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RUSSIA'S CHESS GAME
ON THE FIELD OF ENERGY

V. Putin's coming to power coincided with the period of the growing price of oil on the world markets. In turn, high prices of energy resources have played a major role in ensuring socio-political stability in Russia. To maintain stability has been a priority for Moscow, determining its foreign policy, among other things.

Gas versus Oil

During the 1970s the average price of oil grew more than tenfold as compared to the preceding decade. The positive effect of this circumstance was much greater for the Soviet Union than for other countries exporting hydrocarbon raw materials. While the OPEC countries have reduced their deliveries to the world market, the U.S.S.R. increased oil production from 285 million tons in 1970 to 527 million tons in 1979. The growing incomes from oil export was largely responsible for the socio-political stability of the Soviet Union during the 1970s – early 1980s.

In the latter half of the 1980s a great decrease of the prices of hydrocarbons on the world market brought about a social and political destabilization in the U.S.S.R. During the 1990s the situation on the

energy market, taking into account inflation, worsened still more as against the preceding decade. Russia lost much not only in money, but also in the volume of oil production (305 million tons as compared with 569 million tons in 1987).

Beginning from 1999, that is, during the period when V. Putin was the prime minister of Russia, the prices of hydrocarbon raw materials were growing again. Compared to the latter half of the 1990s, the price of oil in the 2000s increased almost fivefold. Along with this, oil production was also restored to almost 490 million tons. Russia's share in oil extraction in the world during the period between 2000 and 2013 grew from 8.9 percent to more than 13 percent.

However, the point is that Moscow does not have effective instruments of influence on the prices of hydrocarbon raw materials. Above all, Russia does not have enough capacities for either raising or reducing oil production. Whereas another big oil producer, Saudi Arabia, has such possibilities. Russia is unable to influence the policy of oil-exporting countries as Saudi Arabia, which is the factual leader of OPEC. Apart from that, our country holds only ninth place in the world in the amount of hydrocarbon resources.

The prices of gas, in contrast to oil, are determined at regional level. In this respect Moscow has more opportunities to influence the gas market than the oil one. The point is that Russia is the unconditional leader not only in the volume of gas extraction, but also in the proven gas reserves.

The gas market presupposes more prolonged relations between the supplier and consumer due to the predominance of gas pipeline supplies. At the same time, it is supposed that demand for gas on the world market will grow faster than for oil (almost twice as fast).

Accordingly, the Russian leadership staked on gas in the 2000s, because it was more promising and better controlled than oil. A geo-

economic question has arisen, namely, where more export efforts should be directed to.

European Direction

Russia had several alternatives for implementing its export strategy. During that period, for example, several Russian oil companies organized tanker deliveries to the United States, and simultaneously, deliveries to China by railway transport. However, the main direction chosen was Europe, because the European market is one of the most promising. This is due, among other things, to the continuing decrease of local extraction, primarily in the Northern Sea, and also to the fact that the share of gas in energy consumption in the European Union will be growing. There are ecological reasons for this connected with the Kyoto agreements and also with restrictions imposed on nuclear power production.

The European variant was also favorable due to good relations between Vladimir Putin and several European leaders at the time.

The U.S. foreign policy under George Bush created additional conditions for establishing an alliance between Moscow and the main European capitals – Paris and Berlin.

Within the framework of this strategy Russia has allowed several major companies from the close European countries to participate in certain projects on Russian territory. For example, the Italian “Eni” has signed an agreement with Gazprom on strategic partnership, which envisaged, among other things, joint development of a number of deposits. At the same time Gazprom has received permission to work directly on the Italian gas market. However, the key element of Russian energy strategy was the commissioning of two new gas pipeline projects. The total capacities of the “Severny potok” (“Northern Flow”) and “Yuzhny potok” (Southern Flow”) should comprise about

120 billion cubic meters of gas annually, which will be four times greater than the unrealized “Nabucco.”

Russia also expected that energy cooperation would be the basis of economic partnership, including cooperation in the high-tech sphere. In this connection it is indicative that the State Bank of Russia has joined the joint-stock capital of the aviation-industrial group EADS. Simultaneously, Russian state corporations have begun to actively cooperate with their partners in Italy, France and Germany.

However, in view of the expanding LNG market and the shale revolution in America and Australia these countries’ dependence on Russia should decrease considerably. The “European gas pipeline” project was closed down when a real prospect of gas export from Canada, and even from the United States, has emerged.

Thus, Moscow has come across Europe’s unwillingness to develop strategic partnership with it. The European Commission has begun an antimonopoly investigation concerning Gazprom. The process may go on for several years and result in a huge fine. Besides, the amount of gas from the already functioning “Northern Flow” for the general European network has been reduced and limited.

Cooperation in other spheres had also much to be desired. European countries have refused to implement their sputnik program jointly with Russia.

In the international political sphere relations between Russia and European countries have not turned into strategic partnership. During the American invasion of Iraq Moscow succeeded to draw to its side a number of European capitals, whereas now, during the developments in Syria, Russia has found itself in virtual isolation.

As to cooperation with China within the SCO framework, it has been an element of Moscow’s energy policy. The point is that the creation of the “Eastern bloc” made it possible to draw China

maximally to relations with Central Asian countries. Thus, some countries of the region, primarily, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, have channeled their export to China. This has decreased the potential of their participation in the “Nabucco” project sponsored by Europe, thus removing competitors of Russian export in the western direction.

As far as the Chinese market is concerned, Moscow has actually ceded it to Europe in the situation when it had a real chance to entrench itself in it. Up to 2008 the growth rates of China’s economy reached about 12 percent annually, which required greater amounts of energy resources. The share of gas in the total energy consumption of China had to grow: in 2010 it was four percent, whereas in 2015 it should reach eight percent.

The implementation of projects oriented to China has begun after the world crisis, when Russia was more interested in access to Beijing’s financial resources. Besides, after 2008, the growth rates of China’s economy have noticeably diminished.

Control over Supplies

Actually, Russia has not succeeded in implementing its energy policy based on relations with final consumers. The shale revolution creates conditions for the return of the situation of the 1980s, when the United States and Saudi Arabia jointly initiated price collapse on the oil market, having thus dealt a serious blow at the Soviet economy. Today this situation may be repeated on the gas market of the region (Middle East, Europe, Turkey and Russia). The United States can become the key exporter of gas to Europe within the next few years. And taking into account the influence of the United States in the Middle East, it is the former, but not Russia, that will determine the price of gas in Europe. In turn, the potential “price reduction” creates risks for the Russian budget, and, accordingly, for socio-political stability in Russia.

However, if Moscow is unable to prevent gas export from the United States, it can still influence the situation in the Middle East. Russia has a possibility to increase its influence in the region through its relations with the two key players – Turkey and Iran.

In contrast to other partners of Russia, Turkey's relations with Moscow in the energy sphere have a strategic character. They should have an agreed-on economic policy. Any slowing down of the growth of the Turkish economy may tell on its import of Russian energy resources. Indicative in this respect is that even the Syrian problem could not worsen Turkish-Russian partnership. Moreover, Turkey has signed an agreement with SCO to receive an additional instrument for a dialogue with Russia, above all.

Moscow has a positive experience of successful geopolitical partnership with Turkey. In the first quarter of the 20th century “Red Anatolia” agreed with Bolshevik Russia on the transfer of the Transcaucasus to the sphere of influence of Moscow in exchange for definite territorial concessions and military and other material assistance. In turn, during the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 Turkey actually closed the Black Sea for NATO vessels until the end of the confrontation.

Thus, the strengthening of the two potential partners in the region plays into the hands of Russia for the time being and in a long-term perspective: these relations will make it possible to retain control over the prices of energy resources. The more Turkey and Iran control the situation in the Middle East, the more resources they have. Just as in the case of the “Great Silk Road,” control over deliveries ensures high prices. The loss of control over the Middle East on the part of the Ottoman Empire automatically led to the emergence of alternative suppliers and lower prices.

Tehran is also one of the key partners of Russia in the region. It is one of the few buyers of Russian high-tech products, including aircraft.

In turn, the U.S. administration relies on creating a controlled balance of forces in the region, that is, control over the situation there without implementing expensive and unpopular land military operations.

This balance is maintained within the framework of the Saudi Arabia – Turkey – Iran triangle. Not a single participant in the process should become too strong to be able to change the situation in its favor. Such situation makes it possible to control the prices of raw materials. In this sense the Arab spring was a positive phenomenon from the point of view of opposing the excessive strengthening of Iran. However, against the backdrop of the closer alliance between Turkey and the “Moslem Brothers,” greater risks have emerged for the second participant in the “anti-Iranian coalition” – Saudi Arabia. The point is that the “ageing regime” has become actually surrounded by alternative forces – on the one hand, those closer to Iran, and on the other – those closer to Turkey and the “Muslim Brothers.” Suffice it to say that in Yemen the local “Muslim Brothers” have won the elections, and in Jordan they represent the key political force in the country. In these conditions, just as in Nasser’s time, Saudi Arabia and other monarchies of the Gulf region face the real threat to their regimes.

The coup in Egypt has actually been a continuation of the policy of maintaining the existing balance. However, the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the “Muslim Brothers” has actually created a basis for a potential alliance between the rivals of Saudi Arabia. It is indicative that in recent time the interaction of Tehran and the “Hamas” movement has again become stronger.

In order to prevent this alliance the subject of Syria has again been raised. The point is that this problem continues to disunite Tehran and Ankara. A blow at Asad's positions should evoke a retaliatory reaction of Iran, including with regard to Turkey. This may lead to a definite loss of independence in the actions of the Erdogan government and its closer interaction with Washington and NATO.

As a result of this game the key regional players – Iran and Turkey – should become weaker. This situation may become advantageous to Moscow, and in a longer perspective it may increase Washington's control over prices. Besides, Turkey, having lost hopes for receiving its share of raw material advantage, will be more interested in lower prices, which will have a negative effect on socio-political stability in Russia.

