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**DEMONSTRATION EFFECT IN THE
CONDITIONS OF GLOBALIZATION**

(On the example of events in Arab countries)

Demonstration Effect as a Sign of Social Progress

The “Arab revolution” for the world, just as for the Arab countries themselves, was virtually “a bolt from the blue.” The situation prevailing in most Arab countries at the time could be explained by words of a classic of political science, namely, that “those at the top were unable to rule in the old way, and those at the bottom did not want to live in the old way.” In Tunisia, where these events began, the situation differed from that in Egypt. And the events in Libya took completely different turn, and besides, its position was not like that in most Arab countries.

Then, certain people began to talk of a demonstration effect, which, as they claimed, was the main reason for mass actions in Arab countries.

Yes, this effect did play its role in mobilizing people who were dissatisfied with their life, mainly the most socially active and dynamic young men. However, this phenomenon is a natural attendant of historical progress.

The role of the demonstration effect grows along with the development and expansion of international ties and the means of communication. The role of this effect was especially important in former colonies and semi-colonies.

Under the influence of the patriotically-minded officers of Egypt headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser, who came to power as a result of a military coup and pursued a course to complete national liberation, similar coups took place in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan.

This demonstration effect is felt in advanced countries, too. For example, the so-called student revolution in France in 1968 exerted a great influence on many European countries, Germany being one of them.

The demonstration effect in the 1960s gave rise to the movement of the “New Left” targeted against “consumer society,” “mass culture,” conformism, unification of human personality, etc. However, soon its participants began to resort to the extremist methods of struggle against official society.

Answer of the Authorities to Mass Manifestations of the Citizens Dissatisfied with Their Life

The answer to mass manifestations and demonstrations in Arab countries could well be predicted. Obviously, the rulers still remembered how Asad, Sr. had dealt with the rebellious citizens of his country in 1982. Having used tanks and heavy artillery, he virtually wiped off the face of the earth a big part of the whole Syrian city of Hamy and killed up to 30,000 his fellow-compatriots. And he got away with that easily. The Soviet Union remained silent because it regarded the Syrian regime its ally, but the West did not express great indignation over this brutality either. But times have changed, and people have changed, too.

The western mass media and political analysts, writing and talking of the developments in the Arab world, use such words as “Arab revolution,” “Arab spring,” “long-awaited changes,” etc. But it is too early as yet to judge where there is revolution and where counter-revolution. What is almost certain is that instability in the Middle East and North Africa will persist for a long time to come. The situation in the Arab world is complex and unpredictable, but it is due to quite objective reasons.

The Logic of the Arab Upheavals

One can hear words even at scholarly conferences that revolutions, rebellions, irresponsible manifestations of crowds, etc. are provoked by outside forces, and more often than not the words “Washington’s hand” are heard here and there. But more cautious analysts talk of Washington’s attempts to “redivide” the “Greater Middle East.”

The revolutions in the Arab world are one hundred percent ARAB revolutions provoked by Arab realities, but not by outside interference, which can, of course, take place, but it is not the decisive factor, and is not necessarily American, on the contrary, it may be Iranian. The Arab revolutions have been caused by a number of factors.

First, it is the worsening social situation in many Arab countries after the beginning of the world financial-economic crisis. The chain reaction of mass movements began, as is known, in Tunisia in December 2010. Incidentally, it is one of the most developed and cultured Arab countries.

In January 2011 unrest began in Egypt, which was caused by a similar domestic situation – the growing cost of life, higher prices of food, commodities and services, and increasing unemployment, especially among young people.

Secondly, corruption and a wide gap between the rich and the poor, the dictatorial style of the rulers surrounded by their kith and kin, giving over power to their children or close relatives, and disposing of their country's resources as they think fit. These rulers have lost not only connections with their people and true knowledge of the real situation in their country, but even the feeling of time. And how could it be otherwise when Ben Ali ruled in Tunisia for 23 years, Hosni Mubarak in Egypt – 30 years, Ali Abdal Saleh in Yemen – 30 years, Hafez Asad and his son Bashar in Syria – 30 and 11 years respectively, and Gaddafi in Libya – 42 years.

Thirdly, solution of urgent social problems in many Arab countries was rendered more difficult by the rapid population growth. During the past thirty years the number of people in the Arab countries has doubled. Moreover, the poorer the country, the higher the surplus of its population. For example, in Yemen it is 3.1 percent higher than the growth rates of its GDP. The situation has somewhat been alleviated by money transfers from the Yemenis working in the oil-rich countries, primarily in Saudi Arabia. Although the natural population growth in the Arab countries has somewhat decreased from three to 2.4–2.2 percent, the annual surplus of the GDP, except the rich Gulf states, is so small that they are unable to solve the problem of poverty and unemployment successfully. They have either to increase production or introduce family planning as is the case of China.

Fourthly, mass discontent is also caused by the rule of ethnic-confessional minorities. Iraq under Saddam Hussein was ruled by the Sunna minority (about 20 percent of the population). On the contrary, the Shia minority has ruled Syria, having the key commanding posts in the army and business. This regime is backed by theocratic Shia Iran, which dissatisfies several Arab countries, which regard Iran as their rival for leadership in the region. Besides, they still remember that in

the war between Iraq and Iran, Syria sided with the Shia regime of Ayatolla Homeini.

For the sake of justice it should be admitted that in Iraq and Syria the religious factor has not played the decisive role in public life inasmuch as the ruling Ba'ath parties (the party of Arab socialist revival) were formed on the pattern of the Communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The nature of the degeneration of these parties was about the same as that of the communist regimes. But it should also be admitted that the regime of Bashar Asad in Syria is opposed not only and not so much by the democratic forces, as many people in the West imagine or claim, but by the Islamist forces, and this is why it is not known whether it is better or worse for the future of Syria.

During the past decades under the impact of a whole number of factors (the Shia revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Soviet troops' participation in the civil war there, the collapse of real socialism and the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., the U.S. aggression against Iraq, and the NATO military operations in Afghanistan) the situation has changed: Islam has begun to fill the vacuum in the ideological sphere.

Fifthly, the turbulent events in the Arab world are, in one way or another, connected with globalization and information revolution. New means of communication between people have emerged in various countries and on the global scale. And a new generation of users of the social networks has come into being, who can rightly be regarded as the "fifth, popular power" and who form their own public opinion. The role of the Internet, which is not under control or under censorship and which has tremendous influence on the formation of new revolutionary consciousness, has not yet been properly described and analyzed.

As to the outside interference, it did take place, but it did not trigger off the Arab upheavals.

Miscalculations of the West

No matter what negative events happen in the world, quite a few of our citizens tend to ascribe them to the schemes of the West, primarily, the United States. Meanwhile, the Americans were able to pursue an effective policy at the time of the confrontation between the two world systems. The best American minds have been mobilized and worked successfully to evolve the methods of destruction of the Soviet Union by peaceful means from within. Having used the inability of the old and senile Soviet leadership to rule the country properly and the growing discontent of Soviet people with their living conditions, Washington forced it to allocate enormous means to prepare for the mythical “star wars,” and also prodded it to invade Afghanistan. All this exhausted the Soviet economy, greatly weakened, as it was, by the prolonged arms race, and provoked the growing discontent with socialism as a system. Other means for undermining the pillars of socialism were also widely used. For example, one of the aims of the Helsinki Agreements of 1975 was to breed the dissident movement in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. And in 1986, when *perestroika* was already underway in the U.S.S.R., the United States persuaded Saudi Arabia to increase oil supply to the world market considerably in order to knock down the price of oil, and thus place the Soviet leadership in difficult conditions, which did take place. Washington ably used the weak spots of M. Gorbachev and successfully manipulated B. Yeltsin, which was later admitted by former high officials of the United States.

However, the Americans could not predict the turn of event in the Arab world. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union the United States has become the only superpower in the world, and Washington, thinking that now it could afford everything, began to lose the sense of reality, making one blunder after another. These include two wars – in

Iraq and in Afghanistan. President Bush threatened to use force against the countries of the “axis of evil” – North Korea and Iran, which compelled them to search for survival in possessing nuclear weapon. President Bush could hardly foresee the most complex world problem into which his threat to Iran would turn. His near-to-maniacal striving to manufacture American democracy in countries absolutely unprepared for it could lead to grave consequences in not so distant future. There is no guarantee that Iraq will follow the path of democracy after the withdrawal of American troops from there. One should not exclude the possibility that the Shia Muslims comprising a majority in Iraq might draw closer to Shia Iran. And after the United States and its allies withdraw their forces from Afghanistan there is every possibility of the Taliban coming back to power.

Political stability in Pakistan, the main ally of the U.S.A. in Central Asia, is closely connected with the situation in Afghanistan. But after the assassination of Osama bin Laden and Benazir Bhutto the situation in Pakistan has been steadily deteriorating. The government of Pakistan has demonstrated its utter incompetence, corruptness, and inability to rule. The country is now on the verge of complete chaos.

In this connection we deem it necessary to say a few words about the idea inherent in American and European societies that democracy can function in any country if its institutions are created. However, world experience shows that representative democracy can develop and function more or less effectively only in comparatively advanced countries. It cannot naturalize in undeveloped, poor, illiterate, and predominantly peasant countries, inasmuch as the consciousness of peasants has an authoritarian character, as a rule, and is often inseparable from utopian and monarchic ideas.

As to the “Arab spring,” we can say that revolutions in Arab countries always come to a deplorable end. They begin due to the

worsening economic situation and growing food prices. Popular masses come out in the street, and the authorities order the army to put down the rebellion. If the army succeeds, the revolution is postponed for several years. If not, and the army joins the rebels, and the dictator is overthrown. Then “free elections” take place which have nothing to do with democracy. Well-organized groupings seize power in the country. That was the case of Iran where radical Islamists came to power. HAMAS did the same in Gaza, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. And the Muslim Brothers now rule the roost in Egypt.

If the Syrian regime created by Asad Sr. falls down, it cannot be excluded that the Islamists will come to power there, too.

Russia and the Events in Arab Countries

If we wish to save Russia from disintegration we should maintain sound and constructive relations with western countries. This cannot be achieved without carrying on modernization, developing advanced technologies, and getting investments from the West. China has realized this quite well and is now pursuing a flexible and clever policy and avoiding confrontation with the United States and countries of the European Union. The PRC sells a lion’s share of its goods to them and receives the latest technologies from them. Western investments and the latest technologies are coming not to “capitalist” Russia, but to “communist” China, where many transnational companies have created research centers. Such policy has enabled China to carry on industrialization and score great successes in the high-tech sphere within a short space of time.

