

**RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

**RUSSIA
AND
THE MOSLEM WORLD
2014 – 5 (263)**

**Science-information bulletin
The Bulletin was founded in 1992**

**Moscow
2014**

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RUSSIA IN THE WORLD OF FORCE

IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The modern world is full of paradoxes. On the one hand, it disproves all forecasts, even the most recent ones, creating the feeling of complete unpredictability. On the other, it confirms the fact that the traditional principles of international relations, which have been considered obsolete, are inviolable at the new historical stage, too. The new world is not hopeless for analyzing, as it might seem sometimes, but this analysis is much more complex and non-linear, and requires a multitude of various factors to be taken into account.

The basic concepts have not changed. The state continues to be a structural unit of the international system, despite numerous forecasts concerning its withering away and the obliteration of national borders under the impact of globalization. The hierarchy of states is determined by the correlation of forces as previously. However, force now is a much more complex many-part phenomenon than before. A shortage of one type of force (for instance, traditional military force) can be compensated by others – economic power and “soft power,” which could be termed, more correctly, “power of images and ideas.” It cannot

be said that one of the types of power is more important, or another loses its importance. However, the entire picture is volatile enough, and in each case one or another component may have a “greater weight.” And the task of any state, be it a great power or a small country, is to develop and improve all components, for each of them may come in handy.

The jubilee XX Assembly of the Council on foreign and defense policy, which took place in December 2012, discussed the question of the meaning of power in the modern world and its consequences to Russia. Naturally, it is not possible to give a comprehensive answer to this question. But it is clear that our country is on the threshold of a new development stage. The old models have been exhausted, previous self-identification does not correspond to the new challenges, and the change of the paradigm of world development requires new approaches. For Russia, a comprehensive increase of its strength is also the problem of forming a new identity, which should be directed to the future.

The power of money. Economic and financial problems take pride of place on the global agenda now more than ever before. The indices of the economic might of states, their GDP, the quality and quantity of human capital, and development vectors play the crucial role in the assessment of the aggregate might of states. A paradox is that globalization, which has put to the fore the economy among the factors of power, at the same time diminishes the opportunities of using the economic factors of influence and even the use of economic resources to increase other sources of power, for instance, military ones.

Authoritarian states can afford to spend as much on defense and foreign policy as their governments deem it necessary, and behave with other countries as they think fit. The democratic systems where the authorities have to orient themselves to election results are unable to

use their economic potential for increasing military capabilities. As a result, a reduction of defense expenditures is observed all over the developed world. A high official of the Pentagon said a couple of years ago that the state debt was a greater threat to the U.S. security than “Al Qaeda,” China, or any other potentially hostile country.

Of course, the economy remains the crucial source of power. Control over raw material resources, particularly oil, which has been transferred from transnational corporations of western origin to national states and companies controlled by them, is a special subject. The states rich in natural resources increase their international weight and prestige also because their GDP is steadily growing. At present, world reaction to the energy challenge will be economic-technological rather than geopolitical and expansionist.

Food and the capacity of its production is a source of economic influence. However, the existence of a free market renders it difficult to apply the “food weapon,” which has often been used previously. In general, total mutual dependence restricts the ability to apply economic pressure; it becomes a double-edged weapon, when any action is fraught with damage inflicted on oneself.

The role of technological superiority is also changing. On the one hand, wide distribution of knowledge is steady and unstoppable, and communication transparency contributes to access of even backward countries to advanced technologies. The strength and stability of a state is now demonstrated not so much by the scientific and technological level of its economy as by the quality of human capital, the level of education, and the state of the institutions determining its ability to absorb and apply knowledge and know-how. On the other hand, the world is standing on the threshold of transition to a new technological system and pattern which will give engender a powerful economic and political breakthrough. The ability to develop new technologies will

become another criterion in establishing the hierarchy of states (at least those claiming to play an important role in the world), and growing power in this sphere will be equal to “brain hunt,” that is, a search for professionals capable to serve as a source of new knowledge and technologies. Economic development plays the decisive role here – the more developed and comfortable country the more attractive it is for highly-skilled specialists.

The economy is the major determining factor of the state of the world and its development vector, and economic subjects are now of greater importance in international relations..

Russia is a medium state in the development level and volume of its economy. It has a negative tendency – a one-side character of its economy, and this is why there can be no comprehensive qualitative improvement of the situation in the country. The raw material and energy resources of the country under the sovereign control of the state have compensated its growing technological lag so far. The increasing world shortage of food products, whose output can easily be boosted in Russia by 1.5 to two times in the foreseeable future, is a favorable factor for it. Among potential opportunities of Russia is the growing shortage of water resources, especially in Asia, which makes it possible to develop water-intensive industries in the regions of Siberia and the Russian Far East rich in water for the subsequent export of their products to Asia.

However, the primitivization of the economy and its low efficiency are fraught with a decrease of Russian influence in the world. Unfortunately, neither the Russian ruling class nor the greater part of its population, who are gaining benefits from the continuing redistribution of the rent, do not wish to change anything so far.

Power of arms. Throughout history military force has always been the most important demonstration of the might and influence of a

state. The globalization and democratization of the world system and domestic policy of states put forward problems which cannot be solved by military force – ecology, welfare of the population, the world financial situation, freedom of trade, etc. At the same time, the possession of nuclear weapons by the leading powers makes the unleashing of large-scale wars practically impossible.

Nevertheless, there can be no ultimate renunciation of the use of military force. The general course to returning the role of states in international affairs (there has been nothing more stable), and the erosion of rules, including the standards of international law, induce states to think constantly of their own security (Europe is, perhaps, the only exception, for it does not see any military-political threats to it). The security vacuum becomes deeper in the vast area from the Middle East to East Asia, and the exacerbation of rivalry leads to more frequent conflicts there. A big war or a series of wars in the Middle East is more likely – they will be local, but due to globalization their repercussions will affect places beyond the boundaries of the region. The existence of powerful armed forces with a nuclear component is a necessary condition for a state to be able to feel secure in the face of growing chaos and turbulence in international relations.

Globalization and lower effectiveness of international institutions and regimes place greater responsibility on states. Citizens call to account their government, but not the “invisible hands.” The internationalization of economic, financial, ecological and information processes reduces the possibilities of states to influence not only the environment, but also the domestic processes. The only means which remains under complete control of states is military force. There is greater temptation to rely on it, although the effectiveness of classical levers of force definitely becomes lower.

The power of ideas and images. After the collapse of the communist system many people believed that the ideological confrontation has finished once and for all. But that has not been the case, although the character of rivalry has changed and lost its structural systemic character.

Ideological struggle has exacerbated in the sphere of attractiveness of development models, which predetermine the countries' influence, and their world "capitalization" at the age of information openness. The role of the "soft power" measured by readiness of other countries to follow somebody's example voluntarily is growing. It depends on the welfare level of the basic mass of the population, quality of life, security of man, his freedom, and effectiveness of the legal and political system. The cultural wealth and ability to spread one's culture is of special importance.

The avalanche of information makes the purposeful management of news and ideas ever more difficult. Information becomes more democratic and escapes control, and images turn to be more "objective." At the same time, flows of information sweep away all arguments and bring to the fore emotions, which favor manipulation of a non-systemic character, because it takes place from all directions simultaneously.

The revival of ideological rivalry is taking place against the backdrop of the rapid growing of the amount of information consumed by people, and the triumph of the Internet leads to virtualization of politics. Ideas and views increasingly determine the weight and significance of material phenomena, including those concerning strength and influence. This is why positions in the sphere of mass communications are their sources of special importance.

The accumulated technological, moral and historical assets, trust and habit to use the western mass media create preferential position for

the West, which preserves priority in the interpretation and distribution of ideas. Directly or indirectly, its images and ideas are distributed and popularized. The West yields to the rapidly developing Asian countries, but it intensifies ideological struggle in an attempt to present the existing situation in the world as proof of the success of its ideology.

The struggle for influence on views and ideas of the active popular masses will be one of the crucial types of rivalry between states and their groups in the 21st century. The developing countries, following the strengthening of their positions in the economy and the sphere of security will switch over to an active struggle for ideological influence.

Russian influence in the sphere of information and ideology is still negligible. It can be explained by the fact that it has not found its new identity and is still wallowing in the ideological clichés of the 20th century, instead of turning to its historical potential. The present Russian model of socio-economic development and its anti-western stance are very unattractive.

The place of Russia. Russian statehood for the period of its entire history had taken shape and consolidated in the conditions of a constant threat from the outside, and opposition to it had been the keynote of state construction. Today, perhaps, there is no direct threat to this country. The habitual opponent and rival – the West – is itself weak enough, besides, there are no deep contradictions between it and Russia. China has been doing everything possible not to create the feeling of danger in Russia, inasmuch as Beijing well realizes that its rivalry with the United States is almost inevitable. Local seats of instability, especially to the south of the Russian borders, can cause serious complications, but these conflicts are of another nature, differing from those for which Russia had always been preparing.

Undoubtedly, in the conditions of the growing instability in the world situation the country needs to have strong armed forces. However, it has not been clear so far to what extent the declared plans of rearmament are feasible and whether they are based on concrete long-term calculations.

A primitive character of the economy is quite evident. The factors compensating this drawback are still working: world demand for raw materials and food contributes to the preservation of the aggregate might of the country, all the more so since it has proved its ability to keep territories and raw material resources under its sovereign control. In the chaotic world of national players abiding by unclear rules, Russia feels quite comfortable so far. Besides, its habitual rivals – the United States and Europe – themselves are in a tangle and make one blunder after another. As to China, it adheres to an evasive position, despite its constant rise. However, this situation will not last forever. The United States, Europe and China have demonstrated already the beginning of revaluation of approaches to and assessments of the world situation and evolvement of new models of behavior.

The “soft power” of Russia is not great. Its considerable cultural potential is not used properly. The quality and amount of human capital worsen and dwindle. Despite high-sounding words about modernization and innovations, the ruling elite continues to play the role of a powerful raw material and military-political actor, but not the leader of a new economy, ideology or culture.

In its strategy Moscow increasingly relies on military force, especially on nuclear weapon. It can be explained, but is not adequate enough. Russia is unable to establish reliable allied relations, and prefers to make an emphasis on strategic independence and discretion. Shift toward rising Asia is impermissibly slow and is confined to lip service. No serious efforts to develop modern resource-extracting

branches and industries beyond the Ural Mountains are being made. Meanwhile, against the background of the tumultuous development of Asia, the absence or weakness of the corresponding vector in Russian policy will bring about rapid decline.

If there are no changes for the better and the present model is preserved, there will be semi-authoritarian rule in Russia and the growing gap between power and entire society. The leadership will have to rely on populism and moderate nationalism. Such course will weaken the country's capabilities to protect its interests and will prod it to isolation in the international arena, which will be fraught with a fatal lag in the conditions of global transition to a new technological structure.

