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**RUSSIAN ELITES IN THE MODERN  
NOMADIC CIVILIZATION**

Elite studies serve traditionally as the focus of research on political processes in the post-Soviet space. Usual objects of research are structural and functional characteristics or personal configurations of power groups. The prevalence of structural and functional discourses in the study of Russian elite and the demand for this obviously topical issue in the applied spheres overshadowed the deeper layers of meaning-of-life orientations and basic motivation of power groups. The solving of “structural and functional” research problems emphasizes the importance of considering these basic characteristics, since it is these that determine the phenomenology of political behavior – governance strategies, leadership and decision-making styles, axes of development of sub-elite communities, models of intra-elite relations and interactions along the elite-masses axis. Or, in Aristotle’s terms, the understanding of the *physics* of the process will put *metaphysical* problems on the agenda.

The consideration of historical context of changes in the qualities of elite groups and motives of behavior of Russian politicians of the current generation in the focus of this article.

In post-Soviet discourse, the concept of modernization has become the most discussed concept, as well as an acid test for the human potential of post-Soviet elites of recent years. However, in the post-Soviet space, modernization is a phenomenon more so of *consciousness* rather than of being. One of the frequently mentioned reasons for modernization failure in post-Soviet space is structural problems of economy, the financial crisis, and even natural and climate disasters. However, in my opinion, the reason for the failure of modernization project in the post-Soviet space are, to a degree, determined by the weakness of modernization values and attitudes in the structure of motivation characteristics of elites, i.e. specific characteristics of elite human capital *per se*. The fundamental attitudes of the latter had a significant effect on the configuration of specific manifestations of the inefficiency of public administration systems in the post-Soviet space. It concerns the features of recruitment and rotation of administrative and political bureaucracy (prevalence of patron-client relations and clan matrix in the elite development, levelling of meritocratic principles, virtual absence of a conceptually organized system of personal training, disproportionately big influence of private interests in comparison to public ones, non-optimality of relations of administrative bureaucracy with big business, high intra-elite conflict potential, etc.). Especially malignant are the patron-client relations in the processes of elite recruitment/ Despite the ambivalence of the phenomenon (a good example is Singapore, where patron-client relation between business and bureaucracy did not hamper modernization), clientelism remains an important factor in post-Soviet space. What are the origins of the limited modernization capability of post-Soviet elites?

I suppose that, alongside specific administrative dimensions. What are they?

While solving this problem I will address the provisions of L.N. Gumilev's ethnogeny theory and, first of all, its key provision – the idea that the changes of social groups and their leaders follow certain phases, the contribution of social actors into the historical and political process is of volatile nature, and the rise and decline of individuals and whole nations are transient.

The attempts to find an explanation for the irregularity of historical development through connecting this “phase nature” with the quality of human dimension of historical process inspired L.N. Gumilev to introduce the notion of passionarity as an equivalent of the term drive. This term was meant to denote the cumulative result of actions of ethnological, geographical and historical determinants as the “factor x” making people move “Passionarity is the ability and aspiration towards changing the environment”. When analysing the examples of passionarian individuals – Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Joan of Arc, Jan Hus, protopope Avvakum – L.N. Gumilev shows that the crucial elements is not personal heroism, but the creation of an ethnic dominant, which organizes the system's passionarity and drives it to the chosen target: “The work performed by an ethnic group is in direct proportion to the level of passionarian tension; “It is not passionarian individuals that do great deeds, it is the general attitudes, which can be called passionarity level.

This methodological hypothesis provides a framework for the solution to the “heroes vs. masses” dilemma as the agent of political actions. There is no doubt that the leading role in history is played by outstanding personalities, however, it does not suggest ignoring large social groups, but rather acknowledging their *mediated participation*: a large community becomes an agent as a result of its excessive energy (passionarity), which manifests in advancing prominent historical figures capable of solving large-scale historical tasks. One can

confidently speak of the deep connection between the community in general and the scale of leaders. Sometimes, energetic social movements emerge for petty reasons, just being an outlet for the overflowing energy of a young ethnos: “The means of maintaining the systems’ integrity depends on the era, or more precisely, the stage of ethnogeny. Within young systems, there is a close contact of elements... there is a passion that causes collisions . Bloodshed often has neither an ideological, nor a class content, occurring within one social layer”.

L.N. Gumilev’s ethnogeny concept developed on the basis of attempts, taken in earlier classics of social philosophy, to understand the nature of energy underlying the deeds of outstanding personalities and whole peoples. In particular, G.W.F. Hegel wrote in the *Philosophy of History* that nothing has been accomplished without passion. Numerous pages have been dedicated by F. Engels in his famous work on the origin of the family, private property, and the state to examining the role of individual passions in the development of historical process, including the lowest ones akin to cupidity, which resulted in the development of an antagonistic social class structure. The famous French Historian Augustin Thierry left a description of massive social movements driven by insatiable but not always fully understood energy: “The popular masses, when they are in movements, do not realise the exact nature of the impulse which dominates them; they advance by instinct towards the goal which they appear to be blindly following the particular interests of some leader whose name alone has made an impact in history: however, the very importance of proper names derives from the fact that they have served as rallying cries for the masses...”

Such upsurges are followed, as a rule, by declines, and the titans leading states in the times of ascending are replaced by the pygmies of

the times of decay. As to the features of post-Soviet politics, one can say that an extremely laconic characteristic of the current period of post-Soviet elite evolution is its definition as *a post-imperial stage*. The disintegration of the USSR, which had become the successor to the Russian Empire, at the peak of its might was initiated, to a great degree, by the national elite – the late Soviet *nomenklatura*. If the logic of leaders of national republics that comprised the USSR is evident – gaining independence from Moscow legitimacy – then they are hardly logical from the formal point of view of voluntary renunciation of power by the central elite. This was determined, to a great degree, by the features of international organisation, mentality, and attitudes of the national elite of the late 1980's. It is these features, that played the crucial role in the fate of the country.

I suppose that the three pillars of any empire are a *peculiar “grand design, excessive energy of population* (both vital and metaphysical passionarity), and *efficient technologies of recruitment of imperial elite*, which is aware of its mission. The aggregate of above factors comprises the metaphysical territory of empire, beyond which its physical body is not possible.

The first significant historiosophical empire *design* was the “Moscow Is the Third Rome” project. Later, there appeared other versions of this project; one of then was the Third International. It is not a coincidence that N. Berdyayev wrote that, instead of a Third Rome, Russia managed to be the Third International. A distinctive feature of the historiosophical doctrine of the Russian Empire (after 1917 – the USSR) was the *orientation towards development*: the “hand” of Moscow was heavy and cruel, but, on the periphery territories, it fulfilled the function of modernization. In this case, one can see certain similarities with the British Empire: despite the enormous cost of empire building, the empire was not considered by the British solely as

a source of profit, but rather as an interconnected community. The concept of “white man’s burden”, which had developed by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, emerged, to a degree, as a justification of the civilizing – modernizing – mission.

As to the *energy of population*, it is the passionarity and efficient energy of Russian population that has served as an inexhaustible resource, the “fuel” for the historical development of the country over long centuries. However, later, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which had no mercy on Russia, exhausted the earlier limitless resource of historical energy: several revolutions, the enforced system modernization of the country, and the victory in the most sanguinary of wars required such efforts that the population of the country found itself on the brink of psychological decline at the turn of millennium.

But the most important reasons determining the characteristics of post-imperial evolution of Russia lie in the *features of development and mentality of its political class*.

The features of Russian elite were determined by the character, conditions and pace of empire building in Russia. An important factor was the features of territorial development of the Russian Empire. The challenge of space – the gathering of lands, the need to explore and consolidate vast territories – is a major challenge for any empire; however, in the case of Russia, it was not just another challenge, it became one of the conceptual dominants in the process of state building and the source of legitimacy of power.

The dynamics of territorial expansion in the process of development of the Russian Empire was unprecedented. Beginning from just the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, on average, Moscow annually acquired lands roughly the size of modern Holland (over 150 years running!). By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Moscovian state occupied a territory equal to that of

the rest of Europe, while Siberia, annexed in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, had a territory twice that of Europe. (A. Toynbee wrote later that Russia paid for Siberia with civilization ...). By the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian state was the largest in the world; by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of Russia was 50 times that of Grand Duchy of Moscow under Ivan the III and embraced one-sixth of the populated land. So, the Russian Empire in terms of territory, was the second largest after the British Empire. The process of territorial expansion became a fundamental fact of Russian history “the history of Russia is a history of a country that is being colonized”.

In effect, the Russian ruling class has developed over the last five centuries as *geocracy – a layer meant to gather lands and rule over them*. Another, equally important factor was the *need to protect the conquered lands*. When describing the political system of the Moscovian state, Klyuchevsky emphasised that the original type of governance “is explained by the dominant interest that created it. This interest is external safety of the people. Over a significant part of its history, Russia was involved in defensive wars, which allowed Klyuchevsky to compare the Moscovian state with an armed camp.

In order to understand the role of space for the Russian elite of the historical past, one should recall F. Nietzsche’s idea of external and internal space: external space is comprised of formal – social, political, etc. – structures, while internal space contains the crucial areas of spiritual sphere – language, consciousness, etc. As a result of the combination of large-scale and rapid-pace territorial expansion of Russia and the need to protect it, the *land-territory* became both *external and internal* space for the Russian elite. Moreover, the gathering of lands and their protection became a factor of legitimacy of power, which was the main initiator of territorial expansion: “The main feature of Russian colonization is that its stimulant, organizer, and

regulator, was the centre – the core of power. Mass movement of population from the central provinces to Siberia was also possible only after those territories had been “conquered”, stratified, and absorbed by the power. It was the incitation or permission of the “centre” or appointed by the “centre voivodes”, residing in the main Siberian cities, or industrialist, stimulated by the authorities, that equipped the audacious expeditions of Semyon Dezhnev, Yerofey Khabarov, or Vasily Poyarkov. All the marks left by them on the geographical maps were not only announced as the property of Moscovian ruler, but also connected geopolitically to one of the centers of authority – if not immediately to Moscow, then to Yakutsk, which was ruled by the tsar’s voivode, i.e. became microcosms and later loci of power. Thus, space became an actual factor of legitimization of Russian power in the historical past.

Territorial expansion on such a large scale and at such a rapid pace against the background of insufficient financial resources and permanent external threats (it is not a coincidence that the Russian historian Sergey Solovyov, when speaking about Russia, used the phrases “poor country” and “poor people”) required unprecedented efforts from both the general population and the elite. It is the era of Peter the Great when the dispute between the supporters of territorial expansion and advocates of moderate increase in the territory emerged – the dispute that escalated in the Soviet period.

In the conditions of empire building, the recruitment of ruling class in Russia has followed the “public service model” since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. ‘privileges were a reward for serving the state’. This principle suggested that the administrative class of the state – its political elite – be granted *temporary* privileges as a reward for serving the state. Thus, over five centuries, the Russian political elite was represented by the highest echelon of administrative and political

bureaucracy. Stemming from the Moscovian state, thanks to Peter the Great's reforms, this principle evolved into a technology for building political structures in the Russian Empire. One can definitely say that the imperial elite of Russia dates back to the rejection of the seniority and landowning principle in favour of the “public service criterion”.

This criterion did not become the basis of the recruitment system by a coincidence: privileges became the “carrot”, necessary to lure people into public service, since, under Russian conditions, it was a far cry from the position of idle class. Moreover, Vasily Klyuchevsky stressed that, in Russia, mandatory public duties had affected the highest public servant classes most significantly.

The position of the Russian political class was indeed far from the status of a real elite, which created the demand for the formation of a Russian ruling class according to the principle of *temporary, dependent on the state service* privileges. This principle gave rise to the class of boyars in the Moscovian state, nobility and imperial bureaucracy in the Russian Empire, and party-related and economic *nomenklatura* in the USSR. This dominant historical principle of elite formation determined the permanent nature of its aspiration to acquire hereditary rather than temporary, dependent of public service, privileges. In this contest, one can mention Peter III's *Manifesto on the freedoms of nobility* (1762), affirmed by Catherine the Great *Charter to the Gentry* (1785). The acquisition of *full* privileges in the 1990s was a revolution of elites as a community aimed to implement particular interests and private goals (it is not a coincidence that back then the term “elite” was one of the most frequently mentioned). Moreover, property became a parameter for recruitment into power. *Privatization embraced not only the state but also the elite status*. From the bearer of a *mission*, it turned into a *private agent*. Empire building is an act of “prolonged” historical will, which requires passionarity Hegel was right

to say that nothing had been accomplished without passion. But passion wears us out. The imperial elite got weary of the imperial burden, and the disintegration of territory was a materialization of the renunciation of the imperial mission.

