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**FORMATION OF CIVIL CULTURE**

**IN MODERN RUSSIA**

The question of forming civil culture in the conditions of democratic transformations in modern Russia is quite urgent. The construction of a democratic state requires not only the creation of new and reformation of existing political institutions, but also deep-going changes of the stereotypes of political thinking and models of political behavior of citizens.

The mechanism of the formation of political culture is complex and multifaceted. It is conditioned by the historic specific features of a country, the state and trends of its socio-economic development, the type of its political system, the dominating model of political socialization, etc.

The formation of civil culture should be facilitated by the system of civil education which should contribute to disseminating democratic values and civil rights and freedoms in the mass consciousness within the framework of a law-abiding state. The role of the state in the creation of the educational system in Russia has always been very great.

Political orientations forming political culture are closely connected with the general social and inter-personal orientations. The

latter play a major role in the creation of the atmosphere of trust in social surrounding and soften political positions.

Modern Russia is an unstable democracy which is distinguished by deep inner differentiation and a low level of the citizens' trust in political power. The absence of clear-cut aims of political development and the deficit of value orientations lead to the unpreparedness and inability of part of Russian citizens to integrate in the system of new political and economic relations.

The existing political and socio-economic conditions dictate the need to improve the system of civil upbringing and education. Its main aim is to provide knowledge about the basic laws, political and social structures of society, contribute to the formation of critical thinking and ethical positions of citizens, and inculcate the habits of civil participation in political life. The key aims of civil education are to foster legal consciousness in the individual, form civil identity and tolerant consciousness, and cultivate patriotism.

The priority direction of civil education is the formation of legal consciousness of the individual. Disrespect for law and negligence toward human rights are alarming features in Russian society. The rights of man and citizen remain in the periphery of mass consciousness and social practices, as well as in the practical activity of the authorities. Meanwhile, legal and ethical culture of the individual is an inalienable condition of the existence of a law-abiding state and civil society. Adoption or rejection of the law as the basic instrument of regulating social relations is connected, above all, with the personal interests of man. If his interests are protected by law, the latter is easily embedded in the system of value orientations of a person. Otherwise, the latter may formally accept legal standards, but observe them only through coercion. Surveillance results show that during the past twenty years most citizens of Russia (from 50 to 70 percent) believe that it is

impossible to live in the country without breaking the law. This is due to the fact that our people do not feel protected by law.

Russia has been living through a systemic crisis. Great social differentiation of society, the impoverishment of a considerable part of the population, etc, exert a negative influence on different generations of the Russian people. Meanwhile, the authorities do not show adequate responsibility for the situation in the country. The deterioration of the law and order, growing crime, arbitrariness and corruption of government officials undermine citizens' respect for the existing political institutions and state and government leaders and engender disillusionment, apathy and hopelessness in society. At present 52 percent of our citizens maintain that there is now much more crime and corruption in the country than a year ago.

Russia has always been distinguished by the trend to give aid to fellow-citizens and to establish collectivism and equality. General equality cannot create an economically effective system, there should be an economic system protecting the weak and the poor. However, an analysis of the words and deeds of politicians and business tycoons shows that a considerable part of the political and economic elite of the country does not want to sacrifice anything for the public weal.

In the conditions of the crisis and transition state of society and during the change of types of political culture the model of political socialization is of major importance. In a stable political system the education and training of the rising generation, including its political socialization and the fostering of civil qualities, ensures a comparatively harmonious transfer of basic political values and orientations from generation to generation. This makes it possible for the new generation to accept the existing political system and power as legitimate institutions. In Russia the socio-economic and political difficulties have pushed the problems of political socialization and civil

education of the younger generation into the background. Political socialization is not only the process of transferring the accumulated political experience, but also the process of realizing and accepting the new aspects of democracy. The level of political awareness and political activity of a person, the degree of his involvement in political life are the indices of the effectiveness of political socialization

The mass media, especially the Internet, play an ever greater role in the process of political socialization of civil upbringing and education. However, the role of mass information is dual. The mass media devote too much attention and space to the failures of leaders, scandals, etc. This, willy-nilly, creates a negative attitude to politics among the younger generation. And a shortage of trustworthy information leads to alienation of society from power and does not contribute to the formation of civil qualities of the individual.

In recent years traditional Russian patriotic consciousness has begun to wither away. The problem of fostering patriotic feelings in Russian people has become quite urgent. A way out of the present crisis in Russia is only possible with a combination of patriotic tendencies with civil education of the population and the development of civil society and a law-abiding state.

The role of the family and school in the upbringing and education of people is especially great. They are the two main institutions of the formation of a citizen. With a view to improving civil education and fostering patriotic feelings special courses have been introduced at schools, lyceums, gymnasiums and colleges teaching the foundations of law, political sciences, sociology and psychology.

There should be special programs on the radio and TV aimed at creating and promoting patriotic education of representatives of the various sections of society.

A gap between hopes and realities of our day and social hardships and difficulties encountered by the millions of our people in their everyday life, the difficulty of adaptation to the new market conditions sometimes cause the feeling of frustration and lead to cynicism and political apathy of a considerable part of the country's population. Individualistic sentiments are growing. This is especially true of young people. As a sociological surveillance carried out in March 2011 has shown, Russian people have displayed much less interest in politics during the past six years.

One of the concepts of civil culture is a type of a mixed political culture in which political orientations of participation are combined with patriarchal and citizen-wise. As a result, political culture is formed in which political activity, participation and rationality exist side by side and are balanced by submission, observance of traditions and adherence to community values.

Political participation and civic activity are connected with the realization of civil rights and freedoms, as well as knowledge, habits, and abilities.

Sociological polls show that most Russians admit the necessity of drawing citizens in solution of current problems facing the state. At the same time too many people express the view that political and social participation is of no great use.

The real status of citizen is determined by the correlation of the rights and freedoms of citizen, on the one hand, and the guarantees of their realization and legal sanctions of the authorities, on the other. The dominating value orientations and standards change along with time. As many experts and analysts note, this process is typical of post-communist countries which are in transition stage. Sociological observations of the trends in the sphere of mass orientations show that the period of primary adaptation of Russians to the new conditions is

coming to an end, and the potential of civic consciousness and participation is gradually merging in Russian society.

Today our society has come to the critical line when people will either search for ways and methods of greater influence on life surrounding them. On the whole, while remaining outside “big-time” policy and mistrusting most state and public institutions, Russian people, nevertheless, demonstrate interest in and real readiness for collective actions and self-organization. Young people and the middle sections of the population are awakening. It can be said with relative certainty that these groups and sections will not only join public and political life, but also will demand the creation of democratic institutions and procedures for the realization of their interests.

“Filosofskiye nauki,” Moscow, 2013, No 1, pp. 55–61.

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**MUSLIMS OF MORDOVIA: PROBLEMS**

**OF OVERCOMING INTERNAL CONFLICT**

In the latter half of the 1980s – early 2010s there was a tumultuous development of religious life in the Republic of Mordovia, just as in entire Russia. The most influential and widespread confessions are Russian Orthodox Christianity and Islam (Sunna umma). However, there are also quite a few representatives of other confessions (Lutheran, Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal, and others).

It should be said that stability and tolerance are inalienable features of the ethnopolitical and ethnoconfessional life of modern Mordovia.

However, starting from the early 2000<sup>th</sup> and up to now an intra-religious conflict has been developing in the Muslim umma of the Republic of Mordovia.

In 2000 the Muslim umma of the Republic of Mordovia, whose nucleus is formed by Tatars, became divided into supporters of the two rival muftiates – the Regional spiritual board of Muslims (RSBM) and the Spiritual board of Muslims (SBM). The former was oriented to the Central spiritual board of Muslims of Russia (CSBM) in Ufa headed by the mufti Talgat Tajuddin, and SBM supported the Council of muftis of Russia (CMR) in Moscow headed by mufti Ravil Gainuddin.

In the autumn of 2008 the split of Muslims of Mordovia became still more aggravated by the emergence of the third muftiate – the Central spiritual board of Muslims of the Republic of Mordovia (CSBM RM). It was headed by Fagim Shafiyev, graduate of the faculty of the Arab language at the Islamic University in Medina (Saudi Arabia).

CSBM RM united part of Muslims in the Tatar villages of Aksyonovo, Bolshaya Elkhovka and Tatarskaya Tavla.

The reaction to this event was negative. The formation of CSBM RM was regarded as a factor aggravating the split among the Muslims of Mordovia.

On September 20, 2009, there was an open confrontation between supporters and opponents of Fagim Shafiyev at the mosque in the village of Aksyonovo.

On November 12, 2010, the expert of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation and well-known scholar of Islam R. Silantyev visited Saransk, the capital of the Republic of Mordovia. He delivered a public lecture on Muslim sects at the Mordovian State University. Its main subject was the Wahhabi trend in Islam. He said that in the past fifteen years Wahhabis in Russia had killed fifty imams and two muftis

who did not share their religious views, as well as six Russian Orthodox priests. In his view, the number of supporters of radical Islam was rapidly growing in Russia. R. Silantyev maintains that “Russian Islam is sick.” There are 73 muftis in Russia and each one of them has his own understanding and interpretation of religion. But the most dangerous are sects of Islamic origin. They are aggressive and do not tolerate dissidence. If the state does not interfere with the situation and does not support its real allies in Islamic community, there would be no peace and tranquility in the inter-religious world.

R. Silantyev’s visit to Mordovia has once again reflected the complex character of the intra-Muslim conflict in the republic.

In December 2010, CSBM RM joined the newly-formed structure of the spiritual board of Muslims – the centralized religious organization “Russian Association of Islamic Accord” (RAIA), or the “All-Russia Muftiate.”

This organization includes regional muftiates of Stavropol territory, Perm territory, Republic of Mordovia, Ryazan region, and several regions of the Urals, which position themselves as independent. The mufti of Stavropol territory Muhammad-hajji Rakhimov became the chairman of the organization.

