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**THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL PICTURE
OF RUSSIA: THE RESULTS OF THE DECADE**

Given the unfavorable demographic heritage and positive economic development of Russia for the first decade of the XXI century, a peculiar and unique social situation emerged in the country. Despite big increasing labor resources, the demographic aging and the lack of labor resources are felt in some social spheres of production. At the same time, compensating the appeared problem, the modern technologies and market mechanisms supplemented the productive efforts of the previous decades (including the Soviet time) and led the country to the general economic growth. The simultaneous rise of economic and social disproportions among the regions and the groups of the population contributed to a certain tension. In this context, a special role is plaid by myths of demographic and migration “danger”, of extreme poverty etc. Undoubtedly, the emerged situation has a direct impact on the social-political processes, including elections, and in this way plays a significant role in history of the country. The results of demographic and social changes in Russia for the last decade are discussed below.

For the last two decades the problem of decrease of the population was subject to discussion, while worse prognoses comparing with statistical data were publicized. However, it should be taken into account that more significant economic and social consequences are caused not by the reduction of the population but by the structural demographic changes, first of all by the change of the age index of the country's residents.

The demographic aging is characteristic for Russia as a whole and for all its federal districts. It is displayed in a high share (over 16-17%) of elders and a low share (up to 20%) of children and adolescents. The North-Caucasian Federal District is marked by a rather safe age composition of the population against the general background.

The highest level of demographic aging is characteristic for the densely populated Central, North-West and Volga Basin Federal Districts. These regions are marked by the conditions for the raise of social tension, since the rising density of the population, particular in city agglomerations, coincides with the growing deficit of young age people (children and teenagers) and further causes the deficit of economically active population. Therefore numerous internal Russian and international migrants will come there further.

At the same time, the skill to see the danger of social consequences of demographic aging should not cause panics. The demographic aging itself does not mean that economic and social activity of the population will be reduced by all means. The tempos of such reduction differ in regions depending on the quality of living conditions. The population with higher living standards possesses the longer ability for economic activities despite the age.

The index of real longevity shows that in 2010 the best data was characteristic for the North-Caucasian Federal District, where over 17% of people reach the age of 90 years and more. Despite some views, the

higher index of longevity is characteristic for the Central and the North-West Federal Districts (13%). The lowest level of longevity is characteristic for the population in the Far East Federal District (9.6%).

The official data on estimation of longevity of life after birth for the period of 2001-2009 correspond generally to the indexes of longevity in 2010. It shows the stability of demographic processes for the long-term perspective. Basing on the existing trends one should foresee the situation when the number of older aged people will decrease in the northern and eastern regions of the country and will increase in the central and southern regions. At the same time, the often mentioned load of dependents on the economically active population will, in essence, rise by lesser tempos, which will create condition to make judgments according to formal indications of the pension's age.

For the first decade of the XXI century the population of Russia continued to decrease. In 2010 comparing with 2001 the reduction of the population made up 3%. The population census in October 2010 registered 142 million 905.2 thousand persons on the territory of the country. It was slightly more than predicted.

The comparison of the contemporary population with the population of Russia twenty years beforehand shows that the reduction of the number of the Russian people made up 3.5–4%, i.e. 4.8–5.8 million for the whole post-Soviet period. The data does not justify the mass media deliberations about “annual decrease of the Russian people by one million”. The maximum reduction of the population for the last decade was seen only in 2004, when the reduction accounted for 795.5 thousand people, while the loss further continued to diminish. At the same time, it should be taken into account that the mechanism of registration of actual population is still not perfect and that there are many examples of incomplete estimation of certain categories of people.

The official statistics of the size of the population demonstrate that the positive demographic trend appeared for the last three years. Although the population's decrease in Russia as a whole continues, the tempos of this decrease in some regions fell down, while the increase of the number of the population emerged in some cases. Such situation arises under conditions of special efforts exerted in the field of demographic policy, although the struggle against high mortality of able-bodied people, particularly of able to work men, is still not adequate. The partial improvement of the birth rate is connected also with the fact that numerous age groups at the procreation age of 21–30 years were born for the period of the 1980s.

The migration growth thanks to increase of migrants from the republics of the former USSR played a great role in slower reduction of the number of the population. However, the quality of migration's registration does not let have adequate information. It is supposed that about one million people, who came from these countries, rest being not registered. If it is so, the positive trends in slower rates of the population's loss should turn out to be more evident than the estimates of the official statistics.

At present, for two decades the rise of the population is registered on the territory of the North Caucasian and the Ural Federal Districts. According to the official statistics, in 2010 the rise of population was seen in the Siberian Federal District, while the trend with the negative to zero diminish characterized the situation in the Central and Southern Federal Districts.

But the long-term trends are different. The statistics for the last decade shows the reduction of the number of the population in all federal districts. Only the North Caucasian District was characterized by the rise of the number of residents for the decade. However, contrary to daily view, it was not big and made +6.4% by the end of the period.

The three federal districts – the Ural FD, the Southern FD and the Central FD – are characterized by a rather favorable situation, since for the last decade the loss of the population, despite prognoses, turned out to be relatively small (up to the size of 3%). The fluctuations of the number of residents in these districts may be appraised as an unstable balance with the trend to diminution. The situation in these districts of the Federation differs to a great extent. It is different also as far as changes of the city and rural population are concerned: the Central Federal District is marked by higher stability of city residents. Other federal districts are characterized by the sustainable diminution of the population. For the last decade a rapid diminution took place in the Far Eastern and the North-Western Federal Districts.

The negative correlation of the birth rate index and the mortality index of the population in most regions of Russia is a long-term trend, which somehow changed for better in the period of two years. But for the period from 2001 to 2010 the natural increase of population was marked only in three federal districts (the North Caucasian, the Far Eastern and the Ural Districts). And only in the first mentioned district the index of increase of the population was essentially higher than zero. In other federal districts for the last decade the correlation between birth rate and mortality showed the diminution of the population. The highest tempo of diminution (without migration inflow) was characteristic for the most urbanized and old in terms of demography – the Central, the North Western and the Volga Basin Districts.

Given the positive demographic changes for the last two-three years, the negative situation in terms of birth rates, mortality and natural increase remained unchanged for Russia as a whole. According to official data, in 2009 the mortality was greater than the birth rate (by comparison of the born and died persons for 1000 people). The birth rate in this year made 12.4 per mil, while mortality was 14.2 per

mil. Correspondingly, the natural increase was negative at the level of – 1.8 per mil. The maximum index in the country of natural increase accounts for +23.8 per mil (Chechnya), the minimum index makes the negative amount –10.5 per mil (Pskovskaya region).

The situation relating to the birth rate is different by regions. The highest birth rate is marked in the North Caucasian FD. Besides, a rather big birth rate is registered in the Southern, the Far Eastern and the Ural Federal Districts. For the last decade, the lowest indexes of birth rate were characteristic for the Central FD.

For the last decade, the indexes of different mortality were as follows: the biggest mortality was registered in the Central, Volga Basin and the North Western Federal Districts. A rather high level of mortality was characteristic for the South Federal District. The lowest indexes of mortality were given by statistics in the North Caucasian FD. However, it should be said that the official data about mortality based on registration of the corresponding events are characterized by mistakes connected with tardy presentation of accounts in the republics of the North Caucasus; therefore, probably, the level of mortality in the North Caucasian FD is higher, while the indexes of natural increase are lower to some extent than the official published indexes.

The tempos and sizes of mortality of the population before the age of pension are different in various regions of Russia. The highest level of mortality of able to work people is registered not in the Central FD (although the general index of mortality is marked by the highest level in the country) but in the Siberia and the Far Eastern FD, while in the European part of the country the mortality of able-bodied people is the highest in the North-Western FD. The level of mortality of the population at the age of being able to work is characterized by the lack of statistical data dependence on the size of medical services (or insignificant dependence). At the same time, there is a sustainable

dependence of such early mortality on the level and nature of illness, first of all, on the spread of pulmonary diseases (due to smoking), traumatism and poisoning, particularly alcoholic intoxication. The common viewpoint on dependence of mortality of able-bodied people on diseases of blood circulation is not justified, since these diseases are characteristic for the old people. Besides, the mortality of the able to work people to a large extent depends on the level of criminality, primarily on the number of crimes committed by the intoxicated people, who used alcohol or narcotics.

Thus, the early mortality of some people in Russian regions is the result of primarily unnatural causes due to the spread of ruinous habits (smoking, use of alcohol and narcotics). The higher level of medical treatment is actually in great need but it itself is unable to reduce radically the mortality index of able-bodied people.

There exists the direct connection between the spread of mortality of people as a result of suicides and mortality as a result of alcoholic intoxication. The mentioned long-term indexes exist in the same regions. At the level of federal districts the high levels of suicidal and alcoholic mortality are characteristic for the last ten years (and for earlier periods) for all northern and eastern federal districts. The lowest indications of such deaths are characteristic only for the North Caucasian FD.

The lower migration increase is seen in Russia for the last decade comparing with the first decade after disappearance of the USSR. The contemporary amount of mechanical increase occurred in the end of the 1990s: annually the number of migrants coming for permanent residence exceeds by 250-300 thousand the number of people, who return home. This balance has become particularly sustainable since 2007.

The spread of the migration increase is characterized by a great unevenness. The excess of the number of immigrants over emigrants is the greatest in the Central FD; the annual excess makes 120 thousand people. The North Western FD occupies the second place in terms of migration inflow, although it is four times lesser than the increase in the Central FD. The Ural FD occupies the third place. Actually zero migration increase is registered in the Southern FD and the North Caucasian FD. The Far Eastern FD and the Siberian FD are characterized by the negative migration flow.

A part of the international migration increase is spread rather unevenly. The main positive balance of the international migration is made by the Central FD, presenting excess of the people coming from abroad over the persons leaving the district approximately of 50 thousand people per year. The Volga Basin FD occupies the second place in the international migration balance: annually from 20 to 30 thousand people become new residents in the FD. At the same time, other federal districts are characterized by the low balance of international migration, and the North Caucasian FD is characterized practically by the meaning of zero.

As it is known, under the influence of mass media and some spoke-men of public opinion there were widely disseminated stereotypes about “a migration pressure” and “a change for the new population” allegedly owing to people coming from abroad. In reality, the inflow of new comers, including internal Russian and international migration, accounts only for 1.5% of the whole population (correspondingly, the migration balance is of lesser significance). Naturally, this indication has a bit greater significance in the sparsely populated eastern and northern regions, but over there the share of migrants in the population does not exceed 1.7–1.9% of the residents in

the corresponding federal districts. The share of the people coming from abroad in the whole population of Russia makes only 0.14%.

For the last decade, the share of foreigners among all migrants accounted only for 15.5% (without temporary migration). For the period of 2001–2010, this share decreased for the first half of the decade and further increased having attained the highest level in 2009 and 2010. By the end of the decade the share of migrants from other states increased up to 18% in the Central FD. This share increased insignificantly in other federal districts and even reduced in the Far Eastern FD.

As a whole for the decade the share of foreign immigrants in the total migration flow turned out to be the biggest in two federal districts – in the Southern FD (18%) and in the Central FD (15%). Out of other federal districts there should be mentioned the Ural FD marked by rather big number of foreigners among migrants (only 13%). This share was lesser in other federal districts (10–12%). The lowest share of foreign migrants coming to the RF (7%) was noted in the Far Eastern FD.

Thus, the inflow of migrants does not result in a significant renewal of the population in Russia, while the share of foreign migrants is small. There exists a rather widely spread opinion that the children of migrants will compose the main share of the youth at the child-bearing age. However, the known trends are different. Leaving aside details, it is necessary to define the share of children and teenagers among coming migrants. For the last decade, this share does not exceed 6% both in the total number of migrants and in the structure of the migration balance (the number of new comers minus those, who have left home). This number is insignificant. In separate federal districts the biggest shares of children and teenagers among migrants, who want to become residents, accounts only for 9% (in the Central, the Ural, the

Siberian, the Volga Basin and the Far Eastern FD). Correspondingly for the nearest decades, given the existing migration picture, the children of migrants coming from abroad as usual will not represent a significant part of the population in Russia.

The level of ethnic diversity of the population in various territories has not been studied. The researchers limit themselves with banal deliberations about “100 nations and nationalities” repeated since the Soviet time. The rosters of nationalities published in official sources relating to various regions, as a rule, contain similar numbers (for different ethnic entities). In big regions, like subjects of the Federation, and all the more the federal districts the number of nationalities is equal to the number of them in the country as a whole.

For the sake of comprehension of the diversity of the ethnic composition of the population in big regions the data of the population census below has been calculated according to the indication of poly-ethnicity. According to this indication, the ethnic diversity of the population in the federal districts of Russia does not differ a lot except the North Caucasian FD. On the one side, this fact dethrones the myth about “ethnic homogeneity” of the Russian central regions and, on the other side, reflects not the so big, comparing with other Russian regions, ethnic diversity of the population in the South of Russia.

As a whole, the level of poly-ethnicity in Russia is rather big (index – 7.4). However, the ethnic composition in various federal districts is not similar, but this index in all of them is lower than the level of poly-ethnicity (10.5) in the North Caucasian FD. A rather significant level of poly-ethnicity is characteristic for the Southern FD and the Far Eastern FD (about 5). The level of poly-ethnicity in other districts is characterized by the small diapason of 3–4. The sustainable territorial appropriateness in Russia is as follows: the ethnic diversity of the population is higher in the southern regions of Russia, attaining its

maximum in the Caucasus, as well as in the direction to the east. A certain growth of ethnic diversity is characteristic also for the European North of the country.