Perhaps, the renunciation of the mission by the elite and the exhaustion of passionarity of society would not have had such epoch-making consequences for the country, if they had not coincided with a deep transformation of global context. This transformation is of a multi-aspect nature, in this context, we will consider only two dimensions, namely, the weakening association of national political and economic actors with the “place of residence” and overall marketization of social relations system.

One of the first persons to characterize the philosophical and political consequences of the first above transformations as early as the beginning of the 1990s was the many-years’ advisor to President F. Mitterrand, ex-president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and author of dozens of books, the French economist and political scientist, Jacques Attali in his book entitled *Millennium: Winners and Losers in the Coming Order*. Attali described the emergence at the turn of the century of a new civilization development – a “nomad society”. The distinctive feature of this civilization is the development and large-scale introduction of mobile devices and technologies, the use of which will be accompanied by the loss of traditional attachment to the country, community, and family: “the privileged residents of both the European and Pacific spheres, and of the richest regions of their peripheries, will be empowered, liberated nomads bound by nothing but desire and imagination, greed and ambition. This new nomadic elite is already forming, severing its ties with any particular place, whether nation or neighborhood... The culture of choice, wed to the logic of the market, will deliver the means

for man to reach an unprecedented degree of personal autonomy. Possession of (or access to) nomadic objects will be regarded as a sign of liberty and power”.

Another related concept developed to characterize the new era is the notion of “«liquid» modernity” as a dynamic time-space flow, whose key actors are dispersedly organized inconspicuous governors without a link to a certain territory – which distinguishes them from masses clearly identifying themselves with a territory-state. An important characteristic of the new age elite is mobility. A. Neklessa coined a clear term to define this new generation “**homines aeris**”: “the complicated and modified system of power became accessible to the generation of “**homines aeris**” closely connected to post-industrial (non-material, *ethereal*) production. This new agent is global by definition and “does not have liabilities external to themselves: they do not have either voters or tax payers”.

This tendency became peculiar to the Russian elite, too. The cost of the privatization of elite status and acquisition by the former “class of public servants”, hereditary rather than dependent on public service privileges of an unprecedented scale, was the rejection of modernization and renunciation of the territories by the post-Soviet elites at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Territory lost the status of a legitimizing factor, which was replaced by the factor of ex-territoriality. To a great degree, Russian elites are an inalienable element of the nomadic generation of modern elites, whose legitimacy is associated with their limited integration into global communities.

However, when speaking of the renunciation of modernization mission, I do not resort to condemning pathos, at least because the responsibility for the fate of a country rests not only with the elites, but also with the society: every country has the government it deserves. The quality of ruling class is an acid test for the quality of society.

A crisis of leadership is a sign of a nation's decline. Whether this crisis is grave but temporary or permanent is a question open to discussion. In the *Philosophy of History*, Hegel divided peoples into historic and non-historic ones. The task of the former is to implement the will of the world spirit (or the meaning of history in Karl Jaspers' terminology) at different stages of history. Having implemented the historical mission, a people can acquire the status of a non-historic one. I would like to believe that in case of the Eurasian space, this final has not been written yet.

As to the second aspect of transformation, the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (not only in Russia, but throughout the world) marked the transition to a non-stationary system of social relations and a radical change in the role of politics and economy, when the large-scale *marketization of the system of social relations* became a dominant of social organization. In the sphere of politics, this transformation was manifested in *its turning into a business sphere and the formation of political markets as a type of economic markets based on the principles of direct exchange of supply and demand*. The latter are understood not only as a feature of modern election campaigns turned commercial processes, but as a *deep transformation of the system of relations between the governing and the governed*. This transformation affected the system of public administration – modern states assumed a service character, which makes them rather similar to the sphere of commercial services.

The above suggests a fundamental change in the mechanisms of legitimization of elites: “market is increasingly recognized as a proper source of legitimization”, while professional participants of political processes tackle *politics as business bringing their political behavior in line with business strategies*. It changes the legitimacy of the existing order and gives reasons to discuss the delegitimation of democracy as

an ideal and typical model of political regime and the transition to *post-democracy*.

This context serves as a fit setting for the results of empirical political and biographical studies into the composition of Russian political elite, according to which, a part of the ruling class (members of the State Duma, members of the Council of Federation, governors, and representatives of federal executive power) came to politics from business as political or classical entrepreneurs.

The data obtained in the above-mentioned political and psychological study correlate with the result of other studies carried out in different periods. For the first time the conclusion that the leading tendency in recruitment of Russian political elites is not the inflow of former defence and law enforcement officers but the massive transition of business people into the sphere of governance has been made in the project entitled *The most influential people of Russia*, which was implemented under my supervision.

The proof that entrepreneurship became the key framework for political activity was obtained through a study of the personnel of the State Duma in 1993–2011, as well as a European project on the study of personnel of national legislatures, which was supervised by the author of the article. Other studies based on the study of big business representation among the leading Russian politicians also show that business people have accounted for a significant per cent of the Russian political elite over the last 20 years.

Thus, the *immediate* (for instance, the Russian tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov running for presidency in the 2012 election) or *mediated* (entrepreneurs obtaining seats in the parliament or holding governor's office, which is a frequent phenomenon in Russia) participation of big business in political activities seems to be the most pronounced feature of modern Russian politics.

As to the participation of acting or former defence and law enforcement officers, an analysis shows that military or legal education is not an obstacle on the way of becoming efficient lobbyists in commercial structures, which also fits in with the mentioned traditions of overall marketization.

In Russia, the tendencies towards the overall marketization of the system of social relations and the changing mechanisms of elite legitimization are more evident than in the countries with established democratic traditions. The post-Soviet period has become more than a simple rejection of political and ideological foundations of the previous era – it has become a renunciation of the previous fundamental meaning.

Analyses of the features of Russian version of marketization should take into account its fundamental characteristic – the conglomerate nature.

This term coined by A. Bogaturov implies the existence of heterogeneous traditions and relations. In this context, it means the coexistence – alongside the system of market relations – of a fundamentally different – feudal – tradition. At the same time, these traditions are interpenetrating rather than *parallel*, as a result of which the Russian market sector becomes deformed and turns into a quasi-market structure. This statement requires further clarification.

The term feudal, as well as a number of other terms in the field of social science, has various interpretations. The most popular meaning is the definition of one of non-repeating stages of socio-economic development. However, in this context, the term is used in its political dimensions to define a universal phenomenon, whose basic characteristic is the amalgamation of economic and political governance and the ensuring development of patron-client dependence between self-sufficient quasi-governmental formations in the

framework of a national state. This interpretation stems from M. Bloch's understanding of feudalism. It is such quasi-governmental formations that developed in Russia in the late 1990s. The political and financial structures (oligopolies) gained their own financial and industrial potential, organized their own security services, their own creatures in power, law enforcement and defence structures of different levels, formed their own information analysis empires and forged connections with certain regions and industries, nurtured political "parties of the couch", and established contacts with certain segments of opposition. As a result, the largest oligopolies turned into versatile and self-sufficient quasi-governmental formations. It gives grounds to infer the existence of the trend towards the quasi-feudalisation of the elite formation model, which is emphasised by the acquisition of public authority prerogatives by private structures. Another argument in favour of the quasi-feudal nature of such formations is the analysis of relations in the framework of such formations conducted by M. Afanasyev, which shows the clear patron-client character of such relations. The reproduction of clientelism relations might be considered as a sufficient reason to speak of the archaisation of elite formation processes.

The intertwining of different traditions results in the Russian version of *risk society* and the Russian variant of *liquid modernity*. The formation of risk society is a global trend affecting, to a degree, all significant segments of the world. At the same time, each of the conspicuous versions of this trend has its own features. In order to understand those features, one might use the characteristic of modern world structure proposed by Parag Khanna. Rejecting the traditional vision of this structure, Khanna assumes that its tripolar structure – the first, second, and world – became an anachronism; there is only the division into the first (USA, EU, China) and the second (all other

countries) worlds. Despite the controversial nature of this dichotomy, it can be accepted in terms if one criterion – the quality of social organization and grounds for social and political mobility. In the first world, despite its obvious vulnerabilities and weaknesses, the vector of social mobility contains, to a certain degree, the elements of advancement according to formalised rational grounds (professional competence, education, merits, etc.); in the second world, the mobility systems rest on other criteria. Taking into account the heterogeneity of the “second world”, one can assume that, in the most archaic enclaves of the second world, the social organization and vertical mobility rests on clearly rudimentary principles of organisation peculiar to traditional societies (blood relationship, tribal characteristics, pronounced clientelism). In modern versions, these archaic principles are combined with, or at least disguised by, modern principles (education, party career, professional competence, work experience), however, the decisive principles, as a rule, are based on no-formal relations criteria.

In Russia, over the last two decades, experts (including the author of this article) have been observing the prevalence of patron-client relations in the system of social relations. Scholars have also emphasised the difference between Russian clientelism and the classical version of the phenomenon not infrequent in traditional type societies represented in the post-Soviet space by Central Asian countries: if, in the latter, the principal basis for the consolidation of elite clans is kinship and common territorial origin, in Russia of the 1990–2000s, it is economic interests.

The analysis of the process of dominating group recruiting over the second decade of the current century makes it possible to adjust this characteristic – unfortunately, not towards the modernization of criteria. The analysis of the process of dominating group recruiting over the second decade of the current century makes it possible to adjust this

characteristic – unfortunately, not towards the modernization of criteria. The economic interests, which bring elite groups together, increasingly reveal a more archaic element, namely, kinship. Of course, blood relationship is most pronounced in the formation of business elites: the analysis of generation renewal of business structures shows the inflow of the younger generation of company founders' families to executive positions. However, this trend is not limited to business elite and extends to public authorities. Two generations of the Zhirinovskis, Vorobyovs, Ponomaryovs, Gudkovs, blood relationship between other acting members of the State Duma and the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly, family tandems in the government in 2007–2012 are just the visible part of the family icebergs, which clearly indicate that there is a growing kinship component to modern Russian clientelism.

The originality of this variant lies in the inconsistent combination of not only different but also conflicting traditions – the feudal and modern, even post-modern ones. If the first one involves static relations resting on the principles of static structurization, low mobility and low quality of mobility foundations, the latter implies flexibility of borders, principal relevance of division lines, and involvement of the society in the system of global communications.

Apparently, within this system, subjectness has a highly contradictory character and vector. The dominating component of subjectness is that of *private* relations: even individuals personifying *public institutions* act, in most cases, as *private actors*. So, the corrupted nature of bureaucracy means that it acts predominantly not as an agent of the state responsible for the production of common goods, but as a *private actor in pursuit of maximizing their private profit*.

It is worth mentioning that the restoration of subjectness does not suggest an aspiration to build a new empire – it is out of the question. In this context, subjectness means a more rational use of the vast and

diverse resource potential in order to implement large-scale innovative (social and technological) projects which will help Russia become a more successful and influential political player.

The paradox of the situation is that the objective prerequisites of Russian subjectness are evident – diverse potential, vast territory (the Russian Federation is the largest state in the world), and different political mechanisms. There is only one, but crucial, political mechanism missing – it is the “prolonged” political will. Passionarity. Drive. Every era recruits its own heroes: empires are created by titans. However, heroic eras are a thing of the past. Passion wears people out...

However, the decrease in political subjectness can be sublimated into economic class in a different country: financier – titan – stoic”. History might repeat itself...

(Originally written in English)

“*Politicheskie elity v starykh i novykh demokratiakh*”,  
Kalininograd, 2012, pp. 283–292.

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## **STAGES AND PROSPECTS OF RADICALIZATION OF ISLAM IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

The problems connected with the radicalization of Islam in different countries have been in the focus of attention of many foreign and Russian scholars in the past two decades. The Islamic factor in its political aspect has a serious influence on political processes in Russia

and its regions. Radicalization of Islam is fraught with various risks and threats to the country's security.

Islam in Russia is widespread mainly in its Sunni form in two areas: the Volga and Ural regions, and West Siberia, on the one hand, and in the North Caucasus, on the other.. In recent years religious-political extremism and terrorism have become widespread especially in the latter area.

The North Caucasus is dominated by Sunni Islam, however, a relatively small number of Shi'ites lives in the southern part of the region.

There are several ideological trends of Islam (traditionalism, fundamentalism, modernism), and each one of them wants to increase its influence on believers. The modernist trends are weak and contradictory and do not play any significant role in the region. Traditional Islam is mainly represented by the Muslim clergy, the administrative apparatus of religious organizations (spiritual boards of Muslims), as well as mosques, Islamic educational institutions, etc. These Islamic institutions are considered "official Islam."

During the post-Soviet period the steady process of politicization of "official Islam" has been observed. This process is characterized by the growing interaction of the authorities and official clergy. In the 1990s certain representatives of quite a few institutions of power in the North Caucasian republics believed that the "salvation" and "revival" of national republics lay in the exclusive orientation to Islam. In turn, Muslim leaders tried to draw closer to the authorities and power bodies declaring that it was only they that were able to oppose Islamic radicals.

