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**Political institutions and the regulation of
ethnic conflicts: Russia's experience**

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Political institutions and the regulation of ethnic conflicts: Russia's experience

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There is such a formula: "wise man is learning from somebody's else mistakes, while a fool can't learn even from his own ones". It's totally applicable to post-Soviet ethnic-political conflicts with only one reservation needed: experts are sharing responsibility with politicians. Each conflict look unique and there are experts who are responsible for translating from conflict-specific to a universal language, for "seeing a forest behind trees", making thus possible for politicians to learn from "somebody's else mistakes" as well as from the right answers.

There were ethnic conflicts which starting from 1986 first came to the surface among all political conflicts in the former USSR. In 1988-1989 national revival movements in this or that form appeared in all national regions as a reaction to Communist Russificative internationalization and ethnic leveling. In some rare cases (Chechnya, Ingushetia, partly Kalmykia and Tuva¹) they brought to power new nationally-oriented leaders. In majority of cases, however, they were used by ethnic Communist elites to strengthen their position and to protect themselves from changes which were initiated by the Center. It's not by chance thus that to the beginning of 2002 half of all Russia's republican leaders - 10 of 21 were those who came to power under the Soviet rule, occupying highest Communist (7) or Soviet (4) positions in their regions².

Fifteen years ago, when ethnic conflicts were just coming to a surface in the USSR all of them were almost immediately getting spatial dimension, taking shape of territorial conflicts. When our group has started the work on the data base on ethnic-territorial claims and conflicts (See Glezer et al, 1991, 1992) it seemed that any ethnic, ethnic-political conflict inevitably transforms into ethnic-territorial one in the situation when ethnic and territorial principles are overlapping in the state-territorial organization. It used to be so in late Soviet – early post-Soviet periods. Now the revolutionary period of conflicts' development is over and the evolution which came instead has broken this direct causality. There are many ethnic-political conflicts now which are not leading to territorial redrawing and which are playing positive, system-forming rather than destructive role. It's not about conflicts only, it's about their treatment as well. Instead of looking for radical surgical ways to deal with an ethnic conflict experts should prescribe therapeutic political medicines – allopathic or even homoeopathic ones.

¹ The window of opportunity was rather narrow. Strangers, coming to the power in republics after 1992, - Mordovia, Kalmykia, Chuvashia, Karachai-Cherkessia – 1999 were no more nationalists.

² In "proper Russian" oblasts, krajs and federal cities the share of leaders who managed to keep the power through "stormy 90-ies" was seven times lower – 4 out of 57.

The question arises why Russia? Why Russian experience should be applicable for say Azerbaijan, why it should teach us to deal with ethnic conflicts anywhere else? Russian experience is relevant to the whole post-Soviet space because all its parts have common historical-cultural roots, similar peoples' mentality, and principles of social-political organization.

Russia having more than 80% of ethnic Russian population is more monoethnic than a number of other European countries. However, there are more than a hundred different indigeneous ethnic groups and 31 ethnic-territorial units. Russia is very far from being a success story if only not to consider as such the very fact that it has managed to avoid the risk of disintegration. However, failure-stories are even better to learn from. The decade of Russia's development after the disintegration of the Soviet Union presented so many schemes of political development, different institutions tried in very different situations etc. that it will take several decades more to learn all about this and to study everything. It's like having one big and 89 smaller laboratories of transition.

Chechnya comes to mind first when speaking about Russian experience of dealing with ethnic-political conflicts. It's not very relevant, however, because Chechnya can hardly be considered to be a pure ethnic-political conflict, and because if to take the beginning of the second war in Chechnya, it was not about Chechnya at all³. It was about transfer of power in Moscow. This transfer of power from Yeltsin to the heir appointed by him happened to be very successful. The war which played the key role in this is still going on. This poses a question about the balance between local and general political factors in ethnic conflicts appearing, strengthening and resolving. If to look at Russia's troubled path to democracy there were two periods of rather intensive fights for power in the center: 1990-1991 and the second half of 1992 – 1993. Both were accompanied by an essential increase in number and intensity of ethnic conflicts: the Parade of Sovereignties, establishment of General Dudayev regime in Chechnya, bloody Ingush-Ossetian dispute on Prigorodny rayon, etc.