RAIA proclaimed the “real solution” to the problems of the Russian Muslim community as its aim, in close cooperation with the Russian authorities at all levels (the Federal center and regional authorities). This muftiate declared that it plans to create a council of ulems and also its structural subsections which would recreate the Russian Muslim theological school, develop Islamic information area in the Russian Federation, and inspect Islamic religious publications.

RAIA has immediately expressed a critical attitude toward Ravil Gainuddin, , the head of CMR in Moscow.

For his part R. Gainuddin called RAIA a “community of dirty people and puppets,” and a “pocket muftiate.”

The April 2011 issue of the newspaper *Islam v Mordovii* (Islam in Mordovia) published an article under the title “RAIA – There Is No Future Without Repentance.” The article described crimes and reprisals against religious cults, particularly Islam, perpetrated by Soviet power, and Lenin personally. A great many mosques and madrasahs were destroyed, Islamic books were burnt, tens of thousands of imams and rank-and-file Muslims were arrested and killed. Then the article suddenly accused mufti Shafiyev of “adherence to Lenin’s ideas...” Indeed, the Internet has placed an interview given by F. Shafiyev in which he mentioned the experience of the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks. Shafiyev took Lenin’s premise that the basic problem of any revolution is the problem of power. Something similar is taking place in the Muslim umma of Russia. “In order to become consolidated our Muslims should first disunite and then come closer together,” Shafiyev claimed. But this statement of his was immediately used against him by his opponents from SBM RM.

A majlis-congress of SBM RM was held in Saransk on September 14, 2011, at which it was announced that R. Khalikov was appointed deputy chairman of the Council of muftis of Russia (CMR). The 30-year-old Abdulkarim-khazrat Abdrashitov, graduate of the Russian Islamic University, became a new mufti of SBM RM.

Unfortunately A. Abdrashitov lost his life in a car crash in November 2011. Ildus-khazrat Iskhakov was elected new mufti of SBM RM on November 27.

Unfortunately, the formation of RAIA has increased the polarization of forces in the Muslim umma of Russia, particularly, in the Republic of Mordovia. Sides do not hear one another, there are no negotiations, personal attacks are a common thing, etc., etc. Such

situation may have pernicious consequences for the Muslim community.

*“Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Rossii  
i sopredelnykh gosudarstvakh v  
2011 godu”. Moscow, 2011, pp. 110–113..*

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**“CHERCESSIAN PROBLEM”  
IN POLITICAL PROCESSES**

The Cheressian problem has a major significance for the political process in the North Caucasus. Its main essence is the idea about the Caucasian war of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the “genocide of the Adygi people.” At present the Cheressian problem includes: demands that Russia should officially recognize the genocide of the Adygi people during the years of the Caucasian war (1817–1864); demands that Adygis living abroad (descendants of those who had left their native country due to the Caucasian war) be given entry visas and residence permits to return and live in Russia, Russian citizenship, and favorable conditions for adaptation to a new life in the Russian Federation; demands to form a larger “Adygi” part of the Russian Federation, which would unite Adygea, Karachay-Cheressian Republic, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic and, possibly, part of the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories; demands to form the Cheressian autonomous region.

Some of the active proponents of the Cheressian question (certain Adygi organizations) voice opposition against holding the

Winter Olympics in Sochi in 2014 (“place of the genocide of the Adygis”).

In actual fact, however, many Adygis, Kabardians and Cherkessians (further on they will be termed “Adygis”) do not regard the demands to recognize the genocide of Adygis, settle foreigners of Caucasian origin in the Russian Caucasus, etc. as the most pressing problems of their everyday life. The Russian Adygis live the same life as citizens of other nationalities, and with a similar set of problems (wages, children, housing, etc.). Thus, the term “Cherkessian problem” has a definite manipulative potential, which should be taken into account in analyzing the situation.

Certain leaders of the North Caucasus realize this full well and criticize the above-mentioned “Cherkessian problem.” They say that “yes indeed, there was the Caucasian war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But we have long forgotten about it. We look into the future. Just go out in the street and ask any person whether this problem touches him or her at all. The answer will definitely be “‘No’”.

Foreign Adygi organizations have their own position. There is a host of information about them in the mass media, from their loyalty to modern Russia up to calls for the liberation of the Caucasus from “Russian occupation.”

The main political specific feature of the “Adygi” republics (just as many other “national” republics) is that the division of power takes place not between political parties and other “supra-ethnic” actors, but between “nationalities.”

The policy of the Federal Center exerts considerable influence on the regional political processes. During the past twenty years this policy has changed seriously. This was largely due to the existence of “ethno-parties” which are powerful actors in these processes. These parties are communities of individuals with a vivid, sometimes exaggerated, ethnic

self-identification occupying important positions in the social structure, connected with one another by network relations of mutual support, and capable to mobilize members of their ethnic group to mass actions. The evolution of ethno-parties continues. They have become stable and acquired an “institutional character,” despite the formal domination of the official bureaucracy, which has no nationality, and the presence of branches of federal parties in the republics. Ethno-parties wield power above all other institutions, including state and party-political ones, which, as a rule, are subordinated to them or adapted to their interests.

The first state document which officially recognized the genocide of the Adygis was a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic of February 7, 1992. Then there was an address of the President of Adygea and the State Council of that republic of April 29, 1996, to the State Duma asking the latter “to give a legal assessment of the act of genocide committed by czarism against the Adygi (Cheressian) ethnos.”

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the federal authorities began a campaign of bringing the regional legislation in line with the federal one, suppressing the North Caucasian armed underground, and curbing the most brazen separatists from among ethnic activists. Most Russian Adygi organizations and their active members correctly viewed these measures as a warning. Their initiatives became more restrained.

However, the activities of separatist national organizations continued. They demanded that the federal authorities officially recognize genocide (including at an international level), they came out against the Winter Olympics in Sochi, broadened their contacts with foreign Adygi organizations and ethnic activists living abroad, as well as with foreign scholars, journalists and other persons supporting the demand “to solve the Cheressian problem.”

Beginning from 2008 young people of the Adygi nationality living in Moscow, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Chercessia and Stavropol and Krasnodar territories were actively drawn in the radical Adygi movements. Informal public associations of definitely protest nature (for instance, the “Forum of Chercessian young people,” and others) were set up.

Recognition of genocide is actively lobbied by the foreign Adygi diaspora whose members hold meetings and organize pickets at Russian embassies and missions abroad, and offices of international organizations during various functions (for example at the Vancouver Olympics in Canada and at the London Olympics of 2012). A conference devoted to “hidden” nations, continuing crimes against Chercessians and other peoples of the North Caucasus was held in Tbilisi (Georgia) in 2010. Participants in it appealed to Georgian parliament to recognize genocide officially. On May 20, 2011, Georgian parliament adopted a resolution on recognizing the genocide of Chercessians (Adygis), committed by the Russian Empire during the Caucasian war.

It can be assumed that as the Winter Olympics of 2014 are drawing closer Georgia will continue to protest against it, which will take place near its “occupied territories” (Abkhazia. Such protests are (and will be) voiced by the Adygi people, too

The decision of the International Olympic Committee to hold the Winter Olympic Games of 2014 in Sochi has been lively discussed by the leaders and activists of Adygi public organizations. Sochi and its district are associated by many people with the Caucasian war in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The last battles of that war had taken place in the vicinity of Krasnaya Polyana where Olympic competitions were planned. Besides, a march past of the troops of the Russian Empire was organized in honor of victory over the North Caucasian mountain

dwellers on May 21, 1864. This is why the city of Sochi and its suburbs are regarded by many activists of the Adygi national movement as the “place of genocide” of Adygis. (The point is that the Olympic Charter forbids the holding of the Olympic Games in places of mass destruction of people). In their opinion the fact that the year of the Winter Olympics coincides with the tragic anniversary (150 years from the end of the Caucasian war) adds special cynicism to the Olympic plans.

However, there are quite a few Adygi public organizations which are not against the Sochi Olympics. They only wish that the games should reflect some of the Adygi cultural and ethnic components. The Winter Olympics in Vancouver are cited as an example of using the symbols of the indigenous population of Canada.

Nevertheless, on the eve of the Sochi Olympics it is possible to think and speak of certain risks – possible mobilization of part of the radically-minded young people capable to organize actions of protest in Russia and in other countries. These actions can also be provoked by certain geopolitical rivals of Russia pursuing their own selfish aims. There are Adygi organizations abroad protesting against the Olympics (“Cheressian Cultural Center” in New Jersey, U.S.A., “Cheressian Research Institute TIM” in Germany, certain Cheressian organizations in Israel, and others.). The most numerous and mass protest actions of Caucasians living abroad have taken place in Turkey. At the XXX Olympic Games in London in 2012 a small group of Adygis living abroad protested against the Sochi Games.

It is to be hoped that most organizations in Russia will refrain from protests against the Games. But there can be local protests in certain western countries. Such actions can be organized by the leadership of Georgia, which lies close to Sochi. Mass protest meetings can also be held in Turkey.

The Internet is the most important instrument in the hands of the Adygi activists in their dealing with the Chercessian problem and the Olympic subject. One of the most popular information-analytical web-portals is [www.elot.ru](http://www.elot.ru). It has virtually turned into a political platform of the Chercessian youth movement.

Unfortunately, the “answer” of the Russian state to the “Chercessian question” is unsatisfactory. Experience shows that federal and republican officials prefer not to object the “genocide of Adygis,” on the contrary, they try to seek favors of ethnic activists who endlessly harp on the “Chercessian problem.” This is shown, among other things, by their frequent meetings and discussions with these persons, helping the latter express their views detrimental to the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, government officials in charge of domestic policy should express the views of the Russian state on the pressing problems of history and our time and make concrete statements reflecting Russian national interests.

*“Problemy sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya yuzhnogo makroregiona,” Rostov-on-Don, 2012, pp. 131–137.*

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**ISLAMIC EXTREMISM IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS**

While examining the role of Islam in the development of Russia one can single out both internal and external factors in this religion.