Our positions in the world gained by the Soviet Union at a very high price and by great efforts are becoming weaker and narrower. The United States has ousted us from Egypt, we lost the sales markets for our arms in Iraq and Libya, and soon we will have to leave the Syrian

market, too. Do we have to strive to preserve our positions won a long time ago by the Soviet Union, the second mighty superpower in the world with quite a few allies? Will present-day Russia have enough strength to retain what little it now has, having lost industries, the high-tech sector, scientific achievements, etc? Russia's GDP is now only one-tenth of that of the U.S.A. Do we need the Syrian port of Tartus where a group of our warships headed by the "Admiral Kuznetsov" aircraft-carrier has cast the anchor recently? We have four fleets and only one aircraft-carrier, whereas the United States boasts 11 such vessels in operation and 10 in reserve, Britain has three, and France and Italy have two each, not counting several under construction. We should not pretend to be a global power, but think of how to preserve Russia within its present borders and retain its present identity. We have to devote all our effort to create a modern economy. Otherwise, if our fuel-and-energy reserves come to an end or their prices drop before we solve this task, a catastrophic scenario of Russia's development will become inevitable. In its time the short-sighted Soviet leadership, in an effort to expand the area of "world socialism," muddled into the war in Afghanistan and brought the U.S.S.R. to disintegration.

The "Arab Revolution" Will End Sooner or Later, and What Next?

We cannot say anything definite in answering this, yet some predictions can be voiced already now. The economic situation will definitely deteriorate in the nearest future. During revolutions, mass disorders, rebellions, etc. the countries gripped by them have lost about \$60 billion by the end of 2011. The assistance promised by the European Union to the "revolutionary regimes" will hardly improve the situation, all the more so since the donor itself experiences acute financial problems. A difficult situation now exists in Tunisia where

there is a huge army of the unemployed. The country's prosperity is largely connected with tourism, which has suffered greatly from the world crisis.

But the most difficult situation is in Egypt, which had to accept a great many fellow-compatriots who had worked in Libya and were coming back home. A question arises whether the army will be able to retain its monolithic unity and restrain the Egyptian people from hurling the country into greater cataclysms. If it is answered positively the country will be able to get assistance from the United States as before, and, perhaps, from other countries, too. However, one thing is clear: there are no conditions for establishing democracy in Egypt at present. The country needs strong power, which can also be established by the Islamists. If they are flexible and cautious enough, they will be able to get aid from the rich Gulf states. Solution of the pressing socio-economic problems facing the country is impossible without foreign investments, and also without the firm law and order.

Libya has objectively the opportunities to cope with the aftermath of the civil war comparatively quickly. It has great currency reserves in western banks, and if foreign specialists and workers, who have left it during the civil war, come back, the work of its oil-and-gas sector could be restored within a comparatively short space of time, and normal life will return to the country.

As to Syria, the situation there is still unclear. There is the view that Asad's departure from power will not solve the problem. The regime was created there 45 years ago, and Asad, his entourage and supporters have grown under it and are interested in its preservation. The result will be either its collapse or triumph. In the conditions of sanctions the Asad regime can last for about five more years.

What is the final conclusion? Evidently, most Arab countries will have to pass through the historical stage of Islamic regimes of different

degree of harshness. They have no other idea uniting them. The world knows of three powerful mobilizing factors: the national, the social and the religious. Nationalism, which prevailed in Nasser's time, has exhausted itself. The idea of socialism (with elements of nationalism and religion) has gone into the past along with real socialism. The idea of Islam has remained deeply rooted in the consciousness of the broad popular masses, and it is not only ideology, but also the way of life and the hope of those who have become disappointed with the secular forms of public life.

As to the idea of democracy, it seems to stay in the political arena in the conditions of globalization and information revolution. But it will either be integrated in the Islamic regime as is the case of Iran, or bear an imitation character as in many secular autocracies. There will also be such political systems in which democratic institutions will remain in the conditions of the rule of Islamic parties of a moderate character, as, for example, in Turkey.

“Strany Vostoka: sotsialno-politicheskiye, sotsialno-ekonomicheskiye i sotsiokulturniye problemy v kontekste globalizatsii,” Moscow, 2012, pp. 49–63.

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**CONFESSIONAL AND SECULAR FACTORS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF DAGESTAN AT PRESENT**

Russia is a striking example of a poly-ethnic and poly-confessional state, where confessional and inter-confessional relations are very important.

The contemporary model of state-confessional relations has been enriched by the diversity of regional models, depending on the specific

features of individual regions. In particular, it is characteristic of the republics of the Russian Federation with higher political-legal status, where ethnic and confessional factors are of greater significance and influence the formation of national-regional identity. Dagestan is a case in point.

In terms of ethnic-confessional relations Dagestan has always been regarded as one of the most complex republics, because it is inhabited by more than 100 various nationalities, including 32 indigenous peoples of three confessions: Muslim, Christian and Judaic. This great confessional and national variety of Dagestan is connected with the history of the republic and its geographic location.

It should be emphasized that the notions “religious” and “national” are closely connected in the consciousness of Muslims in Dagestan. The perception of unity of the national and religious factors has consolidated in the consciousness of the Dagestani people for a long time. Following the adoption of Islam, the people of Dagestan became united by common faith. Confessional unity on the national basis was accompanied by specific features which absorbed local national customs, traditions, and rites and rituals. The traditions and customs with religious content were accepted as the ones created and ordered by God. The lack of understanding and incorrect appraisal of national specific features displayed by certain people in their attitude to the existing traditions and religious rites are often a cause of social tension. But there are customs and rites equally observed by believers and non-believers, and often together, for example, funeral repast, or giving name to a child.

This can be explained by the fact that during the Soviet period many people observed Islamic traditions, habits and rites, regarding them as a popular, but not a religious custom. Incidentally, this

situation is also typical not only of Dagestani Muslims, but also of Muslims in the Volga area, the Urals, and the Caucasus.

According to a sociological survey made some time ago 64.1 percent of respondents considered themselves believers, while 38.7 percent observed religious rites, and 25 percent did not observe them. About 200,000 people were devout Muslims. Sociological surveys showed that the prevailing type of religiousness in Dagestan was one in which believers did not practice all rites regularly.

The attitude to religion differs in different ethnic groups. For instance, there are 38 percent of the Avars who are devout Muslims observing all rites. The figure for the Dargins is 20 percent, the Kumyks – 14 percent, Lezghins – 10 percent, the Laks – 4 percent, other nationalities – 14 percent. The share of the Wahhabis and Tariqatis among deeply religious Muslim is small (from three to four percent).

The contemporary regional model of confessional policy in Dagestan is determined to a large extent by the socio-economic and political-legal development of the region and the confessional structure of the population, as well as by psychological features and business quality of political and religious leaders. The present-day religious situation in Dagestan is characterized by the following features: 1. growing religiousness, which is not connected with the regular observation of rites; 2. high level of religiousness depending on the place of birth and ethnic origin; 3. the form and degree of religious (Islamic) education; 4. degree of politicization of traditional Islam in Dagestan; 5. existence of various religious trends, including the religious extremist Wahhabi trend; 6. poly-confessional situation. Such factors as politicization of traditional Islam and religious extremism present a grave threat to security not only of Dagestan, but also of the entire North Caucasus and the Russian Federation.

The existing conflict potential in the inter-ethnic, inter-confessional and intra-confessional spheres is of great significance as a threat to Dagestan. Islamic confession is split into two trends: adepts of traditional popular Islam, and supporters of the reactionary wing of Mazkhab of Khanbalists (Wahhabi and Salafi). Distribution and popularity of the Wahhabi trend is caused by both internal and external factors. The secular character is one of the basic principles of building and functioning of a modern law-abiding state. The external factors are as follows: Muslim education abroad; missionary activity and activities of foreign non-governmental organizations; economic interests of transnational companies, and geopolitical interests of various countries, to mention but a few.

The change of the geopolitical role of the Republic of Dagestan is one of the most important factors of dissemination of extremist Wahhabi ideology in Dagestan. After the emergence of the independent Trans-Caucasian republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and political instability in Chechnya and other republics of the North Caucasus, Dagestan became the easy subject of the geopolitical situation in the south of Russia. The dissemination of Wahhabi ideology was promoted by several reasons of domestic nature: socio-economic instability, unemployment, poverty of the population, moral degradation, dominance of the clan system in the Muslim regions of the North Caucasus, Moscow's inconsistent policy toward the region, low prestige of the clergy among the local population, etc.

The main threat to public security coming from the Wahhabi adepts is their insistence on turning society into an "Islamic state," which included forcible suppression of all and sundry trends of thought differing from theirs. The challenge of Wahhabi ideology and practice takes the form of radical politicized Islam in the religious and socio-political spheres. The Wahhabi adepts in the North Caucasus are

supported by international Islamist organizations and other external forces, which render them substantial financial, material and propaganda assistance.

In order to preserve stability in Dagestan the republican government bodies and public and religious organizations should work out a program of comprehensive measures aimed at attaining ethnic and religious tolerance, consolidating friendly ethnic-confessional relations between representatives of different nationalities in the republic, and creating a model of religious behavior in the region.

Article 14 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation says that the RF is a secular state in which there is no official state religion and no single faith is considered obligatory or preferable. In such a state religion, its canons and dogmas, and religious associations should not exert influence on the state system, the activity of state and government bodies and their officials, the state educational system, and other spheres of state activity. The secular character of the state is ensured by the separation of the church (religious associations) from the state and the separation of school from the church.

Article 17 of the Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan says that Dagestan is a secular state.

In our view, a secular state is such an organization of political power in which the state and the church are separated and at the same time interact with each other, religious associations are equal, freedom of conscience and equality of citizens are guaranteed irrespective of their attitude to religion with a view to ensuring a balance of the interests of the individual, the state and religious associations in the various spheres of society's life.

The Republic of Dagestan has the constitution of a secular state. It means that the state does not interfere with the religious affairs of citizens, including the upbringing of children in the family, which is

based on the parents' convictions and with due account of the wish and right of the child to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion.

A secular state should not place the functions of state and government bodies, including local ones, on religious associations of citizens. The state should ensure the secular character of education at state and municipal educational bodies.

The essence of this constitutional premise is also disclosed in Article 4 of the Federal Law of September 26, 1996, "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations," which says that all religious associations are equal before the law.