Let's look at the relationship between ethnic-political and ethnic-territorial conflicts which enables us to understand if there are territorial solutions to ethnic conflicts. As a matter of fact many ethnic conflicts do not have and cannot have just and final territorial solutions. Let me illustrate this important point by Russian experience.

1. Ethnic settlement is dispersed and very complicated with majority of ethnic republics having no dominance of titular ethnic groups at their territory. In a lot of cases problems of this or that ethnic group can hardly be solved within the borders of appropriate republic: for example, only one third of ethnic Tartars, the second largest ethnic group in Russia lives in Tatarstan.
2. Multi-storied character of ethnic settlement reminds Russian nested matreshka doll with several smaller dolls being inside each bigger one. An attempt to reinforce ethnic Karachai's character of a small Karachai-Cherkess Republic (14,1 thousand square km, 436,1 thousand inhabitants) immediately brought to existence 4 new self-determination claims: of Cherkess, Abaza and 2 Cossack ones. Enough never is enough with regard to multi-storied ethnic self-determination just like in case of fractal geometry.

³ Look how Vladimir Putin was describing his motives when starting the second war in Chechnya: "I have never for a second believed, that Chechnya would limit itself to its own independence. It would become a beachhead for further attacks on Russia." If the Chechen rebels had remained in power, "they would have swallowed up Dagestan, and that would have been the beginning of the end. The entire Caucasus would have followed – Dagestan, Ingushetia, and then up along the Volga river to Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, reaching deep into the country."

Vladimir Putin, *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President* (New York: Public Affairs, 2000).

3. Territorial solution which could be considered to be totally acceptable at certain point now can cause violent conflicts anytime in future due to unpredictable changes of either objective situation or its perception by any of sides involved. Let's take Chechen-Ingushetia as an example. After Chechens and Ingushs were proclaimed in 1944 by Stalin "enemies of the people" and removed to Kazakhstan their autonomous republic was abolished with its territory being divided between neighboring Georgia, North Ossetia and Stavropol' krai, the remainder formed Grozny oblast'. In 1957 Chechens and Ingushs were rehabilitated along with several other ethnic groups and Chechen-Ingush ASSR was restored. In a slightly different boundaries, however. Instead of giving them back Prigorodny rayon in suburbs of North Ossetian capital Vladikavkaz⁴ two Cossack rayons were transferred from the Stavropol' krai providing thus a territorial exchange. In 1991 Chechnya proclaimed its independence, it's separated from Ingushetia and the latter found itself avoided of both a capital and a big part of its former territory. Cossack rayons which left in Chechnya anymore could serve as the compensation for the loss of historical lands and the bloody conflict with Ossetians over the Prigorodny rayon took place soon.

It is general political background that defines applicability and effectiveness of measures aimed to solve ethnic-political conflicts. This point can be illustrated by two examples dealing with center-regions relations. Three attempts to enlarge Russian regions were made last decade to address secessionism and avoid the risk of disintegration by principle «fight fire with fire»: in 1990-1991 when eight so called interregional associations of economic cooperation were established (in 1998-1999 attempt was made to reanimate them); in 1991-1992 when the idea of «enlarged landers» appeared in draft versions of the Russian constitution; and in 2000 when seven federal districts were formed by the presidential decree. It was the third attempt only which worked and due to the fact mainly that the situation has changed radically with the center becoming much stronger and much more united. Appointment of the presidential representatives to regions can serve the similar example. The institution of the presidential rep was introduced in 1991 and it took 9 years before reps appeared in almost all Russian regions including republics which were opposing to this. However, there never were presidential reps in three most jibbing republics: Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Sakha-Yakutia. In 2000 it took three month after Putin's regional reform has started in summer to appoint chief federal inspectors to all 89 regions including these republics as well.