In the light of the former, Islam can be regarded as a form of national-religious self-identification of the Moslem part of the population of Russia. On the other hand, it can be viewed as an instrument of the struggle for power of the religious Islamic elite under the slogan of national liberation.

An analysis of the current situation shows that many national and socio-political associations of the North Caucasian republics pursue a policy aimed at creating a uniform Islamic state under the guise of the need to revive the culture, customs and habits of the indigenous peoples. The religious situation in the region enables one to conclude that the greater part of devout Muslims in the North Caucasus regard the revival of religion as a method of restoring the self-consciousness of their people and their national and cultural traditions and customs.

The leaders and active members of national movements pursuing their ambitious political aims maintain stable connections with the functionaries of the existing Islamic organizations operating in the region, although a majority of the population is not inclined as yet to identify religious relations with national ones.

The stepping up of the activities of Islamic organizations in the region is going on against the backdrop of excessive tolerance, even conniving, of certain bodies of power in the North Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation and the absence of the necessary legislative basis and the wish to improve the existing situation. Such situation is in the interests of the local elite which wishes to enhance its potential electorate, receive money donations from Islamic countries, and at the same time to give legal access of the pro-Islamic forces to the levers of power. The development of the situation in this direction may bring Islamic fundamentalists to state power.

The political opposition is often using Islamic slogans. However, it is still unable to create a serious competition to the powers that be in

most regions. Yet, in some places, Dagestan for example, its weight and influence are always on an increase, and its coming to power, at least in one city or district, cannot be excluded. In other parts of Russia, where Islam is traditionally widespread, it is highly probable that radical Islamic political leaders may penetrate the ruling elites and take certain key positions there.

Another danger is a combination of Islamic political radicalism with nationalism and separatism. In most North Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation the nationalist-separatist forces have become weaker to a certain extent. They have suffered defeat in regional and local elections, but are striving to win back the lost political positions using the potential of more attractive Islamic organizations. A combination of national-separatism with politicized Islam can engender, or increase, interethnic tension in the region. Besides, such combination enhances the political potential of confessional and nationalistic movements and gives a new impetus to the formation of all and sundry alliances and blocs which are far from loyal to the federal authorities.

In the context of external factors Islam can be viewed as the agent of influence of the leading Muslim states on the Muslims of Russia, and on the other hand, as an instrument of the influence of Russia in the Islamic world.

The rapid spreading of Islam in the 1970s – 1990s radically changed the character of international relations, including the aspect of ensuring national security of Russia. In this context special attention should be paid to the ambitions of certain Islamic countries to make the Muslim world an independent center of force, the real impact of Islam on the formation of a multipolar world, the attempts of the United States and certain West European countries to play the Islamic card to the detriment of the national interests of Russia, and to penetration into

Russia of agents of influence of unfriendly foreign Islamic centers and their attempts to influence our country's life.

The coordinated actions of Muslim states, primarily Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, whose religious centers, official circles, special services and non-governmental organizations, using Islam, are striving to ensure favorable conditions to exert influence on the development of the political and economic situation in the North Caucasian region, which gives grounds to regard the spreading of Islam as one of the threats to the security of Russia in the region.

The North Caucasus, due to its geopolitical position and ethno-confessional structure of the population, occupies a special place in the inter-confessional processes in modern Russia. The region is inhabited by over 100 nationalities and ethnic groups, among which are Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and other Russian-language groups comprising 74 percent of the population. There are Dagestanis – 7.6 percent, Vainakhs – 6.2 percent, Turks – 4.5 percent, Abkhaz-Adygis – 3.4 percent. The total number of the population of the region is about 17 million.

The Islamic infrastructure is growing and developing in the North Caucasian republics. From the point of view of ensuring the security of Russia, the spreading of Wahhabi ideas initiated and financed by the special services of a number of Arab countries within the framework of the program of destabilizing the situation and wresting the North Caucasus from Russia is the most dangerous phenomenon. The Wahhabi movement is one of the main sources of spreading Islamic terrorism in the North Caucasus.

The orientation of various Islamic organizations of Russia to foreign Muslim centers is causing justified concern. The desire of the Russian Islamic circles to rely on support from the Islamic world often

leads to their succumbing to the influence of political and geopolitical views from abroad. Such influence penetrates the country through the network of educational institutions organized in Russia on the money from one or another Muslim country, and also as a result of the study of Russian students at foreign Islamic educational centers.

It should be said that a greater part of Russian students receives Muslim education at the most radical Islamic educational establishments. No wonder that in a number of Muslim districts of Russia the influence of Islamic radicals, bellicose Muslim fundamentalists and various Muslim sects has been growing recently. The number of people who have received Islamic education abroad after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. has exceeded ten thousand. However, the absence of a government-controlled policy in the sphere of Islamic education increases the threat of the most extremist trends of Islam penetrating Russia.

There is also a serious threat in opposing Russian Muslims to the rest of Russia as a “Christian Orthodox state.” More facts have become known of the hostile attitude of Muslims to the Russian Orthodox Church.

A characteristic feature of Islam is the combination of religious and secular laws. In contrast to Christianity, Islam does not know of the division of legislation into canon and secular law. The premises of the Koran are the “laws of direct action” for any devout Muslim, embracing his entire life, both religious and secular.

However, the socio-economic and political life of the peoples of the North Caucasus is based on secular state laws, but not the Sharia law. Speaking of the role of Islam in the life of the people living in the North Caucasian republics, it should be said that it is taken not only as a complex of religious dogmas and rites and rituals, but also as a sum total of everyday rules of life, and customs and habits on its basis which

are observed even by people indifferent to religion. The cultural and historical past of the North Caucasian peoples is, in one way or another, connected with Islam. Recently, more and more young people have displayed growing interest in religion and have actively been drawn closer to Islam. More Muslims are striving to unite the spiritual life of the Caucasian mountain dwellers – Chercessians, Abazins, Karachais, Nogais, and others.

According to approximate data, the number of Muslim believers in present-day Russia is more than twelve million. The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation reported that by January 1, 1996, there were 43 Muslim spiritual centers and boards, which carried on independent administrative and canonic activity (at present their number is sixty), 102 religious schools of different level, six missions, and 2,501 registered Islamic religious societies. But the real number of these institutions is much greater, because in some regions they are set up without special permission and registration.

On the territory of the North Caucasus alone there are eight functioning spiritual boards, 320 mosques, more than 400 madrasahs, and nine schools training Muslim priests. It should be noted that Islam is spread unevenly on North Caucasian territory. It is the most influential in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachay-Chercessia and Adygea. The network of functioning Islamic organizations is the most widespread in Daghestan – about one thousand; in Chechnya and Ingushetia their number is up to 500 in each, and in Karachay-Chercessia and Kabarda-Balkaria up to one hundred in each.

Penetration of Islam in the territory of the present-day Karachay-Cheressian Republic has been going on for 200 years. The main trend of Islam there is Sunnism of Khanafite mazhab.

This religious trend is developing and strengthening its positions thanks to the activity of the Abu Khanif Islamic Institute in the city of

Cherkessk, where young men from 17 to 35 are studying in accordance with the Sharia standards and the curricula worked out in foreign Islamic centers. The teaching staff consists mainly of foreign instructors. The teaching process is in strict accordance with the Sharia demands and Sunna Muslim teaching of Khanafite mazhab, which do not contradict the principles of a secular state. Representatives of this Islamic institute call for peace and accord with Christians and people of other faiths. It is indicative that the heads of this institute declined offers of financial support from representatives of reactionary foreign organizations, despite its rather unfavorable financial position.

Almost all eighty Muslim organizations officially registered in the Karachay-Chercessian Republic function under the guidance of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Karachay-Chercessia and Stavropol Territory. It should be noted that supporters of the Wahhabi trend have stepped up their activity there. There are 35 Wahhabi cells uniting up to 1,700 people who formed 14 “jamaats.” The emergence and activity of Wahhabi Muslims societies in Karachay-Chercessia are due to support from foreign reactionary Islamic centers propagating Wahhabi ideas, the existence of foreign Islamic educational institutions in the republic, as well as trips of young men from the republic to other countries (Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia) to study there.

The Republic of Ingushetia is situated geographically in the zone called the “green belt of Islamic states in the South of Russia” by Islamic leaders. Islamic customs there are based on and supported by the way of life. The stable Islamic traditions are historically strengthened by the division of the population into families (clans) and Muslim fraternities with intertwined family and religious ties which make it difficult for new ideas or religious trends to penetrate this medium.

In the early 1990s there were about fifty Muslim fraternities in the Chechen-Ingush Republic. More than ten of them were in Ingushetia.

Despite the fact that the processes going on in the socio-political life of Russia have resulted in a certain erosion of moral foundations and religious views, the authority of fraternities is still strong and influential, especially in the religious sphere.

The 1<sup>st</sup> congress of republican Muslims was held in 1994 which set up the Spiritual center of Muslims of Ingushetia. It is a public body managing religious affairs in the republic. It concentrates efforts primarily on creating a system of Islamic education and establishing international Islamic connections. With this aim in view it maintains ties with public and government organizations in the countries of the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and in its close neighbors, that is, some republics of the former Soviet Union.

Islam is popularized in Ingushetia through government bodies and also through international Islamic charity and educational organizations.

In June 2011 the First republican youth forum took place in Ingushetia which discussed problems of opposing extremism. The situation in the republic remains rather tense. The level of radicalism is rather high and the ranks of the armed underground are growing.

International Islamic organizations have stepped up their activity in the republic recently. They render material assistance to individuals and help young people go abroad to receive religious education.

Apart from increasing number of representatives of international Islamic organizations coming to the republic and their growing influence on the domestic situation, further Islamization of Ingushetia was largely due to the presence of over a thousand certified theologians

trained in various countries of the Islamic world, whose sentiments and activity are definitely anti-Russian.