Talking of the secular character of the Republic of Dagestan as a state formation, it is necessary to note that at present the most widespread form of the realization of the citizens' right to religious freedom is their opportunity to unite in religious organizations through which the legitimate character of their activity is ensured.

According to the data of the Department on state-confessional relations of the Ministry for nationalities policy, religious affairs and foreign ties of the Republic of Dagestan, by December 1, 2010, there were 2,533 religious associations functioning in the republic: 2,478 Islamic, 50 Christian, and five Judaic.

Of 2,478 Islamic organizations 2,458 are Sunna and 19 Shia. There are also 18 higher educational Islamic institutions, 96 madrasahs, two cultural centers and one Union of Islamic young people. The Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan has been functioning for several years now, and its representatives take an active part in public and political life in the republic. They often write to and speak in the mass media on various spiritual and ethical problems, as well as on the problems of opposing religious-political extremism and terrorism. We believe that today as never before, there should be spiritual modernization of society, differentiation of cultural and value systems,

secularization of education, religious tolerance, and confessional pluralism.

The Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan is faced with major tasks of increasing its role in prevention of extremism, ethnocentrism and terrorism, and in promotion of moral education of young people.

Inasmuch as state-religious relations in the republic develop in completely new socio-political conditions today, the democratization of society opens up new opportunities to religious associations in carrying on their activity for moral improvement of society and for accord and interconfessional peace.

Christianity holds second place in Dagestan in the number of its adepts after Islam. At present, among 50 Christian religious associations 19 are Orthodox Christian, 28 Protestant, eight Armenian religious organizations, and one is Old Believers association. The total number of Orthodox Christian priests in the Republic of Dagestan is 23.

There are also five Judaic communities in the cities of Makhachkala, Derbent, Buinaksk, Hasavyurt and Kizlyar. These communities are part of the Federation of Jewish communities of Russia.

There are also some non-traditional faiths in Dagestan, which do not play any significant role in the religious life of the republic. Each community of their adepts numbers from 20 to 25 persons.

Old dilapidated mosques are restored in Dagestan and new ones are built. Religious newspapers are published, and religious organizations have now gained access to the mass media, including TV. In 2010 about 14,500 Dagestanis made hajj.

As shown by practice, the separation of religious organizations from the state does not exclude, but even presupposes, their cooperation and interaction for tackling socially important problems jointly. Religion is an institution of civic society expressing the spiritual

interests of the individual, and this is why it should not be isolated from the life of the state. Recently, their joint activity has been stepped up noticeably. Along with the questions of moral and patriotic education, cultural advancement, spiritual and ethical enlightenment and social adaptation of former criminals, which have become traditional spheres of cooperation, new ones have appeared – struggle against alcoholism and drug addition, religious security, and maintenance of law and order.

The secular state is closely connected with the socially-oriented state. Religious organizations, carrying on charity activity, implementing various social projects, creating doctrines of social service, and helping the poor sections of the population, thus develop and strengthen the socially-oriented state and play a no small role in eliminating social inequality. The state should contribute to the initiative of religious organizations in creating bodies of social service to the population (elderly people homes, homes for the disabled, orphanages, night shelters, alms-houses, etc.) The church could help the state in health service for the population. The state is unable to ensure a personified approach to all who need help, while the church has more opportunities in this respect. Religious organizations can realize their social doctrines only in the conditions of a well-developed civic society.

Religion with its powerful potential could more actively contribute to the consolidation of economic, political and social stability in the North Caucasus. Religious organizations functioning there should act within the bounds of the existing federal and local legislation.

In order to bolster up ethno-confessional stability in the North Caucasus, as we believe, state and government bodies, and public and religious organizations in the region should work out a comprehensive program of measures aimed at achieving ethno-confessional tolerance

as the basis of interethnic and interconfessional relations and accord and preserving and strengthening the ethnoconfessional area of the North Caucasus, peaceful coexistence and cooperation of different people and confessions within the framework of a single territorial and religious region.

In 2010 – 2011 we carried out a sociological surveillance to ascertain the level of religiousness in the Republic of Dagestan. The main question was about people's attitude to religion. Of 560 respondents 97.9 percent adhered to Sunna Islam. 1.2% said they were non-believers, and 1% were atheists.

The question about the type of the state system in the Republic of Dagestan was answered as follows: 48.04% said it should be secular, and 47.6% said it should be theocratic. As to the young people who were asked the same question, 70.8% said the state should be secular, and 20.1% -- that it should be based on the Sharia law.

The activity of the so-called political Islam is connected with fundamentalist consciousness and attitude to state laws. The extreme forms of its manifestation (Dagestani Wahhabis) completely deny the laws of a secular state and call for the creation of a state based on the Sharia law. A surveillance carried out among the population in 2004 showed that 56.7% of those polled considered it possible not to observe state laws if they contradict their religion. Only 23.3% said that it was necessary to abide by state laws. These figures showed that there was a potential threat to the state from radically-minded and fundamentalist believers.

Another surveillance carried out in 2011 showed that 67.6% were for a secular state which should protect the rights of the individual, men and women should have equal rights, religious rules and rites should be observed freely, and there should be no place for religious fanaticism. This is the most optimal variant for the Dagestani people who lived in a

secular state during the Soviet period. In a religious state there are many absurd restrictions going back to the medieval epoch. It is only a civic, secular state that has a future, and all flourishing European countries are secular, civic states. Supporters of a religious (Sharia) state (they comprise 16.4%) maintain that religion is the main factor in human life, and in a religious state based on strict laws people would fear to commit crimes. They say that they would like to live in a Sharia state, but not like Saudi Arabia, that religion should be the way of life, and that ultimately all people will be living in a religious state.

From the cited results of sociological polls it is seen that in 2011 there were more supporters of an Islamic state than in 1998, especially among young people. It shows that Islamic ideology becomes more widespread and popular. People of middle and old age do not change their attitude and, as a rule, favor a secular state. Most experts believe that it is necessary to adhere to the constitutional principle of the separation of religious associations from the state and school from the church. They come out for the secular development of Dagestan and the entire North Caucasus within the framework of the Russian Federation.

*“Vestnik Dagestanskogo nauchnogo tsentra RAN,”
Makhachkala, 2012, No 45, pp. 105–108.*

CITIES AND PEOPLE: SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

The author¹ (former director of the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies) examines the socio-cultural aspects of Kazakhstan’s urbanization during the post-Soviet period.

¹ A. Sultangaliyeva. *Cities and People: Socio-Cultural Transformation in Kazakhstan* (Almaty, 2010).

The urbanization of Kazakhstan is an incomplete process, despite its rapid pace during the Soviet period. The decrease of the absolute and relative numerical strength of the urban population during the past twenty years gives grounds to talk of the de-urbanization trend. Compared to the late Soviet period, the share of urban citizens in the country's population diminished from 57.1 to 54.1 percent, with the simultaneous absolute and relative increase of inhabitants in rural areas. The share of Russians in the urban population decreased from 51.3 in 1989 to 41.1 percent in 1999. For the first time Kazakhs became the predominant urban population.

Inconsistency, absence of continuity, and absence of the proper form of the urban way of life are characteristic features of the social and cultural development of the Kazakh city. Hence, contradictions in the social and cultural pattern and image of the modern Kazakh city, characterized by several opposite trends: “post-modernism” on one pole and archaic features on the other. On the one hand, there is the Internet-banking service, or “Wi-Fi” in the “Starbucks” Coffee House, and on the other, private homes heated by coal in cities, or unclean and suspiciously looking taxi drivers tugging passengers by sleeves at the international airport. Between these poles are several transitional forms: pre-industrial, socialist, capitalist, industrial and post-industrial. Each one of them has its features and advantages – from archaic and traditionally conservative to modernistic and extremely westernized.

Thus, we cannot talk of a linear transition from one stage to another at the post-Soviet stage of the social and cultural transformation of urban life: from the simple to the complex, from authoritarianism to democracy, or from a closed society to an open society.

There is a tradition in the historical genealogy of the Kazakh city, namely, when political history is changed (pre-Soviet, Soviet, post-Soviet) the preceding stage is either ignored or denied. In the course of

this process the social structure of society is destroyed, material objects (buildings, monuments, etc.) are removed, and habitual symbols (names) changed. As a result, the continuity of social and cultural experience is interrupted, and the memory of the past is obliterated. Naturally, we mean the values and standards which contribute to humanization of the urban medium, social mobility, growing social interest, etc.

In the post-Soviet period most Kazakh industrial cities, which used to be centers of production, are now in a state of decline. Denationalization, privatization and closing down of city-forming industries lead to the degradation of the city structure and the outflow of the population. The phenomenon of “dying cities” or ghost-cities appears, and their population decreases by 15 percent. At the same time, the population of big cities is increasing and now reaches 70 percent of all urban dwellers in Kazakhstan. But these cities, whose life did not depend on just one enterprise, find themselves in a less favorable situation than metropolitan cities, like multifunctional Alma Ata or Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan. Having lost the status of the capital, Alma Ata with its diversified urban economy proved to be better adapted to the shock processes of the early 1990s. The number of its population not only does not decrease, but grows, and its share in the economy reaches 26.4 percent. True, it reflects the trend noticed in many post-socialist countries where the biggest cities, especially their capitals, developed economically, whereas other parts of these states lived through a prolonged crisis and even experienced collapse.

One of the reasons for the better adaptation of Alma Ata to the new conditions is the fact that in its diverse and well-developed economy the sector of educational and intellectual services was the most advanced. And in the new market conditions it was in great demand. One-third of all students of the country is living and studying

in Alma Ata. Besides, it is the center of economic activity, and the number of legal entities comprises 12.2 percent of their entire number of the economically active population, whereas this figure is much lower for the entire country, on average – 3.3 percent.

The socio-economic changes have also influenced the social structure of the Kazakh urban population. Its relative homogeneity of the Soviet period, when the majority was represented by the “middle class” (office workers employed in education and science) and the “lower class” (workers of low and medium skill, especially on railways) gradually disappears.

In contrast to the previous period, stratification and inequality between the indigenous Kazakhs and most “new” urban citizens – rural migrants are increasing. This is based on social and property inequality, when the former live much better against the latter’s poverty. Besides, polarization becomes greater between the narrow section of the very rich, the “highest and high middle section” (owners of the means of production and highly-paid managers in the private and public sectors) (10 percent) and a majority of hired workers of average means representing the “middle and lower middle section” (55 percent). The middle section proper comprises not more than 15 percent and consists of people employed in the financial sphere with the average monthly salary of \$1,000, and also owners of medium-sized enterprises. The “lower section” (20 percent) -- unemployed, independent individual workers concentrated in the informal sector of urban services – holds a special place.

