cope by ourselves.

What these [Basayev, Yandarbiyev, Udugov] do is just playing into the Russians’ hands. Even now, today, they announced that a plane was hijacked from Makhachkala to Israel. And when they said that this Akhmed Amirkhanov⁴ was a Chechen, it made me think that the Russians might have done it themselves. It was done so simply; he hijacked a plane, landed it, and then gave himself up.

Therefore I openly tell you: There were doubts regarding this Gelayev even before this first war began and it was still a civil war. And you know what they did in relation to me when the war ended. And

all this was as if it had been ordered [by the Russians]. Do they really do this talking things over with the Russians? Or are they so brainless they do it out of spite? If it's not so, then, it's not the way to behave.

But I want to please you with the following: today all these former commanders, except for those who were killed, have gone into the background. All these Murdashevs, Atgeriyevs, Batalovs, Arsayevs, Sultanovs, Gelayevs, all of them are sort of outdated. They aren't in this war; they aren't seen and aren't needed. I just pushed away even those of them who fight but are engaged in all sorts of doubledealing and show-off activity.

Instead of them, new people appeared, new commanders. And each new day there are new reinforcements, new commanders, new detachments. They even make reserve units of 15 or 16 people in every village—there're many people for fighting. On the one hand, it's good, they are more disciplined, more committed to order, they have no arrogance, and they have no tricks up their sleeves like these former commanders.

These Udugov guys make statements to the effect that Chechen volunteers were sent to Palestine, that 1,000 dollars for each were sent as aid. And the Udugovs do it on purpose, to make it bad for us, and do this in name of Shamil [Basayev]. This is how they throw it out in his name. Whatever happens, all the same emir Shamil Abdalakh⁵ is there, Burundy the First is there, Burundy the Second, Burundy the Third.⁶ And these two comrades, Umarov and Udugov, they studied all of Basayev's ailments and by sprinkling salt on his sore spots, they drove this man into a stupor. But in the long run, they are playing into the hands of the Russians, they are actively working for the enemy.

Next, about negotiations. From time to time, when I am not paying attention and say: "No one should meet with anyone, no one needs our initiative, as soon as the Russians get tired they'll come themselves. They won't come because we say so, on the contrary, they become impudent ..." But as some time goes by, lo and behold, all of a sudden the Russians send a message that it would be a good idea to meet, and so on, and so forth. Maybe they are just checking your reaction.

And this time such glimmers also appeared, I don't know from where, how, and so on. But I told Khozh-Akhmad Yarikhanov,⁷ and others who are in the government delegation for negotiations and sometimes meet with the Russians, "Let's think, what do we want, what do we strive for, what we do need." Sergei Kovalev has said: "Chechens lacked civic courage, they're afraid of each other all the time." And really that is right! If you ask someone to come and

talk, he'll talk normally with you, and will say if this is the case, then it would be a good thing to do this, and tomorrow do that. But when there's a council and you place him among all others, then each of them tries to look more radical than the one sitting next to him. Understand? That's the way things happen. And there's a lot of pretense.

And this is how each of them, fearing each other, talk about capitulation on bended knees, question why we speak to them and instead demand they bite the dust, drive them into a corner and so on, and this war is going on and on. And the more so, these local secret informers, national traitors, they also try to persuade them: "Just a little bit more, just a little bit, if in the last war you did just a little bit, everything there would be just a little bit better. There, don't make such a mistake this time." They say so in order to extend their existence at least for a month, for six months. These local jerks go to Moscow and confuse them.

Russia is Russia. We say that it is hungry, cold, that they can't afford such material costs. Yes, that's true, but we shouldn't forget that it's the only army that doesn't count its losses at all. It never counted its losses. It's the only army that can fight without any rear, without provisions; it's poorly clad, hungry, dirty, cold, but it can fight. The American army, the French ... it's necessary to give them a sandwich and coffee in time. The Russians can do without. They'll gather rotten apples in the woods, and standing on a road, beg people for bread, saying: "Will you bring me some bread?" And this army is fighting. This is why it's dangerous!

Therefore, this war is dragging on and I say that we need to work out clear positions. Clear fundamental positions—within the limits of what's authorized. In other issues, where we could compromise, we should explain to them, that is, tempt them. Say: "Look here, we could build our relations here like this." It's in Russia's interests. Something in common in defense, common in economy, and so on.

There is an issue of mediation. They stubbornly don't allow the OSCE, the Council of Europe, to get anywhere near us, don't allow the representative of the Parliamentary Assembly to get anywhere near us, they completely isolated us. They are mostly frightened that it becomes an international factor. Then, accordingly, we tell them that it's dangerous to talk with them without mediation from the third side. It's dangerous to talk.

The next issue the Russians insist on is that their troops should remain in Chechnya, a definite amount of troops. And by the way, in

the last war they also said that two brigades should remain here at any cost. We balked for a long time, said that no one would remain. But in the long run we agreed, saying, "Well, okay, leave two brigades."

They left two brigades, then on December 30, 1996, these two brigades literally ran away from here in one night. That is, it's a fundamental issue. They believe that if the army goes away without leaving any units here, then again Russians will say that it's a disgrace and so on and so forth. We will never allow it, regardless how long we will have to wage this war. Here's the second fundamental issue.

And the third issue, concerning political matters. What different kinds of relations could there be between us and Russia? Accordingly they say: "Here's territorial integrity, indivisibility of the state." That's their fundamental position. And we say: "International status, to be more correct, international guarantees of safety of our people from possible wars, from possible provocations, from possible 'constitutional orders,' from possible anti-terrorist operations and the like."

I'll even give an example, when we began negotiating Dzhokhar [deceased president Dzhokhar Dudayev] summoned us and said: "Don't touch upon political or economic issues, just sign the military agreements. Only the military ones." And we literally within two days prepared a project of a possible military agreement and brought it to Dzhokhar. He looked at that military agreement and said: "Just fine, good job! Now you can sign it."

And even when we were beginning these negotiations, we wrote, "We will render assistance in the investigation of the raid on Budennovsk up to extradition of Basayev." So, we began the negotiations with this very undesirable wording. Basayev always criticized it, although Shirvany [Basayev's younger brother] went and discussed it with him and he later wrote the wording in his own hand. What I'm driving at is that we started these negotiations on conditions that were to some extent dishonorable for us.

And even Dzhokhar agreed to sign the military agreements. The military agreement stated we were even ready to disarm, but retain some self-defense units. When these negotiations began, the people rose up and shouted a victory, hurrah, Allakhu Akbar! Dzhokhar really became insolent. After that, when we signed and went to Dzhokhar, he began to express his indignation, "why did you sign it?" Now he wanted even more. You know, when he sees that the people rose up. So, in this way, combining political with military, we practically won that war.

Abroad there are lawyers and they should be consulted. How can the war be stopped? Here's this barbaric state ... how can we get rid

of it? How can we finish it, how can we determine our relations with Russia? So, if you consulted those experts and sent me your concrete suggestions, we would lead the Russians by the nose.

Think over these questions. On the previous cassette for you I wrote that I was at the US State Department and met with Sestanovich.⁸ I spoke with him on both of my trips. He is in charge of the Commonwealth of Independent States, or something. I talked with him for a long time, discussed all variants of possible relations. I spoke with practically all the members of Congress, with the leaders of all their movements, with two or three senators.

Exactly like this in Great Britain, there's the House of Lords and so on and so forth ... with Margaret Thatcher. When you speak with them, it seems to me that I even suggested, for example, to Margaret Thatcher: "Let's ... here are documents signed with the Russians. The Peace Treaty, other treaties, our constitution and all others. We're absolutely right and clean from the legal point of view. If you headed a group of international lawyers and proved to Russia that everything is both *de jure* and *de facto*, you have everything." And when I asked her about her willingness to put it to the Russians, she said: "Yes, I would."

The same with a lobby group in America, they also said that before December, we'll accomplish great things through the Congress, right up to recognition. And as far as the humanitarian aspect is concerned, we can send to Chechnya as much grain as you want. They all said that to me! In Poland they said sure thing, just wait until we join NATO, that'll be it. We don't give a damn about Russia, we respect the Chechens. Especially the human rights organizations they refer to the Geneva Conventions, they all speak very nicely. But when push comes to shove, they go into reverse.

Therefore, we should take a realistic view of it all, weighing the pros and cons, with maximum profit for us, to win this battle. Win at any cost. Without reference to their constitution, without falling under its effect, and depriving them of the right to start up war again for introducing "proper constitutional order," to carry out "anti-terrorist operations," and catch "bandits."

Today those people who carried out this revolution, led it, saying that they were the leaders, crying "marsho" ["freedom" in Chechen] and "shariat" ... those people are gone today. I am saying it to you openly, they are gone! They aren't here! We have here absolutely new people, new politicians, the others have fled abroad. Even Idigov⁹ and those of his ilk, they had to get their work done there and then come

back home. What are they doing there? No one is going to arrest them here, our parliament is working, sits in session, they sit and do their work.

Then, the account of your weekly work. I'm not telling you about the agenda you have in mind. You're the person who must think about everything that's happening abroad. For example, there are big problems at our representation in Istanbul. In three months not a single penny has come from there; even the authorities are entirely set against us and create obstacles. That's very bad.

Work actively, there's a January session of the Parliamentary Assembly there and it is necessary to prepare for it very seriously. Reproach them: "Well, the Russians treat you like mud, to say nothing about us, but we couldn't care less!" It must be insulting for them to some extent. As to the money you wrote about, I told Rakhman all that. As soon as this money can be picked up, I won't be stingy with it where it is needed. It is needed here as well, but I know that there is also a need for it there.

Goodbye. May God help. Give my greetings to everyone for me! May God welcome our cause!

Akhmadov Comment No. 4

This cassette was a comprehensive briefing of events in Chechnya, of internal conflicts, of the depredations of the Russian army, which gave me an excellent insight into Maskhadov's thinking. Getting information out of Chechnya during the Russian information blockade of the second Russian-Chechen war was a major problem. Maskhadov himself was not ashamed to telephone Deutsche Welle or Radio Liberty to get certain points across. He wanted me to make broad use of the information and even to emphasize that I was quoting the words of the president.

Maskhadov made the point that the Russian army, which began the war in 1999, was suffering from demoralization. Problems with pay and supplies led to marauding and other abuses. That was turning the civilian population more and more against the Russians.

He also spoke at length about the internal political conflicts and particularly about General Gelayev who led his forces out of the war zone and into Georgia. Gelayev's entry into Georgia was not approved by Maskhadov. He felt that it was a provocative move and possibly Gelayev, himself, did not fully understand the possible consequences. Gelayev's presence with his fighters in Georgia could give the Russians

an excuse to invade, and undertake actions to undermine Georgian independence. He also felt that the presence of the Chechens could turn the Georgians against the Chechens.

I understood Maskhadov's concern because it was a serious error when a commander of Gelayev's rank independently and without authorization enters a neutral country which was important to us and for the several thousands of our refugees there. Maskhadov subsequently issued a decree depriving Gelayev of his rank and his decorations, branding him a deserter.

As a result of Maskhadov's concerns, I went to Georgia to meet with Gelayev. My encounter with Gelayev was after the Maskhadov decree. I arrived in the evening and we talked all night. He explained the circumstances of his arrival and assured me that he did not intend to stay there and that he would return, which in fact he did. He pointed out that there was no clear front line as this was a partisan war. His men were out of touch with other units. They were pushed away from Ingushetia toward Georgia by a whole series of battles. His forces were suffering from hunger and the only way out was to cross the border into Georgia. They moved into the area of Shatili, a very isolated part of the country, and they were barely distinguishable from Chechen refugees.

He prohibited his men from appearing with weapons and they behaved very quietly. The Georgian authorities got in touch with them quickly and told Gelayev that he had put them in a very difficult position. The Russians used their presence in Pankisi to carry out a few bombing raids and to declare publicly that the Chechens were using Georgian territory to create a terrorist base and could be harboring Bin Laden! That, of course, was a wild and inaccurate claim fairly typical of Russian exaggerations.

The Pankisi Gorge is in fact a very small place. You could ride around it on horseback in two hours. This situation dragged on for a year and a half and finally Gelayev left in 2002. The situation was like a Bermuda Triangle: the Russians used it to pressure the Georgians, to show who was boss in the Caucasus region, and to threaten "preventive" bombing raids. The Americans saw it as a chance to send in military instructors and military aid to the Georgians. The Georgians saw it as a chance to ask for military assistance that the United States provided, one that was promptly seized by corrupt individuals.

Maskhadov, in this cassette, also commented briefly on the recognition of Chechnya as an independent state by the Taliban government in Afghanistan. This event had put me in an extremely

difficult position during my first appearance in Washington at Johns Hopkins University on January 12, 2000. As foreign minister, I was absolutely uninformed that anything was going on with the Taliban. During the question-and-answer session which followed my address, one of the diplomats of the Russian Embassy asked me to comment on the report that the Taliban government had extended diplomatic recognition to Chechnya. I knew nothing about this. It would have been embarrassing for me as foreign minister to admit the truth. I quickly gathered my thoughts and replied, "I am not aware of this, but if it occurred I assume it was to show moral support to the civilian population. Because the Afghans had suffered a similar fate due to the Soviet invasion they know the situation well and are showing solidarity with victims of abuse."

The next day, I telephoned Maskhadov on an open line. At the time, he had several telephones and he let his representatives abroad know that he could take calls during the hours of 6 and 8 pm local time. Later, as the war wore on, the Russians blocked those phones and put them out of commission.

Speaking for a bare three minutes, I was very emotional and my tone was probably a bit brusque but I did not mean to offend him. I asked, "You sent Yandarbiyev to the Taliban behind my back? This is a total mess." He shot back, "If you can't address me as the president, at least have the respect for my seniority and treat me accordingly."

I considered this recognition was stupid, even destructive. I continued, "You sent me to the United States in the hopes of finding support and no one informed me that this conversation with the Taliban was going on. Recognition was always important to us, but you found the most inappropriate partner for this recognition! This recognition will have only the most negative effects for us."

Maskhadov replied that he was dimly aware that Yandarbiyev had gone to Afghanistan but that he had not asked permission to do so. Many Chechen radicals shouted "Hurrah" when they learned about the recognition and my statement was considered by Maskhadov's critics to be cold and dismissive. Basayev and Khattab complained to Maskhadov, but Maskhadov agreed with my position. Later, the Afghans proved more clever than we and their foreign minister Wakil Akhmad said that recognition was in the nature of moral support since the Taliban lacked the financial resources to aid Chechnya.

This incident was a very serious lesson for me and I believe that I answered it in the best possible way. What was clear was that we did not have a well-thought-out foreign policy that had been developed

through the foreign ministry, the parliament, or the president. I was shocked by the episode because I realized that if I made a serious mistake in these circumstances, no one would forgive me. From then on, I was very careful about all of my statements to make sure they were clear, accurate, and did not contradict the general line I was pursuing. I made certain that no one could turn my statements around to make them mean something other than what I intended.

Russian Army Disintegrating?

Audio letter of December 4, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuhu!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! The letters you sent me have reached me. I've read them. Therefore, I want to tell you one more time. There is little hope that America, the West, democracy, even such international organizations as the UN, OSCE, PACE would address our needs. I don't think so. And I don't hope for this. Whoever becomes the president of the United States—government is government. Government has its own interests. Therefore, in the first place, they proceed from this assumption. The West is experiencing an energy crisis, and it is hard to understand what is happening in America. The most important thing for them is to solve their own problems. And they can use Chechnya as a tool to blackmail Russia, put pressure on it, with the aim of pulling off their own interests. Nothing more than that. Either Russia makes concessions, or in case of a totally negative reaction they [the United States and West] all shut up, especially, when Russia makes a concession.

The only thing the human rights organizations can do is to make noise, yell, talk, protest. But nobody listens to them. So, that's the whole story. Why am I telling you this? Because yes, we must work. There must be diplomacy, we should work hard, we must do our utmost, use all our possibilities. We must adapt to all kinds of disagreements that exist between these states. I've always been a supporter of this. It seemed to you at first that everything was going on well. There will be support there. But when it comes to doing something, that is to act, really act, then they start to stall off.

At this moment we shouldn't get very upset. We should expect the worst: that we are a small nation, our state has not been recognized, we were presented to the world as barbarians, terrorists. We contributed to that impression. Today we cannot pretend that everything is 100 percent normal here. So, we should take into consideration that we are what we are, and there is a huge state with a huge territory, huge natural resources, with dirty politics, barbarian politics, a nuclear power that is against us. At this moment few would worsen relations with Russia. Even Iraq and Iran. And it seems that Russians are the dirtiest among Christians. There is the nuclear technology, a tool to put pressure on America.

Therefore, these policies are insidious, they are dirty. Nobody is going to defend the interests of small nations. And today Russia's army is not an army but a hungry horde. Literally, like prisoners released on probation. They were promised big money, but the state doesn't have it. They got out of control, and the generals, the politicians shut their eyes and said: "Grab, rob, do what you like," so that they do not get out of hand. And this drunken, hungry, stinking horde attack miserable people. It is horrible, what they're doing here! These ostentatious trips made by people like Tadeush Ivinsky, the Polish deputy at PACE. One [refugee] tent in Sleptovsk and ten tents in Znamensky. That's it, that's their excursion. They aren't shown anything else there. They know perfectly well that they weren't shown the right places. Here's another example for you, but it is an extraordinary example. It is barbarism! Barbarism. The central market in Grozny ... Even in peacetime that is the only life-saving place for our people, so that they don't starve. There is no other chance anywhere else.

Just about a week ago, it was around the first of December. They surrounded that central market with tanks, armored personal carriers. That drunken horde broke out of the storage rooms, everything on the tables. They dispersed all the women there, made arrests, killed. They forced out everyone. They took everything from the storage rooms and loaded them on the armored personal carriers and trucks. They drove off the crowd, then brought in the tanks and leveled everything to the ground. A member of the OMON riot squad was killed. Do you understand? That is unheard-of barbarism.

The most important thing is, that you are a young diplomat, and it is your first time to appear at high level meetings of world leaders. So, first of all, pull yourself together, and do not hope for more. Furthermore, always expect the worst. The worst. But work! Work hard. Work and work. Why? Do you know what I'm afraid of and

why I'm telling you that? You work well, so well, that I'm very pleased with it. Looks like it seemed to you that something should become clear but afterwards there are no results. They turned everything upside down there, but don't lose your heart. You should know in advance, that's what it will look like. That's what will be.

Therefore, as if the war has just begun, we should persistently prove that we're here, that we exist here. The sort of people we are ... like in the very beginning of the war, when we naïvely supposed that the summit in Istanbul¹ would solve something. The decision of PACE would solve something. The way we thought, that is the way we should think, and work hard. Work hard.

Therefore our hope is that this army of theirs is decaying. There are inside contradictions, inside disagreements. They don't obey each other. They have no control over each other. There is corruption, the generals with Kadyrov sell trainloads of oil. The OMON police at roadblocks: just give them 50 rubles and you can go wherever you like. Even to China! Because of their plundering, the contract soldiers have aroused the people against themselves to such an extent that they bombard them [the contract soldiers] with stones. When you look at this situation as a serviceman, as a politician, as a diplomat, as a president, your only hope is that they will have to withdraw this drunken starving horde.

Furthermore, in this mess, I, as a military man, know that in peacetime exercises, we have everything organized, even pencils, needles, thread, tents. Everything is taken into consideration. It took us three to four months to prepare. We left for a month and would always have three to four corpses: someone would be poisoned by charcoal fumes, someone fell asleep, someone suffocated, someone drank anti-freeze, someone would be crushed, someone pinched. And that's in peacetime!

Now there is a Russian unit stationed close by and one Chechen says that he went to that unit. He saw some soldier there and asked him how things were with them. The soldier answers him: "We're watching ORT, RTR [Russian TV channels], and one federal serviceman got killed, that is about all. The bastards, they deceive! In our small unit we have casualties every day, we kill each other, seven to ten casualties daily. Shoot each other, someone might take an overdose of drugs, someone suffocated, someone got poisoned by charcoal fumes, someone was crushed."

And this "miracle army" isn't able to withstand. When normal people report to this Putin—not generals or Kadyrov supporters—they

say, "Listen to what's happening there. What success? What result? If this hungry drunken horde is returned to Russia, they will annihilate all of us!" Do you understand? When they get exhausted physically, morally, financially, then they will come to us. And we'll have negotiations, and there will be a dialogue, and everything will be there.

Second, you talk about prisoners. You should get into your head one thing, that the previous war and the current war are absolutely different. In the first war we had a stable rear. But now we have no rear. No rear. It has turned totally into a guerrilla war. Russians are everywhere and we are everywhere. We're walking around side by side. We sometimes aim weapons at each other and say: "Well, Vanya, shall we kill each other? No. Then let's separate." We set ambushes for each other. Right under your nose. That is, everything has mixed up here. You don't know who's who, who is shooting and from where, who's setting an ambush for whom.

How will you be able to establish a prison in some village and keep prisoners there? No one will dare do it. Then, in the highland forests, they can be blockaded. Up to 10,000 tanks and paratroopers. And our soldiers consist of small groups of five, ten, fifteen men. As soon as the Russians form a blockade, they have their own secret trails, they get through the flank, into the rear, and so on. Therefore, nowadays we try to have no prisoners at all. We have no filtration posts, concentration camps, prisons. We don't have any! The only thing that can happen, for example, is if some soldier was captured by the Russians, for example, he would be detained at the commandant's office.

Just imagine, for example, I'm a commander, and my soldier is captured by them, and suddenly, I find a way how to free him. Will the commander allow that he's taken away to some prison? Of course not. He will resist and get his comrade out of there faster at any cost. Or some poor devil, what do you call him ... a deserter or someone else, nobody keeps them there, let them go. Let them go. It is necessary to explain to them [the human rights organizations, the representatives of PACE, UN] that we cannot afford to keep them. Earlier [during the war in 1994–1996] we kept 40 to 60 prisoners. But today we can't afford it. Even practically it is not possible.

Nevertheless, I understand you, and you can tell them [various human rights organizations, PACE, UN] that we cannot afford it. That I'll try to make a special assignment. But I'm saying it again and again, they have definitely set themselves the task of not annoying Russia too much, giving them back the "right to vote," and saying to us: "It can completely get out of control."

So, what worries me most is what the Russians are preparing in Georgia now: transfer of that horde from here to there. That's what the Russians are doing. And it's become normal. And they get away with that. And their stooge, with whom they play, is Khamzat Gelayev ... 100 percent, 1,000 percent, no doubt ... although we'll keep on saying that "there must be agreement between us" and the like. There shouldn't be any agreement with them! They're unscrupulous. No matter how much you would strengthen agreement with them, how much you attract them, they have no right to be our comrades. They stumbled somewhere, made a mistake somewhere, tripped over something. So, what's Gelayev doing? After announcing that: "I'm going to organize 'a training unit' near Chemulga settlement on the border of Chechnya and Dagestan, Ingushetia," he pitches tents, gathers some 200 or 300 allegedly cadets for this "training unit." Those guys who should be active fighters, and he keeps them there for two or three months, and in the course of that time they don't fire a single shot.

Now winter has begun, so he says we'll move to Georgia, to improve our health there, rest, improve our combat training and then after coming back to Chechnya, we'll be annihilating the Russians. Again it's Gelayev's politics. He gathered them in one place, then there was a simulation of negotiations of his close commanders with Kadyrov. We frightened them, raising hell at that time. And still they managed to transfer around 150 or 200 there and move there himself. And just as they were moving to Georgia, the Russians are raising a big fuss because of this. They knew that they were moving, everything had been planned, but they raise a big fuss that is, "put pressure on Georgia." The Russians shout about it for a few weeks, saying that armed fighters are crossing the border either from there or from here.

So, three tasks have been accomplished: Their soldiers dispatched away from here. A reason was created to implement a visa system between Russia and Georgia. And, accordingly, raise the level of gangsterism and crime in Georgia. And the person managing this is our famous commander. He sold himself "together with his pants." [A Chechen expression meaning "sold himself lock, stock, and barrel."]

Here's the proof that there are Russians behind it—there was a conference of the Chechen diaspora in Moscow recently. Malik Saidullayev,² spoke. Here's what he approximately said: Kadyrov should be sacked as the head of the administration. He has never kept a single word that he gave. He said that he would win five commanders over to his side—there are no such commanders! Then he

said that he would move 2,000 people to Georgia, but he moved only 200. That is, there still was an agreement that Gelayev had to move not 200 but 2,000 there. But it failed to some extent because at that moment we began to shout, like: "What are you doing? Are you out of your minds? How can you go away leaving our miserable population under the violence of these dirty Russians, shame on you!"

Therefore, if there is a chance, you should go there yourself with Zakayev³ to the Pankisi Gorge. Gather the soldiers stationed there: this is what the president says, he says that it is unscrupulous, he says that it is a great mean act. Now they will fool you like those Berezovskys in the past, and make you kidnap local people, and you'll begin to violate their laws, and then it'll be just what the Russians need more than anything else. Be vigilant, don't let them fool you, be law abiding, be quiet here. Anyone who has the slightest possibility should cross the mountain ridge and those who don't have weapons should also move to Chechnya. We need fighters here.

Then, I've prepared an appeal, because there is a PACE meeting in January, and I hope I'll be able to make them feel ashamed. That can be accomplished. They came here, Tadeush, or what's his name, and before leaving he said that things are changing for the better here in Chechnya and so on and so forth. And he will say it there [at the PACE meeting]. Therefore, take this appeal, you can make some corrections, if you find it would be better. You may shorten some parts, but what's its main idea? It's a reproach to them: "They [the Russians] don't consider you an organization, they mock you. You have your dignity, pride; they've ignored the decision of PACE three times."

There is one more thing about Georgia. There is the introduction of the visa system, the Russians are blackmailing Georgians using Chechens. Send a message to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chechnya. Make them understand that the Russians are behind all that. There must be consent between us, we must be brothers, we must be neighbors, we must live together.

Then, about financing. You're talking about Ferzauli, but you're aware of the situation in Turkey today, that is, I haven't received a single penny from there for five months. Not a single penny comes from there. Since we took that jerk away from there, although those earnings had stopped coming even before he was fired, I've never received even "a round coin" [a single penny]. There's a concrete directive from the [Turkish] prime minister to block all the accounts, to create

problems at the customs and so on and so forth. Even to refuse to receive the wounded.

Therefore, I'm saying it again, that if we had an opportunity to give away large sums of money we would not have problems, but their absence today is the cause of our inability to pay the agreements you concluded, and I know about it. That's what the situation there is like. Nevertheless, they are seeking other ways, a direct way, international, that is Muslim organizations.

And it is necessary to ask Ferzauli: do all his various trips need big money? Or should he be given a fixed bonus or pay? If he went there and talked, so what, he lives there, doesn't he? We live without salaries either. Let him cough up the money, not for us, but for the sake of our Homeland and the people. And then, as soon as things clear up, we'll allot it to him. There will be financing, there'll be everything. I think that everything will be OK soon.

You are asking to send videos, testimonies of the witnesses, genocide—I have been sending full albums to Abumuslimov there. Complete testimonies and so on and so forth, to my mind, five volumes. Faizulla prepares and sends over [to me] I'll try to prepare the video materials regarding this market and what they [the Russians] did there before January.

And finally, about communications. The telephone—even the one that was delivered to me last week—if I make a call or two, the Russians cut it off. That's their only way to find me. I turn it on at 18:00 hours [6 pm local] every day. I turn it on at 18:00 hours, and if you try your best to reach me, I receive your call. But I can't make calls out. I'm blocked. It's difficult to reach me, but if you're patient enough, you can reach me. Therefore, I'll keep it turned on, Rakhman has my number, so try reach me. In that case, I don't demand that once a week you send me long reports regarding business just saying "salaam—marshal" [greeting from Arabic "salaam" and Chechen "marshal"]. What changed or what you found out, or if you've done something, then "we've done this and that."

I told Ella Asayev ... here Ramzan Akhmadov, from Urus-Martan, he called me, saying that one of their guys was arrested in Baku. He knew demolition techniques well, he was their good comrade. I don't know who he was. I called Ella Asayev, to find out what the matter was. I need it because today these guys obey the order and are fighting zealously. If only they fight against the Russians—everything's fine. I need him. Asayev told me that that guy had been arrested. I understood that Aliyev [president of Azerbaijan] promised Putin to

put on a show for the Russians; that the Azeris were also fighting terrorists.

Therefore, you and Ella Asayev, should meet with Abbas Abbasovich.⁴ Tell him that I personally beg him, no matter how much they lick the Russians, they remain Russians. There is no need to flirt with them and hope that sometime they'll be kind. The Russians have always hated non-Russians. Hated Caucasians. Only when they know that there's a silent disagreement between us, only then they'll stop. Extradition of the prisoner won't do them [the Azeris] any good, they are mistaken. If it is necessary on my behalf ... beg, if there is an opportunity, to release him. Say that I need him. I need him in the war. Maybe in peacetime I'd put him in prison, but now in the war I need him to kill these members of the OMON police, these [Russian] contract soldiers. The better he kills them, the better. Tell him so. And you may let Abbas Abbasovich listen to this message of mine.

There, go ahead! Give my greetings to everyone!

Akhmadov Comment No. 5

This Maskhadov audio letter was in response to my report on trips to Holland, Britain, and the United States from January through May 2000 in which I identified deputies and other officials who might speak out in favor of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. My report was sent before the November 2000 elections in the United States, which brought George W. Bush to power. The Clinton administration had developed a rather pro-Russian attitude that frankly disappointed us. So we hoped that there might be some important changes and these hopes were fed by my meeting with many Republican congressmen.

Candidate George W. Bush made two statements during the election campaign that inspired optimism in us: one was a declaration that it was important urgently to end the brutal war in Chechnya, and the second was that under Clinton there had been too many personal contacts like Gore-Chernomyrdin, Clinton-Yeltsin. Bush aides said that building relationships on this basis was poorly considered; they said they were going to build relations based on institutions not personalities.

By contrast, I was in the business of making contacts with personalities. My first meeting with Dr. Brzezinski in January 2000 was very special. I was well aware of his Polish background and how he had used his influence in favor of a democratic post-Soviet Poland. Indeed, I regarded Brzezinski as one of the most important

political leaders in organizing political and moral assistance to the Afghan resistance, an initial step in undermining the Soviet Union. Furthermore, as a graduate student at Rostov University, many of my political science professors were former crypto-dissidents. We read many Western political science works, including Karl Popper's *Open Society and Its Enemies*, and even a number of Brzezinski's books. I was in awe of Brzezinski and found my hands trembling as our first meeting got under way. (I would have felt more at ease confronting President Clinton!) But soon the clarity of Brzezinski's thoughts and his personal warmth toward me overcame my initial nervousness.

Thanks to the Committee for Peace in Chechnya, co-chaired by Dr. Brzezinski, former NATO commander General Alexander Haig and Human Rights lawyer Max Kampelman, and Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, many doors opened for me. I met a lot of Congressmen, Senators, and former political personalities. I was able to explain our country's situation to former secretary of state Madeleine Albright and officials at the State Department. As a result of these meeting, I concluded that the peace-seeking process would not be a simple one and would require a great deal of effort and imagination on our part. My attitude was one of cautious optimism.

About my work, I recall Maskhadov gave me a very good piece of advice. He said, "You are a young diplomat without much experience in this line of work and I understand that you may be a bit emotional. But you should understand one thing: All of these people don't worry a lot about us. Even the human rights organizations that talk so much about Chechnya. You should not expect major results but you should work hard as if the war only just started. You should work hard even though there may be no results at all. You should not give up when you understand there will be no results." This was wise counsel that helped me in my work despite setbacks.

There was one quite interesting moment: I met with people at Human Rights Watch and they made a number of requests to Maskhadov regarding prisoners of war and attacks on civilians who had been working with the Russians. I passed them on to Maskhadov with a request that he release a number of prisoners.

He replied to me, "Everything is different now from the war you knew. During the first war (1994–1996), we waged a classical war with a front line, with a rear, with a unified command, and we had camps for 10–15 prisoners of war. Now everything is changed. There is no front line, we are constantly on the move, there is no ability

to hold prisoners. The only thing is that when one of ours is taken prisoner, then there is a need to exchange.”

The other important point of this cassette was the situation in the Pankisi Gorge of Georgia and General Gelayev. Maskhadov was certain that the Russian special services would use his presence as an excuse for destabilizing Georgia. Then it would be very easy to blame the Chechen refugees in Georgia for the result and would make it more difficult for the refugees to remain there. So he gave specific instructions to Zakayev, ambassador-at-large in Europe, and to myself to meet with Georgian officials and Chechen commanders, urging them to observe all Georgian laws and leave at the first opportunity. Still, this situation dragged on for two years.

The other point concerned the role of the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The United Nations sent fact-finding committees from time to time, but the Parliamentary Assembly wanted to find a political solution to the war. It was clear that the Russians would show representatives of the Assembly what amounted to “Potemkin villages” in Chechnya. And the Russian press, much more controlled than the media during the first war, continually put a positive slant on events giving the impression that Moscow was succeeding in getting the situation under control.

In Maskhadov’s opinion, if Putin knew what was really going on he would have stopped the conflict. He considered it important to undertake initiatives timed to the reconvening of the Assembly in January 2001. Unfortunately, the Assembly had few weapons to use against the Russians; the most was to deprive the Russians of a vote in Assembly’s work. When European representatives did visit Chechnya, the Russians would reduce the killing. Once the representatives went away, the Russians considered they had fulfilled their obligations to the Assembly and felt free to carry on with heavy bombardments again. It was a very cynical policy.

Notwithstanding, Maskhadov understood that the Assembly was the only international organization that was doing anything. The Chechen problem had very few forums and to lose the Assembly would have been a loss. I could not help but see the limitations of the Assembly’s dealings with the Russians and felt it was not really going to be of much help. Because of this I had some running disagreements with Maskhadov.

I left the United States for Europe shortly before the US presidential election of November 2000.

Election of George W. Bush

Audio letter of December 18, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas, and your comrades! Your letters have reached me. I understand everything that you stated in them. If the OSCE were located here, it would have been much easier. It is necessary to make utmost efforts to find a possibility to get them here. If the OSCE is here, then there's an opportunity for a journalist to come and make public the brutality that the Russians engage in, and they think that nobody knows about it, but this also becomes known. This is the only reason, and there's no other, why they don't want the OSCE's presence here.

Therefore, if making utmost efforts, we managed to draw OSCE here, we would have benefited a great deal from it. It doesn't make any difference where they settle, in the city in Grozny or in Znamenskaya. The main thing is that they have an opportunity to move around the territory of Chechnya. Frankly speaking, there's a danger that the Russians can carry out some provocation against them by finding some fool from our ranks. For us, it would be a great responsibility, but if they were present here, the Russians wouldn't have an opportunity to behave in such a dirty manner as they are doing it now.

Today they behave in a very disgusting manner. What they've done to these poor people words fail to describe. Words fail. Here are some examples: in the city of Grozny they launched a pogrom, using as the reason the killing of two members of their riot police. There are even suspicions that they themselves provoke such incidents. I'm not

saying that members of their riot squad weren't killed; all of them should have been killed. But none of our groups has taken responsibility for killing these two riot police, and usually ten groups will claim responsibility.

So, when a column was passing in the region of Mesker-Yurt, our guys attacked it. They set fire to three armored personal carriers and killed 14 soldiers, while on our side one guy was killed and two were wounded. There was a two-hour battle. It was two or three days ago, around December 13. What did the Russians do? Next day, on the circular road to Mesker-Yurt they capture everyone they can lay hands on, including children, around 20 people altogether, throw them into armored personal carriers, and on the road leading to Avtury they kill 8 people. Corpses were found there the next day. Why is this being done? Being impotent to repel the attack, they take out all their rage on peaceful people: "You killed our ten people, and we also killed ten of yours!"

What happened in Alkhan-Yurt just the next day after the terrorist acts in Pyatigorsk, in my opinion, was revenge in Pyatigorsk. "You did it in Pyatigorsk, and we'll do it to you here." Or, the day before, our guys shot four Russian soldiers in Urus-Martan in revenge for them. What do the Russians do? They load a car, a Moskvich,¹ with TNT and take it to the mosque that people are leaving after Friday prayers, and leave it in the place where people had gathered. People got suspicious; they reported it to the Russian commandant's office. Those guys pretended they sent sappers, who kind of checked and didn't find anything.

But you know how inquisitive our people are, so after leaving the mosque people headed for the car, and at that moment it blew up. At that moment it blew up. It was done on purpose. People were killed including 17 or 18 children, many were injured, arms and legs were torn off. All hell broke loose there; 100 percent it was done by the Russians! And as always, Yastrezhembsky [Kremlin spokesman] says, "There's Barayev, there's Gelayev, peaceful people get killed." That's the way it is.

In Mesker-Yurt, the head of administration and his deputy were shot at three o'clock in the morning. Again none of our groups took responsibility for it. It's exceptional if it's done by us. There would be trials with witnesses, and only after all this procedure a Chechen would dare raise his hand against another Chechen. Even if you order them, they won't do it. The *djamaats* could do such a thing, but they have a clear notion that it's a big sin to kill a Muslim who's not guilty.

And those who lack faith, it's the mentality of a Chechen, vendetta [Fear of vendetta prevents people from impulsive murder]. All this is done by the Russians.

After the shooting of the head of the administration and his deputy, their FSB officers contacted our commanders and asked: "Well, if for example, there was an explosion or someone was shot, and that wasn't your work, then let us know." And our guys asked them: "Why do you want to know whether it was done by us or not?" They say that they had suspicions that it might be the work of the GRU [military intelligence] units. There's a special battalion—1st battalion of the 22nd brigade formed of Chechens and Russians—60 percent Chechens and 40 percent Russians. This unit is involved in this: provoking Chechens, the police, Chechen fighters, and even these very FSB officers.

Similarly a UAZik² with explosives is driven to the MVD building where the [pro-Moscow] Chechen police is stationed in Oktyabrsky district of Grozny and blown up. Eighteen Chechen policemen were killed. There's a market nearby, absolutely innocent local women and children were also killed. They have started doing such things literally every day lately.

So, second, you can state with absolute confidence and responsibility, that we have efficient control, interaction, discipline that is getting better each day. Day by day activity increases, groups become bigger. Those who were wounded or were on vacation arrive from Nazran, from Sleptovskaya, and join their groups. Grozny is full of such groups. Teenagers stand near these soldiers. It's as if people have woken up, as if they've never seen these Russians before at all, as if they had been angels before, they've now recognized the real face of Russian chauvinism, nationalism, Satanism, Russicism, as Dzhokhar [assassinated Chechen president] used to say.

Now they don't curse us, don't disgrace our fathers and mothers in any villages, anywhere at all. For them everything that is Russian is barbarism. Everyone who serves Russia, who are led by the nose by Russia, are considered scum. They curse this Kadyrov. The people are somehow very excited, just strike a match and there will be an explosion. So, that's what the situation is like. Russia is in a desperate situation. Desperate. To my mind, they are in a 100 percent deadend.

Do your best, at any cost, mainly work with PACE, OSCE. We have to put pressure on the Russians through these two bodies. To my mind, whatever you undertake, there's a limit to what you can do. Putin is young and thinks all this is simple: the petrodollars, the

unaccounted-for money, authority among the people, he puts on a show and people like it. But it is difficult to start a serious confrontation against the West, America, and the international community. To live behind closed doors as in the Soviet times is difficult. As soon as the international community bars an easy way out for him, or organizes a drop in fuel prices or imposes sanctions, then all these miners and teachers will start a sit-in on the railway tracks.

But it's too early for him to get it. He hasn't understood it yet. Everything seems simple to him. So he went to Cuba, and he said he couldn't care less about the Americans—that's it! Ordinary Russians who have been accustomed to living like this for almost 100 years, like it. And there's nothing else in it.

But I still harbor certain hopes: Bush Jr. was elected with difficulties. But still it seems to me that even a fool in America could understand the Russians wanted to push for Gore at any cost. In all probability, the preference was for Clinton, what he was doing, the politics that he conducted. Maybe over there it's not appropriate to talk about former presidents. But it'll be clear that he wasn't doing the right thing, especially with Russia. In the long run, everything is going back to the old Russia. There's nostalgia for the past.

I really was in favor of the newly elected president [Maskhadov is heard chuckling on tape]. It was good news that George Bush, Jr. was elected president, although I said on that earlier cassette that "they are who they are, and we are who we are." We should never hope that they are on our side—it's out of the question! Only if we are in a situation they are in favor of, then maybe. We hope that we'll get in such a situation.

Then, it's necessary to make a second contact fast with those people you met with, with his [Bush's] supporters directly. Directly. So what can we rely on, hope for? What kind of pressure will they put on Russia? It would be very good for us to find out their position. That would be very good for us.

Then, about PACE. Here's Sergei Adamovich Kovalev, I'm working with him a little. Earlier, before that meeting, I sent him a cassette that I recorded with the aim of shaming him a bit. If you don't understand the situation in Chechnya, how would a farmer in Tambov province understand it? And this time I also sent him a videocassette that shows what these Russians are up to here, even towards their soldiers' mothers.³ Their current forms and methods of warfare with detailed explanations. Because whoever makes a speech there, his words carry weight.

Now we shouldn't get stuck at PACE saying that we don't get attention, we were put aside, as I said before, as if the war started today. Make statements, appeals, if you want to send someone there, send anyone you like.

Then about the International Committee of the Red Cross. The work you spoke about has almost been done. All these humanitarian, international organizations, free access, escort, assistance, does not hamper their work—I've passed on all these orders. Also, work regarding it has been done with mass media. Therefore, you can tell them calmly—it's been done here. And our "madmen" who were able to threaten them, they don't exist anymore. But the enemy can provoke anything. It's important that later on we would be able to prove that it was not done by us. Not us.

Then, about the situation in Georgia. I don't know how you get there, on what occasion, but you must go there by all means and you must be there. Knock yourself out to meet with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and talk to them. I told you to send a statement. What they are trying to make there is a terrible mess, and the Russians are behind all this. The Russians are behind it. At any cost, just using levers of the instruments of pressure on Georgia, its influence on the territory of Georgia, to prevent the penetration of everything from the West there, especially the NATO forces, military bases of the Western countries. To leave even a part of the Russian bases on the territory of Georgia. That is all that is behind it. Because it's still not quiet here in Chechnya, and there's Georgia close by, and what's more, it'll be under close surveillance by the West. It is a very disadvantageous situation for the Russians.

Now you're saying that, we shouldn't tell anything to Gelayev.⁴ He, so to speak, says he respects the chain of command. But what he has done, he's done! What else worse than that can he do? That's it, he's fulfilled his mission! He gave away Grozny. He turned 600–800 of our most desperate fighters into corpses in the village of Saadi-Kotar.

Guilty or not guilty, he is guilty, and no one else! I'm not talking trifles like "one was killed, two wounded," I'm not telling you this. A thousand of the best fighters! It was a moral loss for our fighters, it's impossible to say to what degree it was psychological, moral pressure ... and Saadi-Kotar. And he's the only one who is to blame. That is unforgivable! It's really a war crime!

Because of these groups that he transferred to Georgia, the Russians definitely have a pretext they have been looking for. The fact that they

[the groups] got over there, then, the fact that it became possible to withdraw them from here, Chechnya, completely exposed the south-eastern front. Due to this, it became possible to transfer Shamanov's army from there [from the south-western sector] to Nojay-Yurt. And now the Russians say there that people are kidnapped in Georgia and they lay all the blame on us.

Therefore, Gelayev should be told: "What you did is a big disgrace regardless of whether you follow the chain of command, and regardless who you are. And it isn't a matter of your liking the president or not! The thing is that you allowed yourself to be led by Russia. You gave them a pretext to provoke this. You withdrew combat-ready guys from there, you exposed the whole front! You gave the Russian army an opportunity to concentrate on one patch. Now our guys are being killed there!"

He prepared everything for further provocations and shady enterprises in Georgia, the entire data base. And what's worse—I don't know into whose hands the weapons that were bought, readied, and who has them now. No one who ever saw the weapons. Where did he get them, *Strely* [Russian-type Stinger missiles], rocket-propelled grenades?

Once again, I'm telling you, that Gelayev didn't get to Georgia through battles, nor did he go there after consulting anyone. I've never seen him from the very beginning of this war. I never saw him even before coming to Grozny, even before taking up a defensive position. And I didn't see him at the time when Shamanov⁵ went through Achkhoy-Martan without any resistance. I thought that he had deserted somewhere, and even thought about making Doku Umarov⁶ the commander if Gelayev wasn't there.

Today we have more than enough fighters ... ! There are ten times more people than before [he means the first war of 1994–1996] who wish to fight. All the commanders have been completely changed. Today those who chop up these Russians, not giving them a chance to hide, are Chechen men. They have their own discipline, their own understanding. They obey our operative authorities, have strictly centralized financing. Every week they make reports.

For example, this evening I'm recording this cassette for you, every night I record these cassettes for every commander until six in the morning, then get ready for Ramadan, say a Muslim prayer and go to bed. If I tell you about this system of leadership after this war, your hair will really stand on end. But then, I have excellent interaction with everyone, I'm in the know of the current situation, conditions, and all that. Everything's normal!

There, if you have an opportunity, go to Georgia immediately, go to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and say that you had a talk with the president. Tell them, "Let's be together against this barbaric state. We have to live side by side!"

Then meet with the commanders who are there, warn them: "Be on alert, guys, don't violate the local laws, don't make us a problem here. Be cautious. The president worries about it." It's necessary to meet, discuss, and protect these guys, and if it's possible, it's necessary to transfer everyone there back to Chechnya. This is our task and don't go begging Gelayev on your knees. Try to coordinate actions in that country at any cost, reproving anyone who went astray, and telling anyone who's not wanted there, "it would be good if you were home now."

Spread, spread any small bit of information that reaches you. Our correspondents' offices should be releasing information that we exist, that we fight. So, if you can't phone me—but Khan Mokhammad does call me regularly and that surprises me—tell him and he'll call me if there is something urgent. I'm very pleased with this letter I got from you and in the future I want any concrete reaction that develops there, and other things.

If such pieces of news arrive, then I hope to God, it'll all end well!

Akhmadov Comment No. 6

In the middle of Cassette No.6, Maskhadov shows that he followed the 2000 electoral campaign in the United States quite closely and was aware of the controversial nature of Bush's election that was finally decided by the US Supreme Court on December 9, 2000. He plainly welcomed George W. Bush's election and asked me to find out what we might hope for from the new administration.

He reflected some widespread illusions about the future of American policy that I may have stimulated by my previous visits to the United States and the positive meetings with supporters of the new president. I got the impression before the election that there would be significant changes in US policy with regard to Russia. We were hoping for tough actions by the United States: denunciations of Russian human rights abuses followed by economic sanctions.

However, within six months, these hopes began to fade. Particularly troublesome to us was Bush's meeting with Putin at Brdo, Slovenia, on June 16, 2001. On that occasion Bush declared he had looked into the Russian leader's eyes and got a sense of his soul. We found that statement both naïve and alarming.

Turning to the home front, it was clear why Maskhadov wanted to talk about the OSCE and the ICRC. This second war with Russia had become extremely closed to the outside world because of the restrictions the Kremlin placed on coverage. However, a number of Western and Russian journalists, frustrated by the information blockade, succeeded in penetrating that wall and reported on events the Russians wanted to cover up. They did so under the threat of arrest, expulsion, and even death. I would like to pay tribute to those daring reporters but especially to those who faced particular difficulties or died in the search for truth.

One of the most troubling deaths was that of Italian journalist Antonio Russo whose body was found in Georgia on October 16, 2000. He had illegally entered Chechnya several times to interview Maskhadov and several field commanders. I did not encounter him personally. He had planned to air video footage showing that the Russians were using weapons prohibited by international conventions. Rumors swirled around that he might be working for a foreign intelligence service and was killed by the Russian secret service. Maskhadov indicated that in one of his letters.

Another extremely brave correspondent was Anna Politkovskaya who wrote detailed reports of the abuses committed by the Russians over a period of years. She was cautioned numerous times by Russian officials to go easy, but disregarded these warnings. She was assassinated in contract-style killing in Moscow as she entered the elevator of her apartment on October 7, 2006, after going out shopping. Her killer was never apprehended.

Anne Nivat, a French reporter who spoke fluent Russian, managed to enter Chechnya disguised as a Chechen woman. She had developed many friends in the area and was able to observe many unusual events. She was at the little hospital in Alkhan Kala on January 30, 2000 when a local surgeon saved the life of Shamil Basayev, who stepped on a mine in the evacuation of Grozny, by amputating his right foot. Unlike the others, she survived and published a book *Chienne de Guerre (Bitch of a War)* in 2001.

Another who survived was Andrei Babitsky of Radio Liberty who interviewed Shamil Basayev in the mountains of Chechnya in 2005. Basayev claimed the Russians were conducting a policy of genocide against the Chechens and he was prepared to counter this with terrorism against Russians. The interview was aired by ABC Nightline program on July 29, 2005. The Russian Foreign Ministry condemned the broadcast, which it asserted ran counter to US-Russian cooperation

against international terrorism. In retaliation, the Ministry withdrew the accreditation of ABC journalists in Moscow. So much for Russia's respect for the truth!

Maskhadov believed there would be a more sustained opportunity to counter the information blockade if the OSCE was present on Chechen territory. There had been a decision at the Istanbul summit November 18–19, 1999, that Russia should allow the OSCE to be present. But, as it turned out, the Russian bureaucracy threw up one obstacle after another right up to the summer of 2001. Finally, the Russians allowed a mission and three representatives of the OSCE to travel to Znamenskoe in the northern territory of Chechnya in June 2001. They were strictly controlled by the military and civilian authorities and were unable to travel freely.

Furthermore, on December 1, 2002, the OSCE announced that the mandate for this mission would expire at the end of 2002. By March 2003, this mission was completely removed. During the period of OSCE presence, Maskhadov had hoped that it would open at least a small window through which human rights organizations could send out regular reports on rights developments for the outside world.

I received this tape three weeks after sending my last report and during that time I had a chance to meet with representatives of some human right groups in Europe. Red Cross representatives told me that Russian officials had said they were willing for the ICRC to send representatives but they would not be able to guarantee their safety. That was a typical Russian warning intended to scare outsiders away while not exactly closing the door to them. Therefore, they decided to approach our side. I wrote to Maskhadov urging that we take appropriate measures to welcome them to Chechnya. In this tape, Maskhadov explained what steps had been taken.

Turning to Gelayev and Georgia, it became increasingly clear that Maskhadov considered the Chechen commander heavily influenced by the Russians. He emphasized once again that he was worried that their presence in Georgia could be used by the Russians to mount provocations against the Tbilisi government. He asked me and Vice Premier Zakayev, who was in Georgia, to take whatever appropriate measures we could to defuse this situation.

