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## **The impact of Russian and Chechen conflicts on the Caucasus crisis**

Morteza Ebrahimi  
Sed Ali Mortazavi Emami Zavare  
Fahime Oleiki  
Mehdy Jahantab

*AssiProfessor, Department of Political Science, University of Mohaghegh Ardebili, Ardabil, Iran.  
Department of Education and Theology of, University of Esfahan, Iran  
M.Sc. Department of Humanities, University of Mohaghegh Ardebili, Ardabil, Iran.  
Department of Member of the ahl-Bayt World Assembly, Tehran, Iran*

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### **Abstract**

The collapse of the former Soviet Union caused a geopolitical vacuum in the Caucasus, Central Asia. In such a way that it make it competitive in terms of regional and international powers. The presence of regional and trans-regional powers take impact on the region behavioral pattern. The question that lies ahead is that what is the impact of conflicts of Chechnya and Russia on Caucasus region crisis? The aim of this study is to engage the Caucasus with a historical attitude and the rule of regional and trans-regional powers in Caucasus crisis and specially Chechnya. In the North Caucasus, Chechnya declared independence from Russia in 1991 and this was the most important developments, which later led to a long war with the central government. It seems that the wrong policies of Moscow and local governments are the main cause of violence in Chechnya. However, operating inland should be considered. Russians historically have always been against Muslims. Russians lose a part of its territory with losing Chechnya, because if this first strong and incompatible republic with the independence of Russia managed, turn immediately to reach the other republics of the Caucasus and elsewhere in the region is symmetrical

**Keywords:** Chechnya, Caucasus, Russians, Caucasus crisis

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### **1.Introduction**

The Caucasus region is one of the oldest centers of human civilization. Caucasus land, the land of diverse people, different geographical landscapes, in the northwest neighborhood of Iran, despite of religious and cultural common interests was separated after the signing of the Treaty of Golestan

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and Turkmenchay during the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar from Iran. (Amirahmadian, 1376) By collapsing of Russian empire and invasion of small and big regional and international powers to fill the vacuum resulting from the collapse in the first place Caucasus changed, but its adjacent areas, including North West border areas of Iran, effected by the impact of these developments. Whether or not the South Caucasus North Caucasus both were the center of different tensions and conflicts. Chechens violent tensions with Russia and their independence-seeking, the quarrel between Kabardinoes and Balkars, Karachays and Cherkessiya ... all shows the instability of area (Kazemzade, 1393). In new security studies has added many dimensions to the concept of security, and security has become a "multidimensional" concept that has included economic and environmental topics till money and military threats.( Vaezi, 1382) This problem has caused this research explores the regional powers and their role in creating unrests and insecurities in the North Caucasus region, particularly Chechen.

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## **2.Results and Discussion**

Following the end of the Cold War, world geographical situation had changed, subsequently developments in the Middle East was considered more important than the past., separatist efforts in Georgia and Chechen, which also makes the region susceptible to new conflicts, Non-peaceful changes and Beyond the law in some countries governance structures, and organized crime gangs and trespassers bands Beside many other security problems, disrupted normal life in the region. And the possibility of positive interaction among regional countries and economically productive activities neighbors is minimized (Vaezi: 1382, p. 2). Some of the questions that is ahead of the Caucasus region is that where is the root of insecurity? , what role Chechen-Russian's conflict in zone crisis play? In this study with historical view to Caucasus region, as well as the strategic importance of the Caucasus region's security issues and the role of regional and Trans-regional powers in the Caucasus conflict in Chechnya, were investigated.

### **Geographical situation and Caucasus's geo-strategically importance**

Caucasus's Mountains are dividing Caucasus region into two distinct parts, North Caucasus and South Caucasus. Nowadays, South Caucasus includes three independent countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia and the Republic of Karabakh, Nakhichevan, Ajaria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (in the heart of Georgia that still depends on Russia). And the North Caucasus includes three province, two cites and eight autonomous republic of Russia that are still politically depended to Russia.

Some of the factors that has made Caucasus important: Connection ring between the Europe and Asia, relational bridge between north and south and east and west, junction or confluence of great and ancient civilizations, neighboring Muslim world and the world of Christianity, one of the oil and gas transit routes to Europe. (Vaezi, 1382, S5-3)

### **Perspectives of Russia and The roots of political behavior**

Russian's attention to the Caucasus has been long history and has been done for various reasons. One of the most important cause of Russian's colonial expansion in the Caucasus is the reign's geo-strategic importance and value. (Ozcan turgut, 2011: 13) Caucasians almost never looked to Russians as a friend, and have shown this in numerous historical events such as World War I and II to the Russians by not cooperating with them, Although in these wars , Russia imperialism in the socialism and Czarist form has attracted a large number of Caucasians population by force and persuasion and threats to itself, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Caucasian had shown