Political timing is playing extremely important role with regard to ethnic conflicts. It's true in a sense of political calendar – both wars in Chechnya has started on the eve of parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia. It's true in a sense of a time horizon. Due to the lack of political stability this horizon until recently used to be very short making thus working out and implementation of any strategy almost impossible. Reactive, extinguishing approach towards ethnic conflicts prevailed, leaving no room to conflicts prevention. It's needless to say that a damage from fighting with fire is sometimes bigger than from fire itself and that both cost the society much more than preventive measures if undertaken in time. The «restoration of the constitutional legacy» in Chechnya in 1994-1996 and the «antiterrorist operation» from 1999 till present time can serve good examples. Russians are proud of effective Ministry of Emergences and of having a good minister. It would be much better, however, not to let situations to develop into the state of emergency.

It brings us to very important question about services, institutions, structures to deal with ethnic conflicts at different stages of their development. In 1992-2001 there used to be Ministry on ethnic relations and federation problems in Russia. It no more exists being disbanded with its

⁴ Before Chechnya and Ingushetia were unified in 1934 with the capital in Grozny, Vladikavkaz as a separate administrative-territorial unit served role of the capital for both Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

regional branches and migration service transferred to the Ministry of Interior. There is a network of ethnic-political monitoring and warning developed by the Institute of Ethnology, Russian Academy of Sciences which at the beginning used to work in close contact with the disbanded ministry. The recent changes in the scheme of the Federation Council, the upper house of Russian parliament formation⁵ led to deregionalization and underrepresentation of regional interests. One could say that establishment of federal districts brought the power closer to regions making thus possible to learn about potential conflicts at early stages and to take care of them. This would be perfectly right if only this new structure would not be based almost entirely on secret services and police representatives whose approach to ethnic conflict could be very different from both civilian and civilised ones.

Let it not seem to be a heresy to esteemed lawyers, but majority of ethnic-political conflicts has no pure technologically juridical solutions, otherwise there would not be conflicts. There is a political decision which is needed first to be put into legal shape later on. Universalism, stereotyped approach are totally unacceptable here. This point can be illustrated by several examples from Russian regional political experience.

1. Presidency. There are no doubts that it's better to have the president elected by popular vote than appointed head of the region or the one elected in indirect way. This is true in general, however not in some particular cases. Transfer to presidency in Russian republics has started in 1991. But even in 1999 there still was appointed head in Karachai-Cherkess republic – the last of all 89 regions. Heading executives for almost two decades, since 1979 he was major political long-liver even by Caucasian standards. He was Karachai representing the second biggest by Russians ethnic group in multi-ethnic republic. Finally elections were held with major competition taking place between mayor of the capital, Cherkessian and retired general from Moscow, Karachai. They caused massive unrest, their results were contested, urgent intervention of highest federal officials became necessary, and it took extraordinary efforts and more than a year before the situation was stabilised with Karachai as a president and agreed distribution of other high offices between representatives of major ethnic groups.

Dagestan with its 14 titular nations⁶ is now the single region in the country where the head in violation of federal laws is elected in indirect way by the Constituent Assembly which consists of the republican parliament deputies (1/2) and delegates from local representative bodies. Three referenda on establishment the presidency were held there in 1992-1998 with representatives of two biggest ethnic groups supporting this idea and others rejecting it being afraid of breaking the fragile ethnic balance. The State Council is considered to be «a collective president». Its 14 members are representing all titular nations and by the 1994 constitution initial design the Council should be chaired by all reps in turn. However the first elected chair, Dargin, who was elected to this post in 1994 after occupying highest positions in the republic for 15 years is still there and his new reelection is planned for 2002. What is most interesting about this scheme it's the fact that to elect the representatives to the state Council is the prerogative of the whole Constituent Assembly which is choosing one of several candidates nominated by appropriate ethnic

⁵ Regional leaders and speakers of regional parliaments no more represent their regions in this body of power as it used to be in 1996 - 2001. Starting from 2001 some of them and since January 2002 all remaining were replaced by appointees of two regional branches of power with almost half of them representing the Kremlin and different lobbyist groups in Moscow, not regions.

