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GLOBALIZATION AND ETHNO-POLITICAL PROCESS IN MODERN RUSSIA

The 21st century has not only brought mankind the change of the millennia, but has also widely opened the doors to the globalization of all processes, including the economy, social sphere, and culture. In the conditions of globalization it becomes quite evident that the strongest is the winner. This is true of the leading states today. At the same time, this century the geopolitical position of certain states in the world, especially after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the sovereignization of newly-independent states (CIS), the aftermath of the Balkan events (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia), and a more active policy of the United States in the international arena has changed considerably. Due to this a radical change of international relations and a shift of the political forces of the main actors in the world scene have also taken place. Moreover, today's tendencies of modern development of political processes in states are conditioned by a number of essential factors which are connected, above all, with the general globalization changes in the world. The most crucial factor of our time is the world economic crisis, which had a profound influence on the geopolitical position of certain countries and the European Union as a whole due to the migration, ecological and demographic processes in a number

of European and Middle Eastern states. Naturally, these changes and the crucial factors influencing these processes include the worsening socio-economic positions of the main part of the population of these countries. As a result of these negative processes contradictions and conflicts flare up between the ruling elites and the opposition in the person of the broad popular masses, which take the form of civil wars in some states. A vivid example is the present chain revolution in several countries of North Africa and the Middle East (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, and others). This situation has gone so far that without cardinal changes and extraordinary measures in these countries it would be impossible to resolve the contradictions and improve the situation in this region.¹

Apart from that, there is a number of countries where similar situation is in the offing, and this may be fraught with conflicts and armed clashes. Naturally, all these contradictions are directly connected with the general global processes. Similar processes of an ethnopolitical character, as is known, can be traced in some West European countries as a result of migration flows from Islamic states. The situation in France, Germany, and especially in Italy, which is becoming flooded by refugees from Tunisia, Libya and other North African states, is causing serious concern. A case in point is the small Italian island of Lampedusa. The number of refugees from the African shore of the Mediterranean exceeds the number of the indigenous population of the island. And this is just a beginning.

Of course, Europe is not happy in face of these prospects. The leaders of Germany, France and Britain made a statement in 2011 to the effect that globalization and the policy of building a multicultural society had failed and that social policy and the migration legislation should become stricter.²

In connection with the globalization processes the geopolitical position of parts of the Soviet Union is also changing. Social cataclysms and armed clashes occur in certain countries of the former CIS, which has an impact on neighboring territories and their national security. Suffice it to recall developments in the Baltic countries, exacerbated relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia, armed clashes between Georgia and Russia, and the crisis situation in Ukraine. It should be noted that the latest events in and around Ukraine can have very negative consequences for Russia, Europe, the United States, and all citizens of Ukraine, inasmuch as globalization cannot but influence these countries.

This problem is also based on the absence of trust between nations of whole regions, and this is aggravated by the complex problems of corruption, which are threatening regional security. “Deficit of trust” in the North Atlantic community undermines cooperation, strengthens tension in states, leads to additional expenses, and ultimately brings more risks to citizens of these countries.

As a result, the events in Ukraine present serious danger and demand joint actions. Ukraine should not be turned into another Berlin Wall in Europe. The division of Ukraine would mean a new division of Europe.³

The study of problems of the preservation of stability achieved in the 1990s–2000s with great difficulties becomes a timely matter with a view to establishing geopolitical priorities in the world.

In connection with the multinational and poly-cultural character of Russian society it is very important for us to give an analysis of the situation of the Caspian region and the southern part of Russia: the Southern and North Caucasian federal parts of the country where there are threats of conflicts accompanied with acts of terror and manifestations of extremism, which create serious tension

and jeopardize the future development of the entire country. This is why it is necessary to find and use the factors and ways to consolidate society and ascertain external and internal challenges, which is the task facing scholars and experts.

It is known that political conflicts are determined by researchers in most cases as a kind of social ethnopolitical conflict based on the problem of political power. Orientation to political power presupposes clash and solution of a conflict by victory of one side in the conflict over the other. Meanwhile, there is a special group of conflicts which can be determined as “systemic political conflicts.”⁴ The reason for emerging most conflicts, representing at first glance ordinary clash of the interests of national groups, political parties, groups of influence, public associations, etc. is the character of the political system expressed in specific features of its organization. However, such conflicts put forward the question not of winning power or changing the subject of power, but of changing the foundations of the political system according to modern processes and their trends.

World experience shows that such systemic political conflicts threaten the existence of the political system, as it can clearly be seen from the contemporary history of a number of Balkan and Middle Eastern states (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Libya, and some others). On the other hand, this factor reveals the essential contradiction which could be a source of the progress of the entire political system. Systemic conflict can be viewed as a system-forming if it produces forms contributing to its improvement and stability.

It is common knowledge that there are several regions with a high degree of tension on the territory of the Russian Federation, which have a negative influence on the entire political system. The southern region is the most “conflictogenic,” where there are many risks and threats to regional stability. The hierarchy of these threats and

risks calls for a revision of medium-term and long-term forecasts and conflictogenic scenarios of the development of these macroregions.⁵

This is why one of the most pressing aspects of the modern geopolitical process in Russia, when its southern part and the Caspian region are concerned, are the problems connected with the stability of the political system and problems of the ethnopolitical security of the state. It is generally known that the Caucasus proved to be the most destabilizing and conflictogenic region in the entire former U.S.S.R. on whose territory contradictions have not been settled until now, which sometimes turn into armed conflicts. Among them the Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts, which have a negative effect on all neighboring regions, and also contradictions and terrorist acts in the entire North Caucasus. All this requires a competent and thorough analysis and elaboration of effective recommendations.

The Caspian region and the North Caucasus are the most destabilizing areas. The point is that the former is an important strategic link between the North and the South – Russia and the Persian Gulf – as a source of oil and gas for European markets.⁶ The events in Iraq, relations between Iran and the United States, the military conflict of Georgia with Russia, etc. all are the consequences of such international processes. This is due primarily to the natural hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian states, and also the geographical position of the region which lies at a crossroads of transport and trade routes, as well as the Caspian Sea with its unique bio-resources. Apart from that, the migration processes taking place also have a conflictogenic potential. By the beginning of 2013 there were up to ten million illegal migrants, mainly from the republics of Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus in Russia. Each year their number grows by over 60 percent.

All these negative processes influence, directly or indirectly, the South of Russia and the North Caucasus. Destabilization in the North Caucasus has an impact on the situation in the vast Eurasian areas not only of Russia, but also other countries which are connected by ethnocultural ties with the entire Caucasus.⁷

This region is highly explosive for many reasons, primarily due to the weak development of democratic mechanisms, or their complete absence, there. And the market mechanisms do not work in the region either. There are practically no free mass media, and the courts are far from independent and objective. Human rights are not duly observed and there is a high level of clannishness and corruption.

This is why it is quite logical that ethnopolitical conflicts, especially in the North Caucasus, show, above all, the state and degree of stability of the existing political system.

Talking of the situation in the North Caucasus, mention should be made that among its most evident and indisputable values are territorial integrity of the entire Russian state, its poly-ethnic religious tolerance, recognition of titular nations as state-forming, and the Russian language as the official language.

World experience shows that the presence of a systemic political conflict threatens the existence of the political system itself, as it can be seen from the history of a number of Balkan and Middle Eastern states (Yugoslavia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and others). On the other hand, this factor reveals the essential reason which can be a source of the development of the political system. In this case, if we deal with the geopolitical position of Russia, despite relative stability as a whole for the entire country, in the South of Russia there is a high conflict intensity, which should be dealt with without delay. It can be explained by large-scale corruption, high level of unemployment, extremely low efficiency of the regional bodies of power, criminal activity, including

underground band formation, ethnic clannishness, relative poverty of the population, “imported” extremism, critical dependence of the North Caucasian republics on donations from the federal budget, low level of industrial production, and low quality of life.

Concern over such state of affairs in the North Caucasus has time and again been voiced by the head of state (the annual state of the union message to the Federal Assembly in November 2009).⁸

At present, due to the worsening socio-economic situation and intensive migration flows ethnopolitical conflicts in certain parts of the southern region have reached the level of virtual armed clashes (Daghestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria). Terrorism as the extreme form of conflict in these republics has now begun to move to central regions of Russia (Pyatigorsk, Budyonnovsk, Stavropol, Astrakhan, Volgograd, Moscow).

Nowadays research centers and scholarly communities are engaged, among other things, in analyzing and forecasting ethnopolitical processes, which influence the situation in Russia, its geopolitics, elaborating strategy and position of further mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries in the world political arena. The timeliness of this problem can be explained by the exacerbated relations between the states of the Caspian region (for example, in the dispute on the division of the Caspian Sea and its resources), as well as between world powers in their rivalry for control over this region. These world powers are interested in the development of the hydrocarbon resources of the region, creation of transport corridors with access to India, and deployment of military bases on territories of the Caspian region. All this goes to show the increasing threat from the outside to the political stability of Russia and the need for evolving the means of its prevention and rebuff with a view to warding off interstate conflicts.

It should be noted that Russian and foreign experts most frequently use examples from the history of ethnic conflicts in the North and South Caucasus, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf in creating their analytical models.⁹

Characterizing the present-day situation in the South of Russia with its Caspian vector, and especially in the North Caucasus, our and foreign scholars and experts, as well as the authors of the report “Free Movement of Workers and Labor Market Adjustment” of the Berlin Center of OECR make their forecast and assess the situation as very difficult.¹⁰ They also note that the considerable importance of the Caspian region, and consequently the South of Russia, lies not only in the sphere of energy and transport, as well as in the military sphere, but also in the humanitarian field, being one of the main actors in a dialogue of civilizations with its mentality, traditions and tolerance. Thus, previous approaches, methods and recipes for analyzing the ethnopolitical security of states existing in world practice do not allow us to give effective recommendations for normalizing and improving the situation in these countries. In this case, the measures of forcible pressure brought to bear on the initiators and their subjects breeding conflictogenic factors, and challenges and threats to ethnopolitical security only tend to aggravate the existing situation. In view of this, a major subject of investigations of the processes going on in this region should be the influence of macroeconomics, political processes, culture, migration, and ethnic conflicts on the geopolitical situation in the Caspian states. It is necessary to determine the challenges and threats which could influence the ethnopolitical security of the South of Russia and the destabilization of the socio-political development of our country.