In this situation Russia is interested in the stabilization of relations between Iran, on the one hand, and Turkey and the "Muslim Brothers," on the other. The situation in Egypt may become a foundation for their rapprochement. This possibility does really exist, taking into account that the basic interest for Turkey and for Iran are presented by the rich monarchies of the Persian Gulf, but not the economically more costly projects – Syria and Egypt.

"Vestnik politiki," 2014, No 1.

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THEATER OF TERRORIST OPERATIONS

The modern world is restless, the number of problem-plagued regions is growing, and this process cannot be stopped. But it is possible to determine certain tendencies and find potential troubled spots.

Naturally, we are not going to forecast anthropogenic catastrophes and interstate conflicts. However, we can name regions where violence caused by international terrorism will be observed.

The Cloying Caucasus

Inasmuch as we are mostly interested in Russia we shall begin with it, or, to be more exact, with its North Caucasian republics, which have been a pain in the neck for Moscow tormenting it for more than twenty years. Despite countless special operations and cheery reports about regular eliminations of leaders of bandit underground gangs, their number does not diminish. There is nothing surprising, because the struggle is being waged not with the cause of the problem, but with its consequence. Moreover, the very reason for the existing and even growing terrorist activity has not been properly determined.

The North Caucasus has always been a region with redundant workforce. From olden times men have been leaving it for other regions of Russia, and even foreign lands, in search of work. Later they came back, built homes, married and started families. Nobody complained about the absence of work and took an automatic rifle instead of it. If there was no job at home, well, it will be found at some other place.

In our day whoever needs a job can find it at his place, if he so wishes. Another problem is that there is no wish. In general, there are two main problems in the North Caucasus. The first is a subsidized economy. The twenty years of the functioning of such vicious little-controlled economy of kickbacks and distributions has brought about the abominable practice of paying federal money in exchange for security guarantees. Thus, it turns out that the federal center finances the armed groups itself, and local officials declare ever louder that their republics are in the forefront of the struggle against separatism,

extremism and terrorism, and, as is known, those who are in the front ranks should be well-fed.

“Money for loyalty” – this mechanism can work more or less smoothly for a certain period only. As a result of this shameful practice the local rulers and high officials become omnipotent and rich, while most others – poor and embittered.

Another problem. A warped economy of payoffs and distributions gives birth to a warped politics. Rank-and-file inhabitants of the North Caucasian republics who are far from taking any decisions at various levels have virtually no rights. They are humiliated at government offices, at police headquarters, and therefore their desire to avenge themselves becomes quite understandable.

The situation in the North Caucasus facilitates the activities of the forces who are interested in instability in the South of Russia. The Republic of Daghestan, the biggest in population and territory, and bordering on five foreign states (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Kazakhstan) causes the greatest concern. It is quite possible that Daghestan can become a haven of international terrorists, just as its neighbor, Chechnya, in 1996–2000. Two factors contribute to the realization of these plans: the extremely high level of corruption of local officials, and inaccessibility of many districts, especially in the mountains close to the state border. So far there is no information about the penetration of foreign combatants in Daghestan, but they can appear there at any moment. This is an additional factor of risk, along with the already existing local underground and the steady growth of radical sentiments among local young people.

Mention should be made of the attempts to sow discord between the Sunnites and Shi'ites (there are several small Shi'ite communities in Daghestan).

Thus, we can hardly expect calm in the North Caucasus, particularly in Daghestan. The situation tends to worsen all the time, inasmuch as the existing problems remain unresolved, which fact is used by the ideologists of all and sundry extremists.

The North Caucasus is the most vulnerable part of Russia in terms of the country's security, and the forces wishing to create more problems for our state will definitely deal blows at this region. A terrorist war in the South of Russia and in Syria is advantageous to the same subjects of international politics. Syria interests them as a transit territory for gas transportation, and Russia, which supplies energy resources to Europe, as a competitor-country, which should be weakened.

The Volga Area: Calm and Quiet Are No More There

Many experts often talk of a terrorist threat to the Volga area. Terrorists are now captured not only in Makhachkala or Nazran in the North Caucasus, but in the respectable capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, that is, in the very heart of Russia. This shows that the cause of terrorist activity lies not only in the absence of jobs. There is no problem to find a well-paid job in Kazan.

Thus, experts can draw the following conclusions from the situation in the Volga area. First, terrorist activity and the growing radical sentiments have little to do with unemployment and the low living standards. The Republic of Tatarstan is one of the most favorable regions of Russia, the level of unemployment is record low there – 1.19 percent.

In Daghestan or Ingushetia this figure is almost ten times bigger. The situation in Tatarstan has aptly been described by Rais Suleimanov, the head of the Volga Center of religious and ethnic-religious studies.

“The Islamist community in Tatarstan is represented by three sections: there is a militant wing (Mojaheds of Tatarstan), political wing (organizers of and participants in street demonstrations, meetings, pickets, etc.), and lobbyist wing – representatives of the regional bureaucracy who prevent the authorities and their special bodies to take preventive measures against the Wahhabi community.” Rais Suleimanov cited an example as a vivid illustration of the existing situation. “A person named Ramil Yusupov, who had studied in Saudi Arabia and was on the wanted list by the federal authorities lived calmly and quietly under the wing of local officials in a comfortable government-owned house in Nizhnekamsk. Many people are of the opinion that bureaucrats-Islamists, while giving incentives to the growth of fundamentalist sentiments, hope to draw investments to Tatarstan from the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf.”

Secondly, the experts who talked of the radicalization of the Muslim regions of the Volga area some twenty years ago proved right. At the time when the Soviet Union was quite stable and seemed unshakeable, analysts of the special services reported of a certain plan to create a gigantic arc of instability in this country, stretching from the North to the South – from the upper reaches of the Volga to the Caspian Sea and the North Caucasus. It was supposed to exacerbate the socio-political situation in the region to the maximum, implanting ideology alien to the traditional religious views of most local people. This would have caused a deep social conflict which would inevitable accompany the spreading of new ideology brought from the outside.

This was one of the scenarios of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The imaginary line connecting the Volga area with the North Caucasus passed along the Volga and was supposed to split the country in two. This scenario still exists, and there are influential forces in the world wishing to apply it to Russia. Although the disintegration of the

Russian Federation as a state is not advantageous to certain countries, its weakening and greater adaptableness would suit many forces.

There are other stumbling blocks, too: transportation routes of Central Asian hydrocarbons and the promising “North – South” transport corridor, which, passing through the North of European Russia, the Volga area, the Caspian Sea, Iran and Pakistan, can connect Northern Europe with India. In both cases the already existing or hypothetical routes either cross the line of the possible split or pass along it very closely. And no investor in sound mind would ever give a penny to a long-term infrastructural project if he were not one hundred percent sure of stability of the situation in the region. The presence of an armed underground which has the aim of creating a caliphate does not add any confidence to the matter.

There are as many risk factors in the Volga area as in the South of Russia. The national factor in the North Caucasus has always been more important than the religious one. In the view of many experts, this can explain the fact why the Wahhabi project based on fanning intra-confessional conflict has not been realized there.

As to the Volga area, the local Muslims are more internationally-minded, as it were. This is why they are more susceptible to the words of foreign preachers, who are regarded as bearers of really pure religion. And the number of religious radicals is growing steadily. Last October an ideological conflict reached an armed stage, and there are grounds to believe that it will continue.

An additional risk factor is uncontrolled migration. Indicative in this respect is Astrakhan region where the number of Uzbeks from Central Asia has reached 40,000 after the events in the South of Kyrgyzstan. Only 10,000 of them have Russian citizenship, the rest are either guest workers or illegal aliens. Members of the “Khizb-ut-Tahrir” party and its supporters who have moved to Astrakhan region

carry on propaganda work among Uzbek believers at mosques. As quite a few members of the Uzbek community in Astrakhan region think, in case of a new aggravation of the situation in the South of Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan (especially in the Ferghana Valley or after the end of President Karimov's rule) there will be an uncontrolled flow of Uzbek refugees going mainly to Astrakhan region where there is a numerous Uzbek diaspora already.

If the Uzbek authorities continue to persecute members of “Khizb-ut-Tahrir” and other banned organizations, they will inevitably move to the nearest regions of Russia, namely Astrakhan region and the Volga area. And the latter is not the only Russian region with the growing number of bearers of extreme ideology. In recent years the special services have become worried over the situation in the Urals where communities emerge adhering to fundamentalist positions, and there is information about the training of armed fighters there.

The Middle East: Conflict Is Spreading

Syria and Iraq are definitely the most troublesome countries in the Middle East. However, the wave of violence is gradually sweeping the entire region. As is known, the pro-Iranian grouping “Hezbollah” based in Lebanon has come out to support Bashar Asad from the very beginning of the Syrian conflict. This support has been growing all the time, and at present several thousand “Hezbollah” fighters take part in battles on the side of the Syrian government forces. According to rumors, officers of the Iranian special services are engaged in coordinating military operations in Syria.

On November 19, 2013, one of the days when fierce fighting was going on between the Syrian government forces jointly with “Hezbollah” from Lebanon and Iranians, on the one hand, and the militants, on the other, and negotiations proceeded in Geneva, two

explosions took place at the gates of the Iranian mission in the southern part of Beirut. These suicide terrorist acts caused twenty-five casualties and about 150 wounded people.

Responsibility for these acts was taken by the jihad grouping “Teams of Abullah Azzam” – branch of “Al Qaeda” in the Eastern Mediterranean. It can well be assumed that the main aim of these acts was to punish Iran and “Hezbollah” for their participation in the Syrian events, as well as to provoke Iran to certain harsh steps and thwart negotiations with the United States.

As is known, these acts of terror have not influenced the course of negotiations, and the assistance of Iran and “Hezbollah” to the Asad regime has not stopped. But the situation in Lebanon itself has become more strained.

The situation is also aggravated by the factor of Syrian refugees whose number in Lebanon exceeds 400,000. Naturally, many of them are full of bitterness and accuse Sunnites, Alawis, and representatives of other confessions of their misfortune. All this exacerbates very difficult intercommunal relations, complex as they are.

