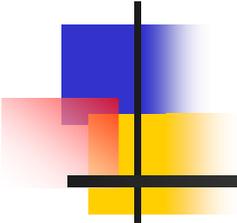


# *Russia and the Islamic Other*

**Specifics of Integration of Islamic Population in  
Russian Society:  
Immigration and Separatism**



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## **RETHINKING RUSSIA**

**Seminar organized by**

**The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)**

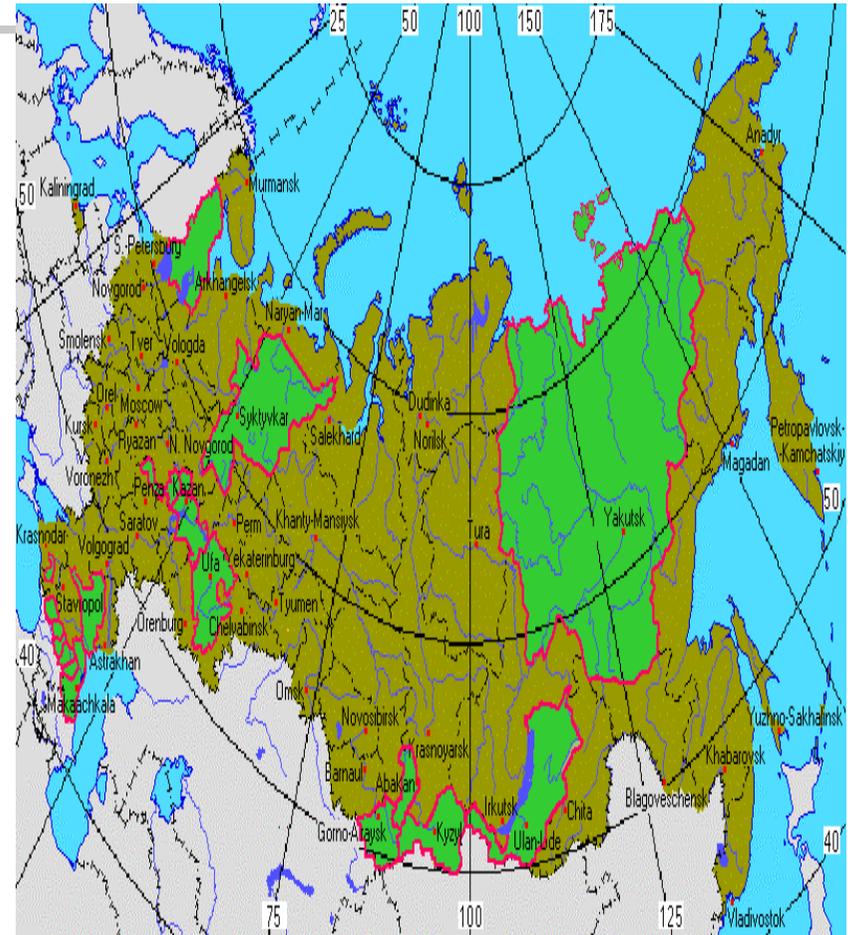
**Oslo, 18–19 January 2007**

***Presentation.***

***Dr. Prof. E.Pain***

## *What is the Russian specific character of Muslim minorities problem?*

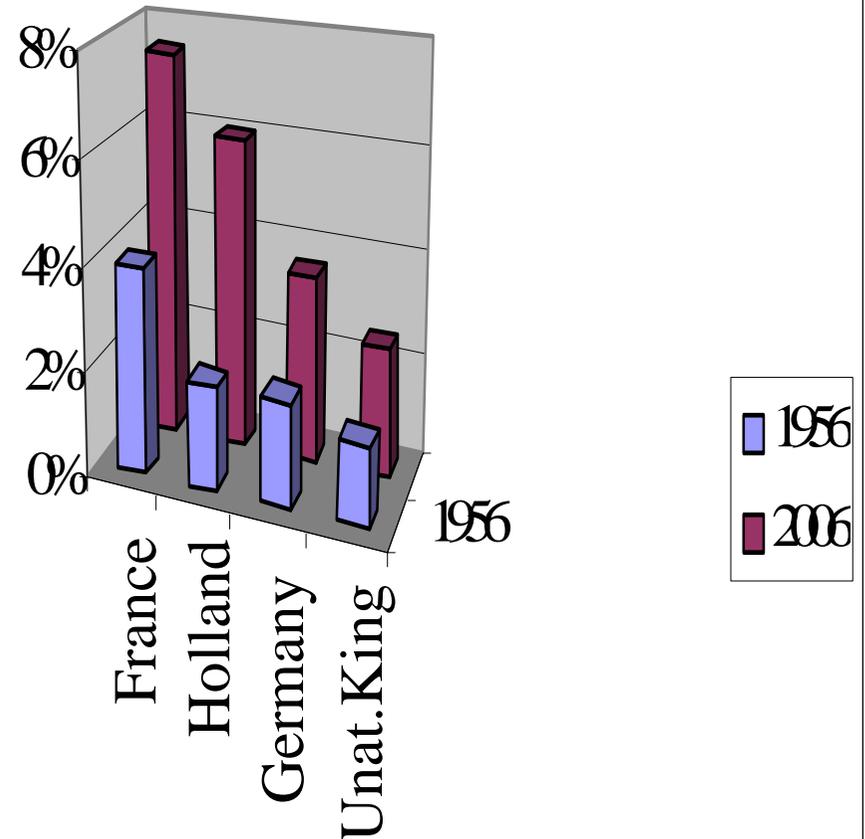
**Unlike West European countries the Muslim population of my country has not been formed due to influx of immigrants. More than 90% of Russia's Muslims are representatives of indigenous population.