According to the data of the population censuses in 1989 and 2002 (up to present the data of the census of 2010 is not available), the poly-ethnic composition of the population remained almost unchanged in the North Caucasian FD. However, the ethnic diversity increases by the most rapid tempos in the Southern FD. The Central FD occupies the second place in the process of rise of poly-ethnicity. The ethnic diversity in other districts actually remained unchanged, while it reduced in the Far East.

The disseminated myth of a special role of foreign migrants in the change of ethnic composition of the population in the Russian regions is not corroborated. The estimation of the correlated dependences reveals the fact that the increase of poly-ethnicity to a larger extent is connected with the average long-term indications of internal Russian migration and to a smaller extent depends on the indications of international migration.

The information on the level of the population's education in Russia is not regular and comparative in terms of statistics. The most complete picture may be constructed only by the data of population censuses. However, since the Russian Statistical Office has not estimated the regional information on the level of the population's education by regions on the basis of the data of the All-Russian Population Census of 2010, the author has used the data of 2002. In addition, for the sake of contemporary analysis of the higher education the author used the data on the number of students of all higher education institutions (state and private) in 2009. The number of students was correlated with 1000 residents. It became evident that the data of the census of 2002 and the mentioned information on the

number of students demonstrate the same situation in all federal districts. The higher share of the people with higher education is characteristic for the Central FD and the North Western FD. The relatively lesser (lesser than the average share in the country) share of the students in the higher education institutions in the Southern FD and in the North Caucasian FD is compensated by the indications of the education level, which is higher than the average level in the country, since a certain number of residents of these districts receive higher education in other regions of Russia.

The regional economic leaders and outsiders are described below on the basis of data on the GNP by the end of the decade. The indications differ a lot by the federal districts: the maximum index (the Central FD) by 17 times exceeds the minimum index (the North-Caucasian FD). The leading place is occupied by the Central FD producing over one third of the GNP. Further with the lesser share in production of the GNP are placed the Volga Basin FD (16%), the Ural FD (14%), the Siberian FD (10%) and the North Western FD (10%). The minimum size of the GNP is characteristic for the North Caucasian FD (2%) and the Far Eastern FD (4.5%).

Moscow and the Moscow region are the leaders in the Central FD. Although the best indices of Moscow by many times exceed the region's indices, it should be taken into account that the production capacity and human resources of the Moscow region are realized (often purely legally) within the administrative limits of Moscow. For the sake of the discussed research it should be adequate to consider the level of GNP production in the capital and the adjacent region as a united entity.

The Volga Basin FD lacks the absolute leader in GNP production, since within the district there are several economic locomotives: Tatarstan, Bashkortostan and Samarskaya region, and further – Permski krai and Nizhegorodskaya region, followed by

Orenburgskaya region and Saratovskaya region. Correspondingly, as a whole, the federal district is characterized by the relatively even social-economic situation without big territorial disproportions. Such situation makes the Volga Basin FD as one of the most successful and socially homogeneous federal districts in Russia.

The territorial disproportion is characteristic also by the GNP production per head as a whole in the country and particularly in federal districts. As it was mentioned, the Ural FD is the leader in the GNP production per head, while the second place in this respect is occupied by the Central FD, which is followed with rather big lessening by the North Western FD and the Far Eastern FD. It should be stressed that all other federal districts possess the per head indices in the GNP production, which is lower than the average level in the country. It is evident that such disproportion increased further for the post-crisis period. The lowest index of the GNP production is characteristic for the North Caucasian FD.

At the same time, within the low efficient production of the GNP in the North Caucasian FD and the South FD there are the least differences in the districts. Naturally, the Stavropol krai is the leader in the GNP production per head. Nevertheless, North Ossetia, Dagestan and Karachai-Cherkessia play a lesser role marked by a relatively small lag. The lowest index of the GNP per head of the population is seen only in Ingushetia. The data on the Chechen Republic, probably, lacks complete certainty but even this information is nearer to the low indices of Ingushetia than to the indices of other regions of the district; such is the picture in the North Caucasian FD as mentioned above. Hence, the North Caucasian FD as a whole is the territory, which will be the source of outflow of labor force to other federal districts.

There is much talk on social consequences of different levels of employment and unemployment in Russia. A lot of conjectures about

negative role of migration are spread. Nevertheless, the existing perceptions (and myths) about tension in labor market caused by migration are not justified. The comparison by subjects of the RF of the indices of the deficit/existence of vacancies of the unemployed and of migration increase reflects a direct dependence of the migration flow on exactly the level of existence of jobs. In case of the lack or the scarcity of jobs the migration balance either has a trend to the zero or is characterized by the negative index. In other words, migrants go to the place, where jobs are available.

The level of unemployment, at least its registered part, accounted for the end of 2009 and 2010 correspondingly 2.84% and 2.10%. It means that the level of the registered unemployment for the last two years was not high and remained as a whole unchanged with some trend to decrease.

The regional picture of this index has the same logic: for the period of 2009-2010 the distribution and size of the calculated level of unemployment by federal districts rest almost unchanged. One factor attracted attention: the accelerated positive dynamics of reduction of unemployment in 2010 comparing with the previous year in the Ural FD (which was connected with improvement of this index in Tyumenskaya region, primarily, owing to rise of employment in the industries directly or indirectly connected with the oil and gas complex).

Given the low level of the registered unemployment in the country as a whole, and, consequently, the high level of registered employment, one may see the trend to greater employment in center and in the south of Russia, while the index of unemployment showed its growth. As a whole, in the European part of Russia the problem of registered unemployment seems to be “softer” then in the Asian regions. Going to the east, the indices of registered unemployment rise

and attained higher (still not high) levels in the Far Eastern FD. A definite exclusion in the country destructing completely this appropriateness is the North Caucasian FD, where even the registered unemployment (avoiding the indices estimated by wider criteria, particularly methods of the ILO) reaches really big dimensions comparing with the level of unemployment in the less developed countries. In 2009, the level of registered unemployment accounted for 10.7%, and in 2010 – 8.6%. Even if correction of the number of economically active population, according to the data of the population census of 2010, is more extensive and, correspondingly, the estimated level of unemployment in this federal district is a bit lower, nevertheless, the level of unemployment in Russia will reach a record figure also from the point of view of international comparisons.

The unemployment in the North Caucasus is the result of not so much of any international crises, as of the banal lack of the skill to “alleviate” the social situation known since the Soviet time. The constant repetition of remark on “excessive labor force” in the North Caucasian republics actually covers the defects in governance and in long-term planning adapted to this region. The more so, that the question is the problems in terms of inadequate employment only in two regions (one region in the Soviet time) – Chechnya and Ingushetia. In 2010 the level of registered unemployment in these republics was characterized by the startling indices: in Chechnya – 42.3% and in Ingushetia – 21.4%. A year earlier the situation was even worse: in Chechnya the registered unemployment made 54.1% and in Ingushetia – 22.3%. For the previous period the data on employment of the population in these republics was not published at all under pretext that the corresponding estimation of employment had not been adequately organized.

At the same time, with due account of high indices of registered unemployment in these two regions, it should be said that there exists some doubt concerning these indices. The question is that Chechnya and Ingushetia since the period of 2002-2003 up to present have been subject to the targeted federal programs of economic and social development. Besides, the economy of both regions almost completely exists by receiving donations from the federal budget. Correspondingly, any indicated demands of additional budgetary inflows, mildly speaking, are made by various participants of the process of restoration and development of both regions.

The repetition in this case of the fact that in Chechnya and Ingushetia the birth rate is high and allegedly a great unemployment is unavoidable can not be regarded as an exhaustive explanation. It should be reminded that in Tuva, where the level of birth rate is also high, the index of registered unemployment made 6.2% in 2009 and 5.5% in 2010. Of course, this level of unemployment exceeds twice the average Russian level, but it is not the twenty times' excess like in Chechnya and the ten time's excess like in Ingushetia. In Dagestan, marked by a high birth rate, the registered level of unemployment (3.2%) is closer to the level of Tuva and not to the level of Chechnya and Ingushetia. In the Republic of Altai, which is characterized by a high birth rate and where there is only one city and there are no elements of social and industrial (including energy) infrastructure, nevertheless, the level of registered unemployment made 3%, exceeding only half as much again the average index in Russia.

Many publications in mass media and declarations of representatives of the law enforcement bodies demonstrate that the aggravation of employment problems has a direct impact on the scale of criminality. However, as became evident, the rise of the unemployment level for the period of crisis in 2008-2010 did not result in the rise of

criminality in the country as a whole. There was no sustainable dependence of criminality's indices on the changes of employment or unemployment levels in various regions.

At the same time, the employment problems, if they are not solved for a long period of time, form a long-term unfavorable social situation, which actually promotes the spread of deviant and unsocial forms of behavior and, as is shown by statistical comparison, have a considerable influence on the level of criminality. For instance, the comparison by regions of the level of criminality, socially being a significant index, shows clearly as follows: the high share of unprofitable enterprises exists simultaneously with the high level of criminality. At the same time, this interdependence is not fully characteristic (or lacks inter-dependence) in some territories, particularly, in the North Caucasian FD and in the Ural FD.

The index of insolvent enterprises demonstrates the sustainable interconnection, if it is correlated with the level of teenagers' criminality. Only in the North Caucasian FD (in this respect being the sole territory in the country) the teenagers' criminality does not depend on the sphere of employment. Probably, as far as this territory is concerned, one should speak about peculiarities of regional culture and existence of efficient mechanisms of control over teenagers. However, in the North Caucasus the traditions of "deterrence" produce no results relating to criminality of the adults. The comparison of the share of insolvent enterprises with the indices of the share of grave crimes in the whole number of criminal acts shows the evident interconnection of these two phenomena will be evident also in the North Caucasus and in all other federal districts of Russia.

According to the statistics of 2010, the level of criminality in the country was reduced, despite the economic crisis. One year beforehand, the number of registered criminal acts for each thousand of residents

accounted for 21.1 per mil, while at present this index was reduced to 18.4 per mil.

The above reduction took place almost in equal proportion in all federal districts leading to the meaning of certain artificiality of made estimates. Some analysts were in a hurry to say that this decrease was a direct consequence of reduction of the number of labor migrants. Avoiding the controversial discussion on this matter, it is worth saying that in case of direct “regulation” of the criminality level by migration flows the picture of reduction of the criminality level was different in various federal districts and more so in the regions, since the flows-outflows of migrants differ by geographic matter.

For the last decade the situation of criminality in the federal districts of Russia was as follows. The greatest number of criminal acts per head of the population is committed in eastern regions of the country, while the lowest level of them – in the South FD and the North Caucasian FD. At the same time, the highest share of grave and especially grave offences – assassinations and terrorist acts is registered in the North Caucasian FD.

For the sake of estimation of preconditions of social tension in the population it should be necessary to consider the criminal acts committed as unsocial or affective actions, particular criminal acts committed by the people being intoxicated by alcohol or narcotics. A great number of criminal acts committed in affected state and the gravest offences (assassinations and great injury for health) demonstrate a grave social situation.

As a whole, in Russia the reciprocal connection between the number of grave crimes and crimes committed in the state of alcoholic intoxication is not typical. However, this connection is quite evident, if the statistics of crimes committed in the South FD and the North Caucasian FD are left aside. At least in the Volga Basin FD and in all

eastern federal districts the picture of “drunk” criminality to a large extent is similar with the spread of such crimes as assassination and attempted assassination.

The social anxiety is also high in case of often committed unlawful actions in public places. The statistics of hooliganism reflects similar picture. The estimation of coefficients of correlation shows that there is no significant reciprocal connection between the crimes qualified as hooliganism and the criminality of teenagers. It attests that in Russia as a whole hooliganism and street violent offence is “a lot” of the adult contingent of criminals. For the last decade, the maximum indices of hooliganism statistics are characteristic for the Ural FD, since this region is the leader in terms of number and share of such crimes. In terms of hooliganism the second place is occupied by the Central FD and by the North West FD, while the North Caucasian FD and the Volga Basin FD occupy the third place.

The criminality of teenagers marked by its large scale spread also is a significant public trouble maker. In Russia the criminality of teenagers in a large extent is connected with the crimes committed in the state of alcoholic intoxication (it should be noted that statistics do not demonstrate any connection between teenagers’ crimes and crimes in the state of narcotics intoxication). The criminality of teenagers is particularly high in the Siberian FD and in the Far East FD.

It is common knowledge that the registered criminality in the North Caucasus is characterized by one of the lowest indices in the country. Probably, the real situation in this federal district is worse than it is registered. The usual indices of criminality in adjacent regions create doubts concerning low indications about criminality in some regions of the North Caucasian FD. According to the law enforcement bodies, in Chechnya the level of criminality in 2010 made 3.6 per mil for a thousand residents. The same low index in Dagestan was 3.9 per

mil. In Ingushetia it was 4.7 per mil. At the same time, in Karachai-Cherkessia the index was 9.1 per mil, in Kabardino-Balkaria it was 10.8 per mil, and in Stavropolski krai – 13 per mil. The observation of the situation shows that the territories with the population of many thousands have always the level of criminality over 5 per mil.

The data about grave criminal acts leads to the analogous conclusions on the inadequately exact fixation of criminal acts. The fact of a grave criminal act is more difficult to hide out from statistics, especially if it concerns assassination. By the index of the number of assassinations in the total number of crimes is just the North Caucasian FD occupies the first place in Russia, and the greatest share of assassinations is fixed exactly in “the less criminal” Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan. And what is more, the indices for these republics represent the absolute “record” in the country leaving far behind the most “criminal” regions. Significant is the following: in each federal district of the country in 2010 the number of assassinations decreased in the total number of registered crimes, but in the South FD the share of assassinations increased to some extent, while the share of assassinations rose significantly in the North Caucasian FD. Evidently, the statistical paradoxes emerged as a result of the regular concealment from statistics of small unlawful actions and other less grave criminal acts.

