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**CIVILIZATIONS AND CRISIS OF NATIONS
(Arguments in Russia and elsewhere)**

“Civilizational” subjects become ever more interesting for researchers, journalists and authors of various type, as well as readers in the context of the transformation processes going on in the modern world.

Questions of cultural-civilizational identity, the character of relations between values of different regional-cultural clusters, and the evolution of nations in the conditions of growing hyper-globalization become more acute and call for a more thorough interpretation.

Problem of Identification Choice

Russia, especially during the latest years of Putin’s presidency, considers itself as a state of a special civilization based on spirituality and adherence to traditional standards and values. Among them are responsibility of the individual before society and the state (along with his or her rights) and religious ideals (in contrast to aggressive secularism of Europe). However, this does not stop rivalry between

supporters of various concepts and models of the civilizational identity of Russia.

Islamic Extremism and Islamophobia

For centuries Russia has been an impressive example of coexistence, cultural mutual enrichment, and respect for one another of many ethnic and confessional groups, primarily Orthodox Christian and Muslim, within the framework of a single state. However, a conflict between the West and the Islamic world, Islamic extremism which now exists in Russian regions, as well as large-scale unregulated migration processes have worsened relations between these groups. Supporters of the Eurasian choice seem to be bound to build bridges between Russia and the Islamic world, but they (and not only nationalists) often show biased attitude to Muslim civilization.

Adherents of Russian nationalism of all shades are inclined to accuse the West, primarily the United States, of all evils. The St. Petersburg scholar of Ancient Orient Andrei Vassoyevich, for example, asserts that “radical Islamist groupings are directed by the United States of America.” He ascribed the organization of “Al Qaeda” to the United States (which is true, partly), and announced that the British Intelligence Service (but not Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab) created the Wahhabi trend in the 18th century.

Incidentally, we may note that in the 1920s Russian diplomacy expressed certain sympathy to Saudi-Wahhabi expansion on the Arabian Peninsula. It regarded the Puritan movement of the Bedu tribes as a force independent from the colonialists, which set itself the task to unite the Arab people within a centralized and independent state, contrary to the British “divide and rule” project.

It was the Soviet Union, but not Britain, that was the first state to officially recognize the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In the 1920s, in the period of active Soviet national construction in Central Asia, local leaders showed a quite favorable attitude to certain Salaphite preachers. Salaphism, or Wahhabism, presented no threat to the Soviet authorities at the time. In the 1930s there were even imams in Uzbekistan preaching fundamentalism.

But gradually, the situation has changed. Relying on enormous financial resources obtained through extracting and selling oil, Wahhabism has begun aggressive expansion beyond the borders of the kingdom, which set many Muslims against it.

Russia is rather close to the Islamic world due to the fact that over 15 million of its population are Muslims (along with migrants, the figure is more than 20 million), and also due to its people's attitude to religion and its role in society. The terrorists and extremists under the guise of Islam do great harm to the harmonious coexistence of religious communities in Russia. Perhaps, the Muslim clergy could do more to oppose extremism. However, manifestations of Islamophobia, attempts to present Islam as a religion of intolerance and aggressiveness do great damage to interconfessional harmony.

Religious Traditionalists and “Renovationists”

One can agree that the dividing line between civilizations of the West and the Islamic world is the role of religion in society and the state, and people's attitude to this role. However, there are countries with a higher level of religiousness in western civilization, although with a secular system of statehood, as, for example, the United States. Secondly, in the Islamic world there have been cases of upsurge of atheistic thinking (especially in the 1920s, largely under the influence of the October revolution in Russia in 1917 and the creation of communist parties in the East), and regimes founded on secular

principles (Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatyurk) and his followers), Tunisia under President Habib Bourgiba. The Egyptian Ismail Mazkhar (1891–1962) founded the “Dar al-Usul” Publishers in Cairo for propaganda of atheism and printed an Arabic translation of the work “The Origin of Species” by Charles Darwin, so hated by Islamists, and the book by Bertrand Russel “Why I Am Not a Christian.” Ismail Adham (1911–1940) was another active propagandist of atheism, who had studied at Moscow University and then organized an association first in Turkey, then in Egypt. He committed suicide and asked to be cremated, but not buried in a Muslim cemetery.

In the late 1920s and in the 1930s interest in Islam began to grow and atheistic and secularist propaganda lost popularity. The Egyptian intellectual Muhammad Khusein Heikal (1889–1956), a Sorbonne graduate, published a three-volume work about Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and became famous after the publication of his classical work “The Life of Mohammed” (1935). A sharp turn toward Islam was made by Abbas Mahmud al-Akkad (1889–1964), among whose pupils was the well-known preacher of radical Islamism Seyid Kutb (1906–1966) (executed in Egypt during the rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser).

Debates continue in the Muslim world whether Islamic standards and rules are compatible with democratic values. This subject is actively discussed at numerous conferences and symposiums, at meetings of religious figures, experts and politicians. According to one point of view, the very problem of combining the values of Islamic civilization with the democratic principles is wrong in essence, because this civilization is democratic in its foundation and does not need to borrow anything from other systems. Adherents of other point of view accuse Islamic societies of authoritarianism, neglect of human rights, absence of freedoms, etc. There are also supporters of convergence.

Modernization and Cultural Convergence

Success of modernization project will largely depend on how relations between different cultures and civilizations will take shape. According to Ian Peters, it is possible to talk of three globalized-cultural paradigms or development prospects of these relations: cultural differentialism, or preserved differences; cultural convergence, or growing similarity (sameness); cultural hybridization, or constant mixture. The key point here is attitude to cultural-civilizational differences: will globalization lead to their leveling, withering away through the absorption of ones by others, homogenization (convergence); will they be, on the contrary, strengthened and prolonged (differentialism as the foundation of the theory of the “clash of civilizations” by Samuel Huntington), or will there be a process of their mixing (hybridization). It should be noted that the concept of hybridization, which came into being in the West in the 19th century, is now connected in literature with the phenomenon of migration.

In the history of the Islamic world there have been quite a few examples of hybridization. One can remember an old fact: the Muslim Ottoman sultans did not object when the Europeans called their capital city in the old way – “Constantinople,” but they called it differently – “High Porta,” or “al-Istana.” In republican Turkey, after adoption of the law on the postal service in 1930, it was decreed to name the capital “Istanbul.” But the preservation of the old name corresponded to the wish of the Ottoman sultans to use the grandeur of the Byzantine capital themselves, and present themselves as the heirs of the culture of Byzantium. Double identification served the image of the country.

Arabs and Jews: Break or Rapprochement

Today such possibility is blocked by the existing Arab-Israeli conflict and the continuing occupation of Palestine territories by Israel.

The Palestinians, losing faith in the possibility of the creation of their own state, turn more often to the idea of creating a unified democratic Arab-Jewish state. However, they realize that there is no alternative to the concept of the two states, and all ideas and proposals of one unified state are doomed to remaining an empty talk.

At the same time this concept receives support of quite a few western critics of Israel, whose number is growing even in the Jewish community of the United States. Even the critical reaction of western leaders to the words of the Turkish premier R. Erdogan, who compared Zionism with German fascism, was relatively mild.

Function of Historical Memory

The crisis of identity is closely connected with historical memory. Some people have a strong such memory, others – weak. The second category includes not only “new nations.” Nations with a long history have great differences in this respect. For instance, the peoples of the Middle East have such strong memory that it exerts a powerful influence on their mentality and attitude to other nations and to life. One can also mention “genealogical memory,” which has different duration depending on ethnic origin. Suffice it to ask a statistical Russian and Arab young men about how many of his ancestors he knows. One can rest assured that the Arab lad knows many more of them.

Separate facts of history have sacral character for certain nations (Holocaust for the Jews, genocide for the Armenians). The memory of defeats and losses in wars is especially bitter. The memory of defeats and failures in several wars with Israel is unbearable for the Arabs, it breeds their inferiority complex. They have to feel dignity and superiority in something different in order to overcome it.

Religion gives not only consolation, but also hope, and in combination with the idea of chosenness it gives the feeling of dignity and superiority. The well-known Lebanese intellectual Amin Maaluf wrote that “Islam is the abode for both ethnicity and dignity.” Inasmuch as Arab societies have always lagged behind other countries in development (except individual cases), their armies have suffered defeat after defeat, their territories have been occupied and people have been humiliated, “religion, which they gave the world, has become the last abode for self-respect.” There is no doubt that these circumstances were among the reasons which provoked the “Arab spring,” and a rampage of violence during the exacerbated inter- and intraconfessional and interethnic clashes. The Middle Eastern “sphacelation” is spreading beyond the borders of the region, including in the northern direction.

Amin Maaluf mentions “cultural (civilizational) dignity,” with which the desire of any ethnic group to preserve its language and religion is connected (he noted that religion is exclusive, but the language is not). He introduces the concept of “globalized communitarianism,” which is one of the most harmful consequences of globalization, when the sharp growth of the role of religious affiliation is combined with people’s unification in “global tribes” with the help of the all-pervading flows of information. This is especially noticeable in the Islamic world where the “unprecedented wave of communitarian particularism expressed in the bloody conflict between the Sunnites and Shi’ites comes out along with internationalism.” The latter means that an Algerian volunteer goes and fights in Afghanistan, a Tunisian fights in Bosnia, an Egyptian joins the Taliban in Pakistan, a Jordanian can be found in the ranks of the Chechen fighters, and an Indonesian – in Somalia.

Historical memory has an influence outside the boundaries of an ethnic group, which sometimes causes tumultuous political collisions and facilitates powerful information flows.

Memory contains events far away from our present life in time, especially if ethnic groups which took part in them exist in our day and maintain certain relations with other participants in those developments. Suffice it to recall in this context the Kulikovo battle for Russians and Tatars, or the Kosovo battle for Serbs.

All this has direct bearing on the formation of the self-image of ethnic groups. I cannot but agree with Lamont King who noted that a nation is a type of an ethnic group. But “if an ethnic group is *other-defined*, a nation is *self-defined*. People referred by other people to a definite ethnic group cannot detach themselves from it, even if they so wish, however, they can renounce their affiliation to a nation. Moreover, a nation “also differs from a generic ethnic group by its desire to rule its state.” Historical memory is instrumental here, and its function boils down to maintaining national solidarity and cohesion.

Myths and Symbols

The elements of historical memory are almost always confabulated. In order to understand this phenomenon it would be useful to turn to the theory of symbolic choice, whose central idea is that of the *myth-symbol* complex. Myth is “conviction shared by a big group of people which gives events and actions a definite significance.” Within the framework of such understanding the fact of whether the event fulfilling the function of myth did take place in reality or was invented has no significance. In turn, symbol is understood as “emotionally charged reference to myth.” Certain researchers of concrete ethnic conflicts, including those in the post-Soviet area, write that “the “myth-symbol” complex is a *network of myths and symbols*

connected with them. In other words, people make political choice not so much by calculation as by emotions, answering the symbols offered them.

