

A Multi-Causal Analysis of the Genesis of Suicide Terrorism: The Chechen Case¹

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Abstract

This paper reports findings of a two-year study of thirty-four Chechen suicide terrorists studied through semi-structured research interviews with family members and close associates. The interviews were used to construct psychological autopsies of the bombers in order to understand the individual, organizational, societal and ideological factors that motivated them to become suicide terrorists. Using both interview data and general data collected about Chechen suicide terror acts in total the authors provide a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis of Chechen suicide terrorism. The results show that the volatile mix in Chechnya leading to suicide terrorism appears to be organizational responses following more than ten years of conflict over nationalistic concerns, coupled with the importation of a militant jihadist ideology (militant wahhabism) in favor of embracing "martyrdom" operations occurring concurrently with widespread deep personal traumatization among the societal pool of recruits, numerous human rights violations and lack of hope on a society wide level. Political endeavors to end the conflict, bringing about the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and as well as a reining in of heavy handed counter-terrorism measures is very likely to lead to diminished terrorist activity from groups which remain nationalistic in their goals, although in recent months the conflict has spread beyond the borders of Chechnya and is likely to continue to do so if remedial measures are not taken. Likewise Chechnya, along with Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan are key conflict zones that global terrorists use as rallying calls for the worldwide jihad. The conflict in Chechnya will likely continue to fuel recruits to the global jihad as long as it remains in its current state of heavy handed Russian occupation – another important reason for the world to be concerned about it's fate.

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Studying Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorists are difficult to study – unless they failed in their missions they have already died in their self-defining acts before one can gain access for an interview. In some arenas (the Palestini/Israeli conflict for instance) there are a large pool of incarcerated “would be” bombers and senders who can be interviewed. In the Chechen case there is only one and her case is dubious (as will be discussed further on). Since 2002 the authors have been finding creative ways to study Chechen suicide terrorism – constructing psychological autopsies of dead suicide terrorists through interviewing their family members and close associates and also the hostages that they held, conversed and interacted with over three day periods in their last moments of life – sometimes with bombs strapped to their bodies. Likewise the authors have constructed a database of all suicide actions attributed to Chechen terrorists and provide here an empirical and descriptive analysis from both the interview and hard data sets.

The important question in studying suicide terrorism is to learn what factors enable and even propel an individual to take the step of not only being willing to kill, but to deliberately die in order to kill others. The answer lies in analysis of a combination of four main factors interacting to create the psychosocial and political context for becoming a suicide terrorist. On the individual level there is a combination of personal, familial, community, sociological, political, economic, nationalistic, religious, and psychological motivations that interplay in choosing to become a “martyr”. On the organizational level there is the political context in which organizations choose to embrace suicide terrorism as a tactic. On the society level there are the social dynamics that enable organizations to access a ready pool of recruits; and between all three there is an ideology that resonates. This paper looks at all four levels (individual, organizational, societal and ideological) providing a theoretical and empirical analysis of Chechen suicide terrorism based on thirty-two interviews with family members and close associates of thirty-four Chechen suicide terrorists collected in Chechnya over a two-year time period from March 2003 to March 2005 as well as an analysis of all suicide terrorism events attributed to Chechen terrorists.

Recent History of the Current Conflicts in Chechnya

During the fall of the Soviet Union, Chechnya like many of the other former Soviet republics declared independence. In 1992, a time while Russia was writing their own new constitution, Chechnya adopted a constitution defining it as an independent secular state governed by a president and parliament.⁴ Unlike the former Soviet republics Chechnya had also been a member state within the Russian federation and Yeltsin was not keen to lose control of the former federation.⁵ The

⁴ In Chechnya the two oppositional parties - communists and democrats declared the independence of Chechnya simultaneously. In November of 1990 the Supreme Soviet of Chechen-Ingush Republic (Verhovni Sovet Checheno-Ingushskoi Respubliki), which was communist in orientation, claimed their Declaration of Independence of the Chechen-Ingush Republic from the Russian Federation. Likewise the Vainah Democratic Party headed by Zelimkhan Yandarbiev organized the First National Congress of the Chechen Nation and they proclaimed the Declaration of Independence of the Chechen-Ingush Republic as well. Dudaev was invited to head that Congress. In September 1991 Ingushetia proclaimed itself as part of the Russian Federation, but Chechnya declined to join and continued the fight for Independence.

⁵ In April of 1990 the USSR government (Verhovni Sovet) proclaimed a new law that required all former Soviet Republics to sign a new federal agreement with Russia signifying their participation as part of the of Russian Federation. Accordingly any republic not signing the agreement could be understood as outside of Russian Federation. Even today some Chechen leaders and international scholars debate the current Russian legal position regarding Chechnya's inclusion in the Russian Federations arguing in terms of international law that when the Soviet Union fell and Russia rewrote their own constitution Chechnya was free as the other republics to chose its own destiny, and Chechens chose as Yeltsin had urged - freedom.

Kremlin declared Chechen independence illegal⁶ and the first attempt to crush it occurred in 1994 when Yeltsin sent troops into Chechnya. Russian troops first entered Chechnya during the time period of November 27-December 10, 1994. Though the war was not officially declared at that time there were airplane bombardments every day in Chechnya. Many civilians were killed and their homes were destroyed. The governments of western countries were loath to interfere as many saw the events unfolding in Chechnya as the internal case of Russia. Bewildered civilians understanding that the war had begun and no one could help them took up arms to defend their homes and their lives. It was not until December 11, 1994 that the Russian government officially declared war and named it “The actions on restoration of legality, law and order in territory of Chechen republic”. Yeltsin had actually signed this decree already on November 30, 1994, but it was only first published in the summer of 1995 (Vremya, 1995). Before signing such a decree the Russian president should ask the Russian Federation Council (Sovet Federazii) to declare an extreme situation (chrezvichainoe polozenie) in Chechnya, but Yeltsin failed to do so. Hence for rebuilding the constitution and law in Chechnya he broke the Russian Constitution. Likewise, the Russian government was trying hard to show the west that they did not want to use war actions in Chechnya and were participating in negotiations with president Dudaev, but at the same time there was already a war begun in Chechnya. The Russian Army came to Chechnya from three sides: Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia. Many civilians – women and elders without arms stood across the roads trying to stop the tanks. During that time during three months the Russian army bombed Grozny every day until it was destroyed totally. War actions have continued in Chechnya since 1994. Officially during the past decade Chechnya suffered two wars of independence - the first in 1994-1996 and the second beginning in 1999 and ending “officially” in 2000 but in reality continuing unofficially to the present.

Between the two wars, Chechnya had defacto independence although the peace was very fragile with corruption and crime running rampant and the Chechen national leaders unable to execute firm hold of the government structures. Militant wahhabist ideology⁷ was introduced into Chechnya during this time period and the secular leaders found themselves in competition with foreign funding and foreign fighters who funded militant wahhabist mosques and schools and worked with local nationalist separatists using militant religious ideology to organize and train fighters who had previously been part of a nationalist separatist movement moving many of them to take a more religious militant jihadist approach to the conflict.

⁶ October 8, 1991 the Russian federation government claimed that the Declaration of Independence and other decisions of the Chechen National Congress were illegal and demanded the Chechen government to return all arms to Russia during two days. Seven days later Dudaev answered by claiming that the actions of the Russian government toward Chechnya are illegal and aimed at destroying Chechen independence. Dudaev is elected president on October 27, 1991 but the Russian government claimed the elections as illegal.

⁷ Wahhabism as a belief system, although not in itself necessarily militant is the subset of Islam that has been used to inform the terrorist ideology which is at the basis of the current worldwide salafi jihad. For an excellent discussion and definition of the global Salafi jihad see Marc Sageman *Understanding Terror Networks* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. Wahhabism, interpreted in its most radical and militant type also forms the ideological underpinning of Chechen terror groups. While the label Wahhabism denotes a totally other and neutral meaning in the Gulf States and elsewhere in the world, it should be understood that in Russia, Chechnya, the Caucuses, and the other former Soviet Union republics this label denotes an ultra militant form of Islam and refers to militant religious groups that promote jihad and terrorism – so much so that in Russian the word wahhabist has become synonymous with terrorist. For the purposes of this paper we adhere to the Russian meaning of the word, as it is understood in the Chechen context – we refer to wahhabists in Chechnya as those groups that have formed according to a militant interpretation of Islam which promotes jihad and allows for and promotes terrorism. By doing so we mean no offense to wahhabists who practice Islam peacefully in other parts of the world (or in Chechnya for that matter) and we fully acknowledge that this term has an entirely other peaceful meaning outside of Chechnya

As the second war erupted, inflamed in part by aggressive actions of the militant wahhabist groups (Basayev's raid into Dagestan)⁸ the two forces – nationalist separatists and militant wahhabi jihadists were forced together to fight against a common enemy and the two have not since been totally disentangled. Following the official end of the second war the nationalist separatists went underground as did the militant wahhabi groups which organize in terror cells and train recruits in a way similar to the loosely affiliated Al Qaeda structures do so in other areas of the world.

The nationalist separatist ideology carried forward in the first war has changed considerably following the two conflicts with an increasing religious overtone made by many of the groups which had turned to endorsing terrorism and “martyrdom” as the main tactics of the in the call for jihad against Russia which increasingly favored tactics of terrorism as opposed to warfare. As those who study suicide terrorism often point out – organizations frequently move to suicide terrorism as a tactic when the conflict has moved into and beyond second and third reiterations; when the opposing force is much stronger militarily; when there is an occupation particularly by a group of another religious orientation, and when the occupation is heavy handed and includes numerous human rights violations (Bloom, 2005; Hafez, 2004; Pape, 2005; Speckhard, 2005a). All of these conditions existed at the “official” end of the Chechen conflict in 2000 and along with a huge importation of militant wahhabi funding and ideology virtually flooding the country starting during the break between the two wars - a very vulnerable time in Chechen history (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006b).