Given contemporary conditions of life in Russia, particularly the lack of a wide stratum of the so-called middle class, the share of indigent population is the general index of material well-being of the population taking with due account of the regional distinctions. First of all, the category of indigent population includes the people with sustainable (for some years) money income at the level lesser than the subsistence wage. According to this index, for the last ten years in Russia the indigent population accounted for 22.3% of the total

population, and this index in most cases lacked essential differences in the federal districts. As a rule, in the federal districts the share of indigent people accounted for 15–25% of residents. The maximum and higher indices of this share are characteristic for the Siberian FD and even more for the Far Eastern FD. Against the general background the most unfavorable indices are characteristic for the North Caucasian FD, where more than one third of the population has the income less than the subsistence wage. In some regions of this FD the situation is more strained (in Ingushetia the share of indigent people accounts for 63% of the population, in Chechnya, according to incomplete data, this share is the same or even greater). For estimation of incomes' differentiation it is accepted to confront the aggregate of cash income of the less well-being 18% and of the most well-being 18% of the total population. This confrontation shows that for the last decade the smallest distinction in incomes, at least according to the official data, is characteristic for residents in the North Caucasian FD, where cash income of “the rich” exceeds by 6.5 times the cash income of “the poor”. The biggest differentiation of incomes is characteristic for residents of the Central FD and the Ural FD, where the incomes of the first group exceed by 9 times the incomes of the latter.

The mentioned picture of the property stratification, however, does not show the degree of urgency of existing issue, since it does not mean that the less well-being people should indispensably be poor. For the general evaluation of the social tension in the sphere of material well-being one should apply the index of deviation of the less well-being people from their share of incomes. In particular, let us make the supposition: should the total cash of individual people per head of the population correspond to the accepted level of material well-being, the deviation from this level of any category of the population to the direction of lesser incomes fact testifies to the inadequate well-being.

Thus, the above presented research estimated the deviation of the long-term cash incomes of 20% of the less well-being population from the level of 20%. The estimates show that the level of income of the least successful part of the population of the Central FD is lesser by 14.5% and, being at the lowest level compared with the theoretically equal level of income, is socially unjust and the most critical from the point of view of material well being. The analogous category of the Siberian FD also gets low incomes, and the deficit of incomes makes 14% there. In other federal districts the deficit of incomes of the less successful part of the population is only a bit less and accounts for 13%, while the least deficit of incomes is in the North Caucasian FD. The latter shows that the public-political rhetoric concerning the North Caucasus as the poorest part of Russia does not completely correspond to the reality.

To corroborate this point of view one should present the data on the ten years' trend of the growth of real cash incomes. For the period from 2001 to 2009, such incomes were growing by outstripping tempos exactly in the North Caucasian FD, where annual average cash incomes of the population rose by 15%, while in other federal districts, including the South FD, the growth of incomes made 9-10%.

Although there are no generally accepted methods, it is possible to see differences in the level of social comfort. As a rule, the data on the roster of living conditions provided for the population is used for the sake of analysis. It seems that these "objective" indicators should be supplemented by the parameters, which may be interpreted from the point of view of public perception. These parameters shall include the rise of consumption prices in comparison with incomes of consumers. For instance, in one region the incomes of the population are high but they grow more slowly comparing with the rise of prices; in another region the rise of incomes leaves behind the rise of prices, although initially the incomes of the population are not high: in the first case the

social tension may be higher than in the second one. For the last years, the rise of prices for food products (minimum list) outstripped considerably the rise of cash incomes in most federal districts of the country. The biggest gap was seen in the Far Eastern FD. The rise of process for consumption goods outstripped greatly the rise of incomes of the population in the Ural FD, in the North West FD and in the Central FD. Naturally, the situation in the sphere of prices and wages was not attractive for the population of these territories, and the lack of social comfort was quite evident. The situation is slightly better in other federal districts; however, the higher rise of prices for consumption goods was not great only in the Volga Basin FD. The only federal district, where real cash incomes of the population were not behind but, quite on the contrary, rose by accelerated tempos relating to consumption goods' prices, was the North Caucasian FD. It shows a great potential of social development and of perspectives of the social climate's improvement in the North Caucasus.

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**CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY
OF BASHKORTOSTAN
UNDER CONDITIONS
OF NATIONAL IDENTITY CRISIS**

The start of the painful change of the power elite in the Republic of Bashkortostan and also completion of the profound transformation of contemporary society in the republic was marked in summer of 2010 by assignment of R.Z. Khamitov to the post of the Head of the region. It seems that we see the termination of the long historic cycle started for

the 1920s–1930s and terminated with the start of assignment of R.Z. Khamitov. The main characteristic feature of this transformation consists in transition of the traditional Bashkir society to the society of city culture. The political process only coincided with the socio-cultural process, and it is impossible to stop it.

Coming to power in 1990 of M.G. Rakhimov, who rose on the wave of “people’s” movement for sovereignty, only postponed and temporarily closed down many modernization processes, which for the XX century were grown ripe within Bashkir society, but this passage, probably, finally occurred with the end of the rigid authoritarian regime. Despite the fact that the contemporary Bashkir society still is characterized by some features of the agrarian society and the carriers of fundamentalist values actively oppose this process, history will not repeat itself. The political modernization, which (started by R. Khamitov not quite deliberately) only for a certain time stirred “Bashkir national movement” to greater activity, in reality is an illusion of return of the great social activity in the beginning of the 1990s.

At the same time, this process is marked by the atomization of Bashkir society and the deep crisis of national identity. The search is going on for new institutionalized forms of new society. Today, the following questions are very urgent: where to go, who are the Bashkir and what ideas and values are able to form the basis of the new Bashkir nation? The search for the answers to these questions is very complicated, since it demands not only refusal from many ethnic myths and stereotypes of mass consciousness, but also a critical attitude to its own historic experience. Finally, as a result of it, the started processes should either engender a new historic subjectivity or for the XXI century the Bashkir people as an ethnos will terminate their existence. One should live in hope of adequate comprehension of the raised

complicated problem, which will be chosen in the course of complicate search for the way out of the emerged situation.

By the beginning of the XX century on the eve of the revolution in 1917 the Bashkir society was characterized by a complex of unsolved social-economic and cultural problems. In the beginning of the XIX century there emerged the reasons leading to the other painful socio-cultural transformation of the Bashkir ethnos. Exactly in this period the Bashkir people changed the type of economic order and became finally “fixed” to the land. The radical changes could not avoid significant consequences. In the course of this painful mutation the breaking of ethnic consciousness started. Former “Bashkir ethnos” (as a system) ceased adequately to respond to new challenges of time. The load of “old” tradition hindered the Bashkir people to join the process of “capitalist” modernization, which particularly for the second part of the XIX century gained in speed of turns in the Russian empire. The more so, that the Bashkir people could directly observe the activities of the neighboring Tatar ethnos, which successful accommodated itself in the new “bourgeois” system. Apart from social-economic problems, the most negative processes were experience by Bashkir society in connection with a deep “crisis of ethnicity”. What was the problem?

The destruction of ethnic-cultural seclusion as a part of destruction of local spaces in general engendered one of the most important forms of localism’s crisis, which may be called “crisis of ethnic identity” or shortly “crisis of ethnicity”. The crisis of ethnicity was a part of the crisis caused by atomization of society and rise of individual autonomy, being a particular evident part of the process: the most appreciable changes were connected with the change of ethnic-cultural environment and appearance of inevitable in this case tension in inter-ethnic relations. Owing to its evident reason, the ethnic tension

became a kind of the center, which tightened all other social tensions and transformed into a source of mighty destructive forces.

The ability of society to find out the response to this challenge of time depended on the whole complex of connected modernization changes and all new basis of the social peace organization. In case of such readiness' existence, it was easy to see in the crisis of ethnicity the manifestation of very deep and fundamental changes, the evidence of the devaluation of ethnic principles of social integration and the need of passage to another type of integrators, to essentially other, not ethnic mechanisms of social unification. Just this historic new task was formulated and solved by some western societies, where such general decision as a notion "nation" was worked out.

In the real conditions of the Russian Empire in the beginning of the XX society, according to A. Vishnevski, there were many aspects of inter-connection between federalism and nationalism, which resulted in their closeness. The regional elites very soon realized that they might get a powerful support on the part of national movements in the struggle for re-distribution of power and influence between them and the imperial center. Therefore the federalist ideas did not remain within the framework of ideology of pure "regionalism", i.e. extension of rights and chances of regions without ties with the national idea. The temptation to apply ethnic feelings was so great that even Russian "regionalists" in Siberia made an attempt to get "ethnic genealogy" and advanced the idea of "formation of the homogeneous and peculiar regional nationality by means of crossing both local physical-historic and ethnological conditions".

In the Great Russian parts of the Empire federalism gradually was covered by national colors and in the end of the XIX century completely merged with nationalism. The regional elites had a sensation of being much more self-confident when they could base

themselves upon national movements and consider themselves simultaneously as national elites.

In the beginning of the century, the movement of non-Russian peoples, including A.-Z. Validi movement, differed radically from western bourgeois movements, since in the West the movements caused by the ethnicity crisis confronted the system of civil nation. In the West civil society (nation) usually is opposed to ethnic nationalism. It is one of the dual oppositions, which compose the foundation of untraditional societies. In Russia ethnic nationalism is wrongly connected often with extreme chauvinism and also very often with liberal values, which is actually absurd. For instance, the organization “Kuk Bure” of the Bashkir youth calls itself an organization of “nationalists” and simultaneously comes forward for “democratic values”. In reality the bourgeois nation (in the West) suppresses ethnic nationalism of Gaskons and Basks creating at the same time the unified construction under the name of “all-citizens nation”.

In spite of intention of some experts, including Soviet historians, to qualify the movement of autonomists headed by A.-Z. Validi, as a “bourgeois movement of nationalists”, it should be correctly qualified as a traditionalist and conservative movement, since the main slogan of participants of the civil war was the return of the patrimonial right for land. It was the demand to restore the power of the Bashkir community and to establish a special status for the Bashkir as a nation (“autonomy”). This demand was caused by the fact that the “bourgeois” reforms by the end of the XIX century had delivered a strong blow against the local Bashkir society.

Thus, by the beginning of the XX century the Bashkir society was ready for the Soviet (conservative) modernization. The crisis of ethnicity became evident and the national consciousness was rising, while the old institutional cloths became tight for new reality. The static

situation of the Bashkir society (local world), which had not changed for centuries, started to move, and it was impossible to stop the course of history. The society was ready to make a step from archaic community (pre-modern) to contemporary society (Soviet Modernism).

After victory of the October socialist revolution the Bashkir society lived under conditions of Soviet modernization and formation of the foundations of the Soviet system. The ideologists of sovereignty in their time accused the USSR in destruction of the Bashkir national identity, but in reality the picture was quite the contrary. All citizens of the USSR had double self-identification – ethnic and civil, while both of them were fixed officially. It should be recalled that the western civil society and the civil nation are opposed to ethnic nationalism, since they are constructed on the destruction of the latter.

In the Soviet Union the Russian people exercised the function of the civil nation having no ethnic identity. Exactly this fact became the reason of the separatist intentions, which in 1991 led to the disintegration of the USSR and easily achieved the aim, since they were not opposed on the part of the elite in Russia, mainly of the Russian elite, which constituted the majority of the elite in the USSR, according to A. Vishnevski.

In the USSR ethnic nationalism of non-Russian peoples was not suppressed and even artificially was supported. Actually all non-Russian peoples received the formal signs of “civil nations”: “language”, national-state territory, system of national publications, theaters etc. The paradox of the situation consisted in the situation, when the orally condemned ethnic nationalism, being the antipode of civil society, became a needed and efficient instrument of power and successfully legitimized the Soviet regime. Besides, just in Soviet time the Bashkir people were “elevated” to the level of nation and received the regional ethnic elite.

In general, modernization in Soviet time radically accelerated formation of regional elites of non-Russian peoples. It complicated the functioning of city and regions' systems, increased their internal diversity and created their horizontal economic, social and other ties. All this inevitably led to emergence or extension of numerous independent elite's social statuses created by the regional and local social environment. It should have the places not only for heads of local authorities, directors of big enterprises, chairmen of collective farms, editors in chief of newspapers, prominent scientists and writers, artists and sportsmen etc.

However, Soviet modernization led to development of regional elites only to the limit, which corresponded to its instrumental aims. The development of elites was blocked, if the mentioned correspondence ceased to exist. Up to the end the regional elite remained mainly a status entity, "nomenclature" resembling the elite of the feudal society. It depended on the chiefs, of their subjective opinions, designations and "benefits" more than on the objective results of the own activities.

The Soviet elite's establishment was a mono-centric structure like in time of the tsarist rule. All its features were re-produced, probably, in enforced form, at regional levels, where the direct dependence of everyone was particularly evident on the local centralized "party leadership", the local CC or regional committee of the Communist Party or personally its first secretary.

Usually the regions were headed by the deputies of Moscow transferred by the Center from one region to another without due account of their economic, national or cultural specifics. The central power in Moscow, though with participation of regional deputies, took decisions on nominations of directors of biggest regional enterprises, of

most prominent writers or composers, academicians and the presidents of the local academy of science etc.

In “national” republics the local elite was recruited mainly from representatives of the indigenous ethnoses (policy of “preparing” national cadres), but it did not change its nomenclature essence.

The whole system had its certain meaning in time, when internal forces of the regions were undeveloped and when the regions represented emptied space for further regional construction: a new system of administrative governance was created, first plants were built, universities and theatres were opened etc. But time passed, and the created economic, cultural and other constructions started to function according to their own life mixed with former life. Side by side with old nomenclature elites, partially inside them, there formed elites of a new type incorporated more deeply in many respects in the region’s environment. The interests of the new elites were dual.