The Caspian vector of the socio-political stability of the Russian Federation is an important subject in the investigation of projects of an

adequate model taking into consideration threats and challenges during the period of globalization and the world economic crisis. The southern and border regions with a high level of ethnopolitical conflicts connected with various socio-economic factors should take a special place in this work.

Notes

- ¹ *Gazeta.Ru*. 25.02.2011 // www.rosbalt.ru
- ² Yu. Alyokhina. *Otkaz ot tolerantnosti* [Refusal from Tolerance] // *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. 05.02.2011.
- ³ *Ukraina ne dolzhna stat novoi Berlinskoi stenoi* [Ukraine Should Not Become a New Berlin Wall]. D. Braun, V. Ishinger, I. Ivanov, S. Nann, A. Rotfeld // russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=3293#top
- ⁴ See: A. Vassetsky. *Sistemniye konflikty v protsesse stanovleniya sovremennoi politicheskoi sistemy Rossii* [Systemic Conflicts in Formation Process of Modern Political System of Russia]. D. Sc. Thesis. St. Petersburg, 2008.
- ⁵ S. Sushchy. *Severny Kavkaz: Realii, problemy, perspektivy pervoi treti XXI veka* [The North Caucasus: Realities, Problems, Prospects of the First Quarter of the 21st Century]. Moscow, 2013.
- ⁶ A. Magomedov, R. Nikerov. *Bolshoi Kaspy. Energeticheskaya geopolitika i tranzitniye voiny na etapakh postkommunizma* [Great Caspian Region. Energy Geopolitics and Transit Wars at Post-communist Stages]. Ulyanovsk, 2010.
- ⁷ L. Ruban. *Kaspy – more problem* [The Caspian Sea – a Sea of Problems]. Moscow, 2003, pp. 9–10.
- ⁸ *YuFO umenshilsya na sem regionov Severnogo Kavkaza* [SFO Has Lost Seven Regions of the North Caucasus] // *Komsomolets Kaspiya*. No 6(6547), 22.01.2010.
- ⁹ Nation C. Russia, the United States and the Caucasus. Washington D.C.: US Army War College. The Strategic Studies Institute, February, 2007; Cohen A. U.S. Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus: Challenges Ahead // Institute for Central Asian and Caucasian Studies [www.cac.org/journal/eng-02-2000/02.cohen.shtml].
- ¹⁰ “Free Movement of Workers and Labor Market Adjustments.” Information Service of OECR. Berlin Center of OECR. 23.08.2012 // [dx.doi.org / 10.1787/9789264177185-en](http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264177185-en).

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MUSLIM TRADITIONS, LAW AND SOCIETY
IN THE RUSSIAN CAUCASUS

Religious leaders of different faiths including Islam, call for a dialogue. Without denying the importance of this task, it should be noted that it is no less important for Muslim religious organizations to overcome a split in the Muslim community and confrontation between traditionalists and Salafits. It should not be considered that the local religious tradition is always positive. In the post-Soviet epoch the state took upon itself the protection of local traditions. Meanwhile, local tradition can serve as a source of sharp conflicts, as is shown by the experience of the North Caucasus. For instance, in Dagestan there is the tradition of repeated collective prayer after the Friday sermon. In the early 20th century this custom was a matter of controversy. Confrontation between opponents and supporters of this custom sometimes leads to armed clashes.

Expert Assessments of Religious Tradition

In different expert assessments one can come across the assertion that Russian law in the Caucasus is opposed to common law (*adat*) and Muslim law (*Sharia, fikh*), or is even ousted by them in the region. At the same time certain experts in the 1990s believed that for stabilization of the situation it was necessary to rely on traditional mediation for resolving blood feuds and intercommunal and ethnic conflicts. It was claimed that Muslim custom is more in line with the development level and specific features of local society than the federal Russian legislation, and it should be supported to a greater extent.¹

To an extent, hopes for the Sharia law in the North Caucasus and fear of it are connected with the failure of the plans of pacification of the region by the methods of force. Along with this, Sharia has become a mobilization resource of the Islamist opposition, which has become more active in the region, in its jihad against Russia.²

The most serious mistake of experts assessing the potential of adat and Sharia in the Russian Caucasus is the absolutization of the later pre-revolutionary legal situation in the region. Adat and Sharia are presented as the invariable, unchanged legal systems. They are judged and interpreted on the basis of descriptions of the region of the 18th – second quarter of the 19th century. In doing this, descriptions and essays of the latest imperial epoch are transferred to our time, or are presented outside the framework of history. Not speaking of historical and legal confusion in these works, mixture of the Sharia standards with adat, expert assessments made on the basis of this pre-revolutionary material should not be taken seriously. During the one and a half centuries of the imperial and Soviet rule it was not only the standards of these legal traditions themselves that had changed radically, but society itself that had used them. Is it possible now to talk of the preservation of common and Muslim law as independent legal systems in the modern North Caucasus? Or do we have to deal today with fragmented norms of adat and Sharia in various local versions in east and west, in mountains and plains, and among different peoples of the region?

Legal Pluralism in the Russian Caucasus

Judging by sources and the 20-year experience of field work in the region, the religious and legal situation in the Russian Caucasus is much more dynamic and varied. It is characterized by a high degree of *legal pluralism*³, along with which there are several rivaling legal

traditions, local or brought from the outside, which are connected with the present, as well as the Soviet, Russian imperial and even pre-Russian past. Along with the Muslim component, the standards and rules of the Russian population of the region, people of Cossack origin, former nomads, and also migrants and refugees from the zones of armed conflicts in the Trans-Caucasus are of importance. The formation of the legal traditions of the region had also been influenced by mass migration of people in the 18th–20th centuries and by almost one-and-a-half century socio-economic, administrative, legal and cultural reforms. This article does not examine all religious and legal traditions existing in the North Caucasus nowadays. We shall confine to analyzing problems connected with the coexistence and rivalry of the norms of common and Muslim law in the realm of Russian legal standards.

First of all, we should note the basic difference between these two legal traditions. The Caucasian versions of *fikh* are related to the universal Islamic legal system, whereas *adat* is of a local nature. Historically, the development of legal pluralism among Muslims of the region took place through receiving the general norms of the *Sharia* and including them in local *adats*, and a reverse influence of procedural and legal norms of *adat* on *fikh* (in particular, renunciation of the norms of *hudud* in Daghestan) and on the sphere of state legal standards. Among Muslims of the North Caucasus, just as other Muslim regions, the essence of *fikh* is the rules of behavior of believers stemming from the *Sharia* law and sanctions for non-observance of these rules. The main sources of legal decisions are the *Koran* and *Sunna*, which contain, according to Islamic law, answers to any questions. The sphere of *fikh* is wider than law in the European sense. *Fikh* incorporates various types of social norms and standards – religious, legal, moral, etc., including customs and rules of etiquette. The Sunni Muslim legal

tradition recognizes rites and precepts of Islam determining Muslims' relations with Allah (*'ibadat*) to be the subject of fikh, on the one hand, and on the other, the legal norms regulating relations between people, the Muslim state and its subjects, and other confessions and states (*my'amalat*). Sharia judges and courts de facto restored in a number of regions of the North Caucasus (Daghestan, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol territory and elsewhere), after the termination of persecutions of religion following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, are now working mainly in the sphere of religious worship practice.

Historically, most Muslims in the North Caucasus are Sunnites. Of the four existing Sunni religious-legal *Madh'habs* there are two. Most Muslims of the region (and in the entire Russian Federation) follow the *hanafite Madh'hab*. The Muslims of Daghestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia, from the Middle Ages, refer to *Shaf'iyyah*. There are quite a few differences in standards and rites between the two currents, but general relations between hanafites and shafiites in Russia and beyond its borders in the present epoch are, as a rule, quite peaceful. There are more contradictions (including in the public order of the region) between the so-called traditionalists who stand guard over local traditions of the Shafite or Hanafiite fikh, and religious dissidents – purists known under the name “Wahhabi”, whose ideal is initial Islam of Prophet Mohammed's time.⁴ Arguments concerning certain rite traditions and behavioral norms can serve as a pretext to clashes between them. Legal norms as such and differences between *Madh'habs* are not too important nowadays.

The most widespread branch of fikh in the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet Caucasus was the right of personal status – a sum total of rules and standards regulating marriage-and-family, inheritance and other relations close to them (legal capacity, regime of charity,

property, etc.). There were serious differences between the generally accepted standards of the Shafiite and Hanafite schools of fikh in the North Caucasus and the criminal (delict) Muslim law. For one, thieves could be punished by severing their hands, fornicators were killed by stoning. Punishment standards for crimes against morality (*hudud*) were used rather seldom in the region, instead fines were imposed by adat or community service work according to Russian law. From the second quarter of the 20th century fikh lost the role of the legal regulator in Muslim society due to Soviet anti-religious campaigns and secularization of local society. On the one hand, there was the erosion of legal knowledge in the sphere of fikh due to the destruction of the system of developed Islamic education in the region, which became noticeable among traditionalists and among their Wahhabi opponents. (From the 1930s to the early 1990s there had been no legally functioning madrasahs in the region). On the other hand, in the sphere of family, inheritance and land law fikh was replaced by Russian legislation and requirement for its restoration became unnecessary. The Sharia law evokes horror in part of Russian society as a vestige of the gloomy medieval epoch, whereas some Muslims see in its revival a panacea from all trials and tribulations in the post-Soviet Caucasus. In this one can see one of the consequences of the irreversible erosion of the basic knowledge of Muslim law in the region.