The “upper class” (about three percent) is the only social section with clear-cut features which realizes and formulates its interests properly. As a rule, it consists of members of the former socialist *nomenklatura* and the new business and political elites. The connection of “new” money with the upper state bureaucracy is especially

noticeable in the conditions of Kazakhstan. The openness of the Kazakh “upper class” to globalization and Westernization leads to its growing alienation from the less numerous middle class, all the more so, from the lower middle class and the poor. At the same time the lower middle section is always on the verge of sliding down to the poor majority.

The Kazakh creative intelligentsia in its Soviet version deprived of government support is gradually disappearing as a separate social section. At the same time, the scope and range of the commercial entertainment forms of Kazakh-language urban culture – pop music and various shows – are rapidly growing.

The influence of the new realities of urban life is increasingly felt in the traditional social ties. In particular, the city becomes more “Kazakh” and “Kazakh-language” due to the outflow of the Russian population and the flow of Kazakh rural migrants. Thus, to confirm Kazakh identity it is no longer necessary to broaden the circle of family ties. They are rapidly commercialized, acquiring a market price. For the rich section of the Kazakh population these ties become an additional competitive advantage (the more ancient the family, the weightier the right of its representatives to definite resources, such as power, money, and social status). For the poor Kazakh majority reliance on tradition becomes its social capital in the absence of material capital. Relations between the rich and the poor relatives acquire the nature of the patron – client relations.

Traditional informal practices in the conditions of the Kazakh ethnic-oriented statehood do not serve the preservation of ethnic and cultural features now, but are simply a means of personal survival. Thus, the intra-ethnic consolidation of Kazakhs, weakened as it is by profound socio-cultural alienation between the Russian-speaking urban Kazakh dwellers and rural Kazakhs, acquires a more complicated character.

In the conditions of early capitalism and its values and striving for personal advantage, reliance on traditionally strong family ties turns into dominance of nepotism and corruption. As a result, the significance of the common good is replaced by individual and narrow-clan selfish interests inherent in rural inhabitants.

All this prevents the formation of civic self-consciousness and proper understanding of urban community. This, in turn, hampers the cohesion of society on the basis of Kazakh patriotism and civic values. As a result, it is not the city that gives examples of behavior to numerous new urban dwellers, but, on the contrary, the latter set the rural standards of socialized behavior in the city.

At the same time against the backdrop of this socio-cultural multi-form structure the socialist heritage is still seen and felt and it exerts a profound and prolonged influence. This was due to the fact that the Soviet period was the most recent and prolonged. This was why it became possible to transfer values and patterns of behavior within the family from parents to children. The past trends of urban development continue to influence its present progress.

The inertia of the Soviet methods of municipal government can largely be seen and felt in the ineffective management of the post-socialist city. This explains why in the market conditions the former command-administrative and simplified methods of management enter into contradictions with the changed economic conditions – the absolute predomination of private and minimal share of state property.

Thus, by the beginning of the 21st century the Kazakhstan city was “unprepared” for new challenges and changes. Under the constant influence of migrations, both internal and external and ethnically different, the city was unable to create a mature and stable socio-cultural medium.

The excessive concentration of rural migrants in the two main cities of the country leads to the physical growth of the city without its proper development, and its infrastructure is unable to accept and absorb these migrants. This has a negative impact on the socio-cultural sphere of cities.

Given the absence of society's real participation in municipal management, private interests prevail over the common good not only in the system of municipal power, but in the entire day-to-day behavior of city dwellers. Quasi-local management cannot seriously be considered a balance to municipal authorities. This leads to the establishment and consolidation of conservative socio-cultural models: apathy and cynicism, paternalism and rebirth of primitive standards of behavior.

The "urban revolution" of Kazakhs, which began in Soviet times, continues in the new conditions and at another level. In the present epoch of early capitalism it is already free from the regulating and guiding role of the state. But inasmuch as the system of social and economic guarantees of the state has collapsed, the socio-cultural development of the Kazakh urban population has now lagged behind its physical growth. As a result, the opportunities for vertical social mobility have sharply narrowed down and the process of social and property differentiation has become more rapid.

The sharp social stratification within the Kazakh ethnos leads to a situation in which the narrow section of the well-to-do Kazakh people becomes internationalized and cosmopolitan in its essence by being integrated in the ranks of the "world bourgeoisie." Settlement of quite a few rich Kazakhs in advanced and prosperous western countries is a vivid proof of this.

To solve the problems of the urban construction of Kazakhstan in a proper manner is impossible without a broader reform of the

territorial management of the country, including decentralization, greater financial independence of its regions and cities, electivity of municipal bodies of power, and the introduction of real local self-government.

We believe that Kazakh cities, due to historical specific features and regional environment, can hardly be referred to any concrete region or a group of countries. They remain part of the post-Soviet urban “civilization,” but the latter becomes ever more heterogeneous itself, when internal differences undermined its former entirety. The socio-cultural transformation of the Kazakhstan city has not yet been finished. This is connected with the continuing adaptation of the entire urban infrastructure to the market conditions and ethnocultural demographic changes.

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A CLAN CHARACTER OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The elites in present-day Kyrgyzstan are dominated by natives of rural districts. Nevertheless, prior to the coup of 2005 the congeneric relations were manifested primarily in the rural medium which formed the majority of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic, whereas now tribalism as a system of social relations is consolidated in towns and cities. This can largely be explained by increasing inner migration (from the South to the North), which acquired a mass character in 2005 – 2010, having exacerbated contradictions between the Northerners and the Southerners.

The congeneric ties of traditional Kyrgyz society exert a great influence on the bodies of state management. Irrespective of education and circle of contacts, any Kyrgyz, regards himself, first of all, as a representative of a definite clan. It has been noticed that most Kyrgyz settled abroad not only do not accept the culture of the country of their present residence, but, on the contrary, begin to gravitate still more to the traditional values of their people.

Any government official in Kyrgyzstan is always striving to preserve ties with his clan or family. This is manifested most of all in the higher echelons of power where practically the entire system of management is based on the principles of nepotism and invitation of “one’s own” relatives and fellow-villagers, who will always render support when necessary. This is how informal alliances are set up whose members are closely bound up with one another and are mutually interested in promotion of their chief representative going up the career ladder.

The entire domestic policy of Kyrgyzstan after 1991 has been implemented under the sign and in the spirit of the struggle between the North and the South. In the course of changing the ruling groupings, the force coming to power and led by the “revenge-seekers” always tries to minimize the influence of the overthrown clans.

Relations between the northern and southern parts of Kyrgyzstan have always been a subject of the greater interest of the Soviet power elite, just as at present they continue to remain a matter of grave concern of the authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic. Regional ties in the North and in the South of Kyrgyzstan manifest themselves at a state level and are supported by the stable system of archaic congeneric ties.

Kyrgyz society, in contrast to the congeneric structure of neighboring Kazakhstan with its division into three main congeneric unions, or Uzbekistan with its clan division on the territorial principle,

has its own specific features. Along with the dominant role of the congeneric institution, the determining role in Kyrgyzstan is played by man's or group's belonging to the northern or southern parts of the country, which largely determines mutual relations between people on a countrywide scale.

Such delimitation has been inherited from the past. At the time of the Kokand Khanate the northern part of present-day Kyrgyzstan was less involved in political life. It formally recognized the power of the Khan, but actually was ruled by people from the nobility of northern tribes. Chokan Valikhanov, a Kazakh researcher and scholar, wrote that the Kyrgyz in accordance with the region of their settlement have their place in the Khanate. The Kyrgyz of the southern region were actively drawn in the life of the Khanate, taking part in military and civilian rule. The northern Kyrgyz families, clans and tribes living far from the Khanate recognized the Khan's power only formally, leading independent life.

Besides, the south of the country was under a strong Uzbek influence, including religious influence (from the time of the Kokand Khanate), its population adopted a sedentary way of life, whereas the North practically never abandoned nomadic cattle breeding. This determined the specific features of economic life and, accordingly, socio-economic contradictions.

In general, tribal connections in Central Asia are very viable. The authorities of the Russian Empire oriented to modernization of archaic Central Asian society and tried to belittle the influence of the congeneric institution by introducing the system of district and regional management, but this measure did not yield positive results. Beginning from the 1920s the Bolsheviks, while appointing their officials to high posts in the Soviet republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, tried to observe congeneric balance, in particular, a balance between

representatives of the North and the South of Kyrgyzstan. Anyway, for the whole history of the Kyrgyz people rivalry between the chiefs of tribes and clans for power and for control over the best pasture lands had invariably played a major role. This tradition, in a somewhat adapted form in the modern conditions, can be seen and felt today, too, especially in politics.

The essence of the inter-Kyrgyz conflict lies in the struggle between different Kyrgyz tribes and clans for power and control over the entire republic. There is no monopoly of some one tribe or clan on power, but the struggle has been going on mainly between the North dominated by the Chu-Issykkul clan and the South dominated by the Osh clan.

Territorially there are concepts of the conditional “South” (Batken, Jelal-abad and Osh regions) and the conditional “North” (Chu, Talas, Issykkul and Naryn regions). It should be noted that these two regions are connected by the only one motor road from Bishkek to Osh. The rest of the republican territory is dominated by mountains, sometimes heavy-going.

The sources of the struggle for power between the “South” and the “North” lie in the first half of the 19th century when representatives of the clan nobility of the South vied for power with the Sart (Uzbek) and Kypchak groupings of nobility of Kokand Khanate in the Ferghana Valley.

After the 1917 revolution the ethnogeneric nobility of the leading tribes and clans was ousted from power, and it was seized, just as in Kazakhstan, by representatives of tribes and clans of secondary importance.

Inasmuch as there was no monopoly on power of some definite tribe or clan in Soviet times, all leaders had to share it with representatives of other regions.

It should be noted that Southern Kyrgyzstan is somewhat more conservative with regard to reforms and Europeanization. The South Kyrgyz who experienced ethnocultural influence of Uzbeks, are slightly more Islamized and less Europeanized.

In the spring of 2002 the “North – South conflict” flared up and led to the loss of human lives. The pretext was transfer of part of a small stretch of disputed territory to China. It comprised five percent of the territory of Kyrgyzstan, but was considered big enough for such a small country.