The conflict is complicated as well by the widespread corruption in the Russian forces that has made underground fighter and terrorist activities much easier as Russian forces frequently sell weapons to the underground groups, accept bribes for their safe passage, and allow them great leeway in their activities. Frequently the Russian occupying forces are as brutal as the terrorists and consider themselves above any local laws as they pursue their own corrupt underground black market activities.

The tolls from the wars in Chechnya have been horrific with one in two Chechens having been killed or having fled as refugees in the past ten years (Reuter, 2004). Likewise the infrastructure of the country has been decimated and Chechnya's cities left in rubble. Everyone in Chechnya has suffered great losses; many witnessing deaths of loved ones. The majority of the population is deeply traumatized (WHO) by some aspect of the war and ongoing occupation: including the continuous bombardments, and exposure to torture, disappearance and death of loved ones, and destruction of material goods along with continued (to this day) heavy handed counterterrorism operations. All of these things create the climate in which there exists support at least in limited pockets of the population for militant jihadist ideology and as a result groups favoring martyrdom are able to find ready recruits for their suicide operations.

Suicide Terrorism in Chechnya

The first suicide operation⁹ in Chechnya began in the year 2000 using female bombers from the start. On June 7, 2000 Khava Barayeva, cousin of well-known Chechen field commander Arbi

⁸ Shamil Basayev Chechen leader along with Saudi born Khattab made a raid into Dagestan in 1999 claiming to reunite the former Islamic republic but in fact sparking the final acts leading to the next war. See the new Chechen jihad for a further elaboration of this history.

⁹ We have classified suicide bombers as anyone who goes so far as to strap on a bomb, drive a vehicle filled with explosives to a target or who otherwise attempts to detonate an explosive device on an airplane, in a subway or train car, or elsewhere with the aim of dying to kill - irrespective of whether or not the bomber actually died in the attack or was

Barayev and Luisa Magomadova crashed an explosive laden truck into the temporary headquarters of an elite OMON (Russian Special Forces) detachment in the village of Alkhan Yurt in Chechnya, resulting in two deaths and five wounded. Since that time Chechen terror groups have used suicide attacks in the form of truck bombs, car bombs, suicide bombers on both commuter and subway trains, on planes and in it's newest variant using suicide bomber operating in mass hostage taking operations.

Summary of Suicide Operations Attributed to Chechen Terrorists

Since the first operation in 2000 the total number of Chechen suicide attacks include twenty-eight suicide operations with one hundred and twelve bombers¹⁰ involved. Forty-three percent of the suicide terrorists were women (n=48) and fifty-seven percent men (n=64). In these terrorist acts 939 people were killed and 2913 injured. In the combined martyrdom/mass hostage taking operations there were 2043 hostages involved. See Table One for a complete summary of Chechen suicide acts to date (November 2005).

Target of Chechen Suicide Attacks

Chechen suicide attacks can be sorted according to intended target type with three main targets: military installations, government complexes, and purely civilian targets. The first category of suicide attacks, aimed at military installations was carried out in Chechnya or in nearby regions. The second category of attacks intended for pro-Moscow government installations in and around Chechnya were primarily carried out inside Chechnya. While the target is clearly the Russian backed government occupation structures, the majority of victims of this second category of suicide terrorist attacks were civilian Chechen Muslims rather than Russian military. The introduction of militant Wahhabit ideology allows for this “collateral damage” as it claims the right to kill unrighteous civilians and even Muslims in order to achieve “ holy” goals.

The third category of suicide attacks is directed at purely civilian targets and has aimed mainly for Russian civilians although many Chechens have died in these attacks as well – especially the commuter train bombings. Likewise Ossetians were targeted in the recent Beslan school attack. The majority of attacks against civilians were carried out in Moscow and in neighboring regions to Chechnya. The most terrible of these attacks include a new variant of suicide terrorism so far only

successful in detonating - as that is often not within the bomber's control. We take the fact of being to the point of willingly strapping on a bomb or other type of improvised explosive device or driving a vehicle loaded with explosives to a target as enough evidence of seriousness of the intent to suicide and see the end result which is often out of the hands of the bomber as less meaningful than the intent implied by these actions. There is some controversy as to whether or not the Dubrovka bombers were suicide bombers as they did not die by exploding themselves as their plan to do so was interrupted by the Russian special forces gassing and storming the building. Since we have strong confirmation from many family members, close associates and hostages of these terrorists to dies by self-explosion and the fact that the women were already in suicide belts we take their intent and behavior of strapping on bombs as strong enough evidence to classify them as suicide bombers for this analysis. To leave them out of the analysis would, in our opinion, be a mistake as clearly they were intending to carry out their suicide mission if the Russian Special Forces had not thwarted it. We consider this analogous to the many now incarcerated Palestinian bombers who have been thwarted in the last moments before their attempts but who are also closely studied to understand the psychology and psycho-social aspects of suicide bombers.

¹⁰ These numbers reflect the total number of Chechen suicide attacks we count in our database of attacks attributed to Chechens to date from news reports and intelligence sources as of the article's writing in November 2005. Quantifying the exact numbers of those killed and wounded in attacks, the gender of bombers and so on is difficult as reports vary by government and news source and specifics about the accomplished bombers are not always evident after an attack. We have in every case used the more conservative estimates, as our experience with journalists reporting in and about Chechnya is that they have difficulty getting reports and sometimes rely on rumors.

Table One: SUMMARY OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SUICIDE TERROR ACT ATTRIBUTED TO CHECHENS

	Date of terrorist act	Place of terrorist act	Total Terrorists	Women terrorists	Men terrorists	Killed victims	Injured victims	Hostages	Terrorists death
1	June 07, 2000	Chechnya, Alkhan-Yurt Military base (Khava Baraeva, Luiza Magomadova)	2	2	0	2	5	0	Dead
2	June, 2000	Chechnya, Military checkpoint	1	0	1	?	?	0	Dead
3	July 02, 2000	Chechnya, Military base (Movladi)	1	0	1	33	81	0	Dead
4	Dec. 2000	Chechnya, MVD building (Mareta Duduyeva)	1	1	0	?	?	0	Wounded, later dead
5	Nov. 29, 2001	Chechnya, Urus-Martan, Military office (Elza Gazueva)	1	1	0	1	3	0	Dead
6	Feb. 5, 2002	Chechnya, Grozny, Zavodskoy ROVD (Zarema Inarkaeva)	1	1	0	23	17	0	Wounded
7	Oct.23-26, 2002	Moscow theatre	40	19	21	129	644	<800	Dead
8	Dec. 27, 2002	Chechnya, Grozny, Governmental complex (Tumrievs family)	3	1	2	83	<200	0	Dead
9	May 12, 2003	Chechnya, Znamenskaya, Governmental complex	3	1	2	59	111	0	Dead
10	May 14, 2003	Chechnya, Iliskhan-Yurt, Religion festival (Shahidat Shahbulatova, Zulay Abdurzakova)	2	2	0	18	145	0	Dead
11	June 5, 2003	North Osetia, Mozdok Military bas (Lida Khildehoroeva)	1	1	0	17	16	0	Dead
12	June 20, 2003	Chechnya, Grozny, Governmental complex (Zakir	2	1	1	6	38	0	Dead

		Abdulazimov)								
13	July 5, 2003	Moscow, Rock festival (Zulikhan Elihadjeva, Mariam Sharapova)	2	2	0	14	60	0	Dead	
14	July 11, 2003	Moscow, Twerskaya str. (Zarema Mujikhoeva)	1	1	0	1	0	0	Lived	
15	July 27, 2003	Chechnya, Grozny, Military building (Mariam Tashukhadjeva)	1	1	0	?	?	0	Dead	
16	Aug. 1, 2003	North Osetia, Military hospital	1	0	1	35	300	0	Dead	
17	Dec. 5, 2003	Southern Russian near Yessentuki, train (Khadijat Mangerieva)	4	3	1	41	<150	0	Dead	
18	Sept. 15, 2003	Ingushetia, FSB office	2	1	1	2	31	0	Dead	
19	Dec. 9, 2003	Moscow, National Hotel near Duma	1	1	0	6	14	0	Dead	
20	Feb. 6, 2004	Moscow subway station Avtozavodskaya	1	0	1	41	<130	0	Dead	
21	April 6, 2004	Ingushetia, president's car	1	0	1	2	25	0	Dead	
22	Aug. 25, 2004	Airplane TU-134 Moscow-Volgograd (Sazita Jebirhanova)	1	1	0	43	0	0	Dead	
23	Aug. 25, 2004	Airplane TU-154 Moscow-Sochi (Aminat Nogaeva)	1	1	0	42	0	0	Dead	
24	Aug. 31, 2004	Moscow, subway station Rijskaya	1	1	0	10	33	0	Dead	
25	Sept.1-3, 2004	North Osetia, Beslan school (Roza Nogaeva, Mariam Tuburova)	32	2	30	330	470	1120	Dead	
26	May, 2005	Chechnya, Grozny	1	1	0	0	0	0	Dead	
27	May, 2005	Chechnya, Assinovskaya	2	2	0	0	0	0	Dead	
27	May, 2005	Chechnya, Assinovskaya	2	2	0	0	0	0	Dead	
28	July, 2005	Chechnya, Grozny	1	0	1	0	0	0	Dead	
			112	48	64	939	2913	2043		
			100%	43%	57%					

carried out by Chechen terrorists - combining mass hostage taking with suicide terrorism. These include the Moscow Dubrovka Theatre (Nord Ost)¹¹ takeover on October of 2002 in which over eight-hundred hostages were taken and one hundred-thirty died in the storm (Speckhard, 2004; Speckhard, Tarabrina, Krasnov, & Akhmedova, 2004; Speckhard, Tarabrina, Krasnov, & Mufel, 2005a, 2005b) and the Beslan school takeover on September of 2004 in which over one thousand teachers, parents and children were held for three days with a still contested number likely reaching over three hundred killed in the ensuing storm of the school. See Table Two for a summary of target type by region of Chechen suicide attacks.