The preservation and strengthening of Russia's positions in the world as an independent great power requires a change of its development and self-identification model.

It is necessary to reevaluate the priorities of society and the state and sharply increase investments in education and culture. Better quality of human capital will increase the potential of "soft power" and will become a pledge for a technological leap in a generation. In the conditions of a new world, where rivalry for "brains" and know-how becomes crucial, the creation of a medium favorable for self-realization and creative work of professional people is a guarantee of the preservation of stable and solid positions.

Urgent measures are needed to eliminate the primitive character of the Russian economy and improve its efficiency, which requires taking resolute measures against corruption and red tape. For the purpose it is necessary to have a more open political system.

The course aimed at creation of the up-to-date armed forces and restructuring of the military-industrial complex in a more or less market spirit should continue. The preservation of and even increased reliance

on nuclear containment due to lagging behind other big actors by other components of military might are inevitable. However, military expenditures should correspond to the level of real threats, but not the appetites of the most conservative section of the country's leadership.

The creation of one's own center of economic force with the participation of a number of countries – parts of the former U.S.S.R. – should be continued, but without politicizing this process and taking into account the expediency of drawing partners. The source of the real progress of the Russian economy is not in neighboring countries, which can only strengthen the initial positions of one another for access to interaction with more important players.

The economic reorientation of Russia to the market of new Asia has no alternative. For this purpose it is necessary to create in Siberia and the Russian Far East of a number of water-intensive branches of agriculture with drawing big investments from countries in the Asia-Pacific region (the United States, Japan, South Korea, ASEAN countries, and not only China), and also the European Union. Turn to Asia does not mean refusal from the European cultural and historical tradition, in which Russia had been formed. Moreover, this cultural-civilizational orientation should be strengthened, because it creates a base for Russian national self-identification.

Along with exhaustion of Soviet heritage, the formation of a new national identity becomes a strategically important task. It should combine what is best in culture and history of Russia, should look into the future and be open to changes.

*“Liki sily: intellektualnaya elita Rossii i mira
o glavnom voprose mirovoi politiki,”
Moscow, 2013, pp. 15–26.*

BASHKORTOSTAN. ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL: POSSIBILITIES AND RISKS FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION: ISLAMIC WAY

Prior to the emergence of Islam on the territory inhabited by Bashkirs (10th century) in the Southern Urals, their spiritual life was quite varied. Among the cults widespread there were ancient Iranian traditional Mazdaism and Ancient Turkic faiths. Interaction of various cultural traditions inevitably gave birth to syncretism characteristic of the entire pre-Islamic cultural layer.

At the beginning of the 14th century, at the time of Khan Uzbek's rule (1312–1342), Islam became state religion of the Golden Horde. Islam entrenched itself among the Bashkir tribes which became part of the population of the Mongol state. It was also dominating ideology.

After the Bashkirs joined the Russian Orthodox Christian state (the latter half of the 16th century) the dogmatic side of the Muslim cult became actualized, which could be explained by their reaction to the policy of the Russian authorities who were striving to control spiritual processes in Bashkir society. By that time the Bashkirs regarded themselves Sunni Muslims.

The role of Islam as a factor of ethnic consolidation among Bashkirs grew especially rapidly in the 17th – 18th century. As a result of many uprisings during two centuries the Bashkirs were able not only to protect their socio-economic privileges and legal status, but also to retain their ethnic and religious identity. They remained practically untouched by the policy of forcible Christianization. Simultaneously, socio-political oppression contributed to the popularity of Sufi version of Islam among Bashkirs, emphasizing its most attractive features, such as asceticism, indifference to wealth and high social status in society, and fatalism.

The Sufi form of Islam was close to mentality of the Bashkir people, with their love of freedom and independent character.

One of the main achievements of the rebel movement of the Bashkir people was liberalization of the “Muslim” policy of the Russian government aimed at lowering the level of ideological confrontation between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. Thanks to Empress Catherine the Great (1732–1796) Russian religious policy was distinguished by tolerance. Muslims received an opportunity to embrace religion openly, build new stone mosques in cities, etc. By a decree of Catherine the Great of September 22, 1788, a state-religious department for Muslims was set up under the name “Ufa Spiritual Muslim Assembly.”

A long-term result of the religious reforms of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great was a certain reduction of the role of religion in the state and society. Alternative ideologies emerged and began to spread: liberalism, socialism, nationalism. The conservative czarist government made its choice in favor of nationalism with the preservation of the elements of Orthodox Christianity. By the end of the 19th century the upsurge of Russian nationalism evoked among Russian Muslims (first and foremost, the Ural-Volga Tatars) reformist and traditionalist reactions.

Simultaneously, Russian modernization stepped up the marginalization processes in Bashkir society and the impoverishment of a considerable part of the Bashkir population.

Russian modernization was aimed primarily at the creation of a uniform system of education and the state mass media and communication system. However, one of the specific features of Russian reality at the turn of the 20th century was that in “deep provinces” of the country “high” cultures of non-Russian peoples existed, among them, Turkic-Islamic “high” culture on the basis of the

traditional national-religious system of education and upbringing and the literary language “Tyurki.”

After the February revolution of 1917 the differentiation process among the Russian Turkic Muslims was steadily on the upgrade. In July – December 1917 three all-Bashkir congresses took place in Orenburg, which discussed the problem of Bashkir autonomy. Interethnic contradictions were the main reason for the refusal of the leaders of the Bashkir national movement (1917–1920) to take part in the work of the National Assembly of Turkic Tatar Muslims of Inner Russia and Siberia in Ufa on November 22, 1917.

The first decade of the existence of Soviet Russia, and then the Soviet Union, was not accompanied by serious persecutions of religious Muslims. During that period three all-Russia congresses of the Muslim clergy took place (1920, 1923, 1926). But beginning from 1927 the Soviet secular authorities began their struggle against Muslim religion: madrasahs were closed, school curricula were changed (they were now based on the principle of atheist upbringing and education), and mosques were destroyed. However, atheism did not completely ousted Islam. It was due to the formal, but constitutional principle of “freedom of conscience,” as well as significance of the ethnic factor in the formation of the unified Soviet state on the ethnic-national basis. This was why it was possible to preserve Islam as an element of ethnic identification.

Re-Islamization became possible due to the preservation of the extensive development model of Russian society during the Soviet period of the country’s history. Islam as one of conservative ideologies of the extensively-oriented type of societies was necessary for the “extensive type of the individual,” who lost orientations in the period of ideological chaos of the late 1980s–1990s. Return to the faith of the ancestors enabled a considerable part of the Bashkirs and Tatars living

in the Republic of Bashkortostan to retain their value orientations and their own model of the world.

Re-Islamization was also expressed in the revival of the outward aspect of Muslim religiousness: it included the restoration and construction of mosques and other premises for religious purpose, legal administration, opportunity to receive a religious education in Russia and abroad, creation of the religious mass media, etc.

By 2006, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Bashkortostan registered 259 mosques, two Islamic institutes of higher education and six madrasahs.

At the present development stage of Russian society there is such constant as religious, including Muslim, identity. Muslims in the Republic of Bashkortostan preserve their Islamic identity which can be judged by the level of their religious culture.

It is difficult to give the exact number of religious Muslims in present-day Bashkortostan due to the absence of the data about religiousness of the population contained in the latest all-Russia population censuses (2002, 2010). However, the material of these censuses fully reflects the ethnic composition of the country's population. Proceeding from the fact that Islam is the predominant religion in the republic, it can be said that 92.4 percent of the Bashkirs and 86.7 percent of the Tatars polled during our surveillance in the republic in 2011 are adherents of Islam. Thirty-two percent of Bashkirs and 29.5 percent of Tatars who declared their religiousness observe Muslim customs and rites.

It should be noted that rural young people from among ethnic Muslims who have moved to towns for receiving an education are subject to a psychological stress in the atomized urban medium. Their psychological discomfort is due to their lower status, inasmuch as their language, mores and morals, and dress look small-time. And people

from rural districts try to find their own niche in town relying on their ethnic and religious identity. From this marginalized section most young imams with a lower educational level are recruited. A definite part of these marginalized young men, in order to satisfy unrealized ambitions, switch over to the positions of “radical Islam.” The situation becomes worse due to the relatively low living standards of ethnic Muslims, above all, Bashkirs, judging by results of investigations and surveillance

The main source of the increasing Bashkir urban population is migration from rural districts. The low living standards become the main reason for young Bashkirs to join non-traditional religious Islamic movements (Wahhabi, Salaphite, “Islamic Jamaat,” “Khizb ut-Tahrir,” and others).

After the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. emissaries of numerous Islamic charity foundations have appeared on the territory of Russia whose aim was to revive Muslim umma in this country. These foundations paid special attention to educational programs which should have helped bring up and train a new generation of spiritual leaders and priests. Young Muslims from the republics of the North Caucasus and the Ural-Volga area went by hundreds to study at foreign madrasahs within the framework of the Arab and Turkish programs to contribute to re-Islamization of Russian Muslims. By the mid-1990s hundreds of well-educated and ambitious young radical Muslims began to return to Russia where they formed the backbone of the Salaphite movement. At the same time the number of Bashkir Muslims who have received an education abroad is considerably lower than that among Muslims of Tatarstan and North Caucasian republics. For example, in 2006 there were only thirty men from Bashkortostan studying at religious educational establishments in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, whereas there were one hundred men from Tatarstan.

The religious practice of modern Muslims of Bashkortostan has a strong influence of the Sufi form of Islam. According to the data of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia, from thirty to sixty inhabitants of Bashkortostan make hajj annually. This is a modest figure compared to that of the Republic of Tatarstan, not to speak of the North Caucasian republics from where up to 10 thousand people go on hajj to Mecca every year.

Re-Islamization process in Bashkortostan, judging by the results of surveillance in 2011, not only widens, but also deepens. For instance, a considerable part of respondents (48.7 percent of Bashkirs and 41.4 percent of Tatars) regularly pray. Apart from that, 4.8 percent of Bashkirs and 2.4 percent of Tatars attend lessons on the foundations of Islam, 18.7 percent of Bashkirs and 15.9 percent of Tatars regularly read religious literature, and 35.3 percent of Bashkirs and 31.4 percent of Tatars regularly read the Koran.

Results of sociological polls in the Republic of Bashkortostan show not only a high level of tolerance of its Muslims toward people of other religious cultures, but also reflect the process of secularization which has an impact not only on the way of life of an individual, but also on his world outlook.