Maghreb: We'll Go up North!

In 2013 “Al Qaeda” was defeated in countries of Islamic Maghreb by the French forces, and after that it lost control over the northern districts of Mali. Thus the aim of “Al Qaeda” – to create a caliphate in the vast region to the south of the Sahara from Algeria to Eritrea has not materialized.

“Al Qaeda” in the countries of Islamic Maghreb is represented by small bands, groups and cells scattered all over North Africa. As a result of the operations of the French military forces, most “Al Qaeda militants had to leave Mali and now they “search for dirty jobs” in other countries. Experts believe that they are likely to move to Libya and

Tunisia. First, because the armies of these countries are weak and ineffective and will hardly be able to oppose the well-organized and well-armed units of “Al Qaeda” jihadists. Secondly, there are their own rebels in both Tunisia and Libya, who could be useful to terrorist operations. In the 1990s “Al Qaeda” attempted to entrench itself on the Mediterranean coast of Algeria, but was thrown back to the south by the Algerian army and special services. Its present march to the Mediterranean may be more successful.

Africa: Somalia and Nigeria

Somalia has long been considered the most troublesome country on the African continent where a civil war has been raging since 1991 up to our days. In 2013 a central government emerged in that country for the first time in twenty years. True, it does not control the vast territory in the south of the country which is ruled by the terrorist “Ash Shabaab” grouping. The government, in general, controls very little, judging by the frequency and impudence of the militants’ actions.

The “Ash Shabaab” operates not only in Somalia. In September 2013 it seized a big trade center in Nairobi (Kenya) killing about sixty people and wounding many others, and in July 2010 in several explosions near a stadium in Kampala (Uganda) 70 people fell victim to terrorists. The latest attempt to commit an act of terror was made in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) during which the two terrorists assembling home-made explosive devices died.

The geographic location of terrorist acts is quite understandable. Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, just as Sierra Leone, Burundi and Djibouti have dispatched their troops to Somalia within the framework of the African Union’s counter-terrorist operation. Inasmuch as the “Ash Shabaab” has not been destroyed so far, the territory of its activity will definitely widen. At present the grouping is engaged in military

operations in the south of the country, Mogadishu, in particular. It controls the customs service in some ports of Somalia and receives considerable sums from criminal transactions. It also has training camps in several places and movable headquarters and command posts, which enable its militants to escape strikes of American drones.

Experts are greatly worried over more active traffic between the Somali and Yemeni militants, and also jihadists from other countries.

Foreign combatants coming to take part in military operations in Somalia are also engaged in terrorist activity. Experts explain it by the struggle for oil, which is beginning in the region. It used to be extracted there prior to 1991, though not too much, although it was supposed that oil deposits were very rich. In 2012 geological forecasts were confirmed. Experts of the Canadian Horn Petroleum Company made prospecting drilling and announced that oil reserves on the shelf of East Africa and Yemen could be compared to those in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Energy companies of the United States, Britain, Canada and other countries are competing for Somali oil. However, the development of deposits in a situation when everybody fights everybody is simply impossible. The key actors are interested in stability.

On July 23, 2013, a terrorist act took place at the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu, in which three people died. The “Ash Shabaab” claimed responsibility for it. The reason was that Turkey is an insufficiently Islamic country and therefore should have been punished.

However, everything was much simpler. In actual fact Turkey was punished for its too great activity. In 2010 Istanbul was the venue of an international conference on settling the situation in Somalia with the participation of Somali political figures, businessmen and elders. In 2011 Turkey earmarked more than \$200 million for overcoming the

consequences of draughts, and that very year it was the first country to reopen its diplomatic mission in Mogadishu and establish a regular air transport link with Somalia. Apart from that, Turkey took part in quite a few infrastructural projects promising real progress for the country.

Two other regions of Africa, which are often mentioned in connection with terrorists and pirates, are Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea. In the early autumn of 2013 the news was circulated about the death of the “Boko Haram” leader Abubakar Sheku. However, his death (if it is true) gives no grounds to hope for a speedy defeat of the grouping. The point is that “Boko Haram” is based in the northern districts of Nigerai where there is no oil. The poor North is of secondary importance for the country’s budget and therefore it can be hoped that “Boko Haram” is the only argument which local politicians can use in a difficult dialogue with the central authorities.

In 2015 presidential elections are to be held in Nigeria and the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan will definitely wish to be reelected for a new term, which, in the observers’ view, violated the unwritten rule according to which Jonathan, born in the Niger delta, should give his place to a person from the North of the country.

Until now “Boko Haram” carried out its operations only on the territory of Nigeria. There has been no reliable information about this grouping’s connections with terrorists in other countries. However, they can emerge at any moment. The interests of many countries are widely represented in Nigeria whose objects can become the aim of radical militants.

A brief analysis of the situation makes it possible to presume that the number of flash points in the world will increase in the future. The activity of radical Islamists will definitely grow in Russia, the Maghreb countries, in Africa to the south of Sahara, and in the Middle East. If one looks attentively at the theater of terrorist operations, he will see

that the radicals, sometimes contrary to their will, become hostages of a big geopolitical game in Eurasia.

“Odnako,” Moscow, 2014, February -March, pp. 134–144.

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

In this context more attention should be paid to certain aspects of the visit of the President of Tatarstan R. Minnikhanov to Saudi Arabia in March 2013. He discussed the prospects of a Saudi-Russian meeting of top managers of the two world banks – the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Bank of Development.

At the start of his visit to Saudi Arabia President Minnikhanov made *umra*, or “small hajj” to Mecca¹.

For three years, from 2010 to 2012, the name of the head of the Chechen Republic, R. Kadyrov, was included in the “Top-500” of the “Politics” section of the international rating of world leaders. He has established “firm order in Chechnya and put under strict control all institutions of power in the republic”².

In December 2012 and in August 2013 one of these authors carried out a sociological surveillance of Islamic figures whose communities are members of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the European part of Russia. Its aim was to reveal the most authoritative,

respected and influential Muslim figures of the Russian umma. Apart from R. Minnikhanov and R. Kadyrov, among them were Sheikh R. Gainuddin, Chairman of the Council of muftis of Russia, D. Poncheyev, Chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of St. Petersburg and North-Western region of Russia, and some other persons.

The reasons for inclusion of the most influential persons of the Muslim world, who are associated with religious, intellectual, political and other elites, in the world rating may differ. We suggest to consider the results of their work in adopting key decisions in various spheres at the federal, regional or municipal levels, which exert a positive influence on citizens – members of the Muslim community, and on the entire development of Russian Muslim society as the bearer of Muslim identity on Russian territory.

In studying the phenomenon of the Muslim community we adhere to a broader political approach to an Islamic component, making it possible to identify the Muslim (Islamic) community as a complex phenomenon with a multitude of phenomenological characteristics in the most diverse spheres: economic structure and socio-territorial organization, communication lines, reproduction channels, etc.

Our concept claims general significance, yet it bears an imprint of a person, his views, instructions, methods of presenting and solving problems, etc. In the Muslim community the central person is Prophet Mohammed, who traversed a path from an Arab preacher, who had brought monotheism to the polytheistic city of Mecca, to the head of the Islamic state and the founder and leader of the world movement. The doctrine of Islam proclaimed by Mohammed, which, according to the American researcher of world religions R. Right, “was a flexible compromise between Judaism, Christianity and Arab heathenry,” was

energetically propagandized by his followers during a comparatively short period of time.

The well-known Iranian theologian and scholar of the history of religions M. Beheshti wrote about the factors which determined the success of Islam all over the world: “The Islamic movement was all-embracing from the ideological point of view. It was able to give firm, realistic, useful and practical answers to all questions. And it was headed by the man possessing deep faith, indomitable spirit, endurance and readiness to ministration. He was the leader who gave himself wholly to the movement at each stage of its history, who shared all difficulties with other participants in it, and who was not like leaders preferring to stay aside and give direction to others. In addition to this, everything took place in the conditions of a socio-political vacuum.”³

The concept of the Muslim world soon turned from the ideology of a microcommunity into the ideology of a macrosocial group, which could present its own socio-political phenomenon to entire humanity.

Synthesizing the characteristics of Islam, simultaneously founded as a religious charismatic community of salvation and as a *political community*⁴ basing itself on the definition of the Muslim community of Russia as an independent religious-political unit, and also proceeding from an analysis of the political activity of Muslim leaders and Islamic predilections of well-known political leaders of Russian regions showing that the politicization of Islam in Russia has already taken place, in our view, it is possible to use the concept of political community conformably to Muslim community.

The heuristic significance of the concept of “political community” is expressed in the desire to fix the variety of manifestations of politics in the modern world, including in our country, where the community of Russian Muslims is one of the significant parts of the political entity. An attempt to analyze

the Muslim community as the category of political perception opens up a research vector of the interpretation of the political class of the Muslim community of Russia.

As shown in several latest works on the problems of the formation of political identity in post-Soviet Russia, these processes are characterized by the growing activity of the regional political class.

Symbolic power can be deduced from other types of power. Politicians have an access to public discourse inasmuch as they have political power, and scholars – inasmuch as they have the resources of knowledge. There are also specific social groups which formulate definitions of mental models. In the conditions of post-secular society they receive greater opportunities for control over social developments, common socio-cultural knowledge, common sense, views on various problems, and basic ideological standards and values organizing and guiding social perceptions of the public as a whole.

A broad concept of the “elite” including the exclusive social management carried on by a small group gives grounds to refer to the present symbolic elites not only politicians, but also journalists, teachers, lawyers, and religious figures – all who have an access to public discourse, or business managers who indirectly control this access (for instance, as the owners of mass-media empires).