Within this theoretical discourse the concept of identity occupies an important place and it actually comes out as a factor of world politics (it is not accidental that from the 1990s this concept has been elaborated in the theory of international relations). Then again, symbolic politics can deal with the paradigm of the emergence of proneness to conflict on religious grounds. In any case, fear for the disappearance of Islamic civilizational-cultural identity and, accordingly, the loss of positions of socio-political groups basing their legitimacy on it, is definitely able to give rise to hostility and violence. Suffice it to recall the harsh reaction of many people in the Islamic world to the publication of a cartoon depicting Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper.

The “myth-symbol” complex – with the help of fanning aggression on the basis of various historical and religious myths – can overcome the weakness of identity and difficulties of implementation of a policy of mobilization. Such myths, in turn, are built on the interpretation of politics in ethnic terms. Similarly, mythologizing events of the first ages of Islam through symbols can lead to examining events, including modern ones, in religious terms. The point is that these events are given a certain symbolic significance provoking an action of a political character. In doing this, we should always keep in mind that ethnicity and religion are so closely connected that ethnic mobilization can appeal to religious motivation, and vice versa.

Certain scholars consider that “myth in its modern sense is a collective product of a social group.” The myth of the Holocaust as the most tragic event in the history of the Jews speaks of a “collective attempt to find meaning in the death of six million Jews.” This

collective project served as a powerful instrument of national mobilization. It is indicative that there is no taboo among Israeli scholars to discuss the symbolic role of the Holocaust. Similarly, the collective project of the genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the most tragic event in Armenian history, fulfills the same role for the Armenians.

The Crisis of Nations

The above-mentioned crisis of identity is inseparably linked with the weakening stability of the modern system of nations. In recent decades a whole number of states-nations have disintegrated in various regions of the world (U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Sudan), and new ones have formed. The “Arab spring” phenomenon forced many experts and politicians to talk about a crisis of the post-colonial configuration of the Middle East, or about the end of the Sykes-Picot system created after World War I.

Historians can tell much about how hastily the French and British colonialists drew borders between parts of the lands torn away from the Ottoman Empire. For instance, at the authoritative Istanbul forum in 2013 a well-known Turkish author cited one of the reasons for the emergence of the “Arab spring,” namely, that the Arab countries did not allegedly know their national statehood, but were created of “splinters of the Ottoman Empire.” He neglected, for some reason or other, the fact that Egyptian statehood, despite the periods of foreign domination, numbered several millennia. Undoubtedly, this statement is based on the now popular neo-Ottoman discourse, which shows that post-imperial national statehood has not been thoroughly entrenched in the consciousness of Turkish people. I think that Ankara’s policy with regard to the Syrian crisis has been prompted, to a certain degree, by

the fact that part of the Turkish political elite is prone to regard Syria as the already-mentioned “splinter” of the Ottoman Empire.

Certain analysts believe that the system of post-colonial borders and state units mapped by them has become obsolete. Such views are expressed in Middle Eastern countries, too.

Nationalism and the State

Speaking of the crisis of nation-states, mention should be made of the territorial factor. A state is a “legal concept” describing a social group occupying definite territory and organized within the framework of common political institutions and an efficient government. Nation is seen as a “social group which is united by common ideology, common institutions, customs and the feeling of homogeneity.”

Using the words of the already mentioned Ian Peters, the period between 1840 and 1960 was the epoch of “nations,” and the dark side of the building of nations was marginalization, banishment, expropriation, oppression of foreigners, as well as the policy of national purges. Turkey (Armenians and others), Germany (Jews), Uganda (Indians), Nigeria (Ghanaians), Bulgaria (ethnic Turks), India (Muslims) serve as eloquent examples, but this is only the tip of an iceberg. In recent decades the importance of nation-states has diminished and is replaced by globalization, regionalism and ethnicity. The role of diasporas becomes generally recognized, “national” identities become mixed, and the preservation of cultural variety becomes a generally recognized imperative.

Nevertheless, it is precisely the attitude toward immigrants that has become one of the dividing lines between supporters of different development models of Russia, but here both Russian traditionalists and “western-oriented” people often unite in their desire to restrict the inflow of the “aliens.” And this is despite the fact that the latter are our

former fellow-compatriots who lived in the Soviet Union. In general, each restriction concerning people's movement from one country to another is resistance to globalization, in which of the three flows of the free global circulation (capital and goods; information; people) only the two first ones cannot be stopped (economic and cultural protectionism is unsuccessful).

Universal Character of Violence

In connection with the often discussed subject of the high level of violence in inter- and intraconfessional and interethnic relations, identification choice and the destinies of nation-states in the convulsions of the “Arab spring” I'd like to remark that outside the boundaries of the Islamic world, too, one can find many examples of bitterness. One American author writes sarcastically that nobody can deny the fact that Dalai Lama is a charismatic and attractive person, the same can be said about Queen Elizabeth II, yet no one can forbid to criticize the principle of hereditary monarchy. Similarly, the first foreign visitors to Tibet were appalled on seeing terrible feudal submission and cruel punishment meted out to people held in the state of complete slavery under the parasitic monk elite. Among adherents of such seemingly peaceful and humane religions as Hinduism and Buddhism there are many murderers and sadists. These facts are widely known. The beautiful island of Ceylon has been ravaged due to violence and reprisals in the course of a prolonged armed conflict between Buddhists and Hindus.

In today's Myanmar, despite the process of democratization which has begun recently, the Muslim minority (up to 800,000) is subjected to harsh persecution. In today's Africa members of certain Christian sects are guilty of cruel murders of Muslims.

* * *

The above-said calls for greater respect of the national sovereignty of independent states, some of which live through a crisis of statehood under the pressure of challenges of hyper-globalization and the need to make identification choice. Inter-civilizing dialogues is an indisputably important instrument of preventing hostility between ethnic and confessional groups, peoples and states to turn into bloody wars.

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**RECOGNITION OF IDENTITY:
DISCOURSE OF THE ELITE
AND POLITICAL CLASS OF MUSLIM
COMMUNITY OF RUSSIA**

Debates on the problems of identity are going on in most countries of the modern world. As Samuel Huntington said, they are now an inalienable feature of our time. Who are we? What community do we belong to? The need to understand socio-political changes in all their variety and search for new development resources of society adequate to historical challenges prompts political sciences to turn to the category of *identity* more and more often. However, as many contemporary authors and researchers emphasize, the question of

the correlation between individual and collective identity will be one of the most complex.

In modern society the formation of collective identities takes place under the influence of a whole range of factors. They are determined by the activity of the state and the political elite, the conscious policy of identity, and also as a result of spontaneous changes in mass consciousness under the impact of socio-economic and socio-cultural deformations capable to activate such “traditional” forms of collective self-identification as religious, national and civilizing ones. Collective identity is closely connected with political identity and is formed in direct interaction with it.

Another important methodological aspect, which should be taken into account, is the need to use a communicative approach in examining collective identities. Erroneous interpretation can lead to the danger of manipulating whole collectives, ignoring differences between individuals, and, as a consequence, to their forcible homogenization.

The Russian political elite tended to take the concept of cultural ethno-nationalism evolved in 1999–2000 with the help of the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to the Russian political analyst S. Kaspe, who took part in working out and implementing the program of the Russian nation-building, the Russian Orthodox Church, along with the state, should be regarded one of the necessary participants in nation-building¹.

Political analysts A. Verkhovsky and E. Pain have a critical attitude to the concept of cultural ethno-nationalism of the Russian Orthodox Church, assessing a “special path” of civilizing nationalism as one leading to an impasse, contradicting the global tendencies of world development, retarding the modernization of social institutions, and thereby undermining Russia’s hope for a worthy place in the future

world order². Besides, these researchers note that the concept of the Russian Orthodox Church offers representatives of Islam, Buddhism and Judaism the role of junior partners, which they may not like.

It is noted in abundant literature about Islamic revival in modern Russia that along with the growing Islamic infrastructure in the country the “awakening of Muslim identity” is taking place. Identifying themselves with the Russian state and Russian civilizing community, Russian Muslims have preserved their Islamic identification and cultural-religious individuality for centuries.

In the years of “Islamic revival” against the background of ideological vacuum, which has emerged with the coming of the new political elite to power after the collapse of the communist system of the U.S.S.R. and the state’s inability to formulate the national idea and world outlook, Muslim identity has strengthened its positions in the general socio-cultural identification³.

Millions of citizens of Russia have internationalized many standards, values and political orientations current in the Russian Muslim umma⁴.

Under the Constitution of Russia, Orthodox Christianity and Islam are legally equal. However, reality is sometimes different, unfortunately. According to a statement of the Chairman of the Council of muftis of Russia, R. Gainuddin, many Orthodox believers consider that they are in a majority, and therefore Russia is an Orthodox Christian country. “We say No, Russia is both Orthodox Christian and Muslim country. Islam came to this land before Russia had been baptized: the first mosque had been built in Derbent in Daghestan in the 8th century. Islam is not religion of newcomers or migrants, but religion of indigenous Russians,” R. Gainuddin said. Muslim peoples had helped Russian princes to unite into a Russian state. This is why the twenty million Muslims living in the country today have the right to

demand complete equality. The painful subject of confessional inequality continues to exist in Russia. Along with pluralism of views and positions represented in Russian society, the key actors of the Muslim community in their statements and deeds proceed from the annual address of the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin to the Federal Assembly of the country. In his address of 2012 he said that “Russia should be a sovereign and influential country. We must not only continue to develop, but also preserve our national and spiritual identity...”⁵. In his statement at the 2nd All-Russia Muslim conference in 2013 R. Gainuddin said: “Russia has for centuries been developing as a multinational and poly-confessional state in which ethnic or religious discrimination is impermissible. Russia is the beloved Motherland for the many-million Muslim umma...”

The factor of Islamic identity in domestic policy of Russia will continue to grow in importance. According to the results of the All-Russia population census of 2010, most ethnic groups which historically belong to the Muslim tradition have increased in number. The number of adherents of Islam who fulfill all precepts and rules has grown, too.

At present, most experts studying the political activity of Muslims speak of the two historically organized development centers of the Russian umma – the Volga area and the North Caucasus where the vast majority of the population is Muslim. In the Volga area Islam has organically become part of the Russian political and socio-cultural model, The North Caucasus is a region where Muslim religion fulfills the ideological function of uniting opposition circles both in the elite and in the popular masses.

Researchers now center attention on the third Muslim area situated beyond the Ural Mountains, in West Siberia. This region is now becoming a sample of “immigrant Islam,” where the backbone of the

Muslim community is formed by migrants of the first and second generations.