** This fact determines specific character of demands put forward by national movements in Russia. From time to time some of these movements strive for not just equal rights within the country but for the complete secession.



# Increase of the Muslim minority's share in population of the European countries.

In the last 50 years the Muslim minority's share rose by more than threefold and by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century comprised

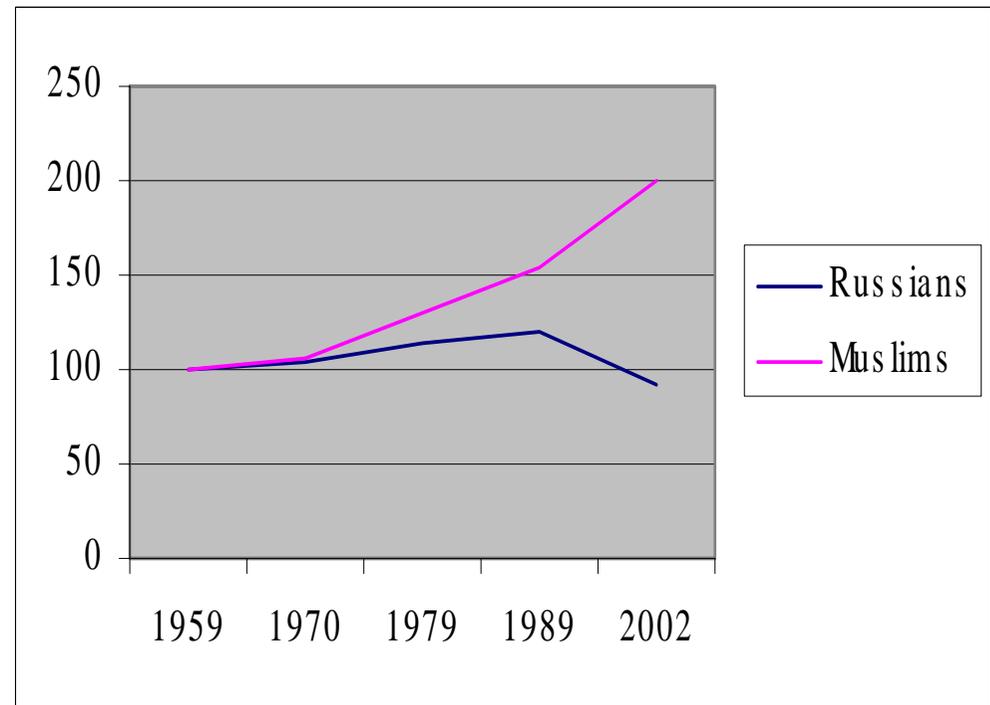
in France	-	<b>7,5%;</b>
Holland	-	<b>6,2%</b>
Germany	-	<b>3,6%</b>
United Kingdom-		<b>2,5%</b>



# Increase of the Muslim minority's share in population of Russia

- **In Russia Muslims comprise from 10% to 14% in the total Russia's population (it is from 15 to 20 million people). By the end of the century Muslims may comprise up to 40% of Russia's population. The final result will depend on the pace of ethnic Russians decrease.**