Summing up the results of numerous sociological polls and surveillances, it is possible to reveal certain trends. First, the basic mass of Muslims in Bashkortostan can be referred to the world of Islamic culture and retains elements of its mentality. At the present stage of the socio-political life of Bashkortostan's Muslims Islam has mostly a symbolic character: for the ethnic self-consciousness of Bashkirs. Islam is important for them not as a system of world outlook but rather as part of the people's historical memory. Secondly, although modern Russian Islam has been institutionalized through spiritual boards and enjoys support of the state, it cannot embrace all spheres of the country's life,

something which the Salaphites are striving for. Modern ethnic Muslims, most of all Tatars and Bashkirs, are integrated in Russian society and its civilizing structures: behavioral, socio-cultural, socio-linguistic, communicative, and industrial-technical. A great role in it is played by traditions of interethnic and inter-confessional tolerance developed in the Ural-Volga area. Taking into account these circumstances, and also the still existing differences between Tatars and Bashkirs, unification of local Muslims in one political force is hardly possible.

“Grazhdanskaya, etnicheskaya i religioznaya identichnost: vchera, segodnya, zavtra,” Moscow, 2013, pp. 173–193.

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POLITICAL ELITE OF DAGHESTAN

During the past decades two opposite trends of political activity have become quite pronounced in Russia. On the one hand, we observe the active role of political elites in the country's life and their influence on the development of political phenomena and processes, and on the other, considerable curtailment of the political activity and participation of the main social strata and groups in socio-political life. In examining the social nature of the main groups of the modern foreign or Russian political elite we come across tabooing this subject, which bears not so much a methodological as psychological character.

The founders of Marxism laid an emphasis on the pressing need for the participation of the broad popular masses in society's political life and warned against the situation in which a narrow circle of people could monopolize power. Marxists proclaimed as one of their task the

liquidation of such monopoly in order to abolish difference between the political elite and the rest of society. The elitist concepts, having elaborated axiological and altimetric approaches, single out the political elite as an independent social group. At present the altimetric approach to the interpretation of the term “elite” is preponderant, inasmuch as no reliable and well-tested criteria of belonging to the political elite have been elaborated by adherents to the axiological approach so far.

In the early 1990s Russia faced a choice of political and state system. The difficulties of a search for new forms of statehood and political instability have resulted in a sharp struggle between different socio-political forces and groupings with different political views and platforms. In present-day Russia as a result of socio-economic and political transformations new social strata and groups, and a whole galaxy of new political leaders and elites have emerged in the past decades.

It should be borne in mind that the formation process of a mature political elite in Russian society takes quite some time. Civil society in modern Russia is still in the “embryonic state” and largely depends on the “initiatives” of the state. During the period of cardinal economic transformations the problem of creating a developed middle class has not been solved. There is an insignificant number of owners who are independent from the state. Unfortunately, having created a multiparty system, we have weak political parties and, accordingly, their political elites and leaders have a very low prestige.

It should also be noted that in the conditions of “weakness” of Russian civil society, which is unable to control political power and political processes and phenomena, the role of political elites and their leaders could have become determining, but that was not the case. The Russian political elite, by its composition and origin, is the social sequence of the preceding Communist party elite of the socialist

formation, on the one hand, and on the other, under the impact of new social conditions and the transformations of the past several decades this political elite is changing and replenished with representatives of the sections which have emerged in the course of economic reforms and political transformations.

We should note that the specific features of the formation of the political elite in Daghestan , along with common Russian processes in this sphere, differ from the general Russian pattern. In our view, they include such factors as the specificity of the political culture of Daghestani society, its traditions, its multiethnic composition, the high level of religiousness, and poly-confessional character of the population. The socio-political transformations going on in Russian society have been aggravated by certain objective reasons typical of Daghestan only, among which mention should be made of the geopolitical position of the region and “stage” specificities of the modern ethno-regional development. A no less important factor is the inclusion of Daghestan in the system of trans-regional ethnic political relations

In other words, on the national outskirts of Russian society, especially in Daghestan, the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. has provoked tumultuous processes which were previously concealed by Soviet modernization. Political and social structures of the Soviet type were destroyed and informal relations between traditional institutions came to the fore. Clan and client relations began to take shape on the ethnic basis, which became close to the elements of ethnic cultures which still existed despite socialist modernization.

The Republic of Daghestan is a unique region of the Russian Federation by its history, original culture, poly-ethnic composition, natural and climatic conditions, and demographic potential. There is no “titular” nation in Daghestan. The most numerous people are the Avars.

Then come the Darghins, Kumyks, Lezghins, Lakz, Tabasarans, Nogais, Rutuls, and Tsakhurs. Apart from them, Daghestan is also populated by Russians, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Tats, Tatars, and others.

One of the ethnopolitical specific features of the Republic of Daghestan is that its ethnic groups are the “holders of right.” The peoples of Daghestan are represented in legislative and executive bodies through regional groups.

Ethnicity is an important political factor in the formation process of the Daghestani political elite. “Ethnic balance” is a typical feature of Daghestan. The system of appointments and promotions at Daghestani ministries, departments, industrial enterprises, and bodies of executive power contradicts the Russian legal standards, but it enables the authorities to maintain fragile civil peace in Daghestan.

The system of ethnic quotas is dangerous because it strengthens nationalistic tendencies among the political elite in Daghestani society. As has been shown by recent developments, ethnicity is used by representatives of the local elites as a trump card in protecting and promoting their interests. In the early 1990s the leaders of many national public and political movements (“Popular Front named after Imam Shamil,” “Sadwal,” “Tenglik,” “Birlik”) came out for the division of Daghestan into independent states. The problem of sovereignty has led to the growth of national self-consciousness, inasmuch as national movements called for territorial division and political independence. In the conditions of Daghestan these processes developed very rapidly due to a complex ethnopolitical background picture. During the period under review the leadership of the republic had to encounter the processes of swiftly growing national self-consciousness and exacerbation of interethnic relations which were manifested in the activity of the political elites pursuing different

political aims and propagating different ideas about the future of their republic.

It is also necessary to note that the political elite of Daghestan largely depends on clan interests in the socio-political life of the republic which were growing during the post-perestroika period, and this was conditioned by the transformation of the Soviet state system. In the conditions of the reforms carried on in Russian society the federal center continued to initiate radical economic and political transformations, and at the same time make concessions to the sovereignization of the national autonomies of the country.

As a result, the specific features of the political situation in the Republic of Daghestan, at a time of the formation of its present political elite, now included the trend of considerable politicization of interethnic relations and ethnicity of politics. This circumstance has contributed to stepping up black-market processes in which the ethnic factor became a channel for acquiring, keeping and using resources of all types by clan groupings. Thus, ethnic affiliation became the necessary attribute for implementing narrow group interests.

In other words, the ethnic factor was used by clan groups to join and carry on the struggle for power in the Republic in Daghestan. During that period the socio-political climate in Daghestan was favorable for the black-market and other shadowy groupings to take part quite actively in Daghestani socio-political and economic life. One of the specific features of the Daghestani political elite is that the old Soviet party and nomenklatura elite was able to remain afloat in the new conditions and successfully integrate in the new reality.

In these conditions the party-nomenklatura elite of Daghestan used in greater degree the existing state resources in the struggle for power against formal and informal non-governmental figures, big businessmen and leaders of various national movements. In their turn,

they began to appeal for ethnic solidarity, and also for support from financial groups.

We believe that the struggle for power between these groupings predetermined the character of the political system of Daghestan and laid an imprint on the further development of the republic. Some experts believe that the political system, which has taken shape in Daghestan after the collapse of the communist regime was a result of harsh confrontations and complex compromises of different political forces, which came into being in place of the uniform system of communist hierarchy on the basis of “checks and balances.”

One of the results of these processes was the emergence of such model in which the clan and ethnic character acquired the dominating significance in socio-political and socio-economic processes of the republic. This is shown, for one, by the fact that throughout the entire post-Soviet period representatives of the three most numerous ethnic groups of the republic – Avar, Darghin and Kumyk – hold all three highest posts in the republic: President, Chairman of the People’s Assembly, and Chairman of the government of Daghestan. Many people believe that the most prestigious and profitable places in the lower echelons of power are distributed, first of all, among representatives of these ethno-clan groupings.

Speaking of the political elite of Daghestan we imply that it consists mainly of representatives of the Devashin and Khunzakh clans, where each clan is striving to achieve a stable position, control its surrounding, and create favorable socio-economic and political conditions for its activity. The typical aim of these clans is to seize valuable assets, promote their people to federal or local legislative bodies of power, receive important government posts, and remove rivals and former business partners.

Examining the situation with the problems of political elites in the entire North Caucasus we shall see the attempts of the Russian leadership to use the regional specificities of the political elites for stabilizing the situation in this difficult region. The federal center believes that the specific features of the North Caucasus, where power was allegedly transferred from father to son, should be taken into account. We consider this view erroneous.

Each independent part of the North Caucasian Federal region has its typical characteristics. For instance, a comprehensive work carried out by the federal center in Chechnya in the past several years gives grounds for certain optimism concerning stabilization of the ethnopolitical situation in the region. The election of Ramzan Kadyrov (the son of Ahmat Kadyrov) President of Chechnya in 2007 was an attempt of the Russian leadership to use regional specificities of the elite for stabilizing the situation in this far from calm and quiet republic. Not all clans and families of that republic were unanimous in acknowledging the election of the new President. This was possible thanks to the strenuous work of the Kadyrov “teip” (clan, family) with representatives of other teips in the process of prolonged negotiations with them.

In Ingushetia the traditionally leading teips were the Ozdoyevs, Evloyevs, and Aushevs. When Yu. Evkurov has been elected President these teips were pushed into the background, because Evkurov was member of a small teip, but by the time of his election he had the rank of major general and was Hero of Russia.

The situation in Daghestan is somewhat different. Recruiting the leading political elites there takes place from among the two leading ethnic groups – Avar and Darghin replacing each other. First the Darghin M. Magomedov was the supreme ruler; he was replaced

by the Avar M. Aliyev. Then again, according to Daghestani traditions, M. Magomedov's son was elected.

We believe that in the present situation in modern Daghestan and in view of the exacerbation of many factors concerning redistribution of power and economic resources, their position and significance of the elites is far from simple. Their confrontations often go beyond legal boundaries and become the cause of a general systemic crisis in the republic. Confrontation within the political elite of Daghestan is manifested in an impact on the political process in the republic via state and unofficial structures kept under control, on the one hand, and through their own agents of influence in the federal center, on the other.

A question could be asked: "What is to be done?" Historical experience shows that the situation is better when the political elite includes representatives of different ethnic groups. Beginning from the mid-1990s heated discussions were going on in the Daghestani mass media whether the republic needed president. The discussion of the problem of changing the form of the state structure of Daghestan was initiated by political and religious figures both in the republic and outside it who were opposed to the ruling elite.

On March 7, 1999, the third referendum took place in the Republic of Daghestan on the following question: "Do you think it necessary to introduce in the Republic of Daghestan the post of President (head of state) elected by citizens on the basis of universal, equal and direct vote with secret ballot?" The number of votes "for" was 201,730, or 23.59 percent, the number of votes "against" was 613,010, or 71.68 percent.