Such big cities as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizny Novgorod, Saratov, and others, which have big Turkic-Muslim enclaves, have not been considered ethnic-confessional political centers exerting profound influence on the basic development tendencies of the Islamic umma due to their considerable multicultural social media and its urbanized character. However, one can see a considerable growth of adherents of Islam in these cities in recent years. In the Moscow region, for example, there are more Muslims now than before, and their religiousness, adherence to traditions, and greater participation in the life and activity of their community have noticeably grown. This was largely due to the greater number of settlers from among the Central Asian and North Caucasian peoples, as well as Tatars whose number in Moscow has increased by 17,400, that is, 7.9 percent. According to R. Gainuddin, there are now about two million Muslims living in Moscow, and their number is growing which is also due to economic problems. The general tendency is not only the growth of the Muslim population in the Moscow region, but also the gradual loss of the periphery status of Islam which was characteristic of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

One of the most important qualitative features in describing the state and position of the Muslim umma is the number of believers taking part in feast's prayers. According to observers, their number has been steadily growing, and it is especially impressive in Moscow. By some of the data of the Ministry for the Interior, each of two major Muslim religious feasts in 2009 was attended by 70,000, and in 2010 – over 100,000. The number of Muslims taking part in Kurban-bairam in 2011 was 170,000. According to the data of the Council of Muftis of

Russia, on August 8, 2013, the total number of Muslims praying on Uraza-bairam in Moscow was over 180,000.

Official estimates show that common feast's prayers of Muslims in Moscow gather five to six times more participants than the protest meetings of people dissatisfied with the actions of the Russian authorities. The number of Muslims who gather at the Moscow Cathedral mosque to hear the sermon and perform collective namaz can be compared to the number of participants in political functions in support of the authorities⁶.

Thus, we see how Islam is changing its periphery status in Russia. Islamic identity, by most characteristics, has gone beyond the limits of national outskirts of the country and become a serious socio-cultural factor not only in such cities as Moscow or St. Petersburg, but also in big federal and regional centers of the Russian Federation. Evidently, Islam has become one of the mobilizing factors, which can be compared to Orthodox Christianity dominating in the country.

The dynamic character of the strengthening positions of Muslim identity in Russian society is acknowledged even by high-ranking clerics of the Russian Orthodox Church. For one, the Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, head of the department on relations between the Church and society, admitted that “it looks likely that we really have only three real ‘parties’ – Orthodox Christian, Muslim and non-believers. And they will determine the future of Russian politics.”⁷

Chaplin's conclusions are based on recognition of the two basic communities – Orthodox Christian and Muslim, which have many active members and quite a few largely common ethical and social values. The third social group, by his classification, is formed by tens of millions of citizens, “non-established so far,” but this group has more resources and is backed by big money, show business, part of the

bureaucratic, expert and mass media elites, and certain part of young people dependent on these elites.

The existence of these three groups presupposes struggle between them on the basis of the models of the family, law, the state and society differing from one another. In any case, not a single rivaling forces fighting for tens of thousands of citizens, “non-established so far” and for their version of the social system in Russia will be able to destroy or oust others⁸. On the contrary, their common task is the process of harmonizing Russian values and social models.

One should agree with the Professor at the Center of Slavonic Studies of Hokkaido University K. Matsuzato that “modern Russian Islam cannot be studied exclusively through the prism of religious research.”⁸

The President of the Autonomous republic of Tatarstan R. Minnikhanov maintains that Islam is one of the leading factors in “the formation of common human values, ideas of humanism and tolerant interaction of various peoples on the territory of his republic.” The head of the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov constantly emphasizes in his public statements Chechnya’s adherence to traditional Islamic values. At present Islamic religion becomes one of the legitimate factors of social and political life of Chechnya, influencing the value and identification dominants of the population. State power turns to the basic principles and values of Islam, thereby emphasizing its confessional identity. This fact was specially noted by participants in the 5th International Peacemaking Forum “Islam – Religion of Peace and Creation” which took place in Grozny on May 25–36, 2013.

Practically within the past twenty-five years the Muslim community was able to join actively the revival processes which were expressed in the awakening of national and religious self-consciousness. During the following period of strengthening the Islamic

infrastructure the construction was going on of religious and educational institutions, and production of food permitted in Muslim society, which was recognized as an important task of a state level in certain regions of the country.

Nothing surprising that Islamic identity of the political class of Muslim republics has become an object of “elitological” analysis of Arab and American research centers. In all four international reports on the “500 Most Influential Muslims of the World” published in 2009–2012 there were representatives of the Russian umma who had made hajj in different years. The list of the key figures is compiled by the data of their influence in their respective states and region and a degree of participation in global processes. In the Russian segment of the list of Muslim politicians are the presidents of Tatarstan M. Shaimiyev and R. Minnikhanov, and President of the Chechen Republic R. Kadyrov.

M. Shaimiyev was the first of the Russian political figures to be included in the Top-500 influential Muslims of the world in 2009. The first President of Tatarstan, a Muslim Republic of Russia, has been awarded the International Prize of King Faisal for his services to the Muslim population¹⁰. The world Islamic rating for 2010 included the new President of Tatarstan who came to replace Shaimiyev, R. Minnikhanov. His name was listed twice, in 2011 and 2012. The report described Tatarstan as an influential Russian region in the center of the country with a religious model combining Islam with European culture¹¹. Islamic experts maintain that the model can be regarded exemplary¹². Tatarstan has taken serious steps for drawing investments of the Islamic world in its bank and financial system. The Tatarstan political and business elites demonstrate their effectiveness and low risks and base their activity on the Sharia laws. They harshly criticize western capitalism which places its financial interests above the interests of society. The leaders of Tatarstan rely on the republican

industrial, scientific and financial elites and cooperate with the member-countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Notes

- ¹ S. Kaspe. *Politicheskaya teologiya i nation-building: obshchiye polozheniya, rossiiskiy sluchai*. [Political Theology and Nation-building: General Premises, Russian Case]. Moscow, 2012, p. 102.
- ² A. Verkhovsky, E. Pain. *Tsivilizatsionny natsionalism:rossiiskaya versiya “osobogo puti”* [Civilizing Nationalism: Russian Version of “a Special Path”]. Moscow, 2010, p. 200.
- ³ A. Verskhovsky, E. Pain. Op. cit., p. 206.
- ⁴ “Islam – religiya korennykh rossyian” [“Islam – Religion of Indigenous People of Russia] // Head of Council of Muftis of Russia about Unique Position of Muslims in the Russian Federation. (Kommersant, 2011, February 18).
- ⁵ Message of President V. Putin of the Russian Federation to the RF Federal Assembly in 2012.
- ⁶ The number of Muslims in Moscow region is growing, as shown by the data of the population census for 2012.
- ⁷ Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin. *Obshchestvo: svetskoye ili religioznoye?* [Society: Secular or Religious?] URL.: <http://www.interfaxreligion.ru/kaz/?act=analysis&div=177>
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- ⁹ K. Matsuzato. Discourses and Behavior of Muslim Leaders of Volga-Ural Region. Influence of Regional Images of Self-perception and Strategies of Regional Administrations // Islam from the Caspian Sea to the Urals: Macroregional Approach. Moscow, 2007, p. 156.
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- ¹² Ibid.

“*Elitologiya Rossii: sovremennoye sostoyaniye i perspektivy razvitiya,*”
Rostov-on-Don, 2013, pp. 162–178.
(To be concluded in the next issue)

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**ARAB PREACHERS IN TATARSTAN
IN LATE 20TH – EARLY 21ST CENTURY:
WAYS OF PENETRATION, ACTIVITY, RESULTS**

Religious revival going on in the whole of Russia and its individual regions after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. which ended the epoch of state atheism in 1991, has resulted in the mass restoration of old temples and construction of new ones all over the country. This process has also been taking place in the regions of compact residence of the people believing in Islam. However, this natural spiritual drive of the Muslim population has been used by adherents of radical Islamic trends from various foreign countries in their interests, who had the aim of reorienting Russian Muslims to foreign religious centers. Such political aims in long-term perspective should have turned the Muslims of the Volga area and the North Caucasus into the “fifth column” in their own country and include these territories in the global geopolitical redivision in Eurasia. In the 1990s the arrival of foreign Muslim missionaries in Tatarstan was received as the desire of foreign coreligionists from countries of the Middle East to help the Tatars return to Islam.

The well-known Tatar theologian Farid Salman remembers that when he was the head of the international relations department of the Kazan spiritual board in the early 1990s, and when the first visits of Arab missionaries began, he often worked as their interpreter and they frequently asked him to cooperate with them as broadly as possible. In 1991, the teachers from Abd al-Wahhab University in Er-Riyadh who came to Tatarstan tried to persuade him to help them convert the

Tatars to “pure Islam.” At that time he refused to cooperate with them, because he was farsighted enough to see where such “cooperation” could lead the Tatar Muslim umma to¹. Unfortunately, there were very few people to turn down “help” from foreign coreligionists from Arab charity foundations.

The activity of foreign Islamic missionaries was at first concentrated on the organization of Muslim camps for young people. The first such camp worked from April 27 to May 3, 1992, on the grounds of the Young Pioneer camp “Solnechny” near Kazan under the patronage of the Saudi charity organization “Taiba.” Among the lecturers were four Saudi Arabs, one of them was Mahdi Khanbali. The guests from Saudi Arabia were active in organizing cultural gatherings which were very popular at the time. The Moscow branch of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), headed by Ali al-Amudi from Saudi Arabia organized courses of preachers of Islam in Moscow and Kazan which invited Tatar young people to study. Along with this, Arab preachers travelled across Tatarstan districts where they read lectures on various topics. Apart from Saudis, there were Arab religious teachers from other countries. For instance, on December 14–27, 1992, Usman Ahmed Hasan Ali from Sudan travelled across Tatarstan with a “charity caravan”².

Open lectures of Arab missionaries were given not only at mosques or young people’s camps. Whole concert halls were often used for the purpose. For example, in February 1992 the high government official from Jordan Walid Shuri Sapsug, and the representative of the World Islamic Organization of Assistance (“Saar Foundation”) Ali Issam Saleh from Jordan spoke at the cultural and sports complex “Unix” of Kazan University. Ali Issam Saleh told the audience about the activity of this organization, noting that there was its office in Moscow which took under its wing 125 Tatars (“Saar Foundation,”

apart from doing educational work, rendered medical and material assistance).

In 1993 the representative of the “Al-Igasa” organization Abdel Hamid Jafar, known among Wahhabi Muslims under the nickname “Dagistani,” made a trip to the Volga region. The “Al-Igasa” organization is known as the International Islamic Organization “Salvation” (MIOS). The mass media have paid special attention to this organization. According to experts, its heads connected with the Saudi special services, secretly financed Wahhabi Muslims all over the world, including radical Islamists operating in Russia.

In 1999 the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation submitted information to the mass media about Dagistani who headed the “Russian department” of “Al-Igasa” at the time, and spent four months each year in Russia, making trips to Tatarstan and the North Caucasus. It was also reported that Dagistani was the imam of a mosque in Medina and fulfilled delicate missions of one of the Saudi special services. It became known that he delivered sermons to Muslims in Tatarstan and the North Caucasus at mosques and madrasahs. In some sermons Dagistani openly called for jihad against the “infidels”. In 1995 the Russian authorities made a statement to the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Moscow, announcing him persona non grata after which Abdel Hamid Jafar known as Dagistani left Russia³.

