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**RUSSIAN MUSLIMS: CALL FOR
CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION**

“I wouldn’t spend a drop of ink on these notes, if I doubted even for a minute the brilliant future of my Motherland and its Muslim community. I believe that sooner or later Russian Muslims reared by their country will stand at the head of intellectual progress and civilization of the rest of the Muslim ummah. Civilization born in the Orient has gradually been moving to the west until now, but at present it seems to have started to move east, and along its way the Russians and Russian Muslims will be its best guides. “I.B. Gasprinsky. Russian Muslims (essence of jadidism)”.

In one of the few articles devoted to the phenomenon of Russian Muslims our outstanding thinker Ismail-bei Gasprinsky noted that the Muslim population felt only an outward, formal connection with the Russian Empire. This connection is confined to duties and selfless service. But this is not enough. In his view, it is necessary that “these outward, official connections should acquire a deeper ethical character, should strengthen and become livelier not only due to its political

necessity, but also realization of its historic significance and usefulness. Russian Muslims should become convinced of the fact that Providence, having connected their destinies with the destinies of great Russia, opened before them broad vistas on the way to civilization, enlightenment and progress.”

This thought was formulated by Gasprinsky in 1881. This view of his put forward a more important question, namely: “What do Russian Muslims have what other Muslims do not have?”

Foreign-policy and ideological challenges force us to put forward the question as to what Russian Muslims really are. What is this ethno-confessional reality? What are its specific features? What can it give the world? What place in Russian social and political life does it take? How can it preserve its traditions and continuity? What threats does it face? And lastly: How important is it for the future of our Motherland – the Russian Federation?

In this article I use the words “Russian Muslims,” which is more correct than “Russian Islam.” The point is that Islam cannot be Russian, Arab, Tatar or Turkish. There is one, uniform Islam, inasmuch as it is the universal message given by Allah to all peoples. However, it is true that getting to a certain socio-cultural ground Islam adapts to it and gives original sprouts, as it were. But in this case we deal not with a special Islam, but with a special practice of Islam, or a special Muslim culture. We should not talk of “Russian Islam,” but we can talk of the existence of “Russian Muslims as a conglomerate of Muslim cultures on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Muslim cultures of Russia have certain specific feature of their own, which are connected with national history. I pay enough attention to the concept of Russian Muslims, that is, ideological construction, which would allow us to single out basic specific features of Russian Muslims and reveal their place in the context of modern socio-political,

philosophical and civilizational trends. In this lies the contextualization of this phenomenon. The concept of Russian Muslims is an answer to the question as to how these Muslims can survive in the present conditions without losing their identity. Inasmuch as contextualization has pride of place in this article, much attention is devoted to close geopolitical and ideological topics.

The article consists of seven parts. In the first I analyze the demographic situation in modern Russia and give certain forecasts for future decades. There is a tendency of the growing role of Islam in Russian social life, which can lead to a crisis in Russian identity and its transformation.

In the second part I analyze the geopolitical and ideological context. I show how the world moves away from the unipolar model towards a multipolar one. The Eurasian area can become one of these poles with the core in the form of the Russian Federation. The Kremlin elite is guided by the proto-ideology of a neo-Eurasian type, whose components are protection of traditional values, traditional multiculturalism and moderate conservatism. These trends open broad opportunities to Russian Muslims.

In the third part I turn to the problem of correlation of Islam and ethnicity. I show that the Koran does not say anything about the need to renounce one's own ethnicity, or that ethnicity is of no importance. The spiritual road is only possible in the mainstream of ethnicity.

In the fourth part I turn to Russian Muslims as a social phenomenon and show that such formula is quite legitimate. I give as an example a brief analysis of Tatar Muslim culture.

In the fifth part I examine the concept of Russian Muslims and show that this concept can be part of a general neo-Eurasian trend proclaimed by the Kremlin elite; besides, I emphasize a special

conceptual closeness of Eurasian traditions and single out their basic features.

In the sixth part I briefly analyze the main challenges facing Russian Muslims, and pay special attention to the globalization process and the diktat of European ultraliberal values.

Finally, in the seventh part I sum up the results and pose the question about the role which Islam should play in Russian identity taking shape at present.

The solutions which I offer in this article are preliminary. As the title of the article says, this is a call for conceptualization and contextualization so any remarks and suggestions are welcome.

1. Demographic Context

Demography is the main factor of survival and historical viability of society.