**Rates of increase of the numbers of Russians and Muslims in Russia (1959-2002).**



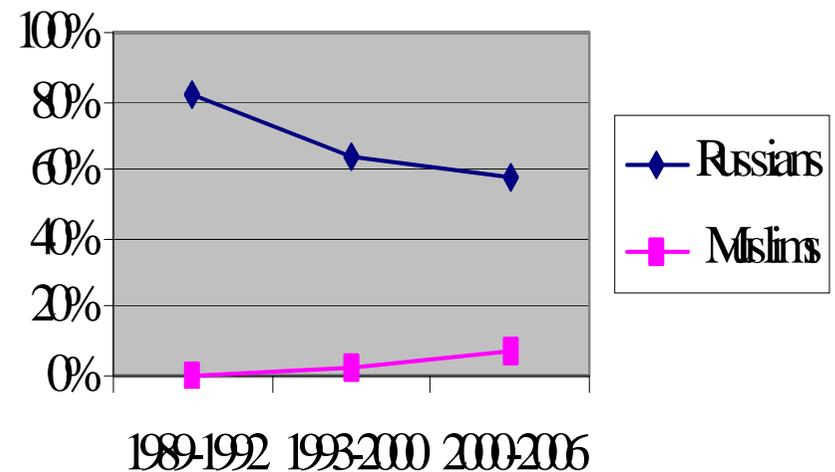
# Peculiarity of Muslim immigration to Russia



1.

- By the total numbers of immigrants Russia is among the world leaders. **However this immigration is largely a return of ethnic Russians to Russia.** In early 1990s they comprised more than 80% of immigrants coming to Russia. Although their share has reduced they still comprise over two thirds of all immigrants.

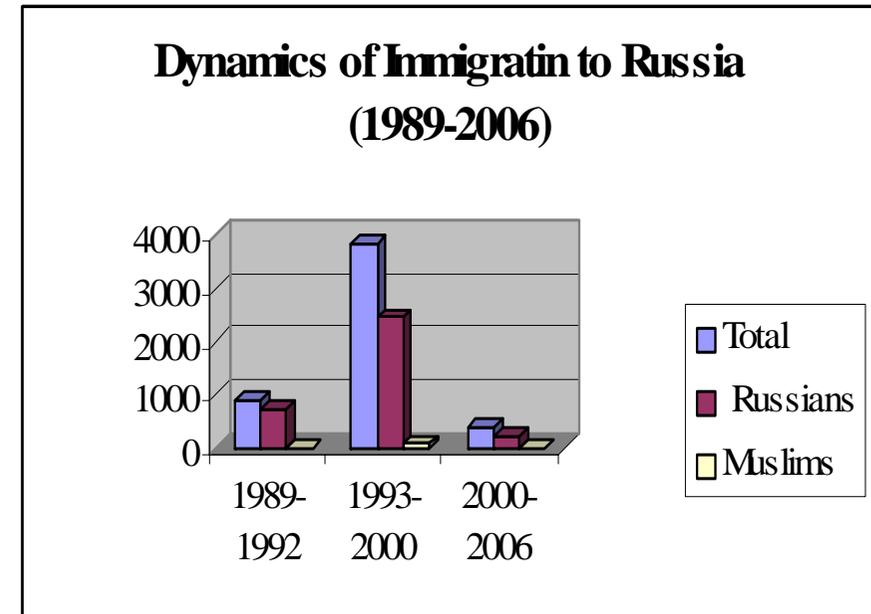
**Change of shares of Russians and Muslims among immigrants to Russia**



# Peculiarity of Muslim immigration to Russia. 2



- Another peculiarity of immigration flows into Russia is that their **intensity is decreasing**. In the beginning of 2000s immigration influx intensity went down nearly tenfold in comparison with its intensity at the peak of immigrant influx which happened in 1993-1994. **However the real boom of anti-immigrant moods is observed precisely under circumstances of migration decline.**



# Peculiarity of Muslim immigration to Russia. 3



The important peculiarity of Muslim immigration into Russia consists in the fact that cultural differences among migrants and Russians are by considerably less than differences that can be observed in West Europe (e.g. between Arabs and the French in France, between natives of Indonesia and the bulk of the Dutch in the Netherlands etc.).