⁶ Ethnic composition of Dagestan is very complicated: Avars – 27,5%; Dargins – 15,6%; Kumyks – 12,9%; Lezghins – 11,3%; Russians – 9,2%; Laks – 5,1%; Tabasarans – 4,3%; Azeris – 4,2%; Chechens – 3,2%; Nogais – 1,6%; Rutuls – 0,8%; Aguls – 0,8%; Tats – 0,7%; Tsakhurs – 0,3%. Majority of these ethnic groups form compact areas of ethnic settlement, forming oftenly pure ethnic administrative units.

group. The fact that each member of the State Council is elected not by his ethnic relatives only but by the whole corps of deputies where any ethnic group is in minority, means that major ethnic groups are represented in the State Council by moderates, not by the radical and strongest leaders. To finish with Dagestani model of ethnic balance which can be named a quasi-ethnic consocialism one need to add that all most important positions in republican politics and economy are informally assigned to major ethnic groups with Avar chairing the People's assembly, Kumyk heading the government etc.

2. Elections and equal voters' rights⁷. Appropriate articles of the federal law telling about inadmissibility of any discrimination including ethnic one at a time of elections seem to be universal. However it could lead to ethnic clashes in case of Dagestan with the enormous complexity of both ethnic composition and ethnic settlement. They did rule thus about ethnic constituencies for the People's Assembly in case of ethnically heterogeneous areas. How does it work? Each of three biggest ethnic groups which are almost equally represented in Khasavyurt rayon, for example, - Avars, Kumyks, and Chechens got 2 constituencies out of 6. A candidate can be nominated in any constituency regardless of where he lives, but in 61 case out of 121 SMD it's defined at the beginning that only representative of a certain ethnic group can be elected in this particular district. It promotes more or less just representation of ethnic groups in the Peoples Assembly.

In order to promote ethnic representation in northern autonomous districts with sparsely settled indigenous peoples who are in minority different other methods are used including ethnic quotas and national-territorial districts. Thus in Khanty-Mansi AO 17 deputies are electing in territorial districts and 6 more representing indigenous peoples are electing from the whole AO. In neighboring Yamal-Nenets AO this proportion is 18 to 3. Electoral engineering does not necessarily oriented toward just ethnic representation. It can serve for ethnic oppression as well, just like in Ingushetia in 1994 where there was single 27-mandate majoritarian district to the parliament which meant that the entire parliament was formed by 75% Ingush ethnic majority.

3. Bilateral treaties can serve a good example of both flexibility of federal authorities in order to find a way out of legal dead-end and their eagerness to exploit discovered golden vein providing themselves additional advantages in political horse trading with regional leaders. Bilateral treaties were «invented» in 1992 when Tatarstan and Chechnya didn't sign the Federal Treaty. It took more than a year to negotiate the first treaty with Tatarstan, which not only gave the republican authorities almost absolute control over economy and finances in Tatarstan and the possibility to provide certain elements of the foreign policy, but also stated that discrepancies between Tatarstani and Russian constitutions should be gradually liquidated by both sides, i. e. by changing both constitutions. Although it was a clear violation of Russian constitution, violation of this kind was much better than measures undertaken to «restore the constitutional legacy» in case of Chechnya. In 1994-1998 treaties were concluded with 47 regions with some of them getting more advantages, some less, causing very intensive discussion about asymmetry of Russian Federation. It's needed to stress that bilateral treaties were not changing balance between the center and each particular region, they were fixing the balance which already existed. Nevertheless the general pattern reminded Orwellian scheme with some regions, like Tatarstan, Bashkiria, Yakuti-Sakha being «more equal» than others. The story came to the end with the development of Putin's federal reform,

⁷ For detailed analysis of international experience in this sphere see Reilly, 2001.

when the center strengthened and in 2001 the task was formulated to revise all treaties putting them in line with the constitution.