The development of the situation in Chechnya has given a great impetus to Islamization, especially its extremist and reactionary Wahhabi trend.

In Kabarda-Balkaria there are Wahhabi cells in almost all districts of the republic, uniting up to a thousand men, as well as two groups of “jamaats” in the cities of Nalchik and Baksan. Most of the emirs of the jamaat groups have received military training in special camps of Islamic extremists.

There is information that militant groups headed by real bandits have plans to unfold combat actions, carry out terrorist acts in the North Caucasian region, and also seize power from the weak secular administrative bodies. According to sources, religious extremists plan to establish a Sharia state in Kabarda-Balkaria by a change of the demographic situation in the republic, active propaganda of Islam, especially among young people, and a plebiscite on life according to the Sharia law. The supporters of this idea have set up the republican “Shura” in Kabarda-Balkaria, which they regard as an element of Islamic statehood.

The situation in Daghestan is dangerous from the point of view of the uncontrolled spreading of Wahhabi ideas. The activities of their supporters are aimed at wresting the Republic of Daghestan from the Russian Federation and based on the experience of Chechen separatists. In their view, the seizure of power in the republic is only a matter of time. The practical transparency of the borders with Azerbaijan allows the local Wahhabis to receive illegally from abroad everything necessary for their activity. The bodies of power and official clergy do not have enough influence and ability to restrain the subversive work of the Wahhabi elements in the Republic of Daghestan.

The growing number of Wahhabi cells has been noted in the zone of residence of supporters of Islamic fundamentalism on the territory of Daghestan and Ingushetia, as well as on Stavropol Territory. Militant “jamaats” have been formed in many of these cells. It should be specially noted that practically all Wahhabi cells and jamaats in the North Caucasian region are under strict control of the religious extremist leaders of the Council of field commanders. The financing of jamaat groups and Wahhabi cells is a secret matter, printed and video materials are spread through bribing government officials and Wahhabi emissaries who have penetrated bodies of power. Representatives of the official clergy serving at mosques are replaced with young imams trained at Islamic educational centers abroad in Wahhabi spirit.

The Wahhabi elements are actively drawing to their ranks new supporters, primarily from among young men, and use money donations for this. Replenishments of the Wahhabi ranks consist of religious fanatics, economically backward and poor people, as well as criminals.

The spreading of Islamic ideology in the Republic of Daghestan is widely used by the special services and Islamic centers of the leading Islamic countries, primarily Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan for intelligence and subversive purposes. The situation becomes still worse due to the absence of a really functioning government or public body which could coordinate the activity of religious organizations without interfering in their internal affairs. The former Spiritual Board of Muslims of Daghestan which functioned previously has split into three religious associations formed on the national principle, and their activity is aimed, above all, at strengthening their own prestige and taking the leading position in Daghestan.

There are now 1,670 functioning mosques, 310 madrasahs, 14 Muslim higher educational establishments and three Islamic parties in the republic. The mosques have 650 schools attached to them. About 3,500 imams and muezzins are serving at various religious organizations. During the past decade more than 1,500 young men have gone to ten Muslim countries to study.

Daghestani Wahhabis are striving for unity with other extremist organizations and separatist and nationalistic circles in the neighboring republics. For example, they have established close contacts with their fellow-thinkers in Chechnya. This alliance can lead to the violation of the territorial integrity of Russia and create a new independent state of an Islamic Republic type in the future.

The foremost task of the Wahhabi elements is the destabilization of the situation, disintegration and collapse of Ingushetia and Daghestan as parts of the Russian Federation. In experts' opinion, this task will be achieved through the existing Islamic educational institutions of Wahhabi orientation and field commanders organizing kidnapping of people. The main source of spreading and popularizing Wahhabi ideas and practices is the "Al Bir" madrasah in Malgobek.

It should be said that many religious leaders of the republic supported by a considerable part of its population have a negative attitude toward the activity of the Wahhabi elements.

In many parts of the Russian Federation where Muslims comprise a majority of believers Wahhabi ideas are banned. Such bans were initiated in the Republic of Daghestan in September 1999, as well as in other parts of Russia – Ingushetia, Kabarda-Balkaria and Karachay-Chercessia. In July 2001 the head of the Provisional administration of the Chechen Republic issued an order banning the activity of Wahhabi religious organizations and groups.

We should pay attention to the political course of a number of Islamic states directed to achieving selfish strategic aims in the South of Russia. In long-term perspective the activities of the special services, governmental and non-governmental bodies and religious Muslim centers of certain Middle East countries, primarily, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Iran, are aimed at creating a mountain state in the North Caucasian region dependent on the above countries, with the subsequent ousting of Russia from this strategically important region and the formation of a “sanitary Islamic cordon.” It is from these positions that we should regard the support by these countries of the activity of the Confederation of the Caucasian Peoples and other nationalist radical movements, and their financial and other assistance with the use of special services and the mountain diaspora in the Middle East countries.

While recruiting supporters, the Wahhabi elements use the concept of “Muslim solidarity.” At the same time they brand adherents of classical Islam and all Muslims outside their religious trend as “infidels.”

It is indicative that the Wahhabi emir in Chechnya, the Saudi Arab Abdurrahman has issued a “fetwa” allowing slave trade and kidnapping with a view to getting ransom. The armed gangs of Wahhabis have invaded peaceful Daghestan, killed many people, including Muslims, but were eventually defeated and driven out.

Wahhabi teaching is extremist and inciting to activity aimed against the rights and freedoms of citizens, spreading war propaganda, fanning national and religious enmity and conflicts, violating state security and public law and order, organizing illegal armed units, and forcibly changing the constitutional structure of the Russian Federation.

Islamic extremism has no difference from any other form of ideological coercion. It is intolerant toward representatives of other confessions and trends even within Islam itself.

The attitude of radical Islam to the states inhabited by people of other faiths is based on the concept of “sacred war” contained in the Koran and evolved in the lifetime of the first caliphs. According to this concept, Islam should wage a constant war against all infidels and adherents of other faiths until they are either killed or completely suppressed.

Islam is used as an instrument by dishonest politicians and religious leaders for reaching their own aims. Modern political institutions and administrative bodies are objects of the aggressive attacks of religious extremists, which, as they claim, are the main obstacle in the way of establishing the foundations of a new religious order.

Religious extremism is a socio-political movement striving to influence the social development process proceeding from religious-legal standards and theological dogmas. Religious extremism does not differ from any other form of ideological coercion. It is expressed in absolute intolerance toward representatives of other confessions or in a confrontation within any one confession.

Religious terrorism is the extreme form of religious intolerance and hatred, the tactics or strategy of religious groups expressed in systematic, organized and religiously founded use of terror for achieving certain aims.

It should be said that religious extremism has never been expressed or manifested in “pure form.” As a rule, the true causes of religious conflicts have always been economic and political interests. For example, the real reasons for spreading Wahhabi ideas are the desire of certain Islamic states, Saudi Arabia, first and foremost, to

expand their sphere of political influence, and also to regulate demand-supply and price formation on the world oil market.

Assessing the general situation in the North Caucasian region it should be noted that the Islamic factor has made a very negative impact on its development. Such course of events creates prerequisites for disintegration, local ethno-confessional and ethno-territorial conflicts, and the isolation of the North Caucasian republics from Russia, which will ultimately lead to the establishment of geopolitical control of Muslim countries over this vitally important region of Russia.

With a view to stabilizing the socio-political situation in the region and preventing threats to the security and territorial integrity of Russia from Islamic extremism it is necessary to evolve and implement a comprehensive program of protecting security of the South of Russia, including political, economic, social, legal and military-strategic aspects.

The possible radicalization of Muslims under the impact of extremist Islamic organizations in central regions of Russia (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Kalmykia), as well as the growing influence of radical Islamism in Siberia and the Russian Far East against the backdrop of socio-economic disarray should not be excluded.

The anti-Russian forces in the West and in the Muslim world render broad support to Islamic extremists in Russia. They instill in the minds of Russian Muslims the idea of their “isolation from the united Muslim world,” “infringement of the rights of the Muslim population,” or its “inadequate representation in the state legislative and executive bodies.” Attempts are being undertaken to present Russia as the “main enemy of Muslims in the world.” Islamic extremism is used for creating and maintaining constant seats of tension in the North Caucasus.

We now observe the expansionist claims of the Islamic world fanned by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and extremist

organizations of certain Asian and African countries, attempts are undertaken in certain countries to push Islamic and Orthodox Christian civilizations onto the path of confrontation, turn Russia into a testing ground, and use it as a buffer against the penetration of Islamic extremism in Western Europe.

Apart from that, in such parts of the Russian Federation as Daghestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Kabarda-Balkaria, Adygea, Karachay-Chercessia, and some others, hidden preparations are being made for the creation of a separate national Islamic state independent from Russia and with an international status. This process is called “creeping separatism,” but nobody talks of it openly now.

In view of the above-said concerning the Islamic factor and its influence on the separatist tendencies in Russia it is necessary to step up the efforts of all bodies of power to fight separatism in the parts of the Russian Federation inhabited by people with traditional Muslim faith.

The struggle against Islamic extremism should be waged with reliance on and support from Muslims themselves and their spiritual and public leaders. The state should act together with the loyal representatives of the Muslim clergy and heads of Islamic public and political organizations.

The number of Russian Muslim students going to study in countries with the strong influence of the radical Islamic circles should be limited.

As to teachers and instructors invited from abroad, they should adhere to moderate Islamic orientation.

Wahhabi teaching should be banned in Russia because it is in sharp contradiction with the Russian constitutional principles and legal standards, which envisage the right of the citizens of the Russian Federation to freedom of conscience. But Wahhabi teaching contains

standards and concepts oriented to unlawful activities running counter to the Law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations.