The decline of the role of fikh is the general tendency in the Russian and foreign Muslim East from the latter half of the 19th century. Similar phenomenon is the attempt to reintroduce the norms of Sharia (above all, *hudud*) in criminal law. In the last quarter of the 20th century Pakistan, Sudan, the Philippines and some other Muslim countries adopted Sharia criminal codes⁵. The only attempt to replace legislatively the Russian state and criminal law by Sharia law was undertaken in Checnya in 1996, which was copied from the Sudanese

criminal code of 1993. In the second quarter of the 1990s there were attempts to legalize the Sharia and mediator courts and decriminalize polygamy and blood feuds, thus adding these categories to Russian legislation in Ingushetia and some other parts of the Russian Federation in the Caucasus. However, these legislative initiatives failed. The “Chechen war” in 1999 played its role, too. A more important factor preventing the return of Sharia to public law was a great shortage of knowledge about fikh among practicing Muslim judges, as well as the absence of requirement for Sharia law among most Muslims in the region.

In the North Caucasus today certain marriage-and-family, criminal and everyday standards of Sharia are practiced, but they are not legally binding on Muslims. Already in pre-revolutionary time fikh ceded its leading place to the legislation copied from West-European samples. Muslims choose the means and methods of dealing with legal matters which are more convenient for them in Russian courts, Sharia courts, or through authoritative local mediators. In 1928 the use of the Sharia norms began to be regarded as a criminal offence, and it continued to be punished by law until 1996.

Among the legal traditions rivaling with Sharia a special role for Muslims was played by adat back in the 20th century. Its norms could be at variance and even oppose Sharia, but they had taken shape under the influence of fikh during the prolonged Islamization of the region from the 7th to the 18th century, as a result of which there is a whole number of standards and norms in the common and Muslim law which are called similarly, but used in an absolutely different manner (for example, the right to incest recognized by both Sharia and adapt as the so-called *kisas*).

In the North Caucasus and in other regions Sharia and adat include both legal and non-legal customs. In this it is similar to fikh.

Despite considerable differences in the legal practice of Muslims in the North-East and North-West Caucasus a number of common features of adat can be singled out in the region. Prior to the inclusion of the Caucasus in the Russian Empire its source was a precedent. Adat was based on decisions of an arbitral umpire, rural court or community assembly. Adat proceeds from the idea of a collective character of a crime. The subject of law in it was not an individual person, but a social group: clan, village or several villages, khanate (more seldom), or other political entity. The clan of the defendant had to compensate losses caused by the clan of the plaintiff. In certain districts the killer's family was banished. There was the custom of cleansing a person suspected of a crime by joint oath of his most respected relatives or fellow-villagers. Punishment by adat was based on the system of compensation of physical or property loss by fines.

The struggle and mutual adaptation of adat, Sharia and Russian standards determined the development of legal pluralism in the North Caucasus in the 18th – first half of the 20th century. Similar courts examined law suits by adat and Sharia. By the time of joining the region to the Russian Empire the spheres of the application of the norms of adapt and Sharia were delimited. The former was used in dealing with criminal offences and land issues. Fikh dealt with civil, family and land law (private family property and charity property – *mulk* and *wakf*). Individual norms of adat (*baranta*, *shikil*, blood feud) and Sharia (*hudud*) which contradicted the criminal laws of the Russian Empire, were banned. In the 1850s – 1870s special mixed adat-sharia courts were instituted for the Muslims of the North Caucasus, and called “verbal,” “mountain,” and “popular.” They functioned up to 1917 under control of the Russian military (in Terek and Kuban regions) and *military-people's* administration (in Daghestan region). The latter was engaged in indirect management through the local Muslim and military

elites relying on local adat (and Sharia) and under control of officers of the Caucasian army. During the first decade after the establishment of Soviet power (in Daghestan up to 1927) the Muslims of the region retained a broad legal-administrative autonomy and were exempt from the jurisdiction of the legislation of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). People's and mountain courts based on Sharia and adat were preserved in rural communities and districts under the name “Sharia.”⁶ They dealt with suits between Muslims in the sphere of criminal law, family and inheritance disputes, as well as wakf and notariate.

Heritage of Imperial and Soviet Policy

Russian policy with respect to Muslim and common law has changed quite often and radically. In the 19th century the tsarist administration in the Caucasus feared Sharia, in which they saw a reason for possible Muslim uprisings (*Mouridism*). Soviet Russia in the 1920s was against common law regarding it as a means of class and colonial exploitation of Muslims –mountain-dwellers inherited from the tsarist regime. Soviet power was established in the region with the support of influential representatives of the Muslim clerical elite, including Sufi sheikhs of Daghestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia. This predetermined the support of Sharia which was regarded by the Soviet government as ordinary popular law. Having bolstered up its positions in the region, Soviet power placed its stake on banning not only common, but also Muslim law. On the eve of collectivization all Sharia courts were closed and most judges annihilated. Adat and Sharia were considered in the 1920s – 1950s in one category of “harmful survivals of the past” banished from the public sphere.

In the middle of the 20th century government policy toward the local legal and non-legal tradition changed again. Soviet power tried to

rely on “useful national adats.” In the 1960s – 1980s in all North Caucasian autonomies there were councils of elders functioning in all rural districts. Their task was to help people’s courts and rural councils to maintain public law and order, resolve conflicts and prevent clashes between community members, prevent cases of blood feud, watch over the state of irrigation channels, village clubs, and preclude embezzlement of collective-farm property.

In the 1990s the positive value of religious custom was recognized at the federal and regional level. The state assumed the responsibility for protecting traditional faiths and recognized common law as a possible source of legislation. The laws “On Rural Commune,” “On Rural Self-government,” and “On Arbitration Court” adopted in Adygea, Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkaria and Northern Ossetia – Alania adopted in 1995–1997 had to serve this purpose. In December 1997 the President of Ingushetia Ruslan Aushev signed the “Law on Justice of the Peace,” according to which courts were allowed to use common and Muslim law in dealing with petty criminal and civil offences. The national movements created at the time tried several times (true, without any success) to use the norms of adat for settling interethnic conflicts. However, the attempts to revive the Caucasian adat as an independent legal system have not brought the expected results. Neither the authorities nor public organizations have succeeded to set up legally capable courts based on adat and improve the crime situation, which has sharply exacerbated after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. At the same time, on the wave of the movement for Muslim revival after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, spontaneous opening of Sharia courts began. Today they consist, more often than not, of the imam of a mosque who is usually in the chair at meetings of the council of the elders of a community on Fridays and performs the duty of the judge. Usually, they confine to dealing with petty criminal and

marriage-family cases and drawing and endorsing notarial wills. Along with Sharia courts, the Muslims of the North Caucasus have Russian people's courts and public courts of arbitration.

It should not be thought that adat, Sharia and Russian legal norms are always compatible. There are contradictions between them in the field of criminal law, the law of personal status (family and inheritance), and land relations, as well as procedural matters. It is to these sections a number of practices of adat and Sharia, such as blood feud and land problems, and also special friendly relations among mountain-dwellers are related, which the Russian and Soviet state had been trying to eradicate for the past two centuries without success. As has been noticed earlier, the norms of common and Muslim law have changed radically, having adapted themselves to the Russian legal standards. Individual norms of adat and Sharia fit well into regional and federal legal norms. The local authorities themselves sometimes resort to simplified legal procedures and informal mediation for reconciling sworn enemies, settling land and interethnic conflicts, etc. At the same time, a number of principles and practices of adat and Sharia is incompatible with Russian law. These include the religious foundations of Sharia, indivisibility in adat and in Sharia of the sphere of law, faith and morality (understanding of delinquency as sin), collective responsibility for crimes, and system of compositions by adat, inequality of sexes and confessions before law (infringement of women's and infidels' rights, persecution of atheists).

Of course, the situation should not be overdramatized and the significance of the region's ties with Islamic centers of the Middle East for regenerating Sharia courts in the Caucasus should not be exaggerated. There is no "import" of Sharia to the region.⁷ Legal collisions with adat and Sharia in the Russian legal sphere can emerge in case their norms are included in or used in the existing legislation in

parts of the Russian Federation, as it used to be done sometimes in Daghestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya. What is more dangerous for Russian nationhood, as we think, is the political manipulation with Sharia in the conditions of the absence of a clear-cut religious policy in Russia.⁸ It is also important to take into account serious differences in the legal situation in the region in the late 2000s and in the 1990s. Given the negative consequences of the exacerbation of the criminogenic situation, growing terrorism and religious radicalism, the present situation in the region is more stable. The fragmentation of power and the narrowing down of the sphere of action of Russian law after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. have largely been overcome by now. The new verticals of power at a local, republican and regional level have been built. The legislation of parts of the Russian Federation has mainly been brought in line with general Russian legislation.

At the same time, the Soviet approach to Muslim customs, which mixed and confused sometimes the legal and extra-legal norms of adat and Sharia still exists. Despite the obsolete character of the positivist thesis about the traditional nature of the North Caucasian society, it continues to exert influence on Russian science, society and politics. Under the influence of the Soviet ethnographic school wrong ideas and concepts have spread in the scholarly and near-scholarly medium about the “traditional character” of modern North Caucasian society. The concept of “tradition” is placed outside the framework of history. After the downfall of the Soviet system and official science along with it, the interpretation and understanding of “traditions” have changed. They became free from Soviet Marxist-Leninist rhetoric. Among the key concepts of the post-Soviet traditionalist discourse, instead of the rejected class and formative principles, there are no less a priori “civilizational categories,” such as “mountain traditions,” “Islamic revival” and “Sharia.” The assessment of local traditions has now

changed the “minus” to the “plus.” From a “harmful survival of the past” they have now become “a source of spiritual revival” and “unity” of the North Caucasus. In the last Soviet years a tendency emerged to apply the word “tradition” to all local institutions and practices of Muslim mountain-dwellers without exception.

