

## Russia moves in Caucasus to reconquer its empire

by Konstantin George

The western world is beginning to pay dearly for its foolish policies toward Russia and its capitulation in the Balkans to Serbian aggression, which have encouraged the emergence of a Moscow policy aimed at restoration of the Russian Empire, grabbing or dominating for starters as much as possible of the territory of the former Soviet Union. In the Caucasus, the former Russian position of dominance has been restored through Russian-backed separatist movements in the Georgian region of Abkhazia and elsewhere; the nation of Georgia is on the verge of being dismembered; and a Russian-launched coup in Azerbaijan has returned to power Haidar Aliyev, the former Soviet Communist Party Politburo member and ruler of Azerbaijan during the regime of Leonid Brezhnev.

It is not accidental that the reconquest of the Caucasus was pushed into a decisive phase after the United States had rejected the Russian offer for cooperation with the United States on ballistic missile defense, at the Vancouver summit in April. For Moscow, this was proof that no reasonable cooperation projects were feasible with the West, giving the upper hand in Moscow to those imperial currents of the "Moscow is the Third Rome" ideological matrix. Their thrust is to counter the insane western geopolitical attempt to destabilize the Eurasian "heartland" with equally insane Russian geopolitics, which aims at the conquest of this "heartland" as the core of a new Russian Empire.

Ten years after Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* magazine argued that a failure of LaRouche's Strategic Defense Initiative policy would bring the revival of the Russian "Third Rome" imperial outlook, that imperial thrust is beginning to aggressively make itself felt. In June 1983, LaRouche wrote a series of articles (see *Documentation*, following this article) exposing the treachery of anti-SDI forces in the West, around Henry Kissinger and others, in facilitating the rebirth of Rus-

sian imperialism. The attempt of Kissingerian forces to pull together a new "world empire," LaRouche argued, would strengthen the forces in what was then the Soviet Union around the Third Rome faction. The dramatic events of recent weeks in the former Soviet empire prove how right LaRouche was then—and how disastrously wrong were his opponents, who appeased the Andropov-Gorbachov clique in Moscow by unjustly trying LaRouche in 1988 and condemning him to federal prison, where he remains today.

### Careful advance preparation

The logistical capability for carrying out the policy shift now under way has been carefully built up ever since the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in August 1991. In the Caucasus, the armed formations, which, knowingly or not, are serving as tools for Moscow's new empire, are, without exception, very well armed. This was accomplished through various means, including withdrawals of Russian combat forces, who always left behind huge stocks of weapons and munitions. Where required, there has been direct Russian participation, in the form of well-organized dispatch of "volunteers" to the separatist forces, as in the case of the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia. The "Abkhazian" forces are much better armed than their Georgian Army opponents.

In Azerbaijan, a similar mode of operation brought Haidar Aliyev back to power. The June 5 revolt by "Col." Suret Huseinov (in reality he never was an officer, having served as an enlisted paratrooper in the Soviet Army, 1977-79), which began the Aliyev comeback through the revolt's capture of Azerbaijan's second largest city, Gyandzha, and Huseinov's subsequent march on Baku, was made possible by the largesse of the Russian Army. Right before the revolt began, the Russian Airborne Division based in Azerbaijan

completed its withdrawal back to Russia. By arrangement, the division turned over the large stocks of arms, vehicles, and munitions it had left behind, not to the regular army of Azerbaijan, but to the private army that Huseinov, a multi-millionaire “businessman” already in Soviet days, had created. Overnight, his units became the best armed in Azerbaijan, and swelled in numbers. Presto! The coup was on.

This Russian pattern of securing in advance the military predominance of the forces working as their tools for reconquest was a dominant theme of an article in the London daily *Independent* on July 6 by Dr. Jonathan Eyal, research director of the London Royal United Services Institute. Eyal correctly charged that “western governments are encouraging Moscow’s aspirations,” telling the non-Russian republics in effect that they are “at Moscow’s mercy.” “Since no western government is willing to police the old empire, better leave it to the Russians who are willing and able to do so.”

Eyal emphasized that many of the “ethnic conflicts” in the former Soviet Union have strikingly “similar characteristics: rebel movements suddenly spring up, either to effect a change of government, or to defend an ethnic minority and gain ‘autonomy’ for it. Miraculously the rebels are often better armed than the governments they confront; and as if by magic, Moscow steps in, either to protect minorities or to act as benevolent arbiter.”