Russia Goes Authoritarian

Audio letter of December 24, 2000

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you Ilyas! This conversation is for you. The letters you sent reached me, I understood everything you were talking about. Starting this conversation, I'd like to give an account of the real situation and the way things are here. What I'm telling you now is a real picture of what is happening, so that you can draw conclusions and speak about it with journalists and information agencies.

The Russians, our enemies, are holding this army here; they say that they have practically occupied the whole territory, and they are everywhere, but today this army has gotten out of control. They can't establish order among themselves, even if we stopped all activities. Especially these contract soldiers. They are the usual criminals. First, the command authorities promised them the moon and when they understood that they wouldn't be given the money that had been promised, they had to go on hunger strike in order to get what they were authorized to get.

Second, the generals, also understood that they failed to achieve any result. They don't know how to control this army, the more so when our subunits, our fighters, our groups are literally dispersed over the whole territory. The Russians can't understand our actions. They can't find us in the woods, they can't find us in the villages, and at the same time we're present everywhere and strike blows everywhere. They are altogether confused. So today, just as an excuse for Moscow, they keep the troops and there are such material costs, they have come up

with the operation under the code name “Falling Leaves” in southeast Chechnya. Vedensky region, Tsentoroy, Dargo, Belgatoy, Benoy, then Zandak, Aleroy, Gansolchu.

It doesn't do absolutely any damage to our soldiers, there hasn't been a single incident in which even two of our soldiers were killed. But they honestly move these columns back and forth, start moving, block villages, block woodlands, simulate clean-up operations. Knowing 100 percent that it's all useless, it's done to report to Moscow, that such an operation is underway.

Our groups, our fighters strike hard blows. In the Grozny, columns of OMON police are subjected to attacks practically every day. In the central market in Grozny two of their officers were thrown to the ground again and shot point blank from pistols. The Russian servicemen are killed wherever they are found. Also in Urus-Martan, in Shali, in Kurchaloyevsky region, wherever they are found, they are struck and destroyed.

What do the Russians do next? They have carried out a series of explosions in populated areas. There's one special example, it's Alkhan-Yurt. There they brought a UAZik or a Moskvich to a mosque in the downtown area, where people usually gather. It made the people who were there suspicious. They called the commandant's office about it. The sappers came, looked, and said there's nothing there, everything is clear of mines. But our people are very curious, they ran over to the car, and at that moment there was an explosion. The Russians themselves blew up the car! Twenty people were killed, twenty had their arms torn off, legs—a real nightmare. And the Russians shout from housetops that the militants are carrying out terrorist acts against civilian population.

According to our information, there's a battalion, 1st battalion of the 22nd GRU brigade. If you remember, before that war [1994–1996] when there was an “oppositional war” there were rumors that in Volgogradskaya oblast the Russians trained Chechens from the opposition to fight against us. In that battalion, the officers themselves say that there are around 70 percent Chechens and 30 percent of Russians, like a “Sonderkommando” in World War II who dressed up as Germans and slaughtered whole villages. These do just the same.

They even kill their own guys, kill their own Russians, set off these explosions for us. Set off explosions near the location of the [pro-Moscow] Chechen police station, near the Ministry of Internal Affairs as in Oktyabrsky district—17 policemen were killed! That explosion

wasn't set off by our guys, they did it themselves! Then, they kill the heads of the pro-Moscow administration. I'm not saying that our guys don't kill, but the Russians also provoke. And recently, in the past two or three weeks they keep saying that many Chechen policemen were killed, the head of the administration was killed there. This is how they blow these rumors out of proportion. What is it done for? That's stirring it up. And nothing else.

Third, what do the Russians do? It seems to be Kadyrov's or Kvashnin's¹ idea: in every settlement they will station garrisons. The garrisons will impose order and take over the control of the villages, allegedly for the protection and safety of the heads of administration. They did just that. But the plan is one to surround the heads of the villages with relatives and some voluntary military forces in order to say, here are the Chechen militants and here are Chechen voluntary military forces.

Then, accordingly, as I say, this "Sonderkommando" will kill the members of voluntary military forces, they will kill two or three, saying that they had been killed by [Chechen] militants, they will set them against each other, that is split every village into two parts. Furthermore, there's a commandant's office in every village and a small military subunit just in case, so that these members of voluntary military forces and the heads of administration are confident that help will be rendered to them.

The other day Akhmad Kadyrov makes a statement and says: "I don't want a war, I speak about peace, and Maskhadov wants a war, he calls for fighting, therefore, those who want to be behind Maskhadov, stand behind him. And those who want to stand behind me, stand behind me." Kvashnin, on the other hand, stresses the necessity to station garrisons in populated areas. They have one more thing to do—to cause a clash, bring us to a civil war. But with God's help, they won't succeed!

As to Malik Saidullayev, the Russians have announced again, that he'd be at the head of the government, Kadyrov would remain there. As I understand it, the Russians have come to the conclusion that Kadyrov should be dismissed. Even dogs spit at him after he goes by. He's a total jerk, a nobody, he can't speak nor say anything, and when he speaks he says things that common people don't find to their liking. He's a goner.

In any case it was clear that in the very beginning of the war, even a year before the war began, that the Benoy clan played its card. This Rizvan Lorsanov, Musa Dokhshukayev, Nuzhden Daayev,

Abdurashid Zakayev, the president of the National Bank, Kadyrov, Saidullayev—all of them are Benoy people.² Benoy's people must come to power at any cost, this is a big clan. That was true in Dudayev's time; the Benoyes openly said that Dudayev should be killed and the power should be passed on to the Benoyes. The Khanbievs opposed the idea and got nothing out of it. And this time the same card is being played.

They played the card with Gelayev very professionally. You say you went to him and spoke with him and he said that he was with the president, he said that he kept to the order and that he'd come back. But Ilyas, if you believe what I'm saying, then for me both Basayev and our Khattab, any guy of ours who shoots a weapon in the direction of the Russians, even if he's a *krovnik*³ who killed my father, I consider him our guy. And I really want people to shoot more in the direction of the Russians. You know. Every fighter, even these Akhmadovs, there's no difference—we'll work it out ourselves.

Today a guerrilla war has begun, a large scale guerrilla war. In every populated area there are small maneuverable raiding parties that function independently. And Grozny is full of these groups. There aren't as before, there's no Basayev front. Everyone hits as he can. And everything that's there, starting with villages, the mobile raiding parties are linked into the strategic control, the General Headquarters and the commander in chief. I still managed to entice them by making them write daily reports, submitting operations reports. Therefore, today we should call things by their real names.

Therefore, don't meet with Gelayev, any more, don't get close to him. You may say something like this: President Maskhadov issued an order by which he ousted him from the position of the commander of the western front, deprived him of the rank of divisional general and deprived him of the right to defend Motherland. Tell Asayev the same. What was before the war and what is today are different things.

Then, the situation in Georgia causes special anxiety. I told Akhmed Zakayev to get back there from Turkey as soon as possible. What I told you boiled down to this: I didn't need your contact with Gelayev, I needed your contact with the president of Georgia, Shevarnadze, with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the leaders of their security, defense, and law enforcement agencies and with ordinary fighters who turned out to be there without knowing for what purpose.

You should make one or two statements to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Make every effort to contact them. Explain to them that the Russians are doing to you what they did to us so they will assert that

there is banditry and crime, and Chechens and their bases. As the Russians say there are terrorist bases and a firing range in Serzhen-Yurt that functions on Bin Laden's money. Now they are starting the same thing in Georgia. That is their task to cause a clash between us and the Georgians, to create a second hotbed of tension, so that we fight on two fronts.

I'm telling you about possible events in Georgia, what might happen there. What's necessary to do there? To establish a contact with the government, establish a contact with the leaders of their security, defense and law enforcement agencies. I told Akhmed [Zakayev] that it was necessary to gather our fighters who are there as often as possible and explain to them: look, guys, you were deceived, you're being deceived, it's no good what Gelayev is doing, he deceived you and brought you here. He did what the Russians wanted, you shouldn't feel awkward in the least, he's openly exposed himself. Here's the decree issued by the president, like it or not. He isn't as sacred as you talk about him. This is how it should be explained to these guys.

They should be told that now we must keep the established order as never before; we must respect Georgian laws; we must not make any problems. Now the Russians will specially send their groups for kidnapping people and then blame it on us. This how they should be put in order and organized. As to sabre-rattling: even if the Georgians open fire, don't respond to it in any event. Even if they arrest someone, it's necessary to appeal to President Shevarnadze or someone else, we'll find a way to release him. Maybe even agree with them, the Georgian government, if, for example, they need something very much, like show the world that it's putting things in order there, we can enter into cooperation with them in it. This is what should be done by any efforts in Georgia.

About the election of President Bush: It is time to contact his administration openly, and from the very first days find out what policies they will carry out in relation to Russia and the war in Chechnya. It's very important for us. It would be advantageous for us if they adopted a hard-line position in regard to Russia. I don't know: why are they sleeping, is it possible that they don't see that Russia is reverting to its past?

There is an open collusion with the communists. Communists are the majority in Duma and the Kremlin administration is cooperating with these communists. Putin has just told them: "Just be quiet, I'll return all communist things to you without much fuss." And therefore all of them vote for him. Whatever they want, they get. But all the

governors, all the presidents of the constituent republics like Aushev – Putin has gagged them all. Whatever he says is passed. His habits, his methods, his behavior. He's an ordinary lieutenant colonel of special services, who isn't fastidious about anything, capable of any dirty trick, any insidiousness.

Americans can't but notice it. They made lots of efforts to destroy the Soviet Union, to destroy that system, and now this lieutenant colonel is bringing it back. Therefore it's necessary to demand from them, make hints that: "If you don't take more drastic measures and if you don't let the Russian people feel a little hungry and don't set them against the leadership of Russia, it'll be impossible to stop them. You won't bring yourselves to fight with them either, you don't have anti-defense missiles and so on, and their rockets can reach you, your people aren't ready for this war." But we should make them understand the necessity to apply severe economic sanctions against Russia. Only this can force Russia to change its politics of going back to its totalitarian past.

Today there is no heating in Russia, something unfreezes somewhere, teachers are on strike somewhere, former responders at Chernobyl are on strike there. Putin behaves very confidently now; he goes everywhere, to China, to India, to France, to England. He promises them the moon. "I will give you fuel, gas, don't worry." Tomorrow he will say, "I didn't say that." He blackmails these Central Asian republics.

There's real starvation, here, especially in the refugee camps. They say that a PACE delegation arrived there. The refugees that stay there sell the "gumanitarka"⁴ [humanitarian aid] they are given. Then buy some simple food in order to stretch it out for a week at least. Then there is, tuberculosis, hepatitis; people with these diseases are sent away in bunches. That's true, I don't exaggerate. I'm very sorry for these people, but I can do absolutely nothing for them.

Next, Umar⁵ called me about a meeting of our parliamentary group and the Duma deputy group. I also thought about it, having in mind the experience of the last war, the negotiation process. When pressure is put on the Russians, pressure before a certain forum, they start making advances, it's not excluded this time as well. As before, there was Krashennnikov's committee⁶ and so on, they did organized meetings with the representatives of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

I also thought, what's to be done? I don't exclude even this possibility. But when you consider the other side of the coin, that is,

the Russians try to take advantage of this meeting and we started a dialogue with them. They'll only say one thing and nothing else. On the other hand, what can we oppose to it, and what can we gain from it? And when you begin to count the pluses, it turns out that we have more pluses.

What's the first plus? It was like this, Sergei Adamovich Kovalev was the first to make contact through Nemtsov, that is, the democratic wing. They came up with a proposition that we should meet and talk. And the more so, if Sergei Kovalev is among them, I thought, he doesn't mince his words in PACE, he always speaks there and if Tadeush or someone else comes here, they see that it's a Russian who speaks, it is kind of more trustworthy.

I prepared this deputy group [from the Chechen parliament]. Got them well prepared, sent my representative there, I gave them instructions that drove them to tears, so that they speak there [at PACE] a little. This chaos, this terrible mess, this uncontrolled situation, these Russian generals, these extortionists, these crimes. That is, if we stuff them [the deputies] a little with it, in the hope that there'll be some use of it, if Sergey Adamovich Kovalev arrives at PACE, speaks there and speaks about us. Since he'll be there, I explained to the deputies group what they should tell him. This is one opportunity when we can sober up the PACE delegates a little, as they too only listen to television and nothing else.

And in contrast to what you say that the Russians will make some propaganda out of the joint meeting, namely, that a negotiation process has begun. In this respect you should say everywhere: "Excuse me, these are those people—Sergei Kovalev, a human rights activist, and Nemtsov—who kept saying all the time that there was no need to fight at all."

Therefore, in PACE they should understand perfectly well that there are "hawks" who don't want peace and they should be pressured, Nemtsov shouldn't be pressured, nor Sergei Adamovich Kovalev. This is how we can say it in response. It's not a government delegation, not the beginning of a peace settlement, not the beginning of the peace process, it's just a contact, an opinion.

The representatives whom I sent there are supposed to come back tomorrow or the day. They'll report to me about what happened. I'll tell you personally afterwards. To my mind, there are no grounds for you to be especially worried about it. Addressing journalists, explain it like this: "This wing of Kovalev and others ... we've always been in agreement with them, everything's clear with them, they don't want

to fight—and those others [Putin and his team] are barbarians, they listen neither to their own people nor to our people, and they continue the war. It's very difficult with them.”

About the media. I don't know why Yastrezhembsky [Kremlin spokesman] works so professionally there, and we ... [unfinished thought] ... everything that Yastrezhembsky says is a lie. There's no way for us to even call there and say that this one was killed, that one was shot at. We don't have such a possibility. My phone ... the Russians have already completely shut down my six phones, I make several phone calls—they block it.

Now it is possible to reach me; reach me but with great difficulties, they say; but it is possible to reach me, therefore, you must call, don't be lazy, try one time, two, three, ten times—contact me two or three times a week at least. If there isn't a connection, I'm telling you, there's information in the Internet, you do listen to their mass media.

We are losing the information war. And you see what Udugov is busy with. Udugov could improve our information work, but he's working for the Russians. Everything that he does, he does against us—openly, with enmity. Shamil may trust or not trust him, but I've finally understood—these people are working for the enemy. They feel hostility toward our people and our state, otherwise it would be impossible to do what they do. Recently during my conversation with Shamil, I asked him:

“Why do you allow Udugov to speak about what happened, why do you allow him to contradict the state policies, why is this majlis, shura, Abdul—Vakhab, what are you cooking up? Did you did you make an agreement with him?”

He answered, “Oh, it was you who did it.”

“What did I do?”

“You said that we were in opposition, and that Kavkaz Center wasn't authorized to speak on behalf of the government.”

“And what else should I say when a meeting is to be held at PACE tomorrow at nine in the morning. They adopted the resolution that we wanted regarding depriving the Russian delegation of the right to vote. And while I was in happy spirits and exchanged calls with Ilyas, at 17:00 hours, you place the shooting of the members of the OMON police squad, their severed heads on Kavkaz Center.⁷ How could you do this without consulting each other?”

And they called me and asked whether that was true or not, and I said that Udugov wasn't authorized to say it. That man doesn't work for me, and Kavkaz Center is not a government site. He is in opposition to me. What else could I say? What was I supposed to say, that he's working in my government, he's with me, and he made that announcement according to my instructions?

Such things of course will happen but we at most shouldn't be too naive. In what respect? Will international politics change overnight and take our side and the international community stop the Russians, give us freedom? It's absolutely out of the question. We can only win by the strength of arms, by combat operations, and having a system of single control. And again, urging the Russian diplomatically and politically.

In the last war many criticized us, saying it wasn't worthwhile carrying on talks with the Russians. In my view, talk and fight, talk and fight, talk and fight, that was a victory. We won a military and diplomatic victory in the last war, whatever anyone says! The Russians were losing in the military situation, and in the political sphere and in the diplomatic in the course of the negotiations.

Go ahead! May God help us! May God welcome our deeds! Do your best there, and we'll be working hard here.

Akhmadov Comment No. 7

In this letter (which amounted to nearly 20 pages in its original, unedited version), Maskhadov presented a detailed briefing on the deteriorating state of the Russian army and other critical issues, which would be of great help to me in the weeks ahead. But one of the most important elements was a directive, again, to follow up on contacts with the new Bush administration that officially won the US elections on December 9, 2000.

Maskhadov urged on me an aggressive stance vis-à-vis the Americans, pointing out that strong measures should be taken at this point against the Russians. The United States, he said, was not prepared to fight a war against Russia but had in the past sought by numerous means to undermine the Communist regime. He characterized Vladimir Putin as an ordinary KGB lieutenant colonel who was taking Russia back to its totalitarian past. He had no illusions of a "Grand Bargain," which could bring democracy to Russia. Now

was the time, Maskhadov said, to impose severe economic sanctions against the Kremlin.

I believed that the American leaders at this point looked on Russia with cautious optimism, but I doubted that they were willing to consider imposing severe sanctions. I had left the United States before the election and began thinking how best to find my way back to the United States. I was eventually able to stimulate another invitation from the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya.

Much of this report related to the Russians forces suffering from lack of communications between units and logistic support. This is typical of an army without clear assignment or motivation. Maskhadov reports on the consequent looting and marauding in villages by the Russians who had occupied the whole territory of Chechnya. This has included the theft of oil.

He pointed out that of this date, December 24, 2000, the Russians had come to realize that a military solution was impossible in Chechnya, had begun the process of "Chechenization," which, in effect, was an effort to turn a part of the Chechen population against the independence-seeking forces. This new campaign began with the effort to create pro-Russian militias in the countryside, which would come to a climax around 2006 with the formation of the Army of Kadyrov. The Russians would cynically offer amnesty to those Chechens who had been accused of violations against the Russian Constitution in order to encourage collaboration.

The president also took into account the Chechen collaborationists in Moscow whom the Russians could see as useful in a future period, men like Beslan Gantemirov, former mayor of Grozny. Among them appeared a new personality, a young businessman Malik Saidullaev, who could be seen as a replacement for Kadyrov at the head of a pro-Russian Chechen government. Maskhadov described the difficulties that the Russians were having to form a coalition and speculated whom the Russians might impose on Chechnya in a pro-Russian administration.

He also went into his own problems of the internal opposition with leaders like Basayev and Udugov. Why couldn't Maskhadov, who won election as president in January 27, 1997, by a majority of 59.3 percent of the vote, suppress the radicals? There were a number of different factors.

Chechnya in 1997 was quite different from Chechnya in 1991 when independence from Russia was declared. President Dudayev was a charismatic figure who breathed energy and romanticism into the

new era. After the first war with the Russians (1994–1996), Chechnya emerged in a state of exhaustion. Our people were tired of fighting, depressed by the killing, longing for stability and chance to rebuild their lives. The radical commanders survived the war with weapons and private armies and resisted any calls to lay down their weapons. They sensed the war had given them new powers to be used in any way that advanced their fortunes.

Furthermore, Chechnya's institutions were weak, and no country in the outside world came to our material or moral aid. The West regarded Chechnya to be essentially a Russian problem to be resolved by the Kremlin. Although Russian President Yeltsin had promised large sums for reconstruction, only a trickle flowed in. Maskhadov's inability to oversee a vigorous reconstruction effort diminished his authority. Russia's political and military leaders considered the 1992 constitution adopted under Dudayev to be illegitimate because it did not subordinate Chechnya to the Russian Federation. They viewed Maskhadov's election in 1997 as illegitimate, too, despite the fact that the OSCE pronounced the balloting "free and fair." Maskhadov feared that if he used the limited force at his disposal against his opponents, the result would be an open civil war. Since we were at war again with the Russians in the year 2000, he constantly was trying to unite the opposition through patriotism and political concessions.

He touched again on the situation of Gelayev in Georgia and how this might affect adversely the thousands of Chechen refugees in Georgia. He included instructions to me and to Zakayev to try to resolve the Gelayev issue. He especially sought to get me to approach the leadership of Georgia. In fact, he scolded me for paying attention to Gelayev and urged me to contact President Eduard Shevardnadze or the Georgian Foreign Ministry in an attempt to offer moral support and maintain friendly relations between Chechnya and our neighbor in the Caucasus. He noted that Georgia is independent but in a weak position with regard to Russia and needs all the friends it can get, especially the Americans and its regional neighbors.

Maskhadov urged that we continue to work with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which is the one official body taking an interest in our problems. This was complicated by the presence of Russian representatives in the Assembly where there were also human rights representatives. Maskhadov felt that we should work as much as possible, despite all obstacles, to win the support of the Assembly.

He also urged that I step up a PR offensive by giving interviews to radio broadcasters and television stations, while I traveled around

the United States talking at universities. I never achieved the impact Maskhadov thought I should. The hard fact was that we had little outside financing, and I was not in a position to hire a Washington-based public affairs firm like Edelmann, which might have raised our profile. We had various proposals from PR firms that had helped the Georgians when they became independent. But their offers were usually predicated on payment of at least \$25,000. We simply had no such sums.

What else could we do to influence the new administration in these circumstances? I met on occasion with Rep. Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.), who was interested in the Chechen problem, and discussed the possible creation of a lobby group in Congress. But I warned Maskhadov that this, too, might eventually involve sums of money.

In any event, no lobby group developed. Could we get any direct contacts with the new White House or the State Department? Could we reveal the horrors of what the Russians were doing? I tried, but US officials were usually reluctant to meet me. There was a lingering suspicion in the United States that our government of Chechnya Ichkeria might be harboring terrorists or allowing extremists into the leadership circle. And there was the official US view that Chechnya was an internal Russian problem that Moscow should deal with, deal with swiftly with as little spilt blood as possible.

Later, some American friends were willing to draft articles for me and get them published. That was much appreciated but only of marginal help. All of this was bound to have a dampening effect on my efforts and a depressing effect on me.

The Mystery of Dr. Gluck

Audio letter of January 18, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! The only reason I am sending you this cassette is to make you people realize the situation we have here, its political and military aspects. I thought that it would be good to have this cassette when you discuss the situation here in regard to what is happening in the outside world.

The military aspect: In the southeast of Chechnya in the district of Tsentoroy, Belgatoy, Dargo, Zandak, Aleroy, Gansolchu, the enemy concentrated a tremendous amount of troops, armored equipment there after transferring units of the 58th army from the Shatoysky sector. Speaking of conducting clean-up operations, they comb the woods, literally looking for something under every bush. Artillery bombardments are conducted. Severe clean-up operations are being carried out in villages of Dargo and Zondak. They just grab peaceful people, kidnap them, and then demand: "You can ransom them for a submachine gun, for two submachine guns ... " They break into people's homes, rob their property, they loot, and engage in extortion. Some Russian soldiers are grimy, exhausted, and starved like hungry dogs. This is how they oppress the population.

Our detachments that are located in that area, be it Khanbiyev's detachment, or Abalayev's, or those who are with Khattab, or the president's guard, don't experience serious complications because of the accumulation of enemy units. They are very maneuverable, move very fast, have their own reconnaissance systems. As soon as the Russians

stir, as soon as they start a tank, they move. They have observation posts everywhere communications. They maneuver directly between the Russians, striking blows whenever possible, blow up their moving equipment. That is how our detachments operate right between them.

Generally speaking, we have adapted to the methods of this guerrilla warfare pretty well. You know our Chechen guys: each of them is a general, each of them is a strategist. Each one adapts to any situation by himself. So, I don't see the Russians having any superiority over us in the military aspect. On the contrary, they suffer more losses, many times more than in frontal combat attacks, while we suffer the minimum. We have saved combat-ready detachments, created a whole system of control starting with a village, around a village, in the mountains, in the woods, etc. We managed to do all this rather well. Even on the level ground, in all settlements we organized mail service, timely delivery of dispatches, communications, and so on. Dozens of raiding parties operate in Grozny as before [in the first war of 1994–1996]. And the situation, literally speaking, is that the city is in our hands.

Next, about the kind of tactics the Russians use. In villages like Kurchaloy, Mairtup, they organize a blockade, conduct tough clean-up operations, seizing rugs, furniture. Then, they say they will establish garrisons in these villages—there are about 300 of these settlements—and leave barracks and a commandant's office. Then, to protect the local administration leaders they establish a militia of 20–30 people, sponsored by their relatives. That is, they create a confrontation in that village. There are Chechen fighters and militia members who protect their relatives, that is, traitors and puppets. Meantime, the Russians kill off these administrators and militia members. Play off one group against another. It's done on purpose to divide the village into two parts, and to leave a hotbed of confrontation when they finally depart.

But today the people have risen up in a big way. Yesterday there was a huge meeting at Gudermes timed to the arrival of a PACE representative. The day before in Grozny, where a PACE representative was staying, there was a huge meeting. A huge meeting in Kurchaloy. A huge meeting in Sleptsovsk.

Our newspapers, television, radio are working very well now, and we constantly appeal to people. "They want to divide us. Don't let them unleash a civil war here. Don't let them create these garrisons!" Yesterday at Bachi-Yurt, women threw stones and broke the windows in the school where the Russians wanted to quarter a garrison. They

broke the doors and set the building on fire. The people are strongly against them.

What do the Russians do with the Kadyrov supporters, the local administration? It seems to me that ... [unfinished thought] ... they did not appoint even Saidullayev. They named Ilyasov¹ to head the government. Either a Russian or a Tatar from the Stavropolsky region. They say that he will be the chairman of the government. Well, in general they appointed a Russian. And here these puppets of ours hoped that they would appoint the one whom Kadyrov senior would want to appoint or whom Gantemirov would want to appoint. What does it show us in this respect? In all likelihood they don't count on the Chechen factor, even if they are going to leave. For example, if they relied on the clan factor, the Benoi factor, they would put in Saidullayev. Then there would be his relatives around him. Or, they might put in a Gantemirov man. Now they have brought in that Russian Ilyasov because, even if they hand out money through these Kadyrov people, they know perfectly well what it is like setting the fox to guard the chickens. Russians are not throwing money around as before [in the war of 1994–1996]. This is one more proof that there will be two confronting sides: a Russian side and a Chechen side. So, Russian and Chechen. There is not a third side.

Next, about the refugees. No matter what they say, the situation there [in Ingushetia] is really disastrous. If there were not these refugees, or if they stayed under someone's roof, it would not be difficult at all to fight. The situation is disastrous there. There is real starvation there! So, the Russians do not give them a penny from the whole federal budget. They get a miserly amount from the humanitarian aid that comes in from abroad.

Next, regarding the American citizen from Doctors Without Borders, you will make a statement yourself. I can't tell you what I am thinking over the phone. My chances to meet with journalists here are utterly insignificant because of security. If today I tell you about my underground routine of existence, you will never believe it. Therefore, analyze even those little things that you hear on Russian television. You should give interviews on Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle, otherwise, none of our information gets out. This should never be ignored. For example, as president, although I know that it might be demeaning, I myself got in touch with Deutsche Welle, got in touch with BBC. People here listen to [Radio] Liberty, Deutsche Welle, they want to hear from our representative. But none of our representatives speaks out over there.

Whether it's Selim Beshayev² or Akhyad Ididgov or you, one of you should take turns and speak out. If this American was kidnapped, you should say it clearly. It is not Udugov who should comment, but you should declare it! How come? Just think who will profit from this? He [Dr. Gluck] came to help us. To save us from hunger, cold, tuberculosis. How could we kidnap him? Just imagine: This is occupied territory, absolutely any home can be broken into, any village can be surrounded, any woods can be surrounded. In other words, it is a guerrilla war. We have no rear, we have no prisons. We have nothing! I am making this recording and in five minutes the place where I am can be blocked and there will be a battle. How can I have a hostage with me? How can a fighter keep him? The fighters wear neckties in the daytime and in the evening they change and commit sabotage. We have no [prison] possibilities even if we wanted to keep him.

Second: there is a Red Cross convoy consisting of three or four cars, that is moving in the Stary Atagi area on the Grozny—Shatoy highway, where there are roadblocks every 200 meters. So, how is it possible to get ahead of this convoy, stop this conovoy, get that American [Dr. Gluck] from it, put him in a car and take him away? Well, it is bullshit as in the Babitsky case, furthermore, done very unprofessionally.

And what was the purpose of that action? Recently, there was a program "Voice of the People" on NTV. There is a movie made by a woman, I don't remember her name, from Great Britain, about our killed and maimed children. A very impressive movie! Then they showed it here on NTV: you see Kadyrov sitting, Aslakhanov is there, Bokovikov, the representative on Chechnya. They made quite a show of it. And this representative of Doctors Without Borders [Gluck], this American, spoke there. He spoke; he was surprised. He said, "I had been to Gekhy-Chu, there were no medications, there was this and that." And after that movie he was taken away.

The main reason is simply a complete information blackout. There isn't a single journalist here. Babitsky fell silent, shut his mouth, hid, and he isn't seen anywhere. The holding company "Media—Most," Gusinsky, everything has been entirely blocked by them [the Russians]. The only opportunity to spread information from here, to get the truth out, is through Doctors Without Borders and these humanitarian organizations.

And before the next meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Again, they say he [Kenneth Gluck] is with

Khattab or in the mountains with Ramzan Akhmadov ... He is not with any of them, not even close to them! And now, they will kill him like they killed Fred Kuny, and throw him away somewhere. They will throw him away. All this is done by them [the Russians]. Here is the Italian Radical Party man [Transnational Radical Party] and who was there, it seems Russo, it is 100 percent certain their [Russian] special services killed him. He carried out of here all the information in full, all the films, and many other things.

Ilyas, you should not forget, and always speak about it, that a real maniac came to power in Russia today. Just a real maniac! An ordinary special service lieutenant colonel. Absolutely nothing ... he is just a hypocrite as bad as they get! He stops at nothing, there is absolutely nothing sacred in this man! He can say one thing in front of his people one day, and the next day say, "I didn't say that."

Work with information. . . you should always control the pulse. You should personally head it, take it into your own hands. . . you should have your own spokesman and every day on Deutsche Welle, the BBC, Voice of America ... [unfinished thought]. However, you are the minister of foreign affairs, and on behalf of the president you can say, "Here is the president's position." It is not necessary that I speak, it is not necessary that I sit at the telephone and talk for hours, so that they can blow me up with a rocket strike.

I sent Sergei Adamovich Kovalev some video cassettes before the Parliamentary Assembly [before the meeting of PACE]. I also sent him audio cassettes on which I explained to him things like what I am telling you now, in hopes that he would speak about them. There should be a statement regarding such things on your part, including those on behalf of the president, etc. At regular intervals, I will systematically share my thoughts regarding the present situation here with you, and judging by them, you should make up your mind which statement to make, as you pretty much know my position.

What will Lord Judd say there? Well, I think the governments, the leaders of the governments in the West, perhaps gave them [PACE] some specific task to return them the right to vote. If they did so decide, it will be accepted. What will be the decision there again ... of course much depends on us. We should have a continuing dialogue. There must be a dialogue. We must have a continuing influence.

Next, despite the inauguration of the American president, you should make yourself known constantly. Inform them constantly through Lyoma Usmanov [Chechen representative in Washington DC]. Information should constantly spread out from here. This

should be taken care of. Do anything to set at least him [George Bush] against them [the Russians].

Regarding Rakhman and Isa³ [his predecessor], we practically lost six months.⁴ Nevertheless, I think that whatever ... yes, it is unpleasant when people violate the law in such a way, it is unpleasant that they did not respect the minister of foreign affairs, it is unpleasant. The fact that I telephoned personally and asked to do this and that, and they didn't do it, that is unpleasant. They picked a quarrel with someone. But we understand that. It is unpleasant. But taking into account the situation here, I can't tell you all—you should see with your own eyes.

This is the reason why I sent Ismail there, he was in the cabinet of ministers. I sent him there. Once he went there—came back and reported to me about the situation there, and I'll send him again. So, what is my decision more or less like? Rakhman remains the authorized representative [in Istanbul] and that other one [Isa Abzotov] is dismissed, so the decree remains in force. All other humanitarian, financial issues, working with committees should be done only through Rakhman and no one has either a right or an opportunity to interfere with that.

Second: it's Isa Abzotov again ... the decree does not specify whether he is released from the duties of General Representative or not. It's not in there. He has got every right to say "I was released from this position, but not from that." Therefore, I told Ismail to prepare regulations about General Representatives. So, what's in them? To coordinate the work of the representative offices, maybe, I somehow infringe on your rights. You are in charge of foreign policy with America, England, or the OSCE, PACE, etc. You've got plenty of work, and here is the coordination of the work of the representative offices in Transcaucasia and Turkey.

That's one thing. And there's another: Gelayev. There was a reason he turned out to have 200 or 300 fighters. To cause a clash with their [Georgian] law enforcement or military units, so that Russia would offer help. Pour oil on the fire. There's nothing else in it. In order for them [the Russians] to have an opportunity to claim there are bases, there is crime and by throwing their agents in there, kidnapping people, again, this creates the image of the Chechens. In general, Gelayev had to send in 2,000 people there. He had an agreement with them [the Russians] about it. Gelayev isn't clean, and you should not meet with him anymore. I strictly forbid you to talk with him, even treating him as a private soldier. Vallakhi!⁵ Tell it flatly to Ella Asayev.

I strictly forbid you to do this! So, by my decree, I don't know if Akhmed Zakayev announced it or not: he [Gelayev] has been released from the position of commander, fired, to be more exact, reduced to the ranks and deprived of the right to defend the Motherland.

I'm responsible for my words! He doesn't exist for me any more, like he doesn't exist for the resistance movement. Therefore, I am telling you again, we have a false conception that if we don't have agreement, we will be beaten, that we are few in number, that, on the contrary, we should put it on the back burner and not make it public. No, we must make it public, and should have done so from the very beginning! And if we didn't await the attack by the Russians, we should have done it. And I was silent not because I didn't know what they [his inner opponents] were like.

Today the fact that these people, who are preventing us from building our state, are quitting our ranks is by the grace of God! If Turpal⁶ leaves—we should thank God. If Batalov leaves⁷—we should thank God. Kadyrov switched sides and we should say “al-Hamdu Lillah Alhamdulillah.”⁸ If Gelayev switches—we should say: “May all of them [internal opponents] scram!”

Today I can put in front of you a list of clean, handsome, intelligent, decent, faithful young men of the new generation. The commander of the president's guard, the commander of Benoyevsky sector, the commander of Zandaksky sector, the commander of Aleroevsky sector, the commander of Tsentyroyevsky sector, the commander of Gudermes sector, Naursky sector, Kurchaloyevsky, Shalinsky sector. They exist! These are new people, they do not wear gowns [religious attire], they aren't saints, they aren't arrogant. They fight gracefully! Vallakhi they fight! They don't have too many people behind them, they don't say, for example, as before—“I have 800 behind me,” they say—“I have 40 people behind me,” but these 40 men do what 300 do. And these people will win this war! Vallakhi! They will win! They have already won. And these people will build a state!

There is nothing that you should doubt, everything is going smoothly here. The political aspect, you see better from where you are, it suits us perfectly. I am telling you again, suits us perfectly! Even if they [PACE] return them the right to vote, big deal! Nevertheless, that very background [the attitude toward the war in Chechnya abroad] satisfies us. Second, the internal political situation: the people have begun to support us completely. The people's understanding is utterly on our side. None of their games with those puppets, with those traitors won't wash. It's a very important, strong factor. The

military factor, exclusively ... today we are definitely “hitting their kissers.” So, if they don’t stop the war when spring comes ... I can’t fully set out my thoughts in writing, that is, our preparations, what we’ll be able to do, and so forth. Everything is going smoothly! As to the financial aspect, with God’s help, we will not be without it. Even if aid stops coming from abroad, I have reserves that I can direct—I’m working on that. We won’t be living from hand to mouth, all the more so without ammo! So, that’s the whole story.

Next, once a week I ... [unfinished thought] ... although, here for example, we can expect something from PACE this week and I’d calm down. And you don’t tell me this, and I am worried, and there is no opportunity to make a phone call. My phone could still receive calls, but since the Russians got to know about it, they disconnected it. If you let me know once a week—“here such and such preparations are underway, we expect this result”—this will be a great consolation. I take everything hard. It is not about ... I don’t request the minutes of the meetings from you ... but at least approximately, what we expect, what is the result, what we can hope for. Take publicity under your control. Statements, interviews ... in newspapers. If you do not do it personally, nobody will do it. You must be in charge of it yourself. You must be the press secretary, the Press Department. You must be a correspondent there. Be all of these rolled into one. I don’t want to explain to you here how many roles to play. I am in good health, I am not suffering from sclerosis. It means that everything is going smoothly. It means that I endure everything that an average person would endure. It means that I can work. This is how we should move forward. May God help us in this! Give my greetings to everyone. Give my greeting to Ella Asayev.

And there’s one more thing I forgot to tell you. I passed on a cassette for Gaidar Aliyev [president of Azerbaijan]. It was recorded chaotically, in order to have time to send it before Putin’s arrival in Baku. Ella had asked me to do it. I don’t know if it reached him or not. A guy from the *djamaat*, allegedly a terrorist, was arrested and put in jail. I did not want it to happen, just because Aliyev weakened in front of the Russians, trying to please them. I said on this cassette: “Geidar Aliyevich, don’t do this! The Russians aren’t worth it. They’re villains. As long as their policies here in the Caucasus remain the same, our deeds won’t do any good. We won’t be free! Until, at least once, we all have our say with the word ‘I.’ They shouldn’t be feared. You won’t die of hunger, nothing will happen to you. You shouldn’t accept their blackmailing. Don’t give him away to them. And then, when the

war is over, I'll bring him to you, and if you would like, you'll try him. But today don't let the Russians be happy."

This is what I told him. Let me know what Ella did with the cassette and how we should behave with the Azeri authorities and what they are ready for morally. I would like to know. Well, I have told you the rest of it. So, once a week, send me a message with your observations and your assessment.

Goodbye.

Akhmadov Comment No. 8

One of the important items for me in this tape was the case of Kenneth Gluck, the American who headed the North Caucasus operations of Doctors Without Borders, and who was mysteriously kidnapped in January. Our Ichkeria government, as well as the civilian population, were kindly disposed towards Western humanitarian organizations. The kidnapping of such a representative was a serious blow to our image.

Maskhadov is writing during the first week after Gluck's disappearance on January 9, 2001, and shortly before the new administration in Washington took office. Maskhadov clearly was concerned that the Gluck matter could influence negatively any decisions by the new Bush administration with regard to Chechnya. Gluck was liberated 26 days later in February in a rather strange way: the FSB announced that as a result of a special operation he had been found and freed in Nazran, if I remember correctly. Simply, he was taken by the FSB and told, "You are free."

Many observers and newspapers judged that only the Russian special services could have grabbed Gluck in the first place, possibly using some local Chechens as technical help, and then released him. This incident could have been of benefit only to the FSB and I remember a couple of months later on a radical Chechen site, Kavkaz Center, there was an announcement by Shamil Basayev that he was responsible for the incident and publicly apologized for it. He asserted that this was a mistaken operation and that it was organized by the Chechen resistance. It was more than strange.

A few months later, I met Gluck at Dulles airport and had a lengthy conversation with him. He said he did not understand how all this happened. He did not understand why Basayev would have made such a declaration and did not believe he was kidnapped by Chechens fighting the Russian federal forces. He said he was convinced that he

was being held by Chechens working for the Russians. This was a significant moment and obviously Maskhadov tried to clarify what had happened.

This cassette was typical of the sort of tapes I would receive from time to time from President Maskhadov in which he describes for his overseas representatives a broad spectrum of issues concerning the current conflict, Russia's internal problems, and other issues. Maskhadov emphasizes a major point: With the mass withdrawal of our forces from Grozny on January 30, 2000, we departed from classical warfare with a front and a rear, to guerrilla warfare.

In this cassette, Maskhadov describes at length the new methods that were being worked up, the new problems that we were facing. This was a period when the Russians had persuaded Akhmad Kadyrov (former chief mufti of Chechnya) to head the pro-Russian Chechen administration in opposition to Maskhadov and his supporters. Kadyrov had been against the Russians during the first war but switched sides as the second war began in 1999. Naturally, Maskhadov considered Kadyrov a traitor to the cause of independence.

This cassette brought me very interesting insights into the internal situation. This was very important for me to understand our new problems. With the retreat from Grozny, the Russians inflicted their disgust on the civilian population. Maskhadov describes the difficult humanitarian situation, the terrible conditions in the refugee camps in Ingushetia, the reaction of the Western humanitarian organizations.

Again Maskhadov comes back to the situation of Gelayev and his fighters in Georgia and his concerns that the Russians could use their presence to mount a major operation. Also, he comments on the information blockade and how to counter it. And he touches on the issue of our representation in Istanbul where a new bureau chief had been installed. This was a very important bureau for us because some humanitarian and financial aid flowed to us through Istanbul. The changeover in bureau leadership had resulted in a cut-off of funds and Maskhadov issued directions for dealing with this situation.

Maskhadov also revealed that he had sent a special audio cassette to President Aliyev of Azerbaijan. He was appealing to Aliyev to release a Chechen who had been arrested in Baku allegedly as a terrorist. In any event, he urged Aliyev not to hand the man over to the Russians and promised to send him back after the war for trial if that was what Aliyev wanted. I thought this showed how broad his concerns were.

Russia Seeks to Bribe Maskhadov Out of Chechnya

Audio letter of February 8, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas! This recording is addressed to you. It has been a long time since a letter or any mail came from you. It worries me. A lot of forums have taken place and what happened at them we know only from the version of the Russians. You know that there is no opportunity to use the phone, therefore it is necessary to observe the rule strictly—send a cassette once a week.

Everything that happens in the United States—and the situation that changes daily in Europe, America, and other countries—is of great importance. At the last session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we should not be surprised at the decision taken there. As it seems to me, we should not be surprised; it was obvious roughly what they wanted to do it and they strived for it. With God's permission we count on Him, and not on the Parliamentary Assembly. Everything that we do on this matter is just what we are obliged to do by virtue of our office.

How do we do it, have we decreased our activities, or don't we do this work as actively as in the beginning, are we tired, have these Russians started working actively? Such thoughts dawn on me. The delegates of PACE all know that in Chechnya the Chechens are being terrorized and annihilated. If we calm down, saying that the delegates of PACE should not be informed a hundred times, or that

it is enough to say it only once, they'll forget about the situation in Chechnya because it is of little concern to them, they have their own policy interests.

I have always spoken about this, in the previous cassette as well, that the work we should do until this war stops is to act as if this war only began today, making the public know what is happening everywhere, letting everyone know again, again, and again, shed a light on everything that is happening here. It is necessary to take the initiative in the information world at least. Today the FSB rules Russia, the war is being waged by the FSB, and not by the army, especially in the past six months. The most serious work that our enemies carry out is that they spread rumors and slander everywhere, here, abroad, everywhere.

This war reveals surprising things now. It turns out that we did not see or know anything, we did not understand anything. Everything that was spinning around us was different from the way we perceived it. Now this war highlights all this. As soon as it becomes known what intelligence services a couple of people work for, then the war will end. Everyone who had to show his true color has already done it, everyone has reached his limit, there are only a couple of them left—the only thing that is not clear is what special services they work for: Israeli, some other, or for these Russians? And if they work for the Russians, then for whom in particular: for the GRU or the FSB? Such atrocious things are happening here. The Russians have done their utmost here, so that we don't win, so that we cannot build a state. They have made big preparations.

You must never accept blindly anything that someone brought to you allegedly from me, or something that was supposedly said by me, or that I said it meaning this or that. Nothing! For example, if suddenly you feel like taking offense at what I said or did, just for a brief moment, for five minutes at least, try to understand my situation. Now I'm recording this cassette for you and it is necessary to understand my situation this very minute. Here is the situation and everything that surrounds me today, and everything that is spinning around me, what these pro-Russian Chechen slaves are up to. Think of my assistants and all that, the gossip, and so on and so forth. All these things keep me in a state of confusion.

And as to what really is happening here: the Russians just seize people, take them away and they disappear without a trace. Beginning with young boys 12 years old. So, they just conduct roundups, seize children, old men, and those who are stronger are taken away and

people disappear. If the Russians are given some big money, then they release them; if they are not given money, then the man disappears without a trace. So, a concrete task is set—to kill an extra one. I swear nothing else is happening here! They are not hunting for our fighters, they are not catching any terrorists, they just conduct total roundups, seize children, take them away and they disappear without a trace. Burst into villages, torture the poorest, rob their belongings, beat, and inspire fear.

Next, in the Istanbul office, I am saying it once more, our previous man there Abzotov was sort of crazy, he could not keep to the established order. The only asset this man had was that he had brushed off the schemes of Yandarbiyev, Basayev, Gelayev. He bluntly put the issue before all the committees: “So, that’s it!” he would say, “We have a president and the rest doesn’t matter.” This was the thing that no one liked. The leaders of the committees and others did not like it. It did not bother him that we might lose financial contributions. He just brushed it all off because of his character and psychology.

Then, the most terrible thing: today also there are people who spread gossip that Abzotov will be reappointed or will be fired. Some say he was assigned only temporarily. It is the Russian special services who are spreading these rumors. I am afraid that if these financial contributions come abruptly to an end, then the Khattabs and the Udugovs will get them through their own channels. Even today they are actively throwing money around here and are preparing a great evil even if the Russians get out of here. So, you did not like it when I said: “Hold on, I’ll take some decision, do this, or do that.” You thought that was it. This is how you said it, you lack respect for the minister. And in the final analysis, there are people spinning around you, too, saying this fact was not considered, and they didn’t take into account the newly sent representative, and many other things. That is the point and not bearing a grudge against Abzotov for not taking us into consideration. Those were private interests and nothing more. But what happened, happened. Rakhman has now been assigned there. I sent cassettes there, presenting him to various people, and to my mind, he is learning the ropes. And that guy Abzotov, to my mind, is getting worn out and hangs around refugees who fled during Dudayev’s time and is complicating the situation.

Therefore, in this situation I can take some decision on my part without discussing it with you, can make some changes there to iron out this situation, in order for things to keep going, and me, I will have to take it—so, try to take it easy. Leave alone these petty squabbles.

We have only two or three field offices, so we will deal with them somehow or other.

The work you should take care of is Bush's administration: how will they behave, what relations will they have with Russia, how will they view us? What will be the reaction of other international organizations? Information work: how do we get information out of here and make it accessible to public? The Hague Court, the international court of justice, and everything connected with it, you need to gather all that together.

Next, I'm very worried about things dealing with the deputies there. So, they are dealing with very foolish things. So, eight or nine deputies gathered there [in Baku] and what do they do? Isa Temirov¹ is appointed acting chairman of the Parliament. What right do they have to do this? Eight people gathered there, how can they do this when Selim Beshayev, first deputy chairman of parliament, is safe and sound. He is alive and he is there. He was supposed to take his place automatically. And here eight people are going to settle it, that is, they deceive Isa Temirov. Then they send me the news that it would be a good thing to move our parliament to Baku, that its work would be more effective there, that is a "parliament in exile." That is the news that Temirov sends me.

I tell him today the Russians are mostly disturbed by the fact that I am in Chechnya and that deputies are holding meetings and taking decisions. We have the State Committee for Defense. We have the General Staff. We have operation departments. It is just these things that are the greatest hindrance for the Russians. They would provide me with gold and an airplane and would not interfere with my departure to any country, but the fact that I remain stay here is disastrous to them. They would prefer to have a thousand Khattabs and as many mujahedeen standing behind him, if only I and those like me would leave.

Here we have deputies with whom we were not satisfied during the interwar period—they represented the pro-Moscow opposition to Dudayev. Today they have become patriots and say, "Aslan, no problem, everything that you say will be solved, no one will be able to lead the parliament astray, the Russians will not succeed in opposing the branches of government. We have the State Committee for Defense, we have a president." These men with whom we were not satisfied yesterday, all ran away to Baku. They are not needed there and they have nothing to do there, and they do nothing but spread gossip. If they had real courage, they would get back here one by one.

Furthermore, there is a newspaper called *Mekhhel* [Council of the Country] and it carries the resolution of the parliament that says that the foreign policy of the parliament is conducted through the parliamentary foreign policy committee. It is done so that, in parallel with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, anyone could make any statement he wishes, announce whatever he wishes. These things are done so that we can be made fun of. A decision was made that any statement made by the parliament, or by a deputy or anyone else, must be coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yet the deputies passed their own resolution and it is a provocation! And it's Akhyad Idigov who orchestrates all this.

Therefore, you should tell the deputies, "There, the president says this and that, and it would be a good idea if you come back to Chechnya and only leave one deputy at most here [in Baku] with me, who knows how to deal with people and speaks fairly well. If, for example, it is necessary to go somewhere, I'll tell him, go there, and, consulting with each other, we will work together on behalf of the parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And you, dear friends, go home as soon as possible! The parliament is there, meetings are held there, and the decisions that you make here are enough to make anyone laugh. It is illegal and you know it perfectly well! Don't pretend! You are refugees, you are deserters, go home, it is possible to go home, no one is going to catch you there. Our men are fighting in the midst of the Russians, war, *gazvat*, is on-going there." Tell them, "Come on, get going home!" But don't make them feel uneasy, it's not worth it.

Next, about the events in Georgia. I said to Akhmed Zakayev and to Doku Umarov and to Abdul-Malik: "That's all, I absolutely don't need anything that is happening and what is being done there anymore; come back home all of you, move here as soon as possible. I need Zakayev right here, I need Doku Umarov here, I need Abdul-Malik here, I need Isa Chantimirov and Alman here. Come back home. Here we have everything for a victory. There are weapons, there is ammunition, there is an enemy—here's everything! I need everyone here! Everyone should come back home immediately!"

What is happening in Georgia should be under tight control. In what respect? The work that is being conducted with their government, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under tight control. Because a major provocation is being prepared there. A great evil. You do not believe me, although I tell you this. The fact that Gelayev was sent there, and here today Akhmad Kadyrov, asserts that all the fighters moved to

Georgia and those who remained here are terrorists. It means that he transferred the fighters there and saved them, and only terrorists have remained here with Maskhadov. All these things have been agreed, these things are jointly discussed [with the Russians] and done. It doesn't happen incidentally.

Go ahead, once a week provide me with a description through Khan-Mokhammad of the situation in Georgia and what needs to be done there, and if not an account, then at least, record a cassette, fill me in. It's very important for me!