Thus, a much greater number of inhabitants of the republic rejected the idea of presidential rule in the Republic of Daghestan at the time, deeming it more expedient to have the State Council of the Republic of Daghestan as the most acceptable body in essence and

form. This Council consists of 14 people and is formed by the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of Daghestan. The State Council cannot have more than one representative of one and the same nationality.

Summing up the above-mentioned facts and figures, it can be concluded that the political elite in the republic is under a great influence of definite ethnic clans. It would be no exaggeration to say that this phenomenon is present in all spheres of life in Daghestan. The formation process of modern influential elite clans began at the end of the 1980s, and it can be considered more or less completed by today.

“Elitologiya Rossii: sovremennoye sostoyaniye i perspektivy razvitiya,” Rostov-on-Don, 2013, vol. 2, pp. 474–480.

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**RELIGION AND ETHNICITY AS COMPONENTS
OF CHECHEN IDENTITY
(Material of sociological survey)**

Chechen culture has been formed as part of Caucasian culture. In this connection it is possible to examine the phenomenon of the so-called Caucasian identity. A study of this problem is quite timely in the light of the growing process of globalization. In the view of many scholars and experts, ethnic identity is a special characteristic of subjectivity consisting of perception and consciousness of the individual of his or her affiliation to a definite group or community of people through the feeling and understanding of oneself as part of common material and spiritual culture, the language, values,

traditions, customs, habits, historical past, territory of settlement, ethnonym and religion.

Chechen identity, as part of Caucasian identity, has its own specific features which have been formed throughout centuries. This identity is not something given once and for all and an unchangeable social phenomenon. In the conditions of social transformations it goes through noticeable changes, and some of its components are actualized, while others remain socially neutral.

Religion (Sunni Islam of the Sufi trend) is playing a special role in Chechen culture. As a specific form of consciousness it has its own laws, for example, according to Islam, each believer should strive for uniqueness of his personality and self-perfection. There are other moral and ethical obligations of Muslims: respect for human life, loyalty and decency, kindness and profound gratitude to the parents, help to relatives, fellow-compatriots and coreligionists in their needs, and mercy and charity to those depending on you. It is not important for a rank-and-file Muslim to know where his religion came to him from. The important things are that the above-mentioned standards answer his needs and aspirations and reflect his views and feelings.

The founder of the Sufi fraternity generally recognized in the Muslim world was the Chechen Sufi saint of the 19th century, sheikh Kunta Hajji who had been born in the Caucasian mountain village Isti Su. As legend has it, he came to this world of ours at the most dramatic hour in the life of his people and saved them from the present and forthcoming terrible calamities. The Sufi taraqat contributed to the distribution and strengthening of Islam in the North Caucasus in the 19th century, when many representatives of official Islam ceased to observe the precepts and norms of the Koran and Sharia, and began to ignore and infringe the rights of the poor in order to please the local rich exploiters and czarist officials. Kunta Hajji emerged in the political

arena of Chechnya at the end of the Caucasian war. The Chechen people were tired and exhausted by the protracted war and needed peaceful respite. Kunta Hajji's sermons devoted to peace, fraternity, support of the poor, downtrodden, and orphans were in line with the general sentiments and the spiritual state of the people. Among the main ideas of his sermons were non-violence, renunciation of military hostilities against czarism, which had overwhelming forces compared to those of the Chechen mountain-dwellers, and also calls for meekness.

In one of his sermons Kunta Hajji said: "Brothers! Our ranks are dwindling due to continuing unrest and military hostilities. Further resistance to the authorities is apparently against the will of our Lord. If you are told to go to churches, obey and go, for they only are simple buildings, but we are Muslims in our soul. If you are forced to wear crosses, obey and wear them because they are simply pieces of iron, but you are Muslims in your soul. But if your women are humiliated and raped, if your language, culture and customs are banned, rise and fight to the last man, to death! Freedom and honor of a people are their language, customs and culture, forgiveness of insults to one another, help to widows and orphans, breaking the last piece of bread between us..." This speech of Kunta Hajji expressed the moral, spiritual and social state of the Chechens who were defeated in the Caucasian war in 1859. The sheikh's sermon reflected his deep worry and concern over the fate of his people. Kunta Hajji suggested that the Chechen people reconcile with defeat and fulfill the demands of the czarist authorities. But at the same time he set the limit to humility.

In 2012, associates at the research institute of RAS named after H. Ibragimov (in Grozny) carried out a sociological surveillance aimed at examining the multi-level identity of modern Chechen young people. Standardized interviews were taken from 750 respondents – students of

three state institutions of higher learning of the Chechen Republic (Grozny Oil Technical University, Chechen State University and Chechen Pedagogical Institute). Selection was based on the quota system. The questionnaire had twenty-five questions.

Along with other questions, the respondents were offered the following point: “Please, show the degree of importance of the following definitions”. The most important socio-cultural identities were offered as variants of answers: “it is very important for me,” “it is important for me,” “it is of little importance to me,” “it is not important to me,” “it is difficult to answer.” This is how answers to this question look like.

Table 1

**Importance of main socio-cultural identities
for students of Chechen higher educational institutions
(% of those polled in each type of identity)**

I am citizen of Russia	5.3
I am inhabitant of North Caucasus	9.1
I am representative of my republic	13.2
I am representative of my ethnos	16.8
I am representative of my religion	21.4
I am representative of my teip	12.8
I am member of my family	21.4
In all	100

Confessional and family identities were equal in importance for respondents (21.4% and 21.3% respectively). National (ethnic) identity was important to students, too (16.8%). Such identities as “inhabitant of my republic” (13.2%), “representative of my teip” (12.8%, “inhabitant of North Caucasus” (9.1%), and in the last place “citizen of Russia” (5.3%) were of secondary importance. The results of surveillance, doubtlessly, show the continuity of generations and the role of the

family in creating religious identity of students in the Chechen Republic. Ethnic identity is in close interaction with confessional identity, which becomes “one of the many and often contradicting identities, which can easily exist peacefully, due to its virtual character, in one person.

As a cross-point question to confirm the most important identities, the students were asked as to what status was the most convenient and comfortable for them.

Table 2

**The most convenient and comfortable status
(% of those polled)**

Man	0.5
Russian	0.9
European	1.2
Representative of one’s own teip	1.9
Citizen of the world	3.8
Chechen	18.2
Muslim	73.5

No doubt, confessional affiliation of young people is the most important component, and as the nucleus of their identity this variant of answer was chosen 73.5 percent of those polled. Affiliation with the Chechen ethnos was considered as the most comfortable by 18.2 percent. The cosmopolitan status as citizen of the world was attractive for 3.8 percent of students. And only fourteen young men declared that they represented their teip. Nine persons regarded themselves Europeans, seven – Russians, and four respondents declared that the status of “man” suited them most of all.

The value scale of young Chechens, according to the surveillance data, looked as the following hierarchic structure: 1. religion (15.3%);

2. family (15.0%); 3. honor and dignity (10.6%); 4. health (10.3%); 5. kindness, patience (10.2%); 6. friendship (8.5%); 7. intelligence, education (6.4%); 8. Motherland (5.6%); 9. modesty, conscience (5.5%); 10. independence (4.0%); 11. money (2.2%); 12. beauty (1.9%); 13. power (1.0%); 14. luxurious life (1.4%); 15. freedom, disinhibition (1.3%); 16. nature (0.8%).

The results of this surveillance make it possible to suppose that ethnicity and religiousness for Chechens are closely connected, complementing each other, and are inalienable components of identity. Chechen identity today is unthinkable outside the context of the Islamic tradition. Greater attention to the fundamental spiritual values of the Chechen people, which had been formed and accumulated over many centuries, can contribute to strengthening national unity and preserving the ethno-confessional identity of the Chechens. Even in the conditions of the global world it is possible to preserve national originality. The Chechens should strive for mutually enriching cultural coexistence with representatives of other peoples and confessions.

“Sotsiologiya i religiya v obshchestve pozdnego moderna,” Belgorod, 2013, pp. 245–250.

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RUSSIAN-KAZAKH RELATIONS AS A FACTOR OF STABILITY IN THE CASPIAN REGION

The interests of Russia and Kazakhstan, the two neighboring countries having a common history, cultural and interregional connections, and common challenges and threats to security, are closely intertwined. This is why the development of relations between our two

states and their role and influence on political stability in the Caspian region cannot be ignored. Good-neighborly relations are indispensable for both Russia and Kazakhstan, moreover, they should become a factor of stability on the strategically important lines along their borders. It should be noted that the Caspian region is important for our two states not only from the point of view of its resources, but it is also a zone of geostrategic significance in terms of national security [1]. The proper examination of Russian-Kazakh cooperation in the Caspian region can contribute to a better understanding of the origin and development of the problem under review.

Modern Russian-Kazakh relations are a successful and effective model of bilateral cooperation in the entire post-Soviet area. During the past years Russia and Kazakhstan have accumulated a wealth of positive experience in the oil-and-gas sphere. The prospects of cooperation and interaction in the fuel-and-energy sphere and oil and gas transportation, as well as the joint development of the hydrocarbon resources in the northern part of the Caspian region can have a positive influence on the economic situation in neighboring countries and also contribute to greater stability or confrontation in the region.

There are two major components in the development of relations between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Caspian region, which determine their general state. In the geopolitical aspect, Kazakhstan depends on Russia as far as Kazakh oil transportation to the world is concerned. The transit of Kazakh oil for export passes mainly on Russian territory. Another aspect which has already had a positive influence on their bilateral relations is solution of the problem of the status of the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan, Russia and Azerbaijan hold similar positions on the issue, and they have signed a number of agreements regulating their interaction on the problem. For one, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on the delimitation of the bottom of the northern part of the

Caspian Sea with a view to implementing sovereign rights to use its natural riches on July 6, 1998 [2]. Similar agreement was signed by Russia and Azerbaijan in September 2002. Under the agreements “consensus can be reached on condition of a just division of the Caspian Sea bottom along with the preservation and use of the water surface, including freedom of navigation, agreed-on quotas of fishing, and environmental protection. By now the agreements on the delimitation of the sea bottom have been signed by three states – Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In accordance with these agreements Kazakhstan controls 27 percent of the bottom area, Russia – 19 percent, and Azerbaijan – 18 percent. Iran is offered 14 percent of the shelf, but it claims 20 percent and insists on transferring the border by 80 kilometers to the north from the line of the former sea border of the U.S.S.R. This position of Tehran is supported by Turkmenistan. Under an agreement the sea bottom with its mineral resources is divided on special agreement between neighboring and other countries, and each state has sovereign rights to use natural riches, but no territorial jurisdiction.

A greater part of water area with its biological resources is in common possession and joint use without borders on the water surface (except two coastal zones of agreed-on width, one of which could be an analogue of a territorial sea, and the other could be a fishing zone envisaged by the bilateral Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1940).