In the last decades of the 20th century a demographic crisis and a sharp drop in the number of born Europeans were observed, which was one of the reasons for turning to mass immigration, including from Muslim countries. Low birthrate combined with a comparatively low mortality leads to gradual ageing and extinction of the white population, which will actually mean an inevitable transformation of the ethno-confessional structure of Europe and the growing role of the Muslim factor. The reasons for the demographic decline are many and varied, but the main one is the changes in the view on the family and childbirth, which are definitely based on the economic causes. The cult of the mini-family, solitary existence (the “Stockholm model”), economic emancipation of women, feminism and libertarianism, loss of religiousness, mass use of contraceptives, legalization of abortions, etc. all this leads to a demographic crisis, which causes an identity crisis due to immigration policy connected with economic considerations.

A no less complex situation is in Russia. In 1925 the summary birthrate was 6.8, whereas in 1990 it dropped to 1.2. Now the figure is 1.7, whereas it should be 2.1 for simple population reproduction.. The low birthrate in Russia, almost similar to that in Europe and the United States, is combined with high mortality rate, which is similar to that in Tropical Africa. To boot, Russia holds one of the leading places in the world in the number of abortions, although this index has been two times lower in the past decade. Low birthrate, high mortality rate and a great number of abortions have given rise to the phenomenon known in demographic literature as the “Russian cross,” that is, sizable depopulation. In the period between 1992 and 2005, the natural decrease of the population in Russia amounted to 11.2 million, that is, almost one million a year. In recent years this figure has diminished, but it is expected that birthrate will soon lag behind mortality rate. According to forecasts, by 2030 the natural decline of the population will be about 11 million.

The most probable future of Russia is examined in an authoritative report of the UN “Russia Facing Demographic Challenges” (2008).

With the preservation of the present demographic tendencies by 2050 the population of Russia will drop to 116 million; the country will move from 9th to 14th place in the world rating: it will take place below Ethiopia, Congo, the Philippines and Mexico. The age structure will also change considerably: by 2025 the able-bodied population will lose 14 million people, there will be five million more pensioners. During that period there will be 822 unemployable persons per each thousand of those working.

According to recent statistics, the depopulation processes have the strongest effect on ethnic Russians, who are the backbone of Russian nationhood. Certain experts believe that the expected

depopulation by 2025 will touch 85–90 percent of Russians, which will result in a decrease of their share to 60–70 percent; there is also a forecast, according to which the share of Russians in the country will amount to 46.5 percent. Supposedly, it will be accompanied by low birthrate precisely among the Russian population, which will mean an essential change of the ethno-confessional structure. We see already now how the image of Moscow is changing, and in the future these processes will go on more rapidly; suffice it to say that at the moment one-third of all births in Moscow is among migrants.

And so, let us sum up the above-mentioned tendencies.

First, during the past two decades mass depopulation has been taking place in Russia, which was due to low birthrate and high death rate.

Secondly, it affects the Russian people most of all.

Thirdly, depopulation will continue, which may lead to the further curtailment of the population and a change of its ethno-confessional structure (with a reduction of the share of Russians).

The above-said tendencies combine with a number of other tendencies, which allow us to speak of the growing role of the Muslim factor. I have in mind the immigration problem and regional specific features of demography.

One of the important premises of the “Concept of demographic policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025” is that the state regards the drawing of migrants as a major task in accordance with the requirement of the demographic and socio-economic development and with due account of the need for their social adaptation and integration. At present Russia is the world’s second in the absolute volume of immigration, after the United States. During the past two decades it has been possible to adjust somewhat the dynamics of the decline of the population. According to official data, during the period between 1992

and 2010 almost eight and a half million immigrants arrived in this country, but unofficial statistics gave other, more realistic figures – 15–18 million, that is, 10.5–12.7 percent of the population. It should be taken into account that high immigration leads to an essential transformation of social reality. According to the data for 2012, 91 percent of the entire migration surplus is accounted for the CIS countries; 63.5 percent of them – representatives of the Islamic republics (Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, partly Kazakhstan). This proportion will be preserved in the future, although on the whole a certain reduction of immigration is expected. One of the challenges facing Russia is integration of immigrants, especially those who have come here to stay permanently.

Another factor showing the growing role of Islam is connected with regional specificities of demography. The least favorable region in terms of demography is the Central Federal region, whereas the North Caucasian region is the most favorable one. From 2000 until 2012 its birthrate increased by 1.7 times. Experts note that the decline of the population is observed in regions with predominantly Russian population. Among demographic leaders are national republics with a low share of the Russian population, and also Tyumen region and Moscow where population surplus can be explained by immigration and high living standards. Baby-boom is expected in North Caucasian republics in the 2020s. Thus, we observe a situation in Russia similar to that in Europe, namely, Islamic people are distinguished by higher and more stable indices of birthrate, as well as by younger age structure. Connection between religious affiliation and summary birthrate coefficient is a well-known demographic fact.