Today when you say to these Basayevs and Khattabs: "Shamil, what are you doing? You are not doing a thing. Khattab, what are you doing? Beat, kill, destroy!" They just sit and say they are waiting for the spring offensive, and the other guy [Gelayev] ran away to Georgia, and Yandarbiyev is sitting in Qatar and they are all busy spreading gossip. They will say: well, this and that happened, this and that has been said about the negotiations, the Russians say this and that has happened. And absolutely nothing has happened there. I told you all this on the previous cassette, I do not want to repeat it. Sergei Kovalev and Boris Nemtsov suggested the deputy groups meet, it was agreed after everything was balanced, both the advantages and disadvantages. And what is being said is that it was all a flirtation with the Russians on purpose before the Parliamentary Assembly met. It's not true. It's the other way around. They started barking, and Putin and his entourage too. And all this ruffraff here and the Kadyrov people began barking.

And that Parliamentary Assembly, even if we explode and disappear, they would still pass that resolution to give back the Russian delegation the right of vote. Why did they pass that resolution? Russia ignored it three times, that is, they had to put this question point-blank, saying that either this organization is of no importance or this Council of Europe and the parliament should be disbanded or make Russia fulfill the resolutions. And since they are not ready to exclude Russia from the Council of Europe, they themselves should disband.

We will not do or say foolish things, and we will not do anything that has nothing to do with care for the people, we will stop this war for our posterity and ourselves, free these people, drive this enemy out of here. We will do it in such a way that Russians never have a right to call the shots here, label us, so that their laws do not spread on us, we will be a people under the protection of international laws. And in such issues as economic, defense interests, Russia's safety ... that there will not be any threat to them from our territory, so that

Chechnya does not become a firing range for clearing up relations between the West and Russia, so that there is no room for Khattab's policy. So, talks with the Russians will be held in such a format, and we must be ready for such talks. We will weigh up everything. I constantly ask religious people, consult with them when I have a chance. Everything is being done!

Everything should be thoroughly weighed, we must not do foolish things. Generally speaking, we should not hope that the PACE or OSCE will suddenly help us, feel sorry for us, then frighten Russia and we will get some freedom from it. It will never happen in our lifetime! The policy we are conducting consists of tearing off the labels the Russians hung on us: we called terrorists, we are called bandits, we are barbarians, and we have no idea what a state is. We say that we are ready to observe international laws, we respect these organizations, are ready to implement their resolutions. The only use of the PACE and the OSCE is that it is possible to speak to them frankly and get rid of the labels the Russians have hung on us.

Of course, I have given you an earful. It sounds like instructions or that I think you don't understand it. What I am telling you is just what I think should be, and we must be united in understanding it, and I am letting you know what I think about it.

May God help us in this! May God give blessings to all our deeds! Goodbye. Give my greetings to everyone!

Akhmadov Comment No. 9

This ninth cassette reveals, among other things, that the Russians were particularly concerned that Maskhadov, leader of the independence movement, had remained in Chechnya. He reports they would like to get rid of him, possibly even giving him a plane, safe passage abroad, and money. I believe they suggested Malaysia, where his son Anzor was living, as a destination. The Kremlin apparently tried to encourage his predecessor General Dudayev to flee, too, by offering similar inducements. Maskhadov reported that he was not about to accept exile and remained determined to deal with all his current problems.

He dictated this message after the January 2001 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Assembly had deprived the Russians, because of their human rights abuses in Chechnya, of the right to vote. It was a very difficult decision for Russia and it was received in Chechnya as an indication of the Assembly's

willingness to become more active in Chechnya and supportive of a proposal for resolving the issues. Eventually, the Assembly returned the right to vote to the Russians who hailed this as a great achievement. There were many comments to the effect that it was becoming clear what Russia was facing in Chechnya was a struggle against terrorism. This was difficult for us to accept.

As a result, I began to understand that the only thing the Parliamentary Assembly would really do was to deprive the Russians of their right to vote and then return it. The Assembly did not have other actions. Of course, the Assembly gave recommendations. It was obvious that every European government that was part of the Council of Europe had its own interests with Russia and naturally they did not act on the recommendations for a harder line on human rights abuses. Members of the Assembly with whom I met, and also members of the Chechen parliamentary delegation that visited, acknowledged that the Assembly used its weapons but that they were not very powerful. These European representatives all felt that they had to cooperate with the Russians and they hoped that such interactions would lead the Russians to a more constructive stance in finding a political solution to the Chechen problem. No European government seemed willing to sponsor a peace process.

I understood this reality as did Maskhadov, but he insisted that we continue to maintain our contact with the Council of Europe and to be open with them.

In the rest of the cassette, there is a discussion of the working methods of the Russian special services and of their great influence in the course of the war. Maskhadov describes the sorts of action that we needed to take to counter them. Even with our miserly means, we tried to be very active with the people who had ties to government institutions and supply them with information despite the news blackout imposed by the Russians. Maskhadov made the point that it was not good enough to say things once; they needed to be repeated hundreds of times. It was not good enough to say, "They already know that." I considered that was the right approach. I tried to get the information across by giving interviews, by holding press conferences, making statements over our Foreign Ministry site in English. Of course, this could hardly counter the powerful voice that Russian propaganda had.

Talks with Putin Suddenly Cancelled

Audio letter of April 24, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and our comrades who are with you! I waited for your papers to arrive, but then without waiting for them, decided to send this monologue to you with reflections on the current situation, on what should be done, and how it should be done. Too much time has passed, and our time is going away. Spring has come, it's warm. The enemies here are trying to create an image to show to the whole world, to the population here, to the ordinary population in Russia, thinking that they are staying here [for good], making it look as if the war here is over. They claim they are busy catching criminals. They claim they are establishing some kind of government. But people see all this. It is hard for those who haphazardly watch their television there, to believe it.

In that region where you went and the work that you did there ... I'm saying it again ... that only after familiarizing myself with the work that has been done, after reading the papers ... the papers [from you] as reported have already arrived. They have to be delivered today. After familiarizing myself with them, I'll express my opinion. The fact that the State Department received you, and met with you, is a bitter pill for our enemies to swallow. If this is a loss for them, then it's a victory for us, God willing.

That was good news for ordinary people and fighters here. It was good news. But it went against the grain for some people. Most of all, it went against the grain for Shamil Basayev, second, it was against

the grain for Movladi Udugov and Umarov. And they made it clear. They do things—how should I put it?—sort of super naïvely, like kids, pretending that they don't understand, and thus finally doing what the Russians want them to do. I have no doubts that they do it after consulting the Russians. I have no doubts, although I've had doubts before. Good Lord, men who have been together since 1991 and who have been working diligently, cannot do anything in agreement with the Russians. Perhaps, it happens because they themselves do not understand, or don't quite understand, what they're doing, or someone deceives them. It seemed impossible for them to do it consciously, didn't it?

But today, I'm telling you, it's done consciously, in harmony [with the Russians], otherwise, it's not possible. And besides, it is presented so professionally! Because I specifically accused Gelayev of desertion, and issued a decree in this regard, they [Basayev and his comrades] sent a cassette to the effect that you [Gelayev] were fired, come back home, and come under my command. Here, so they claim, there is no president, no legitimate power, the legitimacy of power ended in 1998. On it [the cassette], he [Basayev] says that he was in complete agreement with Maskhadov and wished to agree, but because of that unfortunate PACE meeting ... I told Udugov to place those killed members of the OMON riot squad on the site, and on the second day the PACE [meeting] occurred, and now because of that, our agreement fell apart. We were made out to be provocateurs. Such rumors go around.

These rumors are aimed at the average man. How on earth can the guys, young men who are fighting here, know what PACE is, how can they know what the State Department is, how can they know what diplomacy is? Because of this PACE ... we had to fight, setting up hopes for PACE, don't we set hopes for God, isn't everything in His hands? Just nagging like this, they're professionally pushing through the order of Russia's secret service. I tell them here: "Damn this PACE meeting, wasn't it possible to place it [the photo of the killed members of the OMON riot squad] on the site after the meeting was over? Why place it tonight when it's known that this meeting will be tomorrow morning? Is it just an incident, or was it childishness or ignorance? What is it?"

This Kenneth Gluck is sort of the same thing. And nothing more! Here everyone has forgotten that all this was done by Russians. Even they [the Russian journalists] arrived here; that Izmailov¹ of theirs and others, said openly, "This was done by the Russian secret services,

there was no special operation [to free Gluck], it's a lie. Why, so to speak, did the Chechens need him? Why would they kidnap him?" Everyone has already forgotten about him.

Next, the situation here. Our fighters and our detachments have increased their activities since spring and warm weather arrived. Just kind of zealously ... these subversive actions, attacking columns, commandant's offices. These Russians, be they in the market or if they drop in at a cafe ... literally, there's no place left where they can feel safe [the Russian servicemen are attacked everywhere]. In this respect the activity is very good. They work with time-fuses, console units, land mines, etc., in a professional way already. The Russians are crying their hearts out. Crying. But on television screens they lie as if ... even if their ten members of the OMON riot squad were bumped off, they say "four Chechen policemen have been killed" [i.e., the pro-Moscow Chechen policemen]. If, for example, ten soldiers were killed, they say: "One was killed, two were wounded, well, and civilians were passing nearby, so another five civilians were killed." That is, they hook it up to civilians and so on and so forth. It's done for the purpose of stoking hatred of our local population and driving a wedge between our fighters and ordinary people.

In all likelihood, there's an instruction from above, as Yermolov [ultra hard-line nineteenth-century Russian general in the Caucasus] used to say in his day, "For every Russian soldier killed, ten Chechens should be killed." Soldiers should be killed ... or there's no difference ... most importantly, ten Chechens. That's what they do. And if someone went to pasture sheep or cattle and ran into these Russians, then there's no difference whether it's a child or anyone else, they [the Russians] kill people by controlled shots to the back of the head. Just for kicks.

Just about a week ago in the village of Aleroy, to my mind, there Kadyrov's son-in-law [lives]. They had sort of a housewarming party because he [Akhmad Kadyrov] was going to arrive there, from all appearances the Russian subunits cordoned it off. The father, his two sons and two nephews were pasturing cattle there. They [the Russians] put all five of them down with faces into the ground and killed them by shots into the back of the head.

There are also cases of harvesting internal organs. About a month and a half ago they [the Russians] blocked Argun for four days, and carried out a rigorous cleaning-up operation. They seized and took away ninety-five people. Seventy-five people were lucky to be freed—women were fighting for them. The rest of them, they took away on

helicopters to Khankala. Then people rushed there. A week later eleven corpses were found near the village of Prigorodnoye. Four corpses had been harvested for internal organs. I sent these photos to Khan. It was quite clear in them—the chest, the stomach had been completely cut open and then sewn up. Similarly, six corpses were found near Meskety. There's apparent information that in the city [Grozny], in our former Gazprom where their administration is located, this Khadjiyev² was the director there. It's likely that there's a laboratory of the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry there. In all likelihood, they perform these operations there.

Then, they [the Russians] said that garrisons will be [stationed] in villages. So, what approximately, did they want to do? Presumably, for example, there's an army unit in every village, there's a company with up to a hundred men. Then, next to it, there's village police, our policemen [pro-Moscow police made up of Chechens]. Then there's a militia around the head of the administration [of the village] and there's a branch of the FSB, that is in charge of secret informers and traitors. Thus, they create these garrisons in villages, then little by little, with their direct interaction encircle a village with check points, patrol them, and impose a curfew. That is, they become the real bosses in that village.

And the most important thing—to divide a village into two parts: there are militants, there are their supporters, and there's the other side. Then, accordingly, in their conversations the Kadyrovites say that it is necessary to establish some body, a court, in every village, that will determine justice and injustice. That is, what does it mean? They thought that if they really station garrisons there, establish village police, establish home guard, then the militants will divide the village into two parts and then these parts will clash, and will determine justice and injustice. That is what they [the Kadyrovites] say is what they planned step-by-step.

What else are they doing now? Now, having announced that they have formed this government [the pro-Moscow government headed by Akhmad Kadyrov] they have repaired and prepared the building of the former parliament. They are making false announcements that, we've moved this government into this building, this is how much money was allotted there, construction was started, there ... plants, factories, hospitals, schools. They aren't building anything, they don't even think of building. But they painstakingly report all this in the mass media.

Accordingly, the Russians created this government [the pro-Moscow government in Chechnya], to put a Russian in charge of it, all

the officials who deal with money are Russians. He [Stanislav Ilyasov] brought 15 or 20 Russians with him from Stavropol. The minister of finance, the National Bank there, etc.—all are Russians. They didn't leave anything in the hands of these Chechens [Akhmad Kadyrov and his team]. Didn't leave anything.

Next, what are their politics today? They say: "It's necessary to bring the refugees back home, conditions have been created for them, places are being prepared in Argun and Znamenskoye." Every day on television they say, "Refugees return, come back there." As I see it, it doesn't at all mean that there any conditions or there's any possibility for their return, or that there's anyone who would care about them. Why? Because they [the Russians] can't possibly accommodate them here at all.

And finally, here's a letter you sent me from the Human Rights Watch organization. You and I spoke on the phone, that this is a very serious letter. They literally accuse us of violating human rights, bringing us into line with the Russians. Therefore, if we don't explain to them, don't explain, after bringing us into line with them [the Russians], and saying "this side, this side" they'll really accuse us and leave it at that. Like I just told you, the policy they [the Russians] are administering here—to split a village into parts, to create a confrontation in a village, saying that a Chechen policeman was killed, when their member of riot squad was killed. If their soldiers are shot at, they say that innocent people were killed [civilian Chechens], say that so many local citizens were killed nearby in the explosion, even if no one got killed. They do these things purposely, in order to set the organizations that speak well about us against us.

I tried very hard to find out, but despite all my efforts, I didn't find the perpetrator of the explosion in the building of this police station of ours or the [Russian] ROVD³ in Oktyabrsky area. The building was blown up and completely destroyed, and many policemen and also women who were at the nearby market got killed—100 percent the explosion was set off by them [the Russians]. Earlier in Alkhan-Yurt they pulled in a car filled with explosives to the mosque exit, and when people had doubts about the unattended car, the Russians came up to it and said "everything's okay there, it's mine-free." Later, when people started walking out of the mosque, they naturally began to approach the car, and at that time [occurred] an explosion. They [the Russians] killed around sixty people there. There are many incidents like this.

That is, these talks they have on television: "Here, so many policemen were killed. So many local residents were killed. That's the work

of the militants.” All this is done to set people here against [against the Resistance]. For the purpose of organizing a confrontation among the civilians. All these talks “police, home guard, militants” all of them are their [the Russians’] work.

It’ll be a good thing if you write a letter in response. I can ask that it be written here, but I’m afraid that ... how they want to hear this response you know better. Know better. It’s necessary to stress our confirmation of the fact that we exactly adhere to the Geneva Conventions documents and so on and so forth. Methods of warfare, military actions, and even sabotage activities. We have orders, decrees regarding the civilian population, the purpose of which is to reduce the risk and damage⁴ as much as possible.

But as these [representatives of the Human Rights Watch] say that ordinary people get indiscriminately killed, the local population isn’t preserved. That’s not true, this is propaganda, Russian propaganda! And the explosions that happen there, where ordinary people happen to be, they [the Russians] themselves organize. Organize themselves. Let them prove it to us even a single fact, that our guys made an act of terror or an explosion where peaceful people were. That is not true. So, [it’s necessary] to try to explain it like that.

You, yourself, know how to present it professionally, skillfully. What we adhere to ... we treat this organization⁵ with respect and so on and so forth. Mention our statements and so on. It will be good if you write them a letter on my behalf. You would write it well. Of course, it can be written here too, but, perhaps, you should know how to present it better. If, for example, you need my official paper, tell Rakhman; he has ten letter heads with a stamp. Call him and take one sheet from him, write on it. Think over this letter thoroughly and write an answer to it. I’ll forward you the letter that they sent.

The next issue regards negotiations. So that you know. There have been contacts between my envoys and Putin, literally two or three months ago. They proposed to him: “Let’s stop the war. It’s a useless war. There, brother, call it off!” They said it to him straight, mincing no words. He was told that if it leads to negotiations between us, and this war comes to an end, we would consider the priorities, interests that Russia has in the North Caucasus. But there cannot be any concessions in regard to international guarantees of safety of the Chechen people, that is Chechnya should be a subject of international law. And the rest of it, what Russia is interested in, interests in defense, interests in economies, even on the territory of Chechnya, we’ll see to it.

He [Vladimir Putin] openly admits [to them]: “Yes, really, the war should be stopped. The war won’t yield anything.” But he says: “Negotiations are death for me. What will I tell the people?” This is what he says. But nevertheless, he asks: “What does Maskhadov propose?”

My envoys answered: “Maskhadov doesn’t propose anything. He suggests sitting down in working groups and working out concrete proposals how to stop the war, how to establish mutual relations, and so on and so forth. Let’s start a dialogue!”

And he agreed. Then our representative met with Kazantsev and he agreed that a working group from Putin’s side and a working group from my side would sit down and start working. So it seemed that we sort of came right up to it, and again they sharply slammed on the brakes. It all fell apart.

And this is not the first time, to my mind, it’s the tenth time! So we draw closer like this, and you feel that it’s about to pan out, but someone interferes. At the time when our guys held the line in the city [Grozny], I said that my meeting with Putin was planned for Nazran on February 2, 2000, it was supposed to be a face-to-face talk. There was even an agreement where the helicopter would land. There wasn’t even the slightest idea that our guys would leave the city. We thought that we’d hold the line for two or three more months and so on. But as soon as we found out that this meeting was to be held ... I told everyone in the city, both these Basayevs and these Gelayevs: “Look, I have to have talks on the 2nd, and if by that time the city is in our hands, I’ll put pressure on him [Putin] there. There’ll be an election just in March and holding elections when the city is in our hands isn’t advisable for him [Putin]. It’s a 100 percent defeat. Therefore, he’s making a fuss, and I’ll put pressure on him there. Mind you, guys, strike harder!”

So, I’m sitting and telling them this. Without an order, without anything, on the night of January 29 and 30, that is, two days before [meeting with Putin], our guys retreat from the city. I am saying it again, I make no secret of it: it is treason! One hundred percent, the fighters were withdrawn from there only with a single goal, and I am not speaking about the consequences, it was done to disrupt this meeting. And I’m saying it again, these Russians, their staff contact us themselves, and as soon as we draw close, it’s abruptly cut off. I strictly stick to such a position, without imposing in any way, so that no one thinks that we’re tired out and so on and so forth. They themselves contact us! And it’s always been so.

Therefore, “to conduct negotiations with Kadyrov or conduct them through him,” so, I draw a conclusion that, apparently, perhaps, they [Basayev and others] tell the Russians that they are ready to make bigger concessions than Maskhadov. Otherwise, it would have been more advantageous for the Russians to start and conduct negotiations with the legal President than behind his back, not knowing what would come out of it.

Therefore, regarding contacts with them [the Russians], that negotiations issue, you may confidently confirm: “Complete deadlock, there are no contacts with them, they are absolutely not ready for it.” That is, as I say, they hope that some traitor will appear in the rear. So now here’s the latest decision of the State Committee of Defense and it says in black and white: “Only the president in coordination with the State Committee of Defense and Parliament is allowed to head the negotiations, to contact the Russians.” All the rest does not count, does not have any legal validity. Even if the president cannot perform his duties, it means that no one alone has [the right] to be in charge of negotiations, everything will be decided jointly at the State Committee of Defense ...” Even to the point of being forced to make such a statement, in propagandistic aspect at least, to convince the Russians that it’s all useless, that this miracle [betrayal] won’t happen.

However hard it may be, but in any case once a week, be it a cassette, or any thoughts of yours that you’d like to share, some other plans, some other ways—we must be in touch. In touch. If, suppose, you have nothing to do, like, say, a trip to America, there are lots of small things that need be done. They aren’t small, of course, as I said: the information works needs to speak out, to explain the situation. To keep in touch with those who went abroad. Explain to Idigov and others what needs to be said, how to speak, what statements to make. Inspection of the representative offices. See what they’re doing, what’s the situation like? There’s a lot work! A lot! So, if information about the work done comes from you, about what is being done, about what should be done, about what is being planned to do, then my concerns go down. So, this is the situation. Go ahead!

May God help us. May our work find favor with God. Goodbye! Give my regards to everyone.

Akhmadov Comment No. 10

I found this tenth audio cassette both troubling and interesting not just for President Maskhadov’s approval of my work in the United

States, but for his disclosure of a secret meeting he had hoped to have with Vladimir Putin, which might have led to peace talks.

What struck me most was Maskhadov's disclosure, in the second half of the letter, that he envisaged the meeting February 2, 2000, in Ingushetia with Putin who had privately expressed an interest in bringing the war to a negotiated end. Interestingly, this was at a time when the Russians were saying publicly they would never negotiate with terrorists. The meeting had been set up for the town of Nazran in neighboring Ingushetia through Mashkadov's secret envoys, working behind my back and leaving me in the dark. Logistical details had been pinned down including when and where Maskhadov would board a Russian helicopter for the encounter. However, at the last minute the meeting was cancelled.

The reason for the collapse was the retreat of Chechen fighters from the besieged city of Grozny during the night of January 29/30, 2000, just days before the meeting. Maskhadov had ordered the defenders of Grozny to hold the city until spring as a way of putting pressure on the Russians. However, the situation of the Chechen fighters was becoming dire as the Russians squeezed the city with three rings of encirclement. A few of the fighters began to flee through the Zavadskoi district.

Basayev, who had not been in Grozny, slipped into the city secretly. He wanted to maintain a unified command and called for the commanders to gather and discuss the situation. Most of them agreed to an organized retreat without informing Maskhadov or seeking his agreement. The Russians media later claimed that the Chechen fighters paid \$100,000 for a safe corridor but I have found no evidence that this was true.

The retreat was led by Shamil Basayev. Contrary to some reports, the Chechen fighters led the retreat and did not use the few Russian prisoners they held as trailblazers, insisting they were following the principles of the Geneva Conventions and its protocols on prisoners of war. Basayev detected no fewer than twenty mines under the snow and then accidentally stepped on mine twenty-one, which tore open his right foot. Word spread among the escapees that he had been killed, but he yelled out, "I am alive, and don't panic." He was carried to the village of Alkhan Kala where a Chechen surgeon amputated his foot, saving his life.

Maskhadov was furious at this unauthorized withdrawal. Maskhadov claimed that Basayev, who always seemed interested in undermining our President's position, had agreed with the Russians to the retreat. Looking back from this remove, it is hard for me to

imagine that Putin had really been willing to meet with Maskhadov. Perhaps the notion of a meeting was merely an idea floated by someone in Putin's entourage, a trial balloon that Maskhadov seized and invested with his hopes.

Now back to March 2001 and the beginning of the new administration under George W. Bush. It was obvious that the new American administration was anxious to develop healthy relations with Putin's Russia but at the same time was distressed by Russian abuses of human rights in Chechnya. They talked about that during the electoral campaign in 2000. This duality called for striking a balance between criticism of, and support for, the Kremlin.

On our side, we had to find an even more complicated balance between our desire for peace talks, outrage at Putin over Russian cruelty, and moderating relations with Maskhadov's internal opponents like Basayev, Udugov, and Yandarbiyev who considered negotiations a useless distraction.

An important part of my mission was to communicate to the American administration the actual state of affairs in Chechnya and to urge American officials to call a spade a spade when it came to the Russian abuses. Through the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, I had good access to members of Congress but almost no ability to meet high US officials. In this regard, Sen. Jesse Helms came to my rescue in persuading the State Department to set up a meeting between acting deputy assistant secretary of state for Russia and the Newly Independent States, John Beyrle, and myself. The meeting on March 26, 2001, was announced two weeks in advance, apparently, to give the Russians time to swallow the unwelcome news of this coming encounter and put it in some kind of perspective.

The announcement of the meeting enraged the Russians who fired off a formal note of protest to the State Department. In fact, the meeting turned out to be purely informational and involved no obligations on either side. Beyrle told me that we should expel all foreign extremists from Chechnya, and renounce any foreign sources of financing. I thought he showed no interest in the political situation in Chechnya. But he did inquire about Emir Khattab, a Saudi who battled against the Russians in Afghanistan, and was now fighting with Basayev.

"Who is Mr. Khattab?" Beyrle asked me at one point. Apparently, he suspected that Khattab might be a Chechen link to Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

I replied, "You should direct that question to the CIA. Khattab talked about receiving training in US-supported camps in Peshawar,

and I've asked myself several times the same question you asked me. We didn't train him and we didn't invite him to Chechnya."

What I considered significant was that Beyrle stated the United States believed the Chechen problem should be resolved through political means. If my presumption was correct, that would mean that Washington should support our efforts to engage the Russians in negotiations. But he also stated the United States considered Chechnya to be an integral part of the Russian Federation. That could mean that the Chechen resistance was unlikely to get any assistance in combating the Russians as the Afghans had received after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It heralded no financial assistance or military aid. I was reminded again that during the Clinton administration one American official, in an offhand remark, called on Moscow to clean up the Chechen rebellion quickly with as little blood as possible. I guessed that the Bush people would take a similar view; they did not want to harm their new relations with the Putin government.

There was one curious thing about the meeting. Beyrle kept looking at his watch—maybe four or five times—as if he was under instructions to keep the exchange short so it could be said later that it lasted "less than an hour." The meeting began at 3 pm in an empty classroom at George Washington University, a stone's throw from the State Department. By my reckoning, it lasted 59 minutes. The State Department spokesman reported at a briefing that the meeting lasted only 45 minutes. Later, I got a call from a Reuters correspondent who asked me how long the meeting went on. Because of my poor English at the time, I did not understand the question and thought he asked at what time the meeting began. I replied, "Three hours." That was bound to further upset the Russians who could not divine what conspiracies might have been cooked up over such an extended time. I corrected my mistake later in an interview on Radio Liberty.

Also, in this tape Maskhadov commented on the case of Kenneth Gluck, an American doctor heading the mission of Doctors Without Borders in the North Caucasus. His abduction by armed men on January 9, 2001, caused quite a stir in the United States and was seen as a serious human rights abuse in the course of war. After some 28 days, Gluck was freed in what the Russians claimed was a special operation. Actually, I don't think Gluck's abduction could have happened without the participation of the Russian special services. Later, however, Basayev released a statement claiming that Gluck's kidnapping was a mistake and he apologized for the incident.

I met Gluck in Washington for an hour and a half at Dulles Airport when he was passing through after his return to the United States. He told me that he thought he had been taken by Chechens who were working for the Russians. He said he was held in a large Chechen house and treated well. It still remains very strange to me that Basayev took responsibility for the incident. Maskhadov thought that the kidnapping was intended to complicate meetings I was having in Washington in which I tried to explain we had nothing in common with al-Qaeda, had no links to al-Qaeda, and were against terrorism.

The issue of terrorism caused great problems for us. We were often cast as rebellious, religious extremists. However, I had a generally fruitful time explaining our reality to members of Congress and influential Americans in the hope they would forward my remarks to the White House and State Department. The points I always made were that the Maskhadov government was seeking independence from Russia, that we denounced terrorist acts, that we had nothing in common with radicalism. This was sometimes difficult to get across because we did not have any propaganda means to counter the loud Russian voice.

During this period the Maskhadov audio letters come back again and again to the process of "Chechenization" that the Russians were pursuing beginning in 2001. This was an effort to get the pro-Moscow Chechens to do the Russian dirty work and eventually head a rival government to our Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. This process was not very obvious at first, but Maskhadov was aware of its beginnings. We did not think this process would succeed because of the age-old antipathy to the Russians and our own customs and traditions. But we were wrong. Might made right. By 2005 and 2006, Chechenization finally brought forth its cynical fruits.

In this audio letter there is a comment by Maskhadov on a document from Human Rights Watch expressing concern that some of the victims of Chechen attacks were members of the pro-Russian civilian administration. Maskhadov asked me to inform Human Rights Watch that we were engaged in a guerrilla war with the Russians and that it was not always possible to identify victims in advance. He wanted me to inform Human Rights Watch that there were civilian workers who were victims, too, of Russian military and special services. Some were even victims of blood revenge. He wanted me to assure them that we were doing our utmost to respect international norms in the conduct of war but we, unfortunately, did not have iron control over events.

Minister Akhmadov and the State Department

Audio letter of April 30, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! I have received your documents about the work you have done, and what had planned to be done. I've studied these documents thoroughly. I understood everything you wrote completely. I highly appreciate these documents and your work. Good job, a great achievement. With God's blessings, moving little by little, there is every reason to believe it will end up in the most unexpected manner for us. I have this feeling. That meeting there, in the United States, and what they said, what you told them, the propositions that were made, all this seems very reasonable to me. With God's blessings, it seems to me that we approximately understand their approach, what is on their minds, the tracks of their thoughts. And it is a very good thing that we both share the same concepts and the same position in this regard!

The statement and appeal made by the Czech government about providing temporary refuge to people who fled the combat zone in Chechnya: we must bend over backward to put it in the center of attention, and not let it fade out. In order not to let it stop at this appeal, it should be used in a big way, maybe even, gather our refugees and people who came from Chechnya somewhere, move them there and organize camps there. Accommodate people in camps, bring journalists there. Let the whole world know about it, spread it. It seems to me that we should start this work, otherwise it will gradually fade out, like: "Well, it turns out they didn't need it!" We just have to remind

them [the Czech leadership] that you made that statement, so let us do it in such a way, that it should have some results, and may God be pleased with you. And the most important issue regarding refugees has been seriously raised by the Russians and Kadyrov. They want to do anything that leads people to believe that this problem of refugees does not exist, they try to wipe it out. They are trying to close the camps in Sleptovskaya and Karabulak by hook or by crook, and make these actions look like they are transferring them to Chechnya.

If the organizations that help us with money have the slightest suspicions about us, then it will be the end of us. We must be very careful with this. Maybe Ferzauli is a good man and all that, but if he gets in touch with the Muslim organizations and takes money from them, if he puts his signature somewhere, I will look into it. All these things should be recorded here: Here this much was received. If it was received, then, what should be done with it? Someone should authorize all this; how to use it later. If it is what someone made up, then it still sticks to your hands and it is disgusting. It's necessary to clear such things up very gingerly. One more thing: Said-Khasan Abumuslimov,—he also should be told. He insists that here's an office, there are so many pieces of equipment, then there is the rent, then there are five or six lawyers and so on and so forth. That, all in all, amounts to \$250,000. I said to him, "We don't have such money." I take into consideration every cent. Approximately every month the estimated total of approximately every mobile group, detachment, every sector—I have to give them a certain amount of supplies. And the amount of these supplies isn't little. And accordingly, if I don't have money in reserve for a month, two months, three months, and if suddenly the money stops, then I won't be able to do anything. Therefore, I watch every penny of this money. We don't have any large transfers coming in. Therefore, I told Said-Khasan Abumuslimov, "This is the beginning. What are these offices for, what are the international lawyers and many other things for? Someone may ask for a room at the representation: Rakhman, can I take this room? Sure you can, here's your Xerox, computer, etc."

Put two or three chairs there. It is possible to find a normal attorney, a lawyer, even a specialist in international law even here. Just sit him down there, so long as we can do this by ourselves. Here the Prosecutor's Office will open a case on crime committed in Chechnya, and will send this material in a preliminary form to the representation office in Istanbul. This material accumulates here and as soon as it's sent there, you should make copies of it and release it for the public.

Abusmulimov sits down there with lawyers, puts together every case. Then he decides how to transfer this to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. If some material is ready there, then find an international lawyer. Pick his brains about how to present it better. We have to start from scratch.

And he wants to summon the lawyers not having anything to show them. They will be sitting there, and we will be paying them money. The money that we don't have! So, that's what I told him. Speak to him also, "Come on, start it this way." Lots of thing should have been started. As soon as the preliminary material, cassettes, pictures, testimony, and so on come to me, I'll send them to you immediately. All are writing brochures, books, and have turned into writers. What do they need it for? Later, when everything is done and we resign, in case we survive, then we'll write memoirs. Now everyone's become enthusiastic about it. They should be told diplomatically, there are things that have to be done.

And finally, work, Ilyas, work! I have no doubts. I trust you in everything, completely, as my close friend, brother-in-arms. You should not have any doubts about this! I do not have anyone to replace you or control you, I even never had such thoughts. You can be 100 percent sure of it. The only thing that I always tell you is about the local imams, and in this respect I'm telling you: be cautious. I am quite aware of your position. Well, these statements about the [destruction of the Bamiyan stone] Buddhas in Afghanistan coming from the Kavkaz Center website these people have sunk to the level of the Raduyevs and here people already laugh at them. No one takes them seriously. I think you won't take them seriously either. If we put relations with Shamil Basayev aside,¹ I consider you my closest brother-in-arms in everything else. There should not be any doubts about it. If suddenly someone did something contrary to the rules established by you, stop him yourself, and if for some reason or other it is impossible, call me—we will stop him, be it the state secretary or the secretary of state. No doubts about it! So, that's the whole story. Work with zeal, in cold blood, without nervousness. Work. If you need something, don't hesitate, and say: "I need this, I need that." To make your work move on, I won't spare anything.

Next, every week try, at least in two or three words, to write a letter or email. I have a mail address and when it's sent to you, it'll be easier for us to communicate, and the fax, they are kind of adjusting it. Then there won't be any need to send these cassettes by mail, send it by email or fax it. If weekly I know what you plan to do, what

you have prepared, what you're doing, it'll be easier for me to orient myself. All are constantly interested in what is happening abroad, that is, pin certain hopes on this, knowing that in the foreign politics aspect we've made some breakthroughs. People feel it and pin great hopes on that. So, that's the whole story.

Goodbye. May God help you! May God be pleased with all our deeds. Say hello to all for me. Go for it. Work hard for these awesome people! Allah Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. II

This is Maskhadov's comment on my report from Washington, spring 2001. Mine was a special visit for which Maskhadov had high hopes. We were in a very difficult position because the Russian propaganda machine was trying to tarnish our image by linking the Chechen resistance to global terrorism. It was important to communicate our desire for independence to members of Congress, Senators, and various influential observers.

Five months before my meeting with Ambassador Beyrle, I had been able to hold a secret meeting in October 2000 with Seth Winnick, head of the Russian desk of the State Department, and two assistants at the New York apartment of a retired businessman who served as go-between. For five hours I tried at length to describe our position in the context of the global war on terrorism. I felt it was a long and fruitful conversation despite the heavy pressure the Russians were putting on the United States.

Maskhadov was always explaining that the Chechen resistance was not an underground terrorist movement as the Russians tried to portray it. The State Department people said they understood that there were radical elements in the Chechen resistance that caused alarm in the West. They wanted to know what they amounted to, what their influence was. Like Beyrle, Winnick insisted that only a political solution could bring an end to this bloody, military conflict. Maskhadov attempted to develop a new position taking this information into account and making it known to his representatives abroad.

Another important point of this cassette was the appeal of our Chechen government urging temporary asylum abroad for Chechen refugees who were fleeing the conflict zone. Maskhadov praised a number of countries, especially the Czech Republic, for their positive response. Many Western countries were providing a fairly generous assistance policy toward these refugees. This was a period of mass

abuses against the civilian population affecting tens of thousands of people. These refugees fled to the West through Eastern Europe like Poland, and the Czech republic. Many found shelter in neighboring Ingushetia but their conditions in refugee camps was appalling. Much of the humanitarian help sent by the West was filched in the process of transmission, and some was even sold on the black market. In 2001, the Russians actually claimed that the war was winding down and the refugees should return home to Chechnya. Few wanted to, because they knew better. The Russians threatened to close down the camps to force them to move, which bothered human rights groups in the West.

Maskhadov tried to remain current on this situation and gave a number of recommendations to make sure that this problem was not forgotten. He urged continuing contacts with humanitarian organizations and to encourage aid and support to refugees who had fled abroad.

The conclusion of the tape concerned routine matters involving our representatives abroad. In Istanbul, the question arose about forming a committee to look into human rights abuses committed by the Russians. Unfortunately, we did not have funds to hire international lawyers or other experts despite the claims in the Russian media that we were receiving millions of dollars from Islamic religious groups, extremist organizations, and even Bin Laden.

Nevertheless, Maskhadov urged that we work on this problem as much as we could without financing. This was an important issue because up to this point we had not made a concerted effort to collect and analyze evidence. I was particularly depressed by the Russian bombing of civilian centers like hospitals and mosques in Grozny. The cruelty with which their contract soldiers carried out cleaning up operations was another heartrending issue.

Maskhadov Hopes for CIA Help

Audio letter of May 2, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! The reason I am recording this cassette is a single one: I forgot to say something on the cassette that I sent you before and it is not appropriate for a phone conversation. Over there in these great countries, you spoke to people who are leaders of various ranks. Perhaps they gave you advice to the effect that you should act like this or that. You yourself say that you did not describe everything in your letter. It seems to me that we should have a very specific conversation about them.

What kind of talk? About these emirs who are here, these imams, these long-haired radicals. And besides that, yes, they don't like Christians, they don't like Russians, they do jihad and perhaps it will be taken into account as a Godly deed. There are deep secrets, behind which stand countries over there, specifically large organizations that have huge financial capabilities.¹ On the whole it is world politics. Be it Jews, or Russians, or those where you were. We aren't blind, we see it, don't we?

The [religious radicals'] goal here is ... [unfinished thought] when you tell them: "Let's fight together against the *kerist*."² They don't want to do it. When you tell them, "Let's do jihad together"—no, they do not do it. When you ask them, "Why don't you do it? Aren't we all brothers in Islam?" They will not do it for love or money. Why? I'll be damned if I know.

What do they suggest as the most essential thing? Never to take into account state order or lawfulness. They always run a parallel ideology, parallel politics, there must be a parallel order. They call them majlises, shuras, they call them congresses—you name it, but only not a state system. So, if I was a president who showed some loyalty to Russia, or loved them [the Russians], or tried to establish tighter relations or, despite everything, tried to establish secular principles here, I tell them: “We don’t love Russians, kill them, do jihad. And can’t it all be done, obeying the state system? Why create two different systems?” They have nothing to say to that, and have no right to act like that.

The second point they stick to is that our people do not exist for them at all, as if they were not in the country. There is absolutely no one among them who would care about our people, they consider this is some sort of get-even zone. They need it [this get-even zone]. This is what they push you to do, they’re striving for this. And I know why they’re striving for it, for example, if they obeyed the state system and did jihad, then the one who governs the state would say: “Hold on, here are people, you can’t do this, this will do people harm, let’s observe staging, today we’ll do one thing, tomorrow ...” But no, that doesn’t suit either, they need to stir up fire and passions. And of course, the one who is the head of state will not allow it—to throw his people into hell.

Therefore, it was possible to contact the people who lead them. How can they be found? How to contact them? In any case, it should come from that country where you have been. They [US political and intelligence leaders] must know it. They know these leaders, they know the leaders of those organizations and this money is only given with their permission. Everything comes from there! Well, it seems to me that way. Therefore, if you told them: “Here, look! These are ordinary crooks—today they’re wearing a beret, tomorrow a robe, the day after tomorrow they’ll wear a tie. They do business with this, make money. Therefore, why do you get involved with these crooks, they won’t succeed absolutely in anything, the more so, that the Chechen people have such a peculiar disposition. The Chechens will not make advances to Udugov or Basayev, betraying the leader whom they elected themselves. You are beating a dead horse! Today at the head of the leadership there is the President who has much mind-boggling will power, who does not need these Russians, who fights with these Russians over the Caucasus. He is ready to maintain relations with anyone, but only not with them. Why don’t you speak to him directly? Maybe he will really do what you want faster?”

There, why not talk like this? That is: “Tell us, what do you expect from them, what’s your goal? We will think, and if, incidentally it suits us even to the slightest degree, then we’ll say openly, honestly ... we’ll do this, and that, and also this. And there’s no need for any Khattab, there’s no need for any Basayev. That’s for sure! But we’ll need this, and this, and this.” Is there a way to speak like this? Are there people [you can talk to]?

Countries with Muslim populations, like Turkey, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, or Qatar, or Saudi Arabia, Yemen and others—all these states hang on every word of the country [United States] you visited. You see, now in this Turkey—their president met with Putin one time, and then Kasyanov arrived there and that was it—the customs were closed, the money in the accounts were frozen. They definitely wanted to expel our wounded from Turkey. In other places they immediately stopped rendering aid. And then you went there [the United States]. In that big state they outrageously [from the Russian point of view] received you, showing the Russians that they don’t take them into consideration, that everything changed. It changed in Turkey, it changed in other places.

Therefore, if there are certain people in the country where you were [United States] they should be told that if the Muslims were given a hint to unfreeze this aid—“help them [the Chechens] a little”—they would give it [money]. But now, it seems they are taking Russian’s opinion into consideration.

Why am I saying this? If we really manage to get financing here, we will be able to fight and raise our activity, and capture the city [Grozny]—we’ll be able to do everything. Everything can be bought. Most importantly, if it comes through a unified order, and not through Khattab or any other channel. If we bring it to an integrated order, and we all are under one guiding hand, then everyone will obey integrated rules, there will be order here, there will be unity, we’ll be fighting more vigorously. There will be everything!

Everything is based on the fact that someone is leading them and not allowing them [the radicals] to obey the state order and throws money at them from all sides. If they let them [the radicals] obey orders and told other countries to help Chechnya, and if this help reached us here, then Vallakhi, these Russians would not be able to do anything here. We would have kicked them out of here within two months. I am not saying that those over there help us with heavy weaponry, but at least that someone gave these radicals here permission to obey the state order. And people in this large state [United States] should

give an order to other governments to help. And this help should come here through a single channel. And we'll do all the rest.

So it dawned on me, could you do it? It cannot be said over the phone. It would be a good thing to think over this. Give me an answer about it as soon as possible. Of course, this conversation is not intended for strangers, but on the other hand, it is necessary to talk about it.

Goodbye! Give my greetings to everyone.

Akhmadov Comment No. 12

This short letter from Maskhadov forwards instructions to me on how to act in meetings with political figures in the United States and obliquely suggests that the CIA—one of the “large organizations that have huge capacities”—could help our cause much as it helped the Afghans against the Russian invasion in 1979. I think it displays quite well the stereotypes that we former Soviet citizens held regarding the United States during the Cold War.

Maskhadov, a former Soviet officer, preserved such views from his military past. He believed that the CIA, which had sent aid to Bin Laden and gave training to Khattab, still had influence over them. Believing this, he thought the CIA could persuade various Muslim organizations abroad to send financial help, which might somehow appease his internal opposition because he had brought in money. I understood full well what he had in mind because I remembered he once said to me, referring to the United States, “Why don't they send me the money? I'll prove to be a very reliable partner.”

It was really impossible for me to ask the United States to provide money for our war against Russia. After all, Khattab had moved from Afghanistan to Chechnya where he aligned himself with our radicals. American officials were bound to be unreceptive to Maskhadov's plea because they still could not assess how powerful our radicals were in the Chechen leadership. I never met with officials of the CIA, and never wanted to meet with them to discuss such questions, to figure out if anything of this sort could be done.

Maskhadov's was a rather unexpected request, and it gives evidence of how complicated his position was with his internal opposition, which continued despite the military conflicts that were going on, even as a brutal guerrilla war was in progress. Maskhadov continued to confront this radical opposition that wanted to accuse him of fantastic sins.

He had a difficult challenge: to pursue the war he had to make common cause with the radicals. How far could he go? Did he approve of suicide missions or attacks on civilian targets? It seems to me he was against such actions but he was boxed in. To unify the resistance, he had to appear to side with the radicals on the theory that when he achieved full control he would then be able to supervise the situation more closely and avoid such incidents. This tape convinced me of the difficulty of his problems with the internal opposition, with financing, and his fierce determination to maintain his political line. Needless to say, my inability to unlock American aid was bound to disappoint him.

Seeking Negotiations

Audio letter of July 20, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas, and your friends! Today, I received the letters, the report, the statements, the suggestions sent by you, and also the letter you sent right after that. I thought it over thoroughly, I understand what you write in these letters perfectly well. There is experience in this respect, during the first war in the course of negotiations from beginning to end, what the OSCE and PACE are doing now, and they did then. We have heard all these we things, we have seen all these things, and this Council of Europe—who was there? It seems to be Ernest Mulleman.¹ The things that he did when he came here [to Chechnya], the same things are done today by these representatives of PACE.

We have criticized the OSCE many times. We have said: “What do you offer? Tell us at least, what you are authorized to do?” Today we argue with Russia over such and such issue. As long as you have arrived here in [Chechnya], open your eyes, look what is going on here!” They have annoyed us in the extreme, saying, you see there are OSCE regulations, there is the issue of territorial integrity, the established state. And the same European Parliament and the same OSCE are trying to assert, at any cost, that there is a third force at work in the Russian-Chechen war. They invoked these Bugayevs² and these Shamil Benos.³

Accordingly, as you say, it all looks like an inter-Russian or inter-Chechen conflict. We do understand all these things. Therefore, I say, that we have already seen what these guys from the OSCE and PACE

have been doing now, and during this war. We have been through it all; we have got lots of experience. If there had not been that first war and the negotiations afterward, it would be very difficult to orient ourselves.

Of course, now they say all sort of things; both Shamil and Udugov say that after the first war there was a revision of the Military Agreement, the Khasavyurt Agreement, in our relations with Russia. I tell you: war is war. War is the continuation of politics, and when politicians deadlock, the military gets active. And then at some time the war stops, if not in a month, then in a year, if not in a year, then in five, ten, twenty years. There is such experience and nevertheless the politicians get down to negotiations.

Therefore, during this war it is very important what kind of diplomacy we develop. In the political sphere, in the informational sphere. We have to beat this enemy not just in the field, but everywhere. That is how victory was won in the war of 1994–1996.

And there are other things alongside the war going on, striking blows at the Russians, our unyielding spirit, sticking to our principles, means that running parallel there should be politics, diplomacy, the process of negotiations. And in this field of battle we should outmaneuver them. I have said a lot about it. I mean that the war is everywhere: those who went on hunger strike, those who participate in meetings, those who fight, the people who adhere to their principles without going mad, without falling in retreat.

So, the politicians should work for these people in the first place. People always ask: is there any news coming from abroad, what do people say? Did Bush or the OSCE say anything about holding negotiations? They say that Maskhadov is going somewhere to meet with someone. People do not lose hope. Understand? And in all the issues we should think about people in the first place. If suddenly people suspect us even a little bit, they will say that we are some kind of madmen. We accuse the Kadyrovs, but the people say look, what they are doing—they are crazy.

But I've never been a supporter of walking out dramatically. Even when you talk with these butchers, killers of your people, and sitting next to them there are these traitors [pro-Moscow Chechens], national traitors sitting across from you, and when you talk with them, you have an urgent desire to cut everything off, tell them to go to hell, and fight and fight. Vallakhi! After two or three hours of talk with them, I went out and took three painkillers because my head went crazy.⁴ I swear time and again it seemed to me that it would be much better to

fight with these Russians and die, they are such dirty pigs. But every time I arrived for negotiations, or they were postponed for the next day, or we went somewhere, we always left the talks with issues for discussion at the next meeting. I consider that the right approach.

Therefore, everything that you say: the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly, what they are doing there, and what they intend to do—know all this and see it. Never in my life have I pinned my hopes on them, that they would stop the war or say something in our favor. Even when PACE prohibited the Russian delegation from voting, I was utterly surprised. I did not expect it, I did not believe it to the last minute. Understand? When they returned them right to vote, that was not news to me either.

But the only thing, when everyone keeps silent, these Russian butchers go to work here. I do not know what else can be done; at least, someone somewhere talks about us. Anything that is unpleasant for Russia to hear is good for us. If the Russians were disbarred from voting, if the Russians did not like it, if Rogozin⁵ and his delegation turned around and left slamming the door—that is normal. If Russell Johnston said something to them, somewhere that they didn't like—that is normal. And again, they [OSCE, PACE] will say something unpleasant for them when there is much to gain for them, when something needs to be said at a particular moment, in a particular situation. But in any case, we should never hope that they will change anything there.

Therefore, now I understand your reaction to it, but I do not justify it. I will not sign the decree [about temporary termination of contacts of the Chechen representatives with PACE]. It is against my rules to cut off all these things, to tell the opposite side, "We have no business here." Today I would be pleased to say, "I will not conduct negotiations with these pigs [the Russians] at all, I will take revenge myself on them," and I'm ready to perform it personally with courage, honor and dignity, with all anger that is within me, with all my principles—I am ready for that.

But I'll never say it to them. I always say that we are ready for negotiations without preliminary conditions. I seldom speak about full independence, I always speak about security guarantees for my people, about international guarantees, and so on. And I say that not because I like it, and it is not that I do not know what really should be said to them [the Russians]. Why do I say that? Because there are exhausted people behind me. Understand? Exhausted, worn-out, moaning.

What do we need to do? The most important thing is that we should work with each deputy at PACE individually. With each of them individually, with each of them. We should gain every vote, every word, every statement—we must earn them by the sweat of our brows! This is of great importance! Whatever Judd or Rogozin say ... but when they all say you are just fooling around, they'll have to face it.

Our Ferzauli, Beshayev, Tutakov,⁶ Idigov who work there—it's unpleasant to listen to them or hear them! Generally speaking, it's a shame to show them to people or let people know what they're up to. Since we don't have better people, we say that our comrades work there—but it's disgraceful what they do. They do not fulfill what they were instructed to do, don't work with the deputies, for example, they say, "there'll be a meeting [of PACE] on the twenty-ninth, let's hit the road" and rush in a crowd there. Again, without agreeing they come into conflict with each other, and make people laugh. They discredit us, our state, our policy, and so on and so forth. And if they went everywhere and worked with the deputies [of PACE] a month, two months, three months before and prepared them, so that the latter themselves repeat their words and defeat Lord Judd in argument—it's a job! And we don't do it. Don't do it. It's simple to say, "we don't need you, go to hell!" But this work has to be done.

I hope that you understood everything that I said, although I said too much, but again I want to say: We do not agree with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in the most categorical way. We make sharp statements, protests, demonstrative actions. Understand!

We work with every deputy, but as you say, we don't cut off [relations] with them. I absolutely disagree with you here. Next, I spoke with Mokhamad⁷ on phone and understood it this way: there was a leader of OSCE group [on Chechnya] Tim Guldiman, well, you probably don't know him, at least, not as well as I do. He is a very strange person, he is madly devoted to his work. Vallakhi! If I call him at 12 o'clock at night by sat-phone and tell him that it would be good to meet, he gets into his armored car and rushes to Vedenov or Zandak in the middle of the night.

Therefore, as they tell me there are five people from our side, five people from the Russians side, certain people from OSCE or European side. They meet and there is the Chechen issue. Then, 100 percent Lukin and Nemtsov will be there; 100 percent Putin knows about it. I asked many times if he [Putin] knew it, and the answer was that he knew and in the delegation proposed by Moscow there are two people from the administration.