On the one side, they were engendered by modernization and in general accepted its instrumental results. In this sense they should have been on the one side with the nomenclature and even go further than this nomenclature in being opposed to restoration of traditional elites, which tried to base themselves on the conservative feature of Soviet modernization, including existed elites, sometimes protecting social archaic character, but they with definite exaggeration criticized its many instrumental consequences. At the same time, as regional entities new local elites should advance as the antagonists of the nomenclature personifying centralism of the unitary state and should see allies in traditionalists, whose ideology was always constructed on the stress of regional and (or) ethnic and ethnic-religious peculiarities.

In various parts of the USSR the dual characteristic of new regional elites was displayed differently – depending on the level of

advancement on the way of modernization and on the real correlation of modernist and traditionalist forces.

The results of the Soviet modernization are discussed below. As a whole, one of the principal results of development of the Bashkir society under conditions of Soviet modernization was emergence of new Soviet Bashkir national intellectuals, mainly humanitarian and creative to the detriment of “technicians”- intellectuals. In essence, it was quite a new cultural and social type, which differed greatly from the pre-revolution Bashkir elite. Simultaneously it corresponded to the distinctions of “the person of traditional culture”. His characteristic features were as follows: the sacral consciousness (lacked of the reflex of traditional religious culture), the ability to the easy self-organization on the traditional basis, a rather high level of education and culture.

According to the exact characteristic of A. Vishnevski, it was “an unctuous person with the university diploma”. To his mind, the Soviet cultural modernization ensured the rapid rise of education, the access to modern technical and scientific knowledge, the other instrumental changes needed for consolidation of the contemporary type of culture and, consequently, of the person’s type. But it did not lead to ousting of the middle-aged holistic cultural paradigm, which engendered Homo soveticus – the intermediate type of a person, correlating inside itself the features of contemporary life and traditional “extreme unction”.

On the other side, it is worth mentioning that the weakest point of the socialist accelerated modernization was an essential gap between “the passage to the contemporary life” and traditional culture, which, in general, was characteristic for the Soviet civilization. The Bashkir society lagged behind the process of working out and adapting its culture to the radical social changes. As a result of the super-accelerated urbanization and the attempts of the Soviet power to create artificially a new Bashkir intelligentsia there appeared the homogenous

social stratum, which had all features of local syncretism. A high mobility of the Soviet vertical lift raised from the depth of the Bashkir people the most socially active and talented people, but the paradox of the situation was as follows: these people (the new elite) were not the outcome of organic development of Bashkir culture. In the profundity of their mental layer existed the archaic, which only perfunctorily was covered by a thin layer of the Soviet culture. Former rural residents, i.e. the carriers of a special psychic mentality, in essence, for a very short historic period became the known Bashkir scientists, painters, writers, physicians etc.; however, such accelerated modernization was fraught with the main danger – the inability of syncretism to evaluate critically themselves and the existed social reality. The new Soviet Bashkir elite possessed the mythicized consciousness and a very feeble level of historic self-reflection.

For the period of the 1930s-1940s and further for the post-war period, the Bashkir fundamentalism was displayed quite evidently in culture and social life. The symbols of this epoch became composer Z. Ismagilov, writers M. Karim, N. Nazhmi, Z. Biisheva, painter A. Latfullin and many others. Their outstanding service consisted in their ability to transform rather naturally the Bashkir national culture into the forms of high (Soviet) culture. They created and left perfect examples of high Bashkir culture based on the traditional layers of the people's consciousness. (as an example the most organic stylization it is possible to consider the song of Z. Ismagilov "Shaimuratov general", which is considered up to present as a folk song).

The new Bashkir fiction literature, Bashkir opera, national publications and even cinema emerged for these years. Evidently, it is one of the most positive features of Soviet modernization, although it had its negative aspects. For instance, the excessive Russo-centrism and rather evident influence of Soviet ideological cliché (for instance, the

known words of M. Karim “not a Russian I am, but a Rossianin”) may be mentioned. Besides, the examples and forms of high culture were brought by Soviet civilization, having been the result of Soviet modernization, but it does not diminish the historic significance of the Bashkir Soviet culture. The rapid modernization leap forward revealed other negative phenomena, showed the lack of maturity of new Bashkir intellectuals. For instance, for this period many Bashkir, including intellectuals, gave to their children revolutionary names alien to the national culture (Telman, Darwin, Revmir, Magnit, etc.). The most ardent bearers of the Communist ideology among the Bashkir regarded their own language and traditions as an unnecessary archaic hindering construction of socialism. The party organs privately cultivated the nihilistic attitude to national culture as a whole. However, these phenomena did not have a clearly expressed negative attitude to Bashkir, and by the 1980s they were gradually overcome.

At the same time, the new modernization wave was leading to the historic rostrum the following generation of Bashkir intellectuals. The representatives of the Soviet fundamentalism of the 1930s-1940s were replaced by the generation of the Bashkir traditional elite, which took active part in public political life of the republic for the late-Soviet period and further for the period of sovereignties’ parades. Its main feature was the refusal from rigid fundamentalist directions of the traditional society, which acquired the higher “intellectual” character. By this time, the social-cultural parameters of Bashkir society were subject to certain changes. The old holistic paradigm gradually was being destructed. The Bashkir culture itself was becoming more cultivated and differentiated. The collectivist values of the traditional society were ousted by individual’s directions. The literary centrism of the Soviet Bashkir culture engendered talented writers-public figures, such as Gazim Shafikov, R. Bikbai ad many others. However, side by

side with them, there appeared Rami Garipov, a poet of lyrics. His poetical language correlated simple and vivid imagination of Esenin with exaltation of the world outlook of Pasternak.

In this period of time there started simultaneously the process of growing of ethnic nationalism, which was displayed most radically for the 1990s. The emergence of a new generation of Bashkir intellectuals was characterized by the rise of national self-consciousness and patriotism. Exactly for the 1970s-1980s, the genuine Bashkir names (Salavat, Azamat, Yulai, Ural etc.) were given to the new born children. The dual nature of this phenomenon was evident. On the one side, it was the reaction to the radical change of the life type, caused by urbanization: very gradually the cultural environment was becoming the city culture. This very painful but objective process was correctly interpreted by intellectuals of the BASSR as a deficiency of the Soviet system, and they tried to respond to it by raising ethnic identity. R. Garipov, having noticed negative processes of de-ethnic phenomena, reflected his thoughts in the poem “Tugan tel” (“Native Language”) and became subject to persecution on the part of the party organs.

On the other side, this phenomenon was marked by some features of anti-Soviet and nationalist ideology, which later, for the 1990s, was transformed into the movement for sovereignty.

For the Soviet period, the Bashkir ethnic nationalism was a social and political reality. The economic and power (party) elites of the BASSR, primarily among Bashkir, were clearly identified by the division “own-alien”, despite the fact that it was covered by slogans of internationalism etc. At the same time, the Soviet Bashkir people lacked ethnic-centrism, which was actively used by the local intellectuals only in the 1990s.

Thus, for this period as a result of a peculiar synthesis of the Bashkir people’s “land” (pre-modern) and the cultural policy of the

state (modern) there emerged the specific social-cultural phenomenon, which conditionally may be called “the Soviet version of Bashkir traditionalism”.

For the post-Soviet period of Bashkir society, about the movement for sovereignty of the BSSR and as a whole about the political development of the republic for the period of 1990-2010 a lot has been written by regional scientists. Only some moments of this complicated and contradictory period need certain precise definition.

A peculiar feature of “the movement for sovereignty” there may be considered as follows: it was the display of a specific social phenomenon. The process of pulling down the traditional empire (USSR) resulted in a bright political outbreak, which was accompanied for the beginning of the 1990s in the Bashkir society by a new stage of ethnic genesis. Exactly for this period, the Bashkir intellectuals and the new regime laid the parameter for the new Bashkir people. Since the ideological foundation of “the parade of sovereignty” was ensured mainly by intellectuals, who were elevated by means of the Soviet vertical lift from the local environment, these people, to the mind of the author, fixed a very rigid and narrow space of Bashkir ethnicity. For the post-Soviet time such marks became the following notions: “language”, “rural origin”, “traditional values” and “ethnic centrism”.

Besides, by the beginning of the 1990s, the specter of Bashkir society was much richer and wider. The Soviet modernization did not occur without leaving a trace for the Bashkir people, since just for this period within Bashkir ethnicity there emerged a new cultural type – “the people of the Soviet modernity”. This stratum of Bashkir society was less ethnicized but in return was the bearer of modernization ideas. They were mainly engineers occupied in complicated technical production, the generations of oil workers, scientists and other qualified workers, who unlike the main part of Bashkir intellectuals did not form

a group by the ethnic origin. In other words, they were the people, who found their place in the Soviet system without using ethnic privileges. They represented a peculiar Bashkir “Soviet middle class”. Exactly the people of this type, to the author’s mind, were pushed aside for the period of “the parade of sovereignties”, which let the archaic character grow to a large extent. At present, to this type of people it is possible to ascribe, for instance, historian B. Aznabayev, L. Gumerov, A. Berdin and many others, including the president of Bashkortostan R. Khamitov.

Regretfully, the new national construction created in the beginning of the 1990s, it turned out that except “the people of the Soviet modernity” no places were provided for the Russian speaking Bashkir, the north-west Bashkir or the city Bashkir. For the period of modernization the old framework of ethnicity was on the eve of breaking. Urbanization was another profound reason of this process. The contemporary Bashkir society ceased to be a rural society. At present, over 50% of the Bashkir are city residents, who experience difficulties in mastering the new social space. The ethnic devices of mobilization simply do not function. Under conditions of city environment there appeared the need of the new integration mechanisms based on “civil” and not on ethnic solidarity.

At the same time, “the movement for sovereignty” in reality was a profoundly traditional movement. The carriers of local mentality came to power on its wave, and for a long time they had an essential influence on the political process in Bashkortostan. For twenty years the republic was going in the direction of “conservative modernization” and tried, in essence, to repeat the way of the USSR. By typically state methods it tried to solve problems of cultural, economic and political modernization. For a certain period, this policy protected agriculture and mainly “rural” Bashkir population; however, finally these

advantages of the republic turned round for it to stay behind under conditions of many unsolved social-economic and political problems. In other words, for some time the situation in the region was conserved; however, the processes (negative and positive) going on in other subjects of the federation started as well in Bashkortostan.

Thus, at present we see not only the process of elites change but also of de-montage of “the post-Soviet Bashkir people” assembled in the beginning of the 1990s. Regretfully, it should be recognized that this form of “the people” (based on the rigid ethnic centrism) outlived itself in terms of ideology, morality and policy. The “sovereign” powerful and ethnic-political elite of the RB by the end of “Rakhimov regime” revealed its full inadequacy. To the last moment, it naively considered that for the main mass of the Bashkir population the ideas of state sovereignty were more significant than the basic problems of survival caused by the catastrophic passage to “the market”.

R. Khamitov coming to power and his political reforms this way and that affected interests of Bashkir society, since for the period from 1990 to 2010 it turned out to be vertically integrated in the structure of the regional power. It should be admitted that at present the horizontal ties of society are being feeble and damaged in the course of “overtaking” modernization (although the level of Bashkir traditionalism is as usual high and at least higher than its level of the Russians or of the Tatarian republic). The situation is complicated by inability of the public institutions, such as the World Kurultai of Bashkir, for instance, at present to assume the function of “civil society” and with difficulty to react to the need of changing the format of its activities. Primarily, it is connected with their original aim of fulfilling rather a representative role and became a peculiar sub-system of the former regional power. It is significant to note that the attempts of the new chairman of the WKB I. Sultanmuratov to make the

discourse of the organization more adequate to the political reality and to go away from radical political discussion caused great dissatisfaction of the old generation of the Bashkir political activists. And at the same time, they themselves feeling the urgent need of elite's change initiated his nomination, since by 2010 the WKB suffered actually from the lack of the youth.

The contemporary crisis of Bashkir identity, to the mind of the author, today makes urgent also the problem of the nation's construction. The main attention should be paid to the integration mechanisms, which should be worked out rapidly. Under different (comparing with the Soviet period) political and social-economic conditions, these problems of the Bashkir people acquire the central, existential meaning. They demand at least the active scientific reflection on the part of Bashkir intellectuals.

It should be noted that in 10-15 years the general social-cultural parameters of Bashkir society will change greatly, if not radically. The old generation of the Soviet period will be replaced by the new generation of Bashkir, who do not know well or do not know at all the native language and have less fundamentalist views and values etc. Already today, coming from this situation it is necessary to extend the framework of ethnicity, to avoid hypertrophy of the assimilation's problem or of the problem of national identity's loss. The new Bashkir nation should be assembled not by language and social (rural origin) reason but, first of all, by the display of self-consciousness. Only in this case the place will be found for Russian speaking, city residents, north-west and other Bashkir.

In terms of ideology, it will be needed to avoid the unnecessary confrontation against the central power, to move in the direction to the civilized dialogue. The measure and the good sense should be opposed to any forms of radicalism. Given all kinds of political troubles, the

Bashkir people confront a new stage of ethnic genesis and in the future “the old people” of the 1990s will finally leave the public political arena. Just therefore it is very important from the beginning to build the parameters of the new Bashkir nation and to try to avoid the mistakes of the 1990s. It is necessary “to assemble” the people on the basis of traditional and ethnic values by means of organic synthesis of tradition and modernization.

“Perspektivy modernizatsii traditsionnogo obshchestva”, Ufa, 2011, pp. 116–127.

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**CULTURAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS
OF GROWING TENSION
IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS**

For the past twenty years the transformation processes in all spheres of public life in post-Soviet Russia have aggravated old and engendered new problems in inter-ethnic and inter-cultural life. The rapid regional process of ethno-cultural self-determination and sovereignization, which intensified in Russia in the 1990s and 2000s, can be termed “ethnic revolution. It coincided with the general world tendencies of bringing to the fore the ethno-national problems. These processes have been brought about by the striving to eliminate historical and socio-political injustice (heritage of colonial and neo-colonial policies), discrimination of racial, immigrant and ethno-religious groups, reaction of ethno-cultural communities to globalization, and exacerbation of competition for using the limited natural resources.