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**THE CIS COUNTRIES. UZBEKISTAN**

**Demography.** According to the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the number of the republican population increased by 1.5 percent in 2011, and reached 29 million 559.1 thousand in 2012. There were 626,900 newly-born babies. The number of the deceased was 144,700. The population surplus was 435,700 people. The towns and cities account for 51 percent of the country's population (15 million 069,600). The rural areas are inhabited by 49 percent (1,489,500). The ethnic composition of the population is as follows: Uzbeks – 80 percent, Tajiks – five percent, Russians – 4.5 percent, Kazakhs – 3.5 percent, Kara-Kalpaks – two percent, Tatars – 1.1 percent, Kyrgyz – one percent, Turkmen – 0.7 percent, Koreans – 0.6 percent. In all, the republic is inhabited by representatives of more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups. The able-bodied people account for 68.8 percent.

**Family problem.** The republican center “Oila” (“Family”) attached to the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan has submitted amendments to the Family Code with a view to raising the age limit of girls for marriage from 17 to 18 years. The Center's experts note that 17-year-old girls are not yet ready for motherhood and family responsibility. During the past year there were 283,000 registered

marriages. Twenty years ago 42.7 percent of girls got married before reaching 19, whereas now the average age of entering into marriage is 21 – 22 among girls and 24 – 25 among young men. The size of duty for divorce has been increased to 20 minimal wages, that is, 1.26 sum (\$700). According to sociological polls, 85.2 percent of Uzbekistan's citizens consider that the state takes enough care of their families and note that the family is the crucial factor in the system of social orientations and in the formation of the moral standards. The most important family values are respect for the old, good behavior in society, modesty and industriousness, and concern for the younger generation. More than half of respondents said that love is the most important condition for a happy marriage life. Then they named common interests, sincere and trust-based relations between husband and wife and a similar educational level. The state of health also plays a major role in the future family life. The state proclaimed the year 2012 the “Year of Firm Family,” which shows that the state devotes much attention to family problems.

**Migration.** The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Uzbekistan and representatives of the administration of Smolensk region of Russia organized presentation ceremonies of the socio-economic and migration potential of the region for Uzbek citizens in Tashkent and Almalyk within the framework of the project of the Russian Cultural Center of Uzbekistan on December 13–15, 2012. Uzbek guests at the ceremonies were told about Smolensk region, its infrastructure, industry, agriculture and cultural life.

**Education.** There are 70 higher educational institutions with the student body of 260,000 in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Apart from that the republic boasts 1,536 colleges and lyceums with 1.5 million students and 9,779 general public schools with 4,577,000 pupils. The total number of school textbooks printed by 2012 was 17 million 135

thousand. In 2011 the republican municipal authorities repaired or reconstructed about 580 school buildings, and 45 new schools were built in rural districts. Additional equipment, including computers, was granted to more than 520 schools.

Measures have been worked out for the introduction of broad professional education for 9-year school graduates. About twenty hostels have been built and opened for college graduates who needed board and lodging.

Agreements between colleges and industrial and agricultural enterprises have been concluded with a view to organizing curricular practical training for students and subsequent job placement. In this way more than 390,000 school and college graduates received jobs.

On February 18–25, 2012, the Russian Education Week was held in Uzbekistan with the participation of representatives of higher educational establishment of the Russian Federation. Among them were Irkutsk State Technical University, Tyumen State University, Mari State University. The Week ended with a round-table about innovative cooperation between higher educational institutions of Russia and Uzbekistan. Participants in the round-table discussed questions of interaction in the sphere of the implementation of joint innovation projects aimed at further consolidating all-round cooperation between the two countries. It was proposed to set up a center of innovative cooperation in the development of the economy and innovative technology.

**Health protection.** About 137 billion sum and \$136 million, apart from the budget means, have been earmarked for the reconstruction and equipment of hospitals and other medical institutions. Annual medical examination and prophylactic measures cover 5.9 million women. More than 243,000 pregnant women living in rural districts regularly get multivitamin preparations free of charge. All

children without exception are immunized. The achievements in the health protection sphere have been duly appraised by the World Health Organization and UNISEF. Uzbekistan holds a worthy place among the ten leaders in the “Save the Children” rating. There are several higher medical educational institutions training doctors and nurses. They work in cooperation with leading clinics and research centers in other countries. The share of expenditures on health protection in the state budget comprises 15.7 percent and in the GDP – 4.1 percent. All medical aid in the republic is free.

**Employment.** Due to certain specific features of Uzbekistan, above all the demographic problems, the problem of employment continues to be one of the urgent ones. As a result of the implementation of territorial programs of employment about one million new jobs have been opened, 68 percent of which are in rural areas. Small businesses, private entrepreneurship and the creation of farms have also provided additional jobs.

**Rights of minorities.** A high official of the OSCE noted in March 2011 that Uzbekistan's relations with this organization were steadily developing in all directions, particularly, in parliamentary contacts, and the protection of human rights and law and order. He emphasized that special attention was devoted to ensuring interethnic accord. People of all nationalities and ethnic groups live in peace, irrespective of their language, confession or social origin. Their rights are guaranteed by law. Uzbekistan is cooperating with OSCE in such spheres as the strengthening of regional security and stability, development of institutions of civil society, expansion of international economic and humanitarian partnership, and ecology. Uzbekistan and OSCE exchange experience in the work of the legal system, especially in the protection of human rights and interests, as well as those of national minorities.

**Life of the diaspora.** A round-table devoted to the memory of the great poet, thinker and state and military leader of Uzbekistan Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur on the occasion of the 528<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth took place in Astrakhan, a city in the lower reaches of the Volga River, in February 2012. An evening devoted to the 570<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the great Uzbek poet, thinker and state figure Alisher Navoi was arranged in Moscow also in February 2012. Similar gathering on this occasion was held in Ankara organized by the Uzbek diaspora with the help of the General Consulate of Uzbekistan in Turkey. In August the Uzbek diaspora in New York opened a mosque in Brooklyn. Sacred texts are read in the Uzbek and Russian languages because there are many people from various countries and regions of the former Soviet Union among the mosque congregation. There are plans to open another mosque attached to this one.

**Religion.** By December 31, 2011, there were 2,225 religious organizations registered in Uzbekistan 92 percent of which are Muslim of Sunni trend. Shi'ites comprise not more than one percent of Uzbek Muslims. There are 175 religious organizations representing confessional minorities, 58 of which are Christian, the Korean Protestant Church – 52, the Russian Orthodox Church – 37, Baptists – 23, the Roman Catholic Church – 5, the Lutheran Church – 2, the Armenian Apostolic Church – 2. Apart from that, there are eight Judaic organizations, one Buddhist temple, etc.

**Fight against extremism.** A whole arsenal of extremist literature of the “Hizb ut-Tahrir” party was found in March of 2012 in a Samarkand mosque. In the course of a military operation a group of Uzbek militant fighters trying to cross the border with Afghanistan was destroyed. It was commanded by one of the military leaders of the Islamic movement IDU of Uzbekistan.

**The mass media.** There are 1,243 units of the mass media in the country: 704 newspapers, 254 magazines, 165 Internet sites, 63 TV stations, 36 radio stations, and four information agencies. Forty-three percent of printed publications, 53 percent of TV channels and 85 percent of radio channels belong to the non-governmental sector.

The number of people using the Internet reaches 7.7 million.

*“Etnopolititicheskaya situatsiya v Rossii i sopredelnykh gosudarstvakh v 2011 godu,” Moscow, 2012, pp. 595–603.*

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(Original article written by the author in English)

## **GEOPOLITICS OF U.S. WALKING OUT FROM AFGHANISTAN**

After 13 (15 in 2014 at the time of departure) years of unsuccessful war, U.S. withdrawal may cause a major political, security and strategic vacuum in Afghanistan, which may not only further deteriorate the situation in the country, but also cause many problems in neighboring and regional states. These states have their own political, economic and security interests and objectives in Afghanistan. Therefore these states will try to influence Afghanistan in many ways after the departure of the U.S. Therefore the interests, role and strategy of Pakistan, India, Russia, Iran, China and Turkey has been analyzed in detail in this paper. This paper also discusses different partnerships which emerge in Afghanistan after the exit of the U.S. and the allied forces.

As the date of U.S. exit from Afghanistan is coming nearer, doubt and perplexity are also rising because none is ready to believe that the U.S. will leave Afghanistan without achieving the declared and

undisclosed goals even after spending nearly one trillion dollars and thousands of deaths. Though the killing of Osama can provide a political reason to walk out but it was not the only aim of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

One of the prime objects of the U.S. military action in Afghanistan was to remove Taliban and their ability as resistance force. President George Bush announced this on the eve of Afghan war on Sunday, October 7, 2001.

“On my order the United States military have begun strikes against Al-Qaeda terrorist camps and military installations and of Taliban regime.

These carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the Afghan terrorist base of operation and attack the military capability of Taliban.”

Bush also spoke that now Taliban will pay the price because they did not accept U.S. demand. It was clear in the speech that as well as with destruction of Al-Qaeda network, removing of Taliban was also prime objective of NATO’s prime intention. When OEF was declared it was not mentioned how long it will go and how success would be measured, though Pakistan’s president Pervez Musharraf assured Pakistani people the action would be soft and would end very soon. But he did not describe what he meant by “soft and soon.” U.S. also assured that military action would be against Al-Qaeda and Taliban and civilians would be safe, but casualties of innocent civilians were very high in comparison of militants as UN described it as unacceptably high. After completion of ten years of war in Afghanistan, former top U.S. military commander General Stanley McChrystal stated that “allies are only 50 percent of the way,” he also claimed that “we did not know enough and still do not know enough.” He also raised the question about approach to Afghanistan as he boldly stated: “Most of

us, me included, had a very superficial understanding of the situation and history, and we had a frighteningly simplistic view of recent history, the last fifty years.”