And accordingly, from our side they too . . . it is Tim Guldiman who asks to include the people who took part in negotiations at that time [in 1997]. He knows me, Yarikhanov, Idigov, Udugov, Abumuslimov well. We had close contact with them [the OSCE group on Chechnya], they made out they were taking our side. They were always against the Russians. And if this [plan for the two sides to meet] is true, we should encourage it—they spoke about peace, about negotiations, about the Chechen problem at one more place. Is it really bad or what?

But when we approach the moment when it becomes a threat to the safety of our people, the idea of independence, etc., then say “stop” and come back from there. But we should never refuse as if we don’t like it. We should not predict in advance what will happen there, we shouldn’t have such a position. Therefore, I suggest you look into it, get involved. Certainly, the minister of foreign affairs has diplomatic standing. If it works—good, if it does not—well, we turn around, go forward, and continue the war.

As to Idigov, there immediately arises the question regarding what he said at PACE. I consider him a very educated man. In what respect educated? He knows perfectly well everything that has happened here since 1990, all our laws, the constitution, the deputies, branches of government. He can shut anyone’s mouth, and we should not feel shy before the Russians in this respect. [He means defending the Chechen proclamation of independence from the viewpoint of rule of law]. And if suddenly it is necessary to prove something, we should say, “Sorry, guys, the constitution of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria was adopted in 1992 and the Russian one, when? In 1993. Sorry, guys: who signed the federal agreement, who voted for it?”

I think that to squeeze them [the Russians], it would be a good thing to send Abumuslimov also, but his conversation brings about a counter reaction. Further, Khozh-Akhmad Yarikhanov is a man who knows me through and through, my approach, what I say, he catches it very correctly. When he speaks, it is as if I were there. So, during the negotiations [in 1996] and after them, we studied each other very well.

Therefore, this thing [the scheduled meeting] should be encouraged, call Mokhmad from time to time and say: “There, Mokhmad, what’s going on there? Let’s meet with them [the Russians] and talk, what do they say? They say this and that. Whether it is Idigov or someone else, the president has said this or that and not to retreat. Here is the limit that we should not overstep. Talk up to this point, tell, explain, keep in touch, but when you get to this point, that is the limit.” Let them work. Work.

Next, the most interesting thing about BAB [Boris Abramovich Berezovsky] ... BAB, BAB, BAB. Well, I understood in a way what you wrote in your letter, so I too know this man very well. To my mind, I have studied this man: his manners, the way he behaves, what he is driving at. It seems to me that I understand a bit what he does. It seems that I understand why he got in touch with you, and he needs to get in touch with me through you. In what respect? And it is quite understandable why he passes it on through you, the reason for it and so on ... and it is not because life is treating him well. All these things are well known.

He [Berezovsky] does not want us to establish an independent state here, and we should relax thinking that we are free now. That does not suit him. What kind of situation in Chechnya does he need? That there will never be a state here, there will never be law, that we will never be recognized. That there is some sort of anarchy here—Khat-tab's bases over here, Basayev's troops over there. Arsanov's troops in another place. He needs extremist-minded forces here, and he must control them through the Congress of Chechnya and Dagestan, through Udugov. He gives them television, he gives them everything, he is throwing millions of dollars around. He needs them as shepherds: first Dagestan, then one place, then some other place, a sphere of influence and so on.

Since the moment I became the president I have been thinking hard over this, thinking that here [in Chechnya] someone had to run that show, so that nothing succeeded. Someone who had money to burn, had a great influence on the president [of Russia], on the president's entourage, even on [Russian] law enforcement agencies, on the spy network here [in Chechnya], and so on. And it was BAB who stood behind all this. He was behind kidnapping of people and then ransoming them, behind stealing oil and so on. He threw around vast sums. Destabilization, discrediting of the authorities [the Chechen authorities], so that there is no rule of law, so that there is chaos, so that we're completely ... [unfinished thought] to convince our people that we will never build a state. He himself said: "That's it! Chechens have lost the idea of independence." Lost it.

That is, I consider him [Berezovsky] the main initiator of destabilization here—he personally ran all this. And this war into Dagestan was prepared by him. I am 100 percent [sure] that he knew what the Congresses of Chechnya and Dagestan were dealing with, what Shamil and others were dealing with, he was in the know of Wahhabi sentiments here. He was utterly in the know of everything. He knew

perfectly well that they [Shamil, Khattab, and others] would enter Botlikh and knew where they had to go after that, and knew where they were supposed to stay. He knew everything.

Everything to the smallest detail had been coordinated. But it turned out that at the last moment, when it was already October, November ... all this was supposed to begin, so Voloshin, Putin, Kvashnin acted quickly in collusion. I do not know whether you remember it or not, when this war began, Lebed⁸ came to Moscow and said: "I'll be in demand." So, Lebed was 100 percent sure that he would be prime minister, that he would replace the president⁹ and BAB was preparing Lebed, and not Putin, for the presidency. And all that mess was prepared by him [BAB] and Dagestan was prepared by him—everything was prepared by him. But those Putins, Voloshins, Chubais, and Kvashnins outwitted him, they "conned" him.

I suggested to him [BAB] that we meet even before the war—he was afraid or embarrassed. I wanted to make a proposition to him: "Tell me, what do you want? Why do you beat around the bush? Why did you get involved with these adventurers? Who is Udugov?" Today, accordingly, you are right, he has power on his mind, to sit there and be in charge—everything should be under his control, everything should go through him. He is accustomed to it. Accordingly, establishing a definite structure that allows tangible pressure on the Russian side and using us, Chechens, for that—well, nothing could be better than that. The more so the condition [of affairs] today, the [Russian] military practically lost this war, the FSB cannot do anything, the law enforcement agencies are completely corrupted, the politicians have come to a deadlock. The people of Russia who expected that they [law enforcement] were about to neutralize someone also were taken aback, it turned out that it wasn't that easy to do it. Understand?

He will really be able to oppose everything—that the war should be stopped, the genocide, it is useless. He has ways to set people [against the war] and also to oppose [Russian policy in Chechnya] with the international organizations we talk about and so on. He has ways on all sides and [plus] we are kicking their asses here. Therefore, how can he miss all this having the goals he pursues!? Therefore, he hasn't come to help us, he has come to solve his problems. But again, we say that we welcome him, if at this moment, in this situation someone can put pressure on Russia, on the Russian president, to set someone against them. Why do we have to refuse it? One should be an absolute idiot to refuse it. Why should we care whether it is BAB or someone else!?

First, he should know that I do not reject contact with him, because I, too, need it. I do not know who needs it more, he or I, but I need it also. Therefore, I don't reject it. But before speaking specifically about strategy, tactics, and how to act in the future, how we will work together and so on, so, he must expound on what he wants, at least today. Now you say "I couldn't write it in the letter" [He means the details of my talk with Berezovsky]. Nothing will happen, I am recording this cassette, aren't I?

The second condition: he must trust me. It means that a man of his word, first of all, is a man [of his word]. Understand? I have never resorted to meanness, dirty tricks, and will never resort to them, even toward the enemy. Even toward the enemy. If he trusts me and says that I'm going towards this [goal], having taken this difficult course; here I'll be able to do this and that, and he should speak with me the way he speaks with Udugov and Basayev. But what they [Udugov, Basayev, and others] do is to bluff to his face, before the people, and before God. They are ordinary adventurers.

And I propose to him: "One good turn deserves another. You help us make peace, and then you can say what you want. That's it!" And the most important condition: today he must completely break all ties with Udugov and Basayev. Stop playing around with them, and know that there is only one leader. To stop the war, to lead, there is the president. All the rest, like someone, sometime, overpowering someone and grabbing the situation under his control, all that he should consider too naïve. Naïve. Therefore, if he speaks with me, and continues to carry out this work with me, he should completely break all the ties he has with them. If I ever notice a double game on his part again, making advances—that's it. I will believe that he is capable of such dirty business this very minute. I will consider he is capable of such dishonesty at this very minute.

What do I have in mind? What do I personally need today? At any cost, by any efforts, get the Russian troops out of here, stop the war. This is my first aim. Then clear up the relationship and so on, then it will be politics. This is what I need! Kick these pigs out of here, stop the war. Influence public opinion and so on. If we get help, then we will tell him, and we can tell him even today: "What do you want in return, what do you need? How can we help you?" So, at least, we will remain decent people, that is, the president will remain a man of his word, and we'll do what he needs. And the last condition: only one man will be in touch with him, carry on a dialogue, speak, meet with him. This man is assigned by me, I will give responsibilities to this

man. This man has to go to him, meet with him, then come to me, and meet with me. Confidentially. Every word, every movement should be thought out, coordinated. And there should be no mediators.

May God help us! If I said something pointedly or with resentment, you should think in the first place: "It's very likely that he knows something, if he speaks like that." Put yourself in my shoes, surrounded by people who are really suffering, surrounded by people moaning in panic. Every word, every movement, every instruction, every decree ... however hard it might be, we should ask God for patience, patience. Success is in this!

Goodbye. May God grant help! May Almighty Allakh welcome all our deeds! Allakhu Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 13

Maskhadov's comments here were in reply to an earlier report I had sent him recommending that we temporarily freeze our contacts with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and deny permission for our delegates to meet with members of that Council. In response, Maskhadov reflected on his experience as a negotiator in the previous war, which ended with the Khasavyurt Agreement. He stressed the need for flexibility, ability to compromise, and to resist the temptation to walk out.

My justification for freezing relations was that the Council was trying to put together a working group that would contain, as they claimed, elements from "all layers of the Chechen society." But the Assembly was also working with the Russians to develop a new constitution for Chechnya that would make it a constituent part of the Russian Federation. Our side could not accept that because we already had a 100-article constitution written in 1992 under President Dudayev through which Maskhadov was elected and had been acting.

The document contained 100 articles of a secular, democratic character. The parliament was deemed the originator of laws, and the president the head of the executive branch and commander in chief. There was one significant check and balance on executive authority: impeachment of the president for criminal acts and abuse of power. The constitution provided for an independent system of justice, and unrestricted media not subject to censorship. It asserted equal rights for men and women, and free healthcare. It also stated that Islam would be the official religion of Chechnya but announced tolerance

for all other faiths. It made no mention of Chechen customary laws. The document proclaimed the republic to be an independent, sovereign state with no connection to the Russian Federation. The Russians never acknowledged our constitution as legitimate because it did not proclaim Chechnya to be a part of the Russian Federation.

The Council of Europe and the Russians considered in the summer of 2001 that it would be helpful to hold new elections to help stabilize the situation in Chechnya. I considered this was a total absurdity in conditions of war. Putin had thought that a blitzkrieg war of overwhelming force would subdue Chechnya. But we unleashed guerrilla attacks and ambushes, which disrupted Russian movements in armored personnel carriers, even when accompanied overhead by helicopter gunships. We prevented a speedy military end to the conflict. We stopped the blitzkrieg! But we found ourselves under creeping military occupation. There were more than 150,000 Russian military troops in Chechnya, checkpoints everywhere, rough cleanup operations, and it seemed to me that this PACE elections project was simply the preparation of a farce.

I considered that there should be two clearly identified sides: representatives from the Russian side, and representatives from the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. If Chechens held pro-Russian views, they should be attached to the Russian delegation, and the other side should be representatives of the Chechen resistance. I considered that we should stop our contacts for a while and sooner or later PACE, if it really was going to work for a true resolution, would understand they would have to deal directly with us.

Maskhadov, while understanding my position and remembering his own negotiating experience at the end of the first war, categorically refused to agree with my temporary freeze approach at first. In this letter he defended his position saying that PACE was the only forum concerned with our situation. In the end, Maskhadov was forced to adopt my view. Relations were indeed interrupted for a while—for about six months—until PACE felt obliged to contact Maskhadov, finally understanding that without the participation of the resisting side, the matter was not going to move forward. PACE eventually asked Maskhadov to allow his representatives to engage in constructive participation with the Assembly.

With regard to negotiations, we were seeking to find a way to initiate contacts without frightening off the Russians. A meeting was put together with the help of facilitators from the Russian and American sides, these were civilians who sought to find ways to resolve this

conflict. The initial effort was to hold informal talks that would discuss how negotiations might become possible, who would be involved, and to devise channels of information because up until now exchange of information had been completely absent.

In the search for negotiated peace, Maskhadov also raised questions about Boris Berezovsky as a possible broker between the two sides. Berezovsky, former deputy chief of Russia's national security council under President Yeltsin and a wealthy oligarch, had major financial interests in the North Caucasus. He had paid out large sums of money to ransom a number of figures in Chechnya and contributed financially to the political campaigns of several Chechen personalities who ran for president in 1997. On the surface, it looked like he might be an influential figure in getting the two warring sides to talk. In June 2001, both he and I were traveling in France. Berezovsky at that time had made a number of statements against the war in Chechnya and about the apartment building explosions in Moscow and Volgograd that inspired some hope in us. BAB, as Maskhadov called him, believed that the Russians government, more accurately its security services were involved in some way in these explosions, which killed a number of Russian citizens.

The meeting was arranged at my initiative with help from a Chechen acquaintance who lived in Paris. I had encountered Berezovsky once in Chechnya before the outbreak of the second Russia-Chechen war. This time when we met in a Paris hotel, I quickly informed him that I was interested in his views and should not be viewed as a negotiator. I suggested that any person against the war would be worth working with and perhaps we could develop some joint projects to sketch out ways to resolve the conflict.

The meeting lasted about one hour. Berezovsky laid out his views against the war but also against full sovereignty for Chechnya. He favored a loose Russian Confederation in which Chechnya might be a member with considerable autonomy. He was a literate, educated person, a former mathematician, and presented his views clearly and in a measured way. I told him that he was not committing himself to anything, that this was my private meeting with him but that I would report about it to Maskhadov, which I did. Maskhadov was apparently intrigued but he also took a very cautious approach, stressing that if a meeting were to take place, it would be on the Chechen president's conditions. Unfortunately, this feeler never really progressed further.

The Challenge of Radical Commanders

Audio letter of August 10, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you Ilyas and your comrades! On the cassette that I recorded, I presented my understanding of the work you are doing and the way I would like to see it, especially, if the war will be coming to an end, the way I see the negotiating process. I presented it all. I cannot understand why this cassette didn't reach you; I'll conduct a careful investigation into it. But if this investigation is delayed, I am recording this cassette for you once more.

The work that is carried out abroad: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I keep abreast of all the problems there. What the Russians are driving at, and those politicians who hold on to the same position through their connivance. I mean those Western politicians. I know it all. But we must never cut off contact with them, break off everything abruptly, or rudely. We should have clear-cut diplomacy in this regard. We should make statements about things we do not agree with, express our difference of opinion. It should be clearly understood what we want, what we are striving for, what we can agree to, and what we will never agree to. This should be understood.

These are the tactics I have always adhered to, many people didn't agree with me, but I can convince anyone: those who win wars are those who win through diplomacy. If you fire weapons, if you kill a thousand Russians or ten thousand Russians, or put a thousand of

their tanks out of action—that will not stop the war. The war can be won only through diplomacy.

Second, Guldiman, Brzezinski, and the work that is being carried out there, I don't know why you consider it of secondary importance, that it is of no use. How did you find that out? Why not give it a shot? What do we lose? Let it be a conference there or let it be an ordinary meeting. But what do we lose if a delegation from Russia meets with a delegation from the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria at the international level through the mediation of the OSCE or, say, international observers? What do we lose?

Third, BAB: It's very dangerous to deal with him. Very dangerous! The person who is not afraid to deal with him, even slightly, should be an adventurer of the highest order. In the long run, he is the one who before this war had been destabilizing the situation here for three years with assistance of these Udugovs, with these Basayevs. He was totally their leader. He was the leader of the Basayevs and the leader of the Udugovs. He was the leader of the Congress of Chechnya and Dagestan. He financed, he supplied, he did everything. These Basayevs, Udugovs, and others were just his helpers.

And the fact that BAB came today, we see his situation. He is not the man he was before. Everything has been taken away from him, he was kicked out, he was thrown away, he was dishonored, he was spat upon. And what he wants is to take revenge on the leader who kicked him out. The leader got rid of him, toppled him, and brought someone else to his place. He wants to take the position he had under Yeltsin in the circle of the family and so forth.

There must be a puppet that he controls, so that communications, finances, are all in his hands. He is leading from the shadows, he controls the state, maybe has a directive from certain states, I don't know. Accordingly, today he will be looking for a way to humiliate Russia in any possible way, to humiliate Putin, to set against them everyone he can manage to find from inside, from outside.

To do it, there is only one lever and this is Chechnya. We see Putin today, he begins to twitch whenever Chechens are mentioned. He twitches and is powerless because he came to power through our blood. He built his image on that, raised his ratings and is still keeping it, and still hopes that he will "drown" someone here,¹ that he will solve the problem of Chechnya! And every day it is evident, and the peoples see that he is failing and in all likelihood he will fail. At this moment, using the lever of Chechnya, BAB will disgrace Putin before his people. He will be able to convince the whole world that the war

in Chechnya is senseless, that it is really genocide, it is barbarity. All this really exists here. That is, BAB feels that there is an opportunity to humiliate Putin. So why not use it?

Then we ask: "And what do we get from this?" We too want the same thing, we too want to disgrace this dirty louse [Putin]. We want the world to understand what is going on here, we want to turn the Russian people against him [Putin], and thus we stop the war. That is, today our views and BAB's coincide. And why should we turn it down? We don't turn it down, but we fear this man. He is a dangerous man, he is a treacherous man! If tomorrow he starts to do things he did before the war, again through these Basayevs, through these Udugovs, it's another tragedy. Maybe it is not Putin, but some other person; someone has to be brought to power. Chechnya will be a fire zone again. They'll bomb again, kill again, terrorize again—this is dangerous.

Therefore, we must tell him this: let him know that we understand what he did, what he is doing and what he is going to do. It should not be concealed from him. Both him and us have one enemy today. So, we can make contact with him, we can deal with him, because it is of interest to us, we do not make that a secret. But we have to guard against him. There should be definite conditions because of this.

The first condition: he should say what he wants, specifically, precisely. We should not conceal all this. He should tell me personally, that this and that can be done, this way and that way. I must know this. What do I need to know in the second place? He should stop these games that he played with these puppets—Basayevs and Udugovs. He should shove them aside, as if they didn't exist. Their time has gone by, they don't exist. As long as the Chechen people exist, they won't be considered worthy people any more. Never ever in their lives! He should clearly understand that. Therefore shove everything aside. If all of a sudden I get to know that he is flirting with them, then that's it—I completely stop everything with him.

Third, he should be in touch with me directly through my trusted representative who will pass on to me what he says to me and what I say to him. There should be on one else who would speak to him on his own. No one to speak to him on his own. Only I have a right to speak to him through my representative to whom I say: "Go, pass it on, get an answer from him, listen to what he says." I agree to work with him in this format, agree to talk with him. I fear him and know what he is striving for, and what I am striving for. If all these things coincide—let's do it together. This is what we say to him.

Then, regarding you. I'm telling you once more, I remember you from the first war. I brought you in close to myself to make you a comrade, and you remember it. But everything did not happen the way I wanted. I don't want to remember it. The fact that you moved away from me, but again you understood that I was inclined to forgive you all that and brought you closer to me again. You were needed again. I tried to make you a comrade even during the war.

Well, okay, the war ended, but what surprises me is that you, a refined person, intelligent, knowledgeable, takes a realistic view of everything. You are not a radical, you aren't a fundamentalist nor an extremist, but how did you find yourself in the same team with people with whom, well, you have absolutely different convictions, absolutely different attitudes, well, you are like heaven and earth. How could you find yourself next to them in the same team? This is what surprises me. The fact that you were there wasn't a tragedy for me. But it always surprised me that when you look at Basayev, look at Udugov—why are you all together? Because you are different people, you have different conceptions, you have different attitudes. Even characters, mentality, you differ in everything.

So today, working together, you see we have no disagreements in diplomacy, in politics, etc. In principle, according to your turn of mind, you should have always been near me, if you had done it sincerely. With your understanding, your intellect you should have been near me. Again, I'm not saying this to hurt anyone.

Well, okay, I became the president, and then everything went crazy in a big way. You saw very well that everything these people [Basayev, Udugov, and others] did in relation to me was despicable. It even seems to me that they would "marry" Russians in order to prevent me from governing this state here, to prevent me from working, to put obstacles in my way. For this purpose they would "marry" Russians. And you could not but notice it even when you were in the shadows.

Well, okay, we have become closer again, I brought you closer to myself to make you my comrade, as God is my witness, from the bottom of my heart. Why? Because it still blows my mind how you can be near them at all, how can you speak to them at all? You are different people, and it means that you should be near me. This is what my heart tells me!

Although today we see what your friends are up to. There that one [Yandarbiyev] went to the Taliban and shouts that we should build a state of talibes with Basayev at its head, and he should be the minister of foreign affairs. Khozha Nukhayev who's buddy-buddy

with Yandarbiyev, went to Moscow and said really crazy things, that Chechnya should be divided into two parts—the mountain part should be sovereign, and the plain part should be with Russia. Today Basayev is obviously doing everything to destroy the unity between the fighters, dividing them.

Look what they did: these Taliban recognized us. You know my reaction to it was rather good. For example, if you want to know the truth, I was glad when it happened. Yes, as long as it got in the Russians' way, why should we care? Recognized means recognized, well, thank you. Why recognized? Just because they know these barbarians better than we do. They had experienced the same. Therefore they were the first to recognize, others will also recognize. That was the position. And both Shamil Basayev and Yandarbiyev knew it pretty well. Thus, that was the way I would express my opinion.

And later, at some conference² you let it slip that it wasn't the right time, that we got no benefit from it. As soon as you said [that], Yandarbiyev and Udugov went everywhere, all over the world where Muslims meet, saying that Maskhadov said that we didn't need that recognition on the part of Muslims and that he keeps speaking about the OSCE; everywhere. [Yandarbiyev] went to the Taliban and to that Mullah Omar and everyone ... they even didn't receive the ambassador I sent there. They did a lot good for themselves because of this, using their cunningness abroad.

Shamil Basayev would tell every fighter that Maskhadov said that he didn't need the Muslims' recognition. He's been everywhere. I recently met with Khattab and the first thing he told me was: "Well, you said that you didn't need the Taliban's recognition somehow or other." I answered him, "Who told you this? He who told you this is a scoundrel and a villain!" And then, after he understood that it wasn't me, he says: "But it's from your government. Understand?"

See what I am talking about? You see, don't you that these people use things that come from you against me? It is obvious. Therefore, what I worry most of all and fear is that these people will say again why do we need Tim Guldiman, why do we need the OSCE, why do we need the West? We must make our policies according to the Shariat. Over there is BAB, and here, so to speak, is someone else. With such assertions these people came out to destroy any undertaking here.

Therefore, even today, if there was a sharp reaction on the part of Parliamentary Assembly, I agreed with you that we should have slammed the door but not as loudly as you wanted when you drafted

the decree there. I am an ardent opponent of it. How did it come to your head? In any case, this is the first organization that expressed some protest, even came up depriving the Russians of the right to vote at PACE meetings.

Further, the fact that there will be a meeting between the Russian side and ours abroad ... what's wrong with that? Why do you react to it? What's the reason? Such thoughts come to my head. And then BAB appears, and you cut off all other means and think that all this is real. And I ask you, why? Why? Why not use everything that we can? Why choose? Benefit from this as much as possible, get benefit from this, get benefit from this.

Now about what Guldiman says and others say, it should surely be understood that everything that they are told must be coordinated with me. And be very careful with BAB there, and I know pretty well what to talk with him about. I know it pretty well. And if the letter didn't arrive or let's say the Russians will listen to it—so what if they hear: “may their ancestors be cursed?”³ America was told this, others were told that—so what if they were told? But most importantly, I must know everything—every word pronounced by you, the place where you talked, and what was said. I must know. There should not be any supersecrets. Most importantly, we consult each other, understand each other, then everything will be okay. So, that's the way it is.

Go ahead, may God help us! May Allakh welcome our deeds! With God's permission we all came out in the name of goodness, in the name of God and people. With God's permission we will be granted victory. Goodbye. May God help us!

Akhmadov Comment No. 14

This audio letter dramatically illustrates the divide that was growing between Maskhadov, who favored a Western-style, secular government for an independent Chechnya, and radical Chechen leaders like Basayev and Yandarbiyev who insisted ever more strongly that in the future Chechnya should be organized as an Islamic state ruled by Sharia law. One of the great points of contention came from my extempore comments at Johns Hopkins University in January 2000, in which I commented unenthusiastically on the recognition by the Taliban of Chechnya. As I noted earlier, I was not informed of the recognition and had to make up an answer on the fly.

Maskhadov also seriously mischaracterized my views when he charged that I had sided at one point with Basayev and other opponents.

He claimed that I had moved away from him. Maskhadov's comments seem a result of the internal opposition that he faced since he became president. He presumed that I was in touch with his internal opposition, but I was not. This problem showed the difficulty of working without constant and systematic communications in such a fast-developing situation. The absence of communication led to a series of further problems that I had to deal with, as did Maskhadov, and our whole leadership during this conflict.

This audio cassette also has more comments on Berezovsky. I had written to Maskhadov that I had met with Berezovsky. I had reported on Berezovsky's statements and inquired about his position regarding the war. It was clear that Maskhadov considered Berezovsky an evil genius. Berezovsky was the target of attacks from all sides, from the Russian side and from the Chechen side. It seems that many things linked to Berezovsky have been exaggerated. On the other hand, he gave lots of reasons to be viewed as the main culprit for the beginning of the war ... particularly since Putin had been his protégé. This tape shows very clearly Berezovsky's relationship to all these events.

Besides such personality issues, the tape concerns preparations for an unofficial meeting in Switzerland with some Russian Duma deputies and some unofficial Chechens at the end of August 2001. The initiator of this meeting was a Russian human rights activist Andrei Mironov, who put forward the initiative to the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya. He foresaw a meeting with a number of members of the Russian State Duma who at that time were still "normal" and not "bought off" deputies. He foresaw a lobby group that might be able to work for a solution with members of the Russian intelligentsia, and human rights organizations that had ties with the Maskhadov government. The idea was for a series of meetings that could work up some mutually acceptable channels of communications between the government of the Republic of Chechnya Ichkeria and the Russian Federation. We called these "Track II."

As I said in the previous commentary, all of this was in the early stages and when I was in the United States in the spring of 2001. At that time, Andrei Mironov, a Russia activist, contacted me and asked to discuss this possibility with Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, co-chairman of the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya. Consideration was given to avoid causing difficulties for the Russian deputies who might be willing to participate despite Russian pressures. We agreed that we would not talk publicly and I informed Maskhadov about

this in a very cursory way without going into details. Unfortunately, information leaked out.

There were some Chechens living outside of Chechnya who wanted to help and who came into possession of some information about the proposed meeting. They began to tell Maskhadov about it. They mistakenly said that the initiative came from the Russian leadership and that it concerned the preparation for actual peace negotiations. Maskhadov apparently did not fully comprehend the situation because I had given him only cursory details. He viewed this incorrectly as a very important moment, the beginning of real negotiations.

I tried to explain in two cassettes that I sent previously that the initiative did not come from Putin but that an informal Russian group was involved. The meeting eventually took place in Caux, Switzerland. But, unfortunately, because of telephone calls between unofficial Chechens living abroad and Maskhadov, this information became known to the Russian special services who were vigorous at monitoring telephone calls. Subsequently, several of the Russian deputies who had initially agreed to talk withdrew their participation. From our side, several Chechen deputies could not come because of passport difficulties and lack of financing. Only Deputy Akhyad Idigov arrived and that too after we had completed our less than satisfactory discussions.

This situation led to further tensions between me and Maskhadov. He telephoned me several times and we talked for two or three minutes. He had trouble understanding the origins of the meeting and I was reluctant to go into details because I was sure that our conversations were being monitored by Russian intelligence. It was very unfortunate that we could not speak fully and openly to each other.

General Gelayev in Georgia

Audio letter of August 30–September 8, 2011

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! The president of the Chechen nation is speaking. There is only one reason for my sending you this cassette; maybe many things that I told you in our last conversation surprised you or you didn't understand them. I am saying this because of the way you were talking over the phone. I am telling you again, so that you understand that today the road I am on I did not choose for myself, or to get a kick out of it, or to benefit from it personally. It was not for a position or any benefit that I took this road. The road that I chose is in the name of God with pure thoughts and intentions in the name of universal benefit. The choice of this road was determined by the desire to have a state and freedom for our people, love for faith, Islam, love for everything that is given to Muslims. Earlier I thought it was not worth saying right to your face, you would get upset, take offense. I kept everything to myself. Be it Shamil, be it Gelayev, be it Arsanov, be it Batalov, be it Atgiriyeu. I cut off a lot in myself, fearing to ruin unity, fearing confrontation. In the long run I understood one thing. If the team is not united you cannot build a state. Vallakhi! We could not build it because we tried to be ethical with these useless people, tried to treat them kindly, tried to make people out of them. Knowing in advance that they were dumb, knowing that they had neither brains nor understanding. Knowing that their mental abilities were not sufficient even to send them to pasture sheep. We created some groups,

teams; created some headquarters, created some Shuras. We made these Russians laugh, and they did what they wanted. We kept our poor people away from us, and brought this trouble [the war] here to Chechnya.

Second, about the past meeting. I am telling you again that I did not say that those were negotiations or any treaty would be signed, or this meeting would result in the end of the war. In my understanding, there is one direction we should follow: these Russians say that they won't sit down at the negotiating table, and we say that we will sit down. And we say that they don't have another alternative. This is the most fundamental issue today—to make Russia stop the war and sit down at the negotiating table on equal terms. It is the most important thing! What we will say when we sit down, what we will be debating is of less importance. Most importantly, we must break the back of this Russian army, to show the uselessness of Russian politics; that their politics do not stand a chance here and make them sit down at the negotiating table on equal terms. This is our main task!

Therefore, apparently, there are just consultations, for example, on the level of OSCE or some mediators, the West. Just sit down and talk it over. How do we make Russia sit down at the negotiating table with the Chechen side on equal terms? I didn't say that Putin would come; I didn't say that the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivanov would arrive. Even if none of them [the Russians] arrive, the concern of the West, of the OSCE, is how to sit these fools [the Russian leadership] down at the negotiating table.

When you said that “there's no use for us in it, we don't need it”—this offended me to some degree. Do you really think that I don't understand the issues, that I don't understand that we should not expect any great result from it? Or, do you think that it reflects my weakness, that ... maybe you thought: “Doesn't he understand what I'm telling him?” Again, that also took place.

Next is the principle of the status of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I didn't want to bring it¹ to that level. I don't know how you'll take it. Distrust and so on and so forth. Whoever might arrange this meeting, be it Mokhmad or anyone else, I did not think that it would be right, if we do not respect the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If I did not trust you, or kept any thoughts in my soul, would I not be afraid of letting you go to America and meet with the State Department? Here I tell people: “Right here near me, enjoying much trust is my Minister of Foreign Affairs, he is painstakingly conducting the diplomatic work from which we get lot of good.”

The most important thing for me was that someone would sit down and start a talk about negotiations. Furthermore, at the level of the West, who will be present from the Russian side? It might be Nemtsov, that ... who else is there ... I even don't know the name of the one who was there. It absolutely doesn't matter much. Second, it seems to me, Putin knew it from the very beginning, and his administration knew, and it was conceived at a considerable level. Conceived. It was not that simple that Tim Guldiman conceived it, or that Brzezinski conceived it. The Russians were agreed, the Russians knew and Putin knew, this is how it was.

And at the last moment the Russians withdrew. They did not want it. They know that it is insulting for them. They know for Putin beginning negotiations at such a level means political death. They realize it perfectly well. Their inward nature does not allow them [to conduct negotiations]. But nevertheless if I suddenly slip ... say, "We'll carry on negotiations with you, we will speak with you, we will make big concessions."² It's treachery behind my back! Understand? And they give hope to them [the Russians]. There is information that there are negotiations going on behind my back. And, by the way, it's not the first time that Russia, at the level of Putin, and we reached such close contact five or six times. Five or six times! And at the last moment, when it seemed that everything had already been determined, they suddenly backed off. Again some person inserts himself, promises them something bigger, and it falls through again. This is how it happens and I'm not surprised. Working groups were already organized and so on ... everything, many times. It seems to me that there is a villain sitting somewhere not far from me, who promises them something. Well, okay! Let it be.

Then, I don't know what you were talking about, what good it can do us, what decisions you made, I expect your written report about that. Then I will know. It will be a good thing if you explain every word, everything there to me very thoroughly. I spoke with Tim Guldiman on the phone; he said that it was a fruitful conversation. I know Guldiman well, he is a diplomat, he has rather naïve ideas about Russian diplomacy. It might also seem to him [that the conversation was fruitful]. But most importantly, how do you expect to benefit from it, what was there, what kind of talk was there? Who organized it? At what level? What was it? What were we supposed to expect, and what were we expecting there, and what is the result of this meeting in the long run?

We are not supporters of war. Right? We are looking for a peaceful settlement. We are ready to contact anybody, if only it moves the

war aside, move us closer to a peace process. This is what our tactics are like. With the Russians it is the other way around. And again, the Russians do not want either to listen or talk about any contacts with our side, with the fighting side at any level at all. What do they say openly? "They [the Chechens] are terrorists, they are aggressors, they are rebels, they should go before the prosecutor, then there should be honorable captivity, and so on and so forth."

Still there is some contact at the level of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, they are meeting with our side. Some process is going on. And again it sort of spoils their [the Russians'] position. You should sit down with Idigov and thoroughly figure out how we should act there. Sit down with Idigov, sit down with Selim Beshayev. Call them to your office. Sit down with Ferzauli.

"Hold on, guys. You are fools. Aren't you ashamed? War is going on, people die, the motherland is burning, and you're sitting here finding faults with each other, making the Russians laugh. Damn it! That's it, it can't go on like this." Sit down and do it. Our delegation is going there, and again with a strict statement on behalf of the president, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it is condemning both the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe for their inactivity. Everything there regarding the constitution, some third side and intra-Chechen [conflict]—turn them firmly down, accuse certain people of it, even Lord Judd, even calling him an accomplice to genocide against the whole people. The weakness of the Parliamentary Assembly, of the parliamentarians of Europe. And our demands.

We demand that the main question should be resolved. The question of war and peace. How to stop the genocide, military crimes, crimes against mankind. Everything! And the rest is not your business—they are our problems. When the war ends—we will see to them! And Chechens will clear it up among themselves, and we have the constitution. We have no questions with that. There is one problem—the war is going on, by unlawful means. Whether we will fight all the time or stop this war. How can it be stopped? Everything! And prevent, if again they touch upon the questions dealing with political inter-Chechen [aspects], then the delegation rises, slams the door and leaves. And make a statement to the whole world that here are accomplices of these Putins, these generals, and so on and so forth. Peaceful Chechen people's blood is also on these parliamentarians. It should be in such sharp form there [in the statement].

It is necessary to work very thoroughly with every parliamentarian from every country. There should be work with everyone. It is you

who should become the head of all this. Be the head. This is how I see it.

The only thing is that there is one more danger, apparently: Lord Judd is giving personal invitations to our deputies. Here Rizvan Lorsanov is an obstacle, to be more exact, a jerk, a pig. Scum. So, this plot of the Kadyrov—the “Benoevskii factor”—all this took place in his home. Being a deputy of parliament, our parliament, he wanted to run for the State Duma of the Russian Federation. He is a scoundrel. Then they organized some fraction or a parliamentary group, and that negotiations should be held with the parliament there, a parliamentary republic. He is dirty scum! I hear he is somewhere in Germany. So, he will certainly be invited there.

I am afraid that none of our guys will go there, and they [the Russians] will find a couple of jerks from our parliament, invite them individually, and will let them speak on our behalf. It is not in our favor. And there they should be driven away: “You are sleazebags and scoundrels, and you are villains and traitors.” Having said it to them right there, they should be called the names they deserve. And if I had found out their names earlier here in our parliament, they would have been deprived of their rights as deputies.

Then, about BAB [Berezovsky]. Play all this very cautiously. Play following every word that I told you. Consult me.

Work! With God’s help everything will come to an end soon! Everything is all right here. We will attack. Vallakhi! Strongly attack! There was a heavy battle in Vedeno. For about a week, Vedeno was in our hands. Similar preparations were made in four or five other places, and only because of a small deficiency, this push is at a standstill. With God’s help we will be there soon. There was a very heavy battle in Argun. The Russians had been whining all day long, 16 armored vehicles were put out of action, the Russians suffered a lot of dead.

In the village of Aleroy for almost two weeks they [the Russians] had been torturing poor people very cruelly, as they thought that I was there. They took hostages, saying that if they were not told where the president was, or if they were attacked, they would shoot the people they had captured. Around 80 of our fighters struck a powerful blow against them, burned four or five armored vehicles, then after breaking a double ring got out of there.

The Russians are being struck with blows! Vallakhi! Every day their APCs and Urals³ go up in the air like butterflies [are blown up on mines and landmines]. The guys are all worked up to fight, they are becoming disciplined. Everything’s okay!

One more thing, now everywhere by the decision of the State Defense Committee, there is an oath of allegiance to the president. All the ministers, all the deputies, all the commanders, all the emirs, all the *djamaats* take this oath.

Next, about Georgia, about what Gelayev is doing there, you should not be just an outside observer. A dirty trick is being prepared there. It's big treachery. I swear by God's name—Gelayev sold himself to them [the Russians]. I swear by God's name, he sold himself! Even at the moment when he was going to Georgia, it was said, Vallakhi! the Russians were sending him there! Is it true that there should be a battle between the Russians and the Chechens in the Pankisi Gorge? A big provocation has been prepared there. The Russians do not want to remove their base from Vaziany. They were supposed to direct Russian troops there and delay this process of withdrawing troops from Vaziani and Gudauta. And still, when they didn't succeed in organizing a provocation in the Pankisi Gorge, they removed the base from Vaziani. And everything they are doing now are attempts to hamper the withdrawing of the base from Gudauta in every possible way. They're setting Abkhazians [against Georgians], trying to organize a provocation. It's quite obvious. And again this weirdo [Gelayev] is sitting in Svaneti today. Do you understand it or not? He was sent there just for this purpose, besides if this provocation succeeds, to give an opportunity to assert that Chechens took part in it. And nothing else! This man is not his own master, and his acts are dishonest. At your level you all should carry out work, and it's not shameful to tell them: "Listen, scoundrels, what are you doing? You're playing into the enemy's hands! Are you traitors or what? Damn you! If you are men, go back to your homeland and fight!"

Goodbye. Give my regards to everyone for me! Mail me a cassette once a week. Then it will be easier for us to make ourselves understood. Otherwise, two or three months go by and suddenly something happens, and there's a misunderstanding. And there must be understanding, especially between the two of us.

Goodbye. May God help! Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 15

I received this cassette a short time after the meeting in Caux, Switzerland, with Yuri Shchekochikhin. Lyoma Usmanov, our representatives in the United States, Glen Howard of the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, S. Frederick Starr, chairman of the

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Ambassador Tim Guldemann, who chaired this meeting. Guldemann at the time was the Swiss envoy in Iran and represented US interests there. He attended the meeting at the request of the leaders of the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya and took vacation time to be there. From the Russian side the following arrived: State Duma Deputy Yuri Shchekochikhin, Abdul-Khakim Sultygov, member of the Chechen committee of the State Duma, and the real organizer of the meeting, Andrei Mironov. On the last day of our meetings, Deputy Akhyad Idigov of our parliament showed up. He was much concerned with protocol issues and could not understand the format of our discussions, which clearly bothered the other participants. Later he began spreading rumors that I had signed some agreement with the Russians and hid it from him.

Before Maskhadov dictated this tape, we had a 15-minute conversation by satellite phone. It was a fairly short but confused conversation. Maskhadov called me unexpectedly and I tried to explain to him what happened at this meeting. I attempted to explain to him again that he had not been reliably informed about the circumstances by a third party. This annoyed him. He spoke quickly in an agitated voice although from time to time he restrained himself. He didn't want to listen to my explanations. Maskhadov was always seeking to see the slightest glimmer of hope for a negotiated solution. At this point, he did not comprehend why I regarded the meeting rather coolly. I wanted to lower his expectations but I understood the real possibilities of this meeting.

Maskhadov was operating on information that came to him from an unidentified Chechen living outside Chechnya who accidentally came across some information and reported to Maskhadov a completely different version of the meeting, in particular, that the initiative came from the Russian leadership. The nature of the meeting is described in more detail in my book *The Chechen Struggle* with Dr. Miriam Lanskoj.

Maskhadov's unwillingness to hear me out created a lot of problems. From the very beginning, this meeting was the idea of a Russian human rights activist Andrei Mironov who was in contact with the American Committee with the active participation of Dr. Brzezinski. The meeting was not going to bind anyone to anything as might have thought some former political actors in Russia as well as some members of the State Duma. To avoid a variety of problems, like protocol issues, the idea was to form several groups that would come up with

ways to proceed, recommendations for a resolution, reliable channels of communications.

As I said earlier, a Chechen businessman came across some of this information, didn't understand it correctly, and began telephoning Maskhadov, totally disorienting him. Every effort I made to explain to Maskhadov, he took as a sign that I was underestimating the value of the meeting or that I did not want anything to do with it. This created so many problems that in the end this meeting almost broke up before it began. This Chechen man often telephoned Maskhadov on his satellite telephone and discussed the matter with him. Naturally all this was overheard by the Russian intelligence. Several of the Duma members, who originally gave their assent to the meeting, found themselves boxed in by the Russians, and withdrew.

What was important was that the US Department of State unofficially followed the meeting. I received an undated letter signed by Acting Assistant Secretary of State Steven Pifer saying the United States would press Russia to start a dialogue on a political settlement. Tim Guldman, who was very experienced, was interested to see how both sides might converse, how realistic we were about events, how reasonably we might seek a road to a resolution. Maskhadov apparently thought that this meeting might be the beginning of a second Khasavyurt-type negotiation, which brought the first Russian-Chechen war to an end in 1996. When I commented that the team he had named was the same one at Khasavyurt and might seem too official, too soon, to the Russians, he became quite offended. This added problems to our mutual understanding.

As you can see from this audio letter, one section is fairly short but its tone is quite irritated as he describes our relationship. We occasionally had moments of tension especially when he suspected that I had contacts with his opponents, particularly Shamil Basayev, with whom I had friendly relations from the first war. When I was foreign minister, we never discussed politics. Maskhadov apparently thought I was taking some views independent of his, but this was completely untrue. Basyaev, knowing my situation, never came to me, never gave me any assignments. He understood that I was minister of foreign affairs. I had two or three conversations with him but they were of a general nature—where Basayev described the situation on the ground—and he never tried to press me into taking any kind of political decisions. He understood that I was an employee of the government, subordinate to the president, and frankly I don't know why Maskhadov had such suspicions.

Once again, Maskhadov came back to the situation with Gelayev in Georgia. I had explained to him Gelayev's situation in Georgia and that he intended to return to Chechnya with several hundreds of men. I told Maskhadov that I understood his reaction as commander in chief, but that in our extreme situation we had to do everything to bring our forces together. I felt that by designating Gelayev a traitor, Maskhadov was acting too severely. I told Maskhadov I thought he was furthering the internal split and this only deepened his irritation at me.

Reaction to 9/11

Audio letter October 28, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you and your comrades, Ilyas! I sent you a cassette on which I outlined the situation outside Chechnya and other things regarding it, and also what I think about the negotiations. On the cassette that I sent to Akhmed [Zakayev], I asked him to get in touch with me more often through messengers, as long as there is no way to communicate through telephone or the Internet. He told me that Udugov and his men are again making noise about some captured lieutenant-colonel and making statements regarding him on our behalf, and that worries you. I'll tell you what. There's absolutely no doubt that this activity is being carried out purposefully and by order of the Russians. And this isn't the first time when you can see that it's being done at the right time for Russians and not for us. During his attack on Dagestan, he [Udugov] said that the combatants that invaded were Chechens, and afterward, with the war here [in Chechnya] he said that the guys fighting here are Arabs.

When the Russian delegation was deprived of the right to vote in PACE, he made statements that we had stabbed to death eight captured OMON [Special Russian Police] fighters from Perm, and later on, when they were making a decision [in PACE] whether to return the Russian delegation the right to vote, Kenneth Gluck was kidnapped and they took responsibility for it. And now, as they're afraid of any positive signals or contacts abroad, they specially and purposely found that lieutenant-colonel and made all that fuss about it. For all of us,

it's again and again obvious that these people [Udugov and other radicals] are being led by someone, and they have no choice but do what they're doing, even we all die or burn in flames. And these men are called traitors even by Russians. And what Kadyrov and what they [Russians] are doing about it, everything is orchestrated by the same master. One [Kaydrov] is playing one part, the other [Udugov] one is playing the other part. And we should understand that.

Second: About this prisoner and some other things. There are really big problems here. In what respect? The Russians capture our fighters, and if they can't capture a fighter they break into his house and take away a brother or a father. We even know of five or six commanders and emirs whose wives they captured and these women disappeared without trace. If they kill someone during the arrest, they take the corpses with them, and later when we contact them and offer them a lieutenant-colonel, a colonel and even a general with ten soldiers into the bargain, they just ignore these offers. "Why on earth do we need that general? Give us money! Give us ransom!" And the rates are out of sight, and each day they become higher. First, it was 500 dollars, then 1,000, then 2,000, then 3,000, then 5, then 10, then 15. This is the level to which they [the Russians] raised these stakes. Accordingly, I have no means to pay them, if they captured a fighter or his wife or his brother. I don't have so much money. I tell them to capture officers and soldiers and exchange them for their relatives, but the problem is that Russians don't want to have any exchanges. When you share the information or give an interview, you should mention this problem. Just imagine a fighter whose wife was captured: he becomes hysterical, doesn't know what to do, he doesn't have any money [for ransom]. So, he captures an officer and tries to work an exchange with the Russians, but they refuse. So he says that he'll kill him, that is, they [the Russians by their refusal] push him to do it.

What Udugov and his guys are really doing is provocation. And I want you to see the real picture here in connection with this problem. If our fighter falls into their hands [Russian hands], and if we succeed in ransoming him for 10,000 dollars, he is not a fighter any more, he isn't even a human being. They put him through the wringer, reduce him to such a condition that he will never be able to take up arms, and then sell him for a sky-high price. This is what we must be talking about everywhere. These Russians kill our women and children by the thousands, scalp them, burn them, break their ribs, but they don't have an Udugov who glorifies these actions. And we capture some colonel and following a call from Russians, we turn it into a

provocation. You are asking me how to stop it, how to deal with it. You say that such things distract you from work. They disturb me even more. So, let's think what can be done. I have already talked it over with Akhmed Zakayev. I advised him to contact you, even meet with you, and taking into consideration my reasons and suggestions, discuss it together and make decisions. These people prevented me from building up a state, they distract me from fighting, and tomorrow they'll prevent me from building up the state again. These people can't allow us to do something constructive. They'll constantly discredit everything that is going on here. They have this directive. Therefore, I suggested the following to Zakayev. First, let's deal with Udugov. What do the Russians tell us? When the war began, they said: "You should admit that it's terrorism, furthermore, it's international terrorism, so give us their names [the leaders of the Dagestan raid, including Udugov]." We didn't do that. The war has been going on for two years now. We didn't do what the Russians asked us to do. Why didn't we do it? Because we knew perfectly well what they had in mind when they had come. They've come with a feeling of vindictive punishment. If we accepted their conditions, we would have been split and divided and they would have exterminated us in the worst way. As we knew their real aims. We told them: "Give us the facts, pronounce the names."

Now there are appeals all over the world regarding the [9/11] incident in America and all the world calls on us to separate ourselves from them [the international terrorists]. "Get rid of them, there is something there." But they don't say anything definite. But we can't tell them that here there was international terrorism and therefore the Russians unleashed the war. By doing so we practically justify the aggression, Russia's genocide [against the Chechens]. So, not knowing what to do, we're at a crossroads. Besides, they [the Russians] won't stop if they get feelings of remorse, and they don't intend to stop at all.

And this makes it difficult for us to fight. And if there's some negotiation underway, they [Udugov and others] will create all sorts of problems. They'll find some colonel or a lieutenant-colonel, therefore we should leave them aside. To stop them I suggest focusing on one figure. First, let's focus on Udugov. After the end of that war [1994 – 1996], he was the leading man. It was his idea—the Congress of Chechnya and Dagestan, that is, the provocations that needed to be done against Dagestan, plans to seize it, liberation of the Caucasus and what not. Oman, Islam, extremism, terrorism—all that stuff was his idea; he was the first to start it. At that time, Basayev was still the

acting prime minister and the thought of this did not enter anyone's head. And when they had to proceed to real actions, naturally, he [Udugov] could not take a decision. At that time, Shamil didn't cope with his duties of premier and resigned in a hurry when women began to bombard the windows of his office with stones. At that very time, Udugov and Isa Umarov picked him up and proclaimed him imam of Chechnya and Dagestan, created a Majlis, a Shura and everything else and turned him [Basayev] into a torpedo. So he is just a kind of pawn. He is a shepherd, or rather a ram, put ahead of the flock by the shepherd, and when there is a new shepherd, there are new ideas.

Therefore, the most important thing for us is to announce the name of the one who started it all. The ideological inspirer of this extremism, of provocations in Dagestan, and so on and so forth, is Udugov, it is Udugov. And once again, this doesn't mean it should excuse Russia. I know, you know, everyone knows that it was Berezovsky who provided Udugov with television, it was also he who financed him and together with Udugov prepared the provocation in Dagestan. Accordingly, after that they involved special security services, they also involved the military leadership in the person of General Kvashnin, Putin, and Voloshin, and so on and so forth, that is, they did it together, both the explosions of the apartment buildings and the affair in Dagestan. Therefore, we accuse Udugov as the ideological inspirer of extremism in Chechnya and Dagestan jointly with the Russian special state security forces, jointly with the Russian hawks who had provoked the conflict in Dagestan. That is, we call him an extremist, and we call him an ideological leader of the local radicals, but this is a man who is a toy in the hands of Russian special state security forces and we put him next to them. Number two: we accuse him—this time we Chechens—that he jointly with the Russian special state security forces, Russian military hawks provoked that war, that aggression, that is, he's an accomplice in genocide against the Chechen people. In the international sense—yes, he's an extremist. But with the Russian special state security forces, and for us, Chechens, he's one of the accomplices in genocide against the Chechen people. And one more thing: we bring one more charge against him, that he obviously discredited the idea of our national-liberation movement. That conflict in Dagestan and all other things he provoked jointly with the Russian special state security forces, with the Russian hawks, using the radically minded part of the Chechen resistance movement in the person of Basayev. That is, we make him a hero, an ideological leader, but actually these are pawns.