A new wave of the conflict rose in March 2005 in the course of the notorious “tulip” revolution. The government of President Askar Akayev was overthrown very rapidly, and the decisive role in that coup was played by the southern groupings which were able to organize mass manifestations of protest against the ruling authorities.

The growing influence of southern Kyrgyz in the republican government was accompanied with a new ethnic process, which began about the year 2000. South Kyrgyz began to move from the Ferghana Valley up north. This process was due to several reasons. One of them was the growth of the Uzbek population in the South not only by natural causes, but also thanks to immigration from Uzbekistan. As a result, the share of the Uzbek population in that part of Kyrgyzstan increased to 14 percent of the total number of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic. The resettlement of Ferghana Uzbeks in Southern Kyrgyzstan became a mass phenomenon due to insufficient economic freedom in Uzbekistan, where peasants had no opportunity to sell their produce on free market, but were forced to sell it to the state at fixed prices. Despite a significant share of the Uzbek population in Kyrgyzstan, its representatives in the bodies of state power are few and far between.

Apart from demographic pressure in the overpopulated Ferghana Valley, the outflow of Kyrgyz from the South can be explained by their fear of Islamic extremism, for Islam is so weak among the Kyrgyz that they seem to be heathens to the Uzbeks and Tajiks.

After the “tulip revolution” of 2005 the outflow of Southern Kyrgyz to the North has increased not only due to the stronger pressure of Uzbeks, but also because the positions of South Kyrgyz in the authorities of Kyrgyzstan have strengthened considerably. These factors have also played their role in the exacerbation of the interethnic situation in the republic, inasmuch as they greater pressure on the still numerous Russian-speaking population in the North, which increased migration to Russia and Kazakhstan.

Taking into account the fact that the Northern Kyrgyz and Southern Kyrgyz regard themselves as “more Russified” and “more Islamized” respectively, this process causes concern because it can violate the already fragile balance in the country and lead it to irreparable demographic and geopolitical consequences (and not in Kyrgyzstan alone).

The religious factor also plays its role in the intra-Kyrgyz conflict. As we have mentioned, the positions of Islam in Southern Kyrgyzstan are much stronger than in Northern. In the mid-1990s, some experts believed that the “Erkin Kyrgyzstan” (“Free Kyrgyzstan”) party, most members of which were Southerners, might begin to express fundamentalist tendencies. In any case, there are quite a few people among Southern Kyrgyz who support the idea of creating a common Ferghana Islamic state.

However, the danger lies not in Southern Kyrgyz themselves. They are slightly more Islamized, slightly less Europeanized, not bent to integration with Russia as the Northerners, but there are no principal differences between them, either between rank-and-file citizens or the

elites. The main danger lies in demographic pressure. For example, since 1990 the population of Bishkek grew from 600,000 to almost 800,000 in 1995, with the city infrastructure capable to cater for 400,000 only.

The outflow of Southern Kyrgyz to the North may entail some other processes: for instance, migration of representatives of other, more radical Islamic people, first and foremost Ferghana Uzbeks, as well as various Islamic extremists of different nationalities. Since 2004 one could observe movement to the North of strongly Islamized Uighurs. This may have a negative impact on the religious situation in the North. In the view of certain observers, in the center of Issykkul region, Kyrgyz themselves feel rather uncomfortable due to the influx of Uighurs.

It should be borne in mind that a split in Kyrgyz society has clear-cut geographical boundaries: the conservative South is distinguished by stronger separatist tendencies with regard to the more progressive North. The two poles of their confrontation are the city of Bishkek and the city of Osh. The South is under a certain influence of the Uzbek community and its population is more Islamized. The first bloody conflicts on the ethnic ground took place there in the early 1990s.

But the situation became the most critical in 2010. Among the reasons for its exacerbation were political destabilization and the absence of unity among members of the provisional government. The rulers of Kyrgyzstan at the time were ready to split the country into the South and the North. Apart from geographic division of the two parts of the country, there were historical differences between the ruling clans of the South and the North, the greater internationalization of the latter's population, and the growing share of ethnic Uzbeks in the South (from 30 to 50 percent). Information and surveillance reports showed

that the Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan did not regard their linguistic rights in the local bodies of power substantial and just enough and did not wish to assimilate in the Kyrgyz medium. It was also known that the infrastructure of the Islamic underground in Kyrgyzstan often coincides with the inner ethnic differences of the population.

It should also be noted that the new authorities in Kyrgyzstan, which came to power as a result of the events in 2010, and its government in absolute majority repeat the composition of the opposition which overthrew President A. Akayev in March 2005, brought to power K. Bakiyev, and was part of its regime until he was removed from power by April 2010. The results of the parliamentary elections in the autumn of 2010 showed vividly the unbalanced character of the political situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The opposition “Ata-Zhurt” party (South) won parliamentary elections among the five parties which became represented in the republican parliament. The SDPK party (North) took second place.

The opposition “Ar-Namys” party (North) was in third place.

The neutral “Republic” party (North) was the fourth.

The “Ata-Meken” party (South) was on fifth (last) place.

The number of seats was as follows: “Ata-Zhurt” – 28; SDPK – 26; “Ar-Namys” – 25; “Republic” – 23; “Ata-Meken” – 18.

It should be borne in mind that the “Ata-Zhurt” party, which won the 2010 elections, represented the former government of Bakiyev. In the course of the election campaign the representatives of the South were able to rally together and gain most votes also with the help of the notorious administrative resource.

Election results do not give an advantage to representatives of any one grouping, and to form a qualified majority the parliamentarians will have to reach agreement on many issues.

Thus, we see that the traditional clan and territorial system of the Kyrgyz authorities is not overcome by its coalition character. Coalition power has a clannish character as before, and this destroys the centralized state. The real disunity of Kyrgyzstan cannot be overcome without the actual regionalization of the country, and its parliament and government should ensure the proper representation of the main sections of Kyrgyz society in all bodies of power.

The existing division into the North and the South has deep geographical, historical and economic roots. Historically and geographically, Kazakhstan bears “responsibility” for the North of Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan – for the South, which fact is fraught with the danger of the ultimate actual partition of the country. However, the structure of “neighbor’s responsibility” has a certain difference: for Kazakhstan its priority lies in the protection of the rights of the Kazakh owners in the country’s economic infrastructure and their territorial expression in the vicinity of Issykkul; for Uzbekistan it is the protection of the rights of the ethnic Uzbeks and security of the Ferghana Valley (especially in the conditions of the local scarcity of land). These interests are not of an ideological, but of an objective economic nature. It is impossible to ignore the interests of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, on the contrary, they should become a subject of bilateral agreements with a view to turning the inevitable protection of these interests into an instrument of mutual responsibility.

There is no doubt that Russia has objective interests in Kyrgyzstan and historical obligations with regard to its population, which should be clearly realized and discussed along with each million of financial assistance and each ton of humanitarian cargo. Their unbreakable “package” ties should be clear to any provisional or permanent government of the Kyrgyz Republic in order not to repeat the suicidal path of the former Kyrgyz ruler K. Bakiyev.

When the latter was in power, “Southerners” captured all command posts in economics and politics. The dangerous nature of such situation was clear even to such former allies and supporters of Bakiyev from the South as Omurbek Tekebayev and Rosa Otunbayeva (the present leaders of another Kyrgyz revolution).

In 2010, in contrast to 2005, the movement began not in the South but in the North as a natural reaction to the infringement of the “Northerners” and part of the “Southerners” under K. Bakiyev. But the movement was headed by the “Southerners” – Rosa Otunbayeva and Omurbek Tekebayev, inasmuch as the Northern elite, after the overthrow of Askar Akayev, did not put forward any bright leaders, who were popular among and respected by the broad masses. The revolution of 2010 was “Northern” by nature. But victory in the 2010 parliamentary elections was gained by the “Ata-Zhurt” party of the South. All this goes to show that it is impossible to preserve the integrity of the Kyrgyz Republic without a dialogue within the country.

Domestic interethnic stability in Kyrgyzstan is impossible until the Uzbek population in the south of the country receives an adequate representation in all bodies of power at all levels in that part of the country and until the Uzbek language receives the rights and infrastructure of a regional language, which would fully correspond to modern standards of civilization. But this should not be a result of chaotic measures caused by a civil war and interethnic conflict. These just measures should be an outcome of a responsible dialogue between central power and legitimate representatives of the territorial Uzbek communities of Kyrgyzstan, the common result of which would be mutual responsibility not only for the full rights of the Uzbek minority, but also for the territorial integrity of the state.

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**PRIVATE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TAJIKISTAN:
PRESENT SITUATION, PROBLEMS
AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Religious Education and Formation
of Religious Thinking**

The modernization of religious thinking in present-day Tajikistan as the necessary step on the way of optimizing the religious factor largely depends on the improvement of the system of religious education. An analysis of the current situation shows that the institutions of religious education stand at the sources of most renovation processes in Islam.

The institutions of religious education have been the main centers of philosophical, moral and legal discussions taking place in the Islamic religious elite. According to tradition, Islam has always been regarded the unified “great school”, and therefore all initiatives of madrasah, including innovations, were considered legitimate.

The institutions of religious education have always exerted the decisive influence on the formation of religious thinking, religious sects and distribution of religious movements, including reformist ones, and schools in Islam. For example, the father of modern Islamic reformation, Mohammed Abda outlined the principles of Islamic reformation at the Al-Azkhar Islamic University in Cairo, where he worked as a professor, and the leader of the Muslim liberation movement of the Muslims of India and Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbol announced his concept of “the revival of religious thinking in Islam” at religious seminaries. Ayatolla Homeini began his movement at Faiziya madrasah in the city of Kum and outlined the well-known theory of

“Islamic rule” in his lectures at the religious seminary in the city of Najaf, Finally, the most vivid example of the determining role of the institutions of religious education in the formation of religious thinking was the emergence of the Afghan grouping “Taliban” in Pakistani madrasahs. The very word “Taliban” translated from Arabic means “students of religious seminary.”

Religious education acts as an institution of accumulation, reproduction and distribution of the intellectual potential of religion, as a mechanism of its improvement, rationalization and systematization. The levels and stages in the system of religious education determine the place, importance and tasks of each priest, and also points to his place in the system, thereby preserving the integrity of religion.

This shows the determining role of religious education in the formation of religious thinking and legalization of religious transformations. In this connection, improving the quality and raising the level of religious thinking in Tajikistan is only possible by way of modernization and perfection of religious education.

Going Underground, or Formation Process of a Network of Private Religious Education in Tajikistan

In the late 19th–early 20th century Central Asia as an inalienable part of the Islamic world faced the need for the transformation and adaptation in the conditions of a new life.