The growing tension in the North Caucasian region is a reflection of the general world processes and trends. As a result of powerful, uncontrolled processes of religious renaissance, such destructive phenomena have become more pronounced as radical ethnic nationalism and extremism in the religious sphere, which have destabilized the situation in the North Caucasus during the past two decades and prevented realization of positive tendencies in regional development. Instead of a decisive modernization breakthrough, the real life of the region is in the grip of a systemic crisis.

The reasons for this crisis in the North Caucasus are domestic (political-ideological) and external (geopolitical) factors. They include the disintegration of the powerful Soviet Union, the weakening vertical of state management, emergence of nationalistic separatism, loss of the former ideals and orientations, appearance of ideological vacuum, and crisis of civil identity.

These circumstances have created tension in the region and fanned up interethnic differences. Due to growing terrorism and extremism the above-mentioned factors have created a foundation for ethno-political and ethno-confessional conflicts which tend to expand.

An important aspect of studying tensions in the North Caucasus is the cultural-ideological factor and its manifestations, primarily, the phenomenon of religious renaissance, which has become one of the major tendencies of the development of post-Soviet Russia. It should be noted that religion in the Soviet Union was actually under the ban imposed by the authorities, due to which the number of believers substantially decreased and the role of religion weakened a great deal. During the past two decades the positions of religion in Russia have been restored considerably, the religious factor became predominant in certain spheres of public life, including the education sphere.

It should be noted that religious renaissance has not influenced the modernized parts of the Russian Federation too much, whereas in the traditionalist regions, particularly in the North Caucasus, it became a major development factor of many processes preventing solution of numerous problems of the region. Religious propaganda aimed primarily at young people, along with drawing them to the foundations of faith, Islamic culture and morality, at the same time fostered dogmatic thinking and propagated authoritarian conservative traditional patterns of social behavior. All this gives birth to backward, reactionary trends in social development and become an obstacle along the way of real socio-political transformations.

The opening of mosques and madrasahs is a major component of religious revival in the North Caucasian region. Increase in the number of these religious institutions began to take place in the last years of the existence of the Soviet Union. In 1985 there were only 47 registered mosques in the North Caucasus (27 of them were in Dagestan), whereas their number increased to 431 in 1990. By the year 2010 there were 2,200 mosques in the Republic of Dagestan alone (its population is 2.6 million), which means that one mosque is per 1,000 population, whereas in mainly Russian regions one Orthodox Christian church is per 10,000 to 15,000 population. For instance, in Rostov region inhabited by four million Orthodox Christians there are 260 churches.

Proceeding from these data, an impression is created that the process of religious revival in the North Caucasus has eliminated almost completely the secular models of life created in the U.S.S.R. Soviet power had built a system of secular general school system in the Russian and national languages in the region for many years. As a result, considerable success was registered in the formation of secular world outlook based on scientific traditions among the North Caucasian people. At the same time, the successes of Muslim school education

during the first decade of the Islamic “cultural revolution” are quite impressive. In Dagestan, for example, in the period between 1987 and 1996, 25 madrasahs and 13 Islamic institutes of higher learning, with branches in rural districts, came into being. There are courses to study the foundations of Islam almost in every town and village and educational institutions of various type are in 40 out of 42 rural districts and in nine out of ten cities in Dagestan.

On the other hand, it should be noted that study courses and methods of teaching at many Islamic educational establishments have been borrowed from secular educational institutions of Russia. There is a strange mixture of subjects, which has an adverse effect on the training level and knowledge of graduates from Islamic institutes, many of whom have to receive another, secular education to be able to find a job.

Another important element of religious renaissance in the North Caucasus is mass education of North Caucasian young men at foreign religious institutions of higher learning. The North-Western and Central Caucasus (Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia) is under Turkish influence, which is due to historical reasons (Islam came to this part of the North Caucasus from Turkey and the Crimean Khanate under Turkish domination), and there are large Cherkessian and Chechen communities there now. This is why it is quite natural that many young men wishing to receive Muslim education go to Turkey. At the same time, some young men from the above-mentioned North Caucasian republics prefer to go to Middle Eastern countries (Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Gulf states, etc.).

On the whole, more than 4,000 young men from the North Caucasian region received Islamic education abroad during the 1990s. Many of them became adherents of radical Islam, namely Wahhabi.

Their activity run counter to the traditional currents of Islam in the North Caucasus. Moreover, some of these men take the path of religious extremism and even terrorism.

The developments in Chechnya have played a no small role in the radicalization of the Islamic movement in Russia. In the early 1990s the infrastructure for training combatants under the guise of “studying the foundations of Islam” was formed in Chechnya. A network of training camps has been organized on the money from extremist organizations. Under the guidance and command of a Saudi man named Khattab a “training center” was opened in the populated center of Serzhen-Yurt, Shali district, which consisted of five camps where young trainees studied Arabic, Sharia law, guerilla war tactics, demolition techniques, etc. At the end of 1987 a Dagestani named B. Kebelov came to Chechnya and opened a Wahhabi center in the Urus Martan rural settlement, which coordinated the actions of Islamic radicals in the North Caucasus.

Apart from education, religious revival influenced the subsequent radicalization of ethno-confessional identity, which contributed to the further exacerbation of the situation in the North Caucasian region. Today ethno-confessional identity becomes the foundation of the self-determination and general behavior of individuals and whole social groups. Religious radicalism is the most dangerous consequence of the absolutization of ethno-confessional identity.

Religious fundamentalism as a socio-political phenomenon demands to build and regulate the entire social organization and public life in full conformity to religious precepts. And this often runs counter to the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation.

Extremism based on ideological, particularly religious, convictions which cover political aims, is especially dangerous. This extremism is not necessarily connected with the socio-economic

situation. Various people join numerous extremist movements and trends, and some of them participate in the implementation of these movements and trends' ideas, while many others give them moral and financial assistance. There are people who use these ideas, without sharing them, for their own selfish interests and aims.

Wahhabism is the most vivid manifestation of religious radicalism and extremism in the North Caucasus. Its ideology is based on religious discrimination and calls for enmity against the "infidels," that is, all those who do not share the Wahhabi views. In the view of the Wahhabis, secular, democratic, capitalist, communist, or other trends or views are apostasy, betrayal of Islam. Any form of socio-political structure or socio-political activity not based on the Sharia law is infidelity.

Wahhabism is the ideology of evil and hate, it calls for enmity and violence. It is one of the factors creating tension and provoking conflicts in the North Caucasus. It should be noted that quite a few attempts have been made to ban the activities of the Wahhabi organizations at a legislative level in the region, but they have not brought the desired results.

It becomes evident that the escalation of extremism and terrorism in many North Caucasian republics is directly connected with Wahhabi activities. Propaganda of religious extremism exerts direct influence on young people. It is connected with the material factor of high unemployment in the region, where almost 60 percent of the able-bodied population have no jobs, or if people do work their wages are meager. Another reason is the local population's opposition to the authorities. Local people either support militant groups or are neutral to them, but do not betray them to the federal forces.

It should also be noted that the existence of the terrorist underground in the North Caucasian region is a major factor

contributing to spreading Wahhabi teaching, ideological extremism and terrorism in the area.

Thus, the process of religious renaissance in the North Caucasus creates favorable ground not only for a positive spiritual development of North Caucasian society, but also for the emergence and propagation of the most radical trends of Islam. Simultaneously, the socio-cultural factors of tension in the region also grow. The powerful ideological base provides an opportunity to the terrorist Wahhabi underground to increase the number of its direct and passive supporters among the local population. This goes to show that up to now the local and federal authorities have proved unable to create any effective methods and instruments to oppose Wahhabi activities and influence.

So far the struggle against what is called “new terrorism” has been waged in the Russian Federation, just as in many other countries, along the following lines; the strengthening of the legislative basis; improvement of the activity of special services; increasing struggle against the financial sources of terrorism, and improvement of propaganda and ideological work. Certain success has been achieved along the first three lines in the past few years, whereas the last field remains “badly cultivated,” especially within the Muslim medium. In these conditions, one of the real instruments of opposing aggression on the part of religious extremism and religious-political terrorism could be evolvment and realization of a comprehensive cultural-ideological strategy aimed at the integration of the North Caucasian region in the All-Russia socio-cultural area, painstaking work to overcome ethno-cultural and value-ideological contradictions within the region, and increased interaction of Russia and the North Caucasus as its inalienable part.

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THE WHITE STEAMSHIP OF KYRGYZSTAN AMID THE ICE OF POST-SOVIET AUTHORITARISM

Each country of Central Asia is unique, in its own way. Kyrgyzstan is also unique as an independent state by its recent political history. Its first president was not like his colleagues, men originated from the Soviet *nomenklatura*; he was a professional scientist and real intellectual. The activity of Kyrgyz society, its hankering after political pluralism, and two revolutions, which took place in the past two decades, made Kyrgyzstan an exception among the countries of the region.

Kyrgyzstan is the only country in Central Asia which is clearly divided into southern and northern areas whose relations are far from simple. Stability and well-being of the republic depend on the state of relations between them.

The ethnic composition of Kyrgyzstan's population is rather complex and quickly changing. According to the 2009 census, of

5.5 million population, Kyrgyz account for 71 percent (in 1999 the figure was 64%), Uzbeks – 14.3% (13.8%), Russians – 7.8% (12.5%). In the southern part Uzbeks comprise 27 percent, and Russians – 5.7%.

Political pluralism, unusual for Central Asia, complex ethnic composition, economic backwardness and growing religious radicalism have turned Kyrgyzstan into a territory of instability. From this point of view, the country is the most vulnerable state of the region.

Paradoxical as it might seem, but a crisis predicted by many political analysts, which could have followed the attempt to build a

parliamentary system after the overthrow of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in 2010, did not take place.

Parliamentary, and then presidential, elections in 2011 took place relatively smoothly. A coalition was formed consisting of the Social-democratic party of Kyrgyzstan, parties “Ata Meken,” “Ar-Namys,” and “Respublika.” Social democrat Almazbek Atambayev moved from the post of Premier to that of President. There is also an opposition in the person of one of the most influential parties in the country, “Ata-Zhurt” and another party – “Butun Kyrgyzstan” headed by an ambitious person named Adakhan Madumarov, which has not gained seats in parliament.

It should be borne in mind that these parties have largely been formed on the basis of regional and even family clans. Some of them can be regarded as “southern,” others as “northern.” Nevertheless, clan-political pluralism is expressed through modern institutions – parties and parliament. Some parties, for example Social-democratic party, have more or less clear-cut programs, and all of them claim the status of general national parties.

It should also be admitted that there are quite a few bright, originally-minded persons in the modern Kyrgyz elite, and the political field in the republic is not barren as is the case in most Central Asian countries. The political spectrum of Kyrgyzstan is expressively motley. There is no tedious and mediocre ruling class closely-knit by common corporative interests.

The system taking shape in Kyrgyzstan is based on checks and balances, and is very fragile. However, it has existed under the regime of non-authoritarian power for almost two years already.

After the overthrow of two presidents of the republic – Akayev and Bakiyev, a joke has become popular in the republican capital Bishkek; “What is revolution? Revolution is a popular Kyrgyz sport.”

An indisputable fact is that Kyrgyz, in contrast to their neighbors, have overcome inertness, they have fostered the feeling of self-respect and consciousness that “man” is the subject of politics, but not only its object.

In these conditions the authorities are forced to bear responsibility before society which, in turn, keeps an eye on their actions. But, as is known, to rule a country whose population lives under constant stress is very difficult.

To boot, the economic situation in Kyrgyzstan remains very grave. In 2011, Kyrgyzstan took 14th place among the CIS countries in per capita GDP (\$2,162), being ahead only of Tajikistan (\$1,907), and after Uzbekistan (\$2,959).

Kyrgyzstan's national debt amounted to about \$3 billion in 2011 and its deficit is \$400 million. Its foreign debt reached \$2,230 billion by the beginning of 2010. The black-market (shadow) sector accounts for 60 to 70 percent of the entire economy of the country. The level of unemployment is from 8.4% (officially) to 20% (unofficially). According to the UN data, about one million people suffer from malnutrition annually. Under the World Food Program, Kyrgyzstan received assistance worth \$17.5 million in 2011.

Kyrgyzstan holds 126th place in the rating of the development of human potential out of 196 (Russia is in 66th place, Kazakhstan is in 68th, Uzbekistan is in 117th, Tajikistan – in 127th).

Another major problem facing Kyrgyzstan is corruption. According to the data of the republican office of the Attorney General, the total damage of corruption amounted to 24 billion som (about \$500 million). Western analysts say that corruption in Kyrgyzstan is inseparable from state institutions. Fight against corruption can yield results in several years' time, all the more so since practically every political figure who has his or her own business can become corrupt.

On the other hand, the collapse of the Kyrgyz economy, which has been predicted by many people, has not taken place. On December 29, 2011, President Atambayev said at his first news conference that the country managed to increase the GDP, keep inflation in check, and there was no default. The country's GDP grew by 5.7% (in 2010 it dropped by 0.5%), and growth was registered in almost all branches of the economy. The level of inflation went down by about four percent. Budget deficit was reduced by \$60 million, which amounted to \$460 in 2010.

The political, social and economic problems facing Kyrgyzstan are especially acute in the conditions of a chronic ethno-political crisis in the south of the country. People well remember the bloody events in Osh in 1990, and after 2010 there was a new tragedy – the massacre perpetrated by Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Jalalabad, in which 476 people lost their life, and many more were wounded or maimed. One can talk of the social and economic causes of those clashes, or of political provocations, but the extreme cruelty was conditioned by interethnic enmity, which is very stable and which is so difficult to overcome.