## **The war in Abkhazia**

The Russian-backed assault that began July 2 by “Abkhazian” separatist forces to complete the conquest of that region and detach it from Georgia, came as no surprise to readers of *EIR*. In June, we gave exclusive coverage to two precedent-setting moves by Moscow which foretold the coming attack. The first was a mid-June landing of Russian troops behind the Georgian lines to evacuate some 3,000 Russian civilians trapped in a town surrounded by Georgian forces. Russia never asked permission of Georgia, an independent state and not a member of the Community of Independent States (CIS). This meant that under the banner of rescuing “Russians”—or, to use the precise words of Moscow, “Russian speakers”—Russian troops could march at any time into the Baltic republics, which, like Georgia, are non-CIS states. The second precedent was a Russian government ultimatum to Georgia that it grant all Georgian regions with minorities, i.e., Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, which both border on Russia, and Adzharia on the Black Sea coast bordering Turkey, “real autonomy,” and agree to Russia serving as the “guarantor power” to ensure the “real autonomy” of these regions.

It is only a matter of time before such demands are extended all over the former Soviet Union, and beyond, for example into the Balkans. On July 5, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev repeated the ultimatum that Georgia grant “real autonomy” to Abkhazia and agree to Russia becoming the “guarantor power” for the region. Kozyrev, trying to appear unbiased, added a warning that failure to end the fighting

would lead to “the toughest measures” from Moscow, allegedly against “both” sides, including “economic sanctions.” His attempt at “balance” fooled no one. His sole target was Georgia. Russia could “stop the fighting” in two minutes, if it wished to, as it controls the “Abkhazian” side.

## **The military situation**

By July 7, the “Abkhazian” forces were on the verge of taking the entire region. Outgunned Georgian forces were thrown back to a pocket around the region’s capital, Sukhumi, parts of the coastal strip running southeast from Sukhumi, and the coastal town of Ochamchira to the southeast, the only other town of significance in Abkhazia still in Georgian hands. In the massive fighting, from July 2 to July 7, some 1,000 were killed. The Georgian situation was desperate.

On July 6, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze proclaimed a state of martial law over Abkhazia, citing the “worsening military-political situation” as the reason. The decree also contained harsh measures against desertions by Georgian troops, measures taken in light of the first group of defections by Georgian soldiers predominantly from western Georgia, the regional base of supporters of ex-Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, ousted in January 1992.

Shevardnadze, the former Soviet foreign minister and Communist Party Politburo member, has all along been fostering Moscow’s aims. To do this in a way that will allow him to retain his power, which is not solid, he has had to wear a “Georgian patriotic” mask. His conduct following the “Abkhazian” general offensive provides the most recent illustration of this. He immediately went to Sukhumi to visit front positions, narrowly escaping death during an “Abkhazian” shelling attack (the incident was a masterstroke of “luck” for Moscow, because their asset emerged uninjured, but with the mantle of the “patriotic” President who nearly died for his country). On July 5, Shevardnadze announced his agreement in principle with the Russian Foreign Ministry’s “real autonomy” formula for ending the war in Abkhazia.

The little that Georgia still holds in Abkhazia is threatened by the war’s next Moscow-steered escalation. The first level of that escalation was already visible in the fighting July 2-7, where the “Abkhazians” suddenly threw into the battle their “own” unit of at least eight attack helicopters, and produced their “own” amphibious capability, in landings on the southern coast of Abkhazia. The second level of the escalation occurred in calls on July 4 and 5 for thousands of fresh non-Abkhazian “volunteers.”

On July 4, the ethnic Russian Abkhazian Cossacks called on all Cossack groups throughout Russia to send armed “volunteers” to “defend the just cause of defending the honor, life, and dignity of the people of Abkhazia.” A day later, the Confederation of Caucasian Tribes, representing the tribes of the Russian-ruled North Caucasus and the breakaway republic of Chechenya, announced a “mobilization of volunteers” to fight against Georgia. The organization was formed

last year, formally through General Dudayev, the ex-Russian Air Force general who seized power in the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya, and seceded from Russia. In reality, however, it is steered by Russia as an ideal tool for stripping away territories from Georgia, thus allowing Russia to reconquer the Caucasus with most of the casualties occurring among the “natives.” The Dudayev operation has tapped the reservoir of Afghan war veterans among ethnic groups like the Chechens, Ossetians, Cherkessians, and Kabardiners, who, outfitted with weapons and hard currency, have become the main cannon fodder in the war against Georgia.