One of the leading think tanks of U.S. on foreign policy “Council on Foreign Relations” also described “there is no certain end in sight for U.S. involvement and concern going over the United States capacity to bring stability to the country and region even after 2000 U.S. soldiers and cost of \$444 billion” (Jayshree Bajoria, 2011). It is clear that leading intellectuals on foreign policy experts are losing their patience and declaring whole Afghan war as failure and event they are blaming U.S. for not having capacity to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and region. This is direct question mark on U.S. status of peace guarantor in Afghanistan and region. If now U.S. has not guts and ability to bring peace in Afghanistan and region, what should U.S. do on this juncture? Leave Afghanistan and region or develop the ability as U.S. claimed. As the U.S. and allies facing deep financial crises and public is also has been tried, so they cannot go ahead to maintain their pressure and presence in region and Afghanistan at required level, as well as to develop the capacity and ability to maintain peace and stability in the region is concern all best possible efforts have been made by U.S. and allies (NATO) with failure.

Beyond the declared official goals U.S. also defined some hidden (real) aims in Afghanistan also as many experts suggest. Through its presence in Afghanistan and region U.S. got the opportunity to create military crescent surrounding its arch rivals as Russia, China and Iran. One of the objectives was to weaken the influence and interactions of Islamic revivalists of the south, west and Central Asian region. Other major objective was also to control energy resources and their transportation in the region especially from Central Asia and Iran. Though U.S. does not need Central Asian energy resources for its

domestic consumption but control over these resources may be used as political weapon against producers and consumers of these resources.

Now it is evident that U.S. has failed not only in its military goals but also in its hidden agenda. Only secret raid in Pakistan and killing of Osama can be counted a minor success.

### **Really Walk Out?**

So the 64-million dollar question is whenever U.S. and allies could not achieve even a single goal completely after ten years of efforts, would U.S. really leave Afghanistan and the region? If U.S. would leave Afghanistan and the region U.S. would lose historic opportunity to dominate in South and Central Asia and would also lose its grip in West Asia as well. Not even U.S. would lose opportunity but its image as global leader and superpower would diminish. This also motivates big regional powers like Russia and China to extend their influence in the area and beyond. More importantly, this variant would cast a deep shadow on future strategic and defense vision of U.S. armed forces. Question would be also raised on NATO relevance. Suppose just after evacuation from Afghanistan in 2014 if any big or like 9/11 event occurred in U.S. and allied country, would they be able to launch operation or wars like 2001 in Afghanistan. If yes, they have shown their failure in Afghanistan, so it would not be possible to assure and persuade their people for another long and pre-decided defeated war. If not, it will create their image of banana peel. So just after withdrawal from Afghanistan and the region U.S., would be in lose-lose situation.

### **If not Withdrawal Completely**

Before leaving Afghanistan U.S. is working on two fronts, first it is trying to naturalize Taliban and other militant groups through talks

and dialogue. U.S. has promoted Taliban as “not U.S. enemy.” U.S. also mentioned that U.S. never declared Taliban as enemy in the past. U.S. vice president Biden expressed “That’s critical. There is not a single statement that the president has ever made in any of our policy assertions that the Taliban is our enemy because it threatens U.S. interests.” On other strategy U.S. is conducting strategic dialogue with Karzai government to find out the ways to maintain its presence in major bases even after evacuation from Afghanistan in 2014. Consequently, U.S. and Afghanistan signed a strategic pact in Afghanistan on May 2, 2012 which allows U.S. to maintain its presence in Afghanistan beyond 2012’s so-called withdrawal. The signed agreement stated that “Afghanistan shall provide U.S. forces with continued access to and the use of Afghan facilities through 2014 and beyond as may be agreed in Bilateral Security Agreement for the purpose of combating al-Qaeda and its affiliates, training the Afghan National Security forces, and other mutually determined missions to advance shared security interests.”

No doubt U.S. got the success to maintain its presence even at minimum level, now U.S. presence would be prolonged indefinitely in the region and the region would be new battle ground for new cold war, because all regional countries as China, Russia, Iran and Pakistan do not see U.S. presence in their favor and they would try to diminish U.S. presence and influence in the region. As all U.S. rivals and potential rivals exist in this region, U.S. would try to weaken them by making its presence in the region that would also help to maintain its single and sole superpower status in the world. U.S. can use rogue and anti-nation elements of these countries to weaken these countries, as Baluchistan issues can be used to pressurize and weaken Pakistan. U.S. can support rogue elements of Xinjiang and Tibet against China and Chechen and Central Asian militants can be supported to work against Russia. As

Baluchistan issue was raised in U.S. Senate and increasing violence in Tibet and Xinjiang in recent years can be seen in this perspective. Hence, Taliban give up or not, if U.S. presence would be continuing regional security of Central, South and West Asia would be on risk.

### **If Exit**

If talks with Taliban fail and U.S. decided to withdraw from Afghanistan at maximum level, it would be last nail in the U.S. supremacy. This evacuation put question mark on U.S. ability to intervene in different global issues militarily. This is interesting to know that how Taliban and other players of the region as Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, India and Turkey would react.

This is very strange to know that after U.S. and NATO withdraw, what would be Taliban's strategy to capture and control Afghanistan. Taliban have four options in their post U.S. withdrawal scenario.

1. To start military strikes against Kabul government and try to capture Kabul and later whole Afghanistan as they did in 1995 – 2000. If Taliban would adopt this policy certainly it would fail because this time Kabul government is not so weak and it is democratically elected government. Their keen supporters as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are not in that position to support of in 1995 manner. This time Pakistan is also suspicious about Taliban as leaked report indicated. But if Taliban assured Pakistan to protect Pakistan all type of interest, then Pakistan can play some card in favor of Taliban.

2. If Taliban realized that it is just impossible to capture and control Kabul alone, who would be partner of Taliban and what would be methods. Taliban can shake hands with Hikmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami and other anti-U.S. and Karzai groups, specially with Pashtun groups. Karzai can also come with Taliban if he would feel any threat from

northern alliance to his chair. Karzai's efforts to talk with Taliban may be seen in this context.

3. Taliban can create political party by proxy and openly win the support of majority of Pashtun, if they would participate in political process in any manner Pakistan and China can support to win political power.

4. If all above options fail Taliban can launch long (enduring) offensive until capture whole Afghanistan or completely wipe out from Afghanistan.

### **Pakistan Role in Post-U.S. Afghanistan**

Pakistan always considers Afghanistan as strategic depth in any war and crisis and still talked in this manner. Consequently, any anti-Pakistan or less friendly Afghanistan will hit Pakistani interests in Afghanistan and the region, and Pakistan will not accept any that type of Afghanistan. Any anti-Afghanistan would also be threat for Pakistani internal security. Especially India's involvement in Afghanistan creates anxiety in Pakistani establishment.

Pakistan facing energy and economy crises and its reach to Central Asia and beyond can resolve both problems, in this scenario also a friendly and establish Afghanistan is essential to achieve economic goals. Afghanistan is also sitting on trillion of mineral resources, and if Afghanistan would be friendly and established that can help Pakistan in great manner to directly engage in developing these mineral resources and provide different types of facilities as transport, transit, technical and labor support and can provide coastal facilities to support these resources, therefore northern alliance led government and any that type of government would harm Pakistan's interest in Afghanistan, so Pakistan would try to manage a pro-Islamabad Kabul, if Pakistan fails to manage any pro-Pakistan establishment in

Afghanistan, then Pakistan would try to unstable to Afghanistan at that level that could not be used by any anti-Pakistan player like India.

Taliban also know that even after all mistrust and clashes, only Pakistan can provide solid support to maintain their presence and influence in Afghanistan so Taliban (and Taliban-type militant) would be all time favorite for Pakistani policy-makers and political and military establishment.

### **Chinese Role and Engagement in Post-U.S. Afghanistan**

China always stated “Independent, Stable and Free from outside interference Afghanistan.” China is cooperating with Afghanistan to some extent and enjoying benefits from Afghanistan’s mine industry and other investments. But long time U.S. presence is not in favor of China.

There are three dimensions of Chinese strategy in Afghanistan.

U.S. presence in Afghanistan, Central and South Asia is certainly against Chinese interests as experts argue that U.S. wants to contain China to maintain its global supremacy. U.S. military presence near the Chinese border and in top priority area for defense and energy strategy would encourage rivals of China to act against Chinese interests. U.S. military presence in the region would be pressurizing China not to take any aggressive or offensive steps to achieve its foreign policy or military goals. Except long-term presence in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, the new military doctrine of U.S. in South Pacific in which U.S. would increase its presence in that region as a tactic to cover Chinese from both sides.

China does not see Taliban or Islamic forces in its support and U.S. presence in this region contained this problem at some level. As China is facing separatist movement in Xinjiang and Tibet many

elements of East Tibetan Islamic Movement (TIM) have support and training bases in Afghanistan, Central Asia and in Pakistan as some news reports indicated. U.S. evacuation and shrinking presence can boost up new sprite in anti-Chinese elements. But other side of coin is that U.S. is using these forces to contain China also. Reports revealed violence and attacks on Chinese police in Xinjiang have increased in the last ten years as U.S. reached in the region. So if U.S. will continue to stay in the region, it may use these groups to weaken China.

No doubt if Taliban and like-minded groups dominate in post-U.S. Afghanistan, and Chinese militant groups can find support and aid in Afghanistan and the region, but as China has successfully contained these in pre-U.S. presence periods China can tackle Taliban in post-U.S. situation. If U.S. can conduct talks with Taliban, China can also establish official relations with Taliban and offer all type of help to reconstruct Afghanistan and to accept their control over Kabul, if they assure China not to provide and support anti-Chinese elements. On this juncture Taliban also must realize of their purpose is dominant in Afghanistan it will not be possible without China, Russia and Pakistan and they would have to avoid support to Xinjiang and Chechnya separatists. There is no doubt they should raise human right-related issues in natural way but to provide support to anti-Chinese, Russia, Central Asia and Iran factions not only would threaten their influence in Afghanistan, but their legitimacy also. Pakistan would also not support them to work against Chinese and Russian interests.