Mass depopulation, decrease of the share of Russians, ageing of the population, immigration flows, and demographic growth of Muslim

peoples show that in the coming years the role of Islam in Russian social and spiritual life will increase. How great will these changes of the ethno-confessional structure be? It is difficult to give a definite answer. We do not have exact data about the numerical strength of the Muslim population. According to the 2002 population census, the number of the traditionally Muslim people of Russia was about 14.5 million, that is, about ten percent of the country's population. But there are more realistic figures – 18 to 20 million, or 14–15 percent. On the basis of these figures we could assess, somehow, the future of Russian Muslims. By 2030 the number of Muslims will grow by three percent. I believe that taking into account immigration and depopulation of Russian citizens, the share of Muslims in Russia will reach 20 to 22 percent by 2030.

Thus, some 10–15 years later one of five inhabitants of Russia will be Muslim, and in Moscow this figure will be bigger.

These data require thorough conceptualization. I am sure that in several decades we shall have to deal with a new social reality in which the role of the Muslim factor will be much greater. I think that there can be a crisis of Russian identity, or at least its evolutionary transformation. It would be a grave mistake to ignore the existing tendencies and try to push Islam to periphery, thus giving an incentive to chauvinism and islamophobia. It would be much wiser to try to correct a policy and public opinion in accordance with the existing trends and thus contribute to an evolutionary and less painful change of social reality. In Russia this process will be simpler and less painful than in Europe where there are more talks of the crisis of identity. It is connected with the fact that Russian multiculturalism is more natural and has a longer history.

2. Geopolitical and Ideological Aspect

After the end of the Cold war the world has become unipolar, which has been reflected in the economic and value hegemony of the West headed by the United States. But in the early 1990s a slight trend toward multipolarity began to be observed. It became more pronounced at the beginning of this century. In 2001 the abbreviation BRIC was introduced, which was changed into BRICS in 2011 and included several economically promising countries. At present the BRICS population comprises 43 percent of the world population, and its GDP volume is 20 percent of the world's volume. There is no doubt that by 2050 the BRICS countries will dominate economically. However, there is no clear idea about their geopolitical perspective. It is presumed that a big scope of the BRICS countries' economies will enable them to transform economic growth into political influence. At present the BRICS bloc positions itself as an alternative to the western development model. Each country of the bloc has a unique political system and its geopolitical interests in the region. A uniform political platform for them in the spirit of the western concept of "liberal democracy" and "human rights" seems hardly probable, it is more possible that each country will form its own political agenda relying, on the one hand, on European tradition, and on the other, on their own civilizational specificities.

The economic growth of the BRICS countries is an earnest of the future multipolarity. Theorists of the multipolar world single out the most probable zones: western civilization, Eurasian civilization, Islamic civilization, Latin American civilization, Indian civilization, Pacific civilization, and African civilization.

It should be noted that the future regional division will be formed not only on the economic basis. Economics, and in particular the growth of the BRICS countries, is only a necessary prerequisite for

political, cultural, ideological and worldview demarcation. Theorists of multipolarity operate with the concept of “civilization,” which presupposes special type of economic management and unique culture, social organization, and worldview clichés. In essence, the point is an important notional transfer from the thesis of “universal values,” under which western values are meant formed within the framework of western tradition, to the thesis about specific features of each political and cultural oekumene.

On numerous examples we can see that mechanical transfer of western political institutions and value paradigms to other societies is fraught with social upheavals and great political problems.

Western values only seem simple and understandable, but in reality they are vague and indefinite. In what respect are Islamic ideas about “human rights” worse than European ideas? Why is European liberalism “liberal” toward any people, except Muslims, and in general except religious people? Why does “liberalization” mean pushing religiousness to periphery? The truth is that even modern western models are not consistent in everything.

It is interesting that the coming of the age of civilizational pluralism is felt and predicted by western ideologists themselves. It is important to note that along with the emergence of political realities and their perception of them their positions are gradually changing. Two cases in point are Francis Fukuyama and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

And so what the modern geopolitical context looks like. Evidently, we observe the growth of the economic might of the BRICS countries accompanied with broad civilizational identity of individual regions. We are now on the threshold of civilizational pluralism, which is recognized by leading western political analysts. The major task facing the local civilizational poles is to define one’s own place in the world order taking shape and the formation of the timely agenda

making it possible to map out ways for further progress with due account of cultural specifics.

If we turn to the ideological context we shall see that our political elite accepts these challenges, and this is why our country has taken a course recently aimed at the formation of an independent civilizational pole, which is connected with the integration process in the Eurasian area. It is said in the Constitution of the Russian Federation that our state does not have ideology, and this is why the course taken should be viewed as a general geopolitical and socio-economic orientation. This is not ideology, but a set of concepts and trends. I would characterize this course as “proto-ideology.” It has most fully been expressed in articles by President Putin and in a number of his speeches, especially the one in Valdai in 2013.