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## Documentation

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### LaRouche warned about ‘Third Rome’ in 1983

In a recent radio interview, imprisoned U.S. statesman Lyndon LaRouche warned that an imperial policy is returning in the former Soviet Union, and harkened back to his forecasts of ten years ago. Recalling the spring of 1983, “in our study of the way in which the Soviet reactions to the Reagan announcement of SDI had come,” LaRouche said: “We assumed that what was in process in Russia, was a process of a breakdown of the Soviet system, the bolshevik system, and that all the indications showed culturally a medium- to long-term trend in progress toward a Great Russian revival.” The Soviet Union would cease to be a bolshevik state, and would become a “Dostoevskyan Third Rome state centered around the ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church (not the church as such, but its ideology), as a replacement for the Communist Party for defining a new kind of Russian imperium,” he recalled.

LaRouche underlined in his recent comments, “We were not forecasting or predicting in any astrological sense, but that was what was going to happen unless the United States and other states did something to make the SDI work.” Instead, “The Russians, first Andropov and then Gorbachov, rejected President Reagan’s offer” to share the SDI technologies.

Later, “once the 1989-90 breaking of the Wall had occurred, when the United States, led by filthy, dirty carpetbaggers like this George Soros of derivatives notoriety, had gotten his four feet in the trough over there in Moscow, and the United States began to back him with things like Soros’s pet from Harvard Jeffrey Sachs, the policy in Russia shifted away from a momentary turn toward affection and trust in the United States, back toward rage against the United States and others.”

Thus, in the past 12 months or so, LaRouche observed, Russia rapidly has been moving in the direction of the “Third Rome” model, based on the Russian Orthodox Church as an

ideological reference point, to replace communism. The Third Rome was the self-description of Moscow as capital of the “third and final” Roman empire, which was coined in the 16th century to justify the Muscovites’ intransigent rejection of western ideals of the necessity of progress, coming out of the Golden Renaissance. Today, this trend “is accelerated by the cowardice of the United States in backing down before Britain and France” on the murders of Bosnians by Milosevic’s fascist Serb party.

LaRouche’s first in-depth analyses of the “Third Rome” danger were printed in the June 7 and 14, 1983 issues of *EIR*. In the June 14, 1983 issue, in a feature-length article titled “Yuri Andropov: ‘Czar of Holy Mother Russia,’ ” LaRouche described the situation thus: “The variety of ‘Russian soul’ which these scholarly gentlemen have brought to the surface in Soviet foreign policy, is of the stuff of which a Czar Ivan the Terrible or Rasputin was made in the past. It is a sly, dissimulating, religious-fanatical beast. It can be clever, intelligent in matters of technique, and to that extent appear urbane and civilized. It is at the same time a monster obsessed, beyond all reach of reason, with mystical faith in the magical powers of the Holy Russian Soil and People. . . .

“There is only one way to deal with such a beast, to offer it peace and Russian survival from a standpoint of overwhelming raw power and manifest determination to use that power if necessary. As long as we refuse to present Moscow such a clear set of alternatives of this exact type, [the Russian leader] will alternately hiss and smile—like a cobra—until he strikes.”

Already, as LaRouche put it in 1983, “Over the middle 1960s, recognizably ‘Marxist’ philosophy lost efficient grip in the shaping of Soviet policies, except as part of institutions left over from preceding periods. . . . By 1972, the drift toward a Third Rome policy-paradigm in Soviet foreign policy was sufficiently evident, that the author and his associates elaborated and published a review of these features of ‘detente’ which we entitled ‘The New Constantinople’ hypothesis.”

For issuing this analysis in 1983, LaRouche recalled, “We were attacked for that from many quarters; we discussed that extensively with the National Security Council, the CIA, and other people in the United States in particular; they acknowledged some of this material, but they disagreed. They saw no danger of this sort. They didn’t agree with us on this, and here we are, and all those in the world who disagreed with us, or who took policies in a direction which ignored our warning, have now failed rather miserably.”

He concluded: “We are now at the point where, unfortunately, what I warned against back in 1983, is now all coming true. And we want to see how many people are honest enough to admit that we were right, not just for the purpose of admitting we were right, but to admit that our *method* of policy outlook was correct, whereas their contrary methods of policy outlook, have been discredited by reality.”