Naturally, the symbolic elite of Russian Muslims today is embodied not only by political elites in the regions with a predominantly Muslim population and the religious elites of the clergy, but also a broad section of modern, well-educated and successful people capable to form the image of Muslims and identificationally connected with the Russian nation in the cultural, scientific, educational and economic media – through charity activity, literature, journalism, and other spheres. R. Gainutdin speaks about them as of the “new generation of the Muslim intellectual elite which will influence self-

consciousness and positioning of Russian Muslims in their relation with the entire Russian society, and also among Muslims themselves.”⁵

Indicative in this respect is the history of the spiritual and civic formation of a group of young Muslim intellectuals originated from the Lower Volga area, who became known for their profound knowledge of Islamic religion and socially-useful activity in the mid-1990s. The formation of their Muslim identity was accompanied with constant self-improvement stimulated by the conscious need to follow the Koran commandments and receive a higher secular and religious education, including in Arab countries. Their spiritual tutors at the level of the religious elites of Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod did not leave these young people without attention even during their studies at foreign Islamic centers. After graduation these certificated experts on Islam knowing several Oriental and European languages have returned to the Russian umma and became quite authoritative and well-known personages – religious, scholarly and public figures, and real actors of the intellectual Muslim elite in the Russian Muslim area.

A group of up to 15 Tatar and Russian Muslims formed in Nizhni Novgorod and its region with support of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the European part of Russia has been able to realize themselves successfully within the framework of several projects of the Muslim media-holding under the name “Medina” Publishers⁶.

The development of Russia’s biggest Islamic communication holding has been based on the sincere desire of its financial sponsors and creative workers to publish qualitative literature on Islam with due account of traditional theology and within the framework of the Khanafite mazkhab traditional for Russia. This is not simply book-publishing business, but primarily distribution of knowledge and enlightenment activity with a view to propagating tolerant Islam, but not radical schools of enmity toward other nations and confessions⁷.

In 2000–2004 the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Nizhny Novgorod and region began to publish its own periodicals in the Russian and Tatar languages and founded the site “Islam in Nizhny Novgorod,” which became its official Internet-representative and an information agency telling the audience about the life and activities of the local Muslims.⁸

In 2004–2008 the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Nizhny Novgorod and region began to publish the monthly newspaper “Medina al-Islam,”⁹ whose role is very important for the Russian Muslim umma at the beginning of the 21st century.

In 2007 the Islamic media-holding began to produce Internet-content for the information-analytical portal “Islam in the Russian Federation.”¹⁰ The portal’s task is to inform audiences about the political positions of Russian Muslims and Russian society on the entire range of problems connected with Islamic faith, Muslim way of life, and political developments in the Muslim world¹¹

In 2008–2011 more branches of the “Medina” were opened in several cities of Russia (Kazan, Ufa, St. Petersburg), more Internet projects appeared, a series of encyclopedic dictionaries on Islam in the Russian Federation continued to come off the press. Some periodic publications were distributed free of charge thanks to assistance of the Charity Foundation named after Imam Abu-Hanifa and the Foundation of support of Islamic culture, science and education.

The editorial teams of the mass media, the Internet and printed projects increase their publishing and printing capacities in Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow. By now the total number of the titles of the “Medina” media-holding’s editions has reached five hundred. They include books, study aids and periodicals.

Notes

- ¹ The President of Tatarstan visited Mecca // Kazan: official site of the Kazan Mayor's office. 2013. March 16. URL.: <http://www.kzn.ru/news/38802-president-tatarstana-posetil-mekku>
- ² The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims, 2012. URL.: <http://themuslim500.com/download>
- ³ Beheshti M. Mir nakanune Islama [The World on the Eve of Islam]. St. Petersburg, 2011, pp. 151–152.
- ⁴ Haynes J. Religion in Global Politics. L., N.Y., 1998, p. 127.
- ⁵ Statement of Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin at the 2nd All-Russia Muslim Conference on “Muslims of Russia and Civil Society” // Islam Minbare. 2013, No 6–7.
- ⁶ URL: <http://www.idmedina.ru>
- ⁷ Concept of “Medina” Publishers. URL: <http://www.idmedina.ru/about/concept>
- ⁸ URL: <http://www.islamnn.ru>
- ⁹ URL: <http://www.idmedina.ru/medina>
- ¹⁰ URL: <http://www.islamrf.ru>
- ¹¹ URL: <http://www.idmedina.ru/partners>

(to be concluded in the next issue)

“Elitologiya Rossii: sovremennoye sostoyaniye i perspektivnyy razvitiya.” Vol. 2, Rostov-on-Don, 2013, pp. 179–192.

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THE SOUTH OF RUSSIA: UNEVEN

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWING TENSION

The South of Russia has many faces and is characterized by a host of diverse problems facing its people and society. Security and stability in the South of Russia is one of the key objectives of the Russian leadership. The socio-political and economic problems, threats and risks in the southern macro-region are a subject of scientific research for two reasons: first, because of its great significance for national security in the southern region, especially on the eve of the

Winter Olympics in Sochi in 2014, a critical mass of accumulated contradictions and the possibility of further deterioration of the situation in one of the most multicultural and multi-religious regions; secondly, the scientific value of research in the matter is determined by the existence of the whole complex of interrelated issues in a relatively small field. They are connected with the shadow economy, social contradictions in the southern republics, attempts at administrative-territorial optimization, and the guerrilla war of low intensity. These and other negative processes are going on against the backdrop of enormous corruption. The whole series of events would not have reached this development level without external geopolitical impact.¹

An objective analysis of the situation should begin with the common conceptual trends of recognition of systemic instability in the North Caucasus and symptoms of its manifestations along the southern borders.² Military-political tension has been growing along these borders of our country again as during the “color revolutions”. The chain reaction of popular revolutions, backed by NATO, has been developing in some of the Arab countries. There is a possibility of the penetration of the Arab revolutions’ influence in the North-East Caucasus.

A sufficiently high level of criminal and terrorist tension has been accumulated in the south of the region during the past 20 years, and violent incidents occur at different points quite regularly.³ Several republics became a training ground for active hostilities in 2010. Terrorist actions are carried out by small groups over a considerable area and seem to take place almost everywhere. These attacks are carefully planned and prepared and inflict great damage on the federal forces and law-enforcement agencies. Counter-terrorist operations have been effective enough, despite the complicated situation in the republics. Military aircraft and guns were increasingly used in the fight

against the bandit underground and against the militants in the border areas. These operations have brought appreciable results, but failed to stabilize the situation in the region. The present-day counter-terrorist practices do not bring the desired peace in the region. Tension is spreading beyond the Caucasus in the border areas and frequent incidents become more violent.

Violence is generated by ethnic division, religious strife, and the social protests of young people. Extremists use every occasion to create a split between young people, their families, and society as a whole.

Nowadays the level of ethnic tension is growing in the South, whereas during the Soviet period ethnic conflicts were hardly observed anywhere at any time. It is obvious that society is now living through a period of the formation of stable traditions of interethnic hostility. If the state does not solve the pressing social and economic problems, the radical elements may try to deal with the situation themselves.

The state has traditionally been considered the main actor on the issue of modernization of underdeveloped regions. In Russia, it is trying to implement investment projects aimed at creating jobs in the industrial sector and in selected service industries, and in the North Caucasus – in recreational and tourist projects. The authorities are trying to forcibly draw Russian big business as a co-investor. Compulsion to investments with high risk leads to failure of development projects. Quality projects for the integration of the North Caucasus in the national industrial, educational and cultural sphere have not appeared. The socio-economic status of the republics is still based on federal grants, subsidies and subventions. As a result of the unevenness and different directions of modernization processes there is a high potential for conflicts breaking out in various regions. Stagnation of the socio-economic sphere creates a comfortable environment for the emergence of ethnic hatred and the bandit underground. The Olympic

construction work in and around Sochi, and a mass influx of migrant workers from Turkey and the Central Asian countries cause great discontent of the local population. The government has made great efforts to counter terrorist activities in the North Caucasus carried on by illegal armed groups. According to estimates of the Russian authorities, radical Islamists are stepping up their activities all over the world – in Syria, Libya, even in the United States (the Boston tragedy). European intelligence agencies have increased control over the activities of the Caucasian diaspora which has links with emissaries of the “Caucasus Emirate”. Thus, the situation in the south of Russia is far from calm. The federal government is taking preventive measures to block possible threats from the criminal and terrorist underground.

An integrated approach to combating extremism and terrorism is intended to become the basis of a qualitative change in society.

A conservative-bureaucratic and slow development way is characteristic of southern Russian society. In contrast to the central regions of Russia, economic and social issues in the South are complicated by problems of nationalism, extremism and terrorism. Apart from that, there is the need to harmonize the process of revival of Islam and the European (Christian) development model.

The creation of the North Caucasian Federal Region has not become an effective administrative-territorial way to resolve regional conflicts, but only caused the aggravation of the “Circassian issue” (the Adyg people, anxious to unite, have been divided between three republics and two districts). The socio-economic burden of leadership turned out unsupportable for Stavropol Territory. Revitalization of the migration processes in the area has led to new interethnic clashes. New projects of “redivision of the Caucasus” can lead to the permanent loss of control over the South of Russia, but not to administrative optimization. These extreme circumstances require radical changes, and

it is advisable to take into account regional needs and opportunities based on the historical experience of industrialization, and achievements of modern science and technology.

Notes

- ¹ *Atlas sotsialno-politicheskikh problem, ugroz i riskov Yuga Rossii* [Atlas of Socio-political Problems, Threats and Risks in the South of Russia]. Rostov-on-Don, 2006. Vol.1.
- ² Matishov G.G., Batiyev L.V., Paschenko I.V. *Atlas sotsialno-politicheskikh problem, ugroz i riskov Yuga Rossii* [Atlas of Socio-political Problems, Threats and Risks in the South of Russia]. Special issue. Rostov-on-Don, 2010, Vol. 4.
- ³ Matishov G.G., Batiyev L.V., Paschenko I.V. Romanov I.V. *Atlas sotsialno-politicheskikh problem, ugroz i riskov Yuga Rossii* [Atlas of Socio-political Problems, Threats and Risks in the South of Russia]. Rostov-on-Don, 2011. Vol. 5.
“*Strategicheskoye planirovaniye v polietnichnom makroregione v usloviyakh neravnomernogo razvitiya i rosta napriazhennosti*”, Rostov-on-Don, 2013, pp. 5–8.