From both scientific and practical points of view the concept of “legal traditions” in the North Caucasus is controversial. Speaking of the “traditional character” of customs and habits of “Muslim mountain-dwellers,” the inventors of this cliché tend to forget that most of them have settled in the plains many generations ago, and that the overwhelming majority of the North Caucasian population now lives in valleys. Many legal and everyday-life “traditions”, such as “councils of the elders” and a whole number of rites came into being in Soviet time. Finally, it should be noted that there can be legal complications in confusing the concepts “legal” and “traditional,” because, as it happens in the federal and republican legislation, the state, for some unexplained reason, supports positive and negative, and even, fictional, norms and institutions. The point is that many forms and functions of pre-Soviet “traditions” in North Caucasian society have changed. Some of them have disappeared, while others have acquired an unlawful character. And there are such which can hardly become part of the republican or all-Russia legal systems. Some local customs and habits regarded by a Russian man-in-the-street as Muslim, for instance polygamy and bride-money, do not have direct relation to Islam and are not widespread in the region. A question arises whether the state should support all local “Islamic traditions” without exception. Interfering in the political and ideological struggle between various factions of Muslims the authorities would only raise the internal conflict between Muslim communities to a republican and regional level.

Prospects of Legalizing Local Religious Traditions

As to the prospects of legalizing adat and Sharia in the region, they depend, first and foremost, on the socio-political situation and positions of political figures. The role of scholars in these matters has not been great recently. It should be borne in mind that Russian scholars – legal experts, ethnologists, and students of the Orient – have played a no small role in the preparations and implementation of quite a few transformations in the 19th–20th centuries. Suffice it to recall the names of N. Khanykov, M. Kovalevsky, B. Dalgat, A. Ladyzhensky, and Kh.-M. Khashayev. In the 1990s the authorities often invited scholars as experts for elaborating legal policy in the Caucasus, but, unfortunately, seldom implemented their recommendations. Besides, after 1991, the previously unified Soviet scholarly community became split, old connections between republican centers and Moscow and St. Petersburg weakened, if not disappeared altogether. Scholars and scientists of different specialties, for instance, legal experts and historians have become isolated in their respective investigations. All this had an adverse effect on the elaboration of an adequate national policy with regard to adat and Sharia in the Caucasus. Of course, return to the empire and the U.S.S.R. is impossible, and this is why many imperial and Soviet institutions and projects cannot be restored now.

At the same time, the positive results obtained during the past two centuries should have been used. Among them, the experience of coordinating investigations carried out by ethnologists and legal experts within the framework of special legal institutions of the late Soviet period. The interesting results of the field and archives investigations and conferences carried out by the All-Union Institute of study of reasons for crime and measures to prevent it could have been very useful. Besides, it is necessary to improve the approach to legal

problems with due account of the recent investigations and modern methods of discursive analysis. More attention should be paid to the study of socio-legal practices. These trends and possibilities, in our view, should be considered properly in the elaboration of a reasonable and well-thought-out policy toward adat and Sharia in the post-Soviet legal sphere in the Russian North Caucasus.

Notes

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- ² A. Knysh. Virtual Jihad in the Twenty-first Century: The Case of the Caucasus Emirate // Ab imperio. 2010, No 1; V. Bobrovnikov. “Ordinary Wahhabism” versus “Ordinary Sufism?” Filming Islam for Post-Soviet Muslim Young People // Religion, State & Society. 2011. Vol. 39, No 3–4.
- ³ J. Griffits. What is Legal Pluralism? Journal of Legal Pluralism. 1986, No 24.
- ⁴ V. Bobrovnikov, A. Yarlykapov. *Restitutsiya shariata na rossiiskom Kavkaze: problemy i perspektivy* [Restitution of Sharia in the Russian Caucasus: Problems and Prospects] // Pax Islamica. 2013, No 2, pp. 72, 79–81.
- ⁵ R. Peters. The Islamization of Criminal Law: A Comparative Analysis // Die Welt des Islams. 1984. Vol. 34.
- ⁶ V. Bobrovnikov, Muslim Custom versus Socialist Law: Discourse on Shari'a Courts in Post-revolutionary Daghestan // Islam and Sufism in Daghestan / Ed. By M. Gammer. Helsinki, 2009, pp. 108–117.
- ⁷ V. Bobrovnikov. Al-Azhar and Shari'a Courts in the Twentieth-century Caucasus // Middle Eastern Studies. 2001. Vol. 37, No 4, pp. 23–24.
- ⁸ V. Bobrovnikov. “Ordinary Wahhabism” versus “Ordinary Sufism”.

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L. Khoperskaya
MONITORING OF ETHNO-POLITICAL
SITUATION IN KYRGYZSTAN
(Demography and Migration, History,
Religious Situation, Foreign Ties and Cooperation)

Demography & migration. Kyrgyzstan, just as in previous years, is distinguished by a high birthrate and migration activity of the population.

According to the data of the republican Statistical Committee, Kyrgyzstan's population numbered six million 777 thousand by January 1, 2014, the population surplus for the year 2013 was 113,500. The birth ratio was 27.2 per one thousand. The death figure for 2013

was 34,900. Natural population growth was 120,700. Migration outflow in 2013 was 7,200.

The absolute number and share of the Russian population in the republic diminished rapidly due to demographic losses and migration. According to the data of the Russian cultural center “Garmoniya,” there are now 370,000 Russians living in Kyrgyzstan (6.3 percent). Twenty thousand people left the country in 2012, and about 10,000 in 2013. According to forecasts, about 50,000 Russians will be leaving Kyrgyzstan every five years, and by 2020 their number will diminish to 308,000 (5.2 percent), and in 2025 there will be only 249,000 Russians (4.0 percent), and in 2030 – 194,000 (3.0 percent).

As it is said in the “Concept of Strengthening Unity of the People and Interethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan” endorsed in 2013, as a result of political, socio-economic and migration processes of the past few years, Kyrgyzstan has turned from a republic with a varied ethnic composition, especially concerning the urban population, into a country with numerical preponderance of ethnic groups of Central Asian countries. In recent years there has been a steady growth in the number of Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Dungans, Tajiks and Uighurs.

The migration flow is maintained at a comparatively high level due to the inflow of Chinese, the figures fluctuating from 80,000 to 300,000. They are mainly engaged in the mining industry, road building, and industrial enterprises.

The inflow of ethnic Kyrgyzs to the country is relatively small. In all, more than 900,000 ethnic Kyrgyzs live outside the borders of the republic. Among them, about 400,000 are in Russia, 385,000 in Uzbekistan, 189,300 in China, 56,000 in Tajikistan, about 2,000 in Afghanistan, and 3,200 in Turkey. (These data are cited by the republican Ministry of Labor, Migration and Young People’s Affairs). During the period between 1995 and 2013, more than 40,000 ethnic

Kyrgyzs received republican citizenship. (Between 1992 and 2013, 516,500 people of Kyrgyz origin had received Russian citizenship, or almost nine percent of the entire population of the Kyrgyz Republic; many of them retain double citizenship).

The economically active population of Kyrgyzstan comprises about 2.5 million. The number of working Kyrgyzs is two million 280,000. There are 210,000 unemployed in the republic. The number of economically active young people from 15 to 30 years of age reaches one million 515,000, seventy percent of whom live outside the borders of the country.

In 2013 more than 657,000 Kyrgyz citizens went to Russia in search of work (in 2012 their number was 544,000, which means that the flow of Kyrgyz citizens leaving their native country has grown by more than 100,000).

In 2013 about 3,000 Kyrgyz migrants who worked in Russia illegally were deported to Kyrgyzstan. Around 60,000 citizens of Kyrgyzstan have been deprived of the right to enter Russia for a term of three to ten years due to breaches of Russian laws.

In 2013 migrants from Kyrgyzstan working in Russia transferred back home from \$3 to \$3.5 billion earned in this country. Actually, a new branch of the economy has come into being in Kyrgyzstan, which comprises up to 31 percent of the country's entire GDP to date.

In these conditions Kyrgyzstan intends to ask the Russian authorities to grant preferences to its citizens living and working in Russia. This shows the growing interests of the Kyrgyz authorities in preserving the high level of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan.

At the same time, the country's parliament, worried as it is by the risks connected with the mass labor migration adopted a decree in June 2013 on protection of the rights of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic going abroad.¹ It was aimed at establishing state control over

the outflow of able-bodied, reproductive population going outside the boundaries of the Kyrgyz Republic. The substantiation of this decree said that the most problematic questions of migration are labor exploitation and sexual slavery. In the total number of migrants Kyrgyz women comprise up to 40 percent. The heads of Kyrgyz diasporas in Russia are worried over the position of women among Kyrgyz migrants. There are cases of rape and humiliation committed by Kyrgyz men themselves. This is why there are increasing demands to restrict migration of Kyrgyz girls under the age of 23.

As a result of wide public discussions a decree has been adopted aimed at preserving moral values and preventing a demographic crisis. The document recommends the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to work out a strategy of the demographic and migration policy of the country. It should envisage, among other things, special preparation of persons going to work abroad. There will be legal responsibility of persons in charge of sending Kyrgyz labor migrants to other countries

Language policy. In 2013 the tendency grew noticeably of lobbying the Kyrgyz language in the status of the national language against the background of the narrowing down of the sphere of using the Russian language, above all, in the sphere of politics and management.