Table 2. TARGET TYPE BY REGION OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS

	Target type	Chechnya	Southern Russia	Moscow	Total
1	Military	7	3	0	10
2	Governmental	3	1	0	4
3	Civilian	4	2	8	14
	Total	14	6	8	28

Trends in Targeting in Chechen Suicide Attacks and Organizational Motivations

The majority of Chechen suicide attacks began inside Chechnya and were at first mainly aimed at military targets, although as these were hardened the terrorists moved to pro-Moscow governmental structures. As these two were hardened the terrorists responded dynamically in response to their frustrated ability to succeed in hitting military and pro- Russian governmental targets. A combination of organizational motives including despair and anger at the continued occupation, corruption of Russian forces within Chechnya and heavy handed counter terrorism operations, combined with the hardening of targets inside Chechnya led in 2002 to organizational decisions to move to suicide attacks beyond the borders, striking Moscow and other soft civilian targets. Following a spate of attacks in Moscow in 2003-2004, access by Chechens to the capital has been increasingly controlled. Chechens now find it difficult to travel freely and to receive external passports and the terrorists responded again by moving operations closer to home, although recently spreading their militant ideology and training over the borders of Chechnya. Likewise funding has limited the ability of the terrorists to operate far from their home base which led to the terrorists' decision to attack the Beslan school in Ossetia instead of their stated preferred targets of St. Petersburg and Moscow (Miller, 2005).

Looking at a summary of suicide attacks by year one can see that the majority of attacks were carried out on 2003. (Table Three shows a summary of Chechen suicide attacks by year.) The increase in suicide attacks in 2003 is argued by one author as a direct result and in retaliation for the brutal and terrifying “zachisti” counter-terrorism operations inside Chechnya that led to a backlash and greater reliance in the use of this method (Reuter, 2004). Certainly in situations of war, death and human rights violations, terror groups that resort strategically to suicide terror as a tactic often find increased social resonance in pockets of the population for their ideology. In the Chechen case the human rights violations create a shared goal with the population of ending such operations by driving the Russian forces out of Chechnya. There can be many more self-recruits when the

¹¹ The takeover of the Dubrovka Theater is sometimes referred to as the “Nord Ost” takeover as that was the name of the well known musical about World War Two playing that night, which incidentally featured soldiers on stage at the moment the terrorists arrived on stage shooting guns and shouting to the stunned theatergoers, “You are hostages!”

population lives in a fear state and has had many traumatic experiences at the hands of Russian forces. Our data support this argument at least partially. All thirty-four of the suicide terrorists who were studied had self-recruited to the terror groups all in direct response to traumatization and one even directly revenged upon the exact person who had tortured and killed her family members.

Table 3. FREQUENCY OF CHECHEN SUICIDE ATTACKS YEARLY

Year	Frequency	Percent
2000	4	14%
2001	1	4%
2002	3	11%
2003	11	39%
2004	6	21%
2005	3	11%
Total	28	100%

Another argument for the increase in suicide terrorism operations particularly those taking place in Moscow may also be that the terror groups responded dynamically to the conditions of war and occupation, constantly shifting their tactics in response to the military and police tactics and in response to community responses both inside and outside of Chechnya. In the 2002 Dubrovka/Nord Ost takeover the terrorists made spectacular use of theater themselves, dressing the women in black hadjibs reminiscent of mourning clothes with clearly visible bomb belts strapped around their waists. These women were referred to by the Russian and world press as “Black Widows” with sympathetic stories circulating about them being wives and mothers of Chechen men killed and disappeared during the conflicts. As these stories circled the globe, the Chechen terrorists understood the joint utility of bringing their terror acts to the heart of Russia: to strike fear into their enemy and to gain the global press coverage that occurs when purely civilian targets outside Chechen borders are attacked (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006a). 2003-2004 included many more such attacks inside Moscow, some of them occurring on symbolic dates such as to coincide with the Duma (parliamentary) elections. It is unclear if the increased attacks on Moscow were in direct response to the “zachisti” operations, due to increased despair and desire to make the enemy civilian population suffer as the Chechen civilians suffer, a desire for increased press coverage, desire to adversely affect the Russian civilian support for the war, due to changes in ability to hit targets at home, changes in finances or a combination of all of these factors.

As Moscow became increasingly difficult to strike, Chechen terrorists once again backed down into operations inside Chechnya and the surrounding region, and to attacks on commuter trains reaching just outside Moscow. In 2004 the Chechen terrorists carried off their second huge attack – again combining suicide terrorism with mass hostage taking in nearby Ossetia – taking over a school in Beslan. In this case the press coverage was again global but in terms of creating any sympathy backfired as the specific targeting of children was globally condemned, although the Chechen terrorists could claim success in that their cause was once again brought into world attention.

The choice of targeting the school in Ossetia had many reasons, one of the most important being that limited funding kept the terrorists from striking Moscow or St. Petersburg as terrorist leader Basayev clearly stated was their preference (Miller, 2005). The terrorist leaders also had wanted to overtake the FSB (formerly known as KGB) headquarters in Vladikavkaz, Ossetia’s capital but chose

against it because the number of hostages was too low for their desire for media coverage and because they could not afford all the necessary bribes. Instead they focused on the school in Beslan where many of the elite leaders of Ossetia send their children. The choice of Ossetia was likely because Ossetia is perceived (by the terrorists) as most pro-Russian of all the nearby republics. Another extremely important reason however is that at this point in time the Chechen terror groups were firmly committed to spilling the Chechen conflict beyond the borders and igniting popular resistance to the Russian federation throughout the Caucasus. The fact that Ossetians were chosen as a target likely also was related to the fact that Ossetia had a brutal war history from the early nineties with the Ingush nationals – many of whom were represented in the hostage taking operation. Although it was not widely publicized within, or outside of Russia, atrocities were broadcast in vividly graphic footage in both Ingushetia and Chechnya following the conflicts. These atrocities included pictures of when Ossetians had in one town forced men and boys to watch their women being raped after which the women's breasts were cut off (2005). The results of the broadcast of these stories and photos most likely left long lasting negative impressions of the Ossetians. This perhaps explains in part the mostly Ingush and Chechen hostage-takers willingness to target a school full of children and their brutality when the children started to escape.

In 2005 there were three suicide bombings inside Chechnya. Three female suicide terrorists exploded themselves in May. They prepared to carry out their mission on May 9th but they were recognized and they exploded themselves to avoid arrest. The date chosen for their act was a highly symbolic day - Victory Day – in which Russia and former Soviet states make a prominent display of their military might a day in which a suicide bombing would have certainly diminished this display of military readiness. Indeed on this same date in 2004 the pro-Russian backed Chechen President Kadyrov was killed with his entourage when the stand where he was viewing the display of Russian military might exploded under his feet. The most recent suicide bombing (as of this writing) was on July seventh in Grozny at the time of the terrorist acts in London. It is unknown and most unlikely that there is any connection to the acts. A young man exploded himself in car bomb near a military checkpoint.

The most recent change in attacks by Chechens have not been suicide attacks but incursions outside of Chechnya into nearby Kabardino-Balkaria by military/terrorists forces although in this case the attacks were infused by an ideology of martyrdom. In October 2005 armed terrorists attacked Nalchik, the capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, an Islamic republic with high unemployment and unrest. The terrorists attacked knowing full well that the Russians had been tipped off and had increased their forces within the town. As reported on the www.kavkazcenter.com website – the official spokes piece of the Chechen terror groups – the militants went forward knowing that many would be “martyred,” as was the case. In Nalchik military, police and federal security bureau (FSB – previously known as the KGB) offices were the main targets likely targeted as an expression of the militants' courage, willingness to die which creates a balance in military power and disdain for the corrupt and heavy-handed tactics of all three security forces. Predictably further heavy-handed retaliation occurred in Nalchik with claims by local inhabitants of arrests and tortures that may lead to further unrest in the region. The Chechen terrorists who claimed responsibility for the attack stated that it was an action of the new Caucasus Front, and claimed that militant groups were already planted throughout the Caucasus ready to attack again and the armed conflict was soon to ignite throughout the region. It is unclear if the seeded groups will also resort to suicide terrorism but given the trend toward embracing martyrdom in battle it's likely to be the case.

Table 4. TREND BY YEAR IN TARGET TYPE AND LOCATION OF ATTACKS

Year	Military bases	Governmental places	Civilian places	Total	Chechnya	Southern Russian region	Moscow	Total
2000	4	0	0	4	4	0	0	4
2001	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
2002	1	1	1	3	2	0	1	3
2003	4	2	5	11	4	4	3	11
2004	0	1	5	6	0	2	4	6
2005	1	0	2	2	3	0	0	2
Total	11 (39%)	4 (14%)	13 (47%)	28	14 (50%)	6 (21%)	8 (29%)	28 (100%)

Our Study of Chechen Suicide Terrorism

Methods

The Research Interview

We used semi-structured interviews and focused on open-ended questions regarding life events previous to becoming terrorists; personality and behavioral changes leading up to the terrorist act; and possible motivations for it. We also included questions regarding what was known about the suicide bombers recruitment and interaction with the terror groups and how the family members and close associates viewed the acts of the terrorists and their views of societal support for this type of act, and questions about its contagion effect on those persons close to the bombers.

Recruitment of Research Subjects

It was difficult to make contact with the family members of suicide terrorists because nearly all had already been visited and interrogated by Russian special services and continued to fear retaliation. However they agreed after being told that the interviews would be anonymous and confidential and that the authors are trying to understand the psychological underpinnings of suicidal terrorism. No monetary compensation was offered, but those having psychological difficulties were offered immediate attention and an invitation to longer-term psychotherapy if so desired.