In 1993 the Saudi charity organization “Taiba” signed an agreement on assistance to the educational process with the new madrasah “Yoldyz” in Naberezniye Chelny in Tatarstan. It became known later that the madrasah was actually turned into a training center of fighters during the 2nd Chechen war (1999–2001). In the summer of 1999 the graduate of this madrasah Denis Saitakov was one of the terrorists in a group organizing acts of terror in Moscow. It was also confirmed that the heads of the madrasah cooperated with the Chechen

field commanders Samil Basayev and Khattab, who organized field training for madrasah students. Soon ten more students were found to be members of terrorist groups. The “Taiba” branch in Tatarstan was headed by Isa Shebakhat, a citizen of Jordan.

In 1997 a branch of the “International Islamic representatives’ organization” (MIPO) was opened in Kazan. It was created with the financial help of Saudi Arabia in Dacca (Bangladesh). That very year its branch appeared in Moscow. The official purpose of that organization was distribution and popularization of Islam all over the world. In 2001 the mass media reported that the plan of its activity was aimed at creating an “Islamic state” on Russian territory with its center in Tatarstan, which would include several parts of Russia.

At the time the Wahhabi trend of Islam was being spread in regions neighboring on Tatarstan. It was helped by the organizations “Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz al-Ibrahim” (“Al-Ibrahim”), “World Assembly of Muslim Youth” and “Committee of Muslims of Asia” connected with Saudi and Kuwait sponsors and Saudi special services.

The aims of the activity of these organizations, officially outlined in their operating documents, were quite similar, as a rule, and did not go beyond the framework of rendering material assistance to individual citizens, public and religious associations, and also assistance to organize religious education. At the same time, the mass media and special literature published quite a few negative assessments of the activity of these “non-governmental organizations” by scholars of the Orient and political analysts. They noted, among other things, that their humanitarian aid was accompanied with the creation of a ramified network of special organizations financed by Saudi Arabia, which was especially anxious to increase and support the spreading of the Wahhabi trend of Islam in public life on the territory of Russia, and thereby strengthen Saudi influence in this country. Among the real aims of these

organizations mention should be made of the strengthening of pro-Saudi sentiments in the midst of Muslim believers, their readiness for armed jihad against the “infidels,” and also discredit local religious authorities and replace them with their stooges.

The Algerian citizen Bu Setta Abdurazzak, who worked as a teacher at the “Muhammadiyah” madrasah in 1994–1997 and a representative of the “Taiba” charity organization, made a negative influence on the activity of the Muslim community of Tatarstan. During his stay in Kazan he interfered in the internal and personal affairs of the Muslim clergy, instigated madrasah students to clashes with employees of the local mass media, and created intrigues among the leaders of the Spiritual Board of Muslims. He also organized journeys of young men to religious universities of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait known for their fundamentalism³.

The already-mentioned organization “Saar Foundation,” which began to function in 1992, also specialized on organizing Islamic youth camps and subsequently sending their participants to Arab countries for studies. This organization tried to open such camps not only on Russian territory, but also in Kazakhstan and Belarus. A branch of this organization in Russia was headed by Ali Issam Saleh from Jordan.

The regional charity foundation “Al-Harame-in Foundation” set up in Saudi Arabia in 1991 with a view to “rendering assistance to Muslim brethren in various parts of the world and distributing true Islamic teaching all over the globe worked on the same pattern. “Al Harame-in Foundation” is the leading charity organization in Saudi Arabia functioning directly under the patronage of the royal family and subordinated to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs of Saudi Arabia⁴. From 1993 representatives of “Al Harame-in Foundation” worked in the Volga area. Among its functions was recruitment of young men to go to Saudi Arabia to receive a religious education there. The educational

activity of this organization which was previously confined to organizing seminars and camps and publishing literature changed into recruiting volunteers among Muslims in Tatarstan ready to fight in Chechnya. During the first Chechen war in 1994–1996 the organization waged an active anti-Russian campaign in support of Islamic jihad in Chechnya.

By 2000 the Russian security agencies came to realize that the activity of such foreign “charity” organizations result in the emergence of terrorism on religious ground among Russian Muslims and financing of militants⁵. As noted by experts and researchers, humanitarian aid was accompanied with creating a ramified network of organizations under the guise of charity foundations financed by Saudi Arabia, which was especially active in enhancing and spreading radical Islam in public life in the Muslim regions of Russia⁶.

Penetration of Arab missionaries of non-traditional Islam for the region in the sphere of Muslim education in Tatarstan was especially successful in the 1990s. In 1993 quite a few Arab teachers arrived in Tatarstan, many of whom stayed for good. Husam Abdrahman came from Jordan, and he continues to teach the Arab language at the Kazan madrasah “Muhammadiya” to this day. Ahmad Abu Gaesh also came from Jordan to work at the “Yoldyz” madrasah in Naberezhniye Chelny. However, they did not confine their work to teaching the Arab language. They were striving for missionary and publishing activity. For example, Husam Abdrahman has issued a CD of religious content.

Another foreign instructor, Yasin Usman Abdella, a graduate from Islamic University in Medina (Saudi Arabia), who came to Tatarstan from Eritrea, organized a madrasah in Alemetyevsk in 1998 and became its pro-rector. Besides, he gave lessons to future imams of Wahhabi trend.

At the already mentioned “Yoldyz” madrasah in Naberezhniye Chelny there were four Arab teachers from Egypt, Jordan and Palestine in the 1996/1997 scholastic year. However, they all were expelled from Russia in 2000 after the closing down of this madrasah as one of the centers for the ideological training of Wahhabi Muslims who subsequently went to the North Caucasus first for military training and then fighting on the side of the Chechen separatists.

The Russian Islamic University in Kazan began work in 1998. At the beginning there were two foreign teachers – Salih Seikhan from Turkey and Muhammad Sadyk Awad from Egypt. Both were graduates from the Islamic University “Al-Azkhbar” in Cairo. Later, more people from Turkey and Arab countries have arrived to Kazan to teach at the Islamic University: Muhammad Said Abdulla Kutb, El Said Zakaria Siraj El-Din, Abdulkohsin Ali Arif, Mustafa Myukerrem Karaers, and others.

Today there are only three Arabs teaching in Tatarstan: two at the Kazan madrasah “Muhammadiya” (Husam Abdurahman and Muhammad Mahmud) and one at the Islamic University (Abdulmajid Abdurakib Alawi from Yemen).

Members of terrorist organizations have frequently visited Tatarstan with a view to recruiting fighters. The Egyptian Ahmed Nasser from “Al Qaeda” came to Tatarstan at the end of the 1990s and stayed in the region up to 2004. When he returned to Egypt he was arrested and kept in prison until 2011. In 2012 he was killed in mysterious circumstances.

Arab missionaries were supported quite frequently by their Tatar like-minded persons. For example, Ramil Yunusov, who studied in Saudi Arabia in 1992–1997 and held the post of imam at the Kazan Cathedral mosque “Kul Sharif” in 2005–2012, was known as one of the propagandist of foreign Islam non-traditional in Tatarstan. He organized

three visits to Tatarstan of Ahmad Farid Mustafa, an architect from Medina, who had fought with Saudi mojaheds against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s. What was the purpose for inviting this man to Tatarstan to read lectures to Tatar young people?⁷

However, the most notorious missionary was the Arab preacher Kamal al-Zant. He arrived from Lebanon in 1992 to study at the Kazan Medical University, and soon became very popular due to his sermons delivered in Russian at Burnayevskaya mosque in Kazan. Having graduated from the university, he started work as oncologist at one of the city hospitals, married a local Tatar girl, and combining work with reading sermons began to travel extensively not only in Tatarstan, but also to neighboring regions. As one of the ideologists of the “Muslim Brotherhood” in Tatarstan al-Zant soon began to publish his books and audio-lectures. In 2011 the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan announced that his work ran counter to Islam traditional for the Tatars. Nevertheless, he continued to read lectures and deliver sermons at various mosques of Tatarstan without any license or permission. Without a theological education (he enrolled in the “Al-Jinan” Islamic University in Lebanon only in 2008, where he studied by correspondence), he was quite popular with Tatar urban young people. The keynote of his sermons was the idea of pan-Islamic unity, according to which adherents of any trends in Islam are true Muslims. In actual fact, his lectures were attended by representatives of various Islamist trends. In 2012 he took up the job of vice president at the Cultural Islamic Center “Family” situated in a district some twenty kilometers from Kazan. Finally, the regional authorities of Tatarstan understood the real aims of his missionary activity among Tatar young people, and he had been told to leave Tatarstan with his family for Lebanon in January 2013⁸. But among the results of his propaganda activity for about twenty years was the emergence of radical groups of

Muslims ready to commit terrorist acts, which took place in Tatarstan from 1999 to 2012.

The departure of Kamal al-Zant did not mean that all Arab preachers left Tatarstan. Mohamed Hamed continues his activity. Just like al-Zant he works as a doctor at the Muslim clinical diagnostic center “Yasin” in Kazan, functioning since 2009. Although he is not so popular as al-Zant, yet he has his place among the Arab missionaries operating in Tatarstan.

Summing up, it can be stated that Arab preachers in Tatarstan, the peak of whose activity was at the end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century, were agents propagandizing the currents of foreign Islam of radical trend, which were non-traditional for the Tatar people. Having come to Tatarstan under the guise of teachers or doctors and often working with the support of Arab charity foundations, missionaries from the Middle East have played a negative role in spreading Islamic fundamentalism among Tatar young people of the Volga area. Today, when terrorist acts are not a rare event in Tatarstan it is clear what harm the Arab missionaries have done to Muslims of the Volga area by their sermons of “pure Islam.” It is to be hoped that such preachers will never function on Russian territory.

Notes

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- ³ A. Shokhin. *Vliyaniye vneshnikh faktorov na rasprostraneniye v Rossii islamskogo fundamentalizma* [Influence of Outside Factors on Spreading Islamic Fundamentalism in Russia] // Islam in Russia and CIS Countries: Collection of conference materials. St.Petersburg, 2008, pp. 487–495.

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⁸ R. Suleimanov. *Islamsky terrorism v postsovetskom Tatarstane: spetsifika, potentsial ugrozy, mery protivodeistviya // Kontseptsiya protivodeistviya terrorismu v Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Kompleksny podkhod k formirovaniyu i funktsionirovaniyu sistemy protivodeistviya rasprostraneniyu ideologii terrorizma* [Islamic Terrorism in Post-Soviet Tatarstan: Specificity, Potential Threats, Counter-measures // Concept of Opposition to Terrorism in the Russian Federation. Comprehensive Approach to Formation and Functioning of System Opposing the Spreading of Ideology of Terrorism]. Materials of the 3rd All-Russia conference. Vol. 2. Moscow, 2012, p. 121.

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**CENTRAL ASIA AFTER 2014:
CHALLENGES AND THREATS**

According to American plans, the forces of the United States and its allies should withdraw from the territory of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2014. Evidently, they will leave the Afghan leadership with a host of unresolved problems which will definitely influence, to various degree, both the foreign and domestic policy of Central Asian countries, touching also on the interests of Russia, the People’s

Republic of China, as well as two regional leaders – Turkey and Iran. The United States and its allies began a counter-terrorist operation in 2001, knowing very little about the country in which they would have to operate. Today one can hardly say that they have reached the aims they set themselves.