Delimitation of the sea bottom should be made (as in 80 percent of all cases known in world practice) on the principle of medial line. Russia and Kazakhstan have agreed that they will carry on delimitation of their parts of the sea bottom along the modified medial line (with due account of islands, geological structures, other circumstances, and geological expenses already incurred). However, despite rather close positions, the states in question have been unable for quite some time to

resolve the problem due to the presence of certain controversial details. Great progress was reached on May 13, 2002, when Kazakhstan and Russia signed a protocol to the agreement between the two countries on delimitation of the sea bottom in the northern part of the Caspian Sea, with a view to implementing sovereign rights to use natural riches, on July 6, 1998. The Russian side plans to ratify this agreement in the very near future. In this agreement the two sides established the coordinates of the medial line dividing the sea between them and defined the rules of the development of deposits. Thus, Russia and Kazakhstan have become the first Caspian states which have completely solved the problem of division of the sea bottom. Solution of this problem between two big oil-extracting countries will, probably, ensure greater stability and investment appeal of oil projects in the region.

Another aspect, which should be taken into account, is that the greater investment appeal of the Caspian region has entailed greater activity of the world's biggest oil-and-gas companies in this region. This is both positive and negative factors for the development of Caspian states: on the one hand, it is an incentive to economic development, and on the other, it exacerbates foreign political relations.

Leading world powers have of late joined the struggle for influence in the Caspian region. This is due, first and foremost, to the richest natural resources of the region – primarily, oil and gas. According to certain estimates, the oil resource potential of the Russian part of the Caspian region exceeds eight billion tons. The Caspian districts of Turkmenistan and Iran account for about two billion tons [3].

The role of the local deposits of natural riches is growing with every passing year for the Caspian states in solving their economic problems. Against the backdrop of the continuing militarization of the region this can entail an exacerbation of relations between the Caspian states.

In the view of certain experts, by 2015 the Caspian region can become one of the most unstable regions of the world due to quite a few objective and subjective reasons. This problem was discussed at the 2nd conference on paradigms of international cooperation in the Caspian region, which was held in the Kazakhstan city of Aktau on September 12–13, 2012. The main report on challenges and threats to military security of the region was made by the expert of military-strategic research of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Defense Rafik Tairov [4].

At present more and more people express the view that wars of the future will be waged for energy resources. The “Arab spring,” popular revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, continuing tension in the Caucasian region, growing rivalry for the riches of the shelf of the Arctic Ocean are regarded by analysts and military experts as prerequisites for future wars for energy.

For example, according to research data, 95 percent of available oil resources in the world will be depleted within the next fifty-six years, and the remaining five percent will come to an end in 88 years. This is why it is quite evident that the striving of certain powerful states for having an access to vitally important resources will only increase the number of conflict zones.

The Caspian region is no exception. It is already a center of military-strategic and economic interests of many countries of the world, and not only the Caspian states (Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, but also the most influential world powers. The region becomes a zone of greater attention simultaneously of the North and South, East and West having their own geopolitical interests. Behind these geographical names stand such countries or groups of countries as the European Union in the North, India and Pakistan in the South, the Middle East countries, the PRC and Japan in the East, and the United States and Canada in the West.

It is possible to single out the following groups of interests in this region:

- First, the Caspian Basin countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran) are trying to resolve their domestic problems through deliveries of fuel and energy resources to the world market;

- Secondly, the countries of the transit zones (Russia, Iran, China, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, and others) are striving to draw dividends from transportation of energy raw materials across their territories;

- Thirdly, the subregional leaders (Russia, Iran, China, Turkey) intend to strengthen their strategic positions in the region as much as possible;

- Fourthly, the big world players (the United States, the European Union, Russia, China) regard the Caspian region as an element of geopolitical struggle for control over strategically important regions of the world.

Another distinguishing feature of the Caspian region is that it is not only a source of vital raw materials, but also a transit region which makes it possible to link not only the East and West (recreation of the “Great Silk Route”), but also the North and South (“water way”: St. Petersburg – Moscow – Astrakhan along the Volga River, and further on via the Caspian Sea to Iran). It is not for nothing that the Caspian region is called Trans-Caspian [5].

The future transportation of oil and gas from the Caspian region is connected with quite a few difficulties. Economic expediency and effectiveness become a secondary matter in discussing new export routes, because these plans acquire a clearly expressed political nature. Serious discord arises between states and companies and differences emerge in their positions, primarily at the interstate level, concerning the offered routes of transportation.

In this situation Russia has to look for allies for promoting its interests in the Caspian region, as well as among regional states which have influence on it [6]. In the view of some researchers and experts, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan could become such allies. For this purpose it would be necessary to continue the development of favorable relations with these countries. These two states are important subjects of Caspian policy, more important than Azerbaijan, because their oil and gas resources are much greater than those of Azerbaijan.

Events of the past several years have shown that geological prospecting for and extraction of fuel and energy resources are only part of the program of joint cooperation in the development of deposits of the Caspian states. Today oil and gas resources have become one of the major factors of world politics. The global processes of modern development are connected, directly or indirectly, with energy resources, and access to them is among the priorities of any country. This is why any major projects to develop oil and gas deposits and transportation of this fuel can be an example of broad international cooperation, as well as discord and confrontation. Practically all oil and gas extracting countries of the world carry on “energy” diplomacy within whose framework a state protects and promotes the interests of its fuel-and-energy complex on world markets.

The United States, Turkey, Iran, Japan, China and other countries show greater interest in creating energy transport corridors in the Caspian region and are striving to get control over them through commercial participation of their companies, credits and political pressure. However, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are the countries most interested in creating this and other transportation routes which will pass across their territory [7].

In the view of certain experts, western countries would like to establish control over the energy resources of new Caspian states and

reduce Russian influence in the region [8]. They are ready to ignore economic unprofitability of some Caspian deposits and refusal of some foreign companies to take part in prospecting for hydrocarbon raw materials.

The Caspian region will not become a source of additional volumes of oil and gas to be delivered to foreign markets within the next decade. The obvious reason is that its hydrocarbon reserves have been overestimated. This is confirmed by the data on the extraction level of hydrocarbon raw materials in the Caspian basin countries in recent years, as well as forecasts for the next decade. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, whose resources are viewed as the main sources for filling new pipelines, are unable to offer the necessary volumes of oil and gas.

The volumes of oil deposits in the Caspian region are estimated differently by experts. Some of them believe the Caspian basin is enormously rich in hydrocarbon resources and can compete with the oil reserves of the Persian Gulf, while others maintain that these reserves are too exaggerated and their overstated data are nothing more than the attempts of transnational fuel-and-energy companies to draw additional capital for investments. This was the case during the conflict between Britain and Argentina around the Falkland Islands, disputes between China and a number of Southeast Asian countries concerning parts of the South China Sea, with regard to South Kuriles, and also conformably to disputes and conflicts in Africa [9].

However it can safely be said that the Caspian shelf is one of the world's richest oil-bearing districts. As we have said above, the oil factor is one of the basic ones influencing international relations. This is why the energy resources of the Caspian region strongly influence the alignment of forces on the world energy market [10].

Kazakhstan has all rights to claim the role of a crossroads of transport routes due to its geopolitical and geographical position in the center of Eurasia.

Azerbaijan has not only enormous fuel and energy resources, but also great transport possibilities, inasmuch as it is situated on a junction point of Europe and Asia.

Undoubtedly, cooperation between different countries in these and other joint projects and programs is a necessary condition for inclusion of new independent states in world economic ties, creates prerequisites for the stable development of their economy, and contributes to favorable solution of domestic and international problems.

Russia and Kazakhstan will have to take into account a number of factors, which will determine the situation in the Caspian region in the next decade. First of all, there can be exacerbation of the struggle for transportation routes of resources, which are not yet extracted [11]. At any rate, many countries are striving to diversify the sources of getting natural riches, which resulted in growing rivalry around new projects of building pipelines. With due account of the fact that competition for creating new transportation routes from the Caspian region will be growing, Russia may come across serious rivalry on the part of other Caspian basin states interested in increasing oil and gas deliveries they extract [12].

The growing role of Iran should not be excluded either, for it can become one of the main rivals of Russia and Kazakhstan in the Caspian region. This can take place if the forecasts concerning the growing consumption of hydrocarbon raw materials by the European countries are justified. In this case the role of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which are regarded by European countries as the main sources of resources for new pipelines, can become lower [13].

As a result, transportation of Caspian hydrocarbon resources is a central economic and geopolitical problem for the Caspian basin countries, a region of contradicting interests of different states. In the near future the security problem of the chosen transportation routes may arise, inasmuch as transportation of strategic raw materials can become a trigger for separatism. From this follows that the Caspian region is a knot of a whole number of unresolved problems, which include ecological threats and energy terrorism undermining extraction and destroying pipelines and other infrastructural objects. Solution of all problems can strengthen the energy security of the entire region and the countries importing Caspian oil. Russia and Kazakhstan are the most influential states in the region which have a serious economic and political weight in a whole number of regional and international organizations, whose voice is heeded by the peoples and leaders of the countries of the region [14].

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TRENDS OF EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Islam is not monolithic in the North Caucasus, but is divided into two basic currents – Sunni and Shi’ite, and also Khanifite and Shafiite trends, as well as several ideological forms (traditionalism, fundamentalism, modernism). The main dividing line passes between

traditionalism and fundamentalism. Each of these currents and trends struggles for increasing its influence on believers.

Traditional Islam is represented by the institutionalized Muslim clergy – the administrative-managerial apparatus of religious organizations: spiritual boards of Muslims as well as mosques, educational institutions, etc., subordinate to them. These institutions are considered “official Islam,” or “mosque Islam,” which is typical of the eastern part of the region. But there is another institutionalized traditionalist group in the North-East Caucasus, supporters of “non-mosque Islam,” who are represented by the fraternities of three Sufi taraqats headed by their leaders – sheikhs and ustaza.

This shows that traditional Islam in the region (“mosque” and “non-mosque”) is full of contradictions which cannot but be reflected on the sentiments and views of rank-and-file believers, most of whom are traditionalist Muslims. North Caucasian traditional Islam exists outside the sphere of modernization processes going on in other Muslim regions of Russia, above all in the Volga area.

The main opponents of the traditionalists in the region are fundamentalists (Salaphites or neo-Wahhabis), whose ideal is return to the realities of the “golden age” of Islam (the period of life of the first three generations of Muslims, or the period connected with the life and activity of Prophet Mohammed and the four “righteous” caliphs), transfer of all walks of life on to the Sharia laws, and recreation of the state in the form of caliphate. The confrontation between the traditionalists and Salaphites has led to greater Islamization of the North Caucasian republics (especially in the eastern part). In the mid-1990s the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Daghestan strongly influenced by the Sufi fraternity began to fight the “Wahhabi” trend [1].

The process of politicization and radicalization of Islam in the North Caucasus has passed several stages.

The first, the beginning of the 1970s to early 1990s, when Salaphite groupings of young Muslims appeared in Daghestan influenced by Salaphites from abroad. Special services and law-enforcement agencies found them and tried to stem their activity.