The first religious reformist ideas began to develop in the region, which led to the formation of the movements of enlightenment and jadidism. Throughout this evolutionary process the main problem was that of reforming religious thinking, and the main step on the way of its solution was modernization of religious education. Despite the fact that the Bokhara Emirate lagged behind the leading countries of the Islamic

world in the modernization level of educational systems (for comparison's sake, in Iran the first religious school working by a "new method" was opened in 1852, and the Ministry of education was set up in 1855), during the first two decades of the 20th century a great experience of intellectual quest in this field was accumulated there. Heated debates were going on in Bokhara about the need for universal reforms, which should have touched, first of all, the sphere of education.

But after the establishment of Soviet power, Central Asia has become practically isolated from the Islamic world, and a radical change of the character and direction of all socio-political processes has taken place in the region. As a result, such crucial historical process as the transformation and modernization of religious thinking and along with it the reformation process of religious education remained unfinished, having been replaced with the process of the forcible secularization of society and harsh persecution of religion.

Two factors exerted the decisive influence on the fate of religious education during the Soviet period. The first was the establishment of the principle of separation of religion from the state, whose component part was separation of school from the church. In the conditions of the total separation of the state from religion and strict state monopolization of the educational system, the existence and continuation of religious education as a legal system became impossible. The second factor, which had the decisive impact on the destruction process of the system of religious education, was a special character of educational policy of the first decades of Soviet power, which was denoted as transfer from education to enlightenment. Regarding education as an important link of ideology, Soviet power began to introduce complete changes of traditions, methods and the philosophy of education.

The first principle (separation of school from the church) contributed to the destruction of the infrastructure of religious education and deprived it of the legal status, whereas transfer from elitist education to universal enlightenment led to the destruction of age-old traditions and scholarly and intellectual methods of the Bokhara pedagogical school.

In the course of the struggle with the “survivals of the past” and especially during the “atheistic five-year plan period” (1932 – 1937) the onslaught of militant atheism was accompanied with the destruction of religious literature and physical reprisals against religious intellectuals all over the region, which entailed the maximal destruction of traditions and the potential of religious education in the region. Although during a meeting of religious leaders with Stalin in 1943 certain concessions to religion were announced, which was prompted by political calculations of the time of war, there were no tangible changes in the sphere of religious education.

In the postwar period an important event in the history of religious education in the region was the opening of the Bokhara Miri Arab madrasah in 1947, which later became the main center of training Muslim priests for the entire Soviet Union. The Tashkent Islamic Institute, which began to function in 1971, trained 378 priests during the first 25 years of its existence (1971 – 1995), that is, only 15 men a year.

Despite the continuing anti-religious policy, the years of Khrushchev’s “thaw” could be regarded a period of certain respite for religious education in Central Asia. Along with a relative softening of the political climate in the country, reactivation of religious life was also due to return of representatives of the Islamic clergy who remained alive from Stalin’s labor camps. Among them was the well-known scholar and key figure of the revival process of religious education in

Central Asia Kori Muhamadjon Rustamov, also known as Mavlavi Hindustoni.

Harsh measures for the elimination of the seats of religious education and periodic reprisals against religious figures and scholars forced Islamic education to go deep underground. Education was carried on at hundreds of small “family schools” where religious knowledge was passed secretly from generation to generation. The authorities were unable “to catch and crush” them. Thus, the network of clandestine educational circles contributed to the preservation of pedagogical traditions, curricula and prerevolutionary system of religious education.

As Doctor Akbar Tursun said, religious knowledge was usually passed along secret lines from grandfathers to fathers, children and grandchildren and relatives through Sufi sheikhs in an oral form.

Lessons at such underground schools took place at night, sometimes at 3 or 4 a.m. before the Morning Prayer. Despite that, teacher often changed the place of studies.

The opening of official institutions of religious education in post-Soviet years could not decrease the importance of private religious schools at home. Believers’ attraction to these schools was preserved not only because of a very small number of official religious institutions, but also due to the very limited character of their curricula. Most believers regard the official network of religious madrasahs controlled by the government as schools preparing the conformist clergy. Thus, despite the existence and functioning of official madrasahs, there is a whole network of informal small private family schools, and the number of their pupils is tens of times greater than that of official religious students. Thereby the training of the Islamic clergy is done simultaneously at two parallel networks of religious education.

Present-day Position of the Network of Private Religious Education

The present-day network of private religious education in Tajikistan embraces hundreds of private family schools, circles and courses. The peak of its expansion was reached in the latter half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. It was at a time when during the free atmosphere of *perestroika* the number of mosques and madrasahs was growing quite rapidly. Private schools, groups or circles of religious education were opening in almost each populated center or living quarter of a city.

In the period from 1980 up to 1992 in the Tajik capital Dushanbe alone such medium-sized and big home schools of religious education functioned as the school of Mavlavi Hindustoni, Domullo Eshonjon, Mullo Abdulgaffor, Makhsumi Sadriddin, Mahsumi Sairahmon, Mahsumi Ubaidullo, Domullo Abdulhai, Eshoni Nuriddin, Eshoni Mahmudjon, and others.

The number of pupils in such schools depended on the possibilities and prestige of their instructors and could comprise from 10–20 up to 150–200 simultaneously. For example, the well-known religious teacher Domullo Naimjon had more than 100 pupils in 2011, and that of the popular teacher Eshon Mahmudjon was over 120 pupils. During the funeral prayer of the well-known private religious instructor Mahsumi Sadriddin in 2003 it was announced that throughout his life about 5,000 pupils had studied at his school, which by right could be compared to the activity of an entire institute.

In the northern part of the Republic of Tajikistan private schools are better organized and are called “hujra” (from “room” in Arabic). Since the 1980s up to our day the biggest hujras were those of Domullo Naimjon in Isfar, Eshoni Mirzoyusuf in Zafarabad, Domullo Abdurashid in Ganchi, etc. In the city of Hudjand there was a network

of religious hujras of the “Ferghana type,” whereas private religious schools in the mountain districts of Sogdian region, such as Maschoh, were closer to the schools in the south of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Private religious schools in the north of Tajikistan can be divided into three categories: First, “Hujra” – private school of an ordinary type. Second, “Korihona” – friendly male clubs of Muslim activists of an enlightenment character. Third, “Huchrai tahfizi Kuron” – home schools preparing pupils only for reading the Koran.

As an example of a typical private religious school let us dwell on the home school of Domullo Muhammadsharif in the north of Tajikistan, which has been functioning since 1998. The school has been placed at the teacher’s own home of an old Finnish design divided into two parts. The teacher and his family live in the first part, the hujra, or private school, is in the second part. It have five rooms (one is used as a class for study, another is used for prayers, and the remaining three are for the pupils of different age living there. Their number is from 17 to 20.

The school is functioning on charity donations, as well as on the material help coming from the pupils’ parents (they supply the school mainly with food products).

The school premises were repaired in 1996 and now look quite decently. The pupils sleep on the floor on national blankets, and the school premises are cleaned by the pupils themselves. Each Friday is called “Cleaning Day.” During the week cleanliness is kept by two pupils – these “cleaners on duty” are elected by toss up every week. The cook is appointed in a similar manner. The rules of behavior at the school are not strict, but they should be observed on schedule. Pupils can go home to their families three times a month, but in an extraordinary situation they may leave more frequently. Lessons begin after the mid-day prayer and last to the first evening prayer.

If the order is crudely violated by any pupil or his behavior is not up to the mark, the teacher summons his parents. The latter agree that the teacher has the right to punish their kids strictly.

Corporal punishment and heavy-handed discipline have been included in the tradition of elementary religious schools from early times, and its effectiveness is expressed in the Tajik proverb – “Beating by a stick can teach a bear to become a mullah.”

The school of Domullo Muhammadsharif can be regarded general elementary school. Each pupil studies three or four subjects simultaneously, but the level of teaching is not identical for all. There is a different method at another school according to which a pupil studies only one book at a time and on finishing it takes up another.

Relations between Parallel Networks of Religious Education

There is a definite competition between the official and private networks of religious education in Tajikistan. The limited and superficial character of curricula, inadequate religious knowledge of graduates, and conformism of official madrasahs remain the main arguments in the negative attitude toward the official network of this education on the part of leading authorities in private religious education. In the view of the well-known private tutor Eshoni Mahmudjon, this competition is less pronounced today, but in Soviet times it was quite strong.

Indeed, the quality and level of education at the “Soviet madrasah” were inferior to that in the private madrasah. For example, in order to become a full-fledged mullah, such well-known and respected priests in the republic as Domullo Habibullo and Domullo Mansu Jalilzoda, just as many others, after graduation from the official religious madrasah in Bokhara had to study under Eshoni Nuriddin for

ten more years (the latter received religious education in the private network).

Today the religious medium in Tajikistan is dominated by graduates from private religious educational institutions. Among the fifty most authoritative and popular religious figures in the republic during the past ten years there were only four or five who had graduated from the official religious institutions, and they had also studied at foreign religious universities, among them Hojji Akbar Turajonzoda, Hojji Husein Musozoda, Hojji Muslihiddin Mukaramzoda, Ibodullo Kolonzoda, Haidar Sharifzoda, and others. They all asserted that the foundation of their religious knowledge had been laid in the family and by private teachers.

Relative Decline of Private Religious Education in Recent Years

Despite the fact that the private network of religious education in the Republic of Tajikistan retains its leading role, one can speak now of its relative decline as compared with the 1990s. This is due to several factors.

First, the authorities have stepped up their activity aimed at establishing maximum control over religious education. In recent years the government body for religious affairs tried to transfer the entire process of religious education on to the official platform and reduce to the minimum the possibility of receiving informal religious education in the private network. The number of students of most private religious institutions has become smaller, their activity is restricted, and many of them are closed.

Secondly, the role of systematic regular religious education is gradually raised at all levels. On the one hand, it is because of its greater legal security, and on the other, it is thanks to the latest positive

changes in the curricula of a number of Islamic madrasahs in, say, the cities of Hujand, Vakhdat, and others. An increase in the number of graduates from foreign religious educational institutions of traditional trend also contributes to this positive tendency. It should be said that the local clergy recognizes these graduates who have raised the level of teaching much higher than it traditionally was.