Sample

This study reports on sixty-one interviews (n=61) from sources inside and outside Chechnya including: thirty-two close family members or close associates who reported on thirty-four suicide terrorists and two would-be-suicide terrorists; four seriously radicalized individuals who appeared to us vulnerable to becoming suicide terrorists¹² (two of these were additional interviews from within the group of thirty-two close family and associate interviews and two from the Chechen refugee

¹² Because the authors are both practicing psychologists we decided that upon coming across anyone seriously considering becoming a suicide terrorist that we would make every clinical effort to dissuade them. In our opinion we were generally successful in offering persuasive therapeutic effect in most of these cases to push the subject into reconsidering. In all of these cases Akhmedova offered free clinical services to help the subjects work through the traumatic experiences that appeared to be a driving motivation for considering enacting suicide terrorism. One subject who was highly traumatized in childhood and has not made a good recovery from it we continue to monitor.

camps in Ingushetia); and additional insights from the eleven hostage interviews from the Dubrovka hostage-taking siege and sixteen interviews from hostages held in the Beslan school takeover . The close family and associate interviews were given mainly by mothers, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, first cousins, childhood friends, long-term neighbors, teachers, etc. and were collected in Chechnya over a two-year time period from March 2003 to March 2005. Table Five gives a breakdown of this information. The Dubrovka/Nord Ost hostage interviews were collected from the first week of December 2002, five weeks after the terrorist takeover and into the first week of March 2003, four months after the takeover. The Beslan hostage interviews were collected in August of 2005 close to the one-year anniversary date of the attack, a time when emotions and traumatic memories were dramatically heightened.

All of the descriptive statistics that we report from our sample are based upon the thirty-four suicide terrorists that we were able to closely study (post-mortem) through the family member/close associate interviews we collected in Chechnya. We augment our descriptions of these specific terrorists by their family members and close associates with hostages' observations of the terrorists with whom they spent three days, many of them having ample opportunity to observe the suicide terrorists' behaviors, interactions and to seriously engage in discussions with them.

Table 5. RELATIONSHIP OF RESPONDENTS TO THE SUICIDE TERRORIST

Relationship of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Mothers	2	6.7%
Sister/Brother	6	20%
Cousins, Aunts, Uncles	7	23.3%
Neighbors, Friends, Teachers	15	50%
Total	30	100.0%

Demographic characteristics of the Chechen Suicide Terrorists in our Sample

Age: The mean age of the suicide terrorists in our sample (at the time of their acts) was 24, and the age range was 15-45 (standard deviation of 6.57). There was not a significant age difference by gender.

Gender: In our study females made up more than three quarters of the sample and males less than one quarter (see Table Six). Of all one-hundred and twelve suicide bombers to date, forty-three percent (n=48) have been female and fifty-seven percent (n=64) have been male, hence our study over represents female bombers.

Table 6. GENDER OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	26	76.5
Male	8	23.5
Total	34	100.0

Marital and familial status: Almost half of all suicides in our study were unmarried, but this does not necessarily mean that single persons are more willing to volunteer for suicide missions. Islamic-

based Palestinian and Lebanese groups that make use of martyrdom operations (i.e. HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah) have traditionally favored sending individuals who were not married or parents as bombers. Quite the opposite is true within the imported Wahhabi ideology. The Chechen terror groups favor martyrdom operations for those who are married and who have children, seeing them as having fulfilled their life duties of reproducing prior to sacrificing their lives. Indeed, half of the married, divorced and widowed individuals in the sample had children, but this fact was not an obstacle for their carrying out their suicide mission. Table Seven shows the marital status and gender breakdown of the sample.

Table 7. MARITAL STATUS & GENDER CROSSTABULATION

	Marital status	Females	Percent	Males	Percent	Total	Percent
1	Single	13	50.0	5	62.5	18	52.9
2	Married	3	11.5	2	25.0	5	14.7
3	Divorced	4	15.4	0	0	4	11.8
4	Widow	5	19.2	1	12.5	6	17.6
5	Second marriage	1	3.9	0	0	1	2.9
	Total	26	100	8	100	34	100,0

Education:

The education level of the suicide terrorists was similar to the educational level of general Chechen society demonstrating once again that it is a myth to assume that suicide bombers are impoverished and illiterate sheep led to the slaughter by clever recruiters (Atran, 2003). One woman (age 31) had two University diplomas: economical and juridical. Another woman had finished in the theatre faculty of University. One third of the sample were either enrolled in or had graduated college or university. This is especially noteworthy in the particular context of the war situation. Chechens traditionally push their young to achieve the highest education possible but the majority of youth in Chechnya today cannot achieve the education they wish to because the education system has been destroyed during wartime. Also during the last ten years many schools worked badly or did not work in general. Yet only a small group of young people became terrorists despite the widespread frustration and lack of educational opportunities, and those that did were well educated. Perhaps one can imagine that given their hard work demonstrated by their achievements under duress and self-sacrificial natures that these qualities if found expression in another context could also have made them future leaders with noteworthy contributors to society, that their lives would have been altogether different if they had not been exposed to trauma and violent ideologies. Table Eight shows the educational level of the bombers in our sample.

Table 8. EDUCATION OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Education level	Frequency	Percent
1	High school	23	67.6
2	College	2	5.9
3	University	6	17.6
4	Studying on University or college	3	8.8
	Total	34	100.0

Socio-economical status:

It was very difficult in the war situation to find and utilize normal markers to categorize the economic status of the suicide bombers' families, thus the interviewer (Akhmedova) made a subjective analysis based upon the respondent's reports and her own analysis of their living situation which was often directly observed during the interview. The economic level of the majority of the suicide terrorists' families was middle. Only two suicide terrorists were from high class and two were from poor class. The majority of Chechen suicide terrorists that we studied were unemployed as are most Chechens living in the current war situation. Only four women in our sample had a legitimate means of making an income - they traded in the market. Table Nine shows a breakdown of the employment situation of the suicide terrorists in our sample and Table Ten a categorization by socio-economic status.

Table 9. EMPLOYMENT OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Employment	Frequency	Percent
1	Unemployed	30	88.2
2	Own business	4	11.8
	Total	34	100

Table 10. SOCIO-ECONOMICAL STATUS OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS

	Socio-economical status	Frequency	Percent
1	Poor	2	5.9
2	Middle	20	58.8
3	Good	10	29.4
4	High	2	5.9
	Total	34	100.0

Results

The results of the study demonstrated ten main variables that appeared as clear links in the suicide bombers lives leading up to their suicide terror acts. Four of these variables we found were present in all cases and consider as the main underpinnings of individual motivations for suicide terrorism in Chechnya:

- 1) Living under conditions of a nationalistic conflict/occupation;
- 2) A serious personal trauma that in nearly every case involved the death, torture and/or disappearance of a close family member and often witnessing violence to family members;
- 3) Exposure to and in nearly every case active seeking out of wahhabi terror groups;
- 4) Whose message resonated with a deep personal search for meaning, life purpose, certainty amidst chaos, brotherhood and lost family ties and for the means of enacting revenge, which was given to them from the terror organizations that they sought out or were recruited into.

Seven additional variables that were also important and generally or often present:

- 5) Fugitive status in which choosing when and how to end one's life by enacting a suicide act of vengeance became more attractive than risking falling into the hands of the enemy and dying by torture or facing a brutal imprisonment.
- 6) Religiosity – previous adherence to Sufi Islam appears to have been a protective variable. The majority of our sample were Islamic in name only and thus more vulnerable to being swayed by militant interpretations of Islam that allow self-bombing. This group had no previous beliefs with which to counter militant religious ideologies. ALL of the sample increased in religiosity taking on the Wahhabi ideology in full before becoming martyrs, although we see this as less an issue of religion than one of searching for answers amidst traumatic conditions and finding an ideology that resonates with personal psychological pain.
- 7) Nationalism was clearly a motive in many cases, as well as the fact of the wars having been lost and the nationalist fighter groups having been overtaken by terror groups that were now endorsing a nationalist jihad that included suicide operations as a form of fighting back. Hence some of those who would formerly have taken up arms as fighters were now organizationally funneled into other roles including suicide bombers. Nationalistic motives were difficult to separate out from individual motives of revenge as personal revenge appeared to be more important on the individual level than nationalistic motives, but these were clearly tied together.
- 8) Networked recruitment occurred in some cases through family members and close ties, but again the first four variables were already present – networking alone did not appear key.
- 9) Psychological contagion also was found in our sample among family members where the suicide action of one family member made a strong impact on another influencing him to consider following the same role, but again trauma, exposure to jihadist ideology and a desire to revenge were in our opinion the most active variables influencing the contagion effect.
- 10) Loss of other meaningful roles. There were a few cases of infertile women in our sample; the majority of the sample was unemployed; the effects of war blocked educational and employment opportunities, and a general feeling of hopelessness created vulnerabilities in certain individuals which likely could not have been exploited if the first four variables were not in operation.

Each of these categories is discussed in detail below.

Nationalism

The Chechen conflict began as a war of independence and two wars have occurred (1994-96 and 1999-2000). After two iterations of war it has transformed into an underground battle of guerrilla warfare and terrorist acts. While previously it was clear that the struggle was one hundred percent nationalistic, the militant wahhabist ideology that was imported into Chechnya during the two wars now clouds the picture. The tactics of the conflict changed completely when the militant wahhabist ideology was introduced. What began as a conflict of independence transformed in many groups into a Chechen jihad against Russia led by an extremely limited groups of militant Chechens making use of terrorism in continuing to carry out the national struggle for independence. Martyrdom operations became acceptable, along with targeting civilians, even Chechen Muslim civilians (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006b).