On March 1, 2013, amendments to the laws on the national and official languages came into force, according to which all official documents of the bodies of state power and local self-government can only be accepted and worked on in the national language, and if necessary, should be translated into the official language. A document in the national language is considered original. All legal documents are accepted in the national language only. Taking into account the fact that the share of the Russian-speaking population is decreasing and is practically in a minority in all municipal units, it becomes evident that

local legal acts will be accepted exclusively in the Kyrgyz language. Moreover, the Law on the official language has a point that the normative legal acts should be published in the language of their original compilation, hence it may be difficult for the Russian-speaking population who does not speak Kyrgyz to get acquainted with these documents.

In 2013 the Law of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan came into force “On the Status of the Capital,” according to which its mayor can only be a citizen of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan with a higher education, a record of work in state municipal service or private managerial bodies of no less than five years, and he or she has to be a fluent speaker of the national language.²

This and other laws have evoked a wave of criticism on the part of the non-Kyrgyz population of the republic. In reply, the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan A. Atambayev, speaking at a meeting of the Council on Defense said: “Whether it is to the liking of somebody or not, but we must develop the national language. Let us recognize the truth that there can be no stability in our country if the Kyrgyz language is snubbed...”

The deputies of parliament unanimously approved amendments to the law “On the National Language.” They demanded that all speakers at meetings of parliament or government speak the Kyrgyz language.³

The international non-governmental organization “Freedom House” has voiced the view that the amendments to the law “on the National Language” approved by parliament violate international norms of human rights and the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. Prior to that, the Russian Union of Compatriots in Kyrgyzstan has issued a statement saying that “the time has come when it is necessary not to call for the greater role of the Kyrgyz language but to evolve the effective

mechanisms of its use in the life of the people of Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz state.”

On April 11, 2013, the “Concept of strengthening the unity of the people and interethnic relation in the Kyrgyz Republic,” in which the main task was set “to broaden the sphere of the use of the national language, and enhance the number of citizens speaking this language, including those for whom it is not the mother tongue.”

In July 2013, the President of Kyrgyzstan signed a decree “On measures to develop the national language and improve the language policy of the Kyrgyz Republic.” It said, among other things, that the realities of present society and the aims of greater unity of the Kyrgyz people demand that the national language should become the unifying means for all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, irrespective of their ethnic affiliation, provided the constitutional rights and freedoms of all citizens are strictly observed. The document admitted that despite the Kyrgyz language is being taught practically at all educational institutions of the country, only one-tenth of its citizens for whom it is not the mother tongue can speak, read and write it properly. This fact evoked heated discussions in society on the need to improve the state language policy.

The decree instructed appropriate institutions to organize in higher educational institutions of the capital Bishkek, Osh and other big cities free courses to teach adult people the national language, drawing teachers on a voluntary basis, and also to open a methodological center for upgrading teachers of the Kyrgyz language.

On September 23, Kyrgyzstan marked the Day of the national language. In a special address on the occasion President Atambayev said that the national language should play the key role in strengthening interethnic accord, preserving unity of the people of Kyrgyzstan, and ensuring the country’s stability and development. The republic has all

opportunities, as well as political will to do this. The people of the country should raise the prestige of the national language to a proper level, making it a symbol of nationhood, and historical and cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people. On the eve of the holiday the site of the National Commission on the official language under the President of the republic was opened. It contained dictionaries, books and programs necessary for state enterprises and organizations for compiling and keeping documents in the Kyrgyz language, which can be downloaded free of charge.

However, this well-thought-out position did not exist for a long time. Already in September 2013 the parliamentary committee on international affairs postponed the examination of three international agreements because they were presented only in the official, language, one of them being Agreement on the creation of a joint system of anti-aircraft defense in the Central Asian region of collective security.

The presentation of the fourth volume of the National Encyclopedia of Kyrgyzstan was timed for the Day of the National Language. At a news conference devoted to this event its organizers decided not to resort to the Russian language in their contacts with the journalists present.

In October 2013 the working group set up by an order of President Atambayev put forward a draft national program of the development of the national language and improvement of the language policy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2014–2020. The program proceeded from the premise that by 2020 all organizations, enterprises and economic bodies will keep documents in the national language. There should be more Kyrgyz-language mass media, and Kyrgyz citizens should receive guaranteed secondary special and higher professional education in the national language. A national corpus of the Kyrgyz

language (information-reference system in electronic form for scientific research and teaching the language) should be created.

In the view of experts, the National program practically does not leave a chance to people of a non-titular nation to stay in the republic, inasmuch as according to the program the entire population of the republic shall speak the Kyrgyz language by 2020.⁴ On the other hand, efforts aimed at the broader use of the Kyrgyz language at the expense of the Russian language are regarded counterproductive by many experts because they do not prepare young people of Kyrgyzstan for potential work in Russia. Moreover, the measures aimed at reduction of the use of the Russian language may lead to grater isolation of Kyrgyzstan.

Questions of history. The people's uprising of 1916 was one of the most widely discussed subjects in the public and political discourse of Kyrgyzstan in 2013. Representatives of the republican authorities, political figures of the opposition, and scientists and scholars had their say. All were concerned over the official interpretation of the confrontation between the Cossacks and Kyrgyzs, the uprising as such and its results for the Kyrgyzs. What consequences can be expected at the time of the 100th anniversary of the event by descendants of their main participants – Kyrgyzs and Russians?

It should be recalled that in April 2008 the parliament of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan adopted a decision on establishing the Day of Remembrance of victims of the national uprising of the Kyrgyz people in 1916. The first Friday of August was proclaimed the Day of Remembrance of victims of the national uprising of the Kyrgyz people in 1916. At the time the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation issued a special note saying that the proclamation of the Day of Remembrance of victims of the national uprising of the Kyrgyz people in 1916 by Kyrgyzstan's parliament may have a negative influence on

bilateral relations between Russia and Kyrgyzstan. “Not wishing by any means to interfere in the internal affairs of independent and sovereign Kyrgyzstan, we would like to note that, as we think, such public attitude to this delicate subject is counterproductive for the present friendly relations between our nations. We mean the victims of forcible suppression of mass actions against the tsarist regime on the territory of present Kyrgyzstan during which thousands of Russian settlers also perished. Our past was not always bright and serene. We believe that it would be more correct if historians should have investigated the problems of past ages, without their unnecessary politicization under the pretext of “restoration of historical justice.”⁵

Unfortunately the words of Russian diplomats were not heeded. On the contrary, the subject of 1916 was more actively used as an argument in the confrontation between the powers that be and the opposition. This pretext was used as an argument against Kyrgyzstan’s entry in the Customs Union (Kyrgyzstan should not integrate with Russia which subjected the Kyrgyz people to genocide).

On August 2, 2013, on the Day of Remembrance, representatives of eighteen public and political organizations gathered at the Memorial to the victims of the uprising of the Kyrgyz people in 1916 in the Boom Gorge. They read the Koran to the spirits of the ancestors and adopted the following resolution:

- To ask the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to mark the 100th anniversary of the National-liberation uprising of 1916 at a state level;
- To set up a commission consisting of historians, archeologists, writers, and elders and determine the order and composition of the celebrations;

- To organize competition for the construction of a 100-meter-high monument to the 100th anniversary of the event at the southern gates to the city of Bishkek;
- To erect 100 monuments and name 100 streets in honor of the event in cities, regions and districts of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- To hold international scholarly conferences and expeditions with historians, archeologists and writers taking part;
- To make a film devoted to the 100th anniversary of the National uprising and allocate proper financial means on it; and subsequently show it on all TV channels;
- To organize contests for literary works – plays to be staged at theaters, songs, etc.;
- To build and open a memorial complex “Urkun ordo,” a museum and a mosque;
- To revise Kyrgyz history and issue corresponding study aids;
- To assess the 1916 massacre as the policy of genocide pursued by tsarist Russia against the Kyrgyz people;
- To raise the question of paying compensation by the Russian Federation to the Kyrgyz Republic for innocent victims in the National-liberation uprising of 1916;
- To prepare and distribute information about the political and historical significance of the National-liberation uprising of 1916 in the Russian, English, Chinese and other languages.⁶

One of the persons who signed this document was N. Moruyev, the Chairman of the Popular-patriotic movement of Kyrgyzstan and the Head of the Union of True Muslims of Kyrgyzstan. He even named the sum of compensation – \$100 billion, and also promised that “in three years the Russians in the republic will feel hot...”

There has been no reaction of the official authorities to these demands. But soon a new significant date was added to the political

calendar – the 100th anniversary of the tragic events of 1916, which the overwhelming majority of political and public figures assessed as the genocide of the Kyrgyz people on the part of the Russian Empire. In October 2013 the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic set up the organizing committee for preparations to this anniversary, which emphasized the need to investigate in the most comprehensive manner the course of those events, rebury the remains of the dead with observing all necessary religious rites, and erect a historical memorial. There will be special conferences devoted to the event and general history of Kyrgyzstan and also memorial services held by the Orthodox Christian clergy.

The political party “Uluttuk birimdik” announced a contest for the most objective assessment of the events of 1916, whose winner would receive a new car as a prize. The party is going to publish a collection of material giving the fullest and most objective assessment of the events.

The criteria of objectivity in assessing the developments in 1916 will be Kyrgyz patriotism, anti-Russian rhetoric, and demands for material compensation to the descendants of the victims. The above-mentioned N. Motuyev said that “the Central Asian uprising of 1916 was actually jihad. About a million of Northern Kyrgyzs rose against Russians. But the Kyrgyzs were themselves to blame for not having connections with the Muslim world, although many other Muslim peoples had them.” He put forward a condition for interethnic stability in the Kyrgyz Republic. “The Russians living here should adopt Islam and not stick their head out.” This concerns all others non-Kyrgyz. N. Morguyev is but one of the many Kyrgyz political and public figures of a new type born of Kyrgyz revolutions and oriented to lumpenized mobs.