4. Passports. At the early stage of sovereinization processes there were some claims for reoublican (inside Russia) citizenship, appropriate draft laws were discussing in Tatarstan and Bashkiria till 1999. Introduction of a new form of Russian passport in 1998 where the famouth “fifth point”, the nationality was excluded, caused serious tension in case of some republics. For more than a year Tatarstan and Bashkiria authorities were not issuing new passports in their republics before the agreement about special republican supplements to passports was reached. Several month more passed before the presidential envoy to the Volga district overcame regional authorities resistance and pushed to issuing new passports there in the second half of 2001. There were 51 thousand passports issued in Tatarstan by mid-October 2001 and 73 thousand in Bashkiria. All of them were with a supplement in national language, although a citizen has a right to get a common passport⁸. There are no doubts that this right was violated by republican authorities, which were putting pressure on youngsters. Serious problems thus can be foreseen in connection with the forthcoming 2002 population census with republican authorities being interested to show higher share of titular nationality (the case of Bashkiria, for example, where Bashkirs constitute the third largest ethnic group after Russians and Tatars).

The last but not least point: «do no harm» principle should lead experts and policy-makers when dealing with ethnic conflicts. The road to hell is paved by good intensions – this definitely refers to many precocious actions in the sphere of ethnopolitics. The law on rehabilitation of repressed peoples including territorial rehabilitation which was adopted in April 1991 can be taken as an example. In October 2002 the first post-Soviet population census will take place in Russia. Taking into account “the cost of the question” as well as a way how nationality is being defined at a time of census (it’s by self-recognition entirely) it’s possible to wait for massive attempts by republican authorities to increase the share of titular nation in their republics. Thus strict control is needed in order not to let the census to become the reason of numerous ethnic conflicts now and in future.

Brief generalization of ethnic-political conflicts development in Russia last decade based on materials gathered under the aegis of the Carnegie Moscow Center project on social-political monitoring of Russian regions (Politicheskii Al'manakh 1997, Yezhegodnik 1988, Yezhegodnik 1999) can be presenting as a following schematic model.

Succession model (of both conflicts and approaches to their regulation).

1. formation of ethnic counter-elites (establishment of alternative bodies of power, mass ethnic movements; at certain point replacement of “professors” by “generals” as ethnic leaders is taking place);
2. elites and counter-elites superposition (either unification or replacement), korenization (model Russian-titular), elites ethnization;
3. sovereinization, status –secession (abortive balkanization), search of symbols: renamings – monuments – construction – rewriting history (reactional lower level secessionism);
4. strengthening of quasi-authoritarian regimes, mini empirialism (adoption of new constitutions, electoral systems, laws on language and citizenship);
5. desovereinization, restoration of certain federal control over law enforcement agencies, mass media etc.

⁸ Strana.ru/news/43601.html.

6. inner-elite competition, elites replacements by means of elections (depolitization, deethnization, commercialization)

The development of ethnic-political conflicts in Russia can be summarized roughly as follows:

Table 1. The development of ethnic-political conflicts in Russia

Columns: I Major types of ethnic conflicts. II Examples. III Action. IV. Counteraction.