Thirdly, a decline in the living standards of private pupils and teachers has also played a significant role in this respect. Certain private teachers, such as Eshoni Mahmudjon (Vakhdat), regard this factor as the main one. According to tradition, a definite part of the upkeep of pupils at private religious schools was backed by the tutor, but today most of them cannot afford this luxury. Such well-known teachers as Mullo Eshondjon (Dushanbe) and Domullo Abdulhai (Rudaki) said they were quite well-to-do in the 1980s and in the 1990s and kept pupils mainly at their own expense, but today they live in very difficult material conditions.

From the early 2000th private religious education in the north of the Republic of Tajikistan was in decline. The main reason for this was a broad campaign of struggle against the Khizb-ut-Tahrir party in Sogdian region. Although traditional religious schools had no relation to the activity of this party, the struggle against it did influence their work.

Fearing that these schools could become seats of distribution or objects of the party's influence, as well as the influence of other non-traditional Islamic trends, the local authorities restricted their activity.

Besides, many parents took their children out of these schools and did not allow them to visit religious circles, afraid of accusations of belonging to this party.

Fearing accusations of support Khizb-ut-Tahrir or other radical Islamist trends many sponsors ceased their financial or other material

support to private schools, including the granting of premises for the functioning of religious educational circle.

As a result, many circles and private schools were transferred from private quarters to mosques, where studies were of a semi-legal status, or took place during the intervals between prayers. A private teacher had a lesson before the prayer or immediately after it. But in the summer of 2005 the activity of educational religious circles at mosques was officially banned. In the view of certain analysts, such decisions contribute to driving private religious education into deep underground, where it can become dangerously radicalized.

Programs and Stages of Teaching in the System of Private Religious Education

Numerous private schools differ not only in their material-technical conditions, but also in the level and content of education. The most widespread type of private religious teaching which can be met in almost every village or urban neighborhood is “elementary” schools. Pupils are taught the ABC of religion, that is, the alphabet, the foundations of religion, etc. on the basis of such books as “Koidai Bagdodi” (“Baghdad Rules”) and “Zarurieti dini” (“Rules of Faith”).

The main link of private religious education is “middle schools” – circles and schools with more advanced content of the study course in which the level of teaching certain disciplines reaches that of madrasahs and universities. At these schools, which are formed around well-known religious teachers, a great number of the clergymen of the Republic of Tajikistan receive their education.

Along with this, there are few private schools which could be called “religious academies.” Subjects of the highest level of difficulty are studied there. A case in point is the home school of Mavlavi Hindustani in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. He teaches the

highest subjects which cannot be studied under other teachers. Before accepting students he always checks the level of their knowledge, and if it is not high enough he recommends them to study under another teacher, and only after that come to his school.

Hindustani studied with his students mainly commentaries to the Koran, interpretation of sayings of the Prophet, Islamic law, and creative work of Mirzo Abdulkodir Bedil, poet and philosopher of the late 19th – early 20th century, whose views made a profound impact on the literature and thinking of Central Asia.

Teachers usually do not use any elaborated curriculum, although the teaching process at private home schools has its rules and logic. Each teacher is absolutely free in choosing methods, textbooks, study aids or deadlines in studying one or another book, subject, etc. Sometimes, the latter is chosen by the pupil himself. One wishes to study the Koran, another – Arab grammar, still another – fikh. Despite big differences between approaches to teaching, most teachers try to draw their methods and content maximally closer to the standards and curricula at the Bokhara religious madrasahs, which are considered the best model in this sphere.

At the most popular private school of Eshoni Mahmudjon the curriculum includes a great many subjects and books, some of which are exceptionally difficult medieval texts in Old Arabic.

Such broad selection of subjects and books contains very vast material, whose understanding and perception can be compared with a full university or academic course. A man who succeeded in mastering so much knowledge could well be regarded as a highly intellectual and educated person because this program includes a wide range of not only theological, but also historical, philological, philosophical, pedagogical and aesthetic knowledge. Besides, the process of private education also includes a whole range of practical and ceremonial knowledge.

A certain part of students interrupts regular studies after mastering the foundations of religion and learning prayers and ceremonial texts and practices. The fact that a student knows the ABC of faith and studied Islamic sciences with a teacher for some time gives him the right to carry on religious activity among the local population. Thus, the ranks of the clergy are replenished by understudied and semi-literate mullahs, which is now one of the major problems facing the Tajik Muslim clergy.

Certain Advantages and Problems of Private Religious Education

An analysis of the specific features of private religious education shows that it has its pros and cons as compared to the official network of such education. Some of the positive and negative features of private religious education are as follows:

First, students receive deep and full enough knowledge of certain subjects in private religious schools and circles, which cannot be achieved at official madrasahs. The full text of the basic books on Arab grammar and Islamic law – fikh is learned by heart.

Secondly, special attention is paid to the study and understanding of practical aspects of religious activity. In contrast to madrasah students, those at the private religious educational network master the ceremonial part of religion quicker and better, including such important subjects as rhetoric and elocution, which are very important for the Muslim clergy. Elocution is especially important for religious figures in Tajikistan because it wins them greater respect of the local population.

Thirdly, private religious education has no age or time limits: students of any age can study and train at any time of day or night with mullah. Besides, they can interrupt and resume their studies at any stage; some people continue studies for 25 years, even longer.

Fourthly, private religious education, on the other hand, gives unsystematic knowledge which cannot be assessed by qualification parameters. This is one of the most serious problems facing the Tajik Muslim clergy, for nobody can judge properly the level and competence of the functioning clergymen. According to existing practice, the minimum of religious information obtained from studies with any tutor gives grounds for taking a religious post.

It should be borne in mind that studies in the private network of religious education contributes to the formation of a narrow outlook of students because individual studies with only one teacher in an isolated medium and a limited range of specific knowledge do not lead to the formation of a broad scholarly and modern socio-political area of thought. Sometimes knowledge of students acquires quantitative scope, but as to quality it leaves much to be desired.

Private religious education contributed to the preservation of the atmosphere of strong individualism and contradictions among clergymen. This reality was expressed in a clear-cut manner by the well-known Khojent imam I. Kalonzoda in the following way: “In the private network the student receives from his tutor, along with religious knowledge, his likes and dislikes concerning others. For instance, if this tutor has difficult relations with his mullah or is at loggerheads with his colleague, their students are also at loggerheads with one another. Thus, the line of hostility is drawn by the classical scheme of “teacher against teacher – students against students.”

Private religious educational schools are the keepers of the old and traditional methods of teaching today. Especially now, when attempts of reformation are being made in the official network of religious education, the private network will insist on the need to preserve these methods and will not recognize the heretical innovations in the system of religious education.

In contrast to official madrasahs, in most private religious educational schools practical writing skills are not taught. As a result, most graduates from the private network of religious education do not have written communication skills.

Some Conclusions and Suggestions

The study and analysis of the present situation in religious education in the Republic of Tajikistan, especially the state and problems of the private network of religious education, enable us to make certain conclusions and recommendations.

Religious education plays the decisive role in the formation of the type and level of religious thinking of the Islamic clergy and society as a whole. In this connection we may state that modernization of religious thinking as an effective measure to optimize the Islamic factor is possible only through modernization of Islamic education.

It is only enlightened, progressive and intellectual Islam that can play the constructive and stabilizing role in the formation process of the Tajik national state. Conservative and reactionary religious thinking can serve as a factor of destabilization, a seat of radicalism, and a weak link of national security.

The private network of religious education in Tajikistan today, too, remains the most effective network of the distribution of religious knowledge and a channel for the formation of real and influential religious leaders. The private network of religious education remains a medium preserving traditions and methods of religious education, which serves as the foundation of its effectiveness, and on the other hand, lends it a conservative character. In this lies the strength and weakness of this network.

In modern Tajik society the position of the official network of religious education is rather weak. The low scholarly level of its

institutions contributes to the preservation of the dominant and determining role of private religious education and the formation of a religious atmosphere, values, approaches and standards.

In order to strengthen the role of official religious education and put an end to its deep and prolonged crisis it is necessary to create a legal basis and foster political will for rendering it state financial and methodological assistance, which is not possible today due to numerous legal, political and psychological barriers.

To recognize the official network of religious education by private teachers of religion it is necessary to change radically the present-day curricula of Islamic madrasahs and institutes in accordance with the established traditions of the Bokhara elitist school of religious education and international achievements in this sphere. It is also necessary to invite to teaching at official madrasahs such well-known and authoritative tutors as Eshoni Nuriddin, Domullo Khakmatullo, Domullo Naimjon, Eshoni Mahmudjon, and others.

A more resolute struggle with private religious education, especially the use of forcible methods in this campaign, will result in ousting the private network and driving it into deep underground, which will be fraught with the danger of its radicalization and enmity toward state policy.

It is necessary to remove the existing barriers in the way to legalization of private religious education and introduce licensed teaching of religion. This will make it possible to have a real idea about the scope and content of private religious education and at the same time facilitate the implementation of government control over it.

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**THE POSITION OF TURKEY AND RUSSIA
IN THE CONTEXT OF COOPERATION IN
THE EURASIAN REGION**

The Eurasian region being the crossroads of the world transport roads connecting the North and the South, the West and the East has become one of the most significant subjects of international politics during the past decade. The geopolitical position, as well as the military-strategic and fuel-and-energy potentials of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea basins turns the region into a springboard controlling various communication lines, which are in the focus of interests of the major actors in the international political arena. The interests of regional and non-regional states, such as Russia, the United States, West European countries, as well as the no less influential eastern states like Turkey and Iran are closely intertwined in the region. This can be seen especially clearly in the sphere of international and energy security. It should also be borne in mind that the situation in the Eurasian region as a whole is characterized by the radicalization of socio-political life, the development of controversial political processes, and active interference of non-regional states in regional affairs, which creates additional difficulties in ensuring regional and political stability and security in the region.

During the past decade the Eurasian region has been regarded as a source of the richest natural resources, primarily, hydrocarbon raw materials, and has found itself in the center of rivalry of different countries and political forces. It is gradually becoming the “starting point” in the rivalry between the different forces of world politics and international relations, determining the most interested players in this region, namely, Russia and Turkey.

The position of Russia is especially difficult and responsible, but at the same time it creates additional opportunities for it in the Eurasian region directly, and also outside it. Whereas Turkey, claiming as it is the role of the regional leader, is striving in its turn to expand its influence in the economic and political spheres. Acting cautiously and with restraint, which is due to its wish to preserve good relations with Russia, Turkey has consistently pursued a policy of strengthening its position in the region, being a partner and a rival of Russia in the Eurasian region simultaneously.