It is to be hoped that on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the tragic events of 1916 their historical interpretations will not be a cause for the exacerbation of interethnic relations. There is a whole number of authoritative scholars and public figures of Kyrgyzstan who are ready for a dialogue, which they voiced at a session of the round table arranged by the Academy of Education of Kyrgyzstan held on February 15, 2013. They agreed that the 1916 events and Stalin's reprisals should be viewed as tragedies of the entire people of Kyrgyzstan, all ethnic groups and citizens, and should not be opposed to one another as conflictogenic stereotypes.

U. Babakulov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper "MK-Aziya", maintains that all Russians living in Kyrgyzstan, as well as other Slav ethnic groups, should fear that in 2016 local nationalistically-minded elements can go over from verbal threats to more resolute actions.

Religious situation. The overwhelming majority of the Kyrgyz population (more than 80 percent) are Sunna Muslims, and this is why the main problems in the religious sphere are connected with the distribution of Islamic extremism.

Prior to Kyrgyzstan's independence, there were 39 mosques and 25 churches and parishes of Orthodox Christians, as well as small communities of Baptists, Catholics, Adventists and Pentecostalists. At present there are 2,475 organizations of 33 religious currents functioning in the republic. They include 2,081 Muslim organizations with 1,922 mosques. There is not a single populated center in the republic without a mosque. Big villages have several mosques, with their imams.

Along with the growing number of religious organizations contradictions between Islamic religious communities, which are formed on the ethnic, family or clan principle, grow, too. This is directly reflected in numerous rows and scandals around the Spiritual

Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, in which nine muftis have changed since the revolution of 2010. On January 7, 2014, the Mufti of the Kyrgyz Republic Rahmatulla Egemberdiyev left his post after a great row.

These resignations have been caused not only by corruption in organizing hajj, or merger of individual clergymen with criminals, but also by rivalry between religious-political concepts.

Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian state where the activity of the Islamic missionary movement “Tablighi jamaat” is not banned. Formally, its activity is coordinated and controlled by the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, however, this movement is not subordinated to the muftiat and functions independently. The movement has not been officially registered at the State Commission on religious affairs. The main task of the movement is organization and delivery of sermons, which, in the view of many experts, is fraught with the hidden threat to the country’s security, inasmuch as its aim is propaganda of the “Islamic model of state management.”

This movement has noticeably increased its activity after the arrival in Kyrgyzstan of graduates from Muslim educational institutions in Pakistan and India. There are quite a few supporters of the movement – from people engaged in physical labor to representatives of the political and creative elites, government officials and businessmen. Ethnically, they are mostly Kyrgyzs. Their age limit is from 16 to 70, predominantly men from 19 to 45. The geography of their functioning is vast enough: at present there is practically not a single populated center where members of the movement do not read or hear sermons.

The number of its supporters is growing all the time. Certain communities of “Tablighi jamaat” can unite with radical Islamic groups,

among them representatives of the “Khizb ut-Tahrir” party, whose aim is the creation of an Islamic state in Central Asia.

According to experts’ estimates, over 60 percent of the religious groups and organizations in the republic are financed from abroad, and even the banned religious extremist parties and movements, such as “Khizb ut-Tahrir,” “Akramiya, Islamic movement of Turkestan, terrorist organization “Zhaishul Mahdi,” “Jund al Caliphate,” “Ansarulloh, and others.

In 2012–2013, the republican law-enforcement agencies uncovered 403 crimes of extremist character. Most of them were registered in Jalal-Abad regions (20.4 percent), Osh region (19.6 percent) and in the capital Bishkek (16.3 percent). More than 1,700 active members of the extremist movements and organizations have been registered by the police, the overwhelming majority of whom are members of “Khizb ut-Tahrir.”

The Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan is not able to oppose effectively the spreading of Islamic radicalism. In turn, radicals actively remove representatives of “official Islam” from leadership in mosques and educational establishments and carry on their own policy. The appointment of a representative of a terrorist grouping as imam of one of the mosques in Kara-Sui district and organization of departure of some citizens of Kyrgyzstan for the zone of the armed conflict in Syria are a case in point.

A no less important problem is the absence of control on the part of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan over religious education in the republic. According to the data of the Ministry for the Interior, of 2,285 imams of mosques have no special education.

There are 75 Islamic educational institutions functioning in the republic (ten higher educational establishments and 67 madrasahs) with

a student body of 4,630 men and about 10,000 priests working officially.

All these Islamic educational units are subordinated to the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, but they have no license of the Ministry of Education and Science of the republic and have no corresponding state standard. The curriculum of most Islamic educational institutions includes learning the Koran and holding everyday rites. There is no teaching of such secular subjects as computer literacy, foundations of market economy, knowledge of the sphere of human rights, and foreign languages.

Graduates from foreign religious educational institutions exert a considerable influence on the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan. According to various expert estimates, about 800 citizens of the republic are now studying at Islamic educational institutions in Turkey, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Pakistan, Kuwait and Malaysia. The total number of those who have graduated from foreign religious educational establishments during the past decade exceeded one thousand.

The graduates of educational centers of religious extremist character are actively using the new forms and methods of propaganda of their ideas among the local population, particularly the Internet, mobile communication system, etc. for distributing information and other material of extremist character. Apart from that, they recruit young men in terrorist groups through their own web-resources. Today the number of Internet sites containing material of subversive and extremist character exceeds seven thousand.⁷

All these features and signs of mass Islamization of the population of a secular state by its Constitution, combined with an analysis of domestic processes going on in the country do not give ground for optimistic forecasts.

Foreign ties and cooperation. The many-vector foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan is regarded as a means for ensuring state sovereignty, national security, and tackling problems of the country's membership in the UN, OSCE, WTO, CIS, CSTO, SCO and EurAzec.

Kyrgyzstan's choice of the strategy of many-vector policy has been prompted by the constant need to replenish financial and other material means, mainly at the expense of new credits, grants, privileges and preferences. In this context it is necessary to view the country's decision to join the Customs Union.

The statement to this effect was first made in April 2011, when a meeting of the republican government approved a decision on joining the Customs Union and Unified economic area of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

President A. Atambayev has said that “whether we like it or not, there is no other way forward except joining the Customs Union. Our tradesmen will not be able to earn by re-export of Chinese commodities any longer...”

In June 2013 Kyrgyzstan's parliament adopted a decision, and President Atambayev signed the Law on denunciation of the agreement with the United States on a center of transit transportation and its closure and removal from the territory of Kyrgyzstan in 2014. However, it can be assumed that the United States will do everything possible, including financial means, to preserve their presence in Kyrgyzstan even after the withdrawal of the NATO troops from Afghanistan.

The decision on the entry of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan in the Customs Union was endorsed in January 2013 by the President of the republic. This step, as the Premier of Kyrgyzstan Zh. Satybaldiyev said in March 2013, could bring not only economic benefits, but also political ones for further integration. Membership in

the Customs Union is the republic's strategic position.⁸ President A. Atambayev reaffirmed in April 2013: "If we enter the Customs Union, it will open new prospects to us."

These statements were made on the eve of the signing of an agreement with "Rusgidro" on the construction project of a hydropower cascade at a total cost of \$727 million and writing-off of Kyrgyzstan's debt to Russia amounting to \$599 million, as well as Russian military and financial assistance to a sum of \$1.1 billion.

However, Kyrgyzstan's entry in the Customs Union and the EurAsian Economic Union still remains at the level of declarations. Quite a few representatives of Kyrgyz public voice doubts and apprehensions concerning the expediency of entering these unions. Some people see more politics than economics in them and regard them as a geopolitical instrument.

The political year in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan ended with the statement made by President A. Atambayev that Kyrgyzstan would join the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan only if the demands of Bishkek are met.

The three sources and three components of the Kyrgyz economy ("Kumtor," labor migration and "Dordoi," forming the budget of the republic) determine the basic problems of domestic and foreign policy, and as long as approaches to their solution are based only on "the interests of the Kyrgyz people," but not on the entire poly-ethnic population of Kyrgyzstan, social tension in society will increase."

"Etnopoliticheskaya situatsiya v Roissii i sopredelnykh gosudarstvakh v 2013 godu," Moscow, 2014, pp. 601–615.

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**GREATER ACTIVITY OF SUPPORTERS
OF RADICAL POLITICAL ISLAM
IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS A THREAT
TO SECURITY AND INTERESTS OF RUSSIA
IN CENTRAL ASIA AFTER 2014**

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union more approaches have emerged in the English-speaking scientific and political community toward certain regions in Asia, which resulted in the appearance of such concepts as “Greater Central Asia” or “Greater Middle East,” which was supposed to answer the requirements of new scholarly research. Despite the fact that the American school of political science, which is in the vanguard of many branches of modern science, has been the first to react to these changes, the public political discourse changes slowly enough after the professional one. This is reflected in the rhetoric of many contemporary American politicians in the form of numerous clichés of the Cold war time.

Similar situation is characteristic of Russian society. Views of certain scholars aimed at overcoming historical clichés describing and evaluating the political picture of the world are meeting with a strong opposition on the part of mass thinking, which is extremely conservative, as a rule. This concerns, above all, an analysis of various processes going on in the post-Soviet area in connection with the situation in the Middle East, which has now become in the focus of public attention after the events of the Arab spring in 2011.

The experience of studying the political discourse of the Russian-language Internet-area and the printed mass media shows the preservation in the consciousness of rank-and-file Russian citizens (and

also certain researchers) of clear-cut boundary between post-Soviet Central Asia and the rest of Muslim Asia. The heritage of the Soviet epoch determines the perception of the Central Asian republics not as the “foreign East,” but as part of the Soviet internal political-cultural area developing by its own special laws. This morally obsolete paradigm reflects the old view on the structure of modern Asia and contributes to the formation of an erroneous perception of the realities of world and regional politics and, consequently, requires a fundamental revision.