After the withdrawal of their forces from Afghanistan serious complications may arise in Central Asian countries, particularly in the ethnic-religious sphere, for example, between Uzbeks and Kyrgyzs in the Ferghana Valley, which flare up from time to time even now. A case in point was the events in Tajikistan in August 2010, when fighters from the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IDU) escaped from prison and took refuge in the Rasht Valley. In 2011 terrorist acts took place in Kazakhstan (Almaty, Atyrau, Taraz, and elsewhere). It was announced that behind the explosions in Atyrau in October 2011 stood the fighters from the organization “Soldiers of Caliphate” (“Jund al-Caliphate”), which, according to certain data, is based in Afghanistan. Among its members are people of various nationalities from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and other countries of Central Asia, whose main aim is the revival of Islamic caliphate. It should be noted that there are definite connections between Islamists and members of the opposition in these countries. Turkmenistan is the most stable state among the countries mentioned, because its authorities succeeded to take the domestic situation under strict control and prevent the emergence of seats of religious extremism. The many-year efforts of the world community, particularly the United States, to stop drug trafficking from Afghanistan along the “Northern route” (via Central Asian countries) have not brought the desired results, and after the withdrawal of the ISAF troops from Afghanistan the situation could deteriorate still more. According to the UN, up to thirty percent of Afghan opiates pass in transit through the countries having a common

border with Afghanistan in the North, that is, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. It should be borne in mind that Central Asian countries themselves also produce a sizable quantity of narcotic drugs. If the production and sales of drugs are transferred from the sphere of criminal business to the sphere of ideological confrontation, then radical changes of the forms and methods of the struggle against them should be introduced.

As is known, Central Asian countries boast great reserves of oil and natural gas. For example, the hydrocarbon potential of the Turkmen part of the Caspian Sea (over 78,000 square kilometers) is estimated at 11–12 billion tons of oil and 5.5–6.2 trillion cubic meters of gas. The Canadian Company “Tethys Energy” has discovered considerable reserves of oil in Tajikistan, which opens up broad vistas for the economic development of that country. The discovery of rich deposits of hydrocarbons evokes much enthusiasm not only among the official authorities of the Central Asian countries. Radical extremists regard the threats to the oil-and-gas infrastructure as an instrument of bringing pressure to bear on the governments of regional states. We cannot exclude the fact that in not so distant future terrorist acts can be committed on objects of the oil and gas branches with a view to destabilizing the domestic political situation in the countries of Central Asia.

Water resources are another problem. The point is that these resources are distributed in Central Asian countries very unevenly. The region is clearly divided into countries rich in water resources (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan), and countries dependent on them from the hydro-energy point of view (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan). Kyrgyzstan controls the basin of the Syrdarya River, and Tajikistan – the basin of the Amudarya River. The uneven distribution of water resources in Central Asia give rise to the conflict

of interests between the key suppliers of water (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) and its main consumers (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan).

The Taliban fighters may step up their activity after the withdrawal of the coalition forces from Afghanistan. The armed forces of Central Asian countries and their law-enforcement agencies are unable to oppose the Taliban units in case of their massive penetration in the region. In this connection the main responsibility for carrying out the various defensive operations will have to be taken by the Russian Federation. However, the Russian economy will hardly be able to cope with such enormous expenses alone. This is why the role of coordinated efforts and the use of resources within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), whose members are Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is growing noticeably. Along with this, it is necessary to coordinate efforts with the countries of the region which are not CSTO members. Moscow does not have the necessary resources for the implementation of effective measures to prevent the spreading of extremism on the territory of Central Asia. Apart from that, the current problems in Russia itself and the absence of unity of Central Asian countries on problems of military-technical and military-political cooperation are also a negative factor. In this connection the U.S. military bases on the territory of certain Central Asian countries can be regarded as a barrier in the way of spreading religious extremism. In the immediate and in not-so-near future these bases will prevent the growing influence of the Taliban. The Russian Federation have the following tasks facing it: defense of Russian territory from the potentially destabilizing factors in Central Asia; protection of security of the region by restricting interference and participation of outside political forces; control over the share of the

hydrocarbon resources and other natural riches of Central Asia, as well as business-assets of the economic actors in the region.

*“Lomonosovskiye chteniya. Vostokovedeniye,”
Moscow, 2013, pp. 269–272.*

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**‘SOFT POWER’ AS AN INSTRUMENT
OF AMERICAN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA
(Conclusion)**

Uzbekistan

U.S. interest in Uzbekistan has always been great in comparison with other Central Asian republics, as that country is a key one in the region, judging by its geographic location and resource potential, including demographic. The situation in Uzbekistan is reflected in the sphere of regional power and water supply, trade and, ultimately, in the political and social stability in the region.

However, relationship between Uzbekistan and the United States has passed through different stages during the post-Soviet period. Tashkent considered it a priority to establish relations with the West, especially the United States, until the middle of the first decade of the 21st century. President Karimov was concerned about the “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine, carried out with the support of the United States, western criticism of the “democratization of his country”, and the intensification of extremist groups against the backdrop of social tension. He tried to counterbalance the influence of the U.S.A. with the help of Russia. Uzbekistan has gradually deviated from the previously chosen western vector of cooperation in the sphere of defense and security since the beginning of 2004. The country's

foreign policy has been changed most noticeably after the coup in Kyrgyzstan, especially after the events in Andijan in the spring of 2005. As a result, it was decided to close the U.S. military base at Karshi-Khanabad and withdraw it from the country. The cooling of relations with the West was a consequence of instability of the state system of Uzbekistan.

Over the past five years, the foreign policy vector has been changed again in the direction of strengthening relations with Western countries, especially the United States. This trend concerns both the political and economic spheres.

The report of the President of the Republic on the occasion of the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, made in late 2007, was a signal of readiness to return to closer relationship with Washington. President Karimov emphasized that Uzbekistan had good-neighborly relations with the United States and other Western countries.

In turn, the American side has realized that the United States made a lot of mistakes in Uzbekistan, and tried to re-establish contact. Americans sort of neglected the Andijan events, and organizations such as the U.S. National Democratic Institute, Institute for New Democracies, and USAID, reduced their activity in Uzbekistan aimed at undermining the existing political regime.

The period between 2009 and 2012 period was characterized by a thaw in Uzbek-American relations. The Declaration on Strategic Partnership has been materialized as the basic document of bilateral relations signed in March 2002 at the peak of the development of Uzbek-U.S. cooperation. Meetings at various levels held in recent years point to a further convergence of the United States and Uzbekistan on quite a few significant international and regional issues.

The U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signed the document in January 2012, which annulled the U.S. refusal to supply “non-lethal

equipment" for defensive needs of Uzbekistan, despite protests from influential human rights organizations. That was a very important indicator of the new level of Uzbek-American relations. Restrictions on the supply of certain types of military equipment to Uzbekistan have been in force since 2004. At the same time, the Deputy Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Robert Blake announced that the U.S. was preparing to provide significant military assistance to Uzbekistan.

The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent has been doing a vast amount of work in the country. The American side selects experts on Uzbekistan with the utmost care. Its ambassadors and key employees of the embassy and other U.S. offices in that country are persons well-versed in the affairs of the region.

The Obama administration does not bring pressure to bear on Tashkent on the human rights issues, and the American human rights lobby is virtually silent as far as the situation in Uzbekistan is concerned. True, in recent years the U.S. State Department's annual report on the human rights situation has noted an unfavorable situation in which the Uzbek mass media, as well as non-governmental and religious organizations have to work, and also drawn attention to the exploitation of child labor in the cotton fields. However, certain positive aspects have been noted: improvements in the election procedure, in prison conditions, in the fight against human trafficking, and in some other matters concerning the work of local journalists, and functions organized by foreign embassies.

The United States has handed over human rights issues in Uzbekistan to some European countries, in particular, Scandinavian ones, which do not have political and economic interests in the region, but are fully aware that the problem cannot be ignored.

The Uzbek side seeks to demonstrate certain signs of liberalization of the political system by releasing more political

prisoners. At present, the main interests of Americans are associated with the use of the transport infrastructure, primarily, for the functioning of the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) supplies to Afghanistan, as well as with solution of the regional energy problems and the development of communications, using the Uzbek potential in Afghan projects. Obviously, the active rehabilitation of close relationships with Uzbekistan fully complies with the policy of the Obama administration on Afghanistan.

The key role of Uzbekistan in the NDN is a reflection of the position held by that country in the region. (Uzbekistan was the main base of the Soviet operation in Afghanistan in the 1980s.) Uzbekistan is connected with Afghanistan by the most convenient transport infrastructure.

Uzbekistan is increasingly drawn into Afghan economic infrastructure projects with the full U.S. support. “The Afghan direction” of cooperation between the United States and Uzbekistan includes supply of Uzbek products to the U.S. troops. As for the U.S. penetration in the social and humanitarian spheres and opportunities for the functioning of the American network structures, the situation is more complicated than in political and military cooperation. Americans were very active in this sphere during the 1990s, however, the number of U.S. non-governmental organizations (NGO) was greatly reduced during the cooling of relations in the period between 2004 and 2006, especially after the Andijan events. In the middle of the past decade, the Uzbek authorities stopped the activities of the “Soros-Uzbekistan” Foundation, IREX, the American Bar Association, (ABA/CEELI), ACTR/ACCELS, Internews network, Eurasia Foundation, Freedom Houses, Global Involvement Through Education, Central Asian Free Exchange, and others. Simultaneously, the journalists of “Radio

Liberty,” as well as several other Western media were denied accreditation.

The strengthening of military-political relations has not led to the return of American NGOs and the media to Uzbekistan. They continue to feel the pressure of the official structures of Uzbekistan. Moreover, the local office of the Human Rights Watch was closed in 2011.

However, American activities in the educational and social spheres have become more noticeable. For example, USAID became more active, although with greater caution. The agency operates under a bilateral agreement with the Government of Uzbekistan. Its programs are implemented on a contract and grant basis by two dozen local organizations, including UN agencies, business and other organizations. Uzbekistan has been given assistance through USAID programs worth over \$300 million since 1992 year.

The USAID programs involve cooperation with ministries, governmental and other organizations, businesses and communities in the following areas: improvement of legislation, creation of new jobs, higher incomes, improvement of professional knowledge, and resource management.

In the 1990th and at the beginning of the 21st century, USAID provided assistance to the government in restructuring the system of health care in rural areas, vaccination, improving the water resources management system, improving the quality of primary education, reforming the banking system, monetary and fiscal policy, and fiscal analysis. In the future, the Agency will be more active in the field of credit and microfinance institutions to improve access to finance for small and medium businesses.

In recent years, the budget of USAID programs in the Republic of Uzbekistan has been quite small in comparison with the budgets of similar programs in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. For

example, the budget of USAID programs in Uzbekistan for 2011 was \$11,335 million, in 2012 – \$12,940 million, and in 2013 – \$12,595 million.

USAID supports the fruit and vegetable producers, and agricultural firms and associations in Namangan, Ferghana and Samarkand regions to increase profits by introducing new technologies. More than 1.7 thousand people have taken part in these programs.