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BASIC STAGES IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS: FROM MODERATELY RADICAL TO EXTREMIST (On example of the republics of Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Circassia)

The history of the Wahhabi movement in Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayevo-Circassia can be divided into four stages, highlighting some of the most important and substantial characteristics of each.

The first stage can be defined as the end of the 1980s – first half of the 1990s.

There were significant changes in the attitude towards religion in the late 1980's – early 1990's. The restructuring and democratization of society have contributed to this process, and the result was a change in the attitude of government officials towards religion.

In October and November 1990, the Federal law “On freedom of conscience” and the Russian Law “On Freedom of Religion” were adopted. Despite the persistence of bureaucratic orders for registration of religious associations, hundreds of different religious communities were registered in 1988–1990¹.

Numerous Islamic organizations and groups have emerged, the number of Muslim communities and mosques has increased rapidly, pilgrimages to the holy places (hajj) have acquired a mass character. Hundreds of young Muslims have gone to study at foreign Islamic institutions in Saudi Arabia, Libya, Qatar, Egypt, Turkey, and Syria.

Islamic revival process has begun to gain momentum in the North Caucasus, the politicization of Islam has become part of it.

Salafism now known under the name of Wahhabism has helped to turn Islam into an instrument of political struggle. Young preachers, returning after studying at foreign religious schools, have gradually become conductors of untraditional Islam for local people.

Jamaats have begun to emerge in the Republic, as parallel structures, gradually replacing old imams of the mosques.

By the mid-1990s Jamaats existed in almost all localities of Karachayevo-Circassia, which became a fertile ground for spreading radical religious ideas.

All members of the organization took an oath of allegiance, that “they will take up arms on the appointed day and hour, and obey the

orders of the Emir”. The “Karachay Jamaat” has become widely known in the region.

In Kabardino-Balkaria serious changes in the religious sphere have taken place since 1991. The first official madrasah was opened in Nalchik, which turned into an Islamic Institute in 1993. Its main task was to train high-quality clerics with the knowledge of the Kabardian, Balkar and Arabic languages. Kabardians, Balkars, Turks, Uzbeks, and others, – 130 people of various nationalities have been trained at the school. The international Islamic organization “Salvation” with headquarters in Saudi Arabia provided substantial financial support.

The construction project of a large public and religious center in Nalchik began in 1992. It will house the Muslim Spiritual Board of Kabardino-Balkaria, as well as a prayer hall for 1,500, wedding hall, conference hall, library and book depository, and print shop.

In 1994 about a hundred Muslim communities were registered, 40 mosques functioned, and 30 mosques were under construction in Kabardino-Balkaria. A considerable support for the development of Islam in these republics has been provided by Arab countries and the Arab charity organizations accredited in the republics. An Islamic Youth Centre has been opened in Nalchik with the assistance of Saudi Arabia.

In general, the first period can be characterized as a period of latent confrontation between supporters of Wahhabism and traditional Islam, which was limited by the scope of discussions, mostly related to religious dogmas.

The second stage was from the mid 1990s up to the fall of 1999. The confrontation acquired more severe forms, which were typical of Karachayevo-Circassia.

By 1998, the number of Muslim communities in Kabardino-Balkaria reached 130. The number of mosques also increased, although insignificantly: in 1992 – 24 mosques functioned and in 1998 – 68.

Assistance from Saudi Arabia has gradually been reduced due to the dissatisfaction of Saudi preachers with the effectiveness of their missionary activity.

In 1998, the problem of Wahhabism in the North Caucasus became critical. By that time, the Wahhabis actually have seized power in Chechnya and firmly entrenched themselves in neighboring Ingushetia and Daghestan, creating a mini-state -- the Kadar zone -- around the villages of Karamakhi, Chabanmakhi and Kadar in Daghestan. Large Wahhabi communities appeared in Karachayevo-Circassia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Stavropol territory. There were bloody clashes between Wahhabis and traditional Muslims even more often, and Mufti Abubakarov of Daghestan was brutally murdered.

The third stage lasted from autumn 1999 to 2004. Appeals for violence began to be heard on both sides, traditional and non-traditional Islam. First incidents with the use of weapons took place in a number of cities and districts of the Republic of Karachayevo-Circassia.

The socio-political situation was calmer in Kabardino-Balkaria as compared with Karachayevo-Circassia during that period, but by the early 2000s, there were two centers of power local Islam – the Spiritual Board, on the one hand, and the so-called Islamic Center, on the other. The Islamic Center was created as a youth organization of the Spiritual Board, but it soon gained independent influence on many believers.

Since 2000, the republican authorities, supporting the Spiritual Board, began to interfere into the situation. The authorities refused to register officially those, who did not obey the official Muslim leaders and the Spiritual Board of Muslims, but joined separate groups.

By 2004, almost all representatives of the Islamic Center of Kabardino-Balkaria have gone underground, and most mosques oriented to the “alternative” spiritual authority have been closed.

The authorities of the Republic and Ministry of Internal Affairs failed to establish a dialogue with the “Young Muslims”. The supporters of strict reprisals among the official authorities have won. An attempt to find a peaceful solution to the situation proved abortive.

The next stage can be considered from the second half of 2008 to the present.

The stepping up of the bandit underground activity occurred in the second half of 2008, and reached its peak in 2009–2010. If earlier calls for “civilized divorce” with Russia prevailed in slogans of militants hereinafter they have acquired features of the total “jihad” against all “infidels” Secular separatism was replaced by Islamic separatism. Businessmen and officials have become exposed to blackmail, extortion and murder. Famous scientists, public figures, high-ranking officials were killed for refusing to pay “tax on jihad.”

According to experts, the intensification of the armed underground occurred as a consequence of its entry into the extremist organization “Caucasus Emirate” and increasing pressure from international “curators.”

The idea of “pure” Islam still finds understanding among young people. Preachers of radical movements skillfully use the protest mood in society and they turn to the best qualities of the Caucasian people – courage, strong will, contempt of danger, commitment to fairness, sacrifice for the common cause, and for the sake of friends.

The scenario of the further development of the situation in the North Caucasus depends on several factors. First of all, it is the ability to advance and implement a program that will stabilize the situation in

the region and neutralize the actions of ideologists and leaders of Islamic radicalism.

*“Voprosy natsionalnykh i federativnykh
otnoshenii,” Moscow, 2013, issue 3 (22).*

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ETHNO-POLITICAL AND CONFESSIONAL

PROCESSES IN MODERN DAGHESTAN

(Conclusion)

The notion “land conflict” was introduced into the discourse of All-Russia scientific-practical conference on “Actual problems of counteraction to national and political extremism” in 2008. This concept denotes different territorial and land disputes. Participation of village community in such disputes lends a political aspect to conflict, as it can act on behalf of an ethnic group.

The main area of land conflicts in Daghestan are plains, foothills and coastal districts of the country. There are several forms of contradictions, contributing to the development of interethnic conflicts. *First*, the contradiction between the indigenous population of lowland and steppe districts and highlanders, concerning winter pastures. *Secondly*, the confrontation between “local” people and “newcomers” about construction of housing and countryside farming. *Thirdly*, the illegal sale of municipal land to local officials, running counter to the interests of residents of settlements.

Another variety of land conflicts is an uncompleted land reform that is beneficial to the district authorities, selling or renting agricultural

land to their advantage on long-term lease. The administration of rural settlements had to complete registration of plots of land. Thus, property rights would have been protected legally, and non-interference of the heads of district administrations in the economic activities and land policy in rural settlements would have been guaranteed. However, land is administered by district, but not rural settlement authorities. The policy of the regional authorities is encouraged by the republican government. The republican authorities report to the Federal Center about attracting investments. Large agricultural firms are formally involved in agricultural investment projects, most of which remain unfulfilled. Work is carried out only to persuade the Federal Center of the need of the state to co-finance agricultural projects. Subsequently, the allocated funds are redistributed between the participants. One of the outcomes of such land policy is extrusion of the rural population. Unemployed villagers have to join the ranks of migrant workers, leaving for other regions.

According to experts, land and ethnic conflicts in Daghestan are a long-term destabilizing factor in the region. Institutional changes are necessary to overcome it.

However, researchers hold two diametrically opposite views on solution of the problem. As a rule, ethnicity affects the positions of scientists: highlanders believe that there is one country of Daghestan without ethnic lands, but lowlanders adhere to the concept of ethnic lands as an integral part of the environment of their ethnic group. The lowland peoples of Daghestan believe that immigrants do not consider the land as an agricultural resource, but as an object of territorial acquisition. Some researchers are of compromise opinion, recognizing the existence of land in rural communities, but not as ethnic in the broad sense. Historically, multi-ethnic people settled in Daghestan, that is why land is regarded as an ethnic property. Land problems are

politicized on the ethnic basis, not only in Daghestan, but throughout the North Caucasus.

Thus, it is the land conflicts that is a major risk factor in the ethno-political situation in Daghestan.

Confessional situation: The politicization of Islam

The role of the Islamic factor in the post-Soviet period has constantly been growing in the region. Analyzing the problems associated with confessional contradictions and religious and political extremism, researchers use the following keywords: *fundamentalism, religious and political extremism, Wahhabism and Salafism*. Today the concept of Wahhabism is used much less. The concept of Salafism has become more common. The Salafists are divided into moderate and radical, who organized an armed underground. The latter mentioned is referred to as a forest armed underground. The actualization of religious issues began in the mid-1980s, when Wahhabi enclaves appeared in a number of mountain districts. These enclaves continued to grow and to move away from the cultural and legal environment of the Russian state up to the invasion by international terrorists from Chechnya. The consolidation of the multinational Daghestani people around the Russian army in the face of a common enemy, both external (international terrorists) and internal (Daghestani militants), has taken place as a result of this invasion.

A decade later the situation has changed, so that the Chechen Republic has appeared as a region of stability and prosperity in comparison with Daghestan, which has turned into the most unstable region of the country.