With the introduction of militant wahhabism as the basis for carrying out martyrdom operations it becomes difficult to clearly distinguish religious and nationalist motives of Chechen suicide terrorists - just as it's difficult to label the struggle clearly – as one solely of national independence or as a Chechen jihad (Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2006b).

Nevertheless, in our interviews it was clear that at least twenty-one percent (7/34) of the suicide terrorists had clear nationalist motives which they had mentioned to family and close associates as important reasons for wanting to join the jihad - which they ultimately did. It is likely that far more of the terrorists in our sample had strong nationalist motives but because they did not spontaneously state them to their family members and close associates, we did not assume they did. Likewise the statements of Shamil Basayev and the demands made by Chechen groups while couched in religious rhetoric are always nationalistic. They are always the same – a demand to end the armed conflict and remove all Russian forces from Chechnya.

Previous Traumatization

More than ten years have passed in Chechnya during which there have been nearly continuous actions of war with many youth never knowing peace. The average age in our sample was twenty-four meaning that on average our suicide terrorists experienced the effects of war from age fourteen until their deaths. According to the research of the World Health Organization in 2002, sixty-nine percent of the Chechen population has been exposed to such traumatic events as: threat to life; the long stay under bombardments; killing and wounding of family members; disappeared family members and torture. According to the World Health Organization thirty-one percent of the Chechen population is estimated to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a serious psychological illness that occurs in response to traumatic events and includes intrusive upsetting memories of the traumatic event(s), avoidance of reminders, strong bodily arousal states when memories occur and serious impairment in functioning lasting longer than a month (APA, 1994).

Exposure to Trauma

In our study we found that a serious personal trauma that involved the death, torture and/or disappearance of a close family member had occurred in the lives of all but one case and the entire sample had been deeply affected after witnessing violence to family and/or community members. Table Eleven gives a summary of the traumatic events that were experienced by the suicide terrorists in our sample.

Table 11.

TRAUMATIC EVENTS SUFFERED BY CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Traumatic events	Frequency	Percent
1	More than 1 family member killed	16	47.1
2	Father or mother killed	5	14.7
3	Brother killed	8	23.5
4	Husband killed	1	2.9
5	Family member disappeared after arrest	3	8.8
6	Family member tortured	1	2.9
	Total	34	100.0

Posttraumatic Changes

Traumas can often become organizing events in the lives of those who experiences them. The trauma keeps intruding into consciousness in nightmares, flashbacks, and upsetting memories which causes the sufferer to either have to avoid all reminders of the event or somehow make an accommodation to deal with the bodily arousal that the memories engender (fear states, distress, crying, etc.). Oftentimes trauma victims change their lives dramatically in direct response to a traumatic event, sometimes without even realizing they are doing so.

According to the reports of family members and close associates of the terrorists in our sample deep personality changes were observed in the suicide bombers following their traumatic experiences: ninety-four percent (32/34) showed social alienation and isolation; sixty two percent (21/34) had signs of depression; twenty-nine percent (10/34) were suspicious; twenty-six and a half percent (9/34) showed new indications of fanaticism and aggression; twenty percent (7/34) increased in conflicts within the family; and eight percent (3/34) felt strong guilt for not having done more to save a killed family member. All of these signs of posttraumatic stress created within the subjects a deep vulnerability to Wahhabi ideologies promoting revenge and self sacrifice. Table Twelve shows the posttraumatic changes that were directly observed in our sample.

Table 12.

POST-TRAUMATIC CHANGES IN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Post-traumatic changes	Frequency	Percent
1	Social alienation & isolation	32	94.1
2	Depression	21	61.8
3	Suspiciousness	10	29.4
4	Fanaticism	9	26.5
5	Aggression	9	26.5
6	Conflicts	7	20.6
7	Guilt	3	8.8

Depression, Suicide and Jihadist Ideology

According our respondents all of the suicide terrorists in our sample endorsed the idea of militant jihad as their main value, this directly following their exposure to the traumatic death of family members in all but one person in the sample and in that exception she had directly witnessed a great deal of community and societal violence. Holding the main value of militant jihad and martyrdom was also expressed by suicide terrorists who spoke in depth to hostages in both the Dubrovka Theater takeover and in the Beslan school takeover (Speckhard, 2004, 2005b; Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2006; Speckhard et al., 2004; Speckhard et al., 2005a, 2005b).

Respondents in our study reported that in sixty-two percent of the cases the suicide terrorists had fallen into a serious depression following their traumatic experiences. The wish to die – that is for suicide is a major symptom of depression. Likewise it is a common desire often expressed by the traumatically bereaved in the time period after the death of a loved one. Traumatically bereaved individuals often wish to reunite with their loved one so much so that they are willing to die to

reunite in the hereafter. But suicide is forbidden in Islam, similarly to the prohibition against suicide given by other religions. Therefore martyrdom can become a very attractive idea for traumatized people. Jihadist ideology proposes the idea of martyrdom and self-sacrifice in exchange for forgiveness of sins, salvation and instant entry to Paradise.

Exposure to and Seeking out Jihadist groups

The experiences of deep personal traumatization and bereavement create in some a vulnerability to seek out the ideological message of those promoting jihadist methods – and especially in youth this helps the sufferer to find a framework for dealing with their shattered world assumptions, to address their emotional suffering, survivor guilt and sense of a foreshortened future (Speckhard, 2005a; Speckhard & Ahkmedova, 2005, 2006; Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2004, 2006b). In our sample we found all of the terrorists self recruited to the terror organizations in direct response to traumatic events many of them expressing to family members that they wished to become martyrs. What actually happened once they made contact with the terror groups we don't know but it was clear from our respondents that all of the terrorists understood that the groups promoted militant jihad and suicide missions and that their family member or close associate went to the groups readily embracing their message.

Jihadist Ideology as Psychological First Aid for Traumatized Individuals

Depression, survival guilt, traumatic bereavement and a sense of a foreshortened future (i.e. feeling that one will not live long) are all symptoms of psychological trauma and all that can be treated by an ideology of self-sacrifice. To the traumatized individual that is troubled, bereaved and guilty - martyrdom can come to be seen as an honorable choice.

A lethal mix occurred when the traumatized individuals in our sample sought out the jihadist groups. Dramatically changed by their experiences of trauma and fanatically locked on to the desire for revenge as well as having strong needs to overcome they sought out a group that gave them at least short term answers to deeply felt needs which included:

- 1) The loss of family members and a need to belong – which the group offered in terms of fictive kin (Atran, 2003) i.e. Muslim brothers in replacement for lost loved ones
- 2) The need for positive identity, empowerment and a means of overcoming survivor guilt which the group offered in terms of offering purpose
- 3) The need for meaning amidst deep and violent chaos where everything had been thrown to question – the group offered solid answers
- 4) Overwhelming grief was met with the promise of reunion following “martyrdom”
- 5) Guilt and grief over leaving behind family members was met with the promise of being able to bring loved ones to paradise as a result of achieving martyrdom
- 6) A sense of a foreshortened future was met with the promise of greater glory achieved by giving up what might have been a short life anyway
- 7) A strong desire for revenge and even fanaticism in which revenge was generalized to the wider group was strongly supported by the jihadist ideology and by the group that equipped the bomber for revenge.

- 8) Depression and the desire to die and remove himself from unbearable emotional pain (i.e. “psych-ache”) (Shneidman, 1996)¹³ was replaced by working on all of the above vulnerabilities to transform the traumatized individual into one who not only wants to die himself for reasons he has come to believe are good but who also wants to use his death to kill those people upon whom he wishes to revenge.

It consoles the one who is giving up his or her life that in paradise they will be reunited with their loved ones who have gone before. Throughout the preparation for a suicide mission the candidate who is a member of a militant wahhabi terror group is told only the positive value of suicide which is referred to only as self-sacrifice for the community and the greatest honor of “martyrdom”.

Relationship with Wahhabits

All of the respondents in the sample reported that the suicide terrorists (n=34) increased in religiosity following their traumatic experiences and they become adherents to fanatical Wahhabit beliefs. Eighty percent of the sample (27/34) sought out the Wahhabit groups and their beliefs and practices in direct reaction to deep personal traumatization. They were fully aware in seeking out these groups that the Wahhabits embrace militant jihad and endorse suicide terrorism. Twenty percent (7/34) of the sample had been involved with Wahhabits at least peripherally prior to their transformations in response to traumas, but they changed dramatically in response to the trauma, much more deeply embracing the militant beliefs and lifestyle which previously had been only peripheral. Three of these terrorists were already married to spouses steeped in Wahhabit beliefs before their traumas, but in response to the traumatic events they changed dramatically in their appearance embracing the Wahhabi style. The other three were sisters of Wahhabits. Their brothers were killed in two cases and one disappeared. According their family members the sisters were deeply personally traumatized by the death of their brothers and also changed dramatically in their emotions, appearance and behaviors. Even though not previously endorsing their brother’s Wahhabit beliefs and practices their traumatic deaths swung them over to embracing the Wahhabit lifestyle and ideology. The last one was married to a Wahhabit instructor who was from an Arabian country. Her brother was also a Wahhabit Emir. Both her husband and brother were killed in war and she carried out a suicide bombing one year following her brother’s death.

Table 13.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SAMPLE OF SUICIDE TERRORISTS WITH WAHHABIT GROUPS

	Relationship	Frequency	Percent
1	Before trauma	7	20.6
2	After trauma	27	79.4
	Total	34	100.0

¹³ Psychic pain meaning deeply felt emotions that are painful to the individual. Shneidman coined the term “psyche ache” stating that the best predictor of an individual’s propensity to suicide is when emotional pain is experienced as overwhelming and inescapable.