In the health sector, the Agency funds programs to reduce the spread of infectious diseases (HIV / AIDS, TB) among at-risk populations. Also, the information programs are implemented to prevent trafficking work.

NDI is also worth noting among major American institutions in Uzbekistan.

The Institute has been operating with financial support from USAID since 2003. NDI collaborates with international organizations, NGOs, research centers, as well as political parties.

“Tsentralnaya Aziya: problemy i perspektivy (vzglyad is Rossii i Kitaya).” Moscow, 2013, pp .67–73.

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**ETHNO-POLITICAL AND CONFESIONAL
PROCESSES IN MODERN DAGHESTAN**

Daghestan is a special region of Russia, which has been formed not on the ethnic or territorial principle. Different peoples live quite densely in the republic, separated by administrative and interstate

boundaries: the Lezghins, Azerbaijanis, Tsakhurs, Avars live in the south, the Chechens – in the west, and the Nogais – in the north-west. A physical map of Daghestan shows the geographical areas of the republic: mountains, foothills, the Caspian Lowland, steppes and semi-deserts. Historically, Daghestan was a geographic area, not a state. Up to half a dozen small feudal formations and several free societies and their have existed in this area prior to its joining Russia. The northern part of modern Daghestan, populated by the northern Kumyks, the Terek Cossacks, and the Nogais, had no relation to the “land of mountains“ until the establishment of Soviet power in the region. All these historical and geographical factors have predetermined the emergence of a number of ethno-political and religious issues in post-Soviet Daghestan.

Dynamics of ethno-political processes

The ethno-political processes in Daghestan have an independent logic of development, although there has been a definite correlation from the zero years of the 21st century: the politicization of Islam is going on against the background of the depoliticization of the ethnic factor. However, the "risk factors" associated with ethno-political issues are still strong in the country.

This problem remains quite impressive to this day. There is no “blank spots” in the study of the history, causes and essence of ethnic conflicts in the republic. Among the most serious problems are:

– requirement for territorial rehabilitation and the restoration of Auhovsky district of Daghestan inhabited by the Chechens living in Dagestan;

– separation of the Lezghins and other peoples of Daghestan (Avars, Tsakhurs) with the help of the Russian-Azerbaijani border;

– reunification of the Nogai ethnos within one administrative entity, separated by the administrative boundaries between Daghestan, Stavropol territory and Chechnya;

– the problem of the Kumyk people, who have become an ethnic minority in their own land as a result of both the planned and spontaneous migration of Daghestani highlanders to Daghestani plains.

The recovery of the Auhovsky district and the relocation of the Laks from there has become one of the most complex ethno-political conflicts. The problem affects the interests of four ethnic groups: the Daghestani Chechens, the Laks, the Avars and the Kumyks. In 1944, the Daghestani Chechens were deported to Central Asia with their tribesmen of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic. The Auhovsky district of Daghestan, where they had lived, was abolished, and their villages were renamed and settled by Laks, often violently and even with casualties. As a result, a newly created district of Novolaksky came into being. Three big Chechen villages were transferred to the nearby Kazbek district and settled by Avars. Since the end of 1980s, the Chechens have been actively seeking restoration of their ethnic area. According to the law on rehabilitation adopted in 1991, the Third Congress of People's Deputies of Daghestan decided to return houses to Chechen families in the Novolaksky and Kazbek districts.

The leadership of Daghestan and the Russian Federation have agreed with the Laks leaders regarding resettlement of the Lak people in a new location, near the city of Makhachkala, the capital of the Republic of Daghestan. A shortage and delay of financing have become a chronic problem in the implementation of the resettlement program. Ethnic conflicts are possible in the reconstruction process of the Chechen Auhovsky district after resettlement of the Laks.

In October 2012, the former Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation Sergei Stepashin asked the Prime Minister

Dmitry Medvedev to allocate an additional 6.6 billion rubles to complete the resettlement program of the Laks, believing that the delay might lead to the emergence of new ethnic conflicts in the region.

The problem of the divided nation has become another ethno-political issue in the region after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. Several ethnic groups in Daghestan (Lezgin, Avar, Tsakhur) have been separated as a result of the demarcation of the state borders, which increased tension in the region. At present the leaders of the national movements of the separated peoples of Daghestan work together to reach common approaches to the better protection of the interests of their communities. A special meeting of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation was held in June 2011 on the situation involving the people of the North Caucasus. The Organization “Lezghin Federal National Cultural Autonomy” set up in 1999 holds meetings, conferences and international symposiums jointly with Russian ministries, the State Duma and the regional authorities. This organization has its own website and research center, studying the history and culture of the Lezghins.

The ethno-political problems in modern Daghestan show the politicization of the ethnic factor, which has started after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. Already in the early 1990s there were dozens of political movements in Daghestan, which managed to overcome their differences and establish a coordinating body – the Congress of the Peoples of Daghestan, which included representatives from some twenty parties and movements of the Republic. However, the Congress has failed to reach agreement on the future of the state system of Daghestan. There was a split of the Daghestani movements into two blocs: one demanded the federalization of the Republic and greater autonomy for the ethnic territories, and the other called for the unity and integrity of Daghestan, in fact, for the preservation of the status

quo. The split also touched the historical and geographical border of the “country of mountains” and later territories of some neighboring peoples.

The post-Soviet leadership has identified the idea of federalization with the beginning of the division of the country into several parts, which could hardly keep their autonomy or to obtain the status of subjects of the Russian Federation along with the collapse of Daghestan and ethnic conflicts in neighboring regions. After the collapse of the Soviet Union representatives of the divided peoples and ethnic minorities were among the most active proponents of the federalization of Daghestan. Many leaders of the ethnic movements have converted the social capital gained during mass protests into their personal status and financial benefits, having greatly disappointed their followers. Thus, the role of ethnic movements in the political life of Daghestan has gradually decreased.

The transformation of these problems can be traced back to the dynamics of the key concepts and terms in research in this scientific discourse. Initially, it involved the following concepts: *separatism, nationalism, autonomy, national-territorial self-determination, federalization, ethnic conflicts*.

Gradually, the notions of *separatism* and *ethnic conflicts* have ceased to be replicated in an advanced research and analytical discourse.

It became clear that there were no serious ethnic conflicts in Daghestan, such as the Ossetian-Ingush conflict. There were no threats of separatism: none of the ethnic groupings demanded independence or called for the separation of Daghestan from Russia.

(to be continued in the next issue)

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THE MARKET OF SUICIDE-KILLERS
IN CENTRAL ASIA

When talking of the use of suicide terrorists in Central Asia, Islamic terrorism is presumed as an ideological product of religious extremism.

According to the general definition, Islamic terrorism, being a widespread form of terrorism, is a tactic of violent actions aimed at opponents and ideologically substantiated by Muslim teaching, which allows it in the name of the defense of Islamic faith from influence or aggression on the part of non-Muslim countries and ideologies.

The fact that terrorist acts in Central Asia have Islamist roots is confirmed by the data of investigations carried out by the law-enforcement agencies of the Central Asian countries. Participants and organizers of the acts of terror are in most cases members of banned terrorist Islamist organizations. It is precisely Islamist extremism that is one of the leading factors of destabilization of the situation in the region.

On the one hand, statistical data show that participation of suicide-killers in organizing terrorist acts in Central Asia (excluding Afghanistan) is insignificant so far, and on the other, Central Asia is already a target of such acts perpetrated by them.

Examining the problem of resonance actions by suicide-killers, we should not exclude Afghanistan, because it is inhabited by the same peoples as those living in Central Asian republics. This is why there is a contingent to be used for recruiting perpetrators of terrorist acts.

In the first decade of the 21st century terrorist acts with the participation of suicide-killers took a mass and regular character in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, the North Caucasian region of

Russia, and elsewhere. Along with the continuing aggravation of the situation in Syria and escalation of military hostilities in that country, there are no guarantees that new experience and technologies of carrying out major acts of terror with a big number of casualties would not be transferred to Central Asia with a view to increasing destabilization in the area. In the view of certain experts and analysts, if the Syrian regime falls, the wave of destabilization may reach Russian borders¹.

In contrast to Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Russian Federation, the armed forces, special services, and law-enforcement agencies of Central Asian republics have not enough practical experience in the struggle against illegal network organizations using suicide-killers. The latter are an alien phenomenon for Central Asia brought in from Afghanistan and Pakistan where terrorist acts with the use of “live bombs” have become an almost regular phenomenon.

On the example of one of the most notorious terrorist organizations of Central Asia – the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IDU) it can be seen that these organizations began to use suicide-killer about the time when they had moved to Afghanistan and begun to cooperate closely with “Al Qaeda.”

The situation in Central Asia began to destabilize from the early 2000th due to a number of reasons, including the implementation by NATO and ISAF of their operations in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan has remained an “island of stability” in Central Asia for quite some time. However, in 2011 alarming events began to take place there, too, which, according to experts, were closely connected with Islamist terrorism.

In the course of a special operation in Almaty region to smash a group of terrorists, Kazakhstan was forced to admit the presence of extremist organizations on its territory, thus adding another country to

the list of Central Asian states where radical Islamists carried on their activity.

Objects of Suicide Terrorists

Experts define terrorism with the use of suicide-killers as the act of inflicting maximal damage on the civilian population with a view to intimidating people, accompanied by the conscious refusal of the perpetrator to save his or her life². However, in recent years the situation has changed essentially – the number of objects of encroachments of terrorists in general, and suicide terrorists in particular has increased.

It is believed that prior to the 1970s, when radical Muslim spiritual leaders announced that self-sacrifice in the fight against the enemies was a type of martyr death, suicide-killers had practically not been used for political purposes. From the 1970s to the early 1990s terrorist acts with participation of suicide-killers were relatively rare. This type of terrorism was not characteristic of European non-Muslim terrorist organizations, such as IRA, ETA, etc. The use of suicide-killers is typical of Islamic radical movement where certain passionarity, religious fanaticism and upbringing in the spirit of self-sacrifice have always played a significant role, although there were suicide-killers in non-Islamist terrorist organizations, too, such as the Workers' party of Kurdistan, Lebanese Communist party, Syrian Nationalist party, "Tamil Ilama" (Sri Lanka), and some others.

Among the early examples of Islamic terrorism with participation of suicide-killers are the explosion of one such person, member of the "Al Dawa" terrorist organization, at the Iraqi embassy in Beirut in 1981, explosion of the barracks of American troops and explosion at the headquarters of French troops in Beirut in 1983, an attempt on the life of Anwar Sadat in Cairo, terrorist acts in Israel, etc.

From the beginning of the 2000s the use of suicide-bombers has become a widespread practice of radical Islamist organizations, and the number of terrorist acts and their victims has grown sharply.

In September 2001, as a result of an attack of suicide-killers Ahmad Shah Masud, an outstanding leader of the Islamic movement of the mojaheds, was killed, which radically changed the geopolitical situation in the entire region.

But the greatest number of casualties was caused by the terrorist act on September 11, 2001, in the United States, which involved the greatest number of suicide-killers.