Muslim associations of the North Caucasian republics, having a wide network of organizations and relying on traditional moral and ethical orientations of Islam and the authority of its spiritual leaders,

have taken active measures to increase their influence on the processes going on in republican societies.

The main opponent and antagonist of Muslim traditionalists in the region are fundamentalists (Salaphites or neo-Wahhabis), whose ideal is return to the realities of the “golden age” of Islam, or the period connected with the life and activity of Prophet Mohammed and the four “righteous” caliphs, the introduction of the Sharia law in everyday and public life, and the recreation of Caliphate. The confrontation between traditionalists and Salaphites has led to the greater Islamization of the republics in the eastern part of the North Caucasus.

Despite certain negative realities and trends in traditional Islam, the federal and republican authorities regarded it as “tolerant Islam” and supported it officially. However, this view was absolutely correct in the 1990s, but today it is wrong in many respects. In actual fact traditional Islam is now politicized in a large measure, it is sometimes radical, and even aggressive practically in all republics of the North Caucasus, especially in the Northeast Caucasus. Despite all efforts of the local authorities, politicization and radicalization of Islam is growing all the time spreading to new areas of the Russian Federation.

The religious-political processes of the past two-three years have resulted in serious qualitative changes in the structure and geography of spreading Islamism in its extreme forms. With due account of these changes it would be possible to offer the following version of the stages of radicalization of Russian Islam.

1. The 1970s – early 1990s is the first stage. Groups of young Salaphites appear in the Republic of Daghestan.

2. The early 1980s – 1994 is marked by the recreation and actual legalization of Daghestani Salaphite groupings of the Wahhabi trends. During that period “cultural centers” are organized in Russia with the help of certain Muslim foreign states, and Islamist literature is brought

to the country. Simultaneously, similar literature is published in big circulation on the spot. Missionaries, preachers and teachers of Muslim disciplines began to arrive from different Muslim countries. At the same time, young Muslims go abroad to study at foreign religious institutions. The Republic of Daghestan is in the forefront of Islamization.

3. December of 1994 – early 2000s is characterized by the domination of Chechnya in the radicalization process of North Caucasian Islam. The two Chechen wars, just as the three-year interval between them, were accompanied by the concentration of foreign “mojaheds,” mainly Arabs, in that republic, and a serious ideological and financial assistance from foreign Islamic centers. Special training camps were opened on the territory of Chechnya, the most notorious one was headed by the well-known Arab terrorist Emir Khattab, a close associate of Osama bin Laden, then leader of “al Qaeda.”

4. September 1999–2007, a stage characterized by the beginning of the second Chechen campaign, defeat of the military units of Islamic radicals, and their switchover to guerilla war. During that period Chechnya became the epicenter of the concentration of radical Islamists. The ideology of radical Islamism became more popular throughout the entire territory of the North Caucasus, the infrastructure of “jihad” was growing, subversive and terrorist activity spread throughout the North Caucasian region and beyond its borders.

In that period religious-political extremism and terrorism were growing, and more people from among moderate Islamists joined Islamic radicals.

5. 2007 – up to now, when the new leader, Doku Umarov, proclaimed the nationalist new geopolitical project – “Imarat Kavkaz.” According to it, the new state “Imarat Kavkaz” based on Islamic principles has been created on the pattern of the previous Islamic states

of the past (Caliphates). In essence, this is a conglomerate of subversive-terrorist groupings.

6. End of the first decade of this century is distinguished by spreading influence of “Imarat Kavkaz” and its leaders on other Muslim territories – in the Volga and Ural territories, West Siberia, and primarily the Republic of Tatarstan.

7. The past two or three years are characterized by the emergence of Islamist groupings in “Islamic enclaves” in non-Muslim regions of the country, which exist and function around mosques opened there. This is a new trend in the radicalization process of Islam in Russia spreading throughout the country’s territory. Similar processes have taken place in the United States and certain West European countries earlier.

Evidently, the last three stages of radicalization of Islam and the Islamic movement directly touch not only the North Caucasus, but also other regions of Russia. They form a qualitatively new structure of Islamic groupings and prepare ground for the elaboration of spectacular geopolitical plans of changing the political sphere of the country.

And so, on October 7, 2007, the new leader of Ichkeria (unrecognized new Chechnya) Doku Umarov proclaimed himself supreme leader – “amir of mojaheds of the Caucasus” and “leader of jihad” on all territories -- from the North Caucasus up to Tatarstan and even Buryatia in East Siberia. Thus, the idea of national independence was replaced with the doctrine of liberation from the “power of the infidels.” It was declared that the aim of “Imarat Kavkaz” is the establishment of the Sharia governance in the entire territory of the North Caucasus.

The subversive-terrorist activity of “Imarat Kavkaz” and its units has sharply increased on the eve, in the course and after the “five-day war” between Russia and Georgia. The level of this activity is quite

high at present, too, especially in Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Chechnya. During the years from 2010 to 2012 inclusive more than one thousand terrorist acts were committed in the North Caucasus. The Republic of Daghestan accounts for the greatest number of such acts.

Radicalization of Islam in the Volga area, primarily in Tatarstan, has begun under a strong influence from abroad. As emphasized by the Tatar expert on Islam R. Suleimanov, the latest history of terrorism in Tatarstan began with the first terrorist acts on gas pipelines in rural districts in 2003–2005.

In the view of experts, there are about three thousand Salaphites and their supporters in Tatarstan, and their number is growing steadily. One hundred and twenty Tatar young men studied in Saudi Arabia in 2010, and another twenty men were sent there a year later. In 2012 a laboratory producing high explosive devices was uncovered in one of the rural districts of Tatarstan. Tatar experts maintain that Wahhabi supporters implement the Ingush-Daghestani scenario in Tatarstan today: what happened in the North Caucasus some ten to fifteen years ago is now taking place in the Volga area. The first mufti of Daghestan was killed in 1998. After that, more than fifty muftis, their deputies and imams who adhered to traditional Islam were assassinated.

In the Republic of Tatarstan stable Salaphite groups have been formed, and experts predict that Salaphism will spread throughout the entire Volga area, the Urals and West Siberia, just as was the case of the North Caucasus. In the Republic of Daghestan, for example, legal channels for supporting the activity of the armed extremist underground were formed in the first half of the 2000s. The most popular of such organizations was the “Mothers of Daghestan.” Its leaders maintain contacts with extremists and come out against the activity of the law-enforcement agencies. Moreover, in the view of certain experts, a stable

and influential “Islamist lobby” has come into being in Russia. With its help mass meetings of supporters of radical Islam are organized. For instance, on February 8, 2013, more than two thousand Salaphites – supporters of radical Islam waging struggle against the Russian state arranged a mass meeting in the very center of Makhachkala. Similar meetings were held in Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, in the summer of 2012.

The next stage of spreading Wahhabi trends of Islam, in our view, is the strengthening of their adepts in “Muslim enclaves” in certain big cities of Russia. True, such “enclaves” have already been formed in certain European states, for instance in France, and this is why their experience might prove useful for Russia. European realities show that ethnically and religiously homogeneous communities of migrants successfully form the “enclave” medium grouped around mosques or prayer houses. Simultaneously, one of the consequences of the emergence of such “enclaves” is criminalization and religious-political radicalization of certain part of migrants, which inevitable leads to the emergence of the latent seats of socio-political tension for quite some time and their inevitable confrontation with the local population. In our view, there can be no talk of tolerant “Euro-Islam”, it is rather the Islamization of Europe in the most dangerous forms. The developments of the first years of the new millennium in Spain, Britain, France and other European countries only confirm this assertion. As a consequence, European politicians have begun to talk in unison of the failure of the ideology and practice of multiculturalism in Europe and incompatibility of Islamism and West European values.

Similar “enclaves” have appeared in Russian cities with ensuing consequences. For example, in a prayer house on one of the city markets in St. Petersburg, as well as in private homes, several persons were detained who were distributing extremist religious literature.

In all, 271 men were apprehended, most of whom were foreign migrants from Afghanistan and Egypt. The Islamic threat in the region of St. Petersburg could be compared with the situation in the North Caucasus. The people detained were against secular power and advocated the establishment of a caliphate.

Thus, a steady process of the politicization and radicalization of Islam and Islamic groupings has been observed in the country during the post-Soviet period due to the weakening of the institutions of state power and under a strong influence from abroad. This process was aggravated by the weakness and disunity of traditional and official Russian Islam and separatist projects in certain regions of the country, primarily in the North Caucasus. Due to a number of objective and subjective factors stable groupings of radical Salaphites have emerged and consolidated on the territory of Russia, particularly in the North Caucasian region. The ideas of jihad has spread throughout the North Caucasus, and recently this process has engulfed the Volga and Ural areas and West Siberia, as well as “Muslim “enclaves” in Russian big cities.

“*Nauchnaya mysl Kavkaza*,” *Rostov-on-Don*, 2012, pp. 23–30.

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## **INTERETHNIC CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFLICTS IN STAVROPOL TERRITORY**

The essence of ethnopolitical and ethnocultural processes in Stavropol Territory is largely determined by the situation in the North Caucasian Federal Region (NCFR). Its formation in January 2010 in accordance with a decree of the President of the Russian Federation of

January 19 has led to a definite acceleration of all socio-economic processes and laid an emphasis on political and social relations between regional communities. The development of NCFR today is determined by the aims and tasks of the “Strategy of socio-economic development of the North Caucasian Federal Region up to 2025.” This document determines the guidelines and means to achieve the strategic aims of stable development and ensure national security of the Russian Federation in NCFR up to 2025. As a political doctrine this document emphasizes the economic aspects and the development prospects of the various branches of the economy of the region, as well as analyzes the socio-economic and demographic situation, the labor resource potential, and migration processes in the region.

The “Strategy” contains a special section on interethnic relations. The ethnopolitical processes in Stavropol Territory are largely determined by the general situation in NCFR and in the North Caucasus (NC) as a whole. The ethnopolitical sphere of NCFR is very complex due to a number of historical circumstances and factors, among which one can single out the problems of national-state construction in the region during the Soviet period. There are definite conflict factors in the region due to a misbalance of the regional ethnopolitical system. Any exacerbation of interethnic relations is caused by post-Soviet and political-administrative tendencies: democratization of socio-political relations, ethnopolitical sovereignization, implementation of the administrative and municipal reform, strengthening of the vertical of power, and improvement of relations between parts of the Russian Federation and the Federal Center.

At the same time dangerous trends continue to develop in NCFR. Above all, there is a strong influence of the so-called terrorist syndicate – “Imarat Kavkaz.” It is especially active in Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachayev-Circassia. Terrorist acts are committed quite frequently

against government and law-enforcement agency officials, employees of local municipal bodies, public figures, journalists, and clergymen of traditional trends. Apart from acts of terror, radical Wahhabi cells are functioning which propagate extremist views, money is extorted from rank-and-file Muslim parishioners for jihad, and men are recruited to illegal armed units. This is accompanied by nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric, corruption, and various criminal acts; all of this is taking place against the background of conflicts between regional and local elites and clans. This is combined with unprofessionalism of the special services, the low prestige of regional and local elites, and loyalty of the population toward members of armed units and radical religious cells.

A result of these tendencies is the growing activity of terrorists and their greater influence on the population. This influence is felt by interethnic relations, as well as by political and managerial processes. Terrorism constantly breeds nationalism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism, because many actions of terrorists and extremists are justified by ethnic and confessional interests. According to statistical data, the greatest number of terrorist acts takes place in the Republic of Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, and Karachayevo-Circussian Republic. In just six months of 2011 there were 110 acts of terror committed in Daghestan. Several armed groups act in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, and the traces of the terrorist explosion in the Domodedovo airport near Moscow led to the North Caucasian Republic of Ingushetia.

Well-known figures of science and culture, education and literature, as well as clergymen have been killed by terrorists in NCFR, which has a very negative effect on public opinion in the region. One of such negative phenomena is a manifestation of “Russian and non-titular Wahhabi trends” in Stavropol Territory. Expert assessments of

the reasons for still continuing influence of terrorism on the population are concentrated around several arguments: the unfavorable economic situation in the region and the low social status of the population, high unemployment, the absence of social lifts for young people, to mention but a few. Apart from that, there is the low competence of the law-enforcement agencies, special services, and municipal management. Government bodies and public organizations do not carry on proper ideological and information work among the local population. Confessional leaders (both Islamic and Russian Orthodox Christian) are not active enough in their opposition to radical extremist trends.