Criminal investigations of the events in Osh and Jalalabad still continue. The present-day authorities still remain hostages of this bloody conflict of 2010, and its consequences will still influence the situation in the country for a long time to come.

The government has worked out a “Concept on Ethnic Accord” based on the principle of representatives of different ethnic groups living together. By the end of 2011, 11 multi-storey houses were built for those who had lost their houses or flats. Efforts are being made to eliminate material from the mass media capable to provoke interethnic discord, and four memorial complexes are under construction to honor those who lost their life in the bloody confrontation.

However, interethnic clashes do not stop. There are 147 seats of possible conflicts in the country, according to the republican Ministry for the Interior. The State Committee of National Security gives another figure – 29. In the view of the director of the “Egalite” public foundation, Tatyana Vygovskaya, up to 370,000 civilian people have been drawn in interethnic confrontation in the republic, that is, about ten percent of the entire population (in a normal situation in any country this figure does not exceed 2%).

Apart from Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, representatives of other nationalities living in the republic have also been drawn in conflicts, among them Tajiks and people of Caucasian origin. But the greatest tension still exists between two most numerous ethnic groups – Kyrgyz and Uzbek.

There are also problems connected with Russians, who continue to emigrate. This is explained not only by economic reasons, but by continuing instability and growing ethnic nationalism. During the twenty years of Kyrgyzstan’s independence about 485,000 Russians have left the republic for Russia.

The Russian language is losing its popularity, although the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan recognizes it as an official language along with the Kyrgyz language. Many Kyrgyz nationals now understand Russian, but cannot speak.

Russians are not represented in any bodies of state power. There is not a single Russian in the government of Kyrgyzstan endorsed in 2011.

Ethnic nationalism is one of the main reasons for possible destabilization of the situation in Kyrgyzstan, and the present authorities understand it well enough. However, they are unable to overcome the existing interethnic tension, which continues to grow.

Just like other Central Asian states Kyrgyzstan pursues a multi-vector policy. But Kyrgyzstan is doomed to dependence on foreign actors, as well as on its neighbors, in the foreseeable future. The authorities and the political elite realize it full well. The problem of dependence remains painful for any regime.

Kyrgyzstan is connected with Russia by the strongest ties, and no leader doubts it or would wish to sever them. Moscow takes part in all basic Kyrgyz projects, including the construction of the country's biggest Kambaratin hydropower plant and Naryn hydro-energy cascade. Russia holds first place in Kyrgyzstan's import (33.4%) and third place in its export (18.2%). In 2010 Russian investments in the local economy amounted to \$95.9 million. Russia also renders direct financial and material assistance to Kyrgyzstan. For instance, in January 2012 it transferred military equipment and hardware worth of \$16 million to Kyrgyz border-guard units.

According to various data, up to one million Kyrgyz nationals work in Russia, who remit about \$2 billion back home annually, and this exceeds the republican budget, which is about \$1.8 billion.

The country's leaders sincerely wish to develop cooperation with Russia. Bishkek is ready to join the Customs Union and has a positive attitude to the unified economic area and the Eurasian Union created by Russia and Kazakhstan. Of course, there are certain unresolved economic problems between Russia and Kyrgyzstan, but, sooner or later, they will be settled and their relations will remain stable and firm.

In this context there is no need to raise hullabaloo after Kyrgyzstan's President Atambayev words of the possible closure of the Russian airforce base in Kant. It should have been regarded as a tactical ruse, an attempt to balance the promise to close the American base in Manas.

The problem of the base in Manas, which has been renamed into Center of transit shipments, is a kind of a symbol of Kyrgyzstan's many-vector policy. Bishkek regards it not as an alternative to Russian influence, but rather as a proof of the existence of the Russian and American vectors in its foreign policy.

Washington views the Manas problem rather calmly. First, Russia will not insist on the withdrawal of Americans from there, inasmuch as this base has the aim to establish and maintain law and order in Afghanistan, in which Moscow is greatly interested, too. Secondly, the preservation of the Manas base is quite advantageous to Kyrgyzstan, which earned \$1.411 billion during the years of its existence. Thus, consensus between Kyrgyzstan, Russia and the United States will definitely be found.

Beijing does not object the existence of the center either, inasmuch as it regards it as an instrument for fighting Islamic radicalism. Besides, Beijing does not see it as something spearheaded against China.

Apart from Russia and the United States, China is the third vector of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy. And just like the Russian vector, it acquires its own significance.

The Chinese direction becomes one of the key spheres of foreign economic ties of Kyrgyzstan. According to investigations carried out by the Central Asian Institute of Free Market, on Kyrgyz wholesale markets in both the North and South of the country up to 85 percent of the goods sold are of Chinese origin. Trade with China, in which tens of thousands of small and medium-sized businessmen take part, has become a political factor, because if it stops, for some reason or other, there will be great dissatisfaction of too many people involved in it. This fact alone reveals the hidden character of Beijing's political

influence on the situation in Kyrgyzstan and simultaneously, Bishkek's interest in maintaining stable relations with China.

China is no rival of Russia in Kyrgyzstan, because each of the two has its own economic niche. China respects Russian interests, and in its turn, Russia regards Chinese commodity expansion as something fitting. All the more so, since Kyrgyzstan is not an exception among dozens of other countries, including those in Central Asia, whose shops and trade centers are full of consumer goods made in China.

Beijing does not interfere with local political intrigues. Nobody among those in power doubts the need to develop relations with the powerful eastern neighbor. True, at the turn of the 1990s and the 2000th there were some people in Bishkek who displayed dissatisfaction with Chinese pressure on the republic, particularly, with the agreements signed in 1996 and 1999, according to which Kyrgyzstan ceded to China almost 500 square kilometers of its territory, but now it is a thing of the past.

Irrespective of how Kyrgyzstan's relations with foreign actors develop, its destiny ultimately depends on the political situation within the country. The desire to build a parliamentary system alien to the Central Asian region does not exclude the preservation of authoritarian sentiments and hankering after a "strong arm," which can well be explained psychologically, and search for a charismatic leader, another "father of the nation," who is allegedly able to lead society and overcome all difficulties facing the country. Incidentally, there are claimants to the place of such leader in Kyrgyzstan.

Nevertheless, a fragile and vulnerable Kyrgyzstan today, despite all and sundry contradictions and errors, is moving forward, like a formidable and brave ice-breaker, trying to blaze the trail for itself amid the thick ice of Central Asian authoritarianism.

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**TURKMENISTAN AT THE PRESENT STAGE:
PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF
DEVELOPMENT**

Turkmenistan is the most closed state of the CIS. On the one hand, the processes going on there are common to all countries of Central Asia. On the other, the political and economic system that has come into being there has been, and remains, the closest as compared with those existing in the neighboring countries, and it has not changed since the change of the head of state. Meanwhile, the country with its rich hydrocarbon wealth as a promising export resource is becoming an object of conflicting interests of various geopolitical actors, both regional and global.

Turkmen society consists ethnically of several regional groupings: Akhal-Tekin, Mary, Kizil-Arvat, Balkan and Tashauz (Northern groups). The first president S. Niyazov and the incumbent head of state G. Berdymuhamedov represent the Akhal-Tekin (Ashkhabad) Turkmens. The former pursued a policy of regional-tribal hegemony and the strengthening of Akhal-Tekin positions with a view to consolidating personal power.

In the early 1990s S. Niyazov, or Turkmenbashi (the father of Turkmens), as he was nicknamed, was very cautious with regard to other regional political clans, especially the strongest ones – Mary, Kizil-Arvat and Chardzhou. But by the beginning of the 21st century he succeeded in removing all important figures of these clans from the political scene. Actually, under Turkmenbashi the regime in Turkmenistan could rightly be called one of a monarchic type. In 1999 the People's Council conferred the title of head of all Turkmens and the status of lifelong president of the country on Saparmurad Niyazov.

Despite the extension of the People's Council powers in 2003, the supreme power of the head of state remained unlimited.

President G. Berdymuhamedov, who came to power in early 2007, began the country's modernization and at the same time became busy with the strengthening of his own personal power. During the four years of his rule he carried out several reforms of the state management system.

The political modernization of the country began with creating bodies dealing with human rights. In the summer of 2007 the State Commission for examination of citizens' complaints about the activities of the law-enforcement agencies was formed under the President of the Republic. Simultaneously, an Interdepartmental Commission was set up to observe fulfillment of the country's international commitments in the sphere of human rights. In November 2007 a State Commission for improvement of the state legislation came into being, and another one for reforming the country's legislative system for a period from 2008 to 2012. In early 2008, on the initiative of President G. Berdymuhamedov, the Institute of the State and Law under the country's President was set up, which was supposed to provide a scientific foundation of the legislation and legal procedure.

On September 26, 2008, a new version of the Constitution of the Republic was adopted. It abolished the People's Council. Its functions were redistributed between the President, parliament, government and Supreme Court. The number of deputies to parliament was increased from 50 to 125. Many experts note that the new Constitution does not broaden the powers of parliament, but extends and strengthens presidential powers. Under the Constitution the President appoints the heads of the regional bodies of power, members of election commissions, and other high officials. In turn, parliament has the right to appoint presidential elections and adopt the decision of his early

removal from office due to illness. Parliament also decides who of the deputy chairmen of the cabinet of ministers can be appointed temporary head of state in an event of his inability to fulfill his duties for some or other reasons. The premise that the acting President should not take part in elections was retained. The new Constitution also mentions the existence and work of the Security Council. It pays special attention to the development of a market economy based on private, public and other forms of ownership.

Then the time for reforming the country's electoral system has come. In October 2008 President G. Berdymuhamedov signed a law on the elections of deputies to parliament of Turkmenistan, in accordance with which elections would be held by single member electoral districts with the five-year term of office. The powers of the deputies elected are recognized after publication of election results in the press. In December 2008 the elections to the parliament of the fourth convocation took place, which were monitored for the first time by foreign observers representing the CIS Executive Committee, Inter-parliamentary Assembly, diplomatic corps and the OSCE. They expressed doubts as to the openness of the elections but pronounced them valid.

In April 2009 a new version of the Law of Turkmenistan on the elections of members of local councils was adopted. On July 26 these elections were held on an alternative basis.

Changes concerned not only parliamentary structures, but also local administrative bodies. In December 2008, President G. Berdymuhamedov signed a decree confirming the status of the Council of Elders of Turkmenistan which determined the legal foundations of its activity.

The next step in the transformation of state power in Turkmenistan was the formation of several pro-government parties.

There is only one political party in the country – the pro-presidential Democratic party of Turkmenistan. The opposition parties, for example the “Vatan” movement, function abroad. Besides, there are the Movement of revival (“Galkynysh”), youth organization named after Mahtumkuli, Public organization of war and labor veterans, Union of women and Council of trade unions. In February 2010 President G. Berdymuhamedov put forward an initiative to organize the new Daikhan (peasant) party. He emphasized that the emergence of an opposition party in the country is an important event in its socio-political life. He also said that if anybody expressed the wish to create a new political party, the authorities would be ready to register it this very year. The President initiated the adoption of a new law “On Political Parties.”

The multiparty system was also proclaimed in the previous Constitution, but the opposition was in a deplorable state. In actual fact, there is neither legal nor illegal opposition in the country. This is due to the political passivity of the population and actions of Turkmenistan’s authorities. The latter organized show trials of a group of political figures of the country accused of “terrorist activity” against the President in 2002. True, there are several organizations abroad which call themselves “political opposition,” but they have no influence on the political situation in the country. The problems of the opposition are connected with the fact that practically all its leaders were members of the country’s leadership at one time or another and helped Turkmenbashi create the still existing authoritarian state system.

President G. Berdymuhamedov continues Niyazov’s tactics of constantly removing and changing officials at all levels under pretext of their participation in economic crimes. Thus, it is only natural that the country’s political elite has reacted very weakly to the initiatives of the President, fearing possible reprisals for political activity in new parties.

A campaign is going on in Turkmenistan aimed at “desacralization” of the person of Saparmurad Niyazov (Turkmenbashi). A decision was adopted in 2008 to remove the gilded Arch of Neutrality crowned by the revolving statue of the first president of Turkmenistan Saparmurad Niyazov from the center of Ashkhabad to its southern outskirts, the “Niyazov calendar” was abolished, and the state anthem glorifying Turkmenbashi was changed. His name is no longer mentioned in the official oath of allegiance to Turkmenistan, his portraits were removed from banknotes and the Presidential Standard. G. Berdymuhamedov has also ordered to remove material about S. Niyazov’s father from the exposition devoted to the Great Patriotic war of 1941–1945. The authorities explain their actions by the needs of the course aimed at the country’s integration in the world community.

However, some experts maintain that simultaneously with the elimination of Niyazov’s personality cult President G. Berdymuhamedov is gradually establishing the “cult of his own personality,” primarily in the ideological sphere. It’s not for nothing that in place of Turkmenbashi’s written works, the libraries, offices, etc. are now being filled by books of the incumbent president. It became known that the main Muslim temple in Mary Region would be called “Gurbanguly-Hajji.” This is just one example of a change of ideological symbols in Turkmenistan.

There have been changes in the educational system, too. It became 10-year again, and the five-year term of study at institutes and university was restored (under S. Niyazov there was a two-year term). But school and institute curricula and study programs have not practically been changed. S. Niyazov’s main written work “Ruhname” was removed from there, but replaced with works of the incumbent president.