We bring this charge against him. We immediately say that he [Udugov] is an outlaw and has nothing to do with our state, and everything he says has no legal basis and falls short of our laws. Getting involved with the Russian special state security forces and their war hawks, jointly with them [the Russians] he provoked a war in Chechnya, using the radically minded part of the Chechen resistance movement, he's an accomplice in genocide against the Chechen people, thus discrediting the ideas of the national-liberation movement in Chechnya. Then, accordingly, we issue an international arrest warrant through Interpol calling on all states where he may stay like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan for assistance in the search, arrest, and transferring him to the lawful authorities of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. And I think that we must do it, and I think that it's the right time for that. Let me know what you think about it, but I'm telling you one more time, either it's a statement or an appeal, this document must be in compliance with all diplomatic and judicial nuances, keeping in mind that we have no right to acknowledge that we're terrorists, or have international terrorism here, or any extremism. The idea of our struggle—is the idea of safeguarding of our people, the national-liberation movement, and this by no means has anything to do with the international terrorism. Specifically, charges should be brought against this man and the Russian special state security forces and so on and so forth, call him an initiator of a crime, accordingly, charges are brought followed by a search.

Next: regarding this colonel, perhaps, a statement should be made on my behalf. And I'm telling you once again, they [the Russians] recently almost caught me. I was speaking on the phone for ten minutes through the Internet, and as soon as I begin using the telephone, they had the means to determine my coordinates, the place I was calling from. Immediately, they land assault troops or make an artillery strike or fire air-to-ground missiles. And if I had not abruptly changed my whereabouts, they would definitely catch us with our pants down. Therefore, regarding this colonel, a statement should be made on my behalf that goes like this:

We respect and defend the Conventions,¹ we have no prisons, we have no camps, and we even have no ability to keep prisoners of war. Keeping POW is difficult for us because an exchange is almost out of the question, we have no place to keep them, but some desperate people are likely to resort to these methods [keeping prisoners in houses or barns] in order to free a wife, a brother, or a sister. We

don't welcome these methods. And as to this colonel, we have at our disposal official information that he was killed long ago, there was an artillery and air-to-ground strike at the bases where he was located, so this very Udugov, this instigator, jointly with the Russian special state security forces performed that show to the detriment of our interests, with a goal to discredit us again.

Thus, to try to close that issue. Or, appeal to them [the radicals] not to execute him, but to my mind, he's definitely no longer alive. Besides, they take things of this sort rather painfully, compared to the criterion that Russian warriors resort to, because what they're doing here can't come closer to any lieutenant-colonel. Therefore, yes, we have provocateurs, we have people with extremist inclinations, we have those who don't abide by any rules—but they are only a few of them, and all this stuff has nothing to do with our government agencies. We ought to claim that and brush off any accusations against us.

Finally, I order you to send me a cassette once a week, absolutely. Then, you should, by all means, put the media issue in order, also I strictly order you all to improve the effectiveness of your speeches and public appearances. So, that's it.

Goodbye. May God help us! Allakh Akbar

Akhmadov Comment No. 16

Before the devastating 9/11 attack on the United States, Maskhadov would occasionally call me on his satellite telephone and we would speak for two or three minutes. This was always a risky thing to do, because Russian intelligence monitoring might thereby determine his physical location and launch an artillery barrage in his direction. The risks involved in telephone conversations explain why there are sometimes fairly lengthy gaps in our audio letter correspondence.

After the attack, Maskhadov was extremely interested in the situation in the United States and how it might affect US policy. The Russians were loudly announcing that Putin was the first to telephone the president of the United States, George W. Bush. The tenor of his comments seemed to underline the fact that Russia has been under attack from terrorists for some time. Now the United States should understand better the threat of international terrorism that Russia was fighting in Chechnya. That would be a justification for the cruel methods that Moscow was taking against Chechens; it would be a justification for resisting any negotiation with terrorists, and it would be a call to join Russia in fighting terrorism around the world.

In the weeks following 9/11, Maskhadov telephoned me a number of times. He was concerned about the changes that might occur in US policy, but he was also worried the Russians would take the attack as an excuse to justify and intensify their military activity in Chechnya. I told him that the attack was bound to change US policy radically. I emphasized that we had to make every effort to distance ourselves from any act of terrorism, no matter how difficult that might be.

The case of Lieutenant Colonel Boryayev was the main reason for Maskhadov dictating this tape. At the end of September 2001 at the intersection of the Vedenski and Shalinski districts, Chechen fighters attacked a Russian convoy and Lieutenant Colonel Boryayev was taken prisoner. He was an adjutant to the commander of (Russian forces) in the Vedenskii district. Around October 15, Udugov published on the Kavkaz Center website Khattab's proposal to exchange the captured officer for 25 Chechen women prisoners. If the exchange failed, the Russian officer would be killed.

This announcement caught a lot of attention in the press and at the Council of Europe. In war, there are always prisoners, arrests, personnel missing in action. However, it is different when a prisoner is captured and the capturing side announces that the prisoner would be executed if conditions were not fulfilled. That would be contrary to the Geneva Conventions. This possibility was very troubling to a number of European parliamentary figures irrespective of what side the prisoner belonged to. They sought explanations from me, Zakayev, and other Chechen representatives at the Council of Europe.

Publishing Khattab's announcement was fairly typical of Udugov's style of work. He was a great expert in propaganda, in manipulating public opinion. At that time, I tried to research this matter a bit but neither then nor now did I get a complete understanding of the situation. It is true that this officer was captured, and there was another incident in which a Russian general was killed in action and his body could not be found. Udugov then falsely declared that the general was captured alive and was being interrogated. Several days later, the Russians discovered his corpse in the ruins of a building. I was never able to determine the exact details.

Maskhadov was commenting here on the issue of prisoners of both sides and was saying that there is absolutely no civilized way of dealing with this sort of situation. He pointed out that the Russian side refused to consider captured Chechens to be prisoners of war. The Russians did not call the conflict "a war." Rather they viewed it as an

internal insurgency requiring police action. They viewed the Chechen prisoners as common criminals that made an exchange impossible.

Relatives of a Chechen prisoner would try by every possible means to get the return of their kin, either alive or dead. According to the reports of human rights groups, there developed a whole illegal, informal, trade in bodies, prisoners, and other cynical interests. Neither in the first nor second war did the Russians respect the terms of the Geneva Conventions with regard to armed personnel taken on the field of battle, or civilians seized during clean-up operations. Most interesting here was Maskhadov's request to me and to Zakayev asking to neutralize the actions of Udugov that complicated our efforts to win support for our political actions from members of the Council of Europe.

Here he is urging those of us abroad to call on our host countries for help. In my case, the State Department. I had a more realistic view because even for established nations with diplomatic relations, not to speak of unrecognized states, no one was going to lift a finger if there was no extradition agreement between them. And, of course, there was no extradition agreement between the United States and unrecognized Chechnya. In my answer to Maskhadov, I explained to him the situation and said the only thing we really could do was to distance ourselves from radical declarations like Udugov's.

Maskhadov was always trying to unite all the wings of the Chechen resistance to form a united front against the great force arrayed against us. He was trying to dampen the sharp edges among us through compromise. But every time that he succeeded in uniting our forces, there would be some terrible terrorist event, like the Dubrovka/Nord Ost episode in 2002 or the Beslan school tragedy in 2004, which would open up the split again and drive us into another dead end. When we had a semblance of unity, it was imperative that Maskhadov did not interfere with Udugov, or the radical wing of the resistance.

That forbearance risked making Maskhadov look like a close ally of the radicals and obviously confused Western observers. Or turned them against us. I don't remember any other such incident in which Maskhadov was driven to such an outburst.

Maskhadov Names a Successor

Audio letter of November 8, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades. There is only one reason for my recording this cassette: I am tired of being in the dark and lack of any news from you, from not knowing what is going on there [abroad]. As I told you on the previous cassette, I have stopped using both the Internet and the phone, because I understood that would create a serious threat for me. It was just by miracle that I escaped danger two or three times.

On my previous cassette, I obliged you to send me through Khan, who is in Baku, a cassette twice a week, yes, twice a week. However, you do not do it; perhaps, you think it a trivial order, or just think that what can we tell him, as there isn't much going on to talk about, and so on, perhaps, this is what you think. Well, it's likely the way you understand my order. And still, I told you that even if nothing of importance is happening just send me a cassette with the words "Ассалам Аллейкум! There have been no changes." It is very easy to do, isn't it? In my opinion, in this case, there is no other explanation for it but absence of elementary discipline or respect.

I'm sitting here without any information. When I listen to "Radio Liberty" or "Deutsche Welle," I hear them say that PACE is going to hold a conference on human rights, somewhere else the Rogozins and the like gathered to discuss issues of peaceful settlement, there are very many events, and also the situation in Afghanistan, and the Americans' statement regarding it. I don't have all this information

as well what steps you are taking—whether you sent someone to attend those events, or whether or not you made any statements regarding all these developments. Literally, you're driving me into a depressive stupor. I've forgotten about Russians, about all these hardships, about hunger and cold weather, I've forgotten about everything, because I've been worrying about your actions and lack of any information about them, whatsoever.

And therefore once again I'm telling you, and this is an order, my order. Every week, and I said that to Khan, twice a week there must be mail from you. Earlier I told you the mail should arrive once a week, and now, I repeat it one more time, I must receive it twice a week. Twice a week you must send me a cassette with a detailed description of what's going on, your actions and plans. But if it comes to the crunch, and nothing of interest is happening, send me your joint discussions regarding current events: what the Americans said, what the State Department said, what our answer to it should be, what measures should be taken in connection with the forthcoming session of PACE, etc. It's like being with you and we had a chance to meet and discuss the events, but only in this case you're doing it through an audio cassette. And you take it as a formal account after a serious formal visit, as a supplement to all that stuff.

If, knowing everyday situations, realizing how fast it changes, checking our intentions and synchronizing our intentions and actions, and coming to the same conclusion, we still don't work, we can make such a dumb mistake that it'll be very difficult for us to make up for it. So, that's the whole story. Thus, I'm saying it once again, twice a week you must send Khan a cassette with the description of changes that take place, or with your plans and intentions. If you're interested in the situations here, don't hesitate to ask and I'll give you an exhaustive answer.

Today, right now, the situation here is like this: it seems that the Russians are planning to withdraw some troops from here. It seems that they have withdrawn one brigade from Dargo [a settlement in the Vedensky region], and also, apparently, they are withdrawing part of the subdivisions stationed in the region of Angenoy. In all likelihood, at least the way I see it, the reason for it is as follows: As of December 2001, the OSCE troop flank reductions, agreed at the Istanbul summit of 1999, in the North Caucasus are coming due, I think. And also, in my opinion, they [Russians] have supply problems with their troops here. They are right when they say that everything is tied to that oil pipeline and that pipe burst. Third, in all likelihood, there is

some moral and psychological pressure from both inside and outside Russia. But in any case, it doesn't seem that they are ready to give up their policies here. Again and again these Kadyrovites run to Moscow, humiliate themselves before them [Russians] saying that if the troops are withdrawn they would have to fight against Wahabbis, so give us money, we'll beef up the militia, special police squads, organize *tarikats*¹ regiments. So, with these requests that dirty scum [Akhmad Kadyrov] runs to Moscow.

Putin is supposed to swallow the bait, and in all likelihood, can give him the money, as he himself wants it to be this way, and in all likelihood, they'll try to arrange some confrontation within Chechnya. This, certainly, will fail here, this won't be allowed to happen. I've been conducting some policy and diplomacy with people in this direction. Next, exactly what they [Russians] are trying to create around me; I told you before and don't want to repeat myself. Today, at this moment, they're carrying out a clean-up operation in Verkhny Aleroy. Yesterday they made it hell on earth in Gansolchu and blew up the home of the chief of my guard Shaa. Earlier they blew up Akhmad's² and other guys' houses in Nizhny Aleroy. They [Russians] were irritated, they were prowling around, saying "He [Aslan Maskhadov] must be here, he conducted a meeting there yesterday." But with Allah's permission, I hope that luck will be against their search for me, but they're making every effort for it. It seems, that having neutralized me, they try to break up our legitimacy. In this regard I'd like to say what needs to be done to make them understand that it is all in vain. Eliminating me won't do them any good, I've taken all these things into consideration.

As when Dzhokhar got killed and they discussed who would replace him, and the Parliament issued a statement confirming Yandarbiyev as vice president. I've taken all these things into consideration. I discharged Vakha Arsanov [as vice president] by my decree 319, of August 31, 1999. That decree was legitimized and confirmed by the Parliament. For failure to perform his duties. He has not done anything, even lifted a finger. He's been keeping a low profile, doing nothing, since the beginning of this war. It's very dangerous! I assigned the person who will replace him.

I haven't announced the decree, but if suddenly something happens to me, there's a person who will automatically take my place, all necessary formalities have been observed in writing and there is legal documentation. And other formalities, that must be adopted by the State Committee of Defense as the decree of extension of my

authority, and other things, I've taken everything into consideration. Therefore, they should be told: "It's all in vain! We have huge experience how to fight with you, how to deal with you, and how to talk with you. You're beating a dead horse!" It'll be difficult for them to break the foundation of this state [Chechen Republic of Ichkeria]. And with Allah's permission, we'll preserve accomplishments, whatever happens to me or anyone else! So, this is it, and they [Russians] should know that, too.

Number two. Whether or not they beef up his [Akhmad Kadyrov's] militia, beef up the special OMON police squad, the Chechens will not fight with each other. I've already spread my open appeal to the people, to those who began to serve in the militia, and to those who are planning to serve there. "Let's not use weapons too fast! Don't be the first to open fire!"

However mad we get with each other, let's keep away from this. Like the political split in Afghanistan between the North Alliance and the others, but such things, with Allah's permission, never happened before with us and won't happen now! Therefore, guys, if you went to serve to militia, take your weapons and since Russians haven't left yet, rush to join me. Otherwise, if tomorrow the Russians leave those who didn't obey me shouldn't hope for any amnesties like the ones announced by Yandarbiyev after the first war. That will not happen! You'll be charged only on one article: undermining the president, government bodies, constitutional system. As it was last time, when they said that these are from Dudayev's opposition, and these are in favor of Dudayev—this won't happen again! So, this is it! In any case, if they still start organizing ROVDs and village militia, I told them that I'll disarm them, and the weapons will become our property. The situation will be clear—they will be surrounded and warned that if they don't resist, we won't open fire, but give up your weapons and get out of here! That's how it'll be.

Therefore, don't waste your efforts, if you succeeded in starting a dialogue or there's some contact, cut out all nonsense and start them [negotiations]. Correspondingly, international terrorism and attempts to squeeze us into it, those Russian scream: "We're fighting here, and you [the United States and coalition partners] there." They'll be beating a dead horse! We've taken these facts into consideration, too. What's going on here is absolutely different.³ If we speak about certain names, like Udugov or someone else, just call him the name he deserves. But if we speak about others who are fighting to protect our Motherland against Russians, whoever they are—for us

they are volunteers. If they have some definite facts, then let's have an independent investigation, let's have an independent international hearing and I'm quite prepared to go there and take with me anyone they want. Give us facts! We should follow a precise strategy in this respect. But the most important thing here is that we must explain to the Russians that they won't succeed in dragging us into that circle⁴ and put us on the same level with Bin Laden. We should do everything the right way here.

Next: I'm seriously concerned about PACE and what all those Rogozins and the like have been up to. We have to be careful in this respect. It's necessary to be active in PACE, we shouldn't antagonize them saying that we have nothing to do with you. We should be more active with them but without Russians. If Russians come there with their usual "spectacle" we should know exactly how to deal with them. And after that, be it Tutakov or Ferzauli, we should work thoroughly with all the deputies [deputies of PACE]. We should tell them: "Yes, we need you, we love you, we respect you, etc., but don't make us sit together with those pigs. It's an insult for us." This work should be carried out. Where it is formal we have to be very cautious. Next, I told Akhmed [Zakayev] everything that needs to be done, that they should organize a board there [PACE] by all means, and discuss all the questions together. Otherwise, we may do strange things—we could do this, we could do that, we would give them this one, or give up arms. There should be no irresponsible statements like these at all! We have a president, we'll talk it over with him, he'll tell us, we'll specify it and see to it—this is the strategy in case tough issues come up. But if it concerns things we can't do under any circumstances, we should immediately tell them to knock it off! Without any sentiments!

There's one more thing. When you're giving a press conference, and I reproached you in the previous cassette that you should give them more often, because, unfortunately, I have no chance to do it. When you're making a speech, I'm telling you again, you may openly, without hiding anything, say with confidence that now everyone in Chechen Republic of Ichkeria obeys Maskhadov. He's in charge of everyone. Now I'm not telling you this for effect. Just a week ago, I had a meeting with all the commanders and all emirs of *djamaats*, including the most radical such as Akhmadovs and Barayevs. I met with all of them and talked with all of them. It's time we stopped acting like fools! We will capture Dagestan! We'll enter Botlikh! We'll capture the whole world! We'll go as far as Jerusalem! If we keep repeating these slogans, and drag ourselves after Udugovs, we'll never

be able to explain anything to our people and we will never have Islam nor faith in its truth.

And we will not be able to create an Islamic state nor any state at all. There will always be a label of international terrorism. Therefore, we should be extremely patient. The most important thing that interferes with the Russians is that we have a state and this state has form and content, and there are legitimate leaders at the head of this state. And this is for them [Russians] harder to swallow than blowing up their Kremlin, so let us do what they like least of all! They [the commanders] understand that it is necessary to observe the state's directives, follow the president's policies, and carry out his will. Today I don't see the people who would say that Basayev or Khattab had told them something, and they would continue fighting ignoring the president's will. Even if Shamil or Udugov wanted it. Many people don't pay attention to their moves now. It's an entirely different situation. Therefore you can confidently state that. I also tell the *djamaats* and their emirs everything they should do—if you're told to fight, then fight; if you're told to attack, then attack. If you're told to stop, then stop. If you're told to seek peace, then seek peace. Just here you have the president who thinks about all these things and whose people are working on these issues here and abroad. Just do everything that you're told. Do you understand? There is order and nowadays everyone accepts it. And if we need to make a strike on our enemies, we have an opportunity to do this. We have definite plans. There is no shortage of men and mujahedeen. Do it! And while executing the instructions, carrying out the orders, let us do our best, and everything will be fine!

Goodbye, and pass on my greetings to everyone. Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 17

Maskhadov again described the situation in Chechnya, Russian clean-up operations, troop movements, occasional conflicts growing out of our ambushes, and personal complaints against me. But most important, in my opinion, was that Maskhadov here talks about a successor. His five-year term as president would normally end on January 27, 2002, according to Article 71 of the 1992 constitution.⁵

Frankly speaking, it would not have been possible to hold new elections in the weeks before January 27, 2002, because the war was still active although the Russians claimed it was winding down. Therefore, the State Defense Committee took the decision to extend Maskhadov's

term beyond January, in compliance with the Chechen Constitution. No exact date was named for new elections, which might be held when the situation was stable enough to permit it.

By the end of 2001, the Russians generally considered Maskhadov an illegitimate president. However, their attitude varied depending on what was politically convenient for them at the time. As Moscow began creating its alternative government under Akhmad Kadyrov, the Kremlin asserted that the elections that chose Maskhadov were themselves totally illegitimate because the 1992 Chechen Constitution did not state that Chechnya was part of the Russian Federation.

Later in September 2003, the Russians tried to stimulate a move "to impeach" Maskhadov under the very constitution they considered illegitimate!⁶ To do so, they corralled a number of Chechen parliament deputies to initiate a motion of impeachment for treason and other high crimes. On September 12, these deputies, led by deputy speaker of the Chechen parliament Isa Temirov, held a press conference in Moscow to announce that Maskhadov had been impeached and was no longer president.

This was an obvious travesty since these four deputies did not represent a quorum of the legislature. In actuality, the Chechen parliament by now was barely in existence. Some of its members had been killed, some had fled abroad, a few remained in Chechnya, some declined to take part in any political activity. This "impeachment" was soon forgotten.

In this cassette, Maskhadov stated that he had dismissed his vice president Vakha Arsanov who was inactive and seemed to be going over to the internal opposition. That decision was confirmed by the Chechen parliament such as it was. He added that he had appointed a new vice president although he did not name him. He said he was taking steps for a smooth transition in case of his own death. When Maskhadov was killed in March 8, 2005, the successor turned out to be Abdul Khalim Saidullayev, a political and religious figure.

The succession issue was the main message for me and I suppose he sent out similar cassettes to others about his arrangements. Maskhadov did not tell me, or his other representatives, who his successor might be. Evidently, he did not want to encourage a further jockeying for power. I did not worry much about Maskhadov's future because I felt confident that he would survive as leader much longer. However, when he was killed, I called Umar Khanbiev, at the time one of Maskhadov's closest comrades, and asked him if Saidullayev was indeed the successor Maskhadov envisaged. He replied in the positive.

I suspect that Saidullayev was a compromise figure. Maskhadov needed to name a person who would continue to carry out his policy but who might still be able to develop reasonable relations with his internal opponents. That imperative clearly excluded Khanbiev, Zakayev, myself, and a number of other officials.

Also, of course, Maskhadov included in this audio letter, and in the next ones I received, his assessment of internal developments, particularly, the Russian policy of Chechenization, beefing up Akhmad Kadyrov's special security forces and putting Chechens to work for the Russians. He disclosed that he was taking steps to impede this Chechenization process and looked upon the Russian effort skeptically. In our history we had no clear precedents to draw upon. During the 19th century conquest of the Caucasus, the Russians did strike up deals with different clans (teips) and sought to turn one clan against another. The famous case of Haji Murat, written about so eloquently by Leo Tolstoy, is an example of temporary, opportunistic dealings. This Avar warrior dealt with the Russians for purely family reasons, but remained solidly anti-Russian.

Maskhadov occasionally compared our situation to that in Afghanistan where rifts in society led to the creation of the Northern Alliance, which came out against the Taliban. We believed that the bonds among Chechens were unusually strong, that our society was indivisible, and would remain united against the Russian invaders whatever happened. Unfortunately, we were wrong. We underestimated how tired our people were of war; how much they recognized that the Russians possessed superior force and in the long term could dominate.

The January 27 Presidential Issue

Audio letter of November 27, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you and your comrades, Ilyas! The cassette you sent me reached me and I listened to it. Also, a little earlier I received a cassette from Akhmed Zakayev and listened to what he said.

The real situation seems to me to be like this: the Russians have withdrawn some troops. In Dargo they had a brigade—lousy jerks who were equipped with up to a thousand armored units, and they completely withdrew this deployment. Then, between Urus Martan and Tanghi-Chu the 245th regiment had been stationed and they withdrew that regiment—at least, it looks so. Then, there are rumors regarding the withdrawal of one more brigade of the security forces in Kurchaloy. In other places they're relocating the commandant's offices, and the OMON. Some are taken away, others are brought in—there's some movement there.

It seems to me it is because, according to the Istanbul summit, time is running out for flank reductions of troops and weapons in the Northern Caucasus, and also, very likely, material equipment isn't in the shape it used to be.¹ Then, the events in the Central Asia, Afghanistan. If, suddenly, they also would need troops, I don't think that they have other such especially combat-ready detachments. It seems to me that the situation is dangerously explosive there. They know that keeping a large quantity of troops won't do them any good. By no means.

Then, what they're doing around me is like this: they have focused on communications; as soon as I make a phone call, after ten to fifteen minutes they launch an artillery strike. Number two: ... [beginning of this sentence inaudible] they have literally organized a hunt for the relatives of the men in my entourage: bodyguards, guards, the chief of the guard, the commander of the Presidential Guard. For example, Ilyas Talkhadov² [God bless him!]: they kidnapped his 80-year-old father just at the moment when he was praying. There's absolutely no doubt that they had beaten him to death, and still no one knows where the corpse is, although eight or nine months have passed. He has disappeared without a trace.

Then, Akhmad, the commander of the president's guard from Aleroy, they hunted for his father, but he was hidden at one place, and small children from his house, ten- and twelve-year-olds, were hidden in different places. Finally, they [the Russians] blew up his house totally. Also, they blew up the house of the chief of one of the battalions of the president's guard, where I had found shelter. Then they captured the 75-year-old father of Shaa from Gansolchu—the commander of my guard. He disappeared without a trace, and as of today nothing is known about his whereabouts. Shaa's house was blown to smithereens and everything inside was burned to ashes.

Many our commanders, as far as I know, three or four of them, their wives were seized and taken away right out of their homes. Nothing is known about their whereabouts, or whether they're alive or not. They seize women right in their homes and take them away. If there's a younger brother they kidnap him and take him away, if there's a father, they seize him and take him away. The only condition: when he [the fighter] comes, we'll let you go. These are the punitive actions they're practicing. Accordingly, the generals and these officers, who have got used to this money and are making a lot of money too, they, most likely, are sort of a deterrent. In what respect? Their troops are here ... Even if nothing happens, and even realizing that none of their plans will work, they just want to gain a month or two [more in Chechnya].

Here's what I wanted to say in this respect: these generals too, these servicemen say to Putin: "Let us stay here another two months, and we'll do a hell of a job, we'll capture all of them, it's easier for us to operate in winter." Perhaps, Putin's heard it a dozen times. Perhaps, he knows perfectly well that they won't do anything this winter. Nevertheless, despite the fact that he's heard that more than once, however, it seems to me, that he doesn't dare tell his servicemen

openly: “Get out of there.” And every time he says: “OK, two more months, until the spring, but then you’ll have to leave without fail.” I think that this situation is developing like this.

Then, the Kadyrovites and those with him, what they’re hoping for is obvious: after doing here whatever might come into their heads, promote an inter-Chechen confrontation at any cost. They will keep running to Putin and telling him that if you leave [Chechnya], if you withdraw your troops, we will still be fighting here, we have nowhere to go, give us some money, we will bring our police up to 10,000. And this tightwad [Akhmad Kadyrov] is also running there. Of course, Putin would like that. This is the most likely possibility, isn’t it? But he still doesn’t believe him [Akhmad Kadyrov] because it isn’t the first time he says it. And everyone understands that the Chechens won’t fight among themselves. This barrier exists even nowadays. And therefore the money and the weapons that are given to them [the Chechens], as it was done in the first war, can be turned against these very Russians.

After getting the weapons, these guys either come over to our side or if our fighters surround their ROVD, they give up those weapons and walk away, or sell us these weapons at a low price. Afterward, the Russians have to take these weapons away by force. It happened before with those who had joined Umar Avturkhanov, or Gantemirov. He [Putin] is afraid of giving money to the Kadyrovs openly, because the latter is such a lousy scum that loves wealth. And they [the Russians] are afraid of providing them with weapons. What they’re doing is called “Honey is sweet, but the bee stings.” But what conclusion can be drawn from it? The political leadership in the person of the president understood that they would never succeed here. They understand it pretty well.

Then, what we’re busy with here is the use of all possible measures to bring all our fighters into a single command, and, to my mind, I’ve been succeeding in it. Furthermore, training the fighters on how to strike blows at the enemy through a special change of tactics. For instance, there were subversive units numbering ten to fifteen people for demolition work, and now, when they [the Russians] have withdrawn some big units and there’s traffic of long columns, I broke them into smaller groups, three fighters in each, sniper groups. It’s easy, and the material costs aren’t big. Now we’re training these guys so they do not miss a single armored personnel carrier, not a single Ural semi-trailer without a sniper shot at the windshield, that is, completely paralyzing their movements. Everyone has been given

his intersection, his part of the road, his checkpoint. Sniper groups of two or three people and they hunt in turn. They destroy any soldier who happens on the road. Whether it's summer or winter, what a difference that makes! And then, with God's permission I'm making big preparations. I hope these guys will completely come to integrated order, so then we'll be able to carry out full-scale operations. I think so. I think there'll be such an opportunity.

The next issue is certainly linked to January 27, 2002. They created a big movement for that occasion. In what respect? They're busy preparing constitutions, consulting councils ... *[Here the recording is interrupted for a few minutes by another recording. Dampened sounds in Chechen can be heard in the background of the Russian TV news. Apparently, they eavesdropped on the cassette and, possibly, it was recorded while Aslan Maskhadov and I were carrying on that conversation.]*

What I'm driving at is this: today in Baku, the representative of the president of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria is supposed to head the demonstration of the refugees with placards and slogans: "Election on January 27, 2002—is the people's choice!" You should gather all the journalists and correspondents there and announce my statement made at the session of the State Committee for Defense. Mass movement, pictures, documents, etc. It's a mandatory action! This is an order! It's a special mandatory action! The same should be done in Georgia. Zakayev personally should give a task to Aldamov and others to go to the refugees and prepare everything. It must be a mass action. It's not for my sake, it's for the sake of the state. The same should be done in Turkey. These are the events that we should carry out and this is the representatives' responsibility. By that time our purely political activities must be at a high level.

Now, about the negotiations [November 18, 2001] between Kazantsev and Zakayev. I think it's unnecessary to tell you how it all started and ended up in what you already know. In any case, it didn't happen by itself and it wasn't easy, and it happened without the Russians' desire, and they weren't very happy to accept it. They would never allow any contact with our side, that is, the opposing side, if they didn't have the slightest way out of it. Then, like in the course of the first war, they would be searching for a way out, for some field commander, the vice president, some Nukhayeys, some Gantemirovs or Kadyrovs. But to have a formal contact with the opposing side would be a devastating blow to them. The more so, to have an international observer as the third side is more dangerous

for them. But nevertheless, they accepted it, they did it reluctantly, making up excuses, that they issued an ultimatum, demanded we lay down arms.

But they have come to realize that people here are no fools either, they know that the Russians always say that. But still they've come to realize that! They still entered into negotiations! Still we met! So, that was a forced meeting and every shepherd here knows about it. Then, as I said, respectively, the military [the Russians] didn't like it either. Here I have a statement of the State Duma of the Russian Federation in which they're making a direct inquiry to the minister of defense, to the minister of internal affairs and to the FSB: "Is that true that you're putting on hold the punitive operations, clean-up operations, special operations, and all this is due to the meeting between Zakayev and Kazantsev?"

And in the State Duma they say that it's out of the question, because it'll repeat the year 1996 and so on, and so forth. That is, the parliament is against it, and here we have local jerks who run to them making a big deal of it. It seems to me that they once again they drew out this contact, that is, left it without continuation. I told Akhmed Zakayev that there's no need to impose ourselves on them, no need to make phone calls. They themselves will come over, they have no choice! If they came once, they'll come again! If we have worked out this attitude we should stick to this attitude! Here in a couple of months we'll let them know that every month, every day isn't in their favor. On the other hand, and I told Akhmed Zakayev about it, we still have a real example, just between us, and certainly, we can't speak about it as far as big politics are concerned. For example, what the Americans did in Afghanistan; in general, they're working very professionally there. The Russians should learn the ropes from them. And as usual, the Russians work crudely. "They have muscles for brains," as the Russian saying goes. And although they [the Americans] have power, have everything, they appealed to the whole world: Great Britain, Germany, and even Russia, they appealed to the whole world with a call: "Let's unite to fight international terrorism!" You see how skillfully it was done!

Now, regarding the "January 27" issue, I'll send you the Resolution of the State Committee of Defense and the attachment to it. I'll also try to find the previous Resolution of the State Committee of Defense, because it's difficult for me to keep the whole archive with me. If worst comes to worst, if you need to demonstrate a document like this one somewhere, you can declare that in the beginning of the war the

State Committee of Defense in the presence of all the deputies of the parliament, the representatives of the executive and legislative bodies made a decision, that due to martial law and so on, and so forth, the military operations on the territory of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, it was impossible to hold an election or convene a congress, etc. Also, it's possible to draw up such a document, so discuss it with Zakayev. But I think that I'll find this document. It's the first document that was adopted. It's in a way the supplement to it that proves it once more, and I'll send it. Therefore, I persuasively ask you to move heaven and earth there. Involve those who are crazy, contused, deceived, and as I say, those who look askance at you. On January 27, there must be mass political enthusiasm everywhere. Political enthusiasm!

Second, regarding PACE and the working group. You're talking about the letter sent by its leader. I'm constantly in touch with all the parties, social movements, be it Badalov, be it Kutayev, be it Lipkhan Bazayeva, be it Madina Magomadova, be it Zainap Goshayeva.³ I try to send them there, explain it to them, what they need to talk about so that they attract public attention without our formal presence there. I think we've stood our ground regarding this statement [about the statement regarding the temporary suspension of duties of formal representatives working with PACE]. I don't know their concrete decision. Whether they established a consulting council or not. What laws or rights is it based on? As you've read, I understood their decision. Was it established as an organ or not? Where was it placed? What laws or rights is it based on? It's very important! Why? Whether we like it or not, and the more so if the Russians insist on it—it's a very provocative affair. Very provocative! Here, you see, like Afghanistan they say that they're establishing some organ that would replace, it would seem, the legitimate organs. Even if Rabbani was banished, they [the Americans] had an opportunity to tell them: "Keep going." Nevertheless, they staged a provocation through Pashtuns and Taliban members, and then use it in big politics in the relations between big states, saying that this side intercepted the initiatives.

Again, what reasons do they have to replace the existing legitimate branches of power? The executive branch in the person of the president—he's alive, safe and sound, and in his proper place. Tell me, what problems are there? Here's the parliament—everything is in place. The judicial power? Here you go! You're welcome! The State Committee for Defense? Here you go! Orderly system of controlling troops? Here you go! Foreign policy? Home policy? There's

everything, everything exists. Why should we be replaced by someone? What's the reason, and what are the claims against us? Well, has anyone heard the president call for terrorist actions? On the contrary, despite everything, we're trying to do our best that there are no claims against us in terms of international rules and laws, so that there are no reasons to find fault with us. Although sometimes there's an itch to use four-letter words with them, behaving as they do, we don't do it.

On the official level, on the president's level, on the level of the branches of power, absolutely nowhere, in no way, did we let anyone think that our actions resemble what the Russians do. Again, it's worth reminding them that everything that's happening here: the brutality of these butchers, this hungry swarm of locusts has no bounds. Who has ever heard of a war, genocide, fascism, Satanism? Well, there's no definition for it. Therefore, we just can't give up what we've gained—the legitimate bodies of power. We just can't afford to throw them away. We can't allow an internal confrontation. Why? Because we know what these brutes will do with our people. Therefore, we're very careful! If these pigs feel free and easy, it's quite obvious what they'll be up to here! Therefore we should adhere to very restrained politics, cautious politics. We mustn't allow any mistakes. These Troshevs and the like will wipe out everything that's alive here! They're pigs! That's what should be said to them [at PACE]. This is what we're mostly concerned with, we fear most of all. Do you understand? And all this is related to concerns for the destiny of our people. The letter to them [PACE] should be written in this perspective. If, unexpectedly, they get in touch with us, or we take part in some activities, we should lay down certain conditions: "If somehow you don't observe these conditions, then we'll slam the door and you can all go to hell!" This is the way to do it, although I don't know if there's a 100 percent guarantee of success, but if we sit with the Gantemirovs, Kadyrovs, it won't be interesting for us just to swing our arms. And it's just what Rogozins want! In this regard you know better.

I'm thinking about the representative. Zakayev passed it on to me that he might be a participant in the first contact with Russia, if he were given the floor at the January session [PACE]. And as a matter of fact, I can agree to it. I can agree. Then get together, write the answer and send it. Then my representative, Zakayev for example, will meet with their leaders [PACE]. And what he should tell them, explaining the conditions, must be clearly pointed out. It should be done the way you say. They should confess that they convince us, that they aren't going to act in collusion with Russia and commit any treachery

against us and so on, and so forth. This contact could be established again on certain conditions, but they can't do this, or this or that! And if they violate them, we reserve the right to do this!

That's how he [Zakayev] should speak with their head, Johnston, or what's his name. Abumuslimov said that he was invited somewhere as a scientist, or academician, or something like that. Let him speak also. Nothing to worry about! But Zakayev, being the president's representative, should go there and meet with their leadership. With their leadership. Talk all these issues over with them. Our participations in the forums, giving us the floor, etc. Then all other things, called consulting—just to stop the military operations. And no politics! The more so, such as, for example, the inter-Chechnya issue! Our only concern is to stop the war! No other responsibilities! We have all the rest. There's the constitution. There's the conception of creating a state, the conception of peaceful settlement, all the branches of power. There's everything, everything exists.

We won't violate any international standard, we'll do all this, we're clean. We're doing fine. There's no need [to draw up a new Chechen Constitution by the consulting council at PACE]. These are Russian satanic jokes! At PACE they should be concerned how to stop this barbarism, how to stop the war, how to stop the genocide. So, we can speak to them in this tone, discuss, participate, be present, and so on and so forth. But as soon as they start politics—that's it, we slam the door and leave. Therefore, meet with Zakayev, write that letter and send it. Talk over everything he should do during the meeting [with the leadership of PACE] and finally after meeting with them leave the last word to me. "Yes, everything will be passed on to the president, after that it'll be discussed at the State Committee for Defense and they'll make a decision." This is the way to do it. And it should be done so that Zakayev is given the floor at that session. To my mind, they have one in January. That's all in this respect.

Now, regarding the place where you should go. It seems to me, it's time, as I told you before, maybe just hinted, to speak to the point, to speak openly. Whether we want it or not, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Middle Asia, the Caucasus is next. The big state [the USA] will definitely come here! Now in Georgia the Georgian generals are getting around Vasiani figuring out which unit will be stationed there. It's obvious. They [the Americans] won't leave the Caucasus to the Russians, they'll kick them out of here. Therefore, we should carry on an open conversation with them, and speak straight to the point. What we're going to do in our homeland, what are the goals of our

struggle, what we're going to create here and all that. We don't have any extremist or any other stupid things on our minds. If Russia is there [in the Caucasus], we'll live peacefully with her. If it is the United States, we'll live peacefully with the United States.

But we need a partner who can speak with us normally, treat us as human beings, leaving aside all those "anti-terrorist operations," "constitutional order," this genocide. We aren't supercrazy. We aren't Bin Ladens or Talibes. We're people who know that we're Chechens, we know our customs and traditions, we acknowledge the international law and the rules. We know that we have to live in this world and abide by its rules. This is the foundation of the state we built up and we want in this world. But constant presence of danger coming from this barbarian state forces us persistently to wage war with it. Otherwise, as soon as we stop, that's it, they evict us, they annihilate us more and more. Whatever we say to Russia, it doesn't understand.

Nowadays it's quite obvious that we'll never be united with Russia. We're enemies! Now Russia has shown its real face even to an ignorant shepherd, which is quite different. But we can't always be at war with Russia. We have nothing to gain from this war, as we're only 1 million, and they're 150 million. They've got huge military potential, industrial potential. We don't have it. Therefore, we're forced to seek a partner who's capable to understand us. Therefore, we ask them: "What are you going to do in the Caucasus? What's your interest here? OK. You've come to the Caspian Sea, so what's next? Well, don't mince words! What's for the future? For example, after you got there, what next? We're interested in it.

Don't contact us through the Udugovs, the Khattabs, and so forth. There's the president, he'll understand, if it helps preserve his people and preserve his homeland, and then we'll see!" This is the way to talk to them, as if they've already come here [the Caucasus] and if they have the slightest interest in us; otherwise, they'll lump us all together, saying that there's already some Khattab, and it's very bad for us. Very bad. And the fact that we weren't included in those lists [the list of terrorist organizations at the US State Department] is normal, I know that. That is, to demonstrate our attractiveness to them, even hint at it. Next. I told you before, that we should tell them we need their assistance, maybe even at the official level. "Now, that the chips are down, help us."

"If you can't do it yourselves, there are other countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and so on and so forth. Order them! Help us!" I think we should tell it to them straight out. I'm telling

you once again: we should arouse interest in them, show them our attractiveness, explain our perspectives to them, that we hold no threats for them, or for their global politics. Our intentions are very clear: to preserve our people, live in our homeland, have our own state, and that's it! And show them that here in the Caucasus we carry weight and the same status as Afghanistan in the Southeast [political importance in the region]. Explain to them that the peoples of the Caucasus have always considered our opinion, and it's of no small importance to them what attitude the Chechens will adopt. This is how we should raise our price a bit, and on the other hand, show them that we aren't insane and have nothing to do with extremism. So, by drawing them into a dialogue, find out what their interest is. It's natural that they won't reveal it to us, but just their initial interest and say: "There, help us!" I think we should carry out more open politics, to my mind, we're going in that direction. So, that's the whole story. Here I'm finishing my talk. And wherever you are, send a fax to Khan, he'll put it into an envelope and send it to me [through a courier] Once a week, by all means: "I've arrived there. The situation is this and that, I'm doing the following." If I receive these messages, I'll feel much calmer. As to PACE and everything that is connected with negotiations, discuss it very reasonably, be it Abumuslimov, be it Zakayev, be it you or anyone else. Get together and taking everything into consideration, take a very cautious position in this respect.

Goodbye. May God help us! May our cause please the Most High Allakh! Allakhu Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 18

This is a quite wide-ranging cassette, beginning with routine matters and moving on to developments in US politics in relation to Western Europe and the Caucasus. Maskhadov reminds me and other representatives of the need to activate Chechens abroad. He wanted to emphasize that the elections of January 27, 1997, resulted in the creation of a legitimate government. He stressed the need, at the end of his five-year term in 2002, to repeat over and over again that he was the legally elected president of Chechnya despite the Russian occupation. Had there been no active war, he would have called for new elections, which hopefully would have re-elected him. Of course, with hostilities going on it was impossible to present the issue to the Chechen population as a whole.

Maskhadov hoped for a positive signal of support from the large concentrations of Chechens in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Poland. There was only a few hundred Chechens in the United States and I had no means of reaching them. Indeed, had I tried to mobilize them, I would probably have been in violation of US Justice Department rules, which called for the registration of foreign agents. My status in those days was that of a simple foreign visitor, not of a registered foreign representative.

President Maskhadov talked briefly about the possibility of negotiations. In Maskhadov's judgment, the Russians had concluded that it would be impossible to end the Chechen problem through purely military means. Maskhadov recalled the many initiatives aimed at trying to get talks started, especially the initiatives of PACE. Behind this was his strong assertion that Chechnya, though unrecognized in the world community, was a legitimate state, possessing a written constitution, three branches of government, and abiding by international norms.

He again emphasized Chechnya's desire for a negotiated end to the conflict and recalled the meeting at Sheremetyevo Airport of General Viktor Kazantsev of Russia's Southern Military District and Akhmed Zakayev, vice president of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria on November 18, 2001. It was a very brief meeting, only a half hour long, and was quite widely reported at the time. But it gave no results. General Kazantsev repeated Moscow's insistence that Chechnya reintegrate into the Russian Federation, while Zakayev reiterated the Chechen demand for independence. Nonetheless, Maskhadov took the view that the meeting was a step forward; contacts were possible, and at some future date the two sides would come together. On the other hand, the Russians used the meeting to counter Western accusations that they were making no effort to find a peaceful solution with the Chechen leadership.

Looking back more than a decade later, I would have to say that Maskhadov did not fully appreciate the hardening of the Russian position. But who did? The years 2002 and 2003 saw considerable efforts by influential individuals, Russian, Chechen, Americans to encourage political negotiations between the warring sides. But none of these took hold.

I am reminded from time to time that the United States tackled a potential hot bed of terrorism in the mid-1970s over the colonial-style administration of the Panama Canal. The Canal was very vulnerable to terrorist sabotage at a time when anti-American feelings were

rising alarmingly in the Canal Zone. Despite strident conservative opposition at home, President Carter and his colleagues succeeded in defusing the issue by negotiating the end of the Canal Zone and handing the running of the canal to Panamanian officials over a carefully thought-out transition period of 20 years. Since then the Canal has stopped being a spark for conflict, and the stability achieved has permitted the construction of a new and wider passage way across the Isthmus.

How I wished the Putin administration possessed the same foresight and courage of the Washington wise heads who appreciated the value of a lengthy transition period for a special cause. They would have found a willing helpful partner in Maskhadov. But more on that later when I comment on the final peacemaking efforts of 2002–2003.

Russia Takes Advantage of 9/11

Audio letter of December 5, 2001

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and our comrades who are with you. The president is speaking. I received a cassette from you and listened to it. I really was in a terrible condition due to lack of the news from you and impossibility to call you. When you let me know what is happening, I feel quiet and cheerful at heart. It is difficult to put everything on paper, all the more so, to say it on the phone, but when you take a recorder into your hands and tell everything as it is, you feel a little bit more comfortable.

What happened in the United States [the 9/11 attack], the war going on in Afghanistan, the changes that have occurred in the world, whether it is good or bad for us, only God knows and we will rely on Him.

On the one hand, it seemed to the Russians that this [9/11 attack] really untied their hands, even with some degree of malicious joy in their behavior, when that situation there exploded. "We told you so!" The Russians were so sure that they would be able to profit from what had happened that Putin said the Chechens even claimed that they would come to America. If we did not benefit from that event, it seems to me they did not gain from it. Practically, the Russians have completely lost control over the situation in Afghanistan, and in all likelihood soon they will be kicked out of Central Asia. It is obvious. Of course, for the big state [the United States] what happened was a blow. For they were sure that they had secured their people. And still,

who will be the master in the region of Afghanistan, it seems to me, is of no small importance. For about 20 years, or even more, they challenged it and now they have a free hand there and the Russians will have to quit. This is the way I see it.

It seems to me that no one takes the Russians' claims that there are Chechens [in the ranks of Taliban] seriously. I don't know how the American public takes it, but here all people are laughing at it. For example, while making a speech Putin says: "Present me the facts of the violation of human rights, give their names." Or, after the bombardment of Georgian territory he says: "There are no victims there, so what bombardment are we talking about?" Or, what's-his-face? Their Ivanov, minister of defense, says: "Well, Arabs and Chechens shot for a while and then a warehouse blew up." Troshev says: "What negotiations with Zakayev? Zakayev is for independence and so on." As Pulikovsky told me during the meeting in Maliye Atagi after seizing the city [Grozny] in the last war, after I had been explaining to him for two hours who the occupier was, who the aggressor was, who the defender was, and that the city was ours, and he had entered that city as a destroyer. And while he was leaving, he said: "I'm obeying an order of the president of the Russian Federation, I am the commander of the Federal forces." And I told him: "And I'm obeying an order of my President Dzhokhar Dudayev, I was appointed chief-of-staff." His eyes popped out of his head and he said: "You don't obey an order of the president of the Russian Federation?" Then I told him, "What are we fighting for, I wonder? Of course, I don't. If I obeyed an order of the president of the Russian Federation, there would be no war. Haven't you understood that yet?"

That's the way it is. Therefore, I think we should not take it super-painfully. As far as the information sphere is concerned, we don't have the same possibilities as they do to refuse or distance ourselves from what is going on. Second, Afghanistan. The situation there, attempts to contact us, and finally, the fact that the Udugovs and others like him say that Afghanistan recognized us, but here again, it seems to me, they do not take it seriously. You know that I did not show much enthusiasm about it [recognition by the Taliban], but you responded to it. I did it the following way: "Well, it happened, well, OK. Did I have to refuse it, or what? Well, what's wrong with that? They extended recognition, others will recognize too." This is how I sneaked out of this affair. Yandarbiyev told me insistently to send an ambassador there, to open our embassy there. I would say OK, but did not show whether I was glad or on the contrary did not accept it. This is how I acted.

What I am telling you, for example, if you speak to the State Department or elsewhere, you may say it, and you may say what you think and how we see it. If you have to make an official statement somewhere, then it is not undesirable. In what regard? Here fighters, mujahedeen, are at war. All kinds of fighters, I am not speaking about any Wahabbis, extremists, and radicals, but all the fighters who have arms in their hands are not fighters from yesterday. Yesterday they were Chechen fighters, and the most important thing for them was the Chechen code of honor. For example, I was absolutely a different man in the last war. In this war the religious factor is very strong. It is affecting everyone. Therefore, at the government level, Taliban are Muslims, they are at war with the Christians and they recognized us after being recognized by two or three countries. And we have been irritated by the fact that no one wanted to recognize us. And what harm does their recognition do then? This is an impression that a rank-and-file mujahedeen forms. And it is impossible to explain it to everyone separately. Right here, be it the Basayevs, Khattabs, or Udugovs who pick it up at the middle, at the lowest level, they disorient the fighters in a big way. Disorient. Therefore, I say: "Caution!" Whatever leaves our lips, whatever we say, must be thoroughly weighed. In what way? We, Muslims, rely on God in all our intentions. Nowadays, the guys who are fighting, fight with the name of God on their lips, relying on God with the profound belief that after becoming shahids in this war they will get to Paradise. Therefore, they fight courageously, fearing nothing, and so on and so forth. What can they think, how will they understand it, how will it be presented to them?

Next. We have our state, our Chechen, our ways of doing things, and how should we correlate this recognition with it? And furthermore, the big dirty world politics and international law. How does it correlate with it? That is, it is necessary to take everything into account very carefully and soberly, taking into account all the factors, speak about it. Not only the factors, how will it be taken in the West and how will it be taken in Russia or how will it be taken in America? Even a rank-and-file fighter, mujahedeen, how will he take the president's statement, the statement of the minister of foreign affairs? So, that is the whole story. Why? In the long run, if there was no resistance, if we didn't stand up, not bowing down despite everything at that very moment when they think that our forces are worn out, while breaking into and invading Vedeno, Gudermes, and if we didn't present organized force, if their armored personal carriers didn't blow up every day, of course, it would be difficult even for other countries,

the countries that would like to help us, even if their politics aren't crafty, to say even a word or speak about us in general. And they wouldn't say anything. You yourself say: "Hit back a little, ask to slap back a little, show them and it'll be easier to speak." So, we should not give up this factor. For example, just two weeks ago I met with all emirs of all the [*djamaats*] with the intermediate units. It's pointless to speak with Basayev and others, it's like talking to a stone wall. And this unit consisting of emirs, I summon everyone who was with Barayev, who was with Akhmadov: "There, sit down, let's listen to each other, come here. Are you carrying on jihad? Yes. Carrying on *gazavat* [Holy War]? Yes. Fighting? Yes. Now, tell me, here's the president standing in front of you. What cause did I give you to stop obeying me? Open the Koran and look up what God says." I sit down with them like this and talk. And they always say what they were told by Basayev and others at their meetings: "Look, the president wrote something to the pope, look, our minister of foreign affairs said something about the Taliban members." And carrying on such conversations at these meetings they hammer it into these mujahedeens. And then they [mujahedeens] ask me: "How did it happen?" They say that you said it. And it is very difficult to explain it to them. Therefore, in order not to give cause we should have a more subtle diplomacy in this respect. This is how you should understand it, you know perfectly well how difficult it is for me to endure what the Yanderbiyevs do, what the Udugovs do, and beg God to give me patience, and that I understand what they are up to. But everything should be taken into consideration. I couldn't allow myself to play Rabbani or the Northern Alliance, that the Russians were the first to bombard, and then to fight against their brethren, and accordingly, the events that happen in the world I tried to correlate with the state order and law. It was very difficult, but to my mind, the present situation here differs from the previous one. Many things have changed. Today, not even a single Wahabbi takes the Basayevs or the Udugovs seriously, to say nothing of the others. Everyone understood today, who wants the state, who loves the people, who doesn't like the Russians, who's carrying on jihad. It's clear to everyone.