The problem of employment of young people is the most pressing one in the region. The uncontrolled flow of migrants to Stavropol Territory continues. The demographic disproportion increases, and this creates additional threats of conflicts not only to the North Caucasus, but also to entire Russia as a poly-ethnic and multiconfessional country. Besides, the ideas are now current of certain exclusiveness and incompatibility of “North Caucasian civilization” with Russian civilization, as well as “negative hereditary features” and social practices of the North Caucasian people (vendetta, the alleged sponger practice and parasitic existence of the NC on the “healthy body” of the Russian Federation), which are extremely harmful for relations between Russians and North Caucasians.

The still continuing manifestations of terrorism, extremism and separatism breed negative public sentiments which serve as catalysts for interethnic tension and conflicts. These sentiments destabilize the situation in NCFR and around it and have a negative effect on the ethnopolitical situation in Stavropol Territory which could be considered as stable and based on a balance of interests between the ethnic groups there. At the same time relations between them are

marked by a hidden conflict potential, which is sometimes manifested in local clashes between young people and expressions of everyday nationalism and xenophobia. This can be seen in different districts of Stavropol Territory – from eastern ones to the district of the Caucasian spa.

The difficult situation in NCFR, including Stavropol Territory, has been a subject of discussions at various political and administrative levels. For example, President V. Putin said at a meeting devoted to the problems of the NCFR socio-economic development that Russia should not renounce competitive advantages of the Caucasian region. The presidential representative in charge of managing the region A. Khloponin emphasized that difference between total corruption in the Caucasus and total corruption in the European part of Russia lies only in its nationality.

Despite all political and managerial efforts of the government of Stavropol Territory and various official councils and committees, and public organizations, there are still contradictory, even conflictogenic, projects current there: for instance, the creation of Stavropol Russian Republic, withdrawal of Stavropol Territory from NCFR and its joining the Southern Federal Region, or even the Republic of Belarus.

Stavropol Territory has been included in the “Caucasian plans” of the Federal Center. The latter plans to develop health and tourist resorts in the territory and allocates big sums for the purpose, to say nothing of spectacular socio-economic development plans.

Purposeful measures are being taken at a regional level to neutralize terrorist threats and ethnopolitical risks. Special anti-terrorist and anti-extremist programs have been evolved and are now implemented. Work in the sphere of interethnic relations has notably improved. A ramified network of specialized organizations and

information centers has been set up which contributes to the stabilization of interethnic relations. A public organization called “Union of People of Stavropol Territory for Peace in the Caucasus” has been created, uniting twenty-six national and cultural organizations. Confessional institutions continue to develop. For example, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Stavropol Territory has started “educational jihad,” that is, enlightenment and information “war” against radical religious teachings.

Stavropol Territory, just as other parts of NCFR of the Russian Federation plays a major role in the stabilization of interethnic relations and the strengthening of national identity of all members of the North Caucasian community, and ethnocultural security. At the same time, the task is to unmask and denounce terrorism, extremism, nationalism and xenophobia. Much is being done to make Stavropol Territory a unique and attractive region culturally.

*“Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Rossii i sopredelnykh gosudarstvakh v 2011,”*  
*Moscow, 2012, pp. 99–104.*

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**THE CASPIAN REGION**

**IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZATION**

For centuries, the Caspian region has played an important role in the military-political and socio-economic processes in the entire geopolitical space of Central Eurasia. It is situated at the crossroads of the Eurasian land and sea transportation routes, and has been a subject of rivalry between states seeking to establish their dominance in the region for several centuries.

The importance of the Caspian basin lies not only in that the region has been a rich source of natural resources, but it also connects the two continents – Europe and Asia by two vectors – North-South and East-West for thousands of years.

The region is now part of a new geopolitical game in world politics after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Caspian basin is regarded one of the world's major centers of oil and gas.

Currently, the world economy actors tend to penetrate into the region, and this trend has increased lately.

The important geopolitical consequence of penetration into the region has been the intensification of political and commercial confrontation for control of the energy resources of the Caspian Sea basin among eight countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Central Asia) and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia (South Caucasus).

Along with the traditional actors in the region – Russia, the U.S.A., Britain, Turkey and Iran, other countries – France, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Japan – have also become increasingly active, which creates instability in the system of international relations.

The future of the new world order largely depends on the struggle for the Caspian basin, which will allow the countries involved in it to control the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East.

Over the years, Russian policy in the Caspian region has been aimed at geopolitical objectives, rather than at solution of urgent economic problems. Such spheres as transportation of hydrocarbon resources of the region to foreign markets and conservation of bio-resources have now become very important. Russia's national interests in the Caspian basin are closely associated with the country's

security, as well as the problems of the region in the system of international relations.

Russia increases its military presence in the Caspian basin, which is an essential factor in ensuring its political and economic interests. It is interested in the maximal use of its natural resources, as well as greater economic benefits from transportation of oil, gas and various commodities through its territory.

A new trend of Russian policy in the Caspian region in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century covers such important issues as the legal status of the Caspian Sea, the military component, environmental issues, transport, fight against terrorism and poaching, as well as the establishment of bilateral cooperation with the Caspian states.

There are two stages in Russia's geopolitics in the Caspian Sea during the post-Soviet period. In the 1990s, Russia sought primarily to maintain the political and legal status of the Caspian Sea, which had been confirmed by treaties first between the Russian Empire, and later the Soviet Union and Iran. At the same time, Russia began to protect its vital interests by preserving its dominant geo-economic position in the Caspian region and preventing the penetration of Western capital in the region.

However, the desire of the new Caspian states to cooperate with western powers has increased along with the strengthening of Russia's positions on its southern borders. It is clear that these states are unable to develop new oil fields effectively on their own and they are interested in the inflow of foreign investments.

In geopolitical terms, the position of Russia in the Caspian region is determined mainly by the nature of its relations with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.

Kazakhstan has been closely related to Russia, but it has also connected with Turkey and other Turkic-speaking countries ethnically

and culturally. Azerbaijan has become Kazakhstan's strategic partner in the oil and gas sector in the Caspian basin.

Turkmenistan is also rather close to Turkey geopolitically. The controversial issues existing between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have complicated their relationship.

Azerbaijan is under enormous pressure of the U.S.A., so its decisions are increasingly in favor of Turkey. Azerbaijan would like to occupy a dominant position in the entire Caspian region. The U.S.A. and Turkey have already succeeded in persuading Azerbaijan to lay out a pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan – the main terminal for the energy resources of the Caspian basin.

Russia's position proved too weak and vulnerable in the new alignment of political forces and interests.

Its boundaries have been moved to a few hundred kilometers and Astrakhan region became the borderland.

The development of cooperation of the region with the Republic of Kazakhstan is based on the program of “the cross-border cooperation of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan for 1999–2007.” Cooperation covers various spheres: shipbuilding, construction, food, medicine, culture and education, and the creation of joint ventures of small and medium businesses in the border areas. As a seaside area, Astrakhan region and the western region of Kazakhstan have paid great attention to joint work on environmental protection, and the preservation and rational use of the unique biological resources of the Caspian basin. Fishery industry enterprises of Astrakhan and Kazakhstan cooperate in artificial reproduction of sturgeon, commercial fish farming, and fight against poaching.

Relations between Astrakhan region and Turkmenistan began to develop not so long ago, but they have already produced certain results

in ship-building, construction of the infrastructure, and drilling work on the shelf.

Diverse relations have been established with Iran. There are 149 companies with Iranian capital in Astrakhan region. Consulate General of Iran has been opened in Astrakhan.

Almost half of the foreign trade turnover of Astrakhan region has accounted for trade with Caspian countries. The volume of trade has risen with Azerbaijan by 85%, with Turkmenistan – by one and a half times, and with Iran – by one-third for just one year.

In the past decade Astrakhan region concluded about thirty interregional agreements with the neighboring regions of Kazakhstan and provinces of Iran, as well as with various governmental enterprises of Azerbaijan. The International Council of Chambers of Commerce “Business of the Caspian” has been set up and is now functioning in the region to strengthen economic activity and expand foreign interregional contacts. The Association of Universities of the Caspian states works actively to develop the common scientific and educational sphere in the Caspian region.

The main task at the regional level is greater economic integration, broader bilateral relations, and wider social and cultural relationships with the Caspian states. All this provides the basis for building relationships at a state level and for the tasks fulfillment. Russia promotes the initiative for the establishment of the intergovernmental Caspian center, which will monitor the environment of the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have supported this initiative, and Iran has been studying the issue. Turkmenistan is ready to consider it after the adoption of the Convention on the status of the Caspian Sea. The administration of Astrakhan region has insisted that the center should be established precisely in Astrakhan, on the basis of

local research organizations with an extensive information base and the required intellectual capacity.

The important actors in the region, along with Russia, are the U.S.A., the European Union, the Middle East and China.

The U.S.A. intends to influence and control the economic integration and military-political reorientation of the Caspian countries, using the underdeveloped state institutions, unresolved conflicts and political instability as an effective mechanism. The U.S.A. believes that its intention to carry out democratization and market reforms in the region justifies its presence in the Caspian Sea basin and tends to use multilateral cooperation and international organizations for the implementation of its plans.

The U.S.A. has considered Caspian oil as an additional source in case there are problems with the supply of oil from the Gulf countries. American interests are largely determined by desire to retain influence on its allies, primarily in Western Europe and Japan. The U.S.A. seeks to prevent Russia to gain a stable position in the region.

Unlike the United States, European countries have only economic interests in the Caspian region. The main aim of European states is to ensure their own energy security and the preservation and development of their own oil industry at the expense of their oil companies on oil deposits outside their countries.

Iran is trying to prevent the strengthening of the pro-Western forces which are capable to deprive it of access to this strategically and economically important region.

Iran tries to increase its influence in the Caspian region and aims to reach an agreement on sharing the Caspian Sea and its energy and biological resources with all states in the region on an equal basis.

Supporting the development of international cooperation in the Caspian region, Iran is firmly opposed to any military presence of extra-regional countries.

Turkey uses its unique geo-strategic position of the state, located in Europe and Asia. New trends have been traced in Turkey's foreign policy, namely, to influence the geopolitical configuration in the Caspian region, draw closer to Iran, and revitalize the Turkish-Russian relations of 2010.

Pakistan, along with Iran, competes with Turkey in the field of ideological influence on the countries of the Caspian region, and demonstrates greater interest in energy resources of the Caspian basin. Pakistan is interested in transportation of part of the region's energy resources through its territory. Besides, Pakistan has a potential to influence the political and military stability in the region close to the Caspian Sea, particularly in Central Asia.

Unlike Turkey, China fears the introduction of geopolitical control of the U.S.A. in the region of the Caspian Sea and American influence in a zone close to its borders. Another reason is the growing import of crude oil and oil products to China in recent years. Therefore, China has been trying to ensure access to oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea. China's geo-economic and geopolitical interest in the region, especially in its eastern part, will only increase.

China's policy in Central Asia has long gone beyond the limit of not only the Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), but also crossed the Caspian Sea. China's interest in economic ties in the Caspian region is quite natural, and its initiatives are quite diverse. This explains the steps taken by China towards regional cooperation in combating international terrorism. China has been actively developing trade and economic ties with Kazakhstan, for

example, the trade turnover between the two countries accounts for more than \$10 billion.

One of the major problems of the Caspian region is that of demilitarization. Increasing the naval power by all Caspian States is definitely a destabilizing factor. Russia has opposed demilitarization, because it is concerned with the threat of religious extremism and international terrorism, as well as the possibility of regional and local conflicts.

Currently, the economic and political issues of the region boil down to the problem of the delimitation of the Caspian Sea between the coastal states. The development of hydrocarbon deposits on the sea shelf and adjoining land areas, cargo transportation on water and land, as well as the exploitation of biological resources of the Caspian Sea are impossible without an internationally recognized division of its water surface and shelf between the coastal states.

Kazakhstan has agreed on the division of the Caspian Sea for the modified median line, insisting on allocation of maritime zone under the exclusive national jurisdiction and an additional fishing zone.

Russia has supported the position of Kazakhstan in relation to delimitation of the seabed and offered a limited 15-mile zone under the national jurisdiction of each state, leaving the middle of the sea and the water column under it for common use.

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Russia have reached unity in signing bilateral and trilateral agreements on the delimitation of the Caspian Sea. Iran and Turkmenistan have remained out of the process.

Turkmenistan is ready to accept the position of the three states, but its conflict with Azerbaijan on the fields of Azeri and Chirag has prevented to reach an agreement. Each country has considered these fields as its own, and Azerbaijan has already started extracting. Iran

does not have substantial hydrocarbon reserves in its part of the sea, and that is why that country has been supported the common sea principle and division of the Caspian Sea into five equal sectors. Iran also proposes to establish a 20-mile zone along the median line for common economic activity and free shipping. It does not mind the 10-mile coastal zone under national jurisdiction.