In June 2010 he issued an order allowing ministries and departments to open secondary trade schools. Such educational establishments have been opened at the ministry of construction, ministry of power and industry, ministry of agriculture, and at the government-run concerns “Turkmenneftegazstroi” and “Turkmengaz.” Skilled workers and technical specialists will be trained on the basis of two-to-three-year study programs. The scientific potential of the country is also restored: the Academy of Sciences and the Higher Testing and Evaluation Committee are now functioning. In accordance with a decree on improvement of the scientific system of Turkmenistan, the Higher Council on Science and Technology under the President of the Republic has been set up and it will have a special Fund of Science and Technology. These institutions will work out and implement the state’s scientific and technological policy, carry on joint programs in fundamental sciences, introduce results of scientific research and scientific and technical achievements in the country’s economy, put forward proposals aimed at raising the country’s scientific and technological potential, take part in training highly-skilled specialists, organize scientific and technical research, develop international scientific-technological cooperation, etc.

At a meeting of the cabinet of ministers in June 2009 the President formulated the concept of the further development of Turkmenistan’s science oriented to speeding-up innovation processes in the economy and working out a comprehensive state program of scientific-technological development for its consistent and effective implementation. These steps are definitely a good impetus to the policy of the modernization of the country’s economy.

In October 2008 a decree of the President was published on the creation of a special commission regulating the activity of creative workers – writers and poets, theater and film directors, etc. The

commission has the right to evaluate the artistic level of literary and art works and give permission for their publication, staging or filming. The state has the right to control the import of literature and other printed matter from abroad, and also to control access to and the use of the Internet.

Despite its new policy of “openness” Turkmenistan continues to remain a “closed” state, at least due to inaccessibility of economic and statistical information, which complicates the process of analyzing the economic situation in the country.

The specific features of the national economy are determined by several factors. First, the presence of big deposits of hydrocarbon raw materials, estimated by international experts at 20.8 billion tons of oil and 24.6 trillion cubic meters of gas. Apart from that, more than a thousand promising oil and gas structures have been discovered, as well as over 150 deposits of which one-third is being developed. More than 160 deposits of solid minerals have been prospected, including Celestine, coal, sulfur, mineral salts, kaolin, bentonite, ozokerite, carbonate, mineral pigments, etc. Secondly, the closed character of the economy: foreign investors are allowed only to help develop deposits difficult for working. Another factor is geographical closeness. Turkmenistan has no access to the open sea and is surrounded by states the political situation in which makes it difficult to deliver Turkmenistan’s hydrocarbons to world markets. Turkmen gas has been exported to Europe by Russia through its own pipelines for quite a long time. After the new Turkmenistan – China pipeline was opened in December 2009, Turkmen gas reached China.

Among the main industrial branches there are extraction and processing of hydrocarbons, electric power industry, textile industry and construction. A specific feature of the present-day industrial development is the rapid growth of the manufacturing and processing

branches: chemistry and petrochemistry, machine-building and metal-working industries, and light and food industry. In 2009 the metallurgical industry came into being: near Ashkhabad a plant was commissioned producing building bars, angle plates, channel beams, etc. with an annual capacity of 160,000 tons. As to agriculture, the main emphasis is laid on cotton- and grain-growing. The creation of a merchant navy was started in the early 2000s.

During the period of independence several economic development programs have been adopted. In 1992 the “10 Years Stability” program was endorsed, which was supposed to preserve the system of planned economic management along with gradual liberalization of the economy and continue to improve direct state management and regulation at the initial stage of reforms. In 1999 a “Strategy of socio-economic transformations for a period up to 2010” was adopted, which envisaged transformations in the four priority spheres ensuring economic, food, social and ecological security of Turkmenistan. In 2004 another “Strategy of economic, political and cultural development of Turkmenistan up to 2020” was adopted, according to which the GDP of the republic should have grown by 14.6 times, and by 2010 – by 28.4 times.

Privatization policy was one of the directions of the economic reform. According to the law on “denationalization and privatization of property in Turkmenistan” (1992), first of all small enterprises in the sphere of services, light industry, construction and agriculture were to be privatized. By January 1, 2008, two thousand 130 objects of state property were privatized. In agriculture irrigated lands, as well as 89 percent of horned cattle and fowl, and over 61 percent of sheep and goats were given over to private persons. Tenants till 70 percent of plough-land. Free economic zones have been established (the law on it was adopted in 1998), but the first such zone was officially announced

in the city of Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk) on the shore of the Caspian Sea for the development of tourism.

When the new president came to power, the country's authorities proclaimed a course to develop small and medium-sized business, planning to raise its share in the GDP to 45 percent by 2015, and in the future – to 70 percent (in 2008 its share was about 40 percent). For this purpose amendments to the Tax Code were made at the end of 2005 for private enterprises and individual entrepreneurs, according to which the standard tax rate from gross income was fixed at two percent, which made it possible to reduce document turnover and simplify the procedure of calculating and paying taxes. As a result, the tax burden on small enterprises diminished by almost fifty percent.

Customs legislation is also changed. In 2008 the President issued a decree confirming the list of commodities on which customs duties were either considerably reduced or abolished altogether for legal entities and individual entrepreneurs.

In February 2010 the State Commission on support of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship was set up. In accordance with the law “On state support of small and medium-sized business,” the commission's work will be devoted to stepping up and helping entrepreneur activity in various spheres of the country's economy.

The basis of the agricultural reform was the introduction of private ownership of land. Transfer of land over to peasants (up to 50 hectares for personal ownership, and up to 500 hectares for long-term lease) will do no harm to collective farms. The minimal term of lease is increased to ten years. Inheritance of land is also envisaged. Foreign investors can be given state-owned land on lease. The situation in the agrarian sector is rather complex. Private producers of strategically important cotton and grain receive credits from the state on favorable terms and are exempt from taxes. The government compensates 50

percent of their expenses on seeds, chemical and mineral fertilizer, and various technical services.

The reforms which are underway in Turkmenistan and the minimal openness of its economy have yielded certain results (see the table below). In 2005 – 2010 Turkmenistan developed at sufficiently high rates. According to official data, the annual increase of the GDP in 2007–2008 exceeded 10 percent, in 2009 – 6.1 percent, despite the world financial crisis, and in 2010 – 9.2 percent.

In the crisis year of 2009 Turkmenistan registered a stable increase of macroeconomic indices, although it was somewhat lower as compared with preceding years. Industrial output grew unevenly by individual branches. The greatest increase was in oil production – by 79.3 percent, chemical industry – by 50.6 percent, electric power generation – by 37.8 percent. Agricultural production also grew thanks to good harvest.

Table

Basic macroeconomic indices

	Years					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP						
\$billions			13.89	15.36	18.48	20.2
Growth rates,%			110.9	110.5	106.1	109.2
Per capita \$			2,138	2,369	2,843	3,101
Investments in basic assets, \$billions, in current prices			1.61	5.44	8.75	10.0
Foreign trade turnover						
\$billions	7.6	8.9	13.4	17.6	18.3	17.9
Growth rates,%	105.5	117	149	132	103.8	97.6
Export, \$billions	4.3	6.1	8.9	11.9	9.3	9.7
Import, \$billions	3.3	2.8	4.5	5.7	9.0	8.2
Trade balance, \$ billions	1.0	3.3	4.4	6.2	0.3	1.5
National currency exchange rate (manat/\$)	5,200	5,200	5,200	14,250	2,85	2,85

Source: Data of the Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in Turkmenistan.

According to official data, the growth of solvency and real incomes of the population continued in 2009: average monthly wage and salary in the republic increased by 10.4 percent during the year, with zero inflation, and domestic trade turnover – by 15.9 percent. The revenue part of the state budget was fulfilled by 102.3 percent, and the expenditure part -- by 93.9 percent. The high rates of the country's socio-economic development make it possible to replenish in a planned character the Stabilization Fund created in 2008.

During 2009 the denomination of the Turkmen currency took place. The \$ exchange rate to the new national currency was 2.85 manat to \$1, as against 14,200 manat per \$1 by December 31, 2008. True, the manat was not officially devalued. The rate of exchange was established by the country's authorities, but not on the basis of currency bidding.

Simultaneously, the government took measures to reduce the influence of the global financial crisis: stricter control was introduced over the currency regime and the bank system and the tax and budget sphere were strengthened. According to a decree of the President, a commission was set up to analyze the negative influence of the world financial-economic crisis on the country's economy and work out corresponding measures to counteract it.

The discovery of new gas deposits and a change in the law on foreign investments have led to a considerable increase of the inflow of direct foreign investments from 2009, mainly in the sector of hydrocarbon raw materials' extraction.

In 2010 the growth rates of the GDP by branches amounted to: in the sphere of industry – 108.1 percent, construction – 116 percent, transport and communications – 112.2 percent, trade – 111.3 percent, agriculture – 107.8 percent, services – 106 percent. Compared to the similar period of 2009, production of electricity, gas, oil and oil

products, mineral fertilizer, cement, building materials, cotton fiber, cotton yarn, knitted goods and garments, footwear, leather, medicines, fish and fish products, bread, milk and dairy, and other agricultural products have increased.

The fuel-and-energy sector, which is crucial for the national economy has been further developed. The growth rate of gas extraction reaches 116.5 percent compared to the 2009 level. The export volume of natural gas increased by 33.6 percent. In 2010 electric energy generation increased by three percent as against the preceding year, and the volumes of its export are dynamically growing. In 2010 the construction of another gas pipeline to Iran was started, foundations were laid for building a gas trunk pipeline “Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India” and the construction of the country’s biggest “East – West” pipeline began, which is being built by Turkmen companies.

A few words would be appropriate concerning the energy security of Turkmenistan as a factor of consolidation of its international position. It is necessary to protect energy carriers from the moment of fuel-and-energy production to the moment of its delivery to customers. Lately, the situation has become complicated due to international terrorism. There have been blasts along supply lines in Turkmenistan, Iraq, Turkey, Nigeria and elsewhere. This calls for more energetic measures to protect them.

Turkmenistan has substantial reserves of gas and oil and is one of the biggest producers of electric energy in the region. Today thousands of promising gas and oil deposits are discovered in the republic both on land and in the sea.

Turkmenistan is working actively to deliver its fuel-and-energy supplies to world markets. Since this problem is quite complicated, the country’s President addressed the UN in September 2007, putting

forward the initiative to create an international mechanism for reliable protection and security of fuel-and-energy transportation.

Turkmenistan is also taking steps to diversify the export of its fuel-and-energy resources and find other routes for their transportation to world markets. One of the first steps in this direction was an international high-level conference on April 23–24, 2009, in Turkmenistan to discuss the problem of fuel-and-energy transportation and its security.

The revenue part of the state budget in 2010 amounted to 125 percent, the expenditure part – 92 percent as compared to the preceding period. The means received from the budget surplus in 2010 were channeled to the Stabilization Fund.

In the view of experts at international organizations, Turkmenistan is being reformed too slowly. Transfer to market relations began only in 2009. Despite the denomination of the national currency, the bank system is not large enough. The main problem, as analysts from the European Reconstruction and Development Bank think, is conditioned by the domination of state banks, which seriously hampers access of the private sector to finances and at the same time prevents solution to the more comprehensive task, namely, diversification of the economy.

In May 2010 the government adopted a national program of the socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for the years 2011 – 2030. It envisages the diversification of the economy and greater competition and recognized the importance of further market and institutional reforms. For the first time privatization in the sphere of small and medium-sized business is included in the program. Priority directions of the structural reforms were also outlined. First, it is an improvement of the business and investment climate with a view to drawing more direct investments, diversifying the economy, alleviating

the administrative burden and simplifying the registration procedures and licensing of private enterprises. Secondly, it is an increase in the share of the private sector in the bank system. The reform of the bank legislation should contribute to broader access to credits, which is of decisive importance to small and medium-sized enterprises, inasmuch as they have had no access to credits necessary for their operation and development so far.

Tenders have been announced for the privatization of certain government-run companies of the country. In August 2010 the government submitted new bills to parliament on bank and currency regulation with a view to improving the national bank system by transferring it to the international standards of accounts and greater transparency of bank operations.

The growth of the country's industrial potential is to take place along several main directions. So far indisputable priority has been given to the development of the oil-and-gas complex up to 2020. It is envisaged that by the year 2020 the production of oil and gas condensate will increase to 100 million tons of gas – up to 240 billion cubic meters.

Participation of foreign companies in the modernization and development of the country's oil and gas industry until 2020 is legislatively conformed by the President's decree on setting up joint ventures with foreign firms. Turkmenistan has long-term agreements on cooperation in the gas sphere with Russia, China and Iran and has signed a memorandum on cooperation in the energy sphere with the European Union. The government of Turkmenistan stated that in 2010 foreign investments in the energy sector, in which joint ventures operate, would grow by 46 percent – up to \$4.1 billion, as against \$2.8 billion in 2009. However, official statistics has given no data on this score so far.

One of the priority directions in the development of the oil-and-gas complex has been the development of the hydrocarbon resources of the Caspian Sea shelf. Its Turkmen sector is divided into 32 blocks. According to specialists' calculations, the expected resources of the Caspian Sea shelf are estimated at 12 billion tons of oil and six trillion cubic meters of gas. Movable sea installations of the latest type are used for extracting oil from the sea shelf on "Block-1."

Much attention is devoted not only to extraction, but also refinery of hydrocarbon raw materials: the oil refinery has been reconstructed in the city of Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk). Within the framework of this project an oils-producing plant and a cat-cracking installation have been built. The investments of Japanese and Turkish oil companies made it possible to modernize the cat-reforming process at the plant and increase the production of high-grade petrol by 2.5 times. The country's second biggest oil refinery – Seidin plant – has been reconstructed. The program envisages the construction of new oil refineries in Balkan district in 2025 and in Akhal and Mary districts in 2030. A new gas refinery is built with one-billion cubic meters capacity on the Yashyldepe deposit. It will also process 50,000 tons of liquefied gas and 200,000 tons of gas condensate a year. The entire complex includes 40 technological and engineering-communication objects at a contract cost of \$42 million.