The objects of terrorist strikes have also changed. A specific feature of modern terrorism with the use of suicide-killers is that its target is usually civilian population or the enemy manpower. In this lies the difference of modern terrorism from that of the 19th – the first half of the 20th century, which was mainly spearheaded against representatives of state power. Information of the acts of terror with the use of suicide-killers spread by the mass media bears an exceptionally political nature and causes wide panic among the population. It aims at forcing the authorities to agree to concessions and exerts great influence by fear. It is important to consider the fact that the explosions of “live bombs” comprise three percent of all terrorist acts committed in the world, but they account for up to half of all casualties ³ and the strongest public reaction.

Thus, the use of suicide-killers is one of the most widespread forms of inflicting maximal harm on the population and authorities.

In his statement at the conference on “Central Asia in Post-Soviet Integration” in Issyk Kul in Kyrgyzstan in September 2010, the representative of the Anti-terrorist Center of the post-Soviet countries M. Kochubei said that the circle of potential objects of terrorist acts with the use of explosive devices had a well-pronounced tendency to

broaden due to two reasons. First, terrorist acts become more professional. It is now evident that they are prepared by specialists well-versed in the theory and practice of explosions. Secondly, materials for making explosive devices are easily available. Almost all of them have elements of industrial manufacture – detonators, explosive substances, microcircuits, etc. This shows an abnormal situation in army units, arsenals, war industry enterprises, and law-enforcement agencies, where it is not too difficult to obtain materials necessary for making such devices.

It was also pointed out at the conference that expenses for making an explosive device to equip a suicide-killer with it are not too high. As is known, suicide-bombers are the cheapest means to commit murderous crimes: the cost of an explosive device used by such people in Israel is \$150, on average, and the growth of donations from Islamic foundations, other organizations, and individual persons is estimates at hundreds of millions of dollars⁴.

The reasons for which illegal network structures in the person of Islamist terrorist organizations use suicide-killers are as follows:

1. Preparation of an act of terror with the use of suicide-killer is not a difficult task as preparation of an action involving the use of a big group of fighters which requires finding ways of clandestine arrival, hiding and retreat; suicide-killer does not need all this, and it is very easy for him or her to arrive at the place of the planned terrorist act.

2. It is impossible to apply symmetrical retaliatory measures to a suicide-bomber, because the explosion of a “live bomb” exerts a very powerful influence on the civilian population and authorities.

3. The death of suicide-bombers creates a heroic image of martyrs for faith – Shakhids, which makes it possible to draw new members to Islamist organizations.

4. The perpetrator of a terrorist act cannot be interrogated after the crime, which makes more difficult to investigate it and search for its organizers.

5. A relatively low cost of the preparation and execution of the terrorist act.

6. Actions with participation of suicide-killers are always in the limelight of the mass media and evoke great repercussions and criticism of the law-enforcement agencies and authorities.

By committing such terrorist acts the heads of various illegal armed groupings demonstrate the ability of the bandit underground to destabilize the situation in a country, enhance their prestige, and give account for financial expenses to their sponsors⁴. Meanwhile, suicide-killers themselves are regarded as “weapons of strategic importance” in the arsenal of the means of terrorists. By using them the leaders of extremists wish to demonstrate to the authorities and world public the potential of their organization and their determination to reach their aims by any means. This is why the special services do not exclude the possibility of the organizers of such explosions going as far as to use chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear components, as well as perpetrate terrorist acts leading to technological disasters⁵.

It is also necessary to note that in studying such phenomenon as the use of suicide-killers for committing acts of terror it is important to correctly determine and sort out the facts of “suicidal terrorism,” when a member of an illegal network organization commits self-explosion with a view to dealing maximal harm to public security or the enemy manpower (in the latter case this crime can be determined as subversion of military security), and the fact of accidental self-explosion of the suicide-bomber or its maker. It is also necessary to make a difference between terrorist acts with the use of suicide-killers within the

framework of criminal cases of lone fanatics, and terrorist acts committed by religious extremists.

Technology of Recruiting and Training Suicide-killers

The first stage of preparation of a terrorist act includes selection of persons who are best suited to it by their psycho-physical parameters, social status, educational level, passionarity, and readiness to submit to the requirements of the operation.

The educational level of the people selected for the operation is not high, as a rule, although it is not always necessary. An important feature brought out by experts is the absence of firm social connections and susceptibility to outside influence. This factor is enhanced by practically complete isolation of the suicide-killer from outside social contacts directly on the eve of committing the terrorist act.

The main criterion of selection is the psychology of a person, the traits of character and psyche which make him or her controllable and suggestible. The person's religiousness is of no decisive importance. Terrorist groups often cultivate various rites of transfer of their members into the ranks of suicide-killers and support various heroic myths of self-sacrifice. Their ideologists use cultural traditions and historical examples making death not only acceptable, but also commendable⁶.

An expert on terrorists' psychology T. Nestik points to the fact that often psychological trauma, with whose help the organizers of terrorist crimes manipulate the consciousness of the potential suicide-killer is created artificially in order to make the latter wish to sacrifice himself or herself, or regain his or her "ego," or acquire new self-identification. This is clearly seen on the example of the Chechen suicide women-bombers who were subjected to psychological and

physical violence and rape, so that “heroic death” for them was the only possible means to “cleanse themselves.”

The Arab newspaper “Al-Shark Al Awsat”, in an interview with representatives of the Palestinian “Khamas” grouping about how people were selected in Palestine for becoming suicide-terrorists, wrote the following: “There are four criteria with the help of which we determine who will fit for us. First, religiousness, secondly, his or her relations with the parents and the general position of the family: whether he or she is the only child; in that case we dismiss the candidature. Thirdly, he or she should fully realize the importance of the mission. And fourthly, his or her death should kindle the flame of jihad in the hearts of other people and evoke the desire to sacrifice their life to the great cause.”⁷ It should also be taken into account that the families of the suicide-terrorists often receive material assistance from terrorist organizations and sympathizers.

Previously, men have largely been used as “live bombs”, because they were better trained, yet they could change their mind during the operation and thus thwart it altogether. Subsequently, the methods of using “live bombs” has been changed slightly; selection acquired a universal character and women and children began to be used more widely, because they are more susceptible to outside influence and cause less suspicion in the conditions of the extraordinary regime. This is why more and more women and children are among suicide-killers nowadays. By the mid-1990s women comprised about 40 percent of all “live bombs.”⁸

Terrorist organizations strive to draw adolescents to this deadly business. For instance, at the beginning of 2006 the “Hamas” organization created a special site for children (<http://www.al-fateh.net>/<http://www.al-fateh.net>), which glorifies young Shakhids and calls on children to “take the path of martyrs.”⁹ The use of children as

“live bombs” is a new and serious trend of hiring kids for murder, which has first emerged in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Benazir Bhutto was killed by a 14-year-old boy, and a 12-year-old lad shot at Hamid Karzai, the President of Afghanistan.

In 2011 the security forces of Iraq eliminated the base of the organization “Tuyur al-Janna” (“Birds of Paradise”), which existed from 2006 and trained children for the role of suicide-killers. In 2008 Iraqi officers showed journalists six crying arrested adolescents, some of them under 14, who told them that they had been recruited by a “Saudi militant” and had to explode themselves.

In 2009 the newspaper “Washington Times” published results of an investigation, which showed that one of the Taliban leaders in Pakistan had bought children from seven years of age for a price not exceeding \$14,000 to be trained as suicide-killers¹⁰.

The selection process of candidates to Shakhids takes place at Islamist educational centers sponsored and maintained by Islamist radicals or those under their influence and control, at mosques during religious education and sermons, as well as in refugee camps

It should be noticed that there are differences in the tactic of using suicide-bombers.

Some use them blind (when the Shakhid carries a bomb to a definite place unaware of what it is, and explosion is directed by remote-control console. This is practiced with those who can show doubts and hesitation. But if a “live bomb” has no courage to explode himself or herself, for some reason, he or she has an accompanying person who will make the blast.

The next stage of training is psychological brainwashing. The training of “live bombs” is conducted by people with special knowledge. If Shakhids are trained from among Islamic radicals, these

instructors are either mullahs, or persons with a special religious education who can well explain the need to make self-sacrifice.

As a rule, there are many people among suicide-terrorists whose relatives, husbands or wives have been killed in counter-terrorist operations, suffered from actions of the official authorities, etc., that is, a great role is given to searching for a real motive. Training is going on in special camps from several weeks to several months, sometimes in ordinary living conditions, prayer houses, or refugee camps. Brainwashing is usually accompanied by inducing to use drugs and other psychedelic substances. After this, at the end of training suicide-terrorists take the oath, and then the way back is out of the question.

By the time when a suicide-terrorist comes to the place of perpetrating the crime the level of his or her psychological readiness is high enough, which allows him or her to avoid suspicion on the part of any security agent. This is why to prevent terrorist acts committed by suicide-killers is one of the most difficult tasks facing the law-enforcement agencies¹¹. At the same time it is noted that there have been cases when candidates to “live bombs” have been selected literally a week before terrorist acts¹².

At the stage of training of suicide-terrorist he or she is taught the simple skills of handling makeshift explosive devices. Of course, suicide-bombers can use more complex explosive devices, but they are remote-controlled, in most cases. The training program is individual and is connected with motives close to the trainee.

The training period may vary in time. Its duration depends on the nature of the terrorist operation: is it on transport, strategic infrastructure, etc. Transportation routes of bombers to the place where the act is to take place should be planned beforehand.

Indicative in this respect were events on Dubrovka in Moscow in 2002, where 916 hostages were taken by suicide-terrorists.

S. Goncharov, deputy to the Moscow City Duma, retired colonel of special KGB forces, notes: “In order to talk of the Dubrovka lesson, one should remember previous cases of hostage taking. The terrorist act in Budyonnovsk in 1995, where Chechen fighters took more than 1,600 hostages at the local hospital, was a precursor, as it were, of the Dubrovka tragedy. After the special force unit lost three men and received an order from Moscow to lift the siege of the hospital, the Chechen bandits left the scene waving flags and believing in their impunity.

“At the theater on Dubrovka Chechen terrorists captured about 900 people, but this time they were all suicide-killers ready to give short shrift mercilessly to all hostages.”¹³

It is important to note that in conditions of the existence of transnational network terrorist structures, which can “supply” well-trained suicide-killers for committing terrorist acts on concrete territory there is always a reserve of such suicide-terrorists.

Terrorist Acts with the Use of Suicide Murderers in Central Asia

It is difficult to list all acts of terror with the use of suicide-killers in Central Asia because far from all such acts have been registered by official statistics, and information about them is difficult to find in open sources, but they have taken place in Kazakhstan¹⁴, Uzbekistan¹⁵, and Tajikistan¹⁶.

There are no data on terrorist acts with the use of suicide-terrorists in Kyrgyzstan, however, there is information about the activity of the previously unknown grouping called “Jaishul Mahdi” (“Army of the Faithful Ruler”) and its role in organizing explosions at a synagogue in September and in a gym in Bishkek in November, as well

as an abortive attempt to explode a police building in Bishkek in December 2011.

There is evidence that Kyrgyz citizens can be used as suicide-bombers on the territory of other republics of Central Asia.

There is no information about the use of suicide-terrorists on the territory of Turkmenistan in open sources.