The overwhelming majority of immigrants (over 90%) entering Russia are predominantly natives of the former Soviet republics. Actually all of them have a command of the Russian language which is sufficient for everyday communication and retain mentality which used to be common for citizens of the former USSR. Anyway democratic values are approximately equally alien to the Russian majority as well as to immigrant minorities.



## The most important peculiarity of Muslim immigration to Russia.



**The principal obstacle in the way of Muslim immigrant integration in the Russian society consists not so much in adaptive capacities of incoming migrants as in unfavorable conditions created by the recipient society.**

Lack of legal grounds for CIS countries' citizens staying and work in Russia closes down access for immigrants to employment in a wide range of the well paid jobs. Acute problems at the labor market prompt migrants to look for criminal incomes. Criminalization of immigrant community exaggerated by the public opinion increases the negative attitude of the local population to immigrants.

In the everyday life sphere (for example, in housing renting) immigrants experience no lesser problems. Every tenth advertisement in Russian newspapers contains notes that housing is leased or sold 'only to Russians'. The less possibilities representatives of immigrant minorities have for integration into the everyday life sphere due to discrimination at housing leasing the greater is these minorities' insularity.

Probability that immigrants will react to these assaults with actions similar to those that were practiced in Paris during the riots of November, 2005, is still low. Instead, immigrant groups might be involved in the existing structures of armed resistance to authorities that have formed in regions of traditional Muslim settlement in Russia.



## The administrative reform and the Muslim separatism in Russia

- **Separatist movements in Russia for a long time developed within framework of separate ethnic groups that put forward demands of national independence.** From late 1990s the situation started to change. At this time Islam or, rather, new, unconventional for Northern Caucasus varieties of Wahhabi Islam imported from Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan became the basis for concerted resistance to the authorities. New religious leaders who oppose the traditional muftis succeeded in gaining a considerable popularity. These new leaders rallied representatives of various ethnic groups including those that had a long history mutual hostility (as, for example, the Karachay and the Circassians, the Kabardinians and the Balkarians).
- Success of this unification, to a considerable extent, was determined by the Chechen war.
- **The erroneous politics the Kremlin contributed a lot to enhancement of the Islamic opposition grip. When I speak of the erroneous politics I mean, in the first place, the administrative reform initiated by Putin. The principal purport of this reform consists in suppression of the national elites instead of quest of agreement with them.**
- The most important element of the mentioned reform is replacement of governors' election with their appointment. The Kremlin put aside refractory, stubborn but popular leaders, such as Rouslan Aushev, ex-President of Ingushetia, and banked on obedient but unpopular figures. The net result of this policy is the increasing alienation of the local people from all authorities, be they local or the central ones.

# Not only Chechens but also Ingush people are getting to be involved in the armed resistance

*Ingushetia is the most vivid example of this development.* Murat Zyzikov, the security forces general and the new President of the republic, was put at the helm predominantly with the purpose to prevent proliferation of the Chechen terrorism in Ingushetia. During his term of the office the Federal troops and security forces were garrisoned in the Republic for the first time. So called preventive mopping up operations against all suspect persons were launched. There is no surprise that with arrival of Zyzikov Ingushetia has become the second (after Chechnya) theater of permanent hostilities. Not only Chechens but also Ingush people are getting to be involved in the armed resistance to the Russian authorities. On June 21-22, 2004 virtually all territory of Ingushetia was seized by the gunmen for several hours.