To date the effectiveness of the regional security system depends on the ability of the international community to create mechanisms of drawing the regional actors, and first and foremost Russia and Turkey, in these processes. Being the world's biggest state Russia is in eighth place in the number of its population (142.9 million). The volume of its GDP amounted to \$1,477 billion in 2010. The fuel-and-energy complex of Russia ensures 25 percent of the GDP, 30 percent of the volume of industrial production, and more than 50 percent of the federal budget revenue. On the other hand, by 2010 Turkey was in 15th place in the world by economic might and its economy is growing very rapidly (by 8.9 percent in 2010, being behind only China and Argentina). The world crisis of 2008 – 2009 did not make a too great impact on Turkey, in contrast to many countries. According to the statistical department of Turkey, the country's GDP in 2010 was \$ 736 billion, and per capita GDP – \$ 10,079. Together with their historical heritage these two countries play a major role in servicing transport communications at the regional level. Taking into account their economic, political, military and cultural-ideological weight and influence, as well as the formulation of tactical methods and the elaboration of strategic foundations, the policies of these two countries are of a comprehensive character. It is necessary to note that the region is at the crossroads of

the communication ways connecting European, South-Asian and Far-Eastern economic centers, which are quite important for the national interests of Russia and Turkey.

Taking into account the dynamism of Turkey's economy in the past decade and the growing importance of its geopolitical position, the main aims of its present foreign policy could be determined as follows:

The development of political relations not only with global players in international affairs, but also with the neighboring countries and the newly-independent states in the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea basins;

The growing interdependence by creating big regional zones of economic integration and the protection of socio-cultural values, forming and mobilizing them to serve national interests.

With due account of modern tendencies toward increasing regional and international cooperation, the foreign energy strategy of Turkey is aimed at the country's integration in the global energy system. Turkey is striving for realization of large-scale projects on its territory and planning to draw benefit from the rich oil-and-gas deposits around it by building pipelines to neighboring countries, which it can use as a transit corridor between the North-South and West-East.

At the same time the foreign policy of Russia in the Eurasian region is based on the military-political, energy-strategic and structural-economic principles. The geopolitical position, natural wealth, and comprehensive transcontinental communication corridors of this region predetermined its special role in the formation and implementation of these principles. Pursuing its own interests in the realization of its intentions, Russia, on the one hand, is striving to ensure political and social stability along its southern borders and retain its influence in this region. On the other hand, the implementation of new energy projects via its territory and the development of trade and economic ties with

neighboring countries form the road from which the Russian Federation could draw maximal profits. At the same time it is necessary to take into account the unique geographical position of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea region, along with a considerable oil-and-gas potential which ensures its attraction for all parties interested in their presence in the region.

The military-political priorities of Moscow in the Eurasian region are determined best of all in the context of achieving the balance of forces with the leading regional and world powers and creating a new strategic “axis” for the purpose. The new configuration of the region after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., combined with the emergence of newly-independent states on the shores of the Black and Caspian seas and the foreign-policy course of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea countries have brought about a change in the Russian approach to cooperation and competition on a geopolitical plane.

On the other hand, the foreign-policy priorities of Turkey in the Eurasian region are based on three principles: multi-vector foreign policy, maximal economic integration, and socio-cultural cooperation. Political influence, geopolitical position, economic might, historical heritage, and growing population allow Turkey to implement large-scale strategic projects, take an active part in international relations, and make its contribution to stability and prosperity of surrounding areas.

On November 4, 2009, speaking at the Institute of International Strategic Studies (USAK) in Ankara on the occasion of observing the principle of the founding father of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk -- “Peace in the country, peace all over the world,” President A. Gul said that “Turkey continues to pursue a multi-vector and responsible foreign policy which is developing in all directions and is based on pragmatic interests, and also with a feeling of responsibility for the destiny of the region, which is connected with the historical past

of Turkey and its regional ties.” That is, Turkey’s interests in this region are of both pragmatic-economic and historical-political character. President Gul does not call his country superpower like the United States, however, he asserts that Turkey is a sufficiently strong regional player capable to pursue an independent policy on the basis of its own strategic interests and approach regional problems with responsibility conditioned by its historical past and unique geostrategic position. At the same time the country’s foreign-policy course is largely determined by Turkey’s commitments as a member of various international and regional organizations: the UN – since 1945; the International Monetary Fund – since 1947; the Council of Europe – since 1949; NATO – since 1949; OECD – since 1961; OSCE – since 1973; OEC – since 1985; Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation – since 1992; Turkey has the status of a candidate member to the European Union since 1999.

In this context it should be said that after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. a new stage in relations between Turkey and Russia has begun. The first problem facing Moscow was to retain its influence in the post-Soviet area and prevent Turkish influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Up to the middle of the 1990s relations between Moscow and Ankara could be characterized as a period of controlled tension and rivalry in the spheres of geopolitical influence and bilateral relations. During the 1990s Ankara’s caution in its relations with Moscow could be explained by serious interest of the Turkish business circles in the Russian market and the acute character of the Kurdish problem. This was why the Turkish ruling circles avoided any exacerbation of relations with Russia. They refrained from an active interference in the affairs of the North Caucasus and did not support the Chechen separatists, at least officially. However, the new situation and changes in the Eurasian area, on the one hand, led to continuing geopolitical

rivalry between states in this region, and on the other, determined and formed the process of intensive economic cooperation between Russia and Turkey. Each side demonstrated open interest in developing cooperation in the economic sphere. The Russian side displayed much attention to the fuel-and-energy field. Thus, in the 1990s the development of bilateral relations was characterized by preponderance of the economic component.

After the Party of Justice and Development came to power in Turkey in 2002, a political breakthrough in Russian-Turkish relations took place. It was noted in the program of the ruling party that relations with Russia in Central Asia and in the Caucasus would be based on cooperation instead of competition. The new approach to Turkey's foreign policy was largely formulated by the country's foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu in his book "Stratejik Derinlik" in the early 2000th. He asserted that "a country experiencing constant crises in relations with neighboring states can hardly pursue a proper regional and global foreign policy, and this is why Turkey should adopt an all-round plan of peaceful settlement and a package of measures for developing economic and cultural relations and overcoming security crises with its closest neighbors." Ankara holds the view that polarization in the Black Sea – Caspian Sea region and confrontation with neighboring countries are not in the interests of the countries of the region. The common views and interests of Ankara and Moscow concerning the problems of the Black Sea region resulted in the minimum presence of non-regional actors in the area. It should be emphasized that the positive development of bilateral relations with Russia should be duly assessed by Turkey.

The expansion of bilateral trade and economic ties between Russia and Turkey, their closer positions on economic integration in the Eurasian region, and their desire to interact on the basis of close

political contacts make it possible not only to talk of a new stage in Russian-Turkish relations, but also to contribute to resolving the existing regional problems and contradictions and stepping up the integration process in Eurasia on a broader conceptual basis. The objective factors of the two countries drawing closer together (geographical position, common borders, regional interests), the realities of the international situation of the early 21st century connected with the events in the Middle East, the war in Iraq and the U.S. policy, and the absence of progress in the question of Turkey's admittance to the European Union have influenced the Ankara – Moscow relations. It should be noted that to determine the future destiny of Eurasia it is important to make strategic approaches to tackling the problems of mutual relations between Turkey and Russia – countries holding the key positions in the region.

On February 12–15, 2009, the President of Turkey A. Gul was in Russia on a state visit during which the Joint Declaration was signed on moving toward a new stage of relations between the Russian Federation and the Turkish Republic and broadening and deepening friendship and versatile partnership. Turkish experts view this summit as an important event in the development of bilateral relations between two major Eurasian states, as well as in the strengthening of security and stability not only in the region, but in the entire world.

This is also confirmed by Article 5 of the Declaration saying, among other things, that relations and cooperation between Russia and Turkey serve not only the interests of the two countries, but also make a weighty contribution to ensuring peace, security, stability and development in the broad Eurasian area and the entire world. For the first time in the history of Turkish-Russian relations the head of the Turkish Republic has come to Russia on a state visit, and also to part of the Russian Federation – the Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan. His

delegation included about two hundred people – ministers, deputies to parliament, head of departments, and leading representatives of business and scientific circles. That state visit marked a new stage in Russian-Turkish relations which now develop from multilateral cooperation to strategic partnership. Turkish experts commenting on President Gul’s visit emphasized that Ankara’s close cooperation with its “northern neighbor” would contribute to stability and prosperity in the Black Sea – Caspian Sea region and in the South Caucasus.

The Joint Declaration is a vast and clear-cut document fixing not only the political will of the two parties, but also concrete proposals for the further development of bilateral relations to strategic partnership so important to the two countries. In this context it should be remembered that the Russian President said that Moscow relied on strategic partnership with Turkey in the problem of ensuring security in the Caucasus and in the Black Sea region. Realizing that the frozen conflicts in the South Caucasus threaten with potential destabilization of the entire region, Russia and Turkey agreed on adopting effective measures for their settlement. In this connection Ankara has put forward an initiative, which was later called “Platform of Stability and Cooperation in the Caucasus,” and contributed to creating an atmosphere of trust between the conflicting sides, and at the same time improving the already existing international mechanisms.

Another meeting of the Council on Cooperation at a high level took place during the visit of the Prime Minister of Turkey R.T. Erdogan to Moscow on March 15–17, 2011. During the negotiations within the framework of the Council in the Kremlin the two sides confirmed their readiness to cooperate in the construction of the first nuclear power plant on Turkish territory, despite the disaster on the Fukushima plant in Japan.

The Russian-Turkish negotiations also touched on the regional and global situation, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in the Trans-Caucasus. Turkey recognizes Russia's right to play its role in resolving "frozen conflicts" in the region, namely the one between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Summing up, it can be said that relations between Turkey and Russia are based on versatile cooperation aimed at gaining mutual benefits. The developing relations of Turkey with Russia in the energy aspect and Ankara's strategic choice will ensure its advantage in strengthening its geopolitical influence especially in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. It is necessary to note that Turkey is interested primarily in waging a balanced foreign policy, focusing its interests on political advantages, and to gain them it may be ready to agree to a temporary cooling its relations with the West. In its turn, Moscow, which aims at preserving its geopolitical influence in Europe, does not intend to let the West go along without using its oil and gas pipelines. Obviously, there are all grounds to believe that bilateral relations between Russia and Turkey will continue to develop. This is in the interests of both Turkey and Russia.

"Evraziiskoye prostranstvo: proshloye, nastoyashchee, budushchee", Moscow, 2012, pp. 69–76.

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