Under Turkmen-Chinese agreements, an investment project on the development of the gas infrastructure and the construction of gas refinery with a capacity of five billion cubic meters a year were started on the Samandepe deposit in July 2008, which will supply the transnational Turkmenistan – China gas pipeline.

In the early 21st century Turkmenistan began to diversify its gas communication lines. These operations were intensified in 2009 – 2010. Due to great losses caused by a stop to the import of raw materials by

Russia for more than six months, their extraction was drastically curtailed, and about 150 wells were suspended. As a result, only 38 billion cubic meters of gas were extracted in 2009, by 50 percent less than planned.

At the end of 2009 the above-mentioned “Turkmenistan – China” gas pipeline began to function, and during 2010 about six billion cubic meters of gas were supplied through it; the pipeline is expected to reach its project capacity of 40 billion cubic meters by 2013. By that time Turkmenistan will export about 30 billion cubic meters of gas via this pipeline (a contract has been signed between CNPC and “Turkmengaz” on supplying gas to the People’s Republic of China for a term of 30 years, beginning from 2009). Additional 10 billion cubic meters of gas will be supplied by Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. However, the prices of the Turkmen gas supplies have not yet been agreed upon. One of the main factors to be considered is gigantic distances from Turkmen gas deposits to the Chinese border (1,700 kilometers) and its further transportation across Chinese territory – the main regions of gas consumption in China are in its coastal provinces (another six thousand kilometers). According to some sources, the Chinese side offers considerably lower prices than European consumers. So far the low price of \$120 for one thousand cubic meters is backed up by the credit of the State Bank of China amounting to \$4 billion for the development of South Iolotan.

On January 6, 2010, the 30-kilometer-long gas pipeline to Iran (Dovletbat – Serakhs – Hangeran) was commissioned. It will make it possible to bring the volume of Turkmen gas deliveries to Iran to twenty billion cubic meters annually, with due account of the already functioning Korpedzhe – Kurtkui gas pipeline.

Despite the fact that Russia and Turkmenistan have agreed on the export of gas to the volume of up to 30 billion cubic meters annually,

this figure is the upper limit depending on the requirements of Ukrainian and European markets. According to Russian statistical data, deliveries of Turkmen gas to the Russian gas company “Gazprom” amount to about 11 billion tons in 2010, that is, almost four times less than in 2007 – 2008. However, this agreement is more advantageous for Russia than the previous one. According to the contract signed at the end of 2008, “Gazprom” had to buy about 50 billion cubic meters annually (two-thirds of the entire extracted amount) at a price of \$375 for one thousand cubic meters, and now, in the conditions of a sharp drop in prices of gas in Europe due to the existing crisis, in considerably smaller volumes and at a lower average European price of about \$190.

The European Union still hopes to get supplies of Turkmen gas through the Caspian and Black seas. Turkmenistan is a potential key supplier of gas to the Nabucco gas pipeline, which is the alternative to Russian gas pipelines. The implementation of this project is only possible if a strategic agreement is signed by the European Union on supplies of gas from Turkmenistan for a term of 30 years. Despite a certain improvement of the positions of the European Union during the preceding years (the 2008 memorandum on deliveries of 10 billion cubic meters of gas annually), the framework document on the investigation of the route of deliveries from the German RWE (2009), and also Turkmenistan’s intention to supply this pipeline with about 10 billion cubic meters of gas annually, no concrete decisions on the construction of this pipeline has been adopted as yet. The European parliament has agreed to unprecedented political concessions by ratifying the agreement between the European Union and Turkmenistan, despite the situation with human rights in that country.

The implementation of the project of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline is retarded and made more complicated by the absence of a

border delimitation treaty between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, whose gas transportation system is connected with Turkey by the South-Caucasian pipeline.

Turkmenistan is ready to supply gas to Europe only via the territory of Iran or Russia. The already-mentioned new gas pipeline to Iran can be used for the purpose. But this idea will hardly be supported by Washington which has deprived the Nabucco pipeline of gas resources for isolating Iran. True, agreements on the construction of the “Northern” and “Southern” flows practically leave no hopes for having a sufficient amount of Central Asian gas for this energy-and-fuel project. In order to fulfill the already signed export contracts Turkmenistan should have 80 – 90 billion cubic meters of gas and about 20 billion for the domestic market. Ashkhabad’s intention to increase gas export to 125 billion cubic meters by 2015 (increasing it by 150 percent compared to 2008) is assessed by experts as unfeasible.

In May 2010 the construction of the biggest “East – West” gas pipeline began, which will be 1,000-kilometer long. This will make it possible to create a unified gas-pumping system of the country. Besides, in December 2010 an agreement was signed of a gas pipeline connecting Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India about 1,730-kilometer long. Its annual capacity will be about 33 billion cubic meters of gas of which Pakistan and India will get 14 billion cubic meters each, and Afghanistan – five billion cubic meters. If construction begins in 2011, the pipeline may be ready by the end of 2015. However, the documents signed do not contain many important details – the exact date, the size of transit rates and conditions of financing. Besides neither the government of Afghanistan nor the NATO forces deployed in that country cannot guarantee security for the construction of the gas pipeline and its further functioning on the country’s territory.

Turkmenistan has begun the diversification of its oil export (its share in 2009 amounted to about one-third of the total export of hydrocarbon raw materials) and started to pump up to 40,000 barrels of oil a day via the Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan oil pipeline. Turkmen oil now account for up to five percent of the total volume of oil pumped through this pipeline.

The textile industry is the second in importance branch of industrial production in Turkmenistan. National textile factories process about 40 percent of row cotton. The Turkmen-Turkish joint ventures controlling around 90 percent of the country's textile industry are the most stable and successful.

As to electric power generation and transmission, foreign investors are mostly interested in the reconstruction projects of the operating electric power plants and comprehensive servicing and maintenance of energy objects. They are ready to offer meteorological equipment and resource-saving technologies with the use of wind and solar energy. Russia, the United States, Germany and Turkey display special interest in partnership in this field.

Several international energy companies are ready to invest \$3 billion in the project of modernizing the energy system of Turkmenistan. This project will be implemented in several stages and will hardly be completed before 2020. Along with the modernization project of Turkmenistan's biggest Balkanabat electric power plant, it is expected to triple electric power generation in the country by 2020.

The assessments of development prospects of the economy made by the country's leadership and international experts coincide. Both positively assess Turkmenistan's possibilities to restore economic growth rates. According to the International Monetary Fund's estimates, the extraction, refining and export of hydrocarbon raw materials enable the country not only to preserve its economic

positions, but also to strengthen them, all the more so since it succeeded to diversify the transportation of natural gas mined on its territory at the end of 2009.

The “Economic Strategy of Turkmenistan” proclaimed by its President G. Berdymuhamedov in May 2010 is aimed at effective integration of the country’s economy in the world economy. For this purpose “the country will need a diversified and modernized industrial potential, developed transport and communication lines, high-quality market infrastructure, economic and legal guarantees, and conditions for drawing large-scale investments, and stability of the social and political systems.” Due to the course aimed at the diversification of the national economy, the dependence of the state budget on the incomes from the fuel-and-energy complex was lowered in 2010. The agro-industrial complex, transport and communications, construction, textile and food industries were further developed. The creation of the national tourist zone “Avaza”, construction of major projects of the transport and communication and industrial infrastructures, and implementation of municipal building program in the republican capital were continued. On the whole, more than 240 large-scale projects worth \$12 billion were built in the country in 2010. The financing of the national budget for implementing economic strategy was backed mainly by the fuel-and-energy complex of the country.

* * *

Thus, Turkmenistan is trying, as the other Central Asian countries, to carry out administrative and political reforms “from the top,” without creating a real civil society, but strengthening presidential power. This is one of the specific features of the country’s political culture. The Turkmen leadership attaches great importance to modernizing the economy and creating and consolidating the

manufacturing branches, relying on the incomes of the oil-and-gas branch. Slow-going reforms and transfer to a relative openness of the country give hopes to the West that Turkmenistan will gradually join world processes. Meanwhile, Turkmenistan is cooperating more successfully with its neighbors – China, Iran and Russia.

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**POLYCULTURAL EDUCATION IN TAJIKISTAN:
FIRST STEPS**

Tajikistan is a country without an outlet to the sea with a population of seven million 124 thousand. Its geographic landscape is quite complex: 93 percent are taken by mountains, six percent of which are glaciers, and farm land occupies only seven percent of the entire territory. Seventy-three percent of the republican population live in rural areas, with two-thirds engaged in agriculture as the main source of existence. Tajikistan boasts rich water resources, which make it possible to grow crops intensively, especially cotton, which is the main agricultural plant.

Children comprise the greatest share of the population, 40 percent of it are people younger than 18.

Each person has the right to education irrespective of age, sex, nationality, and faith. Equal access to education ensures equal opportunities for disclosing the potential of the individual, achieving a higher level of education, and broadening scientific and technical literacy. The Declaration of Millennium considers a long and healthy life, education, worthy living standards, political and civil freedoms to

choose the way of life of society to be the key prerequisites for the development of human potential.

The “Strategy of Reduction of Poverty” adopted by the parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2002 noted that education contributed to economic growth and the social and political progress of society. Investments in the development of education and human capital should contribute to the economic growth of the country and elimination of poverty. Among the main aims of the government of the Republic of Tajikistan are provision of an equal access to basic education and improvement of the quality of education which has deteriorated in the past decade due to a number of reasons. The educational reform for 2004–2009 adopted by a decree of the government of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2004 and the “National Development Strategy” worked out on its basis have contributed to the development of human capital in Tajikistan.

To provide a high-quality education to all children is a direct duty of the state. After acquiring independence, and especially after signing a truce agreement with the opposition, the government of Tajikistan has undertaken steps to reform the educational system. These reforms have become the foundation for providing qualitative education. Among the basic principles of state policy in the sphere of education is the obligation of general basic education, accessibility of general secondary and primary trade education, and opportunity to continue education, achieving its higher levels, on a competitive basis. However, there are considerable obstacles along the way of ensuring a proper quality in the educational system. This concerns new textbooks, methodological aids and the system of upgrading teachers for interactive methods of teaching. The democratization of the entire educational process and training of teachers, as well as a change in the attitude to education on the part of parents are important from the point

of view of the role and responsibility of society in the modernization process of education.

There are quite a few official documents adopted and issued in the Republic of Tajikistan confirming the right of children to education. Among them the Constitution of the Republic, several laws, government decrees, programs, etc. Special mention should be made of legislative acts of Tajikistan aimed at gender equality in education, elimination of poverty, and improvement of the quality of education by introducing educational standards.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan, the level of education of people from seven to 15 years of age at general educational institutions exceeds 98 percent. At present the number of pupils studying at general secondary schools from forms 1 to 9 is 1,493,954. The main reason for illiteracy of a small part of the population registered by the latest census was the civil war of 1991–1997 and its consequences: refugees, poverty, large families, shortage of money to buy textbooks, study aids, children's clothing, footwear, etc.

Numerous children and young people's centers, clubs, non-governmental, public and charity organizations with support rendered by government bodies, local communities and international organizations help organize and are in charge of non-formal extra-curricular education. There are more than 70 such organizations in Tajikistan carrying on educational work of various type. New educational centers have been opened and are now functioning in the outlying districts of Tajikistan: Rasht, Rogun, Tajikabad, Jirgital, Shaartuz, Farkhor, and elsewhere.

Children's public and non-governmental organizations work in accordance with an order issued by the republican Ministry of Education and the Committee on Young People's Affairs under the

government of Tajikistan in 1999. At all schools of general education the children's public Somoni organization functions, which has three age groups: "Ahtaron" (1 to 4 forms), "Vorisoni Oli Somon" (5 to 9 forms) and "Somonien" (10–11 forms). This organization helps children study better, acquaints them with their rights and duties, and takes care of their extra-curricular activities. School teachers of history, literature and the language and legal subjects take part in the work of these organizations. Non-governmental bodies are also engaged in non-formal education of children. They have set up educational and trade centers teaching children to read and write, to learn various trades, and they also take care of children from refugee families and orphans.

Tajikistan is a multinational country inhabited by representatives of more than 120 nationalities and ethnic groups. They include Uzbeks, Russians, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Tatars, Jews, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Koreans, and others. The "multicolor" picture of the country is reflected by the national composition of the students at the Russian-Tajik (Slav) University. They all enjoy equal rights. At present 177 periodicals of various kind are published in the languages of ethnic minorities, including 45 in the Russian language, 12 in Uzbek, two in Kyrgyz, and seven in English.

The first steps of polycultural education of young people can well be seen on the example of the work of just two chairs of the Russian-Tajik (Slav) University – the chair of studies of culture, teaching methods and psychology, and the UNESCO chair called "Intercultural Dialogue in the Modern World." A broad range of material about history, culture and religion of the peoples of the world, is discussed at seminars and lectures, emphasizing the need to display tolerance and respect of traditions of different peoples. There is a student group called "Caravan of Culture" discussing various problems of history and international relations in reports made by students

themselves, and arranging get-togethers and other functions devoted to various peoples, which help them learn and understand better their culture and traditions on the example of their fellow-students representing these peoples. In this way young people become familiar with the cultural heritage of mankind.

Now a few words about religious education in Tajikistan. Its higher educational institutions have the subject “History of Religion” for 36 academic hours. The course of lectures lasts three months and acquaints students with different religions of the world: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, etc. The course on Islam consists of ten lectures.

In Tajikistan, where religious figures have a significant influence on political and ideological atmosphere, religious matters often turn out into a subject of a heated debate, so much so that the republican Ministry of education has to set up a special commission consisting of representatives of the Muslim clergy, political and public figures and teachers in order to find a solution to problems acceptable to all.

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