The second, from early 1990s to 1994, when recreation and legalization of Daghestani Salaphite groupings took place; Islamist circles were set up where people studied theoretical and practical aspects of jihad in their Wahhabi interpretation. During that period, embassies of certain Muslim countries in Russia opened “cultural centers” which brought in and distributed Islamic literature among Muslims. Similar literature began to be published in big circulation in Russia. At that time missionaries, preachers and instructors arrived in Russia from abroad, and young Muslims from Russia went to foreign countries to receive a Muslim education. Daghestan was in the lead during these two periods.

The third, from December 1994 to the early 2000s, when the radicalization process of North Caucasian Islam was dominated by Chechnya. The two Chechen wars and a three-year interval between them were accompanied by the concentration of “mojaheds” from abroad, mainly Arabs, in that republic and serious financial and ideological assistance from foreign Islamist centers. Special training centers worked on the territory of Chechnya which were headed by the well-known Arab terrorist Emir Khattab, a man close to Osama bin Laden. In 1998 radical Islamists moved to Chechnya from Daghestan where they united with their counterparts from other North Caucasian republics. In 1999 the positions of Salaphites in Chechnya were so strong that they decided to switch over to open aggression and tried to invade Daghestan. But their units were crushed there.

The fourth, September 1999 to 2007, when the second Chechen war began and ended with the defeat of the combat units of separatists

and their switchover to guerilla war. At that period Chechnya was the center of radical Islamists, and jihad spread practically all over the North Caucasus. The ideology of radical Islamism became quite popular in the region, and terrorist acts occurred more and more frequently, even outside the North Caucasian region. Moderate radicals were still present in the North Caucasus, but they gradually were switching over to the extremist positions.

The fifth, 2007 until the present time, when the virtually existing leader Doku Umarov has made public the new geopolitical project – “Imarat Kavkaz.” According to it, the new state Imarat Kavkaz was created in the North Caucasus ruled on the Islamic principles of the old caliphates.

The sixth, the end of the first decade – beginning of the second decade of this century, when the influence of Imarat and its leaders was growing and spreading to other “Muslim” territories – the Volga area, the Urals and West Siberia, and first and foremost Tatarstan.

The seventh, the past year or two, when Islamist groupings have emerged in “Islamic enclaves” in non-Muslim parts of the country. They formed around mosques, which is a new tendency in the radicalization process, which could be compared to the spreading of metastases of Islamism over the country’s territory. Similar processes have taken place in the United States and some countries of Western Europe [2].

Evidently, the latter three stages of the radicalization of Islam and Islamic movement directly touch not only the North Caucasus, but also other regions of Russia, form a qualitatively new structure of Islamic groupings, and prepare ground for elaborating more spectacular plans for changes in the political structure of the country.

On October 7, 2007, the new leader of the non-recognized Ichkeria (the new name of Chechnya given it by the separatists) Doku

Umarov announced the end of his presidential powers and appointed himself supreme ruler, or “amir of the mojaheds of the Caucasus,” the leader of jihad, as well as the only legitimate power on all territories where there were mojaheds, that is, on very vast areas, some of which are situated very far from the North Caucasus, even Buryatia, in the Russian Far East [3]. Thus, the idea of national independence was replaced with the doctrine of the liberation from “the power of the infidels.” As it was announced, the aim of the creation of Imarat Kavkaz was to establish the Sharia rule on the entire territory of the North Caucasus [4].

Thus, a big and autonomous network terrorist cluster has formed in the North Caucasus, which is united with similar network structure in different regions of the world by common ideology and aims [5]. It should be noted that a ramified network terrorist structure has taken shape in the region, which has even such specific institutions as courts, fiscal systems, and also executive authorities of various levels [6]. A considerable vitality of this system is ensured, among other things, by the merger of radical Islamic ideology with North Caucasian traditional social institutions and existing modern socio-political conditions. No wonder that it is so difficult for the Russian authorities to work out adequate measures to oppose religious-political extremism. They did not succeed in curbing terrorism in the region so far.

Under a strong influence from without, including the North Caucasus, radicalization of Islam has begun in the Volga area, primarily in Tatarstan. In 1993 the management of the “Yoldyz” madrasah signed an agreement with the “Taiba” charity organization in Saudi Arabia on rendering assistance to the educational process at the madrasah. It was turned into a training center of Islamic radicals. As a result, one of the graduates of this madrasah, Denis Saitakov, became a member of the group which organized terrorist acts in Moscow. Later, several

graduates from it were also found to be members of terrorist groups. Facts have been revealed of cooperation of heads of the madrasah with Chechen field commanders Basayev and Khattab, who have granted them an opportunity to acquire combat training in Chechnya [7]. Similar organizations of young Islamic radicals were discovered in Almetyevsk, Nizhnekamsk, Kukmor, as well as in some other places of Tatarstan in the early 2000 [8].

The history of Islamic terrorism in Tatarstan began with the first acts of terror on gas pipelines in rural districts in 2003–2005. Then “forest fighters” appeared in Nurlat district of Tatarstan where an armed gang of fundamentalists tried to organize an underground base in a local forest on the pattern of similar bases in the North Caucasus [9]. On November 25, 2010, units of the interior forces of Tatarstan commanded by the Minister for the Interior General A. Safarov smashed an armed bandits’ group which wanted to set up its support and supply base in the forest zone along the Kama River [10]. It became clear at the time that stable groups of radical Salaphites have emerged in Tatarstan closely connected with one another, as well as with ethnic nationalists and representatives of the criminal world.

In 2010 the leader of the North Caucasian radical Islamists, Amir of Imarat Kavkaz announced the formation of the vilayet Idel Ural, which included the territory of the Volga area and the Urals [11]. Following this, another underground appeared. The number of Salaphites was growing, and their institutionalization proceeded apace. In the view of experts, there are about three thousand Salaphites and their supporters in Tatarstan today [12]. More people join their ranks. In Saudi Arabia alone there are 120 Tatar students who have gone there without informing the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan. In 2011, twenty more young Tatars left for the homeland of Wahhabis [13]. In January 2012 a home-made laboratory was discovered in the village

of Memdel in Tatarstan producing explosives and “belts of shahid” [14]. On July 19, 2012, the mufti of Tatarstan I. Faizov was wounded and his deputy V. Yakupov killed in a terrorist act. In the view of Tatar experts, the events taking place in Tatarstan today repeat the Ingush-Daghestani scenario some ten to fifteen years ago. The first mufti of Daghestan was killed in 1998. After that, more than fifty muftis, their deputies and imams who adhered to traditional Islam lost their life in terrorist acts in the North Caucasus [15].

Experts predict the spreading of Islamic fundamentalism in the Volga area, the Urals and West Siberia, just as was the case of the North Caucasus. The fundamentalist groupings regard themselves as stable communities, clearly realizing their specificity, interests, and the possibilities to protect them using legal and other means. This path has already been traversed by their North Caucasian fellow-thinkers who have created a whole number of such organizations engaged in protecting human rights. For example, in Daghestan such organizations were formed in the first decade of the 2000s, which legally support the activity of the armed extremist underground. The most popular of them was “The Mothers of Daghestan” [16]. The leaders of these organizations maintain contacts with extremists and sharply criticize the activity of the law-enforcement agencies, accusing them of mass violations of human rights. Moreover, in the view of certain experts, a stable and influential “Islamist lobby” has taken shape in Russia [17]. Using this, the “Salaphite wing of Muslims organizes legal meetings of their supporters and harp on the subject of alleged persecutions of Muslims on a countrywide scale” [18].

The next stage of spreading Wahhabi trend, in our view, is the strengthening of the positions of its adepts in ‘Muslim enclaves,’ which emerged in some Russian big cities in recent years. Such enclaves have taken shape in some European countries a long time ago, for instance

in France, and this was why their experience could prove useful to Russia [19].

European realities show that ethnically and religiously similar communities of migrants successfully form the “enclave” medium of environment localizing within corresponding territorial boundaries, with mosques or prayer houses, which serve as centers of their concentration. Simultaneously, one of the consequences of the emergence of such “enclaves” is criminalization and religious and political radicalization of certain part of migrants, which inevitably breeds conflicts with the local population. In our view, there is no point of talking about tolerant “Euro-Islam,” what is more likely is Islamization of Europe in the most dangerous forms. The events of the first years of the new millennium in Spain, Britain, France and other European countries confirm this statement. As a consequence, European politicians have begun talking recently about the failure of the ideology and practice of multiculturalism and of incompatibility of Islamism with western liberal values.

Similar “enclaves” have appeared in Russian cities, too, and the results of this became evident quite soon. In the course of an operation of law-enforcement agencies in St. Petersburg in February 2013, in a prayer house on one of the city’s markets, and in private homes 271 persons were apprehended, who stored and distributed printed materials of extremist nature. Ninety percent of them were foreign immigrants from Afghanistan and Egypt. They adhered to radical currents of Islam, denied secular power and wished to do everything to establish caliphate [20].

During the post-Soviet period, due to the weakening of the institutions of state power of the Russian Federation and under a strong foreign influence a steady process of politicization and radicalization of Islam and Islamic groupings was going on, as well as emergence and

institutionalization of non-traditional Islamist currents took place in the country. These processes were aggravated by weakness and disunity of traditional and official Russian Islam, and realization of separatist projects in certain regions of the country, primarily in the North Caucasus. Due to a whole number of reasons and objective and subjective factors, stable groupings of radical Salaphites have come into being and strengthened on the territory of Russia, which have become institutionalized first in some North Caucasian republics. Subsequently, jihad has proliferated practically throughout the entire North Caucasus, and in the past decade prerequisites have emerged for the creation of radical Salaphite groupings in the Volga area, the Urals and West Siberia, as well as in “Muslim enclaves” of big Russian cities.

Notes

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**“SOFT POWER” AS AN INSTRUMENT
OF THE AMERICAN POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIA:
TURKMENISTAN.
(Continuation)**

The prospect to strengthen their influence in Turkmenistan attracts the U.S.A. through consolidation of their opportunities in Central Asia, promoting their infrastructure projects to the detriment of Russian, Chinese and Iranian interests and improving ways of access to Afghanistan to create a threat to Iran. American tactics of “soft power” as applied to Turkmenistan has been evolved in order to collect information and influence the population and the elite. The United States has spent more than \$300 million officially for the various programs to strengthen its influence in Turkmenistan from 1992 to 2010. These expenses amounted to \$11 million in 2011, the State Department asked the Congress for \$9.9 million for the year 2012 and \$6,7 million for 2013.

A certain warming of relations was observed by the end of the first term of President Berdimuhamedov, which replaced the cool Turkmen-U.S. relations during the last years of Niyazov's presidency. A series of visits by senior representatives of the State Department and the U.S. Department of Defense to Ashgabat has taken place since January 2011. Political relations between the two countries seem ambiguous. The U.S. support of projects of the Trans-Caspian pipeline and TAPI has been favorable for Ashgabat during negotiations on the sale of gas. The Turkmen authorities are interested in developing economic cooperation with the United States, and it, in turn, is trying to attract Turkmenistan to closer political cooperation, to expand its

participation in NDN supplies to Afghanistan, and weaken its ties with Russia, China and Iran.