Caspian oil and gas deposits can be considered the world's largest centers of hydrocarbon reserves. This important geo-economic factor has a significant impact on the balance of geopolitical forces in the Caspian region. Another important factor is that the Caspian Sea can be the main supplier of gas to Europe.

Among the factors that influence the formation of law enforcement policies of the Caspian Sea region are:

Geopolitical – access to the sea, availability of ports and state borders, and their geographical location near the Caspian Sea;

Resources – the presence or absence of oil and gas reserves in a part of the Caspian Sea belonging to one of the five states;

Environment – unique biological resources, flora and fauna of the Caspian Sea, the problem of their conservation and utilization;

Legal aspects – the creation of universal law enforcement mechanisms governing territorial disputes between the Caspian states.

We cannot ignore the fact that the Caspian region actually forms a common geopolitical space of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Iran and Russia, as well as other Caspian states – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – have to solve problems of the international legal status of the Caspian Sea and regional security, the environment and biological resources, and to seek new ways of interstate economic cooperation and the development of the transport infrastructure and pipelines.

*“Tysyacheletiya vokrug Kaspiya”,  
Astrakhan, 2013, pp. 99–107.*

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**“SOFT POWER” AS AN INSTRUMENT  
OF U.S. POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA.**

**Kazakhstan**

The long-term political aims of the United States in Central Asia are to wrest the region from Russia, China and Iran and expand its own influence in the economic sphere, reorient the region to South Asia, and gain access to the Caspian hydrocarbon raw materials. As far as the military sphere is concerned, it is to form its own military infrastructure close to the land-locked borders of such big geopolitical players as Russia, China, India and Iran.

Each U.S. administration, when putting forward its projects, is striving to promote solution of these tasks. The Obama administration, while maintaining the general vector and continuity of American policy, has centered its efforts on the implementation of three key programs: Northern Distribution Network (NDN), New Silk Road (NSR), and Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI).

These projects enter into contradiction in certain aspects with the national interests of Russia and China.

Along with the safe supply of the grouping in Afghanistan the Northern Distribution Network is regarded by Washington as a platform for further penetration in Central Asia. The network considerably expands the American presence in the region. For

example, the decision to include Tajikistan in NDN has been prompted not so much by logistics considerations (the republic with its weak infrastructure is inferior to neighboring Uzbekistan) as the task to strengthen the U.S. foreign-policy positions in Tajikistan and draw it in the process of “Afghan settlement” by signing numerous contracts on servicing cargo transportation and water and fruit and vegetable supply, training the Afghan personnel, etc., diversifying supply channels in the event of worsening relations with Uzbekistan, as well as slowing down the movement of the Tajik leadership closer to Moscow and Beijing.

The American strategy of the economic rehabilitation of Afghanistan known as the “New Silk Road” outlined by the former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in India on July 20, 2011, was expressed in an integration plan for Central and South Asia in a single economic macroregion, with Afghanistan as its center. This strategy presupposes the formation of an infrastructure from Central Asian republics via Afghanistan to India (CASA-1000 and TAPI projects). Secondly, trade between them will be liberalized, which would ensure economic stability of a pro-American government in Afghanistan and turn Central Asia in southern direction.

On the whole, the idea of the integration of Central and South Asia is called upon to lower the significance of the Russian and Chinese factors in the economy of the region. The implementation of major infrastructural projects will diversify raw material export from Central Asia bypassing Russia and China, and reduce dependence of Central Asian republics on the already functioning Russian and Chinese pipelines and roads. The emergence of new potential buyers in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan claiming the export of mineral resources to India will hamper the activity of Russian and Chinese mining companies. In turn, liberalization of trade with Afghanistan will increase drug trafficking and the movement of

extremist ideas toward Russia and China and aggravate the criminal situation on the southern outskirts of the CIS.

The Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative was published by the U.S. Department of State in June 2011. Its essence boils down to setting up special operational-investigative units to combat drug production and trafficking in each of the five republics of the region, with financial support and coordination by the White House. With the help of CACI Washington tries to push the front of struggle against drug production and trafficking closer to the Russian and Chinese borders, which runs counter to Moscow's approach to the problem envisaging the destruction of opium poppy crops in Afghanistan itself. Taking into account the absence of real interest of the United States in weakening drug aggression against Russia, China and Iran as its geopolitical rivals, the growing role of the U.S.A. in the struggle against drug production and trafficking in the region for a long-term period will only aggravate the problem. On the contrary, the most efficient solutions in this sphere can be realized without the U.S. participation by the countries directly touched by drug trafficking.

The projects put forward by the Obama administration are within the framework of the explicit desire of the United States to consolidate its positions in the middle part of the Eurasian continent. The White House has retained continuity in its use of foreign-policy instruments. Apart from traditional diplomacy, it resorts to forcible and military actions, placement of loyal governments in other countries, pressure through sanctions, purposeful distribution of material and technical aid, as well as the wide use of the "soft power" levers.

The term "soft power" was introduced in political parlance by the Harvard professor and assistant secretary of defense Joseph Nye in the early 1990s. Initially, it meant the creation of an attractive image of the United States by propagating American values and popularizing the

American way of life. The key role in disseminating American ideology has been played by the mass media, non-governmental organizations, and youth movements. Gradually, the American establishment began to use “soft power” as a means of influence on foreign countries from within and manipulation by foreign public opinion. It also added concepts of the “non-violent” change of foreign governments to it. This was successfully implemented in the post-Soviet area in the course of the “color revolutions” in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine in 2003–2005.

Meanwhile, in recent years among the main trends of American foreign policy was the use of the so-called *smart power* as a combination of “soft” and “harsh” power, which presupposes a massive influence on certain states through network and ideological mechanisms and at the same time diplomatic ultimatums, economic sanctions and forcible actions, right up to rocket-propelled strikes. The intention to rely on “smart power” was confirmed by Hillary Clinton during the Congress debates on her nomination to be Secretary of State, and it became the keynote of President Obama’s foreign policy.

Nevertheless, among special features of Central Asia as a political region are Moscow’s and Beijing’s strong positions in the region. This renders it difficult for the United States to use direct forcible interference in the affairs of the Central Asian republics. This is why, while building its relations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the White House relied on using “soft power” along with traditional diplomacy.

## **Kazakhstan**

In 1994, during his visit to the United States President Nursultan Nazarbayev of independent Kazakhstan and his American colleague Bill Clinton signed the Charter on Democratic Partnership, according to

which the former assumed the obligations to carry on market reforms, observe human rights, and move along the road of democratization of society and the state. The Charter and a number of other documents signed by Kazakhstan with western countries have opened the republic to the activity of numerous American and European non-governmental organizations, agencies, foundations, and mass media.

From 1992 to 2011 American aid to Kazakhstan amounted to \$1.73 billion (fifth place among the post-Soviet republics). However, at the beginning the United States was mostly worried over the problems of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and chemical and bacteriological weapons that were kept in Kazakhstan's warehouses at the time, rather than the difficult problems of building up a civil society there. This was why the bulk of the financial means (up to 40 percent by 2008) was earmarked to creating "nuclear-free Kazakhstan" (nuclear warheads were brought to Russia by 1994–1995), and liquidating weapons of mass destruction and all and sundry proving grounds.

Further on, despite the tendencies toward greater authoritarianism in Kazakhstan, quite evident to American experts, the White House has preserved official restraint in assessing democratic processes in the republic, which was prompted by the interests of U.S. corporations in the oil and gas sector of the country and the transit corridor for supplying the western military grouping in Afghanistan within the framework of the Northern Distribution Network. Here is an interesting fact: from 2003 onward the United States should not have helped the government of Kazakhstan (according to U.S. laws), inasmuch as there was no tangible progress in the sphere of human rights. However, the U.S. Secretary of State has the right not to take this limitation into account due to national security considerations. As a result, the United States annually grants Kazakhstan financial means as before, using pseudo-democratic rhetoric. Meanwhile, numerous mass

media actually connected with the U.S. Department of State and special services sharply criticize the Kazakh regime, which reflects the real attitude of the United States toward the state of affairs in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

It is rather difficult to evaluate exactly the scope of American financial donations to the non-commercial sector, mass media, and education programs in Kazakhstan, inasmuch as they are sponsored by several sources simultaneously.

The U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have sent to Kazakhstan about \$20–22 million annually in the past three to four years. Out of this money some four or five million go for “democratization,” and a greater part – to projects in the sphere of security and military cooperation, including personnel training. On the whole, it is less than allocations to Tajikistan or Kyrgyzstan (not less than \$40–50 million annually), but more than to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The U.S. Department of State and USAID have asked the Congress to grant 421.4 million for Kazakhstan.

The Pentagon and the U.S. Secretariat for Energy have independent programs in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as big American corporations (Chevron and Exxon Mobil), to say nothing of private American firms, sometimes with dubious reputation. The “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation, which began its work in Kazakhstan in 1995, invested in its local ventures not less than \$58 million. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as a non-governmental organization is financed directly by the U.S. Congress. In 2010 alone it earmarked for Kazakhstan’s scientific development and production centers about \$700,000 in the form of \$25 to 300,000 grants.

Finally, the American presence is augmented and dubbed by various projects of the European Union and individual countries of

Europe, and also western international organizations, above all NATO, in whose “Partnership for Peace” program Kazakhstan has been taking part since 1994. In this way millions of dollars have been poured into Kazakhstan annually with a view to disseminating liberal ideology, creating an effective network to lobby American interests, and forming pro-western elites.

The U.S government, federal agencies and private American foundations sponsor individual donor programs and distribute grants among western and local non-governmental organizations, which implement them.

USAID prefers to carry on its work in Kazakhstan through American and international non-commercial and consulting organizations: ACDI/VOCA, AECOM International Development, Flora and Fauna International (FFI), Population Services International (PSI), Eurasia Foundation, Abt Associates, Alliance of Volunteers for economic growth (VEGA), American Councils for International Education, ACTR/ACCELS, Weidemann Associates, Deloitte Consulting, the UN International Children’s Foundation (UNICEF), Internews Network, Cardno Emerging Markets, Chemonics International, Pragma Corporation, Tetra Tech, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Foundation of Salvation of the Aral Sea (IFAS), International Center of Non-commercial Law, Central Association to Combat and Prevent Tuberculosis of the Netherlands, and others.

Receiving money from USAID these international organizations implement projects either independently or draw Kazakhstan’s small production and development centers to this work. As to American private and semi-government American foundations, they issue grants, as a rule, directly to a local non-commercial sector. For example, assistance from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy

Foundation goes to such Kazakh associations as the Internet “Zone.kz” and “Adil soz” Foundation specializing on freedom of speech in the Internet, and also the National Association of TV and Radio Broadcasting of Kazakhstan.

The network of non-governmental organizations and other associations in Kazakhstan financed by the West has certain specific features.

First, many organizations and persons would choose Kazakhstan with its relatively open legal, administrative and ideological regime as a springboard for placing regional headquarters and doing work in other Central Asian republics. Most regional missions of western organizations (along with Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan) are based in the “southern capital” of Kazakhstan Alma Ata.

Secondly, in contrast to some other Central Asian republics Kazakhstan allows the activities of western organizations aiming to influence domestic political processes and even participating in “color revolutions” in the post-Soviet area. Among them are the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Freedom House, whose leadership includes many formerly highly-placed American diplomats and members of special services. Another such organization is the Carnegie Foundation “For International Peace” with the headquarters in Washington and affiliations in Beijing, Moscow, Beirut and Brussels, which tried to open its office in Astana.

Finally, human rights and non-commercial have an opportunity to function unhampered in Kazakhstan and in regions where they set up information offices and establish contacts with local elites. For instance, they actively work in the southern districts of the country bordering on Uzbekistan and in oil-extracting districts in the western part of the republic where separatist sentiments are especially strong. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), which is closely connected

with the U.S. Democratic party and came to Kazakhstan right after the proclamation of its independence, has financed the work of information centers in the towns of Shimkent, Taraz and Kentau. The “Soros – Kazakhstan” Foundation has its offices in Astana, Karaganda, Shimkent and Aktob. The Eurasia Foundation works in the west and east, and in the center and south of the country.

There are favorable conditions for the effective work of American and pro-western organizations in the entire territory of Kazakhstan, although they have to confront certain objective difficulties, such as a close watch by special services and considerable corruption of local officials. The assistance of the U.S. government and American foundations is distributed through the system of non-governmental organizations and is partly used for implementing charity and humanitarian projects, liquidation of consequences of natural calamities, development of health service, fight against infectious diseases, credits to small businesses, and ecological measures. Information about humanitarian actions of the United States is widely publicized by American representatives in Kazakhstan. At the same time American allocations are used for political and ideological aims and as the financial basis of “soft power.” They tend to influence the political course of Kazakhstan.