I II Major types of ethnic conflicts:

- 1) ethnic region vs Center (Tatarstan and Chechen models);
- 2) between ethnic regions or ethnic vs non-ethnic (Ingushetia vs North Ossetia, Stavropol' – Chechnya, Kalmykia – Astrakhan');
- 3) within a region between titular ethnic groups controlling "their" territories (Karachai-Cherkessia, Dagestan) and within an ethnic group between subethnic groups, clans etc. (Cossacks, Moksha and Er'zya Mordvins, Mountain and Meadow Mari, Teips in Chechnya...);
- 4) within a region between ethnic groups including non-titular ones for control over resources (anti-Caucasian feelings in Moscow, Krasnodar, Stavropol', anti-Chinese at the Far East);
- 5) Separated and sparsely settled nations. (Lezgins (Dagestan, Azerbaijan), Akka-Chechen (Dagestan, Chechnya), Ossetians (North Ossetia, Georgia), Russians, Nogai (Dagestan, Stavropol', Karachai-Cherkessia), Adyg-Cherkess group (Adygeya, Karachai-Cherkessia, Kabarda-Balkaria), Russian Germans)

III Actions

- 1) Declaration of sovereignty, declaration of independence, unilateral increase of a status, non-participation in elections, other forms of civil disobedience, republicanization of federal property, closing offices of federal agencies, secession from a mother-region, appropriate referenda;
- 2) Territorial claims and conflicts, worsening of border regime;
- 3) Declaration of sovereignty, fight for power, non-participation in elections, other forms of civil disobedience, secession;
- 4) Positive and negative discrimination, including administrative pressure and language requirements, ethnization of elites, ethnic cleansing, forcing out, other forms of xenophobia, anti-migration legislature, autonomization, power sharing,
- 5) Creation of superregional bodies of power, irredentism (secession/joining), claims for establishment new ethnic regions, migration

IV Counteractions⁹

- 1) Promoting regional identity vs ethnic or one ethnic vs another, redistribution of power between regional and federal authorities, changes in state-territorial composition including enlarging and dividing, federalization, counter-referenda, promoting separatism at subregional level – «to fight fire by fire», putting financial and economic pressure, military actions against separatists;
- 2) Providing institutions and forms for discussing problems and negotiating solutions, mediation, different kinds of compensation, boundary changes, in case of clashes -

⁹ Measures mentioned can lead to both escalation and damping of conflicts. Universal measures like a court intervention in case of violations of laws are not mentioned.

- usage of force to separate sides, introduction of a state of emergency and direct presidential rule;
- 3) Referenda, changing of electoral system: introduction of ethnic quotas and ethnic constituencies, agreeing about distribution of offices, introduction of two-chamber parliament and of a right to block certain decisions, introduction of additional official language;
 - 4) Consocialism, promoting party-building and representation, cultural autonomy with elements of ethnic-cultural traditions, territorial autonomy;
 - 5) Special interregional and international treaties including boundary regime, organised resettlement, assistance programs, promoting migration;

Supplement. Selected chronology of ethnic conflicts development

July 1990 (North Ossetia) The first republican declaration of sovereignty. Tatarstan, Karelia, Komi, Khakasia followed next month. The Parade of Sovereignties has been finished in May 1991 by Dagestan.

Summer 1990 (Tuva) Ethnic clashes between Tuvinians (64% of population) and Russians (32%) leading to mass outmigration of Russians.

1991 (Altaiskii krai, Omsk oblast') Establishment of two German ethnic rayons in regions with the highest share of German population (4,8% and 6,3%). Attempts to restore Volga German Autonomy abolished in 1941 failed due to strong opposition of *Saratov* authorities supported by local referenda in 1991-1992, and German outmigration from Russia in 90-ies exceeded the Jewish one.

April 1991 (Moscow) Adoption of the law on rehabilitation of repressed peoples including territorial rehabilitation. The law, which wasn't well prepared caused intensification of Ingush-Ossetian dispute on Prigorodny rayon with hundreds of victims in October-November military conflict and 40 thousand refugees to Ingushetia.

November 1991 (Chechnya) Independence declaration by General Dudayev, newly elected president (Russian Supreme Soviet announced elections illegal). Declaration of the state of emergency by president Yeltsin, which wasn't approved by the Supreme Soviet.

January-December 1992 (Khakasia) Crisis caused by electing ethnic Russian the Supreme Soviet chair which ended only after the ethnic Khakas was elected to this post.