American diplomacy works carefully to avoid sharp pressure on the Turkmen authorities, but uses every opportunity to strengthen the U.S. positions.

The main field of activity of American NGOs in Turkmenistan is the sphere of education in a broad sense: from organization of the simplest training courses in the countryside up to scientific training abroad. The biggest U.S. organization in Turkmenistan is USAID, which has been working in the country since 1992 and carrying on humanitarian activities under the “soft power” concept. According to the U.S. Embassy, the USAID programs in Turkmenistan cost about \$90 million over the past years; in 2011 the Agency's expenditure amounted to about \$6 million, i.e. about 55 percent of all funds officially allocated for the country at the request of the State Department. USAID activities in Turkmenistan have been carried on the basis of grants allocated by the Agency to NGOs, mostly of American origin. They operate in three main directions: promotion of economic development, assistance to education and health care, and the development of democratic processes in the country.

1. Promotion of economic development. Program EREC has been implemented since 2009 by the company Deloitte Consulting LLP jointly with the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan. It aims at improving the legislation and legal and regulatory framework in the sphere of finance and banking. A group of teachers of economic and financial disciplines at Turkmen universities has been trained in methods of interactive teaching within the framework of EREC. The Turkmen leadership decided to switch to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), with the participation of the program staff, in the summer of 2011. About 30 state employees, mainly from

financial structures, received training under the EREC program in 2010. Among the sponsors were the Turkmen oil and gas division of the American Chevron corporation, in addition to USAID.

The “Junior Achievement” program operated from 2009 to 2012 and was implemented by an international public organization of the same name. It was officially aimed at developing business skills among young people, increasing the level of economic education of students and teachers in secondary schools. The training course has been developed specially for citizens of Turkmenistan. The budget for the program was \$726 thousands, 520 thousand of which was paid by Chevron.

The “Regional Energy Security” program carried out in 2010–2013 was aimed at developing the local energy market and training specialists. It was implemented by the American NGO “Tetra Tech” in all post-Soviet countries in Asia and in Afghanistan, and its budget was estimated at \$16.5 million.

The “Improving agricultural technology” program was a four-year training course (2010–2013) for rural residents. Training was provided by the American Wiedmann Associates company, and its four employees from among local natives worked in Turkmenistan.

2. Assistance in the field of education and health. The health protection program “Dialogue” (2010–2014) includes measures to help citizens who are at risk for HIV and TB, training of social workers, and it has been implemented by the American NGO Population Service International (PSI). The program has been implemented in all countries of Central Asia, starting in autumn of 2011 in Turkmenistan.

The “Youth Centers” program (2009–2012) was aimed at creating USAID youth centers in Ashgabat and Mary with potential audiences of up to 26 thousand people aged 15–25. The project has

been implemented by the American NGO John Snow Inc. Research Institute, (JSI).

A quality health care program (2010–2015) empowers the health care system in Central Asian countries and provision of technical support for the training of specialists. The program is run by the American NGO Abt Associates and the HOPE Project. The program has started in Turkmenistan in July 2011, and, according to a report, 250 health workers have received training on its basis.

Promotion of Information and Communication Technology (2009–2012). Information technology courses and programs on distance education are conducted at the Internet center of the Magtymguly Institute.

3. Development of democratic processes and institutions. Legal support of civil society (2009–2012) aimed at developing and strengthening the legal consciousness of citizens and civil society organizations. The program is run by the American NGO “International Center for Non-profit Law, ICNL” in all countries of Central Asia, and has a budget of \$2 million.

Efficiency program management (2010–2014) has been declared as a means to provide the Turkmen government with expertise in management and work with citizens. The NGO QED Group LC implements it.

The “Local Development Initiative” (2009–2012) has been designed to improve the efficiency of local authorities through training, expert advice and information support. The Cardno Emerging Markets NGOs implemented it in the region, having a budget of \$ 13.8 million.

The NGO “International Council for Research and Exchanges” (IREX) has been working in Turkmenistan since 1993. In addition to implementing the USAID PICTT program, it supervises free courses and exchange through the Department of Education and Cultural

Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. Participants in the program receive full-time training at a number of U.S. universities for master's degree in economics, international relations, journalism, law, information technology, public administration, etc.

The Global UGRAD program for student exchange enrolls students through open competition and includes a one-year course of study in a wide range of specialties at U.S. universities. The REX works with graduates helping them in the practical use of their knowledge; its grants amount to \$3 thousand.

The U.S. Peace Corps federal agency has been operating in Turkmenistan since 1993. Every year a group of 40 to 50 volunteers comes into the country and works there for two years. The Peace Corps carries out two programs in the country: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) for primary and secondary schools, universities, business centers, health care and “Public health” centers, and teaching villagers in simple medical skills. These two directions are the largest in the activities of the Peace Corps (40 and 20 percent of all its projects).

The Turkmen law enforcement authorities have repeatedly voiced their suspicions about the involvement of employees of the Peace Corps in intelligence activities. By the end of 2012, the Peace Corps was planning to reduce their activities in Turkmenistan due to constant pressure on the part the authorities.

According to a report, the NED allocated \$350 thousand for the implementation of five humanitarian projects in Turkmenistan in 2010. Among them, there are projects for regional centers: in the sphere of civil justice, free advice, information about human rights, and support for youth and environmental activities.

The NGO “American Councils for International Education”, registered in Washington, carries out about ten governmental educational programs. The most popular among them: FLEX – a one-

year training program for high school students on exchange; JFDP – five-month internships program at U.S. universities; American Corners – cultural and information centers, where educational and entertainment functions are held regularly, serve as the place of contact for local people with American humanitarian programs.

The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat is engaged in an active humanitarian work. It offers a range of government programs on exchange of knowledge, such as semi-annual TEA, and a six-week SUSI. According to the Embassy reports, the work of its Information Resource Center has evoked a considerable interest of Turkmen citizens. The Embassy website is a guide and advertisement for familiarization with the American humanitarian mission in Turkmenistan.

Turkmen citizens can receive information about the U.S. educational programs and join them through the Counseling Center funded by the Department of Education and Culture, the Department of State, acting in Ashgabat. More than one thousand people visit the center each month, according to U.S. data.

The Turkmen leadership has long been aware of the dangers of the excessive activity of foreign NGOs and humanitarian programs, primarily belonging to the U.S., which began in the early years of independence of Turkmenistan. This danger became particularly evident with the beginning of a series of “color revolutions” in the post-Soviet area. In addition, a failed assassination attempt on Niyazov in November 2002 and the subsequent political reprisals made strong impression on the country's elite.

The Law “On Public Associations” was adopted in Turkmenistan in the autumn of 2003, its active application has resulted in a reduction of the number of foreign NGOs from 400 to 99 by early 2012. The activities of unregistered public associations have been banned under

Article 17 of the Law. At the same time, administrative responsibility is envisaged for activity of unregistered public associations and for evading registration, according to Article 204 of the Code of Administrative Offences. Confiscation of all financial and material resources is envisaged if they are received from individuals or legal entities of foreign countries without proper registration procedures. The Article of the Criminal Code envisaging imprisonment up to one year may be applied to members of a public association for repeated violations of the legislation.

Periodically, the government used a suitable occasion to ban the activities of NGOs or to close individual projects. Persons studying in accordance with, or preparing to participate in, various U.S. training programs, get under pressure from the management of local educational institutions. Reports are current about the practice of cutting salaries of teachers who have foreign education certificates. In 2004 the education certificates obtained abroad were invalidated by a special decree of President Niyazov; this restriction was formally lifted only in 2011. But there is evidence that the owners of foreign education certificates often face various difficulties.

A complete ban on the U.S. humanitarian activities, considered “unaffordable luxury” in Turkmenistan, has led to strained relations with the U.S.A. and the deterioration of the multi-vector policy pursued by the government. In addition, the Turkmen authorities highly appreciate American financial consultations. The U.S. humanitarian activity can lead to a marked increase in pro-American sentiments among the Turkmen elite.

There are quite a few shortcomings in the work of NGOs in Turkmenistan. Their activities are concentrated in large cities, though no less than a very significant percent of the population lives in rural areas.

A vast majority of NGOs are the subcontractors of USAID, working on its grants. Corruption, nepotism, embezzlement of budget funds and fictitious statements are circulated in the activities of Western NGOs in Turkmenistan, as in other Central Asian countries, for that matter. It is obvious that the heads of many NGOs receiving grants are closely related to the State Department and USAID. All this, including specific features of the social and political structure of Turkmenistan, its closedness from the outside world, a strong state control over society, reduces the success of American NGOs in Turkmenistan in comparison with other countries of the region. So, the budget funds, allocated by the U.S. Congress for the activities of NGOs in Turkmenistan, have been curtailed for the past three years to a greater extent than those for other Central Asian republics: from 16.5 million in 2010 to 6.7 million in 2013.

“Soft power” in Turkmenistan has to deal with an inferior sector of NGO in terms of their development. “Free” journalism is missing in the country, only one private newspaper belonging to a favorite of President, the industrial and financial tycoon Dadayev, is printed. The foreign press is available at university libraries in limited copies. The state television is one hundred percent pro-government. News is provided by a variety of satellite TV networks, which is widespread in Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan is far behind other Central Asian countries in terms of the development of the Internet. It is distinguished by low speed traffic and extremely high prices. Many popular Internet services (Facebook, Twitter, Livejournal) are blocked. The Internet resources of the exiled opposition are blocked permanently. The only ISP in the country is the state-owned company “Turkmen Telekom”.

Despite the obstacles, encountered by “soft power”, underestimation of its potential can be dangerous. In case of significant

socio-political or economic shocks and the weakening of state power, the forces, dissatisfied with the current regime, can be mobilized through the U.S. network of NGO: participants in educational programs (several thousand), and representatives of clan structures, which have now been ousted from power.

“Tsentralnaya Aziya: problemy i perspektivy (vzglyad iz Rossii i Kitaya,” Moscow, 2013, pp. 65–67.

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**UZBEKISTAN’S POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN
AND REGIONAL SECURITY IN CENTRAL ASIA**

1. Threats to security of the countries of Central Asia, i.e. the spreading of terrorism, religious fundamentalism, drug trafficking from Afghanistan, etc. are long-term developments. The impact of these threats on countries of the region differs (at least, due to geographical factors), hence, these countries have different views on the situation in Afghanistan and, accordingly, the Afghan problem is a special subject among their foreign-policy priorities.

2. Uzbekistan is one of the key actors among Afghanistan’s neighbors due to geographical, geopolitical and geo-economic factors. And Uzbekistan has actively participated in the elaboration of political and economic decisions aimed at resolving the conflict in Afghanistan.