Washington would like to set up a network of the mass media loyal to the United States. Information flows popularize the American way of life and liberal values, influence public opinion and the republican authorities, and lobby American foreign-policy initiatives in the region. According to the data of the American side, of about three thousand mass media units working in Kazakhstan one-fifth is state-owned, and most TV and radio stations are controlled by members of the family or friends of the head of state. This seriously hampers outside interference in the information field of the republic. Besides,

Kazakhstan has a rather strict legislation regulating work of the mass media. The opportunities of the Internet and foreign channels and information agencies are limited, especially at the time of election campaigns.

Control over the traditional mass media prompts the United States to transfer its projects to the Internet, and develop satellite TV and radio broadcasting whose audience is steadily growing in Kazakhstan.

The U.S. Department of State promotes the so-called freedom of the Internet and criticizes the actions of the government of Kazakhstan which blocked access to fifty sites in August 2011 after a series of terrorist acts.

The U.S. Embassy and consular offices in Kazakhstan create Internet-sites of their own, personal blogs and open groups in social networks, which provide feedback with the local audience. American diplomats and other officials working in Kazakhstan have to popularize such American Internet-resources as the Facebook social, the portal Education USA and the site Global Alumni Community worked out as a means to unite graduates from numerous educational programs financed by the U.S. Department of State.

On the other hand, the United States transfers its international TV-radio-broadcasting resources to the interactive medium. For instance, the American information service “Radio Liberty” has been transferred to the Internet and presents the western interpretation of various domestic and international events for Kazakhstan’s public. The United States supports many local and international mass media reporting and commenting developments in Central Asia in the Internet. The Soros Foundation finances the well-known information agency EurasiaNet.

The most dangerous trend of “digital diplomacy” could be the stirring of protest movements of young people through social networks. The Alliance for Youth Movements set up under the aegis of the U.S. government has the aim of using the activity of young people for changing the socio-political situation in foreign countries, of course, including Kazakhstan. The Central Asian mass media has registered the first cases of using social networks for staging street demonstrations.

At the present stage the western social networks in Kazakhstan are not as popular and widespread in Kazakhstan as in Russia. By 2012 the number of Facebook users in Kazakhstan was estimated at 360,000, that is, not more than two to three percent of its entire population. This can be explained by the undeveloped character of the local segment of the Internet and also by the fact that big western Internet-corporations have just begun to come to Kazakhstan’s market. However, it should be taken into account that the main users of Facebook in the republic are journalists, intellectuals and businessmen, that is, the most politically active section of society. The number of subscribers to this network is growing very rapidly, and it is to be hoped that in some three to four years they will exceed those using the popular Russian programs “VKontakte” and “Odnoklassniki.”

The American side pays much attention to influencing dissidents through the blogosphere and the Internet-journalism. In the autumn of 2010 the U.S. Department of State launched the program “Civil Society 2.0” within which technical experts from the U.S.A. teach members of the opposition and dissident groups in foreign countries how to create blogs, sites and groups in social networks and use special software.

The Internews, “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation and other western non-governmental organizations have been paying more attention recently to projects in the Internet-journalism, such as “Development of New Media in Central Asia,” “New Reporter.org,”

and others. They explain technical and legal aspects of the creation of the mass media in the Internet, distribute the Tunnel Bear program, and other utilities allowing users to overcome the blocking of the “Live Journal” and Twitter in Kazakhstan. Specialists from the United States are invited to read lectures and conduct seminars. The United States takes part in financing such undertakings as BarCamp Central Asia, at which many Internet-specialists gather annually and where there is a possibility to search for talented and active young bloggers and then send them to the Berkman Center studying the Internet and society at Harvard University. This center, in the view of Russian analysts, has been organized specially for studying political orientations of users of social networks and blogs in foreign countries. The center has been studying the social networks and blogospheres of Russia, Iran and the Arab world since 2007, which enables the U.S. government to adopt concrete decisions concerning the financing of some foreign dissident organizations acting through the Internet.

The interest of Americans in the blogosphere of Kazakhstan is a factor which should not be ignored. To date the Kaznet lags behind the Runet, according to experts' estimates, but in three years' time it may catch up with it and will develop in similar manner. The number of its users in Kazakhstan will grow to 3.5 million. The politicization of the Kaznet may also grow and coincide in time with the expected period of political turbulence in the republic in connection with the possible changes in the republican leadership. Against this background the emergence of centers of influence of the United States in the Internet-community of Kazakhstan broadens the opportunities of the White House to interfere in the course of the internal political process in the republic.

To tackle the tasks of digital diplomacy the United States has set up a network of various cultural, resource and computer offices in

Kazakhstan. In 1998 the “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation opened an Internet-training center in Alma Ata (ITC). A regional academy of the American telecommunication giant Cisco has been working on its basis since 2000, which teaches the local engineering and technical personnel specializing in dealing with computer networks. From 2000 onward students of technical departments of a number of Kazakhstan’s higher educational institutions, and also departments of journalism and informatics, have been studying at ITC. On the whole, it was the American “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation that has become a trail-blazer in financing various Internet-projects in the republic, including systematic conferences and training sessions on information security and freedom-of-speech problems in the Internet. Besides, hundreds of Kazakh non-governmental organizations joined to the network with the assistance of the “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation.

An analysis made recently shows that the priorities of the U.S. government in the sphere of information are shifting toward supporting “new media,” which is quite timely in a country where the state and government control practically all traditional mass media.

Another general vector of the application of efforts of American grant donors is directed to broadening a pro-western social base in Kazakhstan. For this purpose the U.S. administration and American foundations earmark financial means for numerous educational programs, training centers and preparatory courses embracing several major social groups – young people, law-enforcement agencies employees, and managerial officials.

A team of American consultants on legal matters is constantly staying in Kazakhstan. Courses are functioning within the framework of the program “Assistance for Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia” (AEECA) for the personnel of anti-narcotics, border-guard and customs bodies. The U.S. Department of State deems it necessary to strengthen

the southern border of Kazakhstan in view of its joining the Customs Union. A regional center of customs operation training has been opened with the help of USAID, as well as the Central Asian Regional Information and Cooperation Center (CARICC) called upon to coordinate transborder operations to fight drug trafficking and train employees of anti-narcotics bodies. According to a project of International Military Education and Training (IMET) Kazakhstan's officers and sergeants are trained in the republic and in the United States. Emphasis is laid on drawing Kazakhstan in NATO operations, greater compatibility of its armed forces with the alliance, and more profound study of the English language. Probation terms are arranged for bank employees, representatives of small businesses, municipal officials, and court judges. The United States pays for their trips abroad and back and arranges seminars which they attend along with their American counterparts.

The U.S. administration supports the desire of Kazakh young people to receive an education in the West and also at the American University of Central Asia opened in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in 1993. Six consultation centers have been organized in Kazakhstan for informing people about American educational programs and drawing students to the university. Western educational institutions are especially popular among the scholars of the Kazakhstan government program "Bolashak." Upon return back home after getting an education in the United States many young persons receive jobs at government bodies of Kazakhstan. Today they form the second level of the official hierarchy of the republic – a section of depoliticized managers and technical experts who help ensure the normal functioning of the economy and government offices. As a rule, they are removed from solving personnel problems and doing highly responsible managerial work. However, they do have power ambitions and will be able to hold

high government posts in the future, while retaining their pro-western orientation.

American foundations and non-governmental organizations carry on an active work with Kazakh young people. The Soros Foundation is especially active among them. It has played a significant role in street actions of the opposition movements in Georgia and Ukraine during the “color revolutions” in those countries. The “Soros-Kazakhstan” Foundation helped create several young people’s centers, such as “Bilim-Central Asia,” “Step by Step,” Volunteers House, National Debate Center, Language School, Center of Democratic Education, and others. The Foundation helps Kazakh students go abroad to study, and organizes forums and seminars.

The National Democratic Institute of the United States carries on work with politically active young people of Kazakhstan. It invites some of them to attend international congresses in the United States. The Institute took part in creating the Republican Network of Independent Monitors in Kazakhstan to watch over electoral processes. Such organizations financed by the West have repeatedly placed in question election results in many post-Soviet countries and declared the existing government illegitimate. The various anti-corruption committees denouncing government officials in the Internet, the creation of which in Kazakhstan is also financed by the West, also contribute to delegitimization of power.

A number of programs implemented by the mission of Eurasia Foundation in Kazakhstan is oriented to drawing active young people in public and political life. The Eurasia Foundation project also embraces Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Thus, the United States has created a whole network of non-governmental organizations in the entire territory of Kazakhstan, which implement humanitarian and public and political initiatives of their

western sponsors and donors that earmark tens of millions of dollars for the purpose annually. The pro-western mass media have entrenched themselves in the media sphere of Kazakhstan also due to the Internet-projects becoming a more independent source of information, despite state control over TV and radio broadcasting. Tens of thousands of Kazakh citizens have attended various short-term and long-term courses opened in Kazakhstan's cities, including employees of government offices, active members of youth movements, journalists, and representatives of local elites, who now connect the future of their country exclusively with a liberal-democratic development model and priority cooperation with the western world.

(to be continued in the next issue)

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**STEPPING-UP OF RUSSIAN ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL  
ASIA AND RUSSIAN-KYRGYZ RELATIONS**

The forthcoming withdrawal of the international coalition troops from Afghanistan has become a factor largely determining the policy of the Russian Federation in Central Asia. Moscow's actions show that it recognizes full well the need for greater responsibility in the fight against the threats of terrorism and drug trafficking in Central Asia. The problem of national security of Russia is regarded in close connection with ensuring security in Central Asia.

A no small role is also played by Moscow's desire to prevent the United States influence from spreading in the region. However, it should be noted that the anti-narcotics policy carried on by the Russian Federation does not exclude cooperation in this matter with the United States and other western countries. At the same time the Russian side maintains that Washington should join the already existing projects or develop cooperation along the CSTO – NATO line. Moscow displayed a negative attitude to Washington's idea to create special units to fight the drug mafia in the five Central Asian republics under U.S. control.

On the whole, Russian policy toward the countries of the Central Asian region is undergoing certain changes. First, as shown by the latest steps of Russia's leadership, Moscow intends to invest more means in creating new jobs in the most backward Central Asian republics, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where drug production is thriving favorable conditions exist for the development of Afghan drug trafficking. We mean, among other things, a decision to set up a Russian corporation of cooperation with Central Asian countries on the basis of the *Vneshekonombank* of Russia, whose task will be to create new jobs in the region. Two billion rubles are earmarked from the Russian budget for the purpose in 2013, which will secure the control block of shares of the state (51 percent), while the rest (49 percent) will belong to private investors. The corporation is to take part in building hydropower plants, developing poultry farming, and manufacturing high-tech industrial commodities in Central Asian countries.

It is expected that the implementation of these projects should ensure the opening of about thirty thousand jobs in Central Asian republics during the first year, which might draw many local inhabitants away from smuggling Afghan narcotic drugs. It is planned to start projects for training professional personnel for the Russian labor market and workers for Russian industrial enterprises in Kyrgyzstan,

which holds first place in Moscow's development schemes concerning Central Asia. In the view of the chairman of the Russian-Kyrgyz Business Council I. Polyakov, "it is necessary to evolve a special mechanism for organized recruitment of labor resources on the territory of Kyrgyzstan for working in Russia, and also to introduce a system of initial professional-technical education and training of workers on the basis of professional lyceums on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic."

Moscow also believes that growing employment in Central Asian countries will contribute to a reduction in the number of labor migrants, the uncontrolled increase of which worsens the social situation in Russia and is one of the reasons for growing criminality in the country. It was not accidental that the decision on the setting up of the Russian corporation of cooperation with Central Asian countries was made public soon after the statement by the head of the Federal Service on Drug Control Victor Ivanov about the need to introduce a visa regime with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Secondly, the present-day policy of the Russian leadership toward Central Asian countries is distinguished by a well-thought-out approach to the problem of granting economic and military aid. Evidently, the republics which demonstrated readiness for active cooperation with Moscow will receive more support and help from the Russian Federation. Today, Kyrgyzstan is the main beneficiary of Russian aid. It is there that the "real center of regional security" should be created.

On April 16, 2013, the State Duma of the Russian Federation ratified a package of agreements with the government of Kyrgyzstan signed during President Putin's visit to that country in September 2012. Despite criticism of a number of deputies from the Liberal-Democratic and "Spravedlivaya Rossiya" parties, a majority of votes endorsed the favorable conditions granted to Kyrgyzstan for repayment of credits to

a sum of \$500 million. One agreement envisages writing off a debt of \$190 million in 2005. Another agreement prolongs repayment on a credit of 2009 amounting to \$300 million: it will be written off in equal sums for a period of ten years beginning from March 16, 2016.