The third dimension is about energy and other material resources in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Since China is second largest and fastest economy in the world and has to import more than fifty percent of its total oil consumption and big amounts of other resources to feed its more than 1.5 billion population, and to maintain economic growth. China also is expected to import 85 percent of its oil needs in 2020.

Central Asian hydrocarbon and Afghan mineral resources can play important role in this regard. Only Turkmenistan's one gas project can fulfill fifty percent of Chinese demand. Turkmenistan also has the fourth largest gas reserves in the world, which can be exploited by China. China is also deeply engaged in other Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and invested billions of dollars; security of pipeline from Central Asia to China is major concern of Chinese policy. So not only security and political interests, but vital economic goals of China are at stake in Afghanistan and in the Central Asian region. Therefore to secure economic and energy interests and curb the influence of Xinjiang and Tibet separatists is top priority of China. Though China has not good gesture about Taliban but if they (Taliban) assured China to protect Chinese interests in Afghanistan and the region, China would give priority to Taliban in place of U.S. military presence in the region.

### **Russian Engagement in Post-NATO (U.S.) Afghanistan**

Russian goals in Afghanistan are nearly similar to those of China.

Russia does not want U.S. domination in the region, especially in its backyard Central Asia because U.S. presence limits Moscow's influence in the region and beyond.

This is the golden opportunity for Russia to strengthen its role in South and Central Asia, and also in the Middle East, to some extent. If Russia successfully makes an alliance with Pakistan, China and Iran, Russia can emerge as a regional leader. Pakistan is already fed up with U.S. Iran is enemy number one of U.S. and wants to keep U.S. away from the region, and China also knows that only Russia has the ability and courage to overcome the U.S. influence in the region as Russia has

all instruments like military, economy and technology. Russia is the immediate neighbor of the region and any upheaval in it certainly would have disastrous impact on Russia. The Central and South Asian region may emerge as top priority in Russian foreign policy. Russia would prefer Northern Alliance in Afghanistan because it is reliable and trusted enemy of Taliban. Northern Alliance also does not support any anti-Russian militants in Afghanistan and Central Asia. But if Northern Alliance loses control over Kabul and inclined toward U.S. or shifts control to Pakistan or Taliban, then Russian policy would be in buck.

As Taliban would be indispensable for Afghanistan's stability and if Taliban would follow its old policy to provide head out and training to Chechen and Central Asian militants it will not be acceptable for Russia but if this time Taliban adopted pragmatic policy and assured Russia not to support any anti-Russian elements, especially Chechen militants, then Russia can come negotiate with Taliban. Drug trafficking from Afghanistan is serious problem for Russia. Taliban curbed it very successfully during their rule in Kabul. Russia can support Taliban for this reason also. Pakistan is going to play important role in post-U.S. Afghanistan. Therefore Russia is improving relations with Pakistan. Russian companies' interests in Pakistani energy sector especially in pipeline from Iran which is under sanctions by U.S. can be seen in the background.

Though this is the golden opportunity to Russia to strengthen its role in South and Central Asia, but Russian attitude and behavior is major constraint to play the leading role in its backyard and near it, because Russia never perceives itself as the leader in the region and in global perspective after the Cold war. If Russia successfully builds alliance with Pakistan, China and Iran, Russia can emerge as a leader in Central Asia, South Asia, and even in the Middle East, to some extent.

Pakistan is already fed up with U.S. and can come forward to establish strategic relations with Russia and Iran.

If Russia shows confidence to engage deeply and for a long time in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia (AFPACA) region, Russia has all instruments as military, economic and technological to prove its leadership. Powerful Chinese presence would certainly boost up Russian confidence as China is emerging prime rival in international politics and economy. Russia can use SCO and CSTO to replace NATO in any future crises and not to allow outsider power to give any chance to them to contain Russia.

### **India's Option in Post-U.S. Afghanistan**

India's relations with Afghanistan are very special and India's economic and strategic interests are at stake. India has invested more than \$2 billion and is involved in many development and reconstruction projects. Strategically also, Indian presence near Pakistan's western border (Afghanistan) would give an advantage to India against its arch rival. As India has second largest population and emerging economic power, so India needs cheap hydrocarbon and other resources to maintain its economic growth to feed its huge population. Afghanistan can help India not only by its natural resources but can also provide transit route to Central Asia. Domination of Taliban or any other anti-Indian government would not only pose security threat to India, but Indian investment and possibility to reach Central Asia would be in jeopardy.

Continued U.S. presence and involvement is in favor of India, but if U.S. is really to withdraw or reduce its presence significantly, the Northern Alliance led government would be Indian priority. But if Taliban emerged stronger in post-U.S. scenario India may establish relations with Taliban also. Indian efforts to improve relations with

Pakistan can be seen in this perspective. As U.S. is not reliable partner this is historical opportunity for India to establish itself as responsible, unbiased and powerful guarantor of peace and stability in the region. India should take some steps to resolve all disputes with Pakistan and China to extend its strength as a serious contender in the region in post-U.S. situation. This is the failure of Indian foreign policy and diplomacy that India considers a threat in different parts of the Muslim world like U.S. and Israel. Though India is not like U.S. and Israel but some time propaganda by Pakistan and hardcore Muslim groups India is depicted as anti-Muslim society, specially Babri Masjid demolition and Gujarat carnage type events represented a very ghastly image of India in the Islamic world.

Islamic movement including Taliban must realize that India is second largest population in the world and one of the fastest growing economies in the world. India is facing many internal and external security challenges and has reasonable and legitimate rights to defend its interests in South and Central Asian regions. Pakistan and political Islamic groups like Jamaat-e-Islami and militant groups like Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami need to realize their policy in given this framework.

India is the home of the second largest Muslim population in the world and their development and prosperity is directly related to India's progress and development, politically also Indian Muslims are also facing several challenges by anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic elements in India. If political and non-political (militant) Islamic groups would adopt a soft approach about India that would not only help Indian Muslims, but would also rally around the good environment in favor of Islam in India. Apart from this, neighbor's importance is undoubtedly established by the last Prophet in his various discourse and talk, he stressed on excellent relations and behavior with neighbor without discrimination of religion, caste, race and color. Prophets described the

rights of neighbor's as narrated Abdullah ibn Umar. The Prophet (peace be upon Him) said: The best friend in the sight of Allah is he who is the well-wisher of his companions, and the best neighbor is one who behaves best towards his neighbors. Transmitted by Tirmidhi. – Al-Timidhi, Number 120.

Narrated Abdul Rahman ibn AbuQurad: The Prophet (peace be upon Him) performed ablution one day and his companions began to wipe themselves with the water he had used. The Prophet (peace be upon Him) asked them what induced them to do that, and when they replied that it was love for Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon Him), he said: "If anyone is pleased to love Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon Him) or rather to have Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon Him) love him, he should speak the truth when he tells anything, fulfill his trust when he is put in a position of trust, and be a good neighbor." Bayhagi transmitted it in Shu'ab al-Imam. – Al-Timidhi, Number 1289.

Narrated AbulHurayah: The Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings be upon Him) observed: He will not enter Paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct – Sahih Muslim 15.

All these hadiths are compulsory and part of the faith to follow for each Muslim as well as are obligatory for Islamic republics, countries, states and nations also. Muslim political and militant groups are expected to formulate their policies towards their neighbors in the light of the guidance of given (above) and other hadiths. As India is the neighbor of Pakistan and Afghanistan therefore if India has reasonable economic and other interests in the region of Afghanistan, Central Asia and elsewhere, this is their religious duty to cooperate with India to achieve its legitimate (which are not harmful for them) goals. This policy can be taken as make India soft in favor of peace and prosperity of the region.

## **Iran's Engagement in Post-U.S. Afghanistan**

If any country would be more relaxed by withdrawal from or reduction of U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, Iran may be named.

During the 1995 – 2000 when Taliban was strengthening its positions in Kabul and the rest of Afghanistan, experts were predicting Taliban's possible clash with Tehran because of their negative approach to Shi'ite Iran. Iran was also very suspicious about Taliban. But this is interesting the Taliban never posed any serious threat to Iran's security and Iran also never complained about Taliban and notably U.S. always blames Iran for supporting Taliban against NATO forces. Iran always denied any support to Taliban and constantly shows its support to Karzai government.

As U.S. presence in Afghanistan is major security threat to Taliban because Iran shares long border with Afghanistan and in any war and military clash, Afghan territory can be used against Iran.

In post different anti-Iran terrorist groups can use Afghanistan specially Afghan Bloch (Junaidullah) is always blamed about terrorist activities against Iran with the support of U.S. and NATO. New tussle on Iran's nuclear program and threat of war against Iran mounting new pressure on Iran and U.S. long time presence would make Tehran more curious.

In post-U.S. Afghanistan Northern Alliance-led government with significantly shared by Shi'ite groups would be in Iran's priority. But if Taliban or Taliban-influenced government with ready to address Iran's concern in Afghanistan and the region would be dominated in Kabul, Tehran can also conditionally support Taliban. Iran can also motivate to Shi'ite groups to support Taliban against U.S. if Taliban assures Iran not to work against Iran's interests. Iran can work with Russia and India to bring neutral Tehran if not any equation would make. Drug trafficking from Afghanistan is also a big concern for Iran and Taliban

and drug and opium policy can relief to Iran. Iran is very desperate to sale its oil and gas to Asian markets a friendly Afghan government which can avoid U.S. pressure to give transit and other facilities. No doubt only Taliban and Taliban-supported government would be favorable for Iran in this regard.