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their hatred to the Russians and their puppet local governments, by asking political and economic independence from Moscow, However, despite all the efforts of Russia, the Caucasus in general and in particular the North Caucasus has always been prone to conflict and instability because the roots of such conflicts very deep and intertwined, and as long as the demands of ethnic conflict are not provided in an acceptable form, they can make Russia's interests violently beaten. (Jahantab: 1387, p: 23)

### **The internal factors of instability in the Caucasus**

Condition and situations that the South Caucasus and North Caucasus are faced implies to threats and divergence that the region is facing are very diverse and numerous. Types of Security threats can be searched in Ethnocentrism types of threats, border's disputes, extreme nationalism, separatism, economic inequality and high inflation. (Jahantab: 1387)

The role of regional and trans-regional powers in the Caucasus crisis:

Regional impact by the independence of the Caucasus and Central Asia and disordering of previous regularity causes the region's geopolitics irregularities. That changed somewhat as a result of geopolitics. This set of factors and developments which have arisen since the coexistence of the republics in the Soviet Union has been associated conditions in the region and has made region more complex. The situation in the independence countries have faced these countries with some threats that could destabilize. Internal situations of the Caucasus and foreign relations can alter the balance of power between countries in the region. (Vaezi, 1382) Russia has always been a land power, Russia's approach to the Caucasus and play an intermediary role between the Western powers and some Eastern countries or north and south groups, as a European-Asian non-ideological power, as an older brother ultimately, has made this country as a smart power. (Sheikh Attar, 1371)

### **Islam in Chechen and regional issues and roots of political behavior**

Chechen Muslims' religious beliefs have two distinctive character: firstly, most of them are Hanafi religious Muslim, and the other that Sufi's beliefs have a special place in their beliefs and have had a significant impact in itself. According to official Soviet authorities, Chechen have started the religious worries activities from mid-eighties. When coincides with the impact of Islamic Revolution in the Muslim world and on the other hand shake the foundations of the Soviet Communist had been heard. In the North Caucasus, Chechen's independence declaring from Russia and its separatism in 1991, was the important development which later led to the long war with the Russians central government. In November 1992, a year after the Chechen's independence, Russia has declared a state of emergency in North Ossetia and Ingush, due to territorial conflicts and crisis, and

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significantly strengthened its military presence in the region. The clashes were the first sign of ethnic clashes after the collapse. (Jahantab, 1387, p: 28-31) Chechen -Ingush republic of the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1991 divided into two separate republics, Chechen and Ingush and asking for independency from Moscow, but after the crises that happened at the war in 1994 and the first half of 1995, , Chechen could not achieve its independency from the Russian Federation. Chechens battles with Russian central government for independency and separation, has begun again from 1999, but couldn't get it again. According to the new Russian Constitution, Adopted in 1993 ,autonomous provinces Adige and Kabarda- Balkar were upgraded to the level of Autonomous Republic.(Jahantab)

Why Russia does not want to lose Chechnya and the surrounding republics? The reasons of Russia's insistence on keeping Chechen even at the expense of ruining of cities, villages and a million Chechens is ,Chechen's geographic strategic location, that the south side of it relies on the ridge of North Caucasus Mountains and it keeps Russia from the threat situation .  
(<http://mahoseyni.blogfa.com/post-45.aspx>)

### 3.Conclusion

Due to the nature of Caucasus region and its dependence on one of the regional powers , and with the rise of Communists in the Russia, Caucasus region dominated the Soviet Union had continued , Until the 1991's by collapsing of mentioned union , southern parts of the Caucasus in format of three countries , Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia gained their independence, Although the mentioned three countries had got their independency , and are as a members of the members of international community .but have not yet rid of historical ties to another power. Today Islamic extremists is mentioned as the main difficulty in Chechen , which has extended in the entire region . But the fact is that Islam isn't the only agent / features of Islamic extremism in the Caucasus It seems the flawed policies of Moscow and local governments is the main cause of violence in Chechen. However, inland features should be to be considered. Historically Russians have always been against Muslims and if in certain periods Muslims have been treated smoothly, it was as a historical inevitability. Russians by losing Chechen, will lose the part of their territory, also they are afraid that it goes like the game of dominoes, because there is no guarantee that the others won't follow the Chechen's success. In the meantime, we can mention republics of Dagestan, Tatarstan, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Adike , Karachay, Circassia , Kabardin, and Balkar, Kalmuk etc .hypothetical and probable Alliance between Chechen and Dagestan can also exclude Russia from access to some strategic opportunities and also considerable part of Caspian sea , and it effect negatively on interests of Russia . Thus, considering this reasons, the Russians strongly attempt to suppress Pro-independence movement in Chechnya and keeping collection the political geography of Russia. Mutually, the Chechens attempt strongly to embrace their longtime political aspirations of

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independence of the Slavic collection - North orthodoxy that does not feel their dissimilarity to it. So there is a hard struggle between them.

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