Once more I am repeating about Udugov: if they really continue making such statements, if they don't put an end to it and don't stop—today isn't yesterday, today the situation is more dangerous than it was two or three months ago. Therefore, I sent you a cassette, I don't know whether it reached you or not, and I told you on it that if you speak at the State Department, say: "There, we've caught one rascal. Here Udugov turned out to provoke a conflict in Dagestan by the

direct rendering of assistance to the special forces of Russia. Here's an ideological leader of separatism, Wahhabism, who in the long run gave Russia a cause to start aggression, to commit genocide against the Chechen people. We ourselves call him a wanted person through the Interpol and call upon all the states to render assistance in searching for him and ask them to extradite him to the lawful authorities of Ichkeria." Say it just like this. The others there like Basayev, Khattab, they are pawns. It was like this in the long run. He is an ideological leader there. The Congress of Chechnya and Dagestan, and he started all this. So, that's the whole story. If they aren't stopped in this manner, they won't stop. It's useless.

Next, regarding the meeting [the meeting of Zakayev and Kazantsev], I roughly understand what the Russians are doing and what slippery international politics are like. I sent Akhmed Zakayev a cassette, where I warned him to be cautious, not to promise anything, nor touch upon serious topics at all, except for contact and then authority to discuss the issues regarding meetings of the government delegations or meetings in high places. And there's no need to get into the labyrinth! It's not necessary. To my mind, he is taking the initiative in a way. Therefore, I told him to consult you about making statements. They should be made very cautiously. For example, you're right when you say that yes, it's just a meeting, but serious things are possible, but Russia in all likelihood isn't ready for that, but the Chechen side never turned it down. So, if it happens, there'll be negotiations, if it doesn't, then there'll be a war. We'll continue to resist. We'll wait. In this manner, demonstrate an indulgent attitude to it, show that we're ready to accept any outcome. To indicate our attitude to it, by it, that's quite normal. Quite normal, I encourage it.

You should consult each other on every statement there, and make it only after discussing what may be said and what may not. So, that's the whole story. Then, PACE, the European Council, also this Lord, or what's-his-name? [Lord Judd] it seems to me, he is hanging around somewhere here; we'll stick to a principled stand toward them. But the only thing is, as I said earlier: be it Tutakov, be it Ferzauli, they should work with every deputy [in PACE]. With every deputy. So, that's the way it is. Then, if you had a chance to visit that place you are talking about, this country [the USA], yes, today it is very necessary. And just move heaven and earth there, make at least some information leak through the media, such as the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*. Even your appearance there would cause complications for the Russians here. There, give it a shot.

Next, the situation that has taken shape in Azerbaijan. They describe it to me as very complicated, I don't know, they find fault with our men, I'm not speaking about those who behave improperly or do foolish things, but about their Ministry of Internal Affairs and other services that find fault with those who live quietly there, and this pressure increases every day. I think that in the first place, it concerns the work of our representative there, even if he's to be replaced. If we don't take an active part there ... It is a very important region. Nevertheless, it is necessary for us to use this region for moving to Turkey, for moving to Georgia. We cannot do without a permanent base there. Even in the future. I remember, for example, when the previous war ended and the beginning of this war, when I had to visit some country, it could be done only through Azerbaijan, and there was no other way out. I had to get there by car and then caught a plane. It's a very important region for trips. Therefore, it's necessary to work constantly and actively with the authorities there, with the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, even with their people through the media. They think that everything has been lost here. That we have lost everything, we've raised our hands, we're giving up. This is how everything is presented to them. And they believed it. But on the contrary, they should be told: "Like hell! We'll kick the Russians out like we did last time. Then you'll be ashamed!" Pass it on to Ella just like this. What is he doing there?

By all means, do your utmost so that I receive information from you once a week, or the news, or a cassette, otherwise, Vallakhi! It is extremely difficult to be in a state of agonizing suspense and in the dark as to what is going on with you there, what is going on around.

Goodbye! May God help you! May God welcome our deeds! Give my greetings to everyone. Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 19

This audio letter brought me Maskhadov's most thoughtful comment on the 9/11 attack on the United States, which changed so much in the world. Despite the fact that the president was suffering from considerable isolation, he summed up the consequences of 9/11 quite accurately for Chechnya. He saw that the Russians would take advantage of the situation to intensify their war on us, and even to scare Americans by asserting the unstoppable, terrible, Chechens cut-throats might infiltrate into the United States to make trouble there. Indeed at the

time there were rumors that some Chechens might secretly enter via the US-Mexican border. I thought those were fanciful stories expanding on the belief that the Chechens loved fighting so much that they were assisting the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was a cynical tale for the Russian secret services to spread. As if the war in Chechnya was not consuming all the resources we had! And incidentally, I never saw any proof that Chechens from Chechnya (I am not speaking of expatriate Chechens from Jordan or Syria) had joined the Taliban.

This relatively short tape described the difficulties Maskhadov encountered in achieving resistance unity and conducting an agreed policy against the Russians. This was an especially critical issue among our young fighters who held a more religious point of view than those of my generation. Maskhadov had to explain constantly why our leaders were taking one position or another. This work was difficult because the radical Movladi Udugov and his Kavkaz Center website constituted a powerful loudspeaker. No doubt Maskhadov hoped I might develop into an effective counter in the West against Udugov.

Maskhadov also came back to the meeting between General Kazantsev and Vice Premier Zakayev. As I said before, this was quite a short meeting but it was noticed worldwide and there followed many declarations from both sides. Maskhadov pointed out that one must be very attentive because of the many contradictory commentaries that followed.

He suggested it would be good to inform the US State Department that from our point of view Udugov was a consistent troublemaker.

In this audio letter, Maskhadov warned me about the delicate nature of the Taliban recognition of Chechnya. Although he himself did not seem to believe that this recognition amounted to much in the international world, he appreciated it was a gesture of support for our young fighters. So he urged me to weigh my words carefully on that subject for fear of complicating his search for unity at home.

It was not surprising that he showed much concern for Azerbaijan and the pressure it was coming under from the Russians. As I commented earlier, we had many refugees in Azerbaijan whom the Azeris were treating rather harshly. Evidently, the Azeris were doing this in the hopes of quietly pushing our people back to Chechnya. The Russians even spread the word that it was safe to go, even though hostilities continued unabated. In any event, the Azeris had their own problems with the thousands of Azeri refugees from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the post-Soviet troubles of the 1990s.

To us, Azerbaijan was a crucial waystation. Baku was an important courier point for us and the Russians knew this. It was a key exit to the Western world where we could obtain visas for onward travel. So Maskhadov was naturally concerned that our representative, a businessman who had lived in Baku a long time and was much respected by the Azeris, should handle matters efficiently. But Maskhadov had his doubts, which surfaced from time to time.

The Problem with Lord Judd

Audio letter of January 29–February 22, 2002

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades! The report and the documents you sent have reached me. I studied and analyzed them. We were following your work there and the fuss the Russians raised about it. If the Russians don't like it, and if they are getting nervous, then it is evidence in our favor. This is the way I see it. May God Almighty be pleased with all of you! At the moment we needed a political breakthrough, and I think we succeeded to some extent. That is the work you fulfilled in Great Britain and France, the work done by Akhmed [Zakayev] in Strasbourg, the work completed by Said-Khasan Abumuslimov in Germany. If we consider these accomplishments from all sides, and that this happened almost simultaneously, we will see that the Russians were besides themselves.

I would like you to familiarize yourself with the situation that has occurred here, which will make it easier for you to figure out what is happening in your area. After the meeting between Zakayev and Kazantsev, the generals and their local slaves begged Putin to give them a month more, two months, three months. Nevertheless the strong way they are insisting is obvious, and it seems that he has given them something of an extension before the spring invasion. Although, in my opinion, he feels that whether they are given three months or a year, it is all useless.

To tell the truth, the Russians are taking pains here, carrying out a lot of work. At the moment, they are conducting a clean-up operation

in Argun, earlier they conducted one in Atagi, in Novye Atagi, in Chiri-Yurt, in Goyty, in Alkhazurovo, in Chechen-Aul. It is just horrible what they did there. It is shameful to speak about it, but they would break into homes and order women to take off their clothes, despite the presence of their husbands. When the women got out of it by paying bribes, they demanded they bare their shoulders at least as, allegedly, they were searching for some female sniper. In mosques they behaved rudely, permitting themselves to do loathsome things in an emphatic manner. They took away rugs from the mosques, or, climbing the minarets, yelled into the loudspeakers “... Achtung, Achtung ...”¹ that is, literally, those jerks were let inside and violated all our customs and traditions. If there is a commandant’s office in a village, they bring in FSB and GRU units. They keep them there for month to work with the local stool pigeons. They filter out our fighters: first category, second category, third category; who was in Budyonnovsk; who was at Pervomaisk, who was a Wahhabi ... They reassure the villagers, telling them that since they are on hand, there would not be any clean-up operations in the village. They make a map of the village: the whereabouts of the villagers, where they sleep and get up, who are their relatives. And after this matrix is completed, they surround the village with armored vehicles and grab everyone who welcomed our fighters, offered them shelter, and even allowed them to leave their cars in their yards for a time. Then they commit the village to “blue flame” violence.

They are withdrawing some units from here. They have withdrawn a brigade from Dargo, they have withdrawn a regiment from Urus Martanovsky region. What is their assignment? They are trying to withdraw the units that are hard to keep and make propaganda about that. At the same time, they are toughening the punitive operations in the hope of keeping the situation under control using the remaining subunits here. They are practicing various special operations and selective actions. They are working painstakingly. But with God’s permission, we are not sleeping either. Our guys strike tough blows against them. I told them that it seems to the Russians that when winter comes, we will leave the woods and hide in the villages, waiting for the spring. So, at that time they will manage to seize the fighters who have come down from the mountains into these villages. On the contrary, I drive them all to the woods: “There, go to the woods and make dug-outs and strike blows especially in winter. And if we beat them in the winter, they will understand how strong our hits will be in the spring.” At present the Russians put special emphasis

on the FSB and GRU, their special operations, as well as on the local informers—these are the objects of their attention. It is not the tanks we should blow up, but “the Pills,”² or Nivas.³ We should paralyze their traffic on the roads. Assemble sniper groups and assign specific roads to them. Carry out tough measures against the informers. If they [the Russians] expand the village police, we should undertake powerful operations, disarm them. With God’s permission we’re making serious preparations in Grozny, Gudermes, and Argun.

They are claiming that the helicopters crash because of engine failure or because of technical problems: it’s a lie, there are no technical problems. They are shot down. The helicopter our guys shot down over Shchelkovsky on January 27, 2002, had two generals and several lieutenant colonels on board. Before that, when I was in that region, there was a guy who was running around with an Igla⁴ and was distressed that he didn’t have a chance to use it. Apparently, he got that chance. Hitting that helicopter successfully, among numerous others that look like ants plowing over the skies, would that be possible without Providence? Just the helicopter with two generals. That day they were landing troops, and there were many helicopters in the sky. He had absolutely no idea who was on board the helicopter he was shooting at. He shot at random, as soon as it appeared in his field of vision, and that high brass happened to there. Another helicopter was shot down likewise in Vedeno region, therefore “technical problems” is a lie the Russians made up.

In town [Grozny], in Argun, for example, the Russians could not do anything with our fighters, 200–300 people who are permanently there and none of them ever left. Argun is always surrounded. After all, maybe you heard what a Russian colonel said: “If they don’t shoot at us, we won’t shoot either.” That is how hard they hit the Russians. Therefore, it is not that we are exhausted, or have retreated, or our guys are unreliable, it is just that the Russians are holding out and do not admit their defeat. If we strike blows on the Russians for another couple of months, shoot down several helicopters, and make a slight diplomatic breakthrough abroad, that would come in handy, to understand what these two months will bring, and what will be next.

Now, about Strasbourg. Frankly speaking, I was worried about the activities of Lord Judd and Rogozin. The initiative they came up with was very dangerous.⁵ But I do not think they established a consulting council based on law. I have close contacts with our public service parties and movements, be it Ruslan Badalov or Lipkhan Bazayeva. Having gone there and come back, they gave me an account. They

thought up something like creating some organizing committee, and afterward, when they came back here they tried to gather Aslakhanov and others, but apparently as long as they did not reach an agreement, they split. But nevertheless, we are planning to create an independent consulting council in contrast to that. Just to show them that their venture is frivolous, and here we have parties, movements, human rights organizations, but over there it is traitors. We will be operating like this until their venture falls apart. So, this is the work we are carrying out and I think we'll benefit from it somehow or other. The resolution adopted in Strasbourg and dissatisfaction the Russians express definitely indicates that either the West or the United States has changed its position. To my mind, little depends on them there. It is obvious. But, nevertheless, I'm convinced that we still have to keep working there. In particular, if it is Tutakov, then it is necessary to entrust him entirely with all this work and let him take an active part in it.

Next. Akhmed Zakayev informed me that they are going to hold a conference in Istanbul, and there is an opportunity to meet with Carla Del Ponte,⁶ who is trying Milosevich. Before meeting with her, we should hold a conference and organize something like a committee for the investigation of military crimes, or as they call it, a committee for investigation of violation of human rights in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. Then, regarding the statement made by Berezovsky, we are also joining it, and telling them to investigate it. It is in the interests of the Chechens. If we carry out all this work, I am sure it will be beneficial. I spoke about it before, that we should get to the International Court of Justice. Abumuslimov is a historian, a public speaker, but it seems to me that he does not want to carry out the work entrusted to him, although this work is very important. Next. I sent Khavagi Serbiev, he was our prosecutor general, and later I fired him. I told him: "Generally speaking, get together in Istanbul, and I will send you a cassette, video footage, special reports with specific occurrences of violence here. Sum them up and prepare the material." This is the assignment I sent him there with. This material should be prepared under your supervision. It is time to knock on the door of the International Court of Justice, on the door of the tribunal. That might put some pressure on the Russians. They seem to think they will win, since there is a war on terrorism in the world, so they think that under this aegis they will manage to conceal their loathsome acts here. And if we make them realize that they will fail, their conduct would be more circumspect.

There is one more thing on my mind: Alikhadzhiyev is the speaker of the Parliament, an elected representative of the people. We should open an investigation into his case.⁷ We should urgently bring up this issue. For some reason or other, we left this issue aside, as if this man did not exist and there never had been such a man. It sometimes even occurs to me that if something happens to me, say, the Russians kidnap me and hide me no one knows where, probably I will be forgotten too. Vallakhi! I sometimes think like that! Alikhadzhiyev is a well-placed man! He is the head of the legislative branch as I am the head of the executive branch. Even from the political point of view, it would be sort of advantageous to bring it up, but somehow we did not give it much thought. We will provide you with everything you might need: the wife's, children's, and the mother's testimony with the detailed description of what happened in their yard. Where he was taken and where he was released. Generally speaking, we will provide you with everything you need. It would be easier for you to carry out this task there. Frankly speaking, it is difficult to focus attention on everything at once, while moving around and hiding. Things of this kind are things of great importance.

In your answer with the description of the work you have carried out, specify your further plans. In what direction is your next move? There should be an approximate guideline, so that I am in touch with the situation. I am saying again and again: even when you went there [the United States], I didn't hear anything for two months, except that Apti Bissultanov⁸ told me he had spoken to you and Lyoma Usmanov, and that calmed me down a little. But besides that I don't know anything, I mean, what is going on there, where are you specifically located, what are you doing there? If I receive mail every week, it is no big deal to get a fax number and send me a letter with a brief account of events, even if you cannot speak about everything, it is very important. Here I am literally losing my sight and worry. Although we have spoken a lot about it, it is still not the way it should be done. I do not know the reason for it. I constantly keep saying about it.

And one more thing! I told you before, but you might have forgotten about it. These days we tell the Russians specifically: "When will you stop this war? What are you going to do? How much longer can we fight you? It is not advantageous for us to fight with Russia! It is not advantageous because it is a big country. Look at the Americans, they did find a common language with the Pashtuns, with the Taliban, with the Northern Alliance. Why did they find it? Because they have a geopolitical interest in that region. And, therefore,

you [Russians] were kicked out from there [Central Asia].” We tell them: “Do you really intend to continue this war or will we be seeking an agreement? But if you don’t understand it, and if you have no interest in the Caucasus, then tomorrow there will be some Khattab, or some Basayev, or Udugov, and they will arrange a jihad here like the Taliban.”

Then they will find some Bin Laden, and after that if you want to be kicked out of the Caucasus—then I just do not know what to say. Then we will have to say to those who are ready to come here [the Americans]: “Why go through Khattab or through Udugov? Let’s negotiate! You did not leave us any other choice.” We do try to carry on such talks with these [Russians]. And over there [the USA] I said that such talks should take place. Something like this: “We fought, talked, conducted negotiations with the Russians, but these fools do not understand anything at all, they do not have any policies, and they do not have any state. They are annihilating our people. In order to pull our people out of the jaws of these pigs, we must either die while fighting with them, or negotiate with them somehow or other. The time is against us. If the Russians do not understand us, then what are you [Americans] planning to do in the Caucasus?” This is the way we should specifically talk to them, and we should not be shy with them. And when tomorrow they reach the Caspian Sea through Central Asia, and their interest becomes more tangible, then it is necessary to speak to them much more specifically. “Do you want it to be this way? Let’s do it this way!” Even from the economic aspect, etc. Are we doing any work in this respect there? Do they mention us in this respect anywhere? It is also of no small importance!

Today the Russians, including Kazantsev, say openly that all accounts have been closed, all financing is being stopped, and we will force the Chechens to their knees. Everything that is related to supplies is extremely difficult here. Everything that came from abroad has practically stopped, and it is very difficult for me to talk to mujahedeen. It is not like the previous war. No one comes to them from a village with canned tomatoes, flour, or rice. It is only the money you give out and what you are buying with it—that is all that the fighters have had in the past two and a half years. Therefore, this issue worries me a great deal. I even see it as the most important issue! Of course, we can tell these guys okay grab, take away everything that falls into your hands. Steal from the munafiqs,⁹ rob others, commandeer a car. But we know from our experience in the past war, the postwar period, what happens when you say such things. If we preserve these guys for

tomorrow in their faith and discipline, the way they are today, it will be easy for us with them, there will be no need to stop them.

Therefore, there is also high politics in it. There are many things tied to material welfare! Therefore, as far as foreign policies are concerned, you should take it very seriously as one of the areas of your activities. Because everything this state [the USA] says to the world overseas, be it to Turkey or to Saudi Arabia, they listen attentively. For example, if we were put on the list of international terrorists, that would be it, they would pull the plug! It would be impossible to go to any America, and generally, do anything at all. And if the Americans did that,¹⁰ they all would do the same. If they say that, then we are terrorists, if they don't say that, then we are not terrorists. Now these poor people who would help us financially are in a spot. If they render some financial aid to the Chechens, they are afraid of being accused of helping terrorists, they are afraid that their accounts will be closed, or they will have problems because of it. They have not understood it yet, whether we are still terrorists or not. Or, it is just a play on words. I think that you should think it over, and I am convinced you should think it over, it is very important. And if you have thought about it, then what can we count on? It is very important for me.

Go ahead! May God help you! May our work please to Him! Work hard, do not interrupt your work there, and here our guys are reliable. Everything will be all right! Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 20

Nongovernmental groups following events in Chechnya, and the Russian human rights group Memorial began speaking of "Chechenization" taking place in the republic, especially in early 2003. This was occasioned by the referendum that was held in March 2003 when voters in Chechnya were asked to approve a new constitution and new elections for president. The process was a move on the part of the Russian government to create a new governing system running parallel to the Maskhadov government and ultimately replacing it. It was a cynical move because Chechnya was under Russian military occupation with an active war going all over the republic. Furthermore, under Russian electoral laws, Russian soldiers were allowed to vote in their place of deployment. This meant that up to 150,000 Russian soldiers, on permanent deployment in Chechnya, voted in the referendum and later in the elections for president even though they had no real connection with Chechnya.

The idea of creating a new governing system for Chechnya grew out of a working group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe headed by Lord Judd of Britain. He later told me in an encounter in Washington that he was surprised at how fast the Russians accepted the idea and put it into action in unsettled conditions. Apparently, Lord Judd's thinking was that the Russians needed to be stimulated to undertake a democratic initiative that could gain favor in the West. The Russians, after all, were supposed to be creating democracy all over Russia. They viewed the Judd initiative not as a way to build democracy but as a way to strengthen their rule while fudging the "democratic" aspects of the maneuver. To pull it off, the Russians made clear through their mass media whom to vote for during daylight hours. A curfew got people off the streets in the evenings when rebels might attack.

Actually, Maskhadov noted early on in a number of his audio cassettes that the Chechenization process was gearing up. In cassette No. 1, for example, he identified Akhmad Kadyrov as a figure to keep your eye on. Before I was sent abroad in 1999, I had occasion to meet Kadyrov at a meeting of the State Defense Committee. Kadyrov had been selected by President Dudayev as the grand mufti of Chechnya. He had received his religious training somewhere in Central Asia, which means that he had been reviewed by the Soviet security services and found to be a reliable individual. That certainly does not mean that he was an official security agent but that the Russians were likely to be able to count on him. Even in those days, I considered him to be a very ambitious person. At one of the Defense Committee meetings, I recall, he remained uncharacteristically silent. I now think that he was weighing his options whether to stay with Maskhadov or go over to the Russians. During that meeting, I tapped him on the shoulder and asked if he could help me establish contact with useful people abroad. He turned his whole body around and snapped, "I know nothing." I suspect he did not really understand what I was asking him about since he was deep in thought.

More to the point were Maskhadov's comments in audio letters No. 3 and No. 7. The Russian military was everywhere in force and they were regularly conducting brutal clean-up operations of people's homes seeking out any sign of rebel activity like weapons, uniforms, young men over 10 years old and younger than 65. On occasion the military would subject villages to artillery bombardment of mosques, clinics, and any place that people were thought to be gathering. This had the effect of forcing village elders to express their opposition to our fighters finding refuge at night.

Maskhadov describes in cassette No. 7 how the Russians next stationed their troops in some of the villages, then followed this up by creating a commandant's post nearby. Next, the Russians began organizing local militias in the villages and created local administrations loyal to the Russians. Obviously, under these wartime conditions it was tempting for local populations to collaborate with the occupiers.

Meanwhile, we could see that the Russians were pinning their hopes on Kadyrov and allowing him extraordinary freedom of action. He did not sit idly by waiting for instructions, but began to create what amounted to his own private army. This involved dressing his own men in uniforms without identifying emblems and giving them automobiles without license plate numbers to move around in. These were sometimes supplemented by Russian armored personnel carriers also without numbers. These forces would arrest people for cause but also totally arbitrarily. In war there are, after all, procedures for arresting and holding suspects detailed in the Geneva Conventions. These rules are often violated or overlooked but they do exist. But "Kadyrov's boys" or Kadyrovtsy acted with total impunity. If you fell into their hands, more often likely than not you totally disappeared. Your family would be lucky if your corpse was eventually found by the side of the road. People began stuffing in their pockets notes stating who they were and what village they came from.

Another tool that the Russians used in their Chechenization program was the granting of amnesties for Chechens who had been fighting against them. They made a big show of citizens handing in their arms, which they were able to convey through state-controlled, national television that the Russian side was making progress in winding down the war.

Predictably, the referendum of March 23, 2003, came out to the satisfaction of the Russians. The vote for a new constitution to replace the Dudayev Constitution of 1992, was approved. Oddly enough, while the vote favored a new constitution, people were given no idea what kind of constitution they had approved. It remained for the Russians to come up with the constitution and to manage the list of candidates for the post of president. From the start, Kadyrov was the leading candidate, but the Russians helped him by knocking off the list some candidates for "technical" reasons.

There was one other aspect of "Chechenization" that was reflected in the Russian mass media by observers close to the Kremlin. This was the thought that Moscow had obtained the loyalty of key figures

like Kadyrov by granting them extraordinary privileges and freedom of actions. This was often called “payments for loyalty.” President Putin did not resolve the Chechen problem by subduing the republic, and creating new governing institutions. His was a system of personal ties, rather like the relations between kings and queens in medieval Europe, which endured after the marriage partners died, and in our case after the assassination of Kadyrov and the installation of his son Ramzan Kadyrov. Portraits of Putin, Kadyrov-father, and Kadyrov-son, were posted in public places throughout Grozny. Locals sometimes joked, “See here the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!”

The Russian Policy of Rape

Audio letter of February 4, 2002

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and your comrades. Your cassette has reached me; I listened to the account you recorded on this cassette. I am pretty well up to date regarding the work that is being done there abroad, what you have done, how well you worked, what you managed to do. I looked through the resolution; it seems to me that roughly we equally understand it, everything that is written in it. Now, the place where you went, hearings of the European Parliament, with God's help we will be looking forward to something good from this work. Then, regarding the trip to Denmark, we will also have hopes for the prospect that it will do some good.

Then there is some congress in Istanbul, Berezovsky is making some kinds of statements, regarding these statements, then further about setting up a commission to investigate the facts of war crimes in Chechnya, which you will speak about in the Danish parliament, everything is going in this direction. The way I see it, this could be used as an instrument of pressure on the Russians. To my mind, it will be all right. The way I see it, it is worthwhile working in this direction. Maybe it will be difficult, but still we must work on it.

Even if the result is less than we expect, Putin and his entourage do not feel very comfortable after such statements. Berezovsky together with them [Putin and his entourage] facilitated the kidnapping of people, he is connected to this provocation in Dagestan, maybe even when these houses were blown up, it was done by conspiracy among

themselves. But today they split for some reason. This should be used to get some benefit from it. We should think thoroughly in this respect and it is necessary to work out some definite strategy.

Next, you say commission, conception ... maybe I surprised you. You really surprised me. I did not expect you to say what you are saying now. I don't know where you took it from, who convinced you this [commission] substitutes for the position of the president, the executive branch or the legislative branch, what are you talking about? You know perfectly well that as soon as martial law is declared, there is a collegial body—the State Committee for Defense. Everywhere, in all countries, we also have it, so this institution is created with the declaration of martial law.

Then, with the declaration of this state, all decisions including [those] of the parliament and the executive branch should be affirmed [by the State Committee for Defense] collectively. Whether the president likes it or not, whether the parliament likes it or not. Under martial law, when the situation is like this, no one must make a mistake. You cannot solve problems by yourself alone. One may be tired, another may be exhausted, another may get frightened, another may take offense, it means that at this moment the destiny of the state should not depend on a single person. It will not in any way infringe upon the presidency and the institution of parliament because the chairman of this State Committee for Defense is the president.

Second, about the interdepartmental commission of the State Committee for Defense. Again, I do not understand what threat from this commission may imperil the president and the parliament. Who told you all this? What threat comes from it? For example, how does this commission threaten me? Why do I have to be concerned? Why should America or Russia care if we set up some commission? What do they care about it? There is the State Committee for Defense, there is a commission. For what purpose? To coordinate policies, ideology, tactics, strategy during the war at this particular moment. I don't understand what is wrong with it. Why did you make a tragedy out of it?

So, on the cassette that I received a little earlier from Akhmed Zakayev, it says fire me, and now you say that it is possible to find someone more intelligent, meaning than you [two] and you are saying this on prior agreement. This is how I understand it! The only thing is that this commission may infringe upon Zakayev. For example, at [the session] of this commission they may say with Zakayev that there is no information activity. There is no television, no radio. In a village

absolutely no one knows [about the radio of Ichkeria and television], there is only radio, that is, there is [Russian] television ORT and RT and all this is taken at its face value. They beat people, and put moral pressure on people through television. People weep.

For example, the State Committee for Defense includes all the commanders, all emirs, deputies of the parliament who remained here, the ministers who are here. Accordingly, there [at a session of the State Committee] they might have a question: "Hold on, is it enough just to fight, is it enough just to fire a grenade launcher, since the people do not understand what we do? The people are confused! Where is this minister? Where is the propaganda work? What are you up to?"

They can say something like this: "And if they can, there is this commission and it can ask Zakayev:

Are you responsible for it?

Yes, it's me."

So, these men ask you a question. Do you have an answer for it? So, there is an answer for it or not.

I do not see anything in it [criticizing the establishment of interdepartmental commission] but fear to get into a similar situation, I do not see that it might infringe on the president or the presidency. There is no threat to me from this commission, I am not afraid. If they ask me, so to speak, what will we be doing tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, or in the future, I will answer them. And I will answer at the session of the State Committee for Defense, and if one has to answer simply, I will answer that way.

And here, accordingly, there is an operational administration on both sides of the Argun, and they are entrusted with big responsibilities. In the sphere of tactics, strategy, and so on, the issues brought up at the sessions of the State Committee for Defense, and are brought up for control, for discussion by this commission, specifically asking the people who are responsible for them. Therefore, what you say is by no means convincing. It seems to me that two or three people got together and said they want to place someone over us, why do we have to give accounts to them now? What you are saying now is just a Chechen way of talking. It is an absolutely Chechen way of talking and nothing else!

Then, the State Committee for Defense or another commission is created somewhere abroad; it means that there is a person who is responsible for everything and thinks about everyone—we do not have such a man, we lack respect for such a man. Such a person does not exist, he was absent yesterday, he has been absent for 400 years.

That is why we never had a state, we never were able to create a state. Our imams have always been Dagestanis, our presidents were from other ethnic groups [he does not mean presidents but leaders of Chechnya in different historical periods], and we have never accepted among ourselves our own man and had any respect for him. This is our misfortune.

Therefore, the situation here, the military situation that has developed today, the position of our people, these devils from our own people who stand with the Russians today, our intelligentsia, our diaspora and everything that they [the Russians] plan here, comparing everything with this, you understand that there is just one man who [can] grasp all this and keep it in his head—it is the president. And you may die but you will never in your life be able to get it your head, nor will anyone else be able to get it into his head, but the president, because he is bound to do this by virtue of his office, because of his position.

For that reason it should never be considered ... here look just this fool is being deceived, look someone slipped him something, look there, and so on. It means, let us say, that by admitting that there is no understanding of what the commission is, or what the GKO is, or what might substitute for the presidency, you turn [me] into some cipher by such talk. To what degree you insult me, degrade me—you do not even think about that.

And in the long run when you comprehend all this, there is nothing that might infringe on us, and it does not, as you say, substitute anything, and there is no danger in it. Be it Zakayev, Abumuslimov there, Yarikhanov or some commander or operation department, so to speak, you were told to do this, and why didn't you do it, you say this and then you say that, you are supposed to say the same thing, aren't you?

Therefore, do your job, consult the president, the way you are doing now, report back to the president, be thoroughly attentive as to what to do, how to do it, consult, and so on. And all this [the interdepartmental commission] does not threaten you at all, it absolutely does not infringe on your department and it does not reveal any of your super secrets. I do not see anything in it that you or I should be concerned with. You did not convince me in that! All this [criticizing creation of the interdepartmental commission] is only being done for fear that we will not fully realize our common cause, that we will act somehow inconsistently, when the right hand does not know what the left hand does, and people laugh at us, and we will have monolithic

power. And nothing else, all this is being done in order to say: "I'm the center of the world, I am doing this and that, everything depends on me, and so on and so forth, so why should I be accountable to anyone?" These are very dangerous things.

You know what seems of most importance to me? What seems to be the main thing? This war, we will win this war, I have no doubts about it. Vallakhi, no! Everything is leading to this, if you look at it from all the sides. Now here [in Chechnya] it is impossible to tell you everything that is happening, but very surprising changes are taking place.

The only thing I am afraid of, even if we beat these Russians, even if the Russians run away from here as they did last time, we are trying now to become closer to the big states, trying to establish some relations and ask them to put pressure on the Russians. It is quite normal, isn't it? Yet, again, these states do not want us to win today, preserving some form of state system and legality, having a president at the top, observing law and order. They would do everything possible to have the victory won by Khattab or some Udugov. Why? Tomorrow when they [the Western states] stretch their feelers further, they will need to proclaim some jihad somewhere, the pattern is the same everywhere. Again it will be necessary to create some congress of Chechnya and Dagestan, again [they will have to] find some Wahhabism, Taliban somewhere.

Second, the Western states remember us when they need us, but when they do not need us, they forget about us, and afterward go off to a ranch, meet, and hug, and again blackmail, that is, again make some puppets out of us. Knowing this, we still conduct foreign policy, so that they don't take us as some terrorists, so that they accept us, call us as a nation, as a state, but never can victory in this war be achieved abroad, it is achieved here.

And the people who stay here ... the Russians want to subdue, subdue, subdue this people, drive them to exhaustion and then, and then suppose Kadyrov does not fit in, another appointee will be named, withdrawal of troops begins, and, if he is useful, and then they'll hold some election, and consult the people. It is necessary constantly to explain to these people what is going on and not let them [the Russians] deceive them. And preserving our state system, increasing our combat activity, we must drive these Russians out of here.

All these contract soldiers, looters, there is money, they could not care less about these orders, they do not have any interaction among themselves, they have no subordination. Well, money does everything,

they can't do anything purposeful, and we don't give up. For example, have you ever seen in the course of this 400-year war that contract soldiers without any teeth in their mouths break into houses and in the presence of the husband, of the father, order all women to take their clothes off?

"But commander, our customs ..."

"I don't give a shit about your customs! She's a sniper."

The husband undresses his wife to the bosom and displays her shoulders. They have too many young women in their hands, whom they take away and rape. They go with such pregnant bellies. It is so disgusting ... there is a court, the International Court of Justice, the right to debar them from voting [at PACE], and so on and so forth, they went for broke in everything. Do you understand it or not? The only way Putin can escape responsibility is victory—success is never blamed. There is no hope that due to some concerns, they will decrease the level of violence here, that is out of the question!

And we behave in such a way, that if this is done [we create an interdepartmental commission], we bring absolute disgrace upon ourselves, so to speak, how come my department will report back to some Lyoma there, and who is he, this Lyoma? He is an ordinary secretary, secretariat, or something, well, it happens. But the commission is governed by the State Committee for Defense, and the State Committee for Defense is governed by the president. It's his department, and there [in the interdepartmental commission] a secretary-administrator is appointed, he just writes a paper.

And today, if you were in Nazran or here [in the mountains], it is more dangerous here, I know it myself, I am so tormented, as I don't know where to put this archive that is accumulating today. You hide it in ten or twenty places, somewhere in the ground, it [the archive] becomes damp, and you're afraid of [hiding it in] a normal place somewhere, because it can be seized [by the Russians]. Just imagine, if one cassette gets into the Russians' hands at someone's home—that is it, his house will be burned down, blown up, and the whole family will be shot. It is more difficult [to keep the archive] here. But nevertheless we try to preserve this archive. You really both surprised and upset me, you see how I am talking. But even if you don't understand, then I don't know how those who don't want to understand it will understand? Or, how those who can't understand will understand?

So, do what you are told, do what you have been told. It is so easy for you, since there is a man who is responsible for everything, so refer to him! You only have to have at least some respect. We will not

allow anyone to deceive us. We did not allow Berezhovsky to deceive us, did not allow the Udugovs and the Kadyrovs and did not allow the Russians to deceive us, and won't allow any Jews and or any Lyomas to deceive us. We do carry out some work, being at least reasonable, thinking, listening, enjoying some confidence with people. Do not consider [me] more stupid than you! It is not that I do not have a head, and no brains in it.

We almost come to blows here, weighing everything from all sides, ten times we did not agree, ten times the papers were returned. This, so to speak, should be removed; we need to write the document and send it all out and wait another two weeks until the mail arrives. And what you say looks as if someone planted something with me, scribbled [a signature] and nothing else.

Therefore, we cannot talk to the president and do not know how to talk to the president, and do not know that it's enough for everyone to do what he has been told. This is where all our troubles lie. And I do not see any big tragedy there anymore. If you are asked what came out of the work that you have done, say everything you can say, and send me the rest in a letter: for example, I could not talk about that, I had such and such secrets and that's it. So what, what's the tragedy?

Goodbye, may God help us! May God welcome our deeds! Give my greetings to everyone! Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 21

The Russians knew no limits in pursuing the war, either in their bombing strategy or in the conduct of their soldiers on the ground. They had no hesitation in bombing mosques and hospitals, or shooting from helicopters at any gathering of people on the streets. They seeded half a million mines in Chechen valleys, which would blow off the arms and legs of anyone who touched them. We had reports that they used chemical weapons prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, bunker-busting bombs on civilian targets, and allowed some nuclear materials to be scattered in the open.

Russian soldiers, many of whom were freed criminals, acted as if they were independent operators bound by no restrictions or control. Part of the problem was that Russian soldiers were often cold and badly fed. Not infrequently, they would invade people's homes, order the Chechen women to undress, and rape them in front of family members like their husbands or fathers. Maskhadov's anger was only heightened by such events.

I felt these were not just isolated actions but rather the result of Russian commanders telling their soldiers they could do whatever they wanted without fear of the consequences. It would be interesting to learn how commanders came to this position. Were they informed orally, or was there any sort of written directive? Or was it just force of difficult circumstance? In any event, these horrible abuses called for someone to do a serious investigation as Maskhadov suggested.

In this sense, the course of the second war was quite different from the first in which rapes rarely came to light. The rape and killing of an 18-year-old Chechen girl by Colonel Yuri Budanov, I felt, was indicative of this breakdown of order within the Russian army.

Budanov asserted that Elza Kungaeva was a Chechen sniper whom he arrested in early 2000. He acknowledged that he tortured and killed her in a fit of rage, then desecrated the body with three subordinates.¹ Two Russian generals spoke of him highly as a wartime regiment commander, but Colonel General Anatoly Kvashnin, overall commander of the Russian forces, denounced his actions as “barbaric and disgraceful.”

Budanov was arrested and subjected to lengthy judicial procedures, finally receiving a 10-year sentence in 2003. He was released in 2009 on parole but was assassinated on a Moscow street in June 2011 in an apparent act of blood revenge by a Chechen.

In this cassette, Maskhadov placed major emphasis on the creation of an interagency commission of the State Defense Committee. The idea first came up in the fall of 2001. Maskhadov talked about this commission several times for the coordinating of the work of Chechen comrades including the representatives abroad, specifically the Foreign Ministry, which was located outside of the conflict zone.

This interagency commission was supposed to gather reports from our Ichkeria representatives and forward them to the State Defense Committee where they would be examined, discussed, and acted upon. This was logical in theory but in practice it resulted in a certain amount of confusion because the large number of representatives abroad were not always well informed.

I was concerned that my audio reports might fall into the hands of Russian intelligence because our couriers were not infrequently arrested as they made their difficult way between Baku and Grozny. Furthermore, I was very reluctant to disclose specific sources of information, even to Maskhadov. I felt I had to remain silent about my conversations with former secretary of state Madeleine Albright after

she left office as well as former defense secretary Frank Carlucci and high Defense Department officials like Richard Perle.

I learned from working in Washington that there are time-honored ways of conveying information unofficially, like information given “off the record” or “on background.” My colleagues at home knew nothing of these niceties, and I was always afraid that Maskhadov would let slip some important details in meetings with our fighters. He met with fighters from time to time; he was always trying to maintain morale and raise hope among those who were doing the fighting. He always wanted to stress that we were making steady progress toward ending the war through diplomacy.

I considered the official in Nazran who was to run the interagency commission as a weak link in this system. He was young, about my age, fortyish, and inexperienced in foreign affairs. I did not know much about his experience or education. How could I trust him? In the end, I never sent him any of my reports.

Representatives of an unrecognized and disputed government have limited possibilities to gather much material. I felt that protecting confidentiality was essential in developing trusting relationships with influential people in Washington. I believe I succeeded because Kremlin spokesman Yastrzhembsky called on Dr. Brzezinski at one point, apparently concerned that my moderate approach was undermining the Russian hard-line positions.

Neither Zakayev nor I discussed the creation of this commission, but we both seemed to have arrived independently at a negative assessment of it. Be that as it may, Maskhadov concluded that we did talk about it with each other, and possibly had entered in a conspiracy against him. This caused him a lot of needless concern.

Between 1999 and 2002, I had traveled all over Europe and the United States seeking moral and diplomatic support from Western governments. This had not been an easy task and my success was limited despite the access that I was granted. My last arrival in the United States would be in May 2002. That is when I learned that the Russians were seeking my arrest through Interpol and I began thinking the unthinkable: asking the United States for political asylum without abandoning the cause.

Solving the Chechen Problem

Audio letter of April 18, 2002

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you Ilyas and your comrades! I have only one reason for recording this second cassette: yesterday, I received some papers and two cassettes from Akhmed Zakayev. I listened to these cassettes. Then there is one more document that I received: "Ways to Solve the Russia-Chechen Conflict." In answer to it, I sent him a cassette with an explanation of what I think should be done, and how best to do it.

It is foreign policy and yours is the leading role so it would be good if you know the way I understand things. The way I understand things and my attitude you can learn only from me. It should not be through anyone else, for example: I met someone and we discussed it, the two of us, the three of us, the four of us. I categorically object to this and I think that it does us harm. Conversation between you and me, and all the issues that have to do with the president, may not be the subject of your discussions with anyone else, and must be carried on directly between me and you.

Therefore, I am telling you directly before you hear it from others. It will be good to know it and there will be fewer questions. The conversation earlier with you and then with Akhmed Zakayev, and what he says, gives me one idea: you really paid attention to everything that is happening there, to the situation and conditions there, but you completely forgot, without comprehending it in any way, about what is going on here. And this is our gravest drawback.

Therefore, all your activities abroad should be agreed upon, and not just the way you see it: this is my department and I am doing fine. Everything should be discussed with everyone, and with each deputy of yours, all your ministers, and your Said-Khasan Abumuslimov, who was sent there also. They should unite around you. That is the circle of people who are interested in our victory.

Second, those who remain here, who are around the president, should unite and constitute a circle of interested people. That is, he who has not defected to the Russians yet, or run away. He remained here, has contacts with the president, has an opportunity to meet with him, talk, and send cassettes. He can see with his own eyes what is going on here, how they torture these poor people, what our fighters are doing, what the refugees are doing, and what these Russian pigs are doing. They see what is happening around the president.

These people see all the efforts aimed attracting everyone, achieving some consent, finding compromises, making efforts made to unite what we thought would never be possible, efforts to bring everyone to unity. And if there are four, five, six people like these, they can evaluate the situation here, work up internal policies, evaluate what is being said abroad and how it will be interpreted here. If we do not work, coordinating every word, you could sprout wings and fly into the sky having done tremendous work, and even if we fire off cannons, nothing will come out of it.

Therefore it is necessary to find the middle ground between what is there and here. On the one hand, it does not mean that what you have there is not needed, that it is unimportant, or there is no understanding or way to appreciate it—I know all that. But if we do not seek the middle ground, taking into account the situation here, we will lose unilaterally! That is why I used to say that it was necessary to create [an executive] committee within the State Committee for Defense. For example, five or six people to unite around you, and five or six people to unite around me here.

Everyone can do something smart, valuable, necessary—I do not exaggerate it, but generally this is the picture that I see. Therefore, the fact that I created this committee so that you do everything in agreement, get together and meet, discussing what to do and then consulting with us afterward—I get the impression that you did not understand it the right way.

You speak about it, as if you understood it like this, that there is the FSB somewhere there in ambush, that they set up their safe, got their Internet going, and are collecting material from our correspondence.

That they gathered there to play some dirty trick on us, and that I am in collusion with them, that I have an agreement with them. You say this. Or, on the contrary, you have thoughts that I have really been deceived by something, and generally speaking, I am more stupid than all of you.

Again, it is nothing else but ambition; who are you that I report back to someone! It is purely a Chechen vice, although as I say, if some document or conception is prepared here, or if we send something else back and forth, nothing will go wrong there. Or, for example, the fact that you visited America or met with someone from the State Department is known to the whole world, and therefore, you will not surprise anyone by this, and besides, it is not a very big secret. The only thing is what you said there: I said this and he said that, and if it is related to a state secret, no one is asking you to speak about it.

I want to say one thing—if we do not take into account both sides, everything that catches our ears, everything that is understood here and there, if we do not find the middle ground, we can lose. You do not understand one thing—I have confronted the Russians since the beginning of this war. When they say that “this is terrorism,” I say “no,” confronting their planes, guns, their troops with our small forces and saying to our fighters, “Don’t let them break you, do this, do that ...” This is how I stand against these Russians, and how I confront this infidel [Kadyrov] administration that they established.

Akhmed again reminds me about the vision of our state system, that is, political reform, and it seems to me, my position approximately coincides with what he says. In what way? I do not tell anyone that we need to change the constitution today, or that it does not exist, or that we have some doubts about the constitution. Here [in Zakayev’s letter] he says that we should announce political reforms. We are not idiots either, our state institutions also are working. No way! I categorically forbid you, moreover, to do it within the scope of our state policies.

Therefore, I did not give any order to place on the website any of the models of the state system. Moreover, I did not give an order to make it public on behalf of the government—it is a lie! It is the commission, I understand it just as I said. You do not understand what is going on here, and it is difficult here to explain what is going on abroad and it is a problem to find the middle ground. Here we will have conversations with Yandarbiyev and others of his ilk, as if the rest of the world does not exist, as if we were isolated on some island—that is also a catastrophe! Therefore, we are seeking the golden mean, so that it doesn’t happen.

Second, the State Committee for Defense is replacing someone now, also some analysts' special work.¹ They know perfectly well there is no danger in it, they are just discrediting what it really is and nothing else. The president is the chairman of the State Committee for Defense, he is also commander-in-chief. And he can sign documents in both these capacities depending on the situation; if, for example, it is a decree, he signs it as president, and if it is a government directive, he signs it as the chairman of the State Committee for Defense. The only thing in which Akhmed is right is the form of these documents, I agree there should be proper letterheads and so on. All of this should look imposing.

What is the essence of what I told Akhmed and the rest of them? There should be a President's page on the site—that's an order! There should be a decree on establishing the State Committee and a decree on establishing the Interdepartmental Commission. All the documents that have gone through this commission should also be placed on it.² And again, according to a strictly determined form.

Second, I told you about it on the previous cassette, I want us to understand one thing: today whether we like it or not, we find ourselves among big, dirty, loathsome states. A huge war has been unleashed in this world and we see it, and if we are not very nibble, don't talk things over among us, if we are not very cautious and vigilant, we will be history. They will not have mercy on us nor feel uncomfortable before us! Today Russia is fighting with us, there is war here, people are drowning in blood, and these Russian pigs have become so impudent that they taunt these poor people. It is necessary to make utmost efforts to stop this war. At any cost, as soon as possible!

Wars are stopped only by means of peace talks. The people who are at the helm of Russia are not endowed with high intellect, and they are pushing through a program conceived by them at the beginning of the war which amounts to "Might is Right." To sit down at the negotiating table means taking responsibility for the war. They realize what will happen to them. Therefore, these dirty creatures fight like cornered animals and are losing their minds, as they do not know what to do, they oppress people, intimidate them, and hammer the spirit out of them.

As with other big states, I do not think that they are interested in stopping this war quickly, because to end the war quickly would provide us with moral, physical, or material help, and put pressure on them. This is all the more so, while maintaining our state institutions with the current president in charge. And if we rely on them, this war may last forever.

It is not in our interests, we do not gain from it, Russia will not gain from it. We suffer physically. In order to stop this war as soon as possible, it is necessary to carry out our foreign policy in such a way that it serves as an instrument to make Russia sit down at the negotiating table.

What we have to do here in Chechnya is to maintain a high level of activity, to attack, to strike blows, that is maintain organized resistance. That is what we have to demonstrate. Guerrilla methods, like blowing something up somewhere, shooting someone are not appropriate any more. Actions must be organized. And for that there should be unified direction. There must be state direction. All *djamaats*, all emirs, all commanders should be brought under state orders and then it is necessary to start an organized war. If we bring all these things together, we have enough strength to beat the Russians in a big way. We can see this strength and we know that it exists. In order to gather them [different forces in Chechnya] under single leadership it is necessary to carry out strong policies and diplomacy with them.

Next, about our people, simple people—we must attract them, unite them. To explain to them what is going on, so that they are not deceived by the devilish tricks of all sorts of Maigovs, Gantemirovs who, while addressing this intimidated, frightened people, ask them what they want and talk about elections. To give the Russians no chance of continuing this war there should be news and information activity, propaganda activity, and so on and so forth. It is one of the ways to make the Russians sit down at the negotiating table.

And the next question, a question of no small importance, concerns the leaders of Russia. We need to demonstrate to them, to persuade them: “It is in your interests to stop this war! Why are you stuck on Chechnya? Let us sit down and talk it over.” Then, if you please, here are Russia’s interests in the Caucasus, in the North Caucasus, on the territory of Chechnya, a compromise, a partnership. Be our guest, but in exchange for sovereignty. What is meant by “territorial interests of Russia in the Caucasus” or “Russia’s economic interests on the territory of Chechnya,” or “defense interests”?

These do not constitute a strategy, we are not claiming that we fall into economic dependency on them, or defense dependency, or diplomatic dependency. This is all for dragging them to the negotiating table and then at the table, what we will be saying ... [unfinished thought]. For example, “territorial interests” does not mean that we will live on Russia’s territory, no, it is our territory. But again, it is the threat from that territory there, in the sense of Russia’s national

security, and so on. "Common economic space," "defensive space" and so on and so forth—there [at the negotiating table] we will be disputing it as much as we wish. Where bases should be, and where something else should be.

But today, when we say it is in Russia's interest, we must also say something to attract them, so that they agree to contacts. We have no other way out! Today there are many people who say, "Aslan, we must do something, our people have almost been wiped out, soon there will be nobody left. Maybe we should put off the issue of status for a while. Maybe it would be enough if the Russians said they would give the Chechen people the right to self-determination. There would be a common legal framework, a constitutional framework, then after that, there would be the next step."

Further, I repeatedly told you and told everyone how to speak to the Americans: "This is Russia, this is the way everyone knows her, knew her, this is what she is like, damn it! And besides, she turned out to be our neighbor. And besides, the war is in full swing, and people die. Maybe you have your tremendous plans, but it is necessary for us to stop this war as soon as possible. And today you do not help us at all, although you benefit from us. And we need to stop the war because our people are dying. It is not good for us to fight Russia. Therefore, we have no other way out, but to discuss partnership and the interests of Russia in the Caucasus. What else can we do?"