Today Wahhabi communities (experts refer to them as Salafi) are present in Daghestani towns and in almost every rural district of the

country. Some of them carry on an underground armed struggle against the Russian state, primarily against law-enforcement agencies, committing terrorist acts.

The broad dissemination of ideas of Salafism has led to a split within the confession itself between the Sufis and Salafis. The conflict is manifested not only in competing to preach “true” Islam, or accusing of paganism and apostasy, but even in murdering imams and other members of the clergy, both the Sufis and Salafis.

An analysis of the current situation shows that Wahhabism spread exclusively among uneducated young people has become the country's serious long-term factor. Extremism among Muslims has roots in their dissatisfaction with corruption among the local authorities. Therefore, one of the primary tasks of the state is the fight against corruption, as well as a sound long-term policy toward young people.

Currently, there are 2,050 mosques and 327 prayer houses, 298 Islamic educational institutions – 15 universities, 82 madrasahs, and 201 schools at mosques in the Republic of Daghestan. The most active religious organizations that play a significant role in the political life of modern Daghestan are the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Daghestan (SAMD) and the Association of Ahl al-Sunnah scholars in Daghestan.

Initially, competition within the Sunni currents of Islam was based on the ethno-confessional principle. SAMD traditionally headed by representatives of the Avar ethnic group has been criticized by religious leaders of other nationalities which led to the creation of Muftiats on a national basis in the territory of Daghestan in the first half of the 1990s.

Contradictions between the supporters of traditional Sufism and fundamentalist Salafism are a major problem in Islamic Daghestan.

The complete eradication of Salafist ideas in Daghestan was originally one of the main tasks of SAMD. A chronicle of confrontation between the two organizations contains dozens of killed religious leaders on both sides. It was obvious that religious radicalization escalated by 2010, and SAMD has initiated the beginning of a peaceful dialogue with Salafis. Salafi followers have founded the “Association of Ahl al-Sunnah scholars in Daghestan”, the vigorous activity of which is noticeable in the public and religious life of the republic.

The growing influence of the Salafi community has forced the authorities of Daghestan and SAMD to reckon with it. The increased pressure on the secular aspect of public life, as well as a split in the Salafi community have been a consequence of such policy. The armed underground of the Salafists has accused the moderate Salafis of flirting with the state and has not taken any forms of interaction and compromises with the secular authorities. The moderate Salafis have lost influence on the supporters of religious and political extremism and terrorism.

Confrontation and tension between Sufis and Salafis increase in the relationship between the secular and clerical sections of Daghestani society. It is expressed in an effort of Islamic religious organizations (both Sufis and Salafis) to increase their influence on the political, educational, media and other sections of society in Daghestan. The ideal for which both moderate and radical Muslims are striving is to build a society on religious model.

Obviously, there are two sets of basic problems in Daghestan for a long time: ethnic and political conflicts and inter-confessional problems among the Muslim population of the republic split into two irreconcilable camps.

*“Nauchnaya mysl Kavkaza,”
Rostov-on-Don, 2013, N 4, pp. 137–144.*

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**EURASIAN INTEGRATION PROJECT:
POSITION OF CENTRAL ASIAN ELITES**

In the article by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin entitled “New Integration Project for Eurasia – the Future Born Today” it is said, among other things, that along with the strengthening of the integration project itself the number of participants in the Customs Union and European economic partnership will be growing.¹ For example, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will join this open project.

The Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus has been functioning since July 1, 2010. The further development of integration, its rates and forms are directly connected with the position of the political and intellectual elites of the states involved.

The economic and political effectiveness of integration processes in the post-Soviet area is reflected in many political and analytical documents. At the same time the risks involved due to the inevitable change of the elites in Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, as well as in the potential participants in the Eurasian project – Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and also political instability in all states participating in the Customs Union and their borders practically open for all and sundry terrorists and religious extremists are the subjects thoroughly investigated by their authorities.

The pros and contras of Eurasian integration are viewed within the framework of arguments submitted mainly by Russian politicians, economists and experts. But discussions of acceptable and advantageous integration models are going on quite actively in other post-Soviet countries.

First of all let us dwell on definitions and comparisons used by representatives of the political, administrative and intellectual elites and

the mass media of Central Asian countries in analyzing the integration initiatives of Russia: aggressive integration, integration as business-takeover, integration as return to the imperial essence of the Russian state, integration as corporate raiding on the part of Russia, integration as a one-way road, friendly intervention, etc.

S. Mambetalin, an expert from Kazakhstan, explains his view of the Eurasian project: “Having set up the Customs Union and the Eurasian Alliance, Russia will be able to dictate its conditions to the satellite-countries – Belarus and Kazakhstan – in order to be free from a possible anti-Russian policy of the future elites in these countries... Integration for the Russian Federation is business takeover, insurance against future political risks and return to the imperial essence of the Russian state. As a long-term perspective Russia would like to colonize its neighbors and enlarge the zone of its influence.”² Expert E. Abdullayev from Uzbekistan believes that “cooperation with Russia should not be interpreted in terms of integration. There will be no former union or an analogue of the European Union in the post-Soviet area in the near future.”³

Experts V. Paramonov and A. Stokov, also from Uzbekistan, gave their own, rather interesting view: “The main institutions of integration in the post-Soviet area – EurAsEC and CSTO face the prospect of becoming sort of legal successors of the CIS to ensure the final stage of the ‘civilized divorce,’ and also actors in the death of integration in the post-Soviet area. In turn, the SCO will, most likely, play the role of one of the instruments to promote China’s interests in Central Asia and Russia. China should be especially interested in a monopoly access to the region...”⁴

In Kyrgyzstan there are both supporters and opponents of the Eurasian project. For instance, Assistant professor of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slav University M. Suyunbayev believes that “Kyrgyzstan well

realizes the importance of the integration project at least because about one million of labor migrants from this republic work in Russia and Kazakhstan. Integration can give Kyrgyzstan such concrete benefits as free movement of commodities and services, lower influence of Chinese expansion, and greater energy security.”⁵

Journalist A. Gladilov emphasizes that for Russia Kyrgyzstan is not only a traditional sphere of influence, but one of the major elements of its own security system, taking into account the transparency of borders, visa-free regime, and simple procedure of getting Russian citizenship by people from Kyrgyzstan. To boot, there are broad economic ties, favorable regime of supplying fuel-and-energy carriers, and hundreds of thousands of guest workers who are freely remitting to Kyrgyzstan millions of dollars earned by them annually.⁶

Their opponent, the head of the Foundation of economic research A. Beshimov maintains that the Customs Union is “a political product with weak economic argumentation.” In his words, “if Kyrgyzstan joining this organization is viewed as another political unit and a possibility of Tajikistan joining it (which has no common borders with the Customs Union member-countries), then the economic component will not be taken into account”.⁷

Kyrgyzstan should observe the general rules of macro-economic regulation, which went into force in the Customs Union in 2013; budget deficit should not exceed three percent of the GDP, state debt – 50 percent of the GDP, inflation should not be higher than the lowest index among all countries by five percent.⁸

Probably, taking into account all these difficulties, the vice premier of the government of Kazakhstan K. Kelimbetov in an interview to the “Interfax-Kazakhstan” News Agency supposed that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan would not be able to join the Customs Union

so far. They are still at the initial stage of negotiations on entry into the organization.”⁹

The discussion of the subject of the Customs Union inevitably entails a wider problem of participation of Central Asian countries in integration projects offered by different international actors. It should be noted that there is an objective need for regional integration conditioned by territorial community, closeness of communication lines, basic and leading branches of the economy, and the need for joint exploitation of water and energy objects. During the post-Soviet period Central Asia has turned into a virtual region (there are no economic ties between states, different political systems and opposite foreign-policy vectors have been formed, water and energy conflicts between neighboring countries do not stop, mass outflow of population continues, etc.).

The virtual character of the Central Asian community is also shown by the fact that from 1994 there have been repeated attempts to introduce intraregional integration; a number of functioning integration structures have been formed, namely, the Central Asian Union, Central Asian Economic Community, and finally Central Asian Cooperation Organization, but all of them proved abortive.

In the view of expert H. Inomzhonov, “the main reason for failures in the institutionalization of regional cooperation lay in that the post-Soviet states of Central Asia were unable to integrate interstate institutionalized cooperation in the formation process of their own statehood.”¹⁰

The struggle for regional leadership between the rulers of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has become an independent factor preventing the implementation of a coordinated course to integration. “Competition between foreign-policy initiatives and rivalry between the

ruling political circles of these countries also create considerable obstacles in the way to developing regional integration.”¹¹

From our point of view, these attempts have proved the unfeasibility of regional Central Asian integration without resorting to a “third force,” whose role is played by the Islamic Conference countries, the European Union, the United States, China and Russia. Accordingly, each of them offers its own integration model: the Islamist one offered by the Islamic Conference countries presupposes the complete political Islamization of the region; resource model in which the European Union countries are interested; transit model satisfying the interests of the Asia-Pacific regional countries, above all China; strategic model complying with the interests of the United States; and traditional model based on multilateral historical ties with Russia.

The interests of all these actors in Central Asia are known well enough, but integration preferences of the Central Asian elites require special analysis.

One of the latest non-Russian integration initiatives was the setting up of the Council of cooperation of Turkic-language states in October 2011, a new association, analogue of the “Turkic-language” European Union, which included Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The preamble to the Declaration of the Council declares that “it will develop relations and strengthen solidarity of the Turkic-language states on the basis of common history, the language, original features and culture, and its main aim is to strengthen regional and international cooperation in the Eurasian region on the basis of the solidarity of the Turkic-language states.” It should be noted that the “Turkic world (as an alternative to the “Russian world”) is defined as a historical and interstate association based on a common language and culture and ideas of blood relation. It is this community that is actively promoted by representatives of anti-Russian elites.

Tajikistan is not related to the Turkic-language countries, but Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan declined to join this association. Why? An answer to this question can be provided on the basis of an analysis of political documents and basic legislative acts determining the most important spheres of international cooperation and permissible limits of the presence of international actors.