Previous religiosity

The majority of all Chechens are Muslims, but they have different levels of religiosity. There are attributive believers who carry out some external attributes, but as a whole they do not know and do not fulfill religious instructions. As opposed to these there are deeply religious individuals who adhere to the basis of Sufi Islam and its practices as it has been traditionally practiced in Chechnya over the years. In our sample we found eight-two percent of the terrorists were from the first type of more secular representatives of the Muslim faith and eighteen percent were individuals whose faith life had already developed in traditional religious families. Given our observation that the militant religious ideology promoted by militant wahhabi groups functions as a type of psychological first aid to assign meaning to chaotic and violent traumatic events we see that it gives the traumatized individual a clear role and instructions on how to respond to deal with traumatic bereavement, survival guilt, a desire for revenge, a sense of a foreshortened future and painful traumatic arousal states. Secular or attributive believers are much more vulnerable in our opinion to falling into and responding to the wahhabi militant ideology as they have no prior belief system to help them in assigning meaning to deeply traumatic events and with which to help them to rebuild their shattered world assumptions (Janoff-Bulman, 1992)¹⁴, whereas the second group is able to draw upon already deeply held religious faith that could help them overcome traumatic bereavement, overcome survival guilt, keep them from generalizing revenge, encourage them in calming posttraumatic arousal states and help them to rebuild a sense of self within a chaotic, violent and unpredictable world (Speckhard & Akhmedova, 2004).

The Arabic word “jihad” means “struggle”. The Koran explains that the greater jihad is the striving of a servant against his low desires, meaning that jihad is an internal struggle to make oneself a better person (Ali, 1997). But Wahhabists insist that militant-jihad is the true jihad. Wahhabism is alien to Chechen culture and traditional Chechen experiences of Islam, yet it found fertile ground especially among those who had been traumatized and bereaved in war. Wahhabism is very extreme movement and has brought a lot of harm to Chechen society. As result there has been many hundreds of both Russians and Chechens killed and wounded people due to suicide terrorists.

Table 14.

PRIOR RELIGIOSITY OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Religiosity	Frequency	Percent
1	Secular	28	82.4
2	Traditional religion	6	17.6
	Total	34	100.0

¹⁴ Researcher Janof-Bulman posits that in normal times and given nurturing upbringings most individuals hold what she calls world assumptions. Three fundamental assumptions that according to Janof-Bulman generally go unquestioned and unchallenged are: benevolence, and meaningfulness of the world and a sense of self worth. The experience of a psychological trauma (i.e. an inescapable, horrifying and terrifying experience which is life threatening or threatens serious injury, or in which a person witnesses or learns of the death or serious injury of another) often so challenges these assumptions that they are completely shattered, and unable to be rebuilt. Indeed reparative psychological work with trauma victims often involves rebuilding a cognitive frame capable of “holding” the emotional and cognitive aspects of the traumatic event.

Revenge

Revenge for personal suffering

In Chechen society it is normal to feel an obligation to revenge against someone who murders a family member. According to old Chechen traditions justice was traditionally dispensed within familial groups via a formalized system of rules of revenge. During the seventy years of Soviet rule government courts took precedence over these rules, but now with war disrupting the normal judicial system many families revert to the former system of revenge rather than allow their cases to be heard in courts that are unlikely to rule against Russian forces who have perpetrated crimes against their family members. These traditional rules of dispensing justice through revenge can be summarized as follows:

1. Murder should be punished with murder;
2. Only males may revenge, females may only take actions to revenge if there are no males in her family and among her relatives to do so;
3. For the murder of a female two males should be killed: the murderer and a member of the murderer's family;
4. Revenge should be directed only to the murderer, not to others, even to his family members or close associates;
5. The revenge is not limited in time, it can be realized many years after a murder;
6. The revenge can be averted if respected elders intervene with the victim's family asking them to forgive the murderer and reach agreement to stop the revenge;
7. Revenge never calls for the avenger to kill himself in order to murder the other.

This ideology of revenge was present in Chechnya before Islam took root there in the sixteenth century. The duty to revenge does not in normal practice spread beyond seeking out the originator of the harm or his close family to repay according to these regulated traditions. Unfortunately widespread societal exposure to psychological trauma and the ensuing illness of posttraumatic stress disorder has changed this traditional Chechen approach to revenge. Akhmedova (the lead author) found after studying 653 persons with PTSD that in thirty-nine percent of the cases PTSD was accompanied by the development of fanaticism centered around the desire for revenge. Their life values changed dramatically as a result and they became fanatical, socially estranged, suspicious, rigid and obsessed of revenge. Financial welfare, family and even their own health ceased to be important to them. Only revenge for their sufferings and humiliations, or self-sacrifice to achieve revenge became important for them. Moreover chillingly they were willing to generalize their revenge beyond simply finding the person who killed or harmed them but could generalize revenge to an entire ethnic group (Akhmedova, 2003).

Thirty-eight percent (13/34) of the suicide terrorists in our sample stated spontaneously to our respondents before taking part in their terror act that they would seek revenge for the violent death of their family member at the hands of the Russian powers. Likewise in our study respondents described twenty-six percent (9/34) of the suicide terrorists as fanatical. These suicide terrorists repeatedly talked about jihad and martyrdom as their main value and life meaning. They did not allow others to criticize their life views and were not open to discussion on this topic, trying instead to impose their views on friends and family. For instance one male suicide terrorist (22 years old) participated on the Moscow theatre takeover. His cousin described him as, "an adolescent when his father and brother were killed. He became closed and gloomy. He said that he should revenge for

them, that he hates the Russians who killed them. All his interests were reduced only to weapons, war and revenge. Then he began to be interested in religion though before he had not even the skills to pray. He started to read the Wahhabists' books that he took from his uncle. He changed externally, grew his hair long and a beard. Then he has gone to "Jamaat" to Khattab¹⁵. His mother was afraid very much of these change that occurred in him so quickly. But she had no real influence over him. She asked me to talk with him because I had good relations with him. When I tried to talk with him about his new beliefs, he told me that if I will criticize him he will quarrel with me".

Terrorist organizations understand that traumatized Chechens are likely to feel a duty to seek justice and in the absence of working courts of law will want to revenge according to traditional mores. It is nearly impossible for the victims relative however to identify who killed, tortured or abducted their relative – they know simply that some member of the Russian forces is responsible but not who exactly. Terrorists capitalize upon this fact as well as the fact that a great majority of the Russian forces are corrupt and that the Russian population is complacent in the face of numerous human rights violations occurring in Chechnya continuing to elect hard line politicians who continue to carry out the heavy handed and corrupt operations in Chechnya. By encouraging victims of traumatic bereavement to generalize their revenge they change the age-old tradition of "my revenge is to my enemy for killing my family member" to that of "our revenge is to our enemies for killing our community members" – the we being the Muslim brothers and the enemy generalized to mean the entire Russian ethnic group.

Delayed responses of revenge

Half of the suicide terrorists in our sample carried out their bombings six to eight years after the traumatic events. This time delay is likely due to many factors: their traumatic stress did not heal overtime but instead additional societal traumatic events added to their psychological burden; the effects of two wars completely breaking the Chechen infrastructure left much of the population in a hopeless and frustrated state over long periods of time; the wahhabist message was imported into Chechnya during the two wars and only then could individuals burdened with a desire for revenge be equipped ideologically and with bombs for revenge; and the traditional Chechen rules of revenge allow for considerable delays – revenge can occur many years after the offense. Table Fifteen shows the elapse of time in our sample between the trauma which we saw as an organizing (or motivating) event and the terror act.

Table 15. ELAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN TRAUMA AND TERROR ACT IN OUR SAMPLE

	Time between trauma and terror act	Frequency	Percent
1	Less 1 year	1	2.9
2	1 year	3	8.8
3	2-3 years	7	20.6
4	4-5 years	6	17.6
5	6-8 years	17	50.0
	Total	34	100.0

¹⁵ Khattab was a Saudi born foreign fighter that led a militant training camp and participated in many raids with Shamil Basayev until his death in 2002.

In only one case was a bombing accomplished nearly immediately in response to a trauma (only three months after the trauma). This case was Elza Gazueva whose husband and brother were tortured and killed by the Russian forces. District Commandant Geidar Gadzhiev had personally summoned Elza Gazueva to witness her husband's torture and execution. Shortly afterward Gazueva who had gone to the wahhabits asking for a means of revenge, went directly to the military headquarters and managed to get close enough to the commandant who was responsible - who had ordered her husband and brother's torture and deaths. Before exploding herself and killing him she asked Gadshiev, "Do you remember me?" Gadzhiev was well-known in Chechnya for personally heading up and participated in the torture of many civilians and this bombing unlike most of the rest met with strong social resonance.

Networked Recruitment

In his study of al Qaeda type organizations Mark Sageman (Sageman, 2004) has found that global salafi jihadis groups make use of familial ties and relationships for recruitment. This is also true in the Chechen terrorist organizations The following are cases of family members participation in suicide attacks: two pairs of sisters (Ganievs & Khadjievs) were present in the Moscow theater takeover; one young woman exploded herself on a plane in August of 2004 while her sister participated in the Beslan school takeover in September 2004 (Nogaevs); and a father, son and daughter (Tumrievs) exploded themselves in a governmental complex in Grozny on December 2002.

Psychological Contagion

It is expected after a normal suicide that family members are at increased risk of suicide. In our sample it was evident that family members were "infected" as well by the act of suicide terrorism. Many were upset by the brutal counter-terrorism efforts directed against the family members of suicide terrorists include destroying the communal home, creating fear so that the family fled their home, and interrogations, but more were upset by viewing pictures of the killed terrorists – especially those who were shown on television some of them gassed but nevertheless shot dead during the Dubrovka Theater storming. Table 16 shows the counterterrorism actions experienced by family members of suicide terrorists in our sample.