This article is an attempt to overcome such stereotypes by examining the influence of the Syrian crisis on the conflict level in Central Asia through revealing the chain of natural sequences, each of which seems to be objective as a result of an analysis of historical experience and current information.

The problem of the future of the Central Asian region after the withdrawal of the international troop contingent ISAF headed by the United States from Afghanistan, which was planned for 2014, is in the center of attention of researchers. As a complex task, forecasting the situation in this case has many variants. For one, an expert group of young researchers under the aegis of the Russian Council on international affairs in August 2012 evolved forecasts of three possible scenarios of the future developments in Central Asia: “Fire-spitting Dragon;” China’s Rise, “Green Crescent over Central Asia,” “Anaconda Strategy,” the West Contains China... Specific features of each variant can be seen from the titles, which proceed from transfer of strategic initiative in the geopolitical confrontation to one of such actors as China, the United States and its European allies, as well as the amorphous structure of radical political Islam. Let us concentrate attention on the “Green Crescent over Central Asia” variant because it

causes more criticism and skepticism, on the one hand, and on the other, promises the region the most fundamental transformations.

The ideas about the threat of radical Islamist movements spreading over the post-Soviet Central Asia are nothing but myths created by the authoritarian ruling regimes with a view to preserving their power by delegitimization of the better organized opposition forces which are based on the ideological premises of Islamism, have spread widely after the events in Andizhan (Uzbekistan) in 2005. The crushing of the manifestation of the discontent of the local population based not on slogans of and calls for Islamization of society, but on aversion of the socio-economic and personnel policy of the authorities by the population has caused many casualties among citizens, and changed drastically the image of the Uzbek leadership in the international arena. Discussions of the violations of human rights in Uzbekistan have pushed to the background the threat posed by Islamist radicals, which considerably lowered the perception level of this danger in the context of the situation in the Central Asian region.

The reduction in the number of terrorist acts perpetrated by Islamists compared with the situation in the latter half of the 1990s – early 2000s, when newspapers and information agencies constantly reported the developments in the Ferghana Valley, has been due to many factors, the main one being the U.S. – NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The stay of U.S. and NATO troops in that country for the past 12 years has been a guarantee of relative peace and tranquility in Central Asian republics, however, the factors threatening this quasi-idyllic situation have not been eliminated. The Taliban and such movements as the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan continue to exist and function in the zone of the Pashtun tribes on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistani border, which has regularly been reported by information agencies and official sources.

Nevertheless, due to the absence of information shocks in Central Asia a skeptical attitude to the Islamist threat in the region has become widespread in Russian society. Even the emergence of jihad organizations in Kazakhstan in 2012, where there had never been any such thing, which caused numerous casualties among the civilian population, has not evoked any anxiety among broad Russian audiences. It should be noted that in Kazakhstan we have witnessed the emergence of a new generation of Islamist organizations, which present a direct threat to the existing system, and this is why any statements that the crisis of Islamism can only lead to its deradicalization or even disappearance are utterly erroneous.

In this connection the possibility of the implementation of the “Green Crescent over Central Asia” scenario does not seem so illusory, especially in an event of the emergence of specific conditions outside the boundaries of Central Asia itself. The transformation of the Arab-Muslim world after the events of 2011 can be the reason for and source of the changes so necessary for Central Asian and Afghan Islamists.

In this context it is necessary to pay attention to interconnections that have been established between the Muslim Middle East and North Africa, on the one hand, and Afghanistan, on the other, from the beginning of the 1980s in relation to the Islamist movement, and single out concrete parallels with the situation unfolding today.

During the period of the direct military-political presence of the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan from 1979 until 1989, the formation of the Islamic opposition to the secular pro-Soviet government of the People's Democratic party (PDPA) of Afghanistan proceeded with the active participation and support of the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf, as well as numerous Islamist organizations of a radical nature. If the former provided material supplies and political and spiritual patronage, the movements like the Muslim Brotherhood and the just

emerging network organizations, like “Maqtab al-Hidamat, recruited volunteers from the entire Arab-Muslim world for taking part in the “sacred war” against the Soviet Union. The educational and logistics system they have set up enabled them to augment the military forces of the opposition, and also organize a supra-national network of personal contacts and ties between the leaders of various associations of Islamists, which largely contributed to the successes of these forces in the conflict.

As to other Arab regimes (mainly in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Jordan and Tunisia), for them the “sacred war” in Afghanistan became a major instrument of getting rid of unemployed young people inspired by sermons of ardent supporters of radical political Islam, and thus having become dangerous for their own political leaders. This was why the secular authorities interested in the stabilization of the domestic political situation have not prevented the departure of volunteers to Pakistan, where they got in the training camps of mujahids, moreover, they helped them through such institutions as amnesty of political prisoners and their subsequent expulsion from the country. The factor of the “sacred war” against the Soviet Union has played its role in that after the bloody massacre perpetrated by Hafez Asad against the participants in the Homs uprising (1982) in Syria, Syrian Islamists have acted mainly outside their country for several decades; for example, many of them have gone to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet invaders. The jihad grouping “Islamic Fighting Group” set up by the Libyan veterans of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan could form a well-armed unit on the territory of Sudan, from where it began its struggle with the Gaddafi regime.

Twenty-four years later, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, there is an absolutely different situation. The change of power that has taken place in many Arab countries not only failed to

solve the socio-economic problems typical of most states of the region, where unemployment among young people had been the most widespread, but, on the contrary, has given rise to new systemic crises and conflicts. The situation in Libya is the most glaring example in this context. After the overthrow of M. Gaddafi the revival process of the state has run across a great number of insurgent units which did not want to renounce privileges and benefits they had gained during the war. At present the “critical mass” of armed young men has reached dangerous limits for the restoration of government institutions and resumption of peaceful life so needed by the new authorities for strengthening their position, and outside actors for maintaining stability in the region.

Syria is another example. The fate of that country and the Middle Eastern region surrounding it, as well as the development of the situation in Central Asia, directly depend on the conflict raging there and its result. The number of various scenarios of the development of the situation in Syria and around it is growing with every passing day. This is why it is possible to make only the most general long-term forecasts, sometimes excluding one another.

Perhaps, the least probable scenario, which, nevertheless, is popular with a great many experts, is the preservation of Bashar Asad's regime and its control over a considerable part of Syria. It presupposes resumption of a dialogue of the present Syrian authorities with big regional players and envisages the need for reintegration of the moderate wing of the foreign opposition in the domestic political life of the country and renunciation of the military means of political struggle. As a result, both radicals and Islamists, who are not interested in the development of such situation will find themselves ousted from political life, and this may give an opportunity to unite many conflicting parties.

In case of the defeat of the present regime and the coming of the irreconcilable opposition to power in the entire country or only in some part of it, all efforts to rehabilitate the country and build a new state will resolutely be opposed by the radical Islamist movements. The latter have a program of social development of their own differing in its nature and essence from similar programs of other movements, which make them active opponents of all political forces without exception. A considerable number of member-states of the “Friends of Syria club” (Iraq, Turkey, Israel) which see a great threat to them in spreading radical political Islam and are interested in the deradicalization and demilitarization of the region in the postwar period and in the emergence of a secular democratic regime in Syria, will have to insist on removal of radical elements from the legal political sphere.

Thus, in the conditions of the realization of any scenario, which does not envisage the coming to power of radical Islamists in Syria, the organizations like “Jabhat al-Nusra” and many other smaller organizations of Islamist “internationalists” will retain their marginal status and become an object of active opposition on the part of their present tactical allies. As a result of the policy of the new authorities the activity of radical Islamists will be “redirected” to North and Northwest Africa and to Central and South Asia. The United States and France are preparing for such course of events (France’s actions in Mali and expansion of the U.S. presence in the region), whereas in the latter case the presence of North Atlantic states in the region is gradually reduced.

The redirection of the threat of radical Islam becomes a vitally important component of the survival policy of many old and new regimes in the Middle East, and besides, it corresponds to the aims of the U.S. and EU policy aimed at gradual appeasement of the Mediterranean “soft underbelly of Europe” in the context of a new balance of forces and interests. The dangerous geographical proximity

of the region to Europe and a powerful pressure of migration from it as a result is a challenge to the fragile European socio-economic and political-cultural balance, especially in the conditions of the economic crisis.

The governments of the Middle Eastern and North African states, where moderate Islamists have become participants in a legal political process and members of their governments, are interested in strengthening their own positions in the internal and external arena, including by removing more radical and less controlled fellow-thinkers. But proceeding from the unwillingness of these associations to come out openly against the radical elements close to them in many respects, the only variant of reaching this aim will be redirection of their activity beyond the boundaries of the region. However, such policy serves only medium-term interests of ensuring security in a separate region and increases threats to stability and security in other regions.

In turn, Central Asia today is still very vulnerable to the challenges of radical Islamism in all its forms. In this connection the role of Russia as a state directly interested in the preservation of peace in the region, as well as the responsibility of the CSTO created on its initiative, become more important. One of the main tasks of the Russian Federation and its allies is the creation of a system to oppose the spreading of these threats and disprove the wrong ideas in the mass consciousness of its citizens about absence of direct connections between these processes in the Middle East and the CIS countries close to Russia.

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**QATAR – AN ACTIVE SPONSOR
OF THE “ARAB SPRING”. PRECONDITIONS,
CONSEQUENCES AND THE RUSSIAN FACTOR**

Based on reports of the Russian, Arabic and Western mass media, Qatar has sponsored programs to educate and train leaders of interactive and Internet bloggers in organizational technique for various meetings, protest movements, and removal of protesters from the streets through social networks.

According to mass media reports, the Emirates' authorities have provided financial, technological and strategic assistance for the rebellious people in Egypt, Libya and Syria, and also given ideological

support with the help of biased reports about events in these countries through the Al-Jazeera channel, financed by Qatar, and other mass media.