### **Role and Opportunities for Turkey in Post-U.S. Afghanistan**

Turkey is the only Muslim country who is the member of NATO. Being the member of NATO Turkey is the part of invaders of Afghanistan. Currently Turkey has 1,750 soldiers in Afghanistan. Turkey has lost 14 soldiers during patrolling operations. Turkey is not the part of South or Central Asia and has only traditionally links and operates foreign policy without extraordinary ambitions. But post-U.S. Afghanistan can provide a good opportunity to engage in this region with ambitious and positive attitude. It would be interesting to know that can Turkey sign a bilateral treaty with Afghanistan as individual as well would be part of remained NATO forces after 2014. If Turkey wants to play any role in this region now regional geopolitical order is in favor of Turkey. It would not only be beneficial economically, but will improve its image internationally. Iran and Pakistan are good friends and Central Asian states always have ethnic and historical links with Turkey. Though Russia and China would not like effective engagement of Turkey in this region, but Iran and Pakistan can create space for it. As Turkey also making distance from Europe and reposting itself toward Asia engagement in Afghanistan and other regional issues may be first good step to go long engagement. Current Turkey's ruling party has Islamic route and considered liberal Islamist and as U.S. is emerging anti-Islamic or Muslim face throughout Islamic world, in future relations between U.S. (West) and Turkey may be cold, therefore

it will be good to prepare to shift to China, Russia and Iran in the future and active role in this region is the way towards this. It is evident that in which manner U.S. is losing its influence in South, Central and West Asia, a new alliance may emerge after 2014 and Turkey is the only Muslim country which can be acceptable to lead because Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia have failed to unite the region. Turkey's democratic and liberal values attract a large population of the Muslim world and the West also has appreciated Turkey's role in this region which is infamous for its radical and militant approach.

## **Conclusion**

In the post-U.S. Afghanistan security situation and stability would depend on two notions.

1. How the Taliban would react after NATO evacuation. If they are not ready to be part of peace process and not ready to accept current constitution and political system then the situation would be totally deteriorated and a new civil war may break out in Afghanistan and in the region (Pakistan border areas and Central Asia). But as Taliban is showing their interest in talks and opening their political office, in future they can accept a political solution in which they would be part of the government with other militant group like Hizb-e-Islami and Haqqani group. Things would also depend on how current ruling groups including Northern Alliance are ready to accept Taliban as legitimate political power. Current ruling groups show their distance from any solution if Taliban would claim leadership.

2. Neighbors and regional countries would play crucial role in post-U.S. Afghanistan. Pakistan is the most important player and would try to dominate in Kabul with the help of China and Iran. Pakistan can take help from Russia as new partnership is emerging. Taliban would be the trump card for Pakistan. China, Iran and Russia see U.S.

presence with great distrust and would welcome U.S. withdrawal and can support Taliban if Taliban assures them not to support militant or separatist groups. India would try to convince U.S. to continue to make presence but would also try to influence current ruling setup with the help of Northern Alliance and other anti-Taliban and anti-Pakistan group but if this equation would not be possible, India may also support Taliban participation in government if Taliban assure not to provide any support to anti-Indian elements on Afghan soil. Turkey may emerge a facilitator with the help of Pakistan and Iran. U.S. would also welcome Turkey's engagement.

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**DILEMMA OF “VALUES AND INTERESTS” IN  
U.S. POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA**

Today, the geopolitical map of the Central Asian region is distinguished by enviable variety. It is in the focus of attention of many influential world players.

Russia holds traditionally firm positions in Central Asia. China is strengthening its positions in it. The European Union carries on its own strategy of “new partnership” in the region. The mechanism of “Dialogue Japan – Central Asia” is also working. Apart from that, Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, and a number of Arab countries are actively developing cooperation with Central Asian countries.

Such powerful country as the United States is not standing on the side of this process. It is striving to expand political and economic ties

with Central Asian countries and interacts with them on the questions of ensuring security in the region. Cooperation with a view to solving a whole range of problems connected with a settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan has acquired a special significance.

In the first half of the 1990s Central Asia was not viewed by Washington as a zone of well-formulated American interests.

From about 1995 the political course of the United States towards Central Asia began to change. This was due to the impact of a whole number of different factors. The “inclination” of Russian foreign policy toward the preferential development of connections with the West began to balance. On September 14, 1995, the then President B. Yeltsin endorsed the “Strategic course of Russia to states – participants in the Community of Independent States.” In accordance with it, the strengthening of Russia as the leading force in the formation of a new system of interstate, political and economic relations in the post-Soviet Union area was proclaimed the main task of Russian policy in the CIS. This was interpreted by the United States administration as a manifestation of “neo-imperial ambitions.”

As a result, at the beginning of the second term of Bill Clinton’s presidency in 1997 a new sphere of tension between Washington and Moscow emerged in the former Soviet republics. From that time on, it is possible to speak of the transfer of the American administration to rivalry with Russia for influence in Central Asia.

During President Clinton’s stay in the White House the “democratization” and “human-rights-protection” components of the U.S. policy in Central Asia noticeably strengthened. Various forms of economic and financial assistance to the states in the region were tied up, in one way or another, with the progress they reached in these spheres. In view of the fact that progress in these spheres was assessed as insufficient, the volumes of real American assistance were

comparatively small. Thus the dilemma of “values and interests” characteristic of the entire foreign-policy strategy of Washington in Central Asia at the time was solved in favor of universal values. Taking into account local specific features, this reduced the force of attraction of American policy. Time will show how this dilemma will continue to influence the U.S. relations with Central Asian countries, presupposing its inevitable “ups” and “downs.”

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, served as a powerful catalyst of the sharply growing attention to the Central Asian region which was in the forefront of the fight against terrorism. These events led to an essential reappraisal by Washington of the place of Central Asia in the system of its foreign-policy priorities, inasmuch as it acquired crucial importance for the operations in Afghanistan.

The United States received real opportunity for broadening its cooperation with the states of Central Asia.

The military campaign for combating and destroying terrorists in Afghanistan, whose rear support was coming from Central Asia, forced the United States to tackle the problems of ensuring stability in the region very seriously. In 2002 – 2003 Washington actively developed cooperation with the countries of the region in the sphere of defense, and political relations were also developing quite well (except with Turkmenistan).

It was at that time that the period of U.S. certain distancing from Central Asian affairs came to an end. The White House policy in the region became more dynamic and energetic, which gave grounds to some American experts to call it “aggressive realism.” Central Asia was not regarded as Russia’s “backyard” any longer, but had definite significance for Washington now. In the view of Professor Charles Zigler of Louisville University (U.S.A.), the U.S. government under President Bill Clinton and President George Bush, Jr. had to work a

great deal, trying to combine its efforts in order to draw Central Asian countries in cooperation on the problems of security with bringing pressure to bear on them in the sphere of human rights and economic and political reforms. In doing this, approaches and methods of the Department of State and the Secretariat for Defense did not coincide. The former believed that assistance to the development of democracy in the region was more important precisely at the time when the region was in the forefront of the fight against terrorism. The Department of State programs were aimed at supporting and financing political pluralism, the independent mass media, , supremacy of law, and religious freedom. Its reports on the human rights situation in Central Asian countries were full of harsh criticism, whereas the military paid attention primarily to cooperation with them in the sphere of security and tried to tone down critical remarks of diplomats. Professor Zigler believes that the U.S. administration, either republican or democratic, will hardly be able to reconcile contradictions between the requirements to ensure security and desire to follow the ideals of democracy and human rights, all the more so since this conflict existed long before the beginning of the fight against terrorism.

In 2003–2005 the United States tried to extricate itself from the most difficult situation in the following way. It took the thesis that success of American policy in the region would depend primarily on the development of democracy as the basis there. This was why it was decided to step up democratic processes in Central Asian republics. Simultaneously, it was stated that these processes would strengthen regional security and yield greater results of the struggle with the international terrorist network in Afghanistan.

The well-known Russian scholar Gennady Chufrin notes that western countries headed by the United States and inspired by the “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine tried to use discontent of

the broad masses of the population in Central Asia caused by their poor living conditions for changing the existing ruling regimes to openly pro-western ones under democratic slogans.

Experienced political analysts from the leading American government and public bodies specializing in the popularization of democratic values all over the world have been drawn to the implementation of this task.

In March 2005, as a result of the “tulip revolution” President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan, who was considered by Washington an exemplary liberal leader, was overthrown.

Soon after that, in May 2005, mass disorders broke out in Andizhan, the Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley. The rebels connected with the Islamist “Akramiya” organization, seized arms and hostages. The authorities of Uzbekistan had to use military force to suppress the revolt and restore law and order.

The events in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have confirmed that challenges to stability in the region come not only from Islamic extremism and international terrorism, but also from the United States which stepped on the path of exporting democracy and directly assisting “color revolutions.” This has caused justified alarm in the ruling elites of Central Asian countries.

Certain leading U.S. research centers have worked out the concept of “Greater Central Asia” at the time. It presupposed the formation of a uniform area of Central and South Asia, which would include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, as well as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Much has already been said and written about this concept. We shall now dwell on the point of view of the authors of the book entitled “Years That Changed Central Asia,” which came off the press in Moscow in 2009. They maintain that the United States needs Greater

Central Asia not so much for developing democracy as for completely controlling all economic and political processes in the region without interference on the part of other actors, such as Russia and China, or international organizations such as CSTO and SCO. Meanwhile, the democratization of Central Asia by western standards resulted in lowering their economic performance, inasmuch as the transit economies of the countries of the region require other measures and approaches.

In our view, several key aspects can be singled out with regard to the situation in and prospects for Central Asia.

Within the framework of the “aggressive realism” doctrine Washington proved unable to resolve the dilemma of “values and interests.” The priorities of U.S. policy in Central Asia have constantly been changed, which prevented to create their clear-cut hierarchy. The question remained open as to what the United States valued most of all: energy resources or military presence and cooperation in the sphere of security, or transparency of elections and freedom of the mass media. Meanwhile, as long as discussions were taking place overseas about Moscow’s weakness in the region, it suddenly became clear that Russia became a member of such integration structures as EuroAsEC, CSTO and SCO. Besides, the United States has no mechanism for interaction with Central Asian countries on a permanent basis. The course to speedy democratization of the countries of the region has not proved viable because it did not take into account their age-old traditions and world outlook. Oriental societies have always been distinguished by gradual and slow changes.

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