Table 16. COUNTERTERRORIST ACTIONS TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF SUICIDE TERRORISTS

	Repressions to family members	Frequency	Percent
1	Destroyed house	5	14.7
2	Fled home	9	26.5
3	Interrogation	20	58.8
	Total	34	100.0

Participation in war

Six of eight male bombers that we studied were former fighters and five of them (14%) were being hunted as fugitives by the Russian forces. Those who were known fugitives had an additional

reason to positively consider martyrdom – as fighters they were committed to causing damage to the enemy, as known fugitives they were likely to be caught eventually and would face certain torture and perhaps a brutal death. These five may have decided it was more attractive to take their death into their own hands – dying as heroes in the eyes of their group. Seven of the twenty-six women in our sample also worked with the fighters as medical nurses and couriers. Two sisters learned to shoot and place land mines. Another woman (age 33) learned to shoot and drive a car (privately owned cars are still very new to all the former Soviet Union republics, most families do not own cars and women still rarely learn to drive). This woman also worked with the fighters assisting them as a medical nurse. Table 17 shows the level of participation in war of the suicide terrorists in our sample.

Table 17.

PARTICIPATION IN WAR OF CHECHEN SUICIDE TERRORISTS IN OUR SAMPLE

	Participation in war	Frequency	Percent
1	Fighters	6	17.6
2	Helpers of fighters	7	20.6
3	No participation in war	21	61.8
	Total	34	100.0

The Lethal Mix

It is our view based on the data we have collected about Chechen suicide terrorists that the persons who become involved as human bombers in Chechen terrorist organizations have four key variables in operation: living under conditions of national conflict/occupation; serious personal trauma; exposure to a militant jihadist ideology and a resonance between personal psychological needs arising out of trauma and living under occupation that are met by the militant ideology. When additional factors are present: no strong previous religious beliefs, strong nationalism, fugitive status, lack of meaningful roles and little hope for the future, networked recruitment and/or psychological contagion - the mix becomes even more potent. In this study all of the subjects had suffered traumatic events: forty-seven percent of the sample (n=16) had experienced multiple traumas including the death and/or torture of more than one close family member (these included parents, brothers, husbands); eight percent (n=3) had suffered the disappearance of a family member after arrest (which usually means torture and death); and one had suffered with a returned family member having been severely tortured while in detention. All had serious posttraumatic effects and embraced the wahhabist ideology as a means of coping with traumatic stress. Unfortunately the psychological first aid they received was terribly short lived.

Atypical cases of Chechen suicide terrorism

In the total cases of Chechen suicide terrorism there are two atypical cases that we know of that deserve special mention. The first is Zarema Mujukhoeva who is well known in the Russian press as she is the only Chechen bomber in custody. Zarema Mujukhoeva was allowed interviews with Russian press in which she made many claims that later turned out to be untrue. Despite her admitting that she lied, her false claims continue to influence Russian views (and sometimes even international views) about the true basis of female involvement in suicide terrorism. For one she

claimed that a woman named Black Fatima followed the female bombers and threatened to detonate them by remote if they failed to do so. This could hardly be true in Zarema Mujukhoeva's case as she had set her bomb filled rucksack down on the street near a café on Moscow's Tverskaya Street and walked away from it. Later the detective who tried to defuse her bomb was killed by it. If Black Fatima was not the fantasy that Zarema Mujukhoeva later admitted to having fabricated, Mujukhoeva would not have had time to walk away before being detonated by remote. Yet based on her claims Russian experts still claim that especially females are forced into suicide terrorism, rather than admitting the more horrifying truth – that they volunteer for these missions. Putin's senior advisor on Chechnya, Sergei Yastrzhembsky for example claimed that female bombers had been sexually coerced into becoming bombers saying "Chechens are turning these young girls into zombies using psychotropic drugs...I have heard that they rape them and record the rapes on video. After that, such Chechen girls have no chance at all of resuming normal life in Chechnya. They have only one option: to blow themselves up with a bomb full of nails and ball bearings." (Myers, 2003) This was not true of Mujukhoeva and not true of any of the women we studied, nor do we have any knowledge that this would be true of any of the women in the total sample of female bombers. Likewise where Chechen society would shun a woman who was raped after not behaving modestly, a woman who is raped in war is not likely to be shunned by her family or society.

Zarema Mujukhoeva was also not a typical case because she unlike all the others in our sample was not motivated by the wahhabist ideology and was not acting out of trauma and the desire for revenge through martyrdom. Instead Zarema Mujukhoeva was a criminal that was fleeing arrest and went willingly as well to the terror training camp hoping to find an escape. Mujukhoeva also claimed that she was to be paid for her act but we know of no payments for martyrdom operations received by her or anyone else for that matter. Mujukhoeva had backed out of an earlier suicide bombing attempt as well – the bombing in Mozdok of a military bus that was carried out later by Lida Khildekhoroeva a more committed female bomber, who wanted to revenge for the loss of her brother.

The second atypical case was Zarema Inarkaeva, a sixteen year old who had been raised in an orphanage. A vulnerable teen without family to protect her, Zarema Inarkaeva had fallen in with a boyfriend who took advantage of her to carry a bomb in February of 2002 to the chief of Zavodskoy district police (ROVD) where he worked in the pro-Russian Chechen police headquarters in Grozny. Her boyfriend devised this plan in order to revenge against his colleague with whom he had a conflict. Zarema Inarkaeva unknowingly carried the bomb filled sack into police headquarters saying it was her boyfriend's bag while her boyfriend waited outside ready to detonate it upon delivery. He instructed Inarkaeva to deliver it to his colleague and leave the building immediately. He boyfriend who was probably nervous did not wait for her to return and detonated it early while she was still present, a moment when she had put it on the floor to rest momentarily. Inarkaeva was wounded but not killed. In this case we cannot include Inarkaeva as a suicide bomber because she was not even aware of the bomb and had no motivation to carry it or to detonate herself.

We include both cases in our list of total suicide bombers because they both carried bombs on themselves to detonate and are designated by Russians in this way, but exclude them from our sample and analysis (although we interviewed close associates of both) because the one was not a suicide act and both differ completely from the other "real" Chechen suicide acts. The first Zarema differed completely in motivation and was a common criminal attempting to evade arrest but not at all committed to her mission, the second did not even know she was carrying a bomb. Each was

not acting from nationalistic motives, personal trauma, ideas of revenge, or the desire to join the jihad as a martyr. They were indifferent to religion and nationalism.

We find as others do that recruitment of martyrs does not require appeals to irrationality or utter fanaticism. Instead the real task is to find a martyr who is unlikely to defect from his mission (Berman & Laitin, 1999; Laqueur, 1999). In our Chechen sample we find that traumatized and fanatical suicide terrorists who have committed to the militant wahhabist ideology of becoming martyrs are the most successful in carrying out their human bomber functions because through their experiences and convictions they have become completely ideologically committed to their goal of revenging on a generalized enemy and giving their lives to do so. Those who do not have the same traumatic experiences, desire for revenge and ideological commitment to martyrdom act differently, abandoning and hesitating in their mission, as did Zarema Mujukoeva.

Societal Support for Suicide terrorism

Modern day suicide terrorism is a relatively new tactic that has migrated around the world since its use in Lebanon in the mid 1980's (Atran, 2003; Bloom, 2005; Hafez, 2004; Pape, 2005; Speckhard, 2005a). Before the wars of independence (1994-96 and 1999-2000) there was no suicide terrorism in Chechnya. However the introduction of militant wahhabi ideology to Chechen culture has made a deep negative intervention in Chechen society. In a sense Chechnya provides us an in vivo study of how a conflict can be changed and deeply influenced by the introduction of the jihadist ideology embracing martyrdom and suicide terrorism. Thus far societal support is still low for suicide terror operations in Chechnya although certain acts such as when Elza Gazueva bombed a commandant well known for his sadistic acts of torturing Chechen people and who was responsible for the torture and killing of her brother have been viewed with widespread support. The first suicide terror act of Khava Barayeva is commemorated in a song popular among youth. Likewise the suicide act of who bombed herself after approaching a commandant was also well received in Chechen society.

Other than that respondents in our sample did not enthusiastically endorse the acts of their family member or close associates and it is only in wahhabi terror networks that the suicide acts are celebrated. Most of Chechen society is exhausted from warfare and wants an end to the conflict and to restore normal living and at this point is willing to accept a solution that brings peace whether or not independence is attained.

The Fight Against Terrorism: Advice to NATO

In the fight against terrorism Russian leaders tend to believe and propagate the false myth that suicide terrorists in Chechnya, particularly women are forced into their actions by rape, drugs, or other methods of coercion from their own people. Our sample shows completely the opposite – that deep personal traumatization occurring as a direct result of the often inhumane acts of the Russian forces has driven some – including women - to complete desperation. These individuals harbor a fanatical wish for revenge as a result of a longstanding nationalistic conflict that has caused them deep personal trauma and when presented with a foreign ideology that legitimates dying to kill – they willingly volunteer to do so.

Militant Wahhabi terrorists on the other hand promote a completely polarized view of terrorism that states that they are enacting political violence out of righteous indignation. According to them they are on the blameless path - answering violence with violence and that it is only because of the

presence of corrupt and violent Russian forces acting illegitimately in their republic that they equip desperate individuals to die in order to kill innocent civilians. They view these acts of martyrdom as holy and glorify death and killing – even of innocent victims - in behalf of a jihad they claim against a corrupt “infidel” ruler.

In response to the terror tactics of the wahhabi groups, the Russian leadership endorses heavy-handed counter terrorist actions. While it could be debated as to whether or not these heavy handed tactics could in theory be effective in cleaning out the terror groups, it is clear that these tactics miserably fail when carried out by corrupt forces that sell their weapons to terrorists; protect terrorists and allow safe passage to terrorists in exchange for money; trade black market goods; and even trade and profit in innocent hostages who are taken prisoners as “terrorism suspects” and often tortured before being sold back to their family members in exchange for the life savings of the family. When their “war on terrorism” is carried out in these ways there is no hope the Russian forces can win by such heavy-handed actions. The war is unfortunately deeply corrupted on both sides. The one side profits illegally and commits the darkest of crimes with impunity while the other becomes more convinced of the righteousness of its cause even when targeting large groups of innocent civilians, including women, children and Chechen Muslims.