March 1992 (Tatarstan) The referendum on the status of sovereign state and the subject to the international law held inspite of the strong opposition of federal authorities. The adoption of the constitution claiming Tatarstan the sovereign state associated with Russia followed in December.

March 1992 (Moscow) The federal treaty/treaties signed with all regions except for Tatarstan and Chechen-Ingush republics (Ingushetia joined later). Several republics including Bashkiria signed treaty on special conditions.

April 1992 (Yakutia) Adoption of the constitution forestalling the federal one. The second one in ethnic republic after Chechnya. *Tatarstani*, *Tuvinian*, and *Bashkirian* constitutions followed, with Tuvinian one formulating the right of secession from Russia. The situation wasn't changed until 2000, when intensive campaign of bringing regional legislature into accordance with federal one started.

May 1992 (Northern Ossetia) Establishment of the republican National Guard in response to the intensification of the conflict in Southern Ossetia (Georgia), which brought to the republic up to 50 thousand refugees. Later in June the state of emergency was declared there.

May-June 1992 (Stavropol' krai) Mass deportation of ethnic Chechens. Visa regime of moving to krai was established in 1994, then rough law on status of the inhabitant of krai followed in 1995; some migrational restrictions in krai legislature as violating human rights were removed by the Constitutional Court decision in 1996.

June, December 1992 (*Moscow, Ingushetia*) Decisions by Russia's Supreme Soviet and People's Deputies' Congress on establishing Ingush Republic without defining its borders, followed after Ingushs referendum in November 1991. Attempts to separate on ethnic ground were made in *Kabarda-Balkaria* (1991-1992, 1994, 1996), *Karachai-Cherkessia* (1991, 1994, 1999), *Mordovia* (1997), *Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District* (1992), all of them failed.

October-November 1992 (*North Ossetia*) The bloody military conflict between Ingushs and Ossetians in Prigorodny rayon, bringing of federal troops there (on Ossetian side), announcement of the state of emergency and establishment of the temporary administration, then in 1993 the temporary state committee working till 1996, when a special presidential representative was appointed instead. In 1997 the conflict intensified extremely again in spite of signing in 1995 the refusal from territorial claims.

June 1993 (*Buryatia*) Republican Supreme Soviet decision claiming the transfer of Buryat rayons to Irkutsk and Chita oblasts in 1937 illegal. The idea to restore Buryat-Mongol republic as of 1923-1937 has been expressed by some nationalists in 1989-1995 from time to time, however never was it actively supported in Aga-Buryat and Ust'-Orda autonomous districts, with the latter being oriented towards reintegration with Irkutsk oblast since at least 1996 when the first tripartite power sharing treaty was signed between district, oblast' and federal authorities.

December 1993 (*Russia*) Adoption of the Constitution almost levelling ethnic regions with non-ethnic. Chechnya and Tatarstan didn't participate in voting, 17 more regions voted against (including Adygea, Bashkiria, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Mordovia, Tuva, Chuvashia). In Tuva the constitution was adopted which fixed the possibility to secede from Russia.

February 1994 (*Tatarstan*) Signing of the first power-sharing treaty between federal and republical authorities, which ended three-year long Tatarstani opposition to the center. Later similar treaties were signed with *Kabarda-Balkaria* (July), *Bashkiria* (August), the next year with four republics more. This practice which did spread in 1997-1998 onto ethnic Russian regions was stopped in 1998, and in 2001 the revision of treaties was announced.

June 1994 (*Ingushetia*) Establishment of the free economic zone "Ingushetia" by decision of the RF government, in 1997 after the end of the war in Chechnya, zone was liquidated. Similar zones existed in Altai, Kabarda-Balkar and Kalmykia republics – to promote economic development.

July 1994 (*Dagestan*) Adoption of the constitution with elements of ethnic consocialism, formation of the State Council of 14 representatives of titular nationalities with elections to the People's Assembly by ethnic constituencies followed next March.