Then most well-known banned terrorist organizations operating on the territory of Central Asian are: “Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan,” “Jamaat of Mojaheds of Central Asia,” “Khizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islamiya” (“Islamic party of Liberation”), “Tablighi Jamaat” (“Group of Envoys”), “Zhaishul Mahdi,” ”Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan,” Uighur “Shark Azatlyk Tashkilati,” “Akromiya,” “Khizb an-Nusra” (“Arty of Victory),” branch of “Khizb-ut-Tahrir-al-Islamiya”), “Musulmon-birodalrar” (“Muslim Brothers”), “Adolat” (“Justice”), “Islam Lashkarlari” (“Warriors of Islam”), “Islam uigonish partiyasy” (“Party of Islamic Revival”), “Toaba” (“Repentance”), “Jamaat Ansarulla.”¹⁷ Many of them are parts of the international “Al Qaeda” network.

From the mid-2000s Central Asian states began active cooperation in the sphere of opposing terrorism at the level of international organizations, such as FMC, CSTO, SCO, ANC CIS, etc.

However, as noted in a report of the Center of anti-terrorist programs, there are certain differences and friction between various countries of Central Asia on questions of opposing and fighting terrorism and extremism. This became especially noticeable in relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

At the Tashkent trial in July 2004 of persons involved in spring terrorist acts, some of the defendants admitted that they were trained at special camps in South Kazakhstan. From their words it followed that these camps were also used for transferring terrorists via Azerbaijan

and Iran to Pakistan. There were quite a few Arab instructors at these camps. This information has been distributed by the Uzbek mass media.

Taking into consideration difficult relations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the authors of the report admitted that the accused made confessions under pressure exerted by secret service agents for the purpose of discrediting Kazakhstan at an international level. In any case, the State Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan denied the charges stating that there were no camps for training fighters in the country. But in the course of the trial it was proved that there was the Kazakh terrorist group “Zhamaat of mojaheds of Central Asia,” whose members were directly involved in the above-mentioned explosions¹⁸.

Suicide-terrorists as a Commodity

Suicide-killers to be used on the territory of Central Asia are trained in four camps of Pakistan (near Islamabad, Quetta, Lahore and Waziristan) by the so-called Iraqi technology. Among future suicide-killers are people from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Usually, young men from Central Asia studying at the Islamic University in Lahore are carefully watched by special agents who try to find zealous Islamists among them, susceptible to outside influence and interested in individual elements of teaching connected with victimhood.

After graduation the candidates selected for further studies and training are thoroughly brainwashed in one of the four camps mentioned, as a result of which their will becomes fully suppressed.

This training is carried on by specialists from the “Khakkani” group (independent terrorist organization in Afghanistan connected with the Taliban engaged in the guerilla fight against the country’s government and the NATO forces). The “Khakkani” network becomes

the owner of “human slaves.” This group can use the trained suicide-killers for its purposes, transfer or sell them to other organizations and groupings operating in neighboring or distant countries, including in Central Asia. The price of a person trained in Pakistan, according to various estimates, may reach \$100,000.

These suicide-killers are used for committing acts of terror with a view to bringing pressure to bear on the local authorities in order to gain political or ideological advantages. But, as experts point out, the aim of suicide-killers may be the liquidation of undesirable political, public and religious leaders.

In December 2011, one of the graduates of the Lahore University killed the deputy to Afghan parliament of Uzbek origin Abdullah Mutualib Bigi and 21 people along with him in Tahar province of Afghanistan.

Experts see a definite Afghan-Pakistani trace in the use of suicide-killers in Central Asia. Cooperation between the “Khakkani” network and the “Islamic movement of Uzbekistan” has played a definite role in the matter of recruiting candidates to suicide-terrorists among ethnic Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kyrgyzs in the southern districts of Central Asia.

Moreover, there was information that the Kyrgyzstan authorities were threatened with terrorist acts to be perpetrated in Bishkek by suicide-killers, which the authorities dismissed as a newspaper hoax, although it has been confirmed by well-informed sources.

In the period of the presidential election campaign in 2011 the son of the ex-president of Kyrgyzstan, an influential businessman M. Bakiyev threatened the incumbent President Almazbek Atambayev with a series of explosions in Bishkek committed by suicide-killers. Indeed, there were seven such persons, ethnic Kyrgyzs and Kazakhs, who were bought by Bakiyev in Tajikistan. These terrorists were

transferred to Kyrgyzstan from Afghanistan, and after they fulfilled their assignment, they were returned to the territory of Afghanistan.

Thus, experts state that to the south of the Russian borders there is a well-organized and well-functioning market of suicide-killers regulated by “market rules,” one of which says that until they fulfill their assignment, they remain in possession of a person who paid for them. According to the operative data of the Afghan special services, purchase of suicide-killers by people from Central Asia does not have a mass nature, it is more typical of Afghanistan and Pakistan themselves. However, in the experts’ view, this market will broaden in Central Asia due to the growing instability and presence of rich resources in the region, and also proceeding from the fact that it is to the advantage of certain geopolitical actors in the region.

Suicide-killers as a Threat to Central Asia

The countries of Central Asia are now an object of close attention and actions on the part of international and regional terrorist organizations of Islamist character. They pursue three goals:

First, to commit terrorist acts in order to intimidate the authorities and force them to adopt concrete political decisions, and also to sow fear among the civilian population.

Thus, the situation in certain countries and the region as a whole, as well as along the borders with Russia, is destabilized, and this circumstance makes it possible to use local terrorist organizations by major geopolitical actors implementing their interests in Central Asia.

The base of Kazakh Islamic extremism is the southern regions of Kazakhstan (Chimkent and Dzhambul). It is from there that “missionaries” move to the north, to the practically “transparent” Kazakh-Russian border. The conditions of the functioning of the Customs Union will allow Islamists to penetrate, practically freely, in

such deep-lying territories of Russia as the Urals and Siberia. When Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan join the Customs Union the situation may become still more complicated.

As to internal factors, along with a difficult socio-economic situation the problem of drug trafficking and consumption is of great importance, because the money earned from the sale of Afghan heroin goes to financing terrorist acts. Besides, the development and thriving of the drug business in the region go hand in hand with recruiting new members to Islamist organizations, especially in the Ferghana Valley. The problem of corruption in the law-enforcement agencies is of no small importance. Military service provides one of the key social lifts for young men in the countries of Central Asia. After the army service it becomes easier for demobilized men to get a job at government offices. Experts note that members of Islamist grouping are doing everything in their power to join the army where they are engaged in clandestine propaganda work.

Thus, the army and military structures are one of the targets for Islamist radical elements as a broad recruiting base. If drastic measures to curb this trend are not taken, radical Islam may penetrate the core of the government apparatus and spread among its officials, and the consequences of it may be simply catastrophic.

Secondly, to use the territory of the Central Asian countries by international and regional Islamist organizations for propaganda and subversive work on the territory of third states, including Russia.

According to numerous mass media reports, there are transfer bases of fighters and caches of arms which can easily be moved practically to any point of the region and used on the territory of third countries. There are also possibilities for transfer, upkeep and legalization of trained suicide-killers.

Thirdly, to use the territory of the Central Asian region as a recruiting base, including for suicide-killers.

Thus, serious attention should be paid to Central Asia in view of the spreading of Islamism of its Salaphite form and growing influence of Islamist propaganda, especially in several districts of the Ferghana Valley. Otherwise, the situation may worsen as is the case of Iraq or the North Caucasus. It is also necessary to take into account the developments in Syria. As soon as the situation in Syria begins to stabilize, some terrorists operating there may be transferred to Central Asia.

For example, there are statements issued by the mojahed grouping “Ansar al-Din” connected with “Al Qaeda,” in which it sharply criticized the activity of Kazakhstan’s authorities and warned that as soon as they scored victory in Afghanistan, they would turn to Central Asia, and Kazakhstan would become a sphere of their interests. The Uighur fighters from the “Islamic party of Turkestan” group, who are now fighting against the Asad regime in Syria, will be returning to China, and it cannot be excluded that from there they will penetrate in the territory of Central Asia.

In the middle of June 2013 five members of the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan were apprehended in Kunduz province of Afghanistan. They were connected with the training of suicide-killers. According to available information, two of them were planned to be used as suicide- killers. During the interrogation they told investigators that they had been trained in a special camp in Northern Waziristan (Pakistan).

On June 23 several citizens of Turkmenistan were arrested in Aleppo (Syria), among whom was the commander of demolition unit of “Al Qaeda,” who had been trained near Ashkhabad in the unit of Sheikh

Murad, from where he was transferred first to Istanbul and then to Syria.

Thus we see that the threat of suicide-killers penetrating Central Asia becomes very tangible. This also concerns Russia.

Evidently, without a system of government measures aimed at curbing this expansion it will not be possible to solve the problem of opposing the terrorist forms of establishing the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism, including with the use of suicide-killers. The forces and means of the special services alone will hardly be sufficient for the purpose. It is necessary to adopt and carry out measures aimed at improving the socio-economic situation of the population and democratizing the local regimes. Broad support of radical Islamists by the local population is based on the latter's substandard social position and dissatisfaction with the authorities. Of course, serious efforts should be undertaken to establish closer interaction of the countries of the region aimed at fighting Islamists terrorism. It is necessary to improve the mechanisms of the implementation of the growing role of state-private partnership in preventing terrorism, combating its ideology and propaganda, and opposing radicalization of sentiments and behavior of the most diverse sections of the population and mass recruiting of people in terrorist organizations.

It is evident that the fight against terrorism and suicide-killers as one of its instruments should include finding the infrastructure which recruits, trains and transfers them to places of terrorist acts. At the same time, experts note that the opposition to terrorism is more effective when it is possible to find and use inner contradictions and differences in the midst of terrorists.

In this connection it is necessary to carry on:

- Constant preventing measures to find and reveal cells of networks, neutralize them, and stop the distribution of illegal Wahhabi literature.
- Appropriate measures in regions with a higher level of social and confessional tension.
- Corresponding training of special service personnel and employees of law-enforcement agencies, including the development of agent network.
- Monitoring and analysis of information.
- Work of civil authorities on education of the population, particularly, explaining the danger of religious extremism.
- Find and reveal those who can present a threat to state and public security.
- Train specialists in counter-terrorist operation.
- Objectively analyze the effectiveness of counter-terrorist activity.

It is necessary to emphasize that the use of suicide-killers with a view to bringing pressure to bear on the authorities in the Central Asian countries becomes more extensive and effective with every passing year. And its role will grow along with drawing the Central Asian states in the new format of relations with the global political actors, especially during the withdrawal of the ISAF and NATO forces from Afghanistan, because the regional and transnational radical Islamist organizations tend to regard the local authorities as the satellites of the West.

Similarly, such situation can develop on parts of the Russian Federation's territory bordering on Kazakhstan and the North Caucasus, and also in the Volga area and West Siberia inhabited by Muslims. Apart from that, there are very many Muslims of Central Asian and North Caucasian origin living and working in big Russian cities as

labor migrants, who are dissatisfied with their economic and socio-legal status.

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