In the conditions of competition between integration models the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov said: “We are fully aware of the fact that along with the further development of globalization integration processes acquire great importance, for they remove border and customs barriers along the way of trade-economic and investments ties of states...But despite the evidence of these processes, they may go beyond the boundaries of the economy and acquire a political tint and essence...Proceeding from these considerations we shall determine our policy toward the formation of and entry of Uzbekistan into intergovernmental associations and alliances.”¹² It follows from these words that political independence (sovereignty) for Uzbekistan is a priority.

Expert analyst Y. Yusupov, following Uzbekistan’s President, states: “Any economic integration is better than its absence. Economic integration gives an opportunity to all participants in it to get additional benefits in the form of increased competition within national economies, in finding its own ‘niches’ in the international division of labor, and broader sale markets for national producers manufacturing competitive commodities. Russia will only gain from such pragmatic integration with its neighbors. Another question: do all its neighbors need integration precisely with the Russian Federation?”¹³

What integration model is preferable for Uzbekistan becomes clear from President Karimov’s speech at the 48th session of the UN General Assembly. “Uzbekistan can reach a high position in culture,

science, technology and economy by all indices and become an integration center in Central Asia... Our republic could be a springboard for interaction of the OSCE and UN in ensuring regional security and cooperation and preventing conflicts”.¹⁴

Inasmuch as the regional leader status is one of the top priorities for Uzbekistan, participation in integration associations is regarded by it as a mechanism for reaching its goal.

One thing is clear, namely, that the model of regional integration offered by Russia has caused doubts in Uzbekistan, which resulted in suspension of its activity in the CSTO on June 28, 2012. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Central and South Asia R. Blake called Uzbekistan the most important partner of the United States in the Afghan operation in the region.

In contrast to Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan does not claim regional leadership and refuses from participation in integration processes, maintaining the status of permanent neutrality which was proclaimed by its first ruler S. Niyazov (Turkmenbashi). The Military doctrine of independent and constantly neutral Turkmenistan adopted under the present rule of G. Berdymukhamedov includes refusal to participate in military blocs and alliances, interstate associations with strict commitments presupposing collective responsibility of participants, refusal from political or any other steps which could lead to war or military conflict, ban on deployment of foreign military bases on its territory, and ban on transportation through its territory of arms or the armed forces of any states to third countries.

In contrast to Turkmenistan, Tajikistan proclaims the principle of active participation in “the coalition of countries waging a struggle against international terrorism and extremism, welcomes collective efforts in the sphere of regional and global security, and recognizes the need, based on international agreements, to cooperate effectively with

other states and international organizations whose task is the fight against terrorism and extremism.

The influence of the situation in Central Asia on the position of Tajikistan is recognized by the Concept of the Republic of Tajikistan on the struggle against terrorism and extremism: it says, among other things, that “at present Central Asia after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. has become a region of the redivision of the spheres of influence. In turn, using the economic and political crisis of this region extremist movements, organized criminal groupings and drug production and trafficking business, have stepped up their activities and are merging with international terrorism and extremism. In mapping out Tajikistan’s position on opposing these threats, the Concept notes that the struggle against terrorism and extremism is a component part of ensuring security not only of Tajikistan, but the entire world community. This is why the question of deployment of a U.S. military base on the territory of Tajikistan and the use of Tajik airfields for refueling U.S. military transport planes has repeatedly been examined by the Tajik authorities.”¹⁵

Kyrgyzstan is a state which legally allows the military presence of a foreign country on its territory (there are military bases of the United States and Russia).

The Concept of national security of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan emphasizes that it is striving for “demonopolization” of foreign-policy priorities, diversification of ties with partners, and equal distance from global political leader-countries. For this purpose Kyrgyzstan pursues a many-vector, balanced and pragmatic foreign policy aimed at forming conditions for the realization of the national development priorities and ensuring national security.

Kyrgyzstan’s choice of a many-vector strategy is prompted by calculations to secure a constant replenishment of financial and material

means, mainly at the expense of new credits and grants, privileges and preferences.

It should be noted that in June 2013 Kyrgyzstan's parliament adopted a decision, and its President A. Atambayev signed a Law on denunciation of an agreement with the United States about the Center of transit transportation and its removal from Kyrgyz territory in 2014. However, it can be assumed that the United States will do everything in its power to preserve its military presence in Kyrgyzstan even after the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian participant in the Customs Union which is oriented to promotion of its interests in the Central Asian region and in the entire world. In its Strategy of national security it is said that among the important elements of its realization is the republic's participation in such organizations as CIS, SCO and CSTO. Kazakhstan also highly values the long-term and all-round cooperation with the Russian Federation and the development and strengthening of friendly relations with China. At the same time one of the key issues of ensuring Kazakhstan's security is the development of intensive cooperation with the United States in various spheres, notably, military cooperation. In August 2012 the then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called Kazakhstan "a strategic partner of the United States in a dialogue".¹⁶

As is known, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have individually been invited by the United States to participate in the NATO program "Partnership for Peace," which gives the right to take part in NATO military exercises. The United States has also promised to increase the financing of American – Central Asian cooperation in the military sphere annually.

One of the variants of its interpretation of national security is offered in a Statement of the "Foundation for Progress" of Kyrgyzstan.

It says, in part: “We are sure that the presence of foreign military bases and military objects is a form of disguised annexation of a country and undermines its sovereignty.” The Foundation calls on President A. Atanbayev of Kyrgyzstan to initiate the elaboration of a New Concept of national security, which will envisage impermissibility of granting the republic’s territory for deployment of military bases and military objects of foreign countries. This premise should be included in the new Constitution. After that bilateral political consultations should be started on withdrawal of the U.S. air base and the Russian air base, as well as other military objects from Kyrgyzstan’s territory. Without this it would not be possible to talk of ensuring genuine independence of the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁷

It should be noted that Islamic countries are increasing its influence on Kyrgyzstan, primarily through the opening of Islamic centers, public foundations and associations, and construction of mosques and prayer-houses. Turkey is especially active in this respect.

Such organizations as “Suleimania,” “Jamaat Tabligi,” “Khizb ut-Tahrir,” and others continue to bolster up their positions in Kyrgyzstan. They draw to their ranks government officials, employees of the special services and law-enforcement agencies, big businessmen, and parliamentarians. Mention should be made of the distribution of Islamic banking. In 2007 a law was adopted in Kyrgyzstan on bank operations based on the Islamic principles of financing.

A question arises as to why a definite part of the elite community of Central Asian countries insistently opposes the idea of the Eurasian alliance whose potential is greater than the potential of other integration models.

Some experts believe that the integration attempts are retarded or thwarted by those who should contribute to and help them, namely, the

national elites who have tasted undivided power and do not wish to share it with anybody even in the name of high national interests.

Such are reasons and conclusions followed from discussions among the political and expert elites in Central Asian countries on the subject of Eurasian integration.

Notes

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PARTICIPATION OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES IN SUPPLYING U.S. TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

Formation of Northern distribution Network

In 2009 the NDP was commissioned on the basis of a series of intergovernmental agreements signed as a result of the active work of American diplomacy. The network represents a system of transport corridors used for supplying the grouping of the U.S. armed forces in Afghanistan through countries to the north of the theater of military hostilities. It includes communication lines of the Baltic countries, Russia, Central Asia, as well as Turkey and the Caucasus. The network considerably facilitates solution of the military tasks of Washington in

Afghanistan. As to the transit republics of Central Asia, it meant a new stage of cooperation with the United States. The consequences of turning the region into a sort of a rear base of the U.S. military operations require proper attention from the point of view of the long-term interests of Russia in Central Asia.

In the conditions of an unfavorable financial and economic situation and considerable reputational losses, the key task of the United States as proclaimed by President Barack Obama was the completion of the expensive and unpopular campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Its solution presupposed a curtailment of the American military presence in these countries, on the one hand, and on the other, the establishment of loyal ruling regimes capable, with western help, to ensure an acceptable security level and guarantee observance of the long-term interests of Washington in the form of access to oil and military bases. In February 2009, President Obama announced the withdrawal of the main U.S. forces from Iraq before the end of 2011 and stage-by-stage transfer of responsibility for security to the local forces of law and order. This proved feasible after a stabilization of the situation reached there, according to official estimates, in 2007–2008.

The experience gained in Iraq was planned to be transferred to Afghanistan. In July 2010 General D. Petraeus, who commanded the multinational forces in Iraq in 2007–2008, was appointed commander of the U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The new strategy in Afghanistan required a considerable increase of the flow of cargoes and optimization of logistics work in the U.S. armed forces. In December 2009 President Obama ordered dispatch to Afghanistan of another 30,000 servicemen with a view to bringing the total numerical strength of the American grouping there to 94,000, and the coalition forces – to 142,000.¹

At the same time, from the logistics point of view, delivery of cargoes to Afghanistan is difficult due to the country's geographic position, no access to the sea, mountain terrain, and climatic conditions, but most important, the absence of a developed infrastructure, and unsafe land communication routes. Another problem for the United States was the complete dependence of communication routes on Pakistan.

Offensive operations against the Taliban in these conditions were doubtful and prompted the U.S. command to look for alternative supply channels. The most convenient were in the north via the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, primarily Uzbekistan, where there was the necessary infrastructure from the time of the military operations of the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan in 1979–1989.

By the beginning of 2009 the opening of the northern routes of supplying the U.S. armed forces and the international forces under the aegis of NATO in Afghanistan became one of the foreign-policy priorities of the White House. A special working group was formed, which included diplomats and Pentagon officials, to conduct negotiations with the interested states. Agreements have been reached within a short time with most transit countries. An agreement with Russia was of key importance. In January 2009 General Petraeus visited Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The U.S. embassies in the region became more active and announced the American desire to buy a great quantity of accompanying non-military commodities.