Doha has lobbied the rebels interests in regional and international organizations, trying to “push” the acceptance of one or another document, and supporting the change of the ruling regime in the three above-mentioned Arab countries.

Qatar has cooperated in a number of issues with neighboring countries – Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates that were also involved in the developments of the “Arab Spring”.

The policy and practice of Qatar are explained by the following reasons.

First of all, the leaders of that country, small in area¹ and population², but with very great ambitions try to play the role of peacekeepers in different regional conflicts in the Arab region.

To be more precise, Qatar has acted as an intermediary in the process of the Darfur Settlement, in settling disagreements between Ali Abdullah Saleh and Housists' rebels, in solving the problem of Lebanon after Rafik Hariri's murder, and in resolving Iran's nuclear problem (in cooperation with Brazil, Syria and Turkey).

It should be noted that Doha proved unable to solve either one of the above-mentioned problems despite the big volume of financing.

Qatar's intention to take the leading place in regional policy has been demonstrated by the ambitions of its leaders, and backed up by the country's solid economic basis. It is a generally recognized fact that nowadays the Arab Emirates are a dynamically developed state drawing great interests of the leading western countries. Qatar's high rate of progress in various fields attracts the attention of experts and the world community. It has been showing a high level of the constantly growing

GDP for several years, being one of the world leaders of the per capita GDP.

In 1999–2011 Qatar's GDP showed a stable upward trend at the purchasing power parity, having increased from \$12,3 billion up to \$184,3 billion³. This was a real confirmation of a certain margin of safety in the country's economy. During the same period the per capita GDP in the country increased from \$17 thousand up to \$104,3 thousand, gaining a maximum (\$179 thousand) in 2010⁴. The recession of 2011 was partly due to the extremely unstable situation in the region that was shown by the volume of Qatar's foreign trade.

However, a steadily growing GDP, as well as the economy as a whole, have been projected for the future, but in lower rates. If the GDP grew up to the record 18.7% in 2011⁵, then the growth will remain stable at the 5 to 7% level in the next few years. At the same time, inflation has dropped significantly – from 6.7% in 2007–2010⁶ up to 1.9% in late 2011⁷.

So, during the past ten years the Qatar economy has been transformed into one of the most dynamic in the world. Sovereign credit rating of the Arab Emirates steadily holding the “A+” level since 2004, rose up to the “AA” level in 2010, according to Standard & Poor's agency. According to the agency's experts, this shows the strengthening of the financial balance of the country due to prospects for economic growth, connected with the implementation of new large projects in the field of natural gas liquefaction in 2010–2012⁸.

Oil and gas sector still remains the cornerstone of the economy⁹. In recent years, Qatar has invested tens of millions of dollars in projects related to the infrastructure development, and the growing revenues from hydrocarbon exports contribute to these investments. Priority is given to the manufacture of vehicles, housing construction, medicine and sports. This is largely due to the fact that the Arab Emirates have

received the status of the host country of the world football championship in 2022 (for the first time a sporting event of such level will take place in the Middle East).

Today, the economic infrastructure of Qatar is rated as one of the best in the world. It looks impressive, as the country has relatively recently started economic reforms and undertaken practical steps in the liberalization of business environment.

A policy to stimulate direct foreign investments has put the state on the list of the leaders of investment deals. More than 200 investment projects were initiated in the country over the period between 2003 and 2011, and the total amount of foreign investments exceeded \$135 billion.

The spectacular “economic breakthrough” of Qatar has been noted by various media, which described the socio-economic achievements of the Arab Emirates in many details.

Qatar is a major regional and international discussion platform where politicians, diplomats and analysts express different views on vital issues of global importance. International conferences are held in the country almost every week: dialogues on religions, discussions on coexistence of civilizations, the world's energy problems, etc.¹⁰

Doha has become the political capital of the Arab world, and Qatar's diplomacy today is the driving force of Arab politics, and such balance of power will probably remain in the future¹¹.

However, the Arab Emirates' leadership is aware that it is hard to compete with large and "old" states, especially such as Egypt, Libya and Syria, with whose heads the Qatar leaders failed to find common ground.

“Conquer” Syria so that Iran will fear

Qatar's campaign against Syria has largely been caused not only by the geopolitical factor, but also by the gas one.

Qatar intended to import Iranian natural gas in 2011, as the Arab Emirates were concerned about increasing domestic demand due to the moratorium on the expansion of production at the largest “North” deposit until 2014.

As a result, the production of natural gas could not be increased to meet the needs of the local market, the growth due to the infrastructure projects within the framework of the national development plan for 2011–2016¹² and the preparation for the 2022 Football World Cup.

The situation is further complicated by long-term contracts for the supply of liquefied natural gas to the U.S.A., UK, India, as well as other European and Asian countries.

Qatar and Iran would refuse to share “as brothers the world's largest gas condensate deposit located in the territory of both countries. Qatar's part of the site is called “North” and Iran's – “South Pars”.

Taking into account the fact that energy demand will increase constantly as a result of the continuous growth of the economy of the country, Doha will seek to make “South Pars” support the U.S. and Europe in their policy of sanctions against Iran.

Several packages of the UN Security Council sanctions have been applied against Iran. In addition, certain companies of the United States and some European countries have carried on limited activity on the Iranian market. Economic pressure of the West prevents Iran to gain a foothold in the European sector of gas, but Tehran has been active in the Asian direction.

China and India are in a special position in the Asian region. Qatar is actively cooperating with China, and the import of its fuel is

growing rapidly. In the coming years the volume of Qatar's liquefied natural gas will increase significantly in comparison with 2010.

More than a quarter of liquefied natural gas consumed in the European Union, is delivered from Qatar¹³. The construction of a LNG terminal is proceeding in Poland¹⁴. Negotiations are going on for deliveries of Qatar's liquefied natural gas to the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine.

Qatar seeks to balance its foreign policy by developing and maintaining relationships with many European and Asian centers of power.

Qatar solves the most relevant problems of regional security by attracting foreign companies to its own economy and shifting these problems onto its political and economic partners.

However, Qatar, agrees with Muslim countries on the major global issues concerning the Middle East.

Qatar tries to maintain balanced relations with the Gulf monarchies within the framework of the League of Arab States and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. Common defense and economic initiatives within the framework of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf have been initiated and one of them provides for the creation of a monetary union. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar have come close to realization of this idea. In June 2009, in Riyadh, they signed an agreement on the introduction of the single currency of the member-states, which can oust the dollar and the euro in the gold and currency reserves of other countries in the region.

Qatar, along with the neighboring Arab countries, has constantly insisted on the necessity for democratization and liberalization of social and political life in the major countries of the Middle East and the North Africa. Doha often accuses of corruption the leadership of Egypt, Libya and Syria.

Qatar has lobbied the interests of rebellious countries in the international arena (UN, Arab League), and tried to push the adoption of documents supporting military actions for regime change in certain Arab countries with the support of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to diplomacy there is the "Al Jazeera" TV channel, which expresses the political will of the Arab Emirates and is one of the effective tools for managing the social and political situation, despite statements to the opposite.

A stable economic situation allows Qatar to carry on its foreign policy quite effectively, and its national security, including all economic and energy aspects, are the country's main goal and "reference point". In 2012, Qatar was ranked 12th in the world (1st among the countries of the Middle East and North Africa) in the ranking of the "Global Peace Index", having moved up by 18 points since 2007¹⁵.

Despite the extremely worrying situation in the Middle East, the internal political situation in Qatar is stable enough. There are no visible manifestations of opposition sentiments, including among migrant workers, who make up 80 percent of the population, as well as disagreements among members of the ruling Al Thani family.

The Qatar authorities have determined the order of reforms in the political system as a major internal problem, but the implementation of these changes will take some time, since social life follows the rules of Islam.

However, it is far from the complete liberalization of social and political life in the Western sense. Political parties and political organizations are still banned in the country, and the media censorship remains, including the "Al Jazeera" TV channel.

So, the internal political positions of Qatar's leadership are stable, although two attempts of conspiracies against the Emir have taken place in recent years.

The country is the world's leader in per capita incomes. The main advantage of the head of state is the support of people whose average living standards are much higher than those in many other countries. The change of the political regime is hardly possible in the near future, as there are no anti-government protests there.

However, in the long run there can be the change of power because there are many powerful local clans with sufficient financial resources to organize an anti-government campaign, and some of them might well like to acquire the status of the “ruling family.”

Russia has consistently opposed the aspirations of Qatar to change “unwanted regimes”¹⁶ in some countries of the region, and, despite criticism from the Arab Emirates, advocated a settlement of the situation in the Middle East by peaceful means from the very beginning of the “Arab Spring.”

The Qatar leadership believes that Russia has lost its status of the center of power, but still hopes to get it back, and the Kremlin actively cooperates with the ruling regimes in Arab countries, especially in the military field¹⁷.

Russia's policy has caused numerous anti-Russian protests, as well as the boycott of Russian products in Jordan, as well as the rejection of Russian investment projects in Qatar. It was expected that the volume of Qatar investments in the Russian economy could be about \$10–12 billion, but Doha has refused to participate in these projects.

Arab countries' calls to stop trade partnership with Moscow voiced in the media, social networks and online forums hit Russia in addition to the economic blockade by Qatar.

There were calls to expel all Russian staff from the region and to hold protest rallies and demonstrations in front of the Russian

diplomatic missions accredited not only in the Arab and other Muslim countries, but also in Europe, Asia, and North and South America.

Our analysis leads to several conclusions: Qatar's active participation in the process of changing the ruling regimes in some Arab countries is a result of its ambitions to become a regional leader.

The role and place of Russia in the Middle East is checked by the strength of the authorities and media of Qatar. They try to discredit Moscow in the eyes of the Arab public in every way, because they are displeased with the Kremlin reluctance to support the Qatar position regarding Syria.

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