Two other agreements concern the key problem of Russian-Kyrgyz relations, namely, hydro-energy production and transmission. They deal with the construction of Kambaratin-1 hydropower plant in Kyrgyzstan with Russian assistance and four other hydropower plants on the Naryn River, and determine the regime of their work. The Russian companies “Rusgidro” and “Inter RAO EES” will be in charge of financing, construction and providing labor force. The estimated cost of the former plant is 64 billion rubles, and the Naryn cascade – 25 billion. The term of recoupment is fifteen years during which time these power plants will be managed by the Russian side, after that management will be given over to the Kyrgyz authorities. As a result of the implementation of these projects the hydro-energy potential of Kyrgyzstan should increase considerably: the total capacity of these five hydropower plants will amount to one gigawatt. This will enable the republic to increase considerably its budget revenues from the export of electric energy (In 2012 it held last place in economic development among the CIS countries, and its foreign debt reached 45 percent of its GDP).

As is known, the construction of new hydropower plants is the main stumbling block in the relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The latter categorically opposes these projects, because the Naryn River runs close to the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border and its water is used by the Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley. President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan has devoted much time and effort to prevent the construction of these hydropower plants, inasmuch as he believes that Kyrgyzstan may get control over the distribution of water resources in

Central Asia and regulate the flow of water as it thinks fit. As follows from Russian-Kyrgyz agreements, Moscow supported Bishkek in this dispute.

In the words of the Russian Premier D. Medvedev who made a statement on the results of his meeting with the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Zh. Satybaldiyev in Moscow on April 23, 2013, “the realization of these projects would make it possible to curtail a shortage of electric energy in Kyrgyzstan itself, and in the entire Central Asia.” Such position of Moscow on this matter can also be explained by political reasons, namely, certain mistrust of Tashkent, which demonstrated its desire to maintain active military and economic interaction with Washington.

However, everything is not that simple. Last May the Russian side already began work on the construction of the Upper-Naryn cascade of electric power plants. As to the Kambaratin hydropower plant, Moscow has agreed with President Karimov’s proposal first to carry out international ecological and seismological expert evaluation. Thus, the construction of the Kambaratin-1 hydropower plant may be postponed. In this case one could regard Karimov’s recent visit to Moscow a success, and certain experts tend to see it as a step toward improving relations with Russia on the eve of the withdrawal of the NATO military contingent from Afghanistan. At the same time, on May 2, 2013, a meeting took place between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan and the assistant U.S. Secretary of Trade M. Murray in Tashkent devoted to expanding investment cooperation of the two countries.

As a result of the April 2013 meeting of the Russian and Kyrgyz premiers a number of new agreements were signed, among them one envisaging a greater role of “Gazprom” and “Rosneft” on the domestic market of Kyrgyzstan. A deal was made by which “Gazprom” bought

100 percent of the shares of the national Kyrgyz operator “KyrgyzGaz,” and Kyrgyzstan’s premier expressed the hope that by the beginning of the next heating season the company’s operator would be the Russian company. Bishkek hopes that with the coming of “Gazprom” to the republic, the latter will get rid of the problems of supplying gas to domestic consumers.

As to “Rosneft” Corporation, it will supply combustibles and lubricants to Manas airport, open two fuel stations near the airport, and also an airport in the south city of Osh. Both sides have agreed on opening affiliations of Russian banks in Kyrgyzstan. The development of humanitarian ties is also envisaged: the government of the Russian Federation granted about 400 stipends to Kyrgyz students at Russian institutes and universities for the 2013/2014 scholastic year.

An important aspect of the development of relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan is their cooperation within the framework of integration associations, such as EurAzEC and SCO. At present Kyrgyzstan is about to join the Customs Union before the end of the year. An international conference was held in Bishkek early in April 2013 devoted to the problem. Its final resolution says that joining these organizations opens great prospects for Kyrgyzstan to draw more direct foreign investments, develop and broaden international cooperation in agriculture, and participate in big energy, trade, transport and information-communication projects.

The Russian Federation supports Kyrgyzstan in its joining the Customs Union, however, to do this it has to sign sixty-four documents. According to official data, Kyrgyzstan’s goods turnover with the Customs Union countries in 2012 increased by 25 percent and comprised \$3 billion, two of which in trade with Russia. During the meeting between the two premiers a protocol was signed on simplifying customs operations and customs control over commodities brought

from Kyrgyzstan into Russia; this concerns such commodities as raw cotton, sewn goods, and food products.

An important direction of the policy of Russia aimed at strengthening its positions in Central Asia is greater military aid to certain countries in the region. Moscow emphasizes that this is due to threats which can emerge after the withdrawal of the allied forces from Afghanistan in 2014; this aid is aimed, first and foremost, at strengthening the southern borders of Central Asian countries, which are the borders of the entire CIS. Within the framework of the CSTO Russia intends to grant \$1.1 billion to Kyrgyzstan and \$200 million to Tajikistan for modernization of their armies. Apart from that, Tajikistan will be granted privileges in getting supplies of Russian oil products.

Kyrgyzstan expects to receive fire arms, military vehicles, helicopters, stationary hospitals, mortars, etc. It is also planned to increase the number of Kyrgyz army officers studying at Russian institutions of higher learning. The leadership of Kyrgyzstan turned down the American offer to give the republic part of its military hardware and equipment taken from Afghanistan. In the words of President Atambayev, he sees his country's future in closer military cooperation with Russia which is its "historical and strategic partner."

Recently the President of Kyrgyzstan reaffirmed that the NATO airbase in Manas airport would be closed in 2014. According to an agreement signed during the meeting between the Russian and Kyrgyz premiers, the Russian Federation would render assistance in modernizing the infrastructure of Manas, as well as the regional airport in Osh.

Military cooperation between Russia and Kyrgyzstan has recently been given a new impetus. On April 27 the Council of the Federation of Russian parliament ratified the agreements between the governments of the two countries on the status and conditions of

the presence of the Russian military base on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, as well as the protocol on cooperation in the military sphere. The agreement envisages that the four Russian military objects on the territory of Kyrgyzstan will be united in a single Russian military base by January 29, 2017, and from then on will operate for fifteen years. Russia will pay for the lease of land on which the base is deployed \$4.5 million annually.

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## **ISLAM AND GLOBALIZATION: PROS AND CONS**

Certain researchers maintain that it would be wrong to believe that globalization is a historical and cultural phenomenon and a specific feature of our epoch only. Indeed, few people doubt that the sources of globalization should be sought deep down in history. In our present motley world the universal trends of integration and disintegration are represented by paradigms of globalization and post-modernism.

Iran is one of the biggest and dynamically developing countries in the Middle East. Its advantageous geographical position enables it to make a profound influence on the situation in the entire Middle East. The outlet to the world ocean via the Persian Gulf gives the country additional benefits. All this gives grounds to the Russian researcher S. Druzhilovsky to come to the conclusion that Iran is in the vanguard of the struggle against universal globalism in the Muslim world, and opposition to the violation of its national priorities by any foreign system of values. Interest in the problem of globalization is so high in Iranian society that dozens of new names and scientific works emerge

in this sphere. For example, there is a research center on globalization problems at Tehran University headed by the well-known scholar Mohammad Nahawandian, an active supporter of the idea of a dialogue of civilizations.

Muslim society has never concealed its cautious attitude to the process of globalization. Nevertheless, everybody realizes its inevitability and unavoidability. There is only one way out – to make the impact of globalization less painful. Attempts are being made to express alternatives to globalization in the tendencies of regionalization, hoping to avoid or contain its destructive consequences. Main attention is paid to the principles of social justice, respect for independence and national originality. The vital character of the idea of “divine justice” in Islam is not an expression of repetitions of the religious past, inasmuch as the problem of the embodiment of divine justice on earth is eternal, without any reservations concerning desacralization, secularization, etc. The Koran idea of divine justice is based on the understanding that the truth is not above time, but *within time*.

The Shi’ite Muslims have initially chosen *justice* of all divine attributes as the basic principle of their faith. Theologian Reza Ostadi explains this by saying that “the Shi’ites believe justice to be their second principle of religion... The world in which we live is based on justice and law, and the Creator of this world is the conscientious judge Who orders His slaves to live in this world of ours being guided by justice and avoiding oppression and violence.” (Reza Ostadi 1993: 78–79). These problems have repeatedly been discussed at international forums organized by the Cultural mission of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow jointly with various academic centers of Russia. Their main conclusion is the desire to evolve a consolidated position enabling mankind to strive for creating a socially just and

economically and technologically progressive world through a dialogue of civilizations. One such conference has been held at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia under the title "Globalization and Justice."

In his message to the participants in the round table on "Globalization and Justice in the light of the ideas of Imam Khomeini" the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation Golam-Reza Ansari noted that "it is not only the world of Islam, but the entire world of the East that should be well informed about the process of globalization... On the other hand, this process should not be centered on gaining benefits; it should not be detached from the tasks connected with morality and spirituality, which are now in great demand of all mankind." In the view of certain Russian researchers, Professor I. Liseyev one of them, the main reference points and orientations in the activity of present-day Iran whose state religion is Islam, are recognition of the noble character and value of each person, and rejection of oppression and hegemony of any person. Professor I. Liseyev writes: "Thus, beginning with the ideas of Imam Khomeini and through all ideology of Iran there is the idea of the need for another interpretation of civilization and the introduction of new spirit and values based on natural human values reflected in Islam."

Professor A. Pyrin, while speaking about the round-table discussion of "Philosophical ideas of Imam Khomeini in the context of the Eurasian concept of the unity of peoples," which has been arranged by the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, jointly with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, cited the words of Professor A. Chumakov, who said the following: "Iran invests financial means in the development of philosophy because it is a manifestation of the spirit of the nation. And this is a weapon stronger than the nuclear one. There is no other country in the world

where there was such close cooperation with Russian philosophers as in Iran, although there are offices of the Russian Philosophical Society in many countries. Iran organized philosophical congresses... It is turned to science, including humanitarian science.” It is indicative that the encyclopedia “Globalistics” contains articles by the spiritual leader and the then President of the country, along with those written by many other scholars. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> international congress “Globalism – 2011: ways to strategic stability and problems of global management” at Moscow State University held on May 18–22, 2011, we had an opportunity to have a fruitful exchange of views with our Iranian colleagues.

The President of Iran S.M. Khatami speaking at the “UN Millennium Summit” said that globalization should not be confined to the creation of bigger sales markets and absorption of national cultures by one dominating culture. This will only be possible when common approaches, interests and laws realized on the basis of equality and justice become widely used all over the world in the name of progress. The main and well-substantiated demand of the Muslim world is to redistribute part of the world’s wealth and incomes of transnational corporations and other corporate structures in favor of the poorest sections of the planet’s population. Life insistently demands that the monopoly of the “global players” on know-how, modern education, and high technologies be abolished. The rights of nations to self-determination, language, system of values and culture be recognized and implemented. No doubt, western countries are in no hurry to share high technologies, but they force their ideological clichés and standards of behavior on other nations. The head of the cultural section of the Iranian Embassy in Moscow A. Torkaman believes that globalization is a new form of colonialism which is now presented under the slogan of

globalization of economy, but with the ultimate aim of all-round domination over Eastern countries.

The development of information-communication systems seriously influences the system of education and science. However, it is not always a positive influence. Quite a few states have to take into account the fact that they are unable to control production processes in the western industry of entertainment, cinema, and show-business oriented to the well-known values of consumerism and drawing into their midst enormous masses of people. But many people in the East realize nowadays that to fight this by prohibitive measures or isolationism is impossible. Naturally, in the conditions when industrially developed countries have all the levers of pressure in their hands and developing countries are suffering from many difficulties, it is preposterous to talk of any “free exchange.” It is no secret that Hollywood has showered the entire world with its product, which is often of low quality, but foreign films shown in the United States are not dubbed, but only subtitled. Naturally, pampered American viewers are not interested in seeing them. Such is one of the “cultural filters.” All this resembles a one-way street whose direction has been chosen by the “global players.”

Globalization in the spiritual and cultural spheres becomes one of the most important phenomena in the world’s progress. Of course, globalization makes it possible to broaden cultural contacts and exchange positive experience in the most diverse spheres of life and work, thus enriching national cultures and exchanging positive experience in the most diverse spheres of life and work. At the same time a question inevitably arises as to the need to preserve and protect the original features of traditional national cultures. There are two opposite worldwide tendencies – globalization and localization; in their interconnections they tend to contribute to intensifying conflicts,

especially on ethno-religious grounds. The growing feelings of religious-cultural identity as an answer to the danger of losing cultural originality and cultural identity are characteristic of a number of local civilizations. Islam opposes westernization and tries to evolve its own original model of globalization based on natural religious and cultural traditions. However, the conscious opposition to westernization does not at all mean rejection of modernization processes.