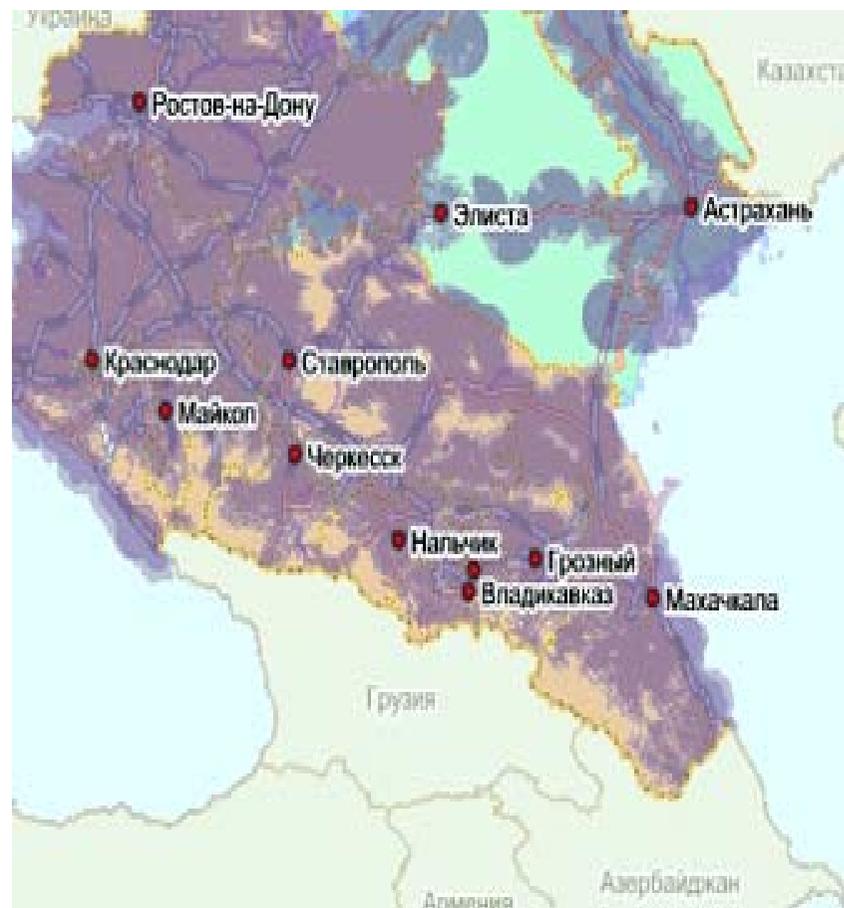
## Dagestan may compete with Chechnya by number of terrorist acts

According to experts, about 70-90 such acts occur in Dagestan annually. The most visible forms of resistance to the local and Federal authorities are actions in religious form. Dagestani Wahhabis declared the holy war (jihad) to Russia as early as in 1999. Rappani Khalilov, “the amir of Dagestani mujaheds”, and Rasoul Makasharipov, “the amir of jamaat ‘Shariat’”, were the leaders of Dagestani jihad. All in all, approximately ten different jamaats are involved in the Dagestani jihad network. There are about 3 thousand fighters in it. For several years the jihad network have waged a sabotage and terrorist warfare against the local and Federal law enforcement authorities.



## *The Wahhabi movement in the Karachaevo-Circassia and Kabardino-Balkaria Republic*

According to the official Russian statistics provided by the Ministry of Interior, in the Karachaevo-Circassian Republic there are 219 religious fundamentalists. According to the informed experts, the real number of them is about 1.5 to 2.0 thousand people. Kabardino-Balkaria was one of the most stable republics of the region in the recent past. Nowadays news from the republic resembles summary information from the war. According to the official statistics there are about 400 Wahhabis in the republic.





## *Emergence of three fronts*

**(Chechen, Ingushian and Dagestanian) of armed resistance to the Federal power** and occasional armed attacks of Moslem radicals against the Federal authorities in some other republic of the North Caucasus create in the region a new situation which is different from what it used to be just 2-3 years ago when Chechnya was the only focal point of the armed resistance to the Federal power.

- **In the North Caucasus republics Federal powers pass through the unprecedented crisis of trust among the local people.** Parallel structures of power in form of Islamic jamaats are rapidly developing against this background. It should be said that these parallel structures are not necessarily prone to terrorist methods. However they create the social space within which the Russian legal norms are virtually ineffective.

# Conclusion



**Thus, Muslim minorities in Russia by and large emerged long ago, historically, in result of Muslim territories colonization by the Russian Empire.** This

process is very different from the process of Muslim minorities' formation in West Europe. This difference dictates specific character of demands put forward by Islamic resistance in Russia, particularly in Northern Caucasus. It also has a bearing on possible behavior of Muslim immigrants to Russia. Anyway, radical Islamic organizations in Russia connect their hopes with influx of immigrants which, as Islamic radicals expect, will help them to expand their strength.

- In West Europe Muslim immigrants' problems are mainly connected with immense cultural differences between them and indigenous population as well as the slim willingness of immigrants to adapt to cultural, social and political conditions of the recipient countries. In my opinion the opposite problem prevails in Russia. The recipient society is neither ready nor willing to integrate immigrants. In a country where neither representatives of majority nor representatives of minorities have sufficient chances for their self-fulfillment in economic, civil and political spheres both parties assert themselves in antagonism to each other.