December 1994 (*Chechnya*) Bringing federal troops into Chechnya, the beginning of the first war in Chechnya after failed attempts to lead opposition to power there. Lasted till 1996, by December federal troops withdrew.

May 1996 (*Irkutsk oblast, Ust-Orda Buryat AO*) Conclusion of the first trilateral power sharing agreement between federal, oblast' and okrug authorities. Quadralateral agreement – with Krasnoyarsk krai, Taimyr and Evenki autonomous districts followed in 1997.

June 1995 (*Stavropol' krai*) Raid of Chechen militants to Budennovsk, causing a lot of casualties, capturing hostages. The new episode of rather complicated history of Cossacks and Chechenians relations, which includes mass deportation of Chechens from krai in June-July 1992, introduction of visa regime for coming to krai in 1993, claims in 1996 for returning of two Cossack rayons transferred to Chechen-Ingushetia in 1957.

January 1996 (*Dagestan*) Raid of Chechen militants to Kizlyar

August 1996 (*Dagestan*) Signing of the so called Khasavurt treaty defining bases of relationship between Russian Federation and Chechen Republic, which put the end to the first war in Chechnya (the problem of the status of Chechnya was postponed for 5 years, it should be defined by 2001).

Fall 1996 (*Mari*) The conflict at a time of republican presidential elections caused by the norm of Mari constitution, claiming for the knowledge of Mari language by the president (share of Mari in the republic – 43%, of Russian – 47%). Due to efforts of republican electoral commission,

prosecutor's office and federal Constitutional Court all candidates were registered and ethnic Russian won elections. Couple of months later the similar conflict in *Adygeya* (Adygs – 22%, Russians – 68%) led to the exclusion of ethnic Russian from the presidential race.

1998? Beginning of the passport epic connected with refusal of some regional authorities to agree with the new form of Russian passport where nationality was excluded. Tatarstan and Bashkortostan finally agreed to give their inhabitants new Russian passports? However with republican additions in 2001 only.

1998 (*Dagestan*) Wahhabists – Stepashin. Villagers in Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi pushed away militia, organized their self-defence and were not listening for republican authorities for two years.

April-May 1999 (*Karachai-Cherkessia*) Presidential elections causing intensive conflict between two major ethnic groups, solved with active participation of federal authorities to 2001 only with a system of the distribution of highest positions between 4 ethnic groups introduced.

June 1999 (*Moscow*) Creation of “Mejlis” electoral bloc out of “Muslims of Russia”, “Nur”, “Refakh” and Russian Islamic Congress. The second attempt to unite Muslim forces wasn't more successful as the first one in 1995: the bloc did split before elections with Mejlis candidates participating in NDR list, “Nur” going on his own and not registered, “Refakh” being one of the “Unity” founders and thus getting several deputies passed to the Duma.

August 1999 (*Dagestan*) Invasion of Chechen militants to Dagestan. Military operation of federal troops and local militia.

September 1999 Bloody terrorist attacks in Buinaksk (*Dagestan* on 4.09), *Moscow* (on 9.09 and 13.09), and Volgodonsk (*Rostov oblast'* on 16.09) causing hundreds of casualties. Ascribed to “Chechenian terrorists” they shocked Russian society and changed public mind in favor of a radical solution of “Chechenian problem”. The start of the so-called anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya followed after the invasion of Chechen guerrillas to Dagestan in August and fight with them and with Wahhabists there. The operation turned soon to the full-scale second war in Chechnya which lasts until now.

May 2000 The start of the so called Putin's federal reform with establishment of 7 large federal districts, appointment of chief federal inspectors into regions (including Tatarstan, Bashkiria and Yakutia where presidential reps were never appointed earlier), bringing regional legislature into line with the federal one, revision of power-sharing treaties.

April 2001 (*Moscow*) Large-scale pogroms against Azeris at Moscow markets, leading to several casualties.

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