We do not say that to cut off the possibility of having a dialogue with you and we do not say that to reach an agreement with them and to be in confrontation with you. We have to negotiate with them only because we have no other way out. When we do sit down at the table with them, we have our own strategy, no doubt about it. If it is about an honest partnership, if we are honest with each other, and if you [Americans] really are seeking for ways to move from Georgia [into the North Caucasus], if you intend to develop some activities here—let us come to an agreement then.

What do you intend to do here? Today, tomorrow, at least the minimum, I am not saying the maximum. To what degree will it affect us? What will be our role? It is very important for us to know—let us be fair and call things by their proper names. There is nothing in it if we tell them so. We need to let them know that in a way we understand that they intend to come here, and they [the Russians] do not have enough strength to stop them.

In Macedonia, for example, there are ethnic groups, the Albanians, in order to obtain their rights in the parliament, they fought, then laid

down their arms, and then the peacemakers came—it will not work here. We have a state here, so be kind enough to speak accordingly, learn to speak to the president, not with Khattab, not with Basayev, not with Udugov.

What is a pattern of action? They [the Americans] are used to getting close to some group in Afghanistan ... [unfinished thought]. I categorically disagree with Zakayev about the importance they attach to the Taliban. That is really wrong. The Taliban are the brainchild of the United States.³ The students' movement, then the Taliban, they are also Pashtuns. Then there is a civil war, they [the Americans] let them [the Taliban] proclaim Sharia, they let them dress everyone in veils, they give them money. They [the Americans] force Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to recognize the Taliban movement. And if the Americans had not recognized them, then they [Saudi Arabia and Pakistan] would have never dared to recognize them [the Taliban]. It is quite obvious!

This pattern of action is there. The Udugovs, Yandarbiyevs, some Taliban and so on. Today I am saying, "Don't do it in the Taliban-style! Do it in the Chechen-style!" To do it in the Taliban-style means you should kill each other for 20 years and then sell yourself out, surrender. Therefore, it seems to me that there is some misunderstanding on this issue among us. When we speak about the Taliban, I always attach importance to them, as they flirted with Wahhabism, then they were thrown into Botlikh or elsewhere "to do jihad," they had one and the same masters.

Therefore, when we speak with this big state [United States] today, we should make them understand that we are not the Taliban nor the Albanians—there is something different, another approach should be applied here. Of course, if they like, it will be easy for them if the Russians go away, to become closer with some group here to proclaim jihad. "But excuse me, the president has worked very conscientiously, there is no Wahhabism, there is no majlis, but there is a state, Ichkeria. Be so kind as to speak to the president!" This is how we should [respond] to them [the Americans].

Next, in the text sent by Akhmed Zakayev, the idea is very simple: exchange the state system for democracy. Today the Russians say the same thing. Today they grind down this nation [Chechnya] to intimidate even those who potentially can bear a gun or say Allakhu Akbar. They [the Russians] demonstrate a great deal of zeal. Then, what do they [the Russians] say? They will ask this nation if it wants to live with the Russians, hold a referendum, and so on. Now

these [the Americans] say, knowing that we are tired are ready for anything just to end the war: "Here you go, exchange the state system for democracy." Therefore, I think that in this case we should have a principled stand. We should reject these bold slogans, otherwise the existing order will be completely ruined. And if it is ruined it will not be to our advantage.

Next, if, being a separate Chechen state, we are going to establish some order. We will not be able to build it in compliance with the Christian order, with their criminal code, and we have witnessed it in the past ten years. It does not work. Our Chechen mentality does not agree with this Russian Christian code. Why doesn't it agree? The investigator sits down [to interrogate] a criminal in a mask. The judge is afraid to announce the verdict! Because as soon as he comes back home, people with crutches [old people] come over, saying, does your son really need a quarrel? The policeman whom you put on duty is afraid to fire his gun. And if you put the policeman to shame, and all of a sudden he unexpectedly fired the gun and even a fragment caught someone, then the next day this quarrel hits him personally [i.e., he is not protected by the state]. So these strange things happen here with us!

Second, the customs and traditions of our people. There is nothing more beautiful, cleaner, more generous! We intend to build a state adhering to customs and traditions and international law, on the basis of our Chechen mentality. This is the way to speak up, and strongly affirm that there is a democratic state, and it means that [in accordance] with their Christian order, with their law, with their criminal code, and so on and so forth. It means this.

Moreover in the text of the article "The Way to Solve the Russian-Chechen Conflict," it says ... [unfinished thought]. Since practically everyone in Chechnya has a weapon, an effective plan of demilitarization, taking into account well-known peculiarities, should be worked out. The most effective way to collect the weapons will be compensation at market costs. What does it mean? That is, again, as if we are in some Macedonia—the Russians give us some rights, and we, full of happiness that our rights will be increased by their State Duma, we agree to lay down arms.

When we constantly speak with the overseas state [the USA] about relations, have in mind our state system. In regards to demilitarization, have in mind our state system. In regard to a democratic state, have in mind international law but take into account Chechen peculiarities. "We must take them into consideration. But we strongly reject

extremism, fundamentalism, radicalism, and so on and so forth, and completely recognize international law.” These formulas should be adopted there—as they are understood there and as they are understood here. In this regard we should have very strong coordination.

Then, Akhmed talks about my going there [to Western Europe], the invitation to Strasbourg, and so on and so forth. I know it would be difficult, but it would be good if it happened. Well, I know that it would be complicated, of course, it would be good if it happened. But one thing should be clearly emphasized: there must be a special invitation for the president, and second, they should escort me there and especially on the way back. With guarantees of safe passage. If they are able to undertake these obligations, it means that through God’s grace, we will have something to say there. If I am given an opportunity to get there, and if these Russians here begin making problems and I find myself stuck at some railroad station, it will be the end of us all.

I absolutely did not like your comments on the previous cassette you sent me. On the cassette that I sent you earlier—I do not know how it was formulated, maybe it was even rude—I told you that yours was inappropriate and you did not think before speaking. Therefore, I am saying once more, for me our relations must be ... [unfinished thought]. I delegated to you enormous authority, so that you took on all the work abroad on your own shoulders, managed it and was personally in charge, and consulting me, you should carry out this work. And no one has a right to interfere with our affairs!

If you even had the slightest misunderstanding [you should say], “Hold on, I know the president’s position well, and no Lyoma [Shakhmurzayev] or any other person will knock him off his position. I will consult [the president]. That’s it!” That is the way the conversation should be. And now some say I am not needed, I am resigning—such talks mean ... If I resign, you resign, even if we all collapse, this world will not turn upside down, and even so to resign today, to move away, to bend over, that is unacceptable.

And other things, so to say, I did not like what Lyoma said, did not like what Shakhmurzayev said, or what the president said. There is a reason. There are so many such reasons! So many! Go ahead! Let us get through this with dignity! Everything leads to it. I’m telling you that I am quite satisfied with the situation that is shaping up there [abroad]. Here our guys will not let you down in any respect. Everything here is going toward that [unified] order I have been speaking about, but we should avoid crass words, and we have the chance to correct it.

But again, it should not be corrected by some clerk with Shakhmurzayev⁴ through Chechenpress. There might be a quarrel between them, something like: I will publish this or I will not publish this, as if he had brought this site from the home of his seventh ancestor. It is not nice, this disregard of the president, lack of respect for the president. As soon as such a situation occurs, there should be an immediate reaction. If you were informed that it had been discussed with the president, you would say: "It is necessary to ask the president urgently. If the president said that, it should be carried out. Perhaps, he has his own reasons. So, let us give it more thought, maybe [it is] really so." It is necessary to accept what the president says. This seems to me more correct and nobler.

Good bye! May God help us! May He give us credit for all our troubles! Give my greetings to everyone for me. Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 22

This audio letter reinforced for me the terrible stresses that Maskhadov was under, both within Chechnya and from the outside world. Prompted by a message that he had recently received from Zakayev, he raised the issue of political reform at home. Although he had been elected president in 1997, Maskhadov's position was fragile from the start. His quandary, as I have written elsewhere, was how to achieve unity with the radical commanders; how to swing them to his views. His first step was to create in 1997, a Council of Commanders with whom he would meet regularly. He saw it as a forum for persuasion. But as time went on this group would issue directives and little by little became a power rivaling the power of the government and parliament.

In another move to pacify his critics, Maskhadov declared full Sharia law in February 1999. This was followed by several public executions that inevitably caused highly negative reactions in the West, which I had difficulty explaining to our hoped-for supporters. Maskhadov calculated that if he implemented some of his opposition's proposals, he could undercut their standing and demonstrate that they were simply trying to amass political power at his expense. In our previous history going back to the nineteenth century, we had made several attempts to bring in Sharia law but these efforts remained local and never really replaced our customary law of the *adat* or even Soviet law, which, theoretically at least, was the law of the land during the Soviet period.

Maskhadov also tried to co-opt the opposition by creating an extra-constitutional body, the Presidential Shura, which would bring together commanders and clerics. But the opposition declined to join and created their own Mekhan Shura, which united the whole opposition. By 1999, Maskhadov felt compelled to declare full martial law. The State Committee on Defense now became the effective government of Chechnya replacing in effect our weak institutions. Simultaneously, the parliament began dwindling in importance as some parliamentarians fled abroad, some were killed, and only a few remained at home.

All of this inevitably raised the issue of political reform of the government at home, a subject that Zakayev wrote to him about from time to time. In fact the 1992 constitution had been amended at various times since Maskhadov's election and was altered in 2002 to take account of the imposition of Sharia law. Nevertheless, Maskhadov retained his belief in a democratic, secular form of government in the future, but he was hesitant to talk about it publicly. From his point of view, Ichkeria was the beginning of democracy. He was reacting against outsiders who saw it as the beginning of something else, the beginning of a theological, radical Islamic state. He would tell me: if I talk about democracy, it will alienate our fighters who are increasingly religious. We are for democracy and international norms. And there will eventually be a Chechen state, and our customs and our religion will be its foundation.

Unfortunately, a misunderstanding developed between Maskhadov, Zakayev, and myself. It involved the creation of an Interagency Commission, an executive-type panel of the State Defense Committee. This was Maskhadov's proposal to coordinate for the sake of unity all the work of his foreign representatives with the numerous concerns of the State Defense Committee. Zakayev and I were skeptical about the value of such a commission. I felt that given the Interagency Commission would be just another bureaucratic layer that would play no useful role, it would create its own problems. Furthermore, Maskhadov expected this commission to be run by a Chechen living a Nazarn, in neighboring Ingushetia. He would naturally be under constant surveillance by the Russians. I was afraid that any material I sent to him might go astray or be stolen by the Russians en route.

The fact that Zakayev and I came to similar conclusions was taken by Maskhadov as some sort of new collusion against him. He responded in a rather irritated way, trying to justify his position. He took our supposed opposition to mean that we had our own ambitions

and did not want to be subordinate ourselves to him. I repeat that I had given him my views in clear form that I had not entered into any understanding with others. Such situations happened from time to time in conditions of war when Maskhadov was pretty isolated and his ability to contact us was limited and slow.

Inevitably, some radical leaders began casting doubts on Maskhadov's legitimacy as the war wore on. He reacted occasionally by protesting that people were not treating him with respect as can be seen from many of his comments in this and other audio letters. Here he stressed that he was both president and commander in chief, and that he needed to have a small loyal group of leaders around him.

That feeling of lack of respect occasionally crept into his communications. In part, I think, this explained his complaints that foreign governments, the United States in particular, might not deal directly with him but try to go through third parties. In the back of his mind was the thought that the United States had taken advantage of splits in Afghan society to forge relations with the Northern Alliance. Maskhadov believed, but then again we all believed, that such splits would never occur in Chechen society. We underestimated the fatigue of our people and their desperate desire to see the war end.

Against this background, the possibility of being invited by the European Union to Strasbourg, which Zakayev alluded to, was definitely attractive to Maskhadov. A public appearance in Western Europe would add to his prestige, reinforce his legitimacy, and give him a breath of fresh air. However, he worried a trip abroad would make him vulnerable to being arrested or even kidnapped by the Russians. He had not forgotten that the Kremlin had sought at one point to bribe him into exile. He had no doubts that the Russians wanted to eliminate him, even make him a victim of targeted assassination. In the end, of course, the Strasbourg trip never took place.

Peace Plans Fail

Audio letter of January 30, 2003

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

My greetings to you, Ilyas and your comrades! Give my regards to Lyoma. Your letters have reached me. I have thought them over and with God's permission I will try to say what I think about it. First of all, about you and the problems that you encountered, the impossibility to move around. I understand all this, not only you had these problems, everyone has them. In some places representative offices are closed, in some places there are people who have no chance to move around, there are even people who were arrested and put on trial at the international level. This is a difficult, cruel, dirty war, I am not saying anything about what is going on here.

And nevertheless, however difficult it might be, whatever difficulties were raised, even if the whole world is burning with a low "blue flame," I have never heard, no matter how the laws are ignored in some state, that the minister of foreign affairs would not let the president know his whereabouts for seven or eight months. Would not let him know why he went somewhere. Would not let him know what he was doing, became silent without uttering a word. And this is surprising. There cannot be anything more surprising in this world. There are wars, and wars are big and small, there is an enemy and there is absence without leave. But we speak about our side, under the conditions that we have, with the resources that we do not have, about those who having tightened their belts and gone out with other men to confront this war, be it a minister abroad, be it a deputy or a

commander who is here or a fighter. We speak about the order that we should have, and about things each of us should do.

Who says that the minister of foreign affairs for nearly a year should not contact the president or write him a letter on a scrap of paper? It is surprising! As Allah is my witness, I have only one aim—my aim is to win! As long as I live, my goal will be to take revenge on that *kerist* for everything they have done and are doing now. And all the rest ... if you were the only one who violates order and discipline that would not be so difficult, but there are many of you. We never had sufficient order and discipline. Respect, serious attitude toward each other—all these things were not created for Chechens. But we tolerate it. However, no one has the right to stop fulfilling his duties. Having completely paralyzed the work of the whole Department, suddenly, the Foreign Affairs Department has stopped work for about a year! At the most hard, difficult, crucial time.

Putin is going around shouting that they [the Chechens] are international terrorists. In Denmark there is some congress in Copenhagen,¹ Khasbulatov speaks out there that everything is finished, here everything has been incinerated, they [the Russians] have created some shady government and the president shrugs off his authority, he is already ... [inaudible]. Then, Zakayev was arrested and is before the court. The Rogozins play games at PACE and so on. Somebody has to handle this, but the whole Department has stopped working. It is incredible. You know better. But I cannot understand it.

Maybe, there are problems going from one country to another—there may be obstacles, they can even detain, arrest. Or they can refuse a visa, but in any case, there is the telephone, there is the Internet, one can give orders from any place: from America, from England, from China, from Japan. It is difficult to lead those who are abroad from here because as soon as you touch the phone they [the Russians] open a “blue flame” fire all around you. The moment you initiate a call, they surround the village [you are calling from], so there is no opportunity to use the Internet or phone. Accordingly, when the Foreign Affairs ministry stops working, then all work stops. Therefore, I do not consider that you have an excuse, and I do not know how you find a justification, because you do not have any.

Second, if we compare the situation here with your situation, then I do not see any big tragedy in it, we have already seen what is going on today. We already saw it during the first war. This chain of events that is going on is definitely entering the home stretch. A referendum, elections, the need to strengthen the MVD, to strengthen

the administration—we have seen it all before. And today the same thing is repeated, we should not be surprised at it. There's nothing to surprise us. No matter what advances that world makes to these Russians, we do not approve of what they are doing. But again in these games, as you say, before the events in Iraq, they are making advances to Russia.

For example, the same Americans do not call us international terrorists because it is not to their advantage, nor do they term what the Russians are doing [in Chechnya] to be genocide. They are steering a middle course. When they feel like it, they stroke these Russians, for example, they call Copenhagen and say, "Detain Zakayev, make a little fuss." Then they call Georgia and approve the extradition of three Georgians to Russia. They stroked Russia.

And what do we see here? Whether they hold a referendum, hold an election, whatever they do—it forces us toward organized resistance, strengthening order and discipline, increasing fighting activities. Only this can restrain Russia and make the go for negotiations, even though we never refused the proposals that the West, that Western civilization, could offer us and so on. We have always agreed to it, although we felt that there was a game being played out in our blood.

Nevertheless, no matter long the war is, it has a beginning and an end, and this war will have an end. Whether Russians want or don't want an end, whether the West intervenes or does not, the end will come. It cannot go on forever. It is obvious to us.

What possibilities might there be here? Let's think! Kazbek Makhashev and others who headed the government delegations before, they wrote a letter to me literally two months ago called "Appeal to the President." Some ministers, some deputies, even some commanders put their signatures to this appeal. They said that the war should be settled as soon as possible, the people are tired. Now they [the Russians] will hold a referendum, and after that they will not hold negotiations with us at all. So before the referendum we should make some small concessions and get the Russians to agree to them.

And I tell them: "Tell me, what concession should be made?" The first concession is a common constitutional framework. It is referred to in the constitution of the Russian Federation. In some areas we would remain under their laws, so that they could not complain that Russia's integrity was violated: territorial, state, and so on. Accordingly, some rights and other matters remain in our constitution. The rest is a common economy, common defense and so on. Then I say that all the same, the Russians will still have rights over us

to regulate “constitutional order,” conduct “antiterrorist operations.” If the Russians still have these rights, then what are we doing, what are we striving for?

A third possibility: here you suggest a Kosovo-like variant, a Bosnia-like variant. There is something amiss. There were elections here, legitimate branches of power were created, a system of government instituted. But all the same, you are suggesting a Kosovo-like variant. Peacekeeping troops come in; an international administration is under patronage of the West. After that they carry out all these procedures that the Russians want to carry out: be it a referendum, be it elections, be it enactment of a new constitution, demilitarization and the like. Well, I do not want to delve too deeply, yes, maybe, we are making a definite step forward toward independence. We are going away from the Russian order. In the international sphere, it is a step forward. But again we do not win any freedom. Maybe, if, suddenly, we become very compliant, benevolent, and obedient, maybe we will get a carrot. But if suddenly we become a little obstinate, there is a stick—this is what Western democracy is like! I have been to all the states, Muslim and Christian. There are states that live under this order [Western democracy], and do not have free hands—it is mandatory to call Uncle Sam, “may we or may we not?” There are huge instruments of pressure, if you become obstinate, they will surely pin some label on you, and economic instruments—they’ll surely strangle you.

But if you think hard, I do not think that today the game that is being played in this world—globalization of world politics, world economy, regional economy, Iraq, Afghanistan, and so on, a pipeline from here to there—what is going to flow? The Caspian shelf is here and these interests will bring them here, and it seems to me in the near future. Then the game will really begin! Until then, they will be steering a middle course [he means the position of the USA and the West in relation to the war in Chechnya]: They won’t say “yes” or “no” regarding the referendum, they will not say “international terrorists” nor will they say “genocide.” They will be steering a middle course—they need the war to go on.

And when their interests arrive here, then at this point, yes, they’ll really make us a proposition: “Either you play the role of the Taliban, do jihad, or the Bosnia-like variant. Here is a carrot for you! We will tempt the other north Caucasian republics with this carrot.” Russia has been tempting us with these republics so far ... [unintelligible] and then we will be given a carrot. They will build offshore zones and so on and so forth. This is a way to seize this region. And at

that moment, if it becomes necessary to stop the war, the war will be stopped. We know what is good in it, we know what is bad in it, we know what is advantageous for us and what isn't.

I have enumerated the three variants. The first, to make advances to Russia on the constitutional framework. The second variant is the Bosnia-like one. The third variant is pure force—to the last Chechen. But there is also the forth variant and the West should know about it, at least have some clue. We say to the Russians: "Let's come to an agreement, do not be silly, this war is not advantageous for you. You have already given up Yugoslavia, given up Afghanistan, given up the Middle East, and you'll give up Iraq and Iran. Is Chechnya of such great strategic interest to Russia that you give up all these regions for it? Let us come to an agreement without the West, we don't need any mediators, don't need any international observers, don't need any peacekeeping forces." I am even ready to meet with that idiot of theirs [Putin] face to face without any mediators and sign a treaty or an agreement in which the relations between the two countries will be well-defined.

Why do I say that? Vallakhi, I say that even if Tim Guldiman is there, if the OSCE is there ... What is the big deal if Tim Guldiman's signature is on it? Who respects these agreements when no one gives a damn about anything in this dirty world. It's only interests! Political interests, regional interests, interests of states. And as to what Maskhadov and Yeltsin signed somewhere, who the observer was, who the mediator was—no one gives a damn! Therefore, only we can make Russia fulfill obligations that she took—by our policies, our understanding, our intellect, our persistence. If they force war upon us, by organized resistance. We will not have any other helpers, we can see that. The will [the West and the USA] will always make advances, but steer a middle course and drag this war on.

Therefore we are ready to come to an agreement with the Russians. But we say to the Russians: "Even if not a single Chechen remains here, Chechnya will never be under the Russian constitutional and legal order—this is a fundamental issue! And as to the rest of it, let us talk regarding Russia's interests in the Caucasus, in the North Caucasus. With regard to Russia's defense interests, let us talk about a common defense area. With regard to Russia's economic interests in the Caucasus, in the North Caucasus, let us [talk], about a common ruble! About common customs regulations. Let's talk about the safety of Russia's southern borders. We take responsibility for this part—the Georgian border—no one will get through, only you cover it from the

air. If we need to establish relations with some other state somewhere, we will do it only through Russia, considering Russia's interests. We make concessions in absolutely everything, but the only thing is, we will not be under their laws. We do not grant them the right to make this hell here. This is the fourth variant.

Russia should know that we also have a Bosnia-like variant. But the West also should know that we have a fourth variant. If they make advances to these Russians and prolong the war in Chechnya we will be given no choice but to go for it and tempt Russia to accept this variant.

I needed three years to establish a unified order here, to put up organized resistance, to unite everyone, to subordinate everyone, all the *djamaats*, all groups of fighters. Why? Because wherever you go, be it PACE or OSCE and you speak with some human rights organization—they listen to you attentively: “Yes, it's bad there. Yes, human rights are violated. Yes, the Russians are beasts. Yes, they cut out our entrails. The buy and sell corpses. Generally speaking, it's the Middle Ages!” They admit it.

But after that, when you finish speaking, you are asked: “So, how long will your patience last, how long can you put up resistance?” That is, they are waiting for you to give up. If you do not have force at hand and if this force does not obey orders, if there is no organized resistance, no one will take you seriously, neither the West, nor human rights organizations, nor international organizations, nor these Russian barbarians. We managed to establish this unity but with great difficulties.

You know how this unity was established: “There will be a Chechen state here, this state will be a Muslim state, with faith in God, and there will be the laws of God. You have been told that I am going to sell myself out to Russians, that I am some sort of democrat. Here I am! You do *gazavat*, and I do it. You do jihad, and I do it!” This is the only way that I can establish this unity. But no sooner do I mention democracy or something like that than the Basayevs, Yandarbiyevs, immediately say “There, you see!”

If you start political maneuvering, letting the West know that such-and-such an approach is possible, and telling Russia another approach is possible, they [the radicals] immediately break up our unity. And if unity is broken, there is no way to fight in an organized way. So, I am saying once more, I do not exclude this variant of Conditional Independence, we need this option. I talk about it with those who speak to the Russians approximately in this form. We tell them just

like this, "You force us to go to the West cap in hand. Here are these options, and we have no choice but to act like this."

That is, politics at large in this world, as soon as you begin to get the hang of it, it is a nightmare. A real nightmare. Vallakhi! Everything that is done by everyone, everywhere, is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. There are no rights anywhere, and it is unlikely that they will ever be. There are interests, that's it! Interests of states, interests of parties, leadership, and so on. It's like pawns that are being moved about in their own interests.

Therefore, we should have some cunning policies. We should not behave like naïve children. Here, the Russians have proposed [something], so we go there and stand, cap in hand. If only this war is stopped, just a little bit is changed in the constitution—all this is again for 300 years. Then, the West proposes something else, we run there, kneel down, if only this [war] is stopped. Well, what next? There are lots of examples when many states stopped wars like this, but these people were not really given more freedom, the more so, if they are Muslims.

We should study the interest of these large states: regional interests, strategic interests. What do they want to do, what are they striving for, what do they want to achieve, by what methods, by what means? Then, how can they use us on their way, and what do they want? How do they want to move us about like pawns [on a chessboard]. Although we do not have any large institutions, we should study this, be vigilant, predict it, we should create our own policies even the subtle type. That is, adjust here and there, and be always in search. They [large states] look for the middle course. We also look for the middle course. Always hold something back, we should do what is advantageous to us.

The most important thing is to win the war, to survive, to preserve our people, to preserve our system of government. Next, to become clear in our relations with this Russia, so that we do not remain under their policies. I am not saying that we should shout some crazy, radical statements that we want to seize the world, or that we are feeding terrorists but building a civilized state. We know that we are Muslims, that we are Chechens, that we live in this world, that we should keep to the international law. Some people say that they want to build a caliphate there. How do you build a caliphate, when there is no Muslim state in the world? When you do not dare to say that you are Muslim. We want to build a free state, where Muslims will have freedom to live freely.

So, perhaps let us agree on this: when you speak or do interviews, say that the president does not yet know the full details of the conditional independence proposal and it is necessary to send it to the president, the president needs to discuss it. The president has not made a decision yet, we are waiting, hoping, and so on. But the minister of foreign affairs thinks this formulation is acceptable. However, the president at the State Committee for Defense has not yet adopted it, although it is likely to get done. We are persuading the president and the State Committee for Defense about this option. It seems to me that it'll be right to do it in this format.

If I say now, "Go ahead! Do it!" unity will completely collapse here. Again all will scatter into groups, into detachments, into *djamaats*, and we all perish. I hope that you understand what I am talking about, so build your conversation like this. I know that if you say it to Lyoma and others, they will say just stop this war. Maskhadov should not have listened to anyone [his opposition]. I understand that it is to be announced from an important forum, but here it is a little more difficult. When you are surrounded by Russian troops and *munafiks* [pro-Russian Chechens], when there is no free spot left in the villages or forest, there are ambushes, ambushes and disgraceful behavior.

Let them know that we see a political settlement in this way, but there's no common decision yet by the president or by the State Committee for Defense. But the minister of foreign affairs keeps insisting on such an approach. So I thought, what if we do it this way. This conversation should be between the two of us. When you let me know your opinion as quickly as possible, then I will consult, and as soon as your plan gets here, we will discuss it with our politicians, our commanders. All the options. But we won't say that to ordinary fighters. Generally speaking, you have to convince us that this is the better way, and we have not made a decision yet. We are thinking, seeking other options, maybe there are some better proposals.

I'm saying it again, wherever you are, whether you have a passport or not, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should hear about it as before. If you like, organize press conferences, do interviews, but do not be silent. One more thing. Zakayev has really been seriously cornered. He cannot move around, perhaps this can go on for two or three months at least. The deputies are walking around there like crazies, cannot get along with each other. And there is absolutely no use of them, not from Tutakov, or Idigov, or Beshayev.

Therefore, Usman Ferzauli should be appointed first deputy minister of foreign affairs. He has everything for moving around, a visa,

etc. Let him represent the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is your aide, delegated and authorized by you. This idea came to my head. In any case, we must not be losers in this respect. Do interviews continually somewhere, at "Liberty" [Radio Liberty] your voice should be heard.

May God help us! May Allakh welcome our deeds! Give my greetings to everyone for me. Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 23

To be frank, I was offended by Maskhadov's criticism of myself. Yes, I had been silent for some time. But I think he had little understanding of my circumstances. This was a period when there was much talk in US leadership circles about invading Iraq and no one was thinking about Chechnya anymore. At this time, the Russians asked Interpol to arrest me and in the State Duma there were calls for my extradition. I had no travel documents and I was seeking a way to regularize my status in the United States because I simply had no other way out. Working in a system of slow courier communications, it was inevitable that all of us were going to have misunderstandings. I regretted this one very much.

But to serious business: The years 2001–2003 constituted a very active time in seeking a negotiated solution to the conflict in Chechnya. Throughout those years no less than six plans or sets of recommendations were put forward by outside observers, both Russian and Western. All of them provided imaginative ideas but ultimately none were taken up by the Russian side.

During August 16–19, 2002, the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya organized a second Track II meeting in Lichtenstein bringing together several prominent Russian political and American political figures to renew the search for points of contact for Russian-Chechen negotiations. This was a follow-up to the failed meeting in Caux, Switzerland, of the previous year. Although attended at a higher level, it did not yield any specific results.

In October 2002, Akhmed Zakayev even organized a World Congress on Chechnya in Copenhagen but this assembly also ended in disarray. At the end of that month, armed Chechen rebels, not associated with Maskhadov, seized the Dubrovka theater in Moscow and demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya.

This dramatic incident, which was put down with force by the Russians, left the search for peace largely discredited. Almost simultaneously Moscow demanded, through Interpol, his arrest. The Danes

detained Zakayev and brought him to trial. But despite information provided by the Russians, the court found in his favor and offered him an apology. Subsequently, he left for London where the authorities eventually gave him political asylum. The British authorities judged the Russians had failed to demonstrate they had a legal case, as opposed to a political case, against him. The Kremlin was outraged, of course.

The design of any peace plan was daunting because of the fundamental requirements of both sides. The Russians were deeply concerned over a series of apartment building bombings and other terroristic acts that they claimed had been organized by Chechens. Furthermore, they were doubtful of the Chechen ability to restore law and order in their territory given the lawlessness, kidnapping, stealings that been rampant between the two Russo-Chechen wars. Furthermore, a pipeline carrying Caspian Sea oil ran from Baku through Chechnya to Novorossiysk on the Black sea was vulnerable. For these, as well as reasons of historic ownership, the Kremlin must have felt the situation would best be righted by complete Russian control over the territory.

The Chechen leadership of President Maskhadov, on the other hand, could not accept these justifications. The Soviet Union had collapsed in 1991 and its 15 Union Republics had all become independent states. Although Chechnya was constitutionally part of the Russian Federation, high Russian officials under President Yeltsin had made no attempt on legal grounds to dissuade the Chechens from seceding, at least at first. Indeed Yeltsin had told us to take as much sovereignty as we could manage. Maskhadov was prepared to make major concessions to the Kremlin, like taking account of Moscow's military concerns including the inviolability of the southern border, respecting Russian interests abroad, remaining in economic common union, and retaining the ruble as currency. But he insisted that Chechnya must obtain self-rule, should build its own institutions as a Muslim state with a long history of customary law, the *adat*. In other words, that Maskhadov insisted that Chechnya should be politically and juridically independent from Russia.

The six plans that were put forward during these two years attempted to meet the conditions of both sides in imaginative ways were in chronological order:

First, the recommendations were by Boris Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister, on February 14, 2001. The central element was that Chechnya would become a special, federal district headed by an ethnic

Russian governor-general who would control all financial, political, and military power. He should be a person known and respected in the West (to reduce the flow of Western criticisms), he should possess great administrative experience, and have the confidence of the Russian president and the military. If this governor-general did not succeed in stabilizing the situation, Chechnya could be divided into two: the northern flatlands would remain part of Russia, being joined to Stavropol, while the area south of the Baku-Rostov highway would be named Chechnya. Federal troops would be withdrawn although special forces would continue to hunt down terrorists in the south. The system of government in the northern area would involve a constitutional convention leading to a referendum asked to approve a parliamentary system in which Chechen clans, rather than political parties, would be represented.

Prospects of success were always in doubt because President Putin had said at the start of the second war that Russia would not negotiate with terrorists. Later, at a meeting in Pyatigorsk on the Chechen problem, which Nemtsov was attending, Putin made the rather off-hand comment: "I'll give you a month. Go ahead and disarm the rebels and if you don't succeed, don't bother to worry any more about the situation."

Second, six suggestions from former Russian premier Yevgeny Primakov on February 14, 2001. First, separation of Chechen fighters from peaceful citizens but without going into details. Second, negotiations with separate commanders on disarmament, dividing them into groups that would recognize the power of a new Chechen government, and those who categorically refused. Third, fighters to announce within 72 hours their willingness to give up their arms and then to engage in negotiations leading to their surrender. Fourth, to localize the conflict so that it would not spread to Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachaevo-Cherkess, and the border with Stavropol to be strengthened. Fifth, possible granting of Chechnya a "special status." Sixth, informing Western countries of Russian initiatives and seeking support for the struggle against terrorism as Russia had indicated support for American efforts after 9/11. I regarded these more as recommendations for a more effective pacification of Chechnya than a real plan for peace.

Third, suggestions in 2002 from Ruslan Khasbulatov, a distinguished Chechen economist who had served as the speaker of the revived Russian Duma after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His plan would grant Chechnya "special status" under which it would

enjoy a great deal of political autonomy, subject to the approval of Moscow. It would remain in the ruble zone, and its citizens would still be Russian citizens. While not independent, it could develop international relations but would have to respect Russia's foreign affairs interests. A program of complete demilitarization would be enacted, federal troops would be withdrawn, and armed groups would disarm. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe would act as guarantors of Chechnya's special status. The plan was not reported by the Russian media, which seemed to be under instructions to give it no publicity. The ideas appeared as an addition to his book *An Exploded Life* and was to be discussed at the Copenhagen Congress.

Fourth, the so-called "Eurasian Plan" of June 28, 2002, was formulated by Khozh-Akhmed Nukhaev, a Chechen businessman and former first deputy premier in the government of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev. His idea was similar to that of Nemtsov's in that Chechnya should be divided into two parts, the mountainous southern area and the northern plain where the population had been favorably inclined toward the Russians since the nineteenth century. The northern area could remain part of the Russian Federation, while the southern section where the population had always resisted subordination to the Russians would be called South Chechnya. This would be a self-governing territory with promises of non-interference by Russia and yet would not be considered a part of the international community. I considered the plan utopian at best and President Maskhadov violently denounced it.

Fifth, a plan put forward by the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya authored by Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski and published in the *Washington Post* on June 21, 2002. This plan would allow Russian troops to be stationed on Chechnya's southern border to relieve Moscow's concern about intrusion of international terrorists into its southern region. Simultaneously, President Maskhadov would be called on to recognize the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. Russia would acknowledge the right of the Chechen people to political, but not national, self-determination. A referendum would eventually be held to approve a new constitution modeled on the liberal agreement between Tatarstan and the Russian federal government. Extremist groups would be ordered to leave the country if they would not vote to approve a new constitution. The international community would organize a major reconstruction fund and provide for a presence on the ground to help in rebuilding the nation's ruined infrastructure.

And sixth, the plan I developed with colleagues in the Chechen Foreign Ministry, approved by President Maskhadov, and called “The Akhmadov Plan of Conditional Independence,”² which I announced at the National Press Club in Washington DC on March 18, 2003. The unique aspect of this plan was that Chechnya would become a protectorate of the United Nations for a period of 10–15 years during which time it would develop and strengthen its institutions and spread knowledge among the population of democratic practices. This was modeled loosely on what we observed in Kosovo and East Timor. Under these arrangements, the Maskhadov government would resign, the Russian military would withdraw, the armed Chechen units would dissolve. In the interim, UN peacekeepers and police forces would keep order. When the situation became sufficiently stable, national elections would be held for a new government. Since Russia has a permanent seat on the UN Security Council we expected that it would be involved in the state building process and could offer suggestions and amendments.

The plan received encouraging support in the West. Olivier Dupuis, a Belgian deputy, collected some 30,000 signature of support. Additionally, 145 members of the European parliament endorsed the plan. However, the Russians never took it up. I was not unduly upset by this lack of Russian response because I considered the plan was another contribution to the overall discussion for the peacemakers.

Reviewing these plans more than a decade later, I am reminded why it was impossible to come to an agreement. The difficult problems were complicated by feelings of revenge among the Russians after losing the first war, not to speak of the desire for vengeance by Chechens who had suffered terrible brutalities, and our memories of the Great Deportation of 1944.

Certain issues were obvious and probably could have been handled. These included initiating a ceasefire, disarming our fighters, withdrawing Russian troops, exchanging prisoners and bodies, providing for the reconstruction of the republic, arranging medical assistance, and providing some form of international oversight or guarantees.

But the rock on which everything fell apart was the utter refusal of both sides to yield on their core convictions. The Russians insisted that Chechnya be reconstituted as part of the Russian Federation, reaffirming the right of conquest tracing back to the days of Peter the Great and before. President Maskhadov insisted on complete independence and the creation of a new state based on our Chechen traditions and customary law.

And what about the future? I believe the desire for independence has been pushed underground only temporarily. Chechens have long memories. Indeed, Chechen families honor family history for at least seven generations. An unpunished crime six generations ago must still be punished today.

I will not be surprised if, say, in 50 years the demand for Chechen independence rises again.

Maskhadov's Last Message

Audio letter of March 30, 2003

Assalamu-alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatuh!

Ilyas, my greetings to you and our comrades who are there. The president of the Chechen People Maskhadov is talking to you. I have not heard from you for quite a while. I don't remember when you and I talked last. In the cassette that I sent you earlier, I told you that the position of the minister of foreign affairs is a high position, the more so, in a country that is at war. It is a position of great importance! It seems to me that you have not realized that yet. You would have understood it, if you were here, stayed in some cave. If you thought of it, and laid on the scales the military situation, the political situation, the diplomatic situation, the internal situation here. If you thought of it. But it seems to me that you have not thought of it yet. It is impossible to imagine a more undisciplined minister in this world, you lack so much discipline.

But today there is a terrible, cruel, hard, war going on here and today I have no chance to separate you all into the good and the bad. Therefore, you behave as suits yourselves, without exerting yourselves. I have no clue what the situation is like in your area. Last time you sent a document with a variant that you suggested, that is the variant of "Conditional Independence." But what comes next, what you have done, what you have succeeded in, what you are planning to do, I know absolutely nothing about that. And here I meet with the most radical group, with the emirs, talk to them, try to explain to them at least a little, the crux of this proposal and persuade them of it.

For example, you know to what degree it is difficult, it is hard. Today it is difficult for the mujahedeens, who went to war trusting in God and fighting with this dirty, brutal Christian state, to speak about the West and Western democracy. It is so difficult to convince anyone that we will manage to find our place in the world in which inflexible laws exist! But no matter how difficult it might be, I am trying to do something here. My only problem is that I don't know what you are up to.

I don't know what progress you are making, nor do I know what you have succeeded in doing. And this is only due to just one reason ... [unfinished thought]. If push comes to shove, if there is no opportunity to send a cassette, communicate through the Internet where you can find Anzor [Maskhadov's son], you can get in touch with him, write him a letter and send it with him. There is such an opportunity. In an extreme case, you can call [me] and tell me in two or three words. But you do not say anything, and I have mentioned the reason why you do not. You are a minister who is unable to maintain any kind of discipline. You are a man who is absolutely unaware of what is going on here. You have no clue. That is the reason.

Therefore, I'll give you a general outline how the situation that has shaped up here. Alkhamdulillah by the grace of God, the men who are fighting here display real zeal, make serious preparations in regard to putting up resistance. We have coordination of small size operations, subversive acts by waging guerrilla warfare, based on local actions and large-scale actions, joint strikes everywhere, simultaneously marching into villages, district centers, the city. They are working on preparation of these plans with zeal. Therefore, in any case, I do not see problems here so far. The Russians only have an opportunity to lie, to say that everything is normal here because of the information blackout, the denial of access for journalists, and the impossibility to make phone calls from here.

And in reality everything is just the way I am telling you. I am saying it once more, I consider it the main issue—to resist the enemy, having a synchronized order, consent, subordination of all the mujahdeen to one leadership, that is, to resist the enemy in an organized way. If we manage to resist in this way, if we manage to persist, then the Americans, the Western states, the UN, the OSCE, the European Council, PACE will get some idea of who we are, where we are, what we do, and they will show concern about us. But if we are unable to do it, if we bow down, if we get tired of holding weapons in our hands, then no one will remember us. No one will care about any variations

we speak about like “Conditional ...” We will only be asked a one question: “Well, how much longer will you be putting up resistance? When will you put your hands up?” There will be this kind of talk.

Therefore, I am saying it once more, I consider it the main issue—organized resistance. Military resistance. And then their referendum will not be worth a kopek, and it does not matter, whether they call him Kadyrov, Mudyrov, or the head, or the administration, or the president. This constant threat from our mujahedeen—they are able to seize the city [Grozny] and at any moment they are able to do something else more crazy—this fear is getting to him [Kadyrov]. It was terrible what they were up to while preparing for this referendum for new elections [March 23, 2003]. They placed tanks around every village, blocked the roads everywhere, pulled up great numbers of troops to all polling stations. And what was the reason? They knew that we were strong enough to attack and do something crazy and knew that we were ready to do it. And nothing else!

Therefore, I am telling you all once more, I am responsible for this main issue here. I am up to date, I am in control, I run the whole thing and I fully know the state of affairs, I am in touch with all the commanders and all the emirs, meet with them, and discuss everything. I have no problems at all in this respect. There are weapons, there is food and drink, and there are men ready to fight. But in addition to that there are other things that need doing including external leverage. So get to it now. These are the things you must do. It is of no small importance also!

I am saying it once more, that if the main issue is normal, when we put up organized military resistance, it is easier for you to work there. Then they [the UN, the OSCE, PACE and the whole West] will seek you out, then they will know where you are, will know where Ilyas is, will know where Akhmed Zakayev is, and the only thing that will be required of you at that moment will be to talk to them. We have paved this road for you. Here our guys have been taking pains for four and a half years to pave this road for you. And consequently, they tell you “you should work also.” They say “work in agreement, be aware of what you are doing, discuss things with each other, know what to say and whom to say it to.”

In our last talk that principle of “Conditional Independence” came up and I made a close study of it all, and I understood everything pretty well. Everything! The Kosovo variant, the Bosnia variant, everything, the template from Western countries, everything is pretty clear to me. And if, for example, it ended in this way, there are advantages that we

gain in regard to independence, in regard to acquiring our statehood, I understand all this. In regard to security, guarantees of security for the people, although, maybe, it is not the final goal.

Here we found some ways, more or less, as to what to say and how to speak with these men who fight, how to break it to them. And here is what is required of you now after our talk. What have you done? What did you succeed in? What comes out of it? What can this result in? And this is what we do not know! Therefore, we are blind. And you are not here to clear it up for us.

Earlier in my talk I told you to go public, to announce by yourself or on behalf of the ministry that there are such and such proposals. Say that we are preparing to determine our relations with Russia, to stop the war on such principles. Organize press conferences, lay it out to the public in all international human rights organizations, have the Russians hear it. I have given you this authority and this freedom. The only thing that I told you regarding me as the president and the State Defense Council: say that they are thinking, they are deciding, they will say, and that does not put an end to it. This is what I told you.

Therefore, for example, if we knew what you have been doing there, what could be expected, if I knew approximately the situation there, then I would tell you what is necessary to do next. For example, I have done everything that was required of me here: I reprimanded those who needed reprimanding, I patted on the back those who needed patting on the back, I made explanations to those who needed explanations. And even if I said that these principles of settling the war come on behalf of the president, I don't see any problems here. The problems are there. And only because of ignorance of what you are doing.

Therefore, here is what you should think about for the future. First, the creation of an international military tribunal, which I think would be a powerful instrument to pressure Russia. They will react to it very strongly. Because what the Russian leaders have done here never even entered the minds of Hitler, or Pol Pot, or Pinochet. It is terrible what they have done here. If they have to answer for it, they will be in a very bad way. But these Russians will say that they do not know anything about it.

But today we understand that the West, particularly America, has enough levers to force Russia to make definite concessions, get them to the negotiating table, even call them to account. It is not the former Soviet Union, and it is not the bygone time of planned economy surrounded by an Iron Curtain. And there is Cuba: the Russians left taking with them their radar installations; they left Vietnam; left

Yugoslavia, left Afghanistan, left Iraq. It did not happen because of their goodwill—they were made to do it.

And as to how to end the war here, how to establish control over it, we suggest the principle [conditional independence] you are talking about. And it will be done from there [from the West], that is, by external pressure. This is pretty much the talk that I have already begun here. I indicated that we are very interested in the International Military Tribunal [on Chechnya]. Now we are fully oriented on the West. And you are the one who should have to shout that the completion of all this can be expected only from there. And you should make it known to everyone. And we also had to get involved in it. Yes, it is very attractive, although we say to the Russians here: "If you, madmen, came to agreement with us and would it up, it would not be necessary to involve anyone else, but it cannot be helped if you are so dumb. Maybe you really see no way out, so drag out this war for twenty more years?" That's why we are oriented toward the West.

That is, I'm saying it once more! What should you do? Contact me as soon as possible, let me know what you are doing there, let me know what you have accomplished and what you are planning to do next. And if you get in touch with Anzor through the Internet, he will deliver me everything you said as soon as possible. Second, regarding the establishment of an International Military Tribunal [on Chechnya]. It should be announced everywhere that we are very interested in it, that we are entirely behind it, and that we have the material to present there. Announce it. Third, it is necessary to call a lot more attention to the principle you suggest [Conditional Independence]. I allow you to do it, I give you the right to say that yes, the president supports it, and it's being discussed at the State Defense Committee, that is, practically we all support this issue. I give you the right to speak about it in this way. I give you the right.

Next, about the country you are in, their Department [US State Department], their leaders, it is necessary to carry on an open conversation with them. I told you in the previous cassette, Vallakhi! They will definitely invade here [the Caucasus]. As soon as things come to an end in Iraq, they will strengthen their presence in Georgia. And as soon as they fortify their position here, they will turn their eyes here. And when they look here, they will have to start a dialogue with us.

Only with our assistance will it be possible for them to take control of this kuyan¹ up to the Caspian Sea shelf. Only with an agreement with us and only with our assistance. And they [the Americans] understand this pretty well. The only thing that I feared is that they

would be able to use the model they used with the Taliban and so on. But here, with God's permission, that will not work. Why? Because we made all our "Taliban" [the local extremists] obey state policies. Now they [the Americans] will have to speak with a state, they will have to speak with us.

Therefore, it is about time you start talks with them. They have to show their cards even a little bit. If necessary, it will be kept secret, we will not tell anyone about it. But they should show their cards a bit, so that we can orient ourselves. Persuade them that we are completely focused on them. Therefore: "What do you need? What kind of help do you need from us? You will fortify your position there [in Georgia] and then you will move ahead here, and what's next? Go ahead, Maskhadov says that he needs to prepare for it, he is already ready for it." Maybe it is naïve. But to my mind, it is time to speak about it without publicity.

Goodbye. Give greetings on my behalf to everyone! Allakh Akbar!

Akhmadov Comment No. 24

This was the last cassette that Maskhadov sent me. Several months had gone by since I had forwarded him our Foreign Ministry plan for a peaceful resolution of the Chechen conflict. He replied that I should personally promote it enthusiastically. He added there were other proposals that we should show Russia, Western Europe, and the United States to demonstrate that we were open to different approaches and were ready for serious discussions. Maskhadov was especially willing to work with the United States, which he believed was going to move into the North Caucasus region because of Caspian Sea oil. He figured US interests in the region could be used to put pressure on Russia to Chechnya's advantage.

Reading this last message, you must keep in mind the difficult circumstances on the ground that were leading him to a state of quiet desperation. The steady march of Chechenization, Russia's continuing attacks, the Nord Ost tragedy in Moscow in the fall of 2002 contributed to his dark mood and his harsh judgment of myself ... supposedly the most undisciplined foreign minister in the world! In fact, had we been able to keep up constant and normal communications many of our misunderstandings would never have occurred.

Maskhadov continued to believe that the United States was going to be of help to Chechnya in the near future. But by end of March

2003, he had yet to realize that the United States was shifting its war against terror from Afghanistan to Iraq. When the US invasion of Iraq occurred, the United States left whatever Caucasian plans it had in mind hanging in the air.

From March 2003 onward, I was involved in promoting our plan for conditional independence of Chechnya under the tutelage of the United Nations. It was perfectly understandable to me that Maskhadov did not want to make a bold announcement of support. He was constantly looking over his shoulder at his radical commanders who had doubts about any shift toward the West and he did not want to drive in a new wedge that would threaten military unity. After all, he had invested enormous energy in creating a unified command to fight the Russians.

There followed a long period during which I worked with Olivier Dupuis, a member of the European Parliament and the French intellectual Andre Glucksmann who came to support me in the United States. On March 18, 2003, I unveiled the plan at the National Press Club in Washington DC to a large audience that seemed very interested. I declared that Maskhadov knew the details of the plan and supported them.

I reported back to Maskhadov about my presentation to the National Press Club on conditional independence and said it would be supported, especially by the European Parliament. I pointed out that 145 European parliamentarians had subscribed to the plan, and various political fractions had discussed it. Some 30,000 private citizens in Europe declared their support from the grass roots. Of course, in Russia there were no commentaries on the plan for perfectly obvious reasons.

The Russians were moving step by step at this time to build a Kremlin-supported regime in Chechnya to rival and overwhelm Maskhadov's administration. On March 23, 2003, they held a highly controlled referendum for a new constitution through which Chechnya would be reintegrated into the Russian Federation. Maskhadov described in some detail how the Russian military assisted the process during war time conditions. The referendum was approved but there was uncertainty as to who voted. The BBC referred to "ghosts" participating. No Westerners monitored the balloting, however, the Arab League, Malaysia, Indonesia, Yemen, Oman, and representatives from the Commonwealth of Independent States sent observers.

This was followed on October 5, 2003, by another highly manipulated operation in which Akhmad Kadyrov, the former grand mufti

who had abandoned Maskhadov and gone over to the Russians, was elected president. Kadyrov was assassinated six months later on May 9, 2004, in a bomb explosion at Grozny's Dynamo stadium, which eventually led to his son Ramzan Kadyrov becoming president.

Maskhadov's last audio letter had paid considerable attention to Russian human rights abuses, which he continually described in the course of our correspondence. Indeed, he charged in this letter that the Russians behaved worse than Hitler, or the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot, or Chilean dictator Pinochet. At the beginning of the conflict, human rights organizations conceived the idea of bringing these abuses to an international tribunal. That was a fairly utopian notion because the United Nations would have been involved and the Russians, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, held a veto. Yet we saw that in the former Yugoslavia many human abuses were raised and resolved. Of course, a lot depends on realpolitik and opportunity. Nevertheless, Maskhadov considered it would be important to collect archival materials for such a tribunal. One day, some or all of this material may surface and shed a new light on the conduct of war.

My return letter of April 2003 was my last direct communication with Maskhadov. I sent my microcassette to Maskhadov's courier in Baku reporting on reaction in Washington to my proposal. I never did take him up on the possibility of communicating through his son Anzor, who was then living in Asia. Anzor eventually received political asylum in Norway where he authored a book, *My Father, the Chechen President*.