As a result, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan agreed with and approved transit operations on their territory in February 2009, Azerbaijan – in March, Uzbekistan – in April, and Kyrgyzstan – in July, 2009. Georgia did it earlier (in 2005) and Russia – in 2008. The system of transport corridors through these countries was named the Northern Distribution

Network (NDN). As K.S. Dowd, supply director of the U.S. Central Command noted, this was more than a simple logistics initiative. In fact, it was an instrument of diplomacy.²

Routes and Volumes of Cargo Transportation by NDN

There are three main land routes operating within the NDN framework – Southern, Central and Eastern.

The first goes via Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Part of cargoes from U.S. bases in continental Europe and Iraq goes to Turkey on land. Shiftment on the Caspian Sea takes place in Baku (Azerbaijan) and Aktau (Kazakhstan).

The second corridor covers Baltic countries, Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The main part of cargoes is taken by railway from the port of Riga (Latvia), partly the port of Tallinn (Estonia) and the port of Klaipeda (Lithuania).

The third route also begins in the Baltic countries, passes through Russia and Kazakhstan, and then turns to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Cargoes are taken across these countries, which have no through railway system, by motor transport.

According to investigations carried out on order of the Soros Foundation in 2011–2012, the cargo flows of the NDN are divided between Central Asian countries in the following way: 100 percent of all cargoes of the three land routes are delivered to Kazakhstan from where about 80–90 percent are shipped by railway via Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. The remaining 10–20 percent are transported by highway-freighters via Uzbekistan or Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan., Turkmenistan with its neutral status does not participate in the NDN officially.³

In 2009 the Pentagon studied the possibility of using routes through Far Eastern regions of Russia and China, but the issue remained unresolved.

According to initial agreements with partner-countries, the NDN was supposed to be used for transporting different materials, engineering and transport equipment, reservoirs for water cleansing, food products, drinking water, etc.⁴

Such advantages as security, relative variety of materials and ways, as well as the desire of the U.S.A. to reduce its dependence on Pakistan prodded the White House to putting greater load on the NDN. In 2009, when the U.S. military logistics was reorganized in order to be used in the new system, the share of non-military cargoes delivered to Afghanistan by the NDN did not exceed 10 percent.⁵ However, in 2011, according to the December report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the share of the NDN grew to 40 percent of all rear logistics, having outstripped the Pakistan and air corridors (29 percent and 31 percent, respectively)⁶ According to the U.S. Department of State data, more than 58,000 containers of “general cargoes” were delivered by the beginning of 2012.⁷

The NDN acquired still greater importance at the end of 2011, after a sharp deterioration of relations between the United States and Pakistan. In answer to an American air raid which cost the life of several Pakistani servicemen, the Pakistani authorities have closed the port of Karachi and their land communication lines to the Pentagon, which were used at the time by up to 5,000 American trucks every month.⁸ Pakistan demanded public apology from the American administration and higher payment for transit of containers (from \$250 to \$5,000)⁹.

In July 2012, after the apology delivered by the then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Pakistan agreed to open its

infrastructure, but warned about stricter demands to cargo traffic. However, the two sides were unable to sign a new agreement on transit, and by the beginning of 2013, about 70 percent of all cargoes for Afghanistan were transported, as before, by the NDN, and the remaining 30 percent – directly on board U.S. and NATO planes.¹⁰

Problems of Cargo Transit by NDN

The NDN is four times longer than Pakistani communication lines and requires the crossing of four state borders, and sometimes the use of several types of transport, which considerably raises the cost of transportation. At Congress hearings in June 2012, the Pentagon chief L. Panetta assessed additional expenses caused by changing the traffic route from Pakistan to the NDN at \$100 million a month and asked the Congress an additional \$2.1 billion to cover them. By the beginning of 2012, the average cost of delivery of a 20-foot-long container by the NDN was \$17,500 as against \$7,200 a year earlier via Pakistan.¹¹ (Although it is considerably cheaper for the United States than air transportation, which costs \$40,000).¹² Since February 2011, Uzbekistan's railway lines charge for the delivery of one container to Afghanistan \$2,000¹³ For comparison's sake, the duty taken by Pakistan from one truck did not exceed \$250 previously.¹⁴ Moreover, with the beginning of withdrawal of the western contingent from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan has raised the railway tariff for cargoes going in a reverse direction by 50 percent at once¹⁵.

Another problem creating difficulties for the United States and NATO was large-scale and all-pervasive corruption which has repeatedly become a subject of discussions at the U.S. Congress. Bribes are widespread for speedily handling cargoes at customs and border points of Central Asia where great quantities of cargoes are kept. True,

certain American transport companies are involved in cargo and financial transactions not without benefits for themselves. According to information leaked from the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent in 2009, one of the biggest Uzbek commercial holdings “Zeromax” connected with Gulnara Karimova, the elder daughter of the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, set up a consortium with seven American firms for carrying on business in Afghan transit.¹⁶ As reported by the American “Harper’s Magazine,” the consortium included “FMN Logistics,”¹⁷ closely connected with Zeromax. This made it possible to curtail the time required for cargo deliveries across Uzbekistan by half¹⁸. “FMN Logistics” was founded in the United States specially for participating in the NDN by G. Yustas who headed the board of the American-Uzbek Trade-industrial Chamber in Tashkent, the body whose sponsor was the same Zeromax who lobbied the repeal of American sanctions against Uzbekistan.

The White House has undertaken a number of measures to draw means of international financial institutions and foreign donors for expanding the capacity of the NDN. The Asian Development Bank, in which large shares belong to the United States and Japan, has invested \$165 million in the construction of a railway line from Hairaton to Mazari-Sharif, connecting the Uzbek transport system with the principal city of Northern Afghanistan¹⁹. The construction of this 75-kilometer line was completed in November 2011. So far this line is used only for cargo transportation and is expected to increase the monthly goods turnover between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan from four thousand tons to up to 40,000 tons²⁰.

In August 2012 a Japanese international organization agreed to finance the electrification program of 465 kilometers of the Marokand – Karshi – Termez railway line, which cost \$330 million²¹. It had a priority over the competitive reconstruction project of the Tashkent

electric power plant, as it was recommended by the U.S. Embassy in a cable sent to the Department of State published in the WikiLeaks at the end of 2009, along with a request to influence proper organizations in Tokyo.²²

There are many difficulties for transport agents in Afghanistan itself. Several highways leading to Central Asia are out of order²³

Fuel Supply from Central Asia to Afghanistan

With the beginning of military operation in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq demand for oil products has grown sharply in the responsibility zone of the U.S. Central Command. The needs of the U.S. grouping increased from 40,000 gallons a day in 2002 to over 1.1 million gallons in 2009²⁴. The U.S. base Bagram was the main consumer of fuel in the northern and central parts of the country, whose daily requirements in the middle of 2010 were estimated at 500,000 gallons²⁵.

From 2007 the Central Command and the Defense Center of power supply of the U.S.A. began to transfer purchases of fuel and lubricants in Pakistan to Central Asia. By 2010 fuel supplies through the NDN grew from 30 to 70 percent in the total supply volume of the American grouping in Afghanistan²⁶.

Initially, the key role in fuel supply of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan has been played by Kyrgyzstan among all Central Asian countries. By 2009 the U.S. air base in the Bishkek “Manas” airport handled up to a third of all necessary fuel.²⁷ In 2009 fuel worth of \$230 million was bought for the needs of “Manas”²⁸.

The commissioning of the NDN at the beginning of 2009 allowed the Pentagon to increase transportation of fuel and lubricants

from Central Asia by land. From that time on, the role of the leader of supplying the American contingent in Afghanistan with oil products has been played by neutral Turkmenistan, which did not participate officially in the NDN.

In 2012 the United States earmarked \$820 million for purchasing Turkmen commodities, and the greater part of this money was spent on payment for fuel contracts. Thus, the rear expenditures in Turkmenistan in 2012 comprised 63 percent of all American purchases in Central Asia.²⁹ The main agent in purchases of Turkmen fuel and lubricants was the offshore company Red Star Enterprises, which became known for its involvement in the corruption scandals around the Kyrgyz “Manas” base.

The fact that the biggest purchases of fuel for Afghanistan are made by Americans in Turkmenistan, but not in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, can be explained by the scarcity of export possibilities of the latter due to high domestic requirements and a shortage of refineries. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are pure importers of mainly Russian fuel and lubricants. Fuel and lubricants’ supplies to Afghanistan have been organized with American assistance by the Turkmenbashi oil refinery with a capacity of about seven million tons of oil a year³⁰. Turkmenistan intends to supply Afghanistan with more fuel, which is shown by its plans to build an oil terminal capable to handle 540,000 tons in Yimamnazar, close to the border with Afghanistan by February 2015³¹.

Cooperation with the United States is viewed by Central Asian producers of fuel as a very promising field, despite the planned curtailment of the American military presence in Afghanistan. This is connected with the fact that the United States, apart from its own requirements, also pays for the purchases of fuel and lubricants for the Afghan national security forces. During the period

between 2007 and 2012 the United States earmarked \$1.1 billion for the purpose³². In 2013, the Pentagon asked the U.S. Congress to allocate an additional \$123 million. On the whole, the United States Command evaluates the requirements for fuel of the Afghan national army at \$555 million a year, on average, in the period from 2014 to 2018³³.

The growing domestic market of Afghanistan, which is still short of fuel, attracts Central Asian countries. By average estimates of the U.S. Department of State for October 2012, Turkmenistan accounts for 25 percent of fuel supply to Afghanistan, another quarter is supplied by Russia, and partly Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.³⁴ An additional source of supply of fuel and lubricants can be re-export from Tajikistan which expected to receive from Russia up to 450,000 tons of oil products duty-free in 2013³⁵.

On the whole, government officials in Kabul state that their country will be able to provide itself with energy carriers by 2015, and they place great hopes on the development of oil deposits in the Amudarya basin in the country's northern provinces by Chinese companies. However, Afghanistan will preserve the status of *net*-importer of oil products for a long time. High domestic demand connected with the western military presence and the U.S. financial assistance will draw suppliers from Central Asian countries.

Notes

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(To be concluded in the next issue)

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