This results in the bizarre situation where terrorist leader Basayev is able to say in all seriousness that he does not judge himself guilty for having claimed leadership for the takeover of the Beslan school holding over one thousand mothers and children hostage – many who were killed when they fled their hostage takers when explosions occurred. When asked by ABC correspondent Babitsky in July of 2005 almost one year later if he feels responsible for the children’s deaths, Basayev answers by calling the Russians the terrorists and by asking his own rhetorical question about responsibility, “Why should I share it with Putin? Officially, over 40,000 of our children have been killed and tens of thousands mutilated . . . But in Beslan, the issue was either stop the war in Chechnya or have Putin resign. Just one of those two things. Carry out one, and all people are released, no questions asked. Get it? There wasn't more to it. Well, you can ask why I did it. To stop the killing of thousands and thousands of Chechen children, Chechen women, and the elderly. Look at the facts. They have been kidnapped, taken away, murdered.” (Koppel, 2005)

Basayev argues that all Russians are guilty for the actions of the government they support and the actions in Chechnya that they remain blind to, while the Russians argue that they must join the American led war on terrorism, claiming that foreign money and influences from the middle east are threatening the security of Russia through terrorism and that they must stamp out these groups. But the Russians go about it using corrupt and illegitimate means that only worsen the situation. Neither side is right and both are rigidly locked into the view that their only choice is to continue on a path of brutally fighting the other.

Is there anything that can be done to end this deadlock? How can NATO countries help? The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was originally created as means to enhance military cooperation between the democratic nations of Europe, Canada, and the United States in order to establish a form of mutual defense against the growing threat of the Soviet Union and NATO functioned in this capacity throughout the Cold War. Today NATO nations no longer face a Cold War threat. The new enemy is global terrorism. According to Article 5 which was invoked following 9-11 for the first and only time in the history of NATO, in the case that one NATO member is attacked, the others are obliged by treaty to join in its defense. NATO members working

as an alliance must find a new and creative defense against global terrorism and the ideologies that support suicide terrorism in particular.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union a series of historic moments occurred in which former Soviet bloc and Soviet countries began to join NATO as partner and full member countries. Likewise in 2002 another historic decision occurred in which Russia who had already become a “partner” country to NATO joined forces with NATO in a joint counterterrorism initiative of the NATO/Russia Council which involves political dialogue, information sharing and collaboration involving finding and working together on joint goals to fight terrorism.

Despite this initiative both the Americans and the Russian leadership have however made use of the “global war on terrorism” to garner support or at least tacit approval for their own agendas, in the U.S. case it has used the “war on terrorism” as the basis for its preemptive incursion into Iraq and in Russia’s case it has used the “war on terrorism” as an excuse to avoid NATO nations outcry over its heavy handed approaches in fighting Chechen terrorism.

NATO nations must be aware that as long as the rigidly locked positions between the Russian government and the Chechen terrorists remains unaddressed by political solutions the conflict is very likely to continue unabated and may even spill over into the surrounding region which as discussed below can destabilize not only Russian internal politics but also deeply contribute to fueling further global terrorism.

In October of 2005 the new Chechen jihad exploded beyond the borders of Chechnya into Khalbardino Bulkharria as mujahadeen directed by the newly announced “Caucasus Front took over the capital city of Nalchik. Again the militant wahhabist ideology was present and a martyrdom philosophy pervaded within the ranks of those who knew they were very likely going to their deaths. The militants invaded despite knowing that news of their attack had leaked and the Russians had fortified their forces. (Their rallying call was to the best of two – victory or paradise through martyrdom.) The militant groups again played upon local vulnerabilities – this time not trauma but the fact that the Muslim population of Khalbardino Bulkaria are in a state of unrest and dissatisfaction with high unemployment and poor living conditions. Likewise the militants knew that the Russian forces would likely respond with heavy-handed policies of arrest and torture of local Muslims and when this predictably occurred, it naturally fuels further unrest and may provide further recruits. Thus the cycle repeats and threatens to spread throughout the region. Soon it may not only be the Chechen people but the entire Caucasus region caught between two pincers: the heavy handed and corrupt Russian forces and the militant wahhabi terror groups.

NATO and its allies must find ways to fight this. Everything that can be done to bring a negotiated peace between the exiled and current Chechen government with Russia must be supported. In October of 2004 Ahkmed Zakaev announced on International Human Rights Day in London in behalf of exiled leader Aslan Maskadov (Chechnya’s last democratically elected president) that Chechens would be willing to accept a negotiated peace with Russia, that they were willing to accept quasi independence and could co-exist with Russia within the federation. Zakaev stated that if Russians could agree to a peaceful settlement and withdraw forces from Chechnya, terrorism and the continued guerilla warfare would be stopped. Likewise in 2004 in Russia the Mothers of Soldiers group fed up with losing their sons in the Chechen conflict announced their plans to start a political party and began plans to meet with representatives of Maskadov’s exiled government in Brussels stating that if the Russian government would not find partners to make peace in Chechnya they

would find their own way to do it. For their part, the Russian government leaders have over the years refused as in the past to negotiate with Maskhadov, calling him an enemy and terrorist. Russian forces killed Maskhadov on March 8th of 2005. This now leaves the Russians to working with the pro-Russian Chechen government (also known for heavy handed tactics, corruption and clan politics and no power over the terror groups) or trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement with Shamil Basayev leader of the Chechen terror groups – neither a good option or talking to rebel leader Abdul-Khalim Sadullaevll who succeeded Maskhadov. Sadullaevll continues in Maskhadov’s policy of denouncing terrorism against civilians though he does not rule out targeting military (Radio Free Liberty, 2005). He also reverses Maskhadov’s policy of containing the war within Chechnya, preferring to encourage its spillover into neighboring republics as it did in Nazran (capital of Ingushetia) in June 2004 and in Nalchik (capital of Kabardino-Balkariya) in October 2005.

While NATO peacekeepers are unlikely to ever be dispatched to the Chechen conflict, NATO countries can individually and collectively demand the Russian leadership to be accountable for human rights abuses, increased democracy, free press coverage from Chechnya, and a reigning in of corruption in Russian forces dispatched within Chechnya. Although this can only be done with good conscience if NATO countries are themselves also refraining from human rights abuses, upholding treaties and conventions against torture and unfair imprisonment, etc. We must keep our own homes in order if we wish to contribute to world peace.

Already NATO and its partner countries carry out joint exercises and training. NATO countries can lend expertise to Russians in building democratic institutions both within Russia and Chechnya, in carrying out political dialogue to bring about the peace and help to organize cleaning up the Russian forces and carrying out criminal proceedings for those who continue in corruption. But the political will to do so must exist on the side of the Russian government.

Likewise the Chechens must work to address the vulnerabilities in their own society, to rebuild their educational and occupational opportunities, to clean corruption in their own governments and to rebuild civil society. During the Soviet period Chechen society functioned well and can do so again - although during Soviet times all head posts included Russian leadership. To succeed Chechen leaders likely need an infusion of concern and help from the outside world following over ten years of destruction.

It also cannot be forgotten that one third of the Chechen population is estimated to have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Psychological programs are sorely needed to address the vulnerabilities of individuals who continue to succumb to militant wahhabist ideologies that promote jihad and martyrdom operations. Likewise the Chechen religious leaders must overcome their well-founded fears of speaking up against militant wahhabism (due to numerous assassinations) and stand up for longstanding Sufi traditions that favor peaceful rather than militant expressions of Islam. School children must be taught at a young age to protect themselves from recruitment into militant ideologies and what the traditional principles of traditional Chechen Sufi expressions of Islam teach. They must be given role models from history to emulate so Basayev, Osama bin Laden and other militant Islamic leaders do not become heroes in their eyes.

The results of our research show that all of the suicide bombers in our sample self recruited to the terror organizations and that they did so out of deep personal traumatization. After exposure to militant wahhabi ideas these individuals embraced a martyrdom ideology and accepted organizational backing that equipped them to revenge on their nation’s enemy. Absent the ideology

and organizational support these individuals are unlikely to have chosen suicide terrorism nor would they have been able to justify to themselves generalizing their revenge by targeting civilians. However when they themselves have suffered as civilians and continue to see themselves surrounded by corrupt forces that do little to enforce justice, and they are exposed to an ideology that justifies acting violently and to terror groups that are ready to equip them for action - they can feel motivated from their own painful experiences to take matters into their own hands.

If NATO countries are truly interested in the global fight against terrorism they must also recognize that despite the fact that few people in the world can locate Chechnya on a world map it sadly plays a crucial role in world politics. The conflicts in Chechnya similar to the conflicts in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan fuel recruitment for the worldwide global jihad. The crushing of the independence movement in Chechnya, widespread corruption in the Russian forces and numerous human rights violations during the wars of independence and continued heavy handed occupation with terrifying counter-terrorism measures in which corruption continue are key to fueling global indignation in the Muslim world to the situation in Chechnya. Likewise the many incidences of torture, murder and disappearances that continue to occur are all fodder for recruiting those who wish to fight against the perceived worldwide domination and humiliation of Muslim people. Live video footage, pictures and stories coming out of the Chechen conflict energize recruits in Europe to join the global jihad – and these recruits not only travel to Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel or Chechnya but even become dangers - acting in their home countries to fight against what they come to believe (as Basayev does) that a corrupt and dirty government order must be brought down to bring freedom, dignity and human rights to Islamic peoples. As long as Chechens continue to be oppressed the Chechen conflict can continue to fuel violence not only in Russia but well beyond her borders. It is in the NATO alliance and the world's best interest to work for peace in Chechnya.

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