I subsequently had a few telephone conversations with Umar Khanbiev, a prominent Chechen surgeon, who served as Maskhadov's ambassador-at-large at this time. He relayed my thoughts to the president and reported back his reactions. Eventually when the pro-Russian regime was well established, Khanbiev returned to Chechnya and became the chief surgeon of the Chechen Republic, a position he holds today under the current administration of Ramzan Kadyrov.

By mid-2003, I was deeply concerned about my own personal situation and no longer in a position to do much for my beleaguered homeland. I was on the verge of becoming a man without a country. My Russian passport had expired in 2002, I could not travel abroad, and the Russians made clear to US officials they wanted to get their hands on me, and put me on trial for treason. Since I was still nominally foreign minister, it was excruciatingly difficult for me to take

the decision to ask for political asylum. Still, I decided to make the request that gave me the chance to demonstrate the groundlessness of the Russian Procuracy charge against me of terrorism. Asylum was eventually granted after lengthy legal consideration.

At home, I was being criticized by some of our leaders for being too pro-Western. The fact that I got asylum, as well as a fellowship at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC, was incomprehensible to my former colleagues. Some American friends urged me to resign and become a private citizen, but I felt I could not do so. That would not have been the loyal Chechen thing to do, especially since I had operated in all honesty in support of our historic struggle for independence.

At the end of February 2005, Maskhadov appealed to the European Union for help and support in bringing the war to an end. Indeed, he had hoped to meet with President Putin in February 2000, as I noted earlier, to discuss ways of ending the conflict. Barely 10 days later, on March 8, 2005, he was killed. There has been much confusion surrounding his death and, frankly, I am still not sure how it happened.

The official Russian version is that he was discovered in the concrete basement of a house in Tolstoi-Yurt by the Alfa and Vypmel special forces.² Reportedly the FSB had paid \$10 million for information leading to his hiding spot. Ordered to surrender, he refused. The agents then threw an enhanced effects grenade into the bunker, killing him.

But there were other versions. Ramzan Kadyrov, Moscow's man who is running occupied Chechnya today, has asserted that Maskhadov was accidentally killed by a bodyguard through careless mishandling of his weapon.³ His body, naked to the waist, was carted into the open and put on public display. A television sequence of his body lying on the ground was too indistinct to reveal much about his death.

Still another version is that Maskhadov asked his chief bodyguard, who was at this time his own nephew, to execute him when escape seemed impossible. This version seems unlikely to me because our Muslim faith considers murder or execution a sin. Furthermore, Maskhadov often wore a suicide belt that he could have activated. His son, Anzor Maskhadov, has publicly stated in the aftermath of the killing, that his father had assured him he would never allow himself to be taken alive by the Russians.

Maskhadov's death was a terrible shock for all of us who worked closely with this honorable man for a cause that has deep roots going

back several hundred years. His family appealed to the Kremlin leaders for return of the body, a request the Russian leadership never bothered to answer. Apparently, they did not want his burial place to become a shrine, which might again rally resistance. In any event, Maskhadov's death was the final event Moscow needed to cap their policy of Chechenization.

The Voice from Beyond

Chechnya, February 25, 2005

For the attention of Xavier Solana, European High Representative for
Common Foreign and Security Policy

Dear Mr. Solana,

With never a day going by without further victims among the civilian population of Chechnya and among Russian and Chechen combatants, without Chechen women, children and men being subject to the worst abuses, the survivors, including myself, have celebrated the unhappy tenth anniversary of the military offensive against the Chechen people launched on December 11, 1994, by President Yeltsin.

Of the one million inhabitants in Chechnya in 1994, over 200,000 have died, 300,000 are refugees outside the country, tens of thousands are displaced within the country, tens of thousands suffer from the consequences of wounds or torture, and thousands more are detained in the so-called filtration camps of the Russian armed forces or their Chechen collaborators, waiting for a ransom to be paid or, more often, for death as a result of torture or privation.

As you know, since the resumption of what has come to be known as the Second War of Chechnya in autumn 1999, I have constantly reiterated my desire to resolve this conflict and all issues of dispute between the Russian and Chechen sides through dialogue with the Russian authorities. These repeated requests for negotiations have so far remained unanswered by the Russian authorities, apart from claims of a false normalization.

In March 2003, Chechen Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov presented a peace plan, which, drawing on the experience gained by the international community in East Timor and Kosovo, aimed to provide a contribution to the resolution of the conflict taking into account both the legitimate security interests of the Russian Federation and the three demands that the Chechen side cannot renounce: a mechanism for the international guarantee, in one form or another, of any new agreement between the two parties; direct involvement, during the transitional period of the international community, in the establishment of the rule of law and democracy in Chechnya; and the material reconstruction of the country; a final decision on the status of Chechnya via internationally recognized norms and procedures.

Unfortunately this proposal, like all previous proposals and like the latest one, the one month unilateral ceasefire I have declared in the beginning of this year, has brought no reaction from the Moscow authorities except a further reinforcement of the process of the so-called normalization of the tragedy of my people, accompanied by fraudulent elections, the strengthening of military operations, and abuse of the civilian population.

With as much attention that my condition as president and resistance fighters permit, I have followed the events in Ukraine, what has been called the Orange Revolution, and the role—decisive, in my opinion—played by the European Union in its happy conclusion. In particular, I have noted how strong and effective Europe can be when it decides to speak with a harmonious voice, through the words of various heads of state or government, or with a single voice, that of its High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy.

I am not unaware of the complexity of the relations between the European Union and its member states and the Russian Federation, nor of the political and economic importance of these relations. On the contrary, it is precisely because these relations are important for the European Union that I believe it to be a matter of vital urgency that they should be built on solid foundations: those of liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. Unfortunately, as events in Ukraine have just reminded us, as the anti-democratic drift in Russia has taught us, and as the tragedy suffered by my people for ten years suffices to demonstrate, these solid foundations do not exist in Russia.

I will not return to the widespread daily terrorism of the Russian state and its Chechen acolytes. As for the terrorist actions perpetrated by extreme fringes of the Chechen resistance, I have, as you know, always condemned them. And I will continue to do so. But this terrorism has nothing to do with international fundamental terrorism. It is the action of desperate people, most of whom have lost loved ones in atrocious circumstances, and believe they can respond to the aggressor

and occupier by using the same methods. This is not my point of view, nor will it ever be. In fact, I have been doing everything within my power to keep actions of the Chechen resistance within the internationally recognized rules of war. When I fail to prevent terrorism, I fail only in the circumstances where no one could have succeeded. The terrorism at work in Chechnya, whether it is the action of the occupying forces or of isolated elements of the resistance, is born and prospers out of war, abject abuse, and the daily violation of the most fundamental rights. The truth is that only peace and democracy can bring an end to it.

Although I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of my people in the affairs of the world and of Europe, the fact remains that it is now the victim of slow extermination, and that the Chechen question, for the Moscow powers, is a key element in their deconstruction of democracy and the rule of law, or, if we prefer, in their construction of a para- or pseudo-democratic authoritarian state.

I know that my country is not Kosovo, no more than Russia is Serbia. But I also know, from my observation of the Ukrainian crisis, that when the European Union is animated by a strong will, it is able to help to thwart what seemed to be unavoidable. This is why I have decided to take this opportunity to suggest that through your high office the European Union address in a united way the question of the Chechen tragedy, with the aim of the creation conditions for the commencement of genuine negotiations between my government and the government of Mr. Putin, under the auspices of the European Union, of any other state or international organization it chooses to involve.

In order to further these reflections, I would be very happy if you could meet Mr. Umar Khanbiev, my general representative and minister of health in my government, since I myself cannot, for the moment, have this honor.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,
Aslan Maskhadov,

President of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria

Akhmadov Comment No. 25

Rereading President Maskhadov's letter of February 25, 2005, to the European Union, I experienced again a deep feeling of sadness in the spring of 2013. It was like an eerie voice from beyond. He was a very

competent man, an excellent army officer, who had been chosen in 1997 as president in our first-ever elections deemed “free and fair” by the Western world. At that time, he became the legitimate leader of all the Chechen people by a significant majority.

He sought to unify our small country of one million as a democratic, secular, independent state that would respect the security and economic needs of our overbearing neighbor, Russia. But as time went on he was forced to make serious concessions to his field commanders who wanted to spread radical Islam throughout the North Caucasus. This eventually blackened his image.

In Russia Maskhadov faced a formidable opponent who possessed overwhelming force and was determined to prevent Chechnya from seceding lest other ethnic jurisdictions like Yakutia, Kalmykiya, or Tatarstan follow suit and set in motion the disintegration of the Russian state.

He tried hard to get the Russians to negotiate a peaceful compromise and almost succeeded in conferring one-on-one with President Putin on February 2, 2000, as he notes in his audio letter No. 10. However that meeting was canceled by the Russians at the last moment. Despite this and other setbacks, he never gave up.

Maskhadov always remained calm, with just a very few exceptions. He was constantly hunted by the Russians, forcing him to change hiding places incessantly. He was obliged to rely on the primitive system of audio letters delivered by couriers. Deprived of instant communication by Internet or telephone, he was not always fully informed of events at home and abroad and consequently made a number of missteps.

Over the years of the Chechen resistance, 1999–2008, the Russians tried by all means to get rid of him. At one point, they tried to buy him off by arranging for him to go into exile. He refused. He survived a brutal and cruel bombing campaign, and slipped through the Russian assassination net for many years. He clung on to hopes that the United States would eventually move into the North Caucasus in search of new sources of oil. Should that happen, he believed, Chechnya could and would play a vital role in assisting the United States to get access to Caspian Sea oil as it also developed relations with the newly independent Republic of Georgia.

However, in the years 2002–2003 when various peace proposals on Chechnya were under discussion, the United States moved its anti-terrorist campaign from Afghanistan to Iraq, leaving issues connected with Chechnya far behind. Nevertheless in early 2005, Maskhadov

declared a unilateral cease fire that appeared to hold and appealed to the European Union for support. He could not have done this had he not cultivated relations with his fiercest internal opponents and created a united military command. That very act made him appear to have shifted away from secular values and made common cause with commanders like Basayev. This misperception was powerfully reinforced by the tragedy at Dubrovka/Nord Ost theater in Moscow and two years later in the catastrophe at Beslan.

Basayev took responsibility for both of these attacks although he did not directly participate in them. In 2006, while unloading munitions from one truck to another he was killed by an explosion. His radical comrade Yandarbiyev, the former vice president of Chechnya, was killed in Qatar in 2004 by Russian agents who planted explosives under his car.

With Maskhadov's death on March 8, 2005, the movement for a secular, democratic Chechnya was condemned to die. Russian forces proved, once again, that "might is right." What was less obvious at first was that the use of overwhelming force encouraged latent anti-Russians feelings throughout all of the North Caucasus and prompted disturbances elsewhere. Moscow succeeded in installing a pro-Kremlin government in Grozny and achieved local stability for the near term under Ramzan Kadyrov.

Chechens have long memories. They have not forgotten the horrors of the 1944 deportation by cattle car to Kazakhstan. Nor will they forget the horrors of these recent wars. Or the fact that Maskhadov's body was never returned for burial despite the appeal from the Maskhadov family. It may well be that in the decades ahead the desire for self-rule and independence from Moscow will rise again.

I joined the independence movement in 1991 out of pure and honest feelings of patriotism when President Yeltsin seemed ready to allow Chechnya to change its status. I do not regret that. And I hope that the two books I have put together recording what we went through will help historians and will assist both Russian and Chechen leaders in the future to find an equitable and long-lasting resolution of our differences.

Notes

Preface

1. Robert W. Schaefer, *The Insurgency and the North Caucasus: From Gazavat to Jihad* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2011); Emma Gilligan, *Terror in Chechnya: Russia and the Tragedy of Civilians in War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Cerwyn Moore, *Contemporary Violence: Postmodern War in Kosovo and Chechnya* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000); A. A. Lyakhovskii, *Zacharovannye svobodoi; Tainy kavkazskikh: voim informatsiia—Analiz, vyvody* (Moscow: Detektiv-Press, 2006); James Hughes, *Chechnya: From Nationalism to Jihad* (New York: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Matthew Evangelista, *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002); Mark Kramer, "The Russian-Chechen Conflict and the Putin-Kadyrov Connection," *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 22 (June 2007), pp. 1–6; Mark Kramer, "Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (March 2005), pp. 209–291; and Mark Kramer, "The Perils of Counterinsurgency: Russia's War in Chechnya," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Winter 2004/05), pp. 5–63.
2. Edward C. Holland and John O'Laughlin, "Ethnic Competition, Radical Islam, and Challenges to Stability in the Republic of Dagestan," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (September 2010), pp. 297–308; Robert Bruce Ware and Enver Kisriev, *Dagestan: Russian Hegemony and Islamic Resistance in the North Caucasus* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), esp. pp. 185–215; Aglaya Snetkov, "Russia's North Caucasus: An Arc of Insecurity," CSS Analysis in Security Policy No. 95, ETH Zurich, Center for Security Policy, June 2011; and Mark Kramer, *Understanding Suicide Terrorist Bombings in Russia*, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 155 (Washington, DC: George Washington University, May 2011).
3. See, for example, Gennadii Troshev, *Chechenskii retsidiiv: Zapiski komanduyushchego* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2003); Moya voina: *Chechenskii dnevnik okopnogo generala* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001); and Mikhail Boltunov et al., *Zhestokie uroki Chechenskoi voiny* (Moscow: Yauza/Eksmo, 2009).

4. See, for example, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, *Dzhikhad i problemy sovremennogo mira* (Gabala, Turkey: Asiman, 2000); Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev *Checheniya—Bitva za svobodu* (L'viv: Svoboda narodiv, 1996); and Dzhokhar Dudayev, *Özgürlük kolay değil* (Istanbul: Turan Kültür Vakfı, 1996). For an account by a Chechen non-combatant see Umalat Umalatov, *Chechnya glazami chechentsa* (Moscow: Edinstvo, 2001).
5. Ilyas Akhmadov and Miriam Lansky, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
6. For a firsthand account, see Nicholas Daniloff, *Two Lives, One Russia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988).
7. Khassan Baiev with Ruth and Nicholas Daniloff, *The Oath: A Surgeon under Fire* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing/Walker, 2003).
8. Comments cited in P. Sergeev, "Po sledam terroristov: 'Ledi smert' po-ichkeriiski," *Krasnyi voyn* (Moscow), No. 69 (September 20, 2003), pp. 11–13.
9. US Defense Intelligence Agency report, "Intelligence Information Report [deleted]/Swift Knight—Usama Ben Laden's Current and Historical Activities," October 1998, classified Top Secret and declassified October 30, 2004, through a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by Judicial Watch. See also Valerii Tishkov, *Obshchestvo v vooruzhenom konflikte: Etnografiya chechenskoi voyny* (Moscow: Nauka, 2001), pp. 297–303.

I Maskhadov's First Briefing

1. "Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings." This is the full version of the Muslim greeting that President Maskhadov used to begin each audio letter.
2. British politician, chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
3. Boris Berezovsky, Russian oligarch, and former deputy secretary of the Russian national security council under President Boris Yeltsin. Fell out of favor with the Kremlin, fled to Great Britain where he received political asylum; committed suicide there on March 23, 2013.
4. Adam Deniyev has been identified as an FSB agent and co-chairman of the Party of Islamic Renaissance during the perestroika years in the Soviet Union. The Chechen Procuracy named him as the organizer of the brutal killing of six members of the International Committee of the Red Cross on December 17, 1996, at Novy Atagi.
5. Maskhadov erroneously states that the murdered doctors belonged to Doctors Without Borders. Actually they were associated with the International Committee of the Red Cross.
6. Akhmad Kadyrov was chief mufti of Chechnya during the presidency of Dzhokhar Dudayev. At the beginning of the second Russian-Chechen war, he defected to the Russian side. In June 2000, Russian President Vladimir Putin named him to head the pro-Russian administration in Chechnya. He was "elected" Chechen president in 2003 by wartime balloting organized by the Russians. He was assassinated on May 9, 2004 in an explosion at the Dinamo stadium in Grozny.

7. Sulim Yamadayev fought against the Russians during the first Russian-Chechen war. During the inter-war period, he was involved in a number of sensational kidnappings. At the start of the second Russian-Chechen war in 1999 he defected to the Russian side.
8. Lt. Gen. Aleksandr Lebed, secretary of the National Security Council under President Yeltsin and signatory of the Khasavyurt cease-fire agreement, 1997.
9. Aleksandr Voloshin, chief of staff of President Putin, 1999–2003. Author of the term managed democracy.
10. Sergei Kovalev, former Soviet dissident and human rights activist in the post-Soviet period. He became Human Rights Commissioner of Russia between 1994 and 1995.
11. Shamil Basayev, Movladi Udugov, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev constituted a powerful group of Chechen radicals opposing President Maskhadov during the second Russo-Chechen war. Khattab, a Saudi mercenary who fought against the Russians in Afghanistan, joined the Chechens in opposing the Russians in 1995.
12. A humorous movie about the civil war after the 1917 revolution in Russia.
13. Doku Zavgayev was the last Soviet leader of the Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic Chechen considered a traitor for collaborating with the Russians.
14. Members of a Sufi brotherhood who identified themselves by wearing white caps.
15. Retired Major General Aslambek Aslakhonov of the ministry of interior Police, member of the State Duma, representing Chechnya.
16. Beslan Gantemirov, former mayor of Grozny who defected to the Russian side and fought with them in the first and second wars against the Chechens.
17. Mairbek Vachagayev, Chechen historian who served as Maskhadov's press spokesman, 1997–1999. Immediately before the second war, he was named General Representative of Chechnya Ichkeria to the Russian Federation.

2 Immediate Tasks Ahead

1. Ali Asayev, President Maskhadov's representative in Azerbaijan. In the audio letters, President Maskhadov pronounces his name in the Chechen manner as Ella.
2. Khanpasha Terkibayev defected to the Russians and for a period worked for Kremlin Spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky.
3. Rakhman Dushuyev the Chechen representative in the Middle East and Turkey 2000–2005.
4. Khalid Khusainov was sent by Maskhadov to Istanbul to be an assistant administrator in the Chechen office.
5. Fayzulla was an activist of the human rights movement in Chechnya.
6. Said-Khasan Abumuslimov, historian, became vice president after President Dzhokhar Dudayev was killed in 2006.
7. Aleksandr Lubimov, Russian television host.
8. Chechen term for Holy War during the nineteenth century, today it is largely replaced by the term jihad.

9. Yusup Soslambekov was a well-known political figure in the North Caucasus. In the early 1990s he was the chairman of the Confederation of the Mountain Peoples.
10. Boris Nemtsov, liberal Russian politician, former governor of the Nizhny-Novgorod district, and at one time vice premier of the Russian Federation.
11. Ruslan Alikhadzhiyev was speaker of the Chechen Parliament and was present when President Maskhadov sent me off to seek help in the West.
12. Rizvan Lorsanov, deputy of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.
13. Baudi Tsomayev, deputy of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.
14. General Ruslan Gelayev, Chechen commander. After the first war, he took the name Khamzat in preference to his non-Islamic name Ruslan.
15. *Djamaat* is an Arabic term for a religious brotherhood that might undertake military operations.
16. General Viktor G. Kazantsev, official Russian representative for the Southern District of Russia.

3 Contact with Dr. Brzezinski

1. Andrei Babitsky, an intrepid Russian journalist working for Radio Liberty.
2. Russian Premier Mikhail M. Kasyanov between 2000 and 2004.
3. Francis A. Boyle, an international law specialist, who was prepared to give our government legal assistance. However, because of a lack of financial resources we were unable to retain him.
4. Isa Umarov was one of the ideologues of the radical opposition and step-brother of Movladi Udugov.
5. Usman Ferzauli, diplomat representing Chechnya Republic of Ichkeria in Denmark, later became first deputy foreign minister under me. After my dismissal in August 2005, he was named foreign minister.

4 Taliban Recognition

1. Former Chechen Minister of Defense who defected to the Russians in 2005.
2. Aidamir Abalayev a celebrated commander who was later appointed Minister of Internal (Police) Affairs of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.
3. Political figure, military commander, elected vice president when Maskhadov ran for president in 1997. Taken prisoner by the Russians in 2005, tortured, and killed.
4. Akhmed Amirkhanov, an ethnic Dagestani, hijacked a plane and forced it to fly to Israel. He gave himself up to the Israeli authorities who deported him back to Russia.
5. Shamil Abdalakh is the Arabic-sounding name for Shamil Basayev; in full it is Abdallakh Shamil Abu-Idris.
6. Here Maskhadov is speaking ironically about the fashion of his radical commanders to invent Arabic-sounding names for themselves in the style of some leaders of developing African republics.

7. Khozh Akhmad Yarikhanov was Minister of Education of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and played a key role in the Russian-Chechen negotiations during the first war.
8. Stephen Sestanovich, US Undersecretary of State, 1997–2001.
9. Akhyad Idigov, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

5 Russian Army Disintegrating?

1. Summit of OSCE members in Istanbul in 1999 at which one of the decisions was to send an OSCE delegation to Chechnya to encourage a political dialogue between the warring sides.
2. Pro-Moscow Chechen businessman considered by the Russians at one point as a possible leader of occupied Chechnya.
3. Akhmed Zakayev was appointed deputy prime minister in President Maskhadov's administration in 2007. In the audio letters Maskhadov pronounces his name as Akhmed or Akhmad depending on whether he was speaking in Russian or in Chechen.
4. Abbas Aidynovich Abbasov, first deputy premier of Azerbaijan under President Gaidar Aliyev. In the audio letters, Maskhadov mistakenly pronounces Abbasov's patronymic as Abbasovich rather than Aidynovich.

6 Election of George W. Bush

1. Moskvich is a small, four-door Soviet passenger car.
2. UAZik is a diminutive name for a Russian jeep-type vehicle produced by the Ulyanov Automobile Factory.
3. The Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia, created in 1989, sought to keep track of casualties among Russian soldiers as well as human rights abuses.
4. Maskhadov is referring to my request that he not punish Gelayev harshly for fear of driving a deeper wedge in relations with the racial commanders.
5. Russian General Vladimir Shamanov serving in Chechnya during the second Russo-Chechen war.
6. Doku Umarov, celebrated Chechen commander, later acting president, dissolved the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 2007 and announced the creation of the Caucasus Emirate.

7 Russia Goes Authoritarian

1. General Anatolii Kvashnin, chief of the Russian General Staff, 1997–2004.
2. The Benoy clan is one of the biggest of several clans that make up Chechen society.
3. In the North Caucasus, a *krovnik* is a term used to designate both a person targeted for blood revenge as well as a person who is to implement the blood revenge.

4. “Gumanitarka” was the Russianized term used to describe humanitarian aid packages.
5. Umar Khanbiev, minister of health of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, brother of Minister of Defense Mokhammad Khanbiev.
6. The judiciary committee of the Russian State Duma that was chaired at that time by Deputy Pavel Krasheninnikov of the Union of Right Forces and who served previously as Russian minister of justice.
7. Radical Chechen website run by Movladi Udugov, a Maskhadov opponent, and uncontrolled by the Chechen government.

8 The Mystery of Dr. Gluck

1. Stanislav Ilyasov was named by President Putin to be President Kadyrov’s premier in the pro-Moscow Chechen government.
2. Selim Beshayev was deputy speaker of the parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria
3. Isa Abzotov, one of the Chechen representative in the Middle East and Turkey (1999–2000).
4. The reference here is to a search of the Chechen office by the Turkish authorities in which an unregistered pistol was found. The Turkish press gave much publicity to the affair, which forced Maskhadov to change staffing arrangements on an urgent basis.
5. “Vallakhi” means “I swear to Allah” in Arabic.
6. Turpal Ali Atgiriye, minister of state security of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.
7. Aпти Batalov, chief of staff of Maskhadov’s administration.
8. “Praise and thanks be to Allah.”

9 Russia Seeks to Bribe Maskhadov Out of Chechnya

1. Isa Temirov was deputy speaker of the parliament of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.

10 Talks with Putin Suddenly Cancelled

1. Vyacheslav Izmailov was a journalist for the liberal newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.
2. Salambek Khadiyev, former minister for petrochemical industry of the Soviet Union, and during the first Russian-Chechen war he headed the pro-Russian Chechen administration for a limited period.
3. District Police Department.
4. Maskhadov means the damage that the civilian population might suffer as the result of resistance fighters’ operations.
5. Human Rights Watch is a human rights organization based in New York.

II Minister Akhmadov and the State Department

1. Maskhadov is referring here to my early relations with Basayev. In 1995 Basayev recommended me to join Maskhadov's staff. Maskhadov seems, at times, to have suspected I was in collusion with Basayev during my tenure as foreign minister. That was absolutely incorrect. Basayev never tried to interfere in my diplomatic work.

12 Maskhadov Hopes for CIA Support

1. This was a hint that he had the Central Intelligence Agency in mind.
2. Kerist is a derogatory word for Russians in Chechen language derived from the Russian word "khristyanin" or Christian.

13 Seeking Negotiations

1. Ernest Mulleman was a chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.
2. Representatives of the pro-Russian opposition to former president Dudayev.
3. Shamil Beno was the first foreign minister of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria and later joined the anti-Dudayev opposition.
4. Maskhadov is referring here to his experience negotiating with the Russians at the end of the first Russian-Chechen war in 1996.
5. Dmitry Rogozin, leader of the Motherland Party, Russian deputy premier, diplomat.
6. Vagap Tutakov was a deputy of the parliament of the Chechen Republic.
7. Mokhammad is the Chechen businessman who learned of the proposed Caux discussions and misinformed Maskhadov saying the initiative came from the Russians. In fact, the initiative came from private citizens both Russian and American.
8. General Aleksandr Lebed.
9. President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

14 The Challenge of Radical Commanders

1. This is an allusion to Putin's famous phrase of September 23, 1999 that Russian forces, would pursue terrorists everywhere and if necessary "drown them in the shithouse."
2. Maskhadov is referring to Akhmadov's appearance at Johns Hopkins University on January 11, 2000.
3. A strong expletive in the Chechen language.

15 General Gelayev in Georgia

1. Maskhadov is alluding to Foreign Minister Akhmadov's participation in the meeting merely as an observer.
2. Maskhadov is referring here to some Chechen leaders who were trying to play their own game with the Russians, suggesting they would make bigger concessions than Maskhadov would.
3. The Ural is an off-road, Soviet military truck.

16 Reaction to 9/11

1. The Geneva Conventions on the laws of war.

17 Maskhadov Names a Successor

1. *Tarikat* is a Sufi brotherhood.
2. Akhmad Avdorkhanov, commander of Maskhadov's Presidential Guard.
3. Maskhadov here is drawing a distinction between Chechens fighting for independence and terrorists.
4. Maskhadov means the circle of terrorism and has in mind some Chechen leaders who were trying to play their own game with the Russians.
5. <http://www.chechen.org/index.php?newsid=21>.
6. The Russians use the term impeachment to mean both accusation and dismissal from office.

18 The January 27 Presidential Issue

1. The Istanbul summit of 1999 sought ways of implementing flank reductions in the Caucasus region and sending an OSCE delegation to monitor the situation, calling on Russia and Chechnya to find a political resolution of the crisis.
2. Ilyas Talkhadov, commander of the Presidential Guard, killed in action.
3. Chechen human rights activists.

20 The Problem with Lord Judd

1. "Achtung" is the German word for "attention." Russian soldiers in Chechnya often liked to copy the behavior of the Nazis on occupied territory.
2. "Pills" is the slang term used to describe minivans used by the Russian special subunits in Chechnya.
3. Russian off-road vehicles.

4. Igla is the Russian version of the shoulder-fired Stinger-type missile of the United States.
5. This was an initiative to develop a new constitution for Chechnya as a step in settling the conflict.
6. Carla Del Ponte is the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal.
7. Ruslan Alikhadzhiyev was kidnapped by the Russians and eventually died in captivity.
8. A deputy premier, poet, who participated actively in the fight against the Russians.
9. An Arabic term meaning someone who abandoned Islam for another faith. In the context of the Chechen war, munafiqs were pro-Russian Chechens whom we considered to be traitors.
10. Putting the Chechen resistance on the US list of terrorist organizations.

21 The Russian Policy of Rape

1. Budanov allegedly demanded that his subordinates rape the corpse.

22 Solving the Chechen Problem

1. Maskhadov is referring here to a dissenting group, you could call them saboteurs, within our midst that was trying to sow confusion about decisions taken by the president and his administration.
2. Maskhadov has in mind placing such information on the president's page of the Chechenpress site.
3. This was a common misperception among Soviet-era officials.
4. Lyoma Shakhmurzayev was a social activist whom Maskhadov appointed to head the interdepartmental commission.

23 Peace Plans Fail

1. The reference is to the Congress on Chechnya organized in Copenhagen by Akhmed Zakayev at the end of October 2002.
2. <http://www.watchdog.cz/edit/uploaded/docs/AchmadovProposal.pdf>.

24 Maskhadov's Last Message

1. "Kuyan" is Russian slang from the 1970s meaning "neighborhood." In this context Maskhadov has in mind the North Caucasus region.
2. <http://army.lv/ru/aslan-maskhadov/791/2705> also <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2005/03/16/418043.shtml>.
3. <http://www.pravda.info/region/2371.html>.

Index

- Abalayev, Aidamir, 44, 88
Abbas Abbasovich, 62
Abdalakh, Shamil, 47
Abumuslimov, Said-Khasan,
 118–19, 133, 182, 195, 198, 216
Abzotov, Isa, 92, 99
Afghanistan
 Chechen support sought from,
 20, 37
 Northern Alliance, 167, 170, 174
 September 11, 2001 terrorist
 attacks and, 163, 167, 187–9
 Soviet invasion, 26, 199–200
 Taliban and, 119 (*see also*
 Taliban)
 U.S. war with, 247
Alsultanov, Lom-Ali, 14, 15
Akhmad (commander of president's
 guard), 176
Akhmadov, Ilyas
 in Baku, 5, 7
 The Chechen Struggle, 155
 on conditional independence
 plans, 232, 234, 239, 241,
 243–4, 245, 246–7, 251–3
 as foreign minister, Ministry of
 Foreign Affairs position of, 4, 19
 on freezing contact with PACE,
 OSCE, 137–8
 legal threats to, 37, 235
 Maskhadov's "commission"
 concern and, 206–8, 213,
 215–17, 225–6
 Maskhadov's communication
 system with, 4–7
 Maskhadov's tension with, 144,
 146–8, 150–1, 155–7, 167–8,
 172, 234, 235
 unpaid status of, 6, 41, 61
 U.S. legal status of, 5–6, 185, 235
 U.S. political asylum of, 248–9
 See also United States
Akhmadov, Ramzan, 61, 91
Akhmad, Wakil, 53
Albright, Madeleine, 63, 212–13
Alikhadzhiyev, Ruslan, 6, 23, 199
Aliyev, Gaidar, 94, 96
Alsultanov, Lom-Ali, 15
American Committee for Peace in
 Chechnya, 40, 62–3, 114, 147,
 154–5, 235, 238
Amirkhanov, Akhmed, 46
Argun, 14, 107, 109, 153, 196,
 197, 207
Arsanov, Vakha, 45–6, 169, 173
Asayev, Ali (Ella), 20, 28, 61–2, 78,
 92–3
Aslakhanov, Aslambek, 15, 22, 24,
 90, 198
Atgiriye, Turpal, 14, 93
Avturkhanov, Umar, 177
Azerbaijan
 Chechen refugees in, 5, 7, 19, 20,
 192, 193–4
 information center planned
 for, 19

Azerbaijan—*Continued*

- Maskhadov's appeal to, for support, 94, 96
- "parliament in exile" plan for, 101
- presidential elections (2002) and, 185
- Babitsky, Andrei, 32, 72
- Badalov, Ruslan, 180, 197–8
- Basayev, Shamil
 - as acting prime minister, 161–2
 - Akhmadov and, 156
 - death of, 255
 - Gluck kidnapping and, 95, 115
 - injury of, 113
 - interviews of, 72
 - Maskhadov challenged by, 145, 146
 - Maskhadov on insubordination of, 12, 17, 23–4, 36, 45, 46, 53, 82, 102, 105
 - negotiation role of, 49
- Basayev, Shirvany, 49
- Batalov, Apti, 93
- Bazayeva, Lipkhan, 180, 197–8
- Beno, Shamil, 129, 130, 263n. 13–3
- Benoy clan, 77–8
- Berezovsky, Boris Abramovich ("BAB"), 10, 134–7, 139, 141–4, 146, 147, 153, 162, 205
- Beshayev, Selim, 90, 100, 132
- Beyrle, John, 114–15, 120
- Bin Laden, Osama, 52, 79, 114–16, 126
- Bissultanov, Apti, 199
- Boryayev (Lieutenant Colonel), 165
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 38, 40, 62–3, 147, 154–5, 213, 238
- See also* American Committee for Peace in Chechnya
- Budanov, Yuri, 212
- Bush, George W.
 - Chechen appeals to, for support, 79–80, 83–6, 91–2, 100, 114
 - election of (2000), 32–3, 55, 62–4, 65–73
 - September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and, 164–5
 - See also* United States
- Carlucci, Frank, 213
- Carter, Jimmy, 186
- Chantimirov, Isa, 101
- Chechen population
 - Great Deportation of 1944, 26, 239, 255
 - population statistics, 183, 185, 192–3, 251
 - refugees, 25, 28, 117–18, 120–1, 200–1 (*see also* human rights issues)
 - in U.S., 185, 192–3
- Chechenpress (website), 218, 224
- Chechen Republic of Ichkeria
 - Chechen colonization and history, 1–7
 - "commission" plans of, 206–8, 213, 215–17, 225–6
 - conditional independence plans of, 232, 234, 239, 241, 243–4, 245, 246–7, 251–3
 - Dudayev Constitution of 1992, 133, 173, 182, 203
 - General Representation Office (Istanbul), 26
 - Islam as official religion of, 137–8, 146, 172
 - Maskhadov criticized by radical commanders, 141–8
 - Parliament, 2, 6
 - peace plan proposals, summarized, 227–40
 - presidential elections for (2002), 175–86
 - presidents of (*see* Dudayev, Dzhokhar; Maskhadov, Aslan)
 - referendum of 2003 (by Russia), 195–204, 247 (*see also* Kadyrov, Akhmad)

- Sharia law and, 12, 224–5
- State Defense Committee, 154, 172, 180, 182, 206–7, 212, 216, 218, 234
- Taliban relationship to, 46, 52–4, 144–5, 146, 193
- Chechen Struggle, The* (Akhmadov, Lansky), 155
- CIA, 123–7
- Clinton, Bill, 25, 29, 62, 68, 115
 - See also United States
- Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia, 3
- communication system, used by Chechen officials, 4–7
- Czech Republic, 117–18
- Daayev, Nuzhden, 15, 77–8
- Dagestan
 - Chechen imams and connection to, 208
 - mediation and, 10
 - Second War of Chechnya and, 4, 11
 - Udugov, 159, 161–2, 190–1
- Del Ponte, Carla, 198
- Deniyev, Adam, 10
- djamaats*, 24, 190, 219, 232, 234
- Doctors Without Borders, 87–96, 106–7, 115
- Dokhshukayev, Musa, 77
- Dubrovka theater terrorist attack (Moscow, 2002), 235–6
- Dudayev, Dzhokhar
 - characteristics of, 84–5
 - Chechen independence declared under, 2
 - death of, 4, 18, 169
 - Kadyrov and, 202
 - Maskhadov as chief of staff to, 188
 - negotiation by, 49
 - opposition to, 15
 - Russia's exile plan for, 103
 - travel by, 27
- Dupuis, Olivier, 239, 247
- Dushuyev, Rakhman, 20, 39, 51, 61, 92, 99, 110, 118
- “Eurasian Plan,” 238
- European Parliament, 247
- European Union, 249, 251–3, 255
- Fayzulla (activist), 21
- Ferzauli, Usman, 38, 60, 61–2, 118, 132, 152, 232, 234–5
- First Chechen War
 - Grozny control and, 21, 41, 188
 - inception of, 1–3
 - peace negotiation, 27, 49
 - supply during, 16
- Fleutiaux, Brice, 10
- Gantemirov, Beslan, 16, 34, 35, 84, 177
- Gelayev, Ruslan
 - Chechen refugees in Georgia and, 64, 78–9, 85
 - Georgia influenced by Russians and, 69–70, 73, 92–3
 - Maskhadov on insubordination of, 23, 36, 44–5, 46–7, 51–2, 59, 106, 154, 157
- Georgia
 - Chechen refugees in, 78–9, 85
 - Gelayev accused as traitor by Maskhadov, 154, 157
 - January 27, 2002 presidential elections and, 182, 185
 - Russian influence and, 69–70, 73, 92–3, 101–2
 - visa system, 59, 60
- Gluck, Kenneth, 87–96, 106–7, 115
- Glucksmann, Andre, 247
- Goshayeva, Zainap, 180
- Grachev, Pavel, 40
- Great Britain, Chechen support sought from, 50
- Groznyenskii Rabochii* (newspaper), 11–12

- Grozny
 Chechen control (First War), 21, 41, 188
 fighting in (January 2000), 113, 125
- Guldiman, Tim, 132, 133, 146, 151, 155, 156
- Hagel, Chuck, 6
- Haig, Alexander, 63
- Haji-Murat, 174
- Helms, Jesse, 114
- Howard, Glen, 154
- human rights issues
 call for international tribunal, 198, 244–5, 248
 car bombings, 66–7, 109–10
 “clean-up operations,” 32, 43–4, 65–6, 87–8, 97–9, 102, 103–4, 153, 195–6, 202–4
 genocide, 21, 61, 72, 161, 162–3, 229
 internal organs harvested, 107–8
 journalists killed, 72–3
 kidnapping, 9–11, 79, 176, 199
 kidnapping and ransom issues, 35, 134, 139, 160
 kidnapping, of Gluck, 87–96, 106–7, 115
 PACE on, 97–8, 102, 103–4
 prisoners, 58, 113, 159–60, 163–4, 165–6
 Red Cross and, 33, 69, 73, 90
 refugees, 56, 78–9, 85, 89, 117–18, 120–1
- Human Rights Watch, 63, 109–10, 116
- Idigov, Akhyad, 50, 90, 101, 132, 133, 148, 155
- Ilyasov, Stanislav, 89, 109
- Ingushetia, 10, 44, 52, 59, 89, 96, 113, 121, 225, 237
- International Committee of the Red Cross, 33, 69, 73, 90
- International Court of Justice, 198
- Interpol, 235
- Iraq War (with U.S.), 247
- Ivinsky, Tadeush, 56, 60
- Johnston, Russell, 10, 131, 182
- Judd, Lord, 91, 132, 153, 191, 195–204
- Kadyrov, Akhmad
 death of, 107, 247–8
 Georgia and, 101–2
 as grand mufti, 202
 as head of Russian-installed Chechen government, 10–11, 13, 14, 16, 22, 33, 40, 67, 77, 96, 153, 177, 203
 oil sales by, 57
 “payments for loyalty,” 204
 Putin/Maskhadov planned talks and, 112
 terrorist attempt on, 35
 Udugov and, 160
- Kadyrov, Ramzan, 40, 107, 204, 248, 249
- Kasyanov, Mikhail M., 33
- Kavkaz Center (website), 82–3, 95, 119, 165, 193
- Kazantsev, Viktor G., 24, 111, 178–82, 185, 188, 191, 193, 196, 200–1
- Khanbiev, Mokhmad, 44, 87
- Khanbiev, Umar, 80, 173, 248
- Khan (courier), 37, 39, 102, 108, 167–8, 184
- Khan Mokhmad, 71, 102, 133
- Khasavyurt Agreement, 3, 130, 137
- Khasbulatov, Ruslan, 237–8
- Khattab (Saudi mercenary)
 CIA and, 126
 location of, 44, 87–8
 Maskhadov challenged by, 145
 Maskhadov on insubordination of, 12, 17, 23–4, 34, 36, 53, 102

- Udugov and, 165
 U.S. on, 114
 Khrushchev, Nikita S., 1
 Khultigov, Lechi, 14
 Khusainov, Khalid, 20, 39
 Korigov (minister of internal affairs of Ingushetia), 10
 Kovalev, Sergei Adamovich, 11–12, 38, 47, 68, 81, 91, 102
 Krashennnikov, Pavel, 80
 Kungaeva, Elza, 212
 Kvashnin, Anatoly, 77, 135, 212
- Lanskoj, Miriam, 155
 Lebed, Alexander, 3, 11, 27
 Lorsanov, Rizvan, 23, 77, 153
 Lukin, Oleg, 132
 Lyubimov, Aleksandr, 22
- Macedonia, 220–1
 Magamadova, Madina, 180
 Maskhadov, Anzor, 103, 242, 249
 Maskhadov, Aslan
 biographical information, 27–8
 on causes of wars, 9–17
 on Chechen political reform, 215–26
 CIA aid sought by, 123–7 (*see also* United States)
 “commission” concern of, 206–8, 213, 215–17, 225–6
 communication system of, 4–7
 on conditional independence plans, 232, 234, 239, 241, 243–4, 245, 246–7, 251–3
 Council of Commanders, 223, 224
 death of, 40, 173, 249–50, 255
 as Dudayev’s chief of staff, 188
 as elected president, 3–4, 27, 85, 173
 exile of, proposed by Russia, 97–104, 254
 final communication from, 241–50, 251–3
 financial support sought by, 20, 25–6, 31–41, 51, 61–2, 94, 96, 125
 insubordination concerns of, 215–17, 226 (*see also individual names of Chechen officials*)
 negotiation sought by, 13, 18, 23–5, 28–9, 38–40, 47–8, 129–39
 plans to meet with Putin, 105–16, 254
 successor chosen by, 167–74
 tension with Akhmadov, 144, 146–8, 150–1, 155–7, 167–8, 172, 234, 235
 unpaid status of, 61
 on war crimes of Russians, 118–19 (*see also* human rights issues)
- Masyuk, Yelena, 10
 McCain, John, 6
 Mekhan Shura, 225
Mekbkel (newspaper), 101
 Mironov, Andrei, 147, 155
 Mokhmad (Chechen businessman), 132
 Mullah Omar, *See* Omar, Mullah
 Mulleman, Ernest, 129
My Father, the Chechen President (Maskhadov), 248
- National Endowment for Democracy, 249
 NATO, 31–2
 Nemtsov, Boris, 22, 81, 102, 132, 151, 236–7, 238
 Nivat, Anne, 72
 North Caucasus
 Berezovsky and, 139
 colonization of, 1
 Doctors Without Borders, 95
 Maskhadov on appeal to, 11
 NTV, 90
 Nukhayev, Khozh-Akhmed, 37, 144–145, 238

- Omar, Mullah, 46, 145
- OMON (special Russian police), 13, 34–5, 56, 76
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 3, 4, 27, 65, 67–8, 72, 73, 129–33
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)
- Akhmadov's views on, 137–8
 - assistance sought by Maskhadov from, 21, 38, 56, 60, 64, 67–9, 91–4, 129–33
 - on human rights abuses by Russia, 97–8, 102, 103–4
 - Judd and, 202
 - Maskhadov's views on, 171
 - presidential election (2002) and, 181
 - Russian representatives in, 80–1, 85
- Perle, Richard, 213
- Pifer, Steven, 156
- Politkovskaya, Anna, 72
- Presidential Shura, 225
- Primakov, Yevgeny, 237
- publicity
- among Chechens, 88
 - conditional independence plans and, 234, 244
 - Maskhadov on need for press conferences, 164, 171, 191
 - Maskhadov's desire to hire public relations firm, 82–3, 85–6
 - presidential election (2002) and, 178
 - Second War of Chechnya and media coverage, 14–17, 28, 43, 72–3
- Putin, Vladimir
- as authoritarian, 75–86
 - Maskhadov on working with Berezovsky against, 142–4, 146, 147
 - Maskhadov's planned talks with, 105–16, 254
 - Maskhadov's views on election of, 9–17, 18, 32, 135
 - September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and, 164–5, 187–94
 - U.S./Russian foreign relations and, 25, 29, 67–8, 71
 - war strategy of, 24–5, 138 (*see also* Russian military)
- See also* Russian Federation
- Qaeda, Al-, 41, 114–16
- Red Cross, 33, 69, 73, 90
- refugees
- asylum sought for, 117–18, 120–1
 - in Azerbaijan, 28
 - in Georgia, 64, 78–9, 85
 - humanitarian aid to, 200–1
 - Maskhadov on suffering of, 25
 - See also* human rights issues
- Rogozin, Dmitry, 131, 132, 197
- Russian Federation
- FSB, 11, 95, 98, 197, 249
 - GRU, 7, 34, 67, 197
 - Maskhadov exile proposed by, 97–104, 254
 - oil and, 57, 84, 168, 236, 246
 - OMON (special Russian police), 13, 34–5, 56, 76
 - September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks reaction, 164–5, 187–94
 - U.S. foreign relations with, 25, 29
 - See also* Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE); Putin, Vladimir; Russian military
- Russian military
- Chechen armed resistance to, 196–7
 - “Chechenization” campaign, 84, 116, 170, 174, 201–3, 250
 - “clean-up operations” by, 32, 43–4, 65–6, 87–8, 97–9, 102, 103–4, 153, 195–6, 202–4 (*see also* human rights issues)

- contract soldiers of, 21–2, 34, 35
- partial withdrawal by, 168, 175, 196
- rape by, 196, 205–13
- soldiers of, as underpaid, 34, 48, 51, 55–64
- Russo, Antonio, 72, 91
- Saidov, Ibragim, 10, 14
- Saidullayev, Abdul Khalim, 173
- Saidullayev, Malik, 59, 77, 84
- Second War of Chechnya
 - Dagestan invasion, 4, 11
 - financial support needed for, 31–41
 - “freelancers,” 10, 26, 28
 - inception of, 4
 - Maskhadov on cause of, 9–17, 18
 - media coverage of, 14–17, 28, 43, 72–3
- September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, reaction to, 159–66, 167, 187–94
- Serbiev, Khavagi, 198
- Sestanovich, Stephen, 50
- Shakhmurzayev, Lyoma, 223
- Shamanov, Vladimir, 70
- Sharia law, 12, 224–5
- Shchekochikhin, Yuri, 154–5
- Sheremetyevo Airport meeting (November 18, 2001), 178–82, 185, 188, 191, 193
- Shevardnadze, Eduard, 78–9, 85
- Solana, Xavier, 251–3
- Solarz, Stephen J., 63
- Soslambekov, Yusup, 22
- Stalin, Joseph, 2, 26
- Sterr, S. Frederick, 154–5
- State Defense Committee (Chechen Republic of Ichkeria), 154, 172, 180, 182, 206–7, 212, 216, 218, 234
- Sufi brotherhood, 14
- Sultygov, Abdul-Khakim, 155
- Taliban
 - Afghanistan and, 119
 - Chechen relationship to, 46, 52–4, 144–5, 146, 193, 221
- Talkhadov, Ilyas, 176
- Temirov, Isa, 100, 173
- Terkibayev, Khanpasha, 20
- terrorism
 - accusations against Chechens, 11–13, 41, 114–16, 117–21
 - Dubrovka theater terrorist attack (Moscow, 2002), 235–6
 - Maskhadov on Islamic fundamentalism and, 12, 16, 18, 31–2, 33
 - in Panama Canal (1970s) and, 185–6
 - September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, 159–66, 167, 187–94
 - suicide-bombers, 35
 - See also* human rights issues
- Thatcher, Margaret, 50
- Tolboyev, Magomed, 10
- Track II talks process, 40, 114, 147–8, 150, 154–6, 235
- Treaty of Peace, 3, 13
- Troshev, Gennadii, 188
- Tsomayev, Baudi, 23
- Turkey
 - Chechen support sought from, 39, 41, 51, 61–2, 96, 125
 - Istanbul summit (1999), 73, 168, 175
 - Russia foreign relations with, 33
- Tutakov, Vagap, 132, 198
- Udugov, Movladi
 - Dagestan and, 190–1
 - Kavkaz Center (website) and, 193
 - Maskhadov on insubordination of, 12, 17, 28, 37, 47, 82, 106, 130, 133, 145, 159–66
- Umarov, Doku, 17, 47, 70, 101, 106
- Umarov, Isa, 37, 162

- United Nations, conditional
 independence plan and, 232,
 234, 239, 241, 243–4, 245,
 246–7, 251–3
- United States
 Akhmadov in, 5–6, 185, 235
 Brzezinski and, 38, 40, 62–3,
 147, 154–5, 213, 238 (*see also*
 American Committee for Peace
 in Chechnya)
 Chechen population in, 185, 192–3
 CIA, 123–7
 foreign relations with Georgia, 52
 foreign relations with Russia, 25,
 29, 67–8, 71
 Iraq War, 247
 Panama Canal and, 185–6
 presidential election (2000), and
 Chechen appeals for support,
 79–80, 83–6, 91–2, 100, 114
 presidential election (2000) in,
 32–3, 55, 62–4, 65–73
 September 11, 2001 terrorist
 attacks, 159–66, 167, 187–94
 State Department, 50, 63, 105,
 114, 117–21, 156, 166, 212–13,
 245–6
- Usmanov, Lyoma, 6, 91, 154, 199
- Vachagayev, Mairbek, 17
- Veselering, Egbert, 5
- Voloshin, Aleksandr, 11, 135
- Washington Post*, 238
- “Ways to Solve the Russia-Chechen
 Conflict,” 215–26, 221–2
- Wellstone, Paul, 6
- Winnick, Seth, 120
- Wolff, Lester, 86
- World Congress on Chechnya
 (Copenhagen, 2002), 205, 228,
 235, 238
- Yamadaye, Sulim, 10
- Yandarbiyev, Zelimkhan
 death of, 255
 Maskhadov on insubordination
 of, 12, 17, 28, 46, 53, 102,
 144–5, 146, 169, 170, 188
 as vice president, 238
- Yarikhanov, Khozh-Akhmad, 133
- Yastrzhembsky, Sergei, 6, 82, 213
- Yeltsin, Boris, 2, 11, 13, 25, 62, 85,
 236, 251
See also Russian Federation
- Zakayev, Abdurashid, 15, 78
- Zakayev, Akhmed
 arrest of, 228, 236
 on human rights inquiries, 198
 Maskhadov’s “commission”
 concern and, 206–8, 213,
 215–17, 225–6
 Maskhadov’s views on, 15, 60,
 64, 78–9, 85, 101, 159, 161,
 165, 175, 178–82, 185, 188,
 191, 193
- Strasbourg work by, 195,
 223, 226
 as vice premier, 73
 World Congress on Chechnya
 (Copenhagen, 2002), 205, 228,
 235, 238
- Zavgayev, Doku, 14, 15