3. In July 2012, the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan discussed and approved the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, put forward by the President, which determined its foreign policy strategy for a medium and long-term period. The document states that the Central Asian region is a top priority of the foreign policy activity

of Uzbekistan and its vital interests are connected with it. According to this document, the problems of Central Asia should be solved by the states of the region without intervention of external forces.

4. The Concept of Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan represents the quintessence of previous approaches and experiences (both positive and negative) in solving security problems in the region.

5. Uzbekistan's foreign policy, including the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, is based on the following principles:

- an open, friendly and pragmatic policy in relation to its nearest neighbors;

- assistance to the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs;

- adoption of political, economic and other measures to prevent involvement in armed conflicts and seats of tension in the neighboring countries, and a ban on the deployment of foreign military bases on their territory;

- integration should not be imposed from the outside, it is unacceptable if infringes upon freedom, independence or territorial integrity of a country or is dictated by ideological commitments;

Uzbekistan reserves the right to conclude alliances, join communities of countries or other interstate organizations, and withdraw from them in the interests of the state, the people and their well-being and safety.

6. Initially, the position of Uzbekistan has been based on two fundamental principles for a solution of the Afghan conflict: 1) recognition of the fact that a settlement can not be reached through military action, and 2) greater role and importance of the economic component of the program to resolve the conflict and restore Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan has been acting in two interrelated directions consistently: through participation in economic projects, and by diplomatic activity to join efforts of neighboring countries of Afghanistan, and the U.S.A. / NATO, China and Russia.

7. In the 1990s the situation in Afghanistan called for coordinated international cooperation at a diplomatic level to improve the dialogue between the warring factions. In 1997, the “6 + 2” format, that is, the six neighboring countries (Pakistan, Iran, China, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) plus the two guarantor states – Russia and the U.S.A. began to act on an initiative of Uzbekistan and under the auspices of the UN. The Tashkent Declaration on the fundamental principles of peaceful solution of the conflict in Afghanistan was signed on July 21, 1999.

8. In 2008, Uzbekistan proposed to form a “6 + 3” Contact Group, which was supposed to include Russia, the U.S.A. and NATO, according to the existing historical realities, along with the countries bordering on Afghanistan – Pakistan, Iran, China, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its aim was to unite efforts to find the best solution for reaching peace and stability in Afghanistan, because the use of military methods would only aggravate the situation, without solving the socio-economic issues. Supervision and coordination of the work of the Contact Group was supposed to be entrusted to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan. It also differs from the format of “6 + 2” so that neither any representatives of power structures, nor warring groups in Afghanistan have been included in the negotiation process. However, this initiative has received no support.

9. The key idea of Uzbekistan in the Afghan settlement has always been a reduction of the military component and more attention to the issues of economic recovery, which would improve the general

situation in Afghanistan. Economic assistance to Afghanistan should be a priority for Uzbekistan. Over the past few years, Uzbekistan has accumulated substantial experience in realization of joint projects in the sphere of energy, road construction and repair, railway construction, mining, education, and also in exchange of experts with Afghanistan. Trade has been expanded significantly between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in recent years.

10. Uzbekistan has cooperated with Afghanistan in the economic sphere since 2002. Uzbekistan has built eleven bridges on the Mazar-i-Sharif to Kabul stretch within the framework of the reconstruction program and, in addition, it completed the construction of a high-voltage transmission line passing through five provinces of Afghanistan and stretching for about 442 kilometers from Kabul toward the border of Uzbekistan. The power line will be connected to the energy system of Uzbekistan through a 43-kilometer-long transmission line from the Suruhan substation (Uzbekistan) to Hairaton substation (Afghanistan). The cost of the project is more than \$198 million.

11. The Joint Stock Company “Uzbektelecom” and the Afghan Telecom Corp. have signed an inter-operator agreement for cooperation in providing services in the construction of a fiber-optic line that will connect the two states. In 2009, a line with a capacity of 2.5 Gb/s was commissioned, which provides a direct link between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan and also international telephone calls to the CIS countries and abroad, as well as access to the Internet.

12. One of the major problems hindering the progress of the Afghan economy as a whole, and the growth of production in the country in particular, is the lack of the infrastructure – transport and communications, networks of water and energy supply, etc. Thus, the project of railway construction on Afghan territory is extremely important. In 2009–2010, the state railway company of Uzbekistan

implemented the construction project of the Haraton-Mazar-i-Sharif 75-kilometer-long railway line with the cost of \$129 million. It is planned to build a railroad along the route of Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul – Kandahar – Herat and back, with a total length of 2,000 kilometers, and the total cost of the project will be about \$3 billion. It will be an analogue of the trans-Afghan transport corridor from Europe to India, China, Iran and Pakistan.

13. After the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan's reconstruction program has started with the support of donor countries and international financial institutions.

14. Nowadays all countries participating in the settlement process, realize the futility of the anti-terrorist campaign within the existing framework. Despite the measures to ensure security, stability and development of Afghanistan, which have been taken by the international community and the United States, the situation has not improved.

15. Over a period of ten years, Afghanistan has failed to solve the problem of security, form an efficient government, and create conditions for sustainable economic growth. The gradual withdrawal of troops of the Western coalition could become a catalyst of destabilization processes both in Afghanistan and in Central Asia.

16. Based on the issues to resolve the situation in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan's foreign policy in this field will focus on:

- greater efforts to establish a dialogue with Afghanistan (with all its political forces), the neighboring countries and the power centers that are interested in maintaining Afghan statehood;

- reliance on bilateral formats, rather than multilateral ones, which turned out to be ineffective in dealing with the Afghan conflict;

- every assistance to resolving socio-economic problems of Afghanistan, support to projects aimed at creating and developing a

viable economy in Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has accumulated significant experience in the implementation of reconstruction projects in Afghanistan, so it could initiate realization of some, which are important to the social and economic development of Afghanistan.

*‘Vyzovy bezopasnosti v Tsentralnoi Azii,’
Moscow, 2013, pp. 96–99.*

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AFGHANISTAN: WHAT’S NEXT

Perhaps, the year 2014 will be decisive for the future of Afghanistan. The planned withdrawal of the military forces from there raises the question of the fate of the Karzai government. Whether it can successfully resist the pressure of the Taliban, relying on its own strength, or it will reach a compromise with them, and on what conditions... Solution of these problems is important not only for Afghanistan, but for Central and South Asia, and partially for the Caucasus. The extremist forces of these countries, including international terrorists, are allies of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Will this alliance continue to exist in case of the Taliban’s victory? Will the Taliban continue to help their allies after taking power or sharing it with Karzai or his successor?

The territories of modern Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and partially Kazakhstan were part of the Emirate of Bokhara, and the Khiva and Kokand khanates in the past. In the first case, the ethnic base of the Emirate served as the supra-ethnic communications between different clans of Uzbeks and Tajiks, in the second – the Uzbeks and Turkmen, and in the third – the Uzbeks and Kyrgyzs. Islam was the ideological force sanctioning each union. The

boundaries of the first and second state formations have undergone major changes, and the third one ceased to exist as a result of the conquest by the Russian Empire. But the foundation of the local state, sanctioned by Islam, has been preserved. A fatal blow was dealt to it during the years of the existence of the U.S.S.R. The territories of new state formations were separated by borders, established on the ethnic basis. These state formations were sanctioned by Marxist-Leninist theory, deeply alien to the local community. Ethnic identification was intended to tie Central Asia to the totalitarian state in order to make a revolutionary impact on the entire multinational Middle East, according to communist strategists. Afghanistan was given a special place in these strategic schemes, as the national minorities (especially Tajiks) living there comprised almost half of its population. The expansion of the Taliban (even ideological) beyond the former Soviet-Afghan border could contribute to growing ethnic identity among the people living in Afghanistan's neighboring countries. This is why it is important that the Taliban should live in peace with the SCO countries. The strengthening of the position of the Taliban in Kabul, or their participation in power along with Karzai or his successor, will inevitably complicate the situation of Islamabad. The Taliban movement is well established on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border, which has not been recognized by Afghanistan. Perhaps, Pakistan will be the biggest loser as a result of the Taliban coming to power. Pakistan is vitally interested in keeping the formal power of the Pashtun in Afghanistan, otherwise it will encounter strong non-Pashtun autonomies, which will objectively hinder Kabul to take a tough position on the Pashtun issue.

Based on these considerations, Karzai received support from his former opponents in the Cold war. India, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan provided some assistance to him. This particularly concerns Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as Pakistan. Tajiks and Uzbeks form influential

minorities in Afghanistan, and Pashtuns are an influential minority in Pakistan.

Pashtun Karzai relies on Tajiks and Uzbeks along with foreign military contingents in the struggle for power, and the Taliban rely on Pashtuns. In Tajikistan, the local Islamist forces have embarked on national reconciliation with the secular regime, which is encouraged by Russia, Uzbekistan and Iran. Proclamation of an Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan could create a lot of difficulties. However, the Karzai regime is secular.

It is possible that after coming to power in Afghanistan, the Taliban may break with their former allies. The Taliban leader Mullah Omar has repeatedly promised the SCO countries not to interfere in their internal affairs in exchange for non-interference in the affairs of Afghanistan. Perhaps, this is a tactic that conceals the true aims of the Taliban, but such statements should not be completely ignored. If a change of the Taliban attitude to Central Asia and the Caucasus is possible, the same cannot be said about Pakistan. The point is the so-called Pashtun problem. The Pashtun ethnos has been divided into two equal parts by Afghanistan-Pakistan border since the days of British India. None of the Afghan governments has ever recognized the legitimacy of the Afghan-Pakistani border after the departure of the British and the emergence of Pakistan.

The Pakistani Pashtuns have used support of Afghanistan in claiming an extensive autonomy. Refusal of the central government to meet these demands has repeatedly led to outbreaks of fighting for an independent Pashtunistan.

Thus, 2014 could be decisive not only for Afghanistan but also for a number of neighboring countries.

Afganistan.ru21.02.2014(http://afganistanru/doc/72096.html?utm_source+twitterfeed&utm_medium+twitter), presented by the author for publication in the Bulletin.

**РОССИЯ
И
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР
2014 – 5 (263)**

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№ 77.99.6.953.П.5008.8.99 от 23.08.1999 г.

Подписано к печати 15/IV-2014 г. Формат 60х84/16

Бум. офсетная № 1. Печать офсетная. Свободная цена

Усл. печ. л. 4,25 Уч.-изд. л. 4,0

Тираж 300 экз. Заказ № 71

**Институт научной информации
по общественным наукам РАН,
Нахимовский проспект, д. 51/21,
Москва, В-418, ГСП-7, 117997**

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информационных изданий**

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(по вопросам распространения изданий)

Отпечатано в ИНИОН РАН
Нахимовский пр-кт, д. 51/21
Москва В-418, ГСП-7, 117997
042(02)9