One should not identify the processes of westernization and globalization, however, it is precisely such approach that is typical of the Islamic world view. Westernization is interpreted as expansion claiming the domination of western culture in the entire world represented by traditional cultures. It is believed that the principle of the functioning of cultures in modern conditions should only be their interaction. Accordingly, the main principle on which it should function is a dialogue based on pluralism and partnership and recognition of equality of cultures. Representatives of traditional cultures cannot but realize that the inevitable acceptance of new forms is an aspect of self-development, and nobody will be able to avoid borrowings.

It is difficult to disagree with the fact that along with the acceleration of social progress growing globalization brings mankind closer to the formation of uniform human culture and civilization, which should in no way reject either cultural diversity or specific features of civilizational development of individual countries and regions. The desire to unify different cultures under the common denominator of universal progress is typical of the universalistic trend in cultural cognition. However, local cultures are unique.

In search of the golden mean scholars of cultures in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had to concentrate on comparative typological study of models of cultural identity. And the principle of dividing cultures into western and eastern could serve as the key in their research.

The Muslim world is not striving for isolationism, rejection of essential positive aspects connected with greater opportunities of broader cultural contacts, and comparing and borrowing positive experience. Investigations of differences in eastern and western cultures make it possible to penetrate deeper in the development process and functioning of culture. The specific features of eastern culture oriented to the self-development of man and society, to man's spiritual world form the roots of its depth and wealth. Islamic movements presuppose an alternative model of modern society, which does not mean refusal from modernization, but call for building a modern society, which takes part in the global system, but is inspired by its own self-consciousness and its own Islamic culture. Iranian researchers single out the economic-technological component in the process of globalization and look for mechanisms to join it, which would be in line with their own national interests and traditions. The view that consensus in the world is possible on the basis of the idea of monotheism and significance of the spiritual and moral component of the modern global development has been expressed by the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran Imam Khomeini and the previous President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Imam Khomeini paid attention to the danger of a low status of spiritual and moral values in the globalized world. Both men asserted the priority of the spiritual-ethical component of human life and found common points of contact in the positions of Islam and Christianity.

The globalization processes in the sphere of culture were accompanied with a no less important polarization of the world community on the principle of division of cultural systems. Along with the economy it is culture that is one of the most complex spheres of social life where the globalization process is manifested especially vividly. The world of Islam is faced with the need to choose "the lesser evil." In view of the variability of globalization scenarios there is the

need to work out its own model by forming corresponding vital orientations. As a result a mechanism of the functioning of global civilization is formed in which the West is a factor of changeability, and the East – a factor of stability. Such original “dipole” could be an alternative to the unipolar world with the hegemony of the well-known “global players.” The East, which cherishes religious foundations, has always proposed spiritual initiatives, for it is not accidental that all world religions and many cultural incentives have come from the east.

Sometimes it can be thought and felt that comparison between East and West is like comparison between art and science. The East seems to be closer to art, and the West – to rational science. The Eastern way of thinking is likened to artistic activity because the individual ethical world is in the forefront in it, just as in art. Whereas in the West, joint activity and interconnection of people are major conditions of society’s organization. This is why, in the conditions of Westernization individual ethnic groups and people possessing natural originality seem to melt into one faceless structure. Naturally, this causes rejection and feelings of protest in the traditional Muslim medium. Doubtless, the East needs connection of the topological coordinate with the religious factor. Due to this it may be possible to determine historical-cultural regions possessing their own socio-cultural identity. It is important for us because reforms in all spheres of life are now taking place in Russia. This is why the study of the correlation problem of eastern and western cultures and civilizations and the place of Russia in their dialogue is so important to us.

In the not-so-distant historical past of Oriental societies, prior to their contacts with the West, religions dominated the entire life and activity of peoples, and accumulation of scientific knowledge took place within the framework of religious-philosophical traditions. This was why the destinies of science proved so different in the West and

East. Western humanists and their eastern counterparts had common knowledge and morals, and constantly turned toward the problems of human life. But the scientific thought of the West has always been directed forward, which was manifested by its great attention to natural sciences and fundamental research which required a corresponding level of theoretical thinking. This was why in the East science remained for a long time within the framework of prescribed practical-technological activity, prior to its bringing closer to the “western,” scientific-rational type. There were only prescriptions as to what should be done and how, and knowledge about this was passed from generation to generation. This was why there was no question of perceiving the entire “scientific” wealth within the framework of methodological reflection, which has been accumulated in the course of the millennia of prescription utilitarian scholarly activity. Islamic civilization is less open to outside influence, which can be explained by the specific features of religion embracing all aspects of life, including economics and politics. The Muslim way of life is not only traditional, but also self-valued. It is traditionalist active civilization. We observe an attempt made by traditional Muslim society to preserve a definite measure of stability along with borrowing everything useful and rational without destructive consequences for its development.

Experience shows that the impact of globalization on the cultural aspects of public life has a contradictory character. Ideally, globalization should broaden the area of cultural contacts, exchanges in new technologies and scientific and technical achievements. Meanwhile, in reality we observe the destruction of cultural foundations of mature societies, their spiritual heritage, and unique original features. Culture plays the role of the immune system of society, as it were. If it withers away, it will be difficult to oppose unfavorable impact from the outside. As a result we are witness to the

attempts of dissemination of western standards, ideals and values all over the world. However, today the adverse effect of the influence of alien mass culture is felt by regional subcultures. But we should not talk of the non-acceptance of the process of globalization even by the Shi'ite theologians as the most conservative section of Iranian society. They believe (not without reason) that consolidation of all societies, nations, countries and governments in a single whole, that is, globalization is not a new phenomenon following the European Renaissance, technical achievements, or political experience of contemporary man. Professor of Tehran University Khasan Rahimpur Azgadi, D. Sc. (Philosophy), writes: "Islam considers the world rational (based on reason), and reason itself – a universal phenomenon. This is why Islam's view on globalization is not an expression of certain nostalgia for traditions which are dying out under the influence of modernism, or reactionary opposition to science and technological progress, for example, in the sphere of communications... There are no grounds to talk of the presence of radical contradictions between Islam and globalization in the sense of changing mutual relations between people, or between man and Nature."

The task of preserving and protecting the values and originality of traditional culture is pressing today as never before. The state of present-day culture and global processes in society expose the contradictory nature of historical consciousness. A situation emerges in which realization of the inevitability of social transformation is added to the opposite tendency, that is, attention to tradition, to the past. The present spiritual leader of Iran S.M. Khamenei has expressed a position typical of Muslims in the following way: "The process of globalization (that is, conquest of the world), which is now described as historic predestination can be termed 'satanic globalization'... The real ruler of the global village (if this term is used correctly) is not man, but his

Creator. He is the protector of human rights, democracy and freedom in real life, but not in theory, and He considers murder of even one individual equal to the destruction of the entire humankind.” And S.M. Khamenei added: “The variant of globalization forced on mankind today has become a cause of the emergence of conflicts on a global scale. This could not but evoke the natural resistance of peoples. Globalization (as a natural process of universalization of the vital activity of the peoples of our planet) and globalization, or the construction of the world (as an artificially promoted process) are two different processes.” In the view of certain Iranian scholars, globalization is a process within whose framework values, the way of actions, customs and traditions, ethnic features and identity, nationality, as well as local and regional governments lose their independence. Besides, the multipolar character of the world in the sphere of politics, economics and culture disappears, and the world is moving toward formation of a uniform direction and creation of a uniform culture. Global tendencies striving to entrench themselves within individual local cultures, destroy their security from within and their own stable system of relations. Another Iranian philosopher, S.H. Nasr, writes: “The modern epoch, especially in view of globalization processes, has engendered the problem of civilizational identity. Civilizations, such as Chinese, Indian and Islamic are facing the threat of annihilation or, at least, transformation into periphery cultural groups of universal civilization on the pattern of western civilization. Hence, the desire of these groups to protect their identity.” This is why it is only cooperation in the spiritual sphere that should form the basis of a modern dialogue of civilizations and cultural interactions.

Transnational culture should not be viewed as some spatial-time process as a result of which a “uniform world culture” absorbing national cultures will be formed. The cultural heritage of mankind is

growing all the time. It accumulates both positive and negative experience of development along with opportunities of creative assimilation of the earlier riches. True, there are changes in cultures taking place under the impact of a whole number of external and internal reasons conditioned by globalization. But their sources are very different. Attempts to perceive the essence of these changes have cognitive and practical significance. Transnationalization of culture has many aspects and means the enrichment of the area of national cultures with a new valuable content corresponding to integration tendencies of the modern world. They presuppose not only, and not so much, socio-economic and geopolitical changes, but above all the formation of a new type of transnational culture whose specific features will be commercialization, unification and mobility, which will distort its structure.

Iranian researcher S. Huseini (Ahlak), while acknowledging globalization's connections with the sphere of economics and communications, thinks that it should have a spiritual and philosophical basis. He writes: "An almost homogeneous world facilitates human contacts, friendship and search for affinity, but does not facilitate individual progress, realization of talents and elaboration of identity, which engenders deep-going spiritual, cultural and political problems. Globalization in culture, politics and science depends on the presence of ideals in human life... New ideas, science and technology develop in the direction of greater actualization of human capabilities."

Religions as a conservative phenomenon of the cultures of ethnic groups contain a tendency for self-preservation. As a result of interactions inevitably connected with the impact of globalization there is no mixing of religions or their hybridization. Globalization brings such phenomena to private life of man whose character is alien to concrete historical specificities of individual ethnic groups. In the

globalized world mankind's problems acquire a general character, and this is why the zone of social responsibility of religions becomes broader. Despite different assessments and acceptance or rejection of globalization, there is unity in the view that globalization, in one form or another, is a phenomenon to stay for a very long time. This phenomenon should be accepted as an objective reality. Globalization, which is accompanied with homogeneous living conditions, is rejected in societies with traditional ways of life. During the past decades, as a result of rapid scientific and technological progress in the development of the productive forces of society, there have been more changes than during the many preceding centuries. These changes took place with growing speed and were inevitably accompanied with deep-going changes in the socio-economic spheres. The negative consequences of global processes by virtue of their inner unresolved causes are doomed to exponential growth which will be accompanied with hidden and open confrontations between smaller civilizations and cultures striving to gain a place under the sun. The two opposite tendencies – drawing closer and simultaneous confrontation of subjects of the world community – condition the undulating character of the process of globalization.

The Muslim East is aware that the world is facing the threat of losing a uniform human perspective, splitting the humankind into a “golden billion” and the rest of humanity. This contributes to the collapse of our planetary civilization which is unable to oppose destructive phenomena endlessly. The lowering of barriers between sovereign states leads to the transformation of inner social relations and destroys cultural taboos, which is negatively received by the Muslim medium. The latter has long realized the need for innovations, modernization, and the development of a modern educational system and communications. Our observations in Iranian universities have

shown that Iran is ready to receive everything positive in transcontinental and interregional phenomena.

The unified world has come into being on the basis of qualitatively new computer technologies, which gave birth to information technologies that radically changed the nature of business. The spreading of information technologies and globalization have greatly changed the essence of cooperation between developed countries with their “information elite” and developing countries. The latter receive the “benefits” of globalization in the form of alien mass culture, withering away of national barriers in economics, and spreading of behavioral stereotypes which are not connected with their national and cultural identity.

It is difficult to deny the universal interdependence as a reality of the globalized world, but it is necessary to give this phenomenon more or less human and humane features. For there are secondary manifestations of globalization: on the one hand, Internet-communications and individual communication possibilities, various forms of international cultural exchanges and contacts, and on the other, international anti-globalist movements, organized crime and international terrorism. All this cannot but create ground for new conflicts and contradictions, which, in turn, put up obstacles to further globalization and its advantages.

Globalization and internationalization are natural processes in the modern world. The East is ready to take part in the formation of global civilization of a new type. But it should ensure the process of progressive changes in the international arena, serve as a guarantor of the future of mankind, and participate in solving its vital problems. This new civilization should be formed as an alternative to technocratic-information global civilization with a wide gap between the “golden billion” and the rest of mankind. It is a dialogue of

civilizations that will be able to become a lever of the preservation of the world and an incentive to the creation of a universal model of an improvement of the international situation, excluding one-sidedness or diktat in politics, religion and culture. The present century should give birth to an integral socio-cultural layer which will be consolidated in the world on the basis of a dialogue of cultures, civilizations and religions and will determine the world outlook of the present and future generations. It is this civilization that will be able to solve all social, class and global problems facing mankind. The world of Islam demonstrates the entire world that the objective process of globalization has definite limits determined by the specific features of national self-consciousness of individual peoples who are capable to limit the destructive aspects of globalization unacceptable to them. Let us hope that by drawing peoples to the world's material and spiritual culture globalization will implement the integration and internationalization of the world community.

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