I shall try to sum up the essence of this new “proto-ideology.”

It can be characterized in the most general form as neo-Eurasianism on the basis of classical Eurasianism of the 1920s – 1930s. It is not a concrete detailed and consistent theory, but a number of concepts united by the assertion that in the formation of Russian identity a great role had been played by Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples. Westernizers were oriented to Europe, Slavophiles were oriented to Slav peoples, nationalists to Russian originality and byzantism, whereas Eurasianists proposed to look towards the East and deepen interaction with Turkic and Finno-Ugric peoples. The union of the Russian, Turkic and Finno-Ugric people living in the vast Eurasian area has formed, in the view of Eurasianists, a unique pattern of Eurasian civilization. Eurasianists advocated the independence of Russian/Eurasian civilization, civilizational pluralism and multiformity, as well as the leading role of Orthodox Christianity in the spiritual life of peoples, although other Eurasian traditions (Islam,

Buddhism, Tengriism, etc.) were regarded close to Orthodox Christianity, as potential Orthodox Christianity.

The form of neo-Eurasianism, which has become widespread among our political elite, preserves many tenets of classical Eurasianists. Citing one of the predecessors of Eurasianists, philosopher Konstantin Leontyev, President Putin asserts that Russia “has always developed as a ‘blossoming complex,’ as a ‘state-civilization,’ and “it is from the model of state-civilization that the specific features of our state structure originate. It has always been striving to take into account the national and religious specific features of some and other territories, ensuring multiformity in unity. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions are an inalienable part of identity and historical heritage of Russia in the present life of its citizens.”

Just as classical Eurasianists, President Putin favors civilizational pluralism and multipolarity of the world. Putin says that the unipolar world does not need sovereign states, it needs vassals. Historically, it is renunciation of one’s own image, of the multiformity of the world.

The meaning of integration in the Eurasian area is to contribute to the creation of one of civilizational poles, while preserving cultural wealth and diversity. The 21st century promises to be an age of great changes, and an epoch of the formation of big geopolitical, financial-economic, cultural, civilizational and military-political continents. This is why our absolute priority is close integration with neighbors. The future Eurasian economic union of which we have been talking recently, is also a project of preservation of identity of peoples, historical Eurasian area in the new century and in the new world. Eurasian integration is a good chance for the entire post-Soviet area to become an independent center of global development, but not a periphery for Europe or Asia. This integration will be built on the principle of diversity. It will be an association in which each member

will preserve its image, originality, and its political subjectness. We shall consistently implement this project along with our partners and we believe that it will be our joint contribution to the preservation of diversity and stability of world development.

In contrast to classical Eurasianists, Putin does not give priority to Orthodox Christianity, but acts within the framework of the idea about the four religions traditional for Russian civilization (Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism). Orthodox Christianity will continue to play the leading role in the spiritual life of Russian citizens, but it will not play the exceptional and privileged role. The President of Russia sees his country's prospects in deeper interconfessional and intercultural actions, in peaceful coexistence, Eurasian spiritual traditions and cultures formed by them.

Another important thesis of Putin is connected with the sphere of morality and religiousness. His criticism is aimed not at religious traditions, but at the degenerated sphere of morality, post-modernist relativization of morality, at the ousting of religiousness from society's life. Putin notes that many Euro-Atlantic countries have actually taken the road of renunciation of their roots, including Christian values forming the basis of western civilization. Ethical foundations and traditional identity: national, cultural, religious, or even gender are denied. People in many European countries are ashamed or afraid of speaking of their religious affiliation. This is a direct road to degradation and primitivization, and to a profound demographic and moral crisis.

Further on, Putin spoke in favor of traditional values contained in Christianity and other world religions.

There is a thesis in Putin's Eurasianism, which is no less important. Putin stands for the preservation of traditional values within the format of secular society which opens broad vistas to the existence

and activity of four traditional confessions. Such format of Russian / Eurasian civilization makes it possible to adhere to moral and spiritual principles in everyday life. This is conservatism, but not radical conservatism, not Wahhabi fundamentalism or Protestant sectarianism. This is moderate conservatism, which allows all to live in peace with representatives of other confessions and with secular people. It allows them to take part in public life, be members of democratic society and take part in elections. This is a unique combination of sound European democratism, technical progress, education and moral conservatism with equal rights of the four leading confessions and all cultures.

In analyzing the neo-Eurasian orientation of the Kremlin elite I examined, above all, the passage that Russia, along with its Eurasian partners, should create a separate civilizational pole in the multipolar world, and civilizational pluralism, which will make it possible to form its own agenda in the ideological sphere. At present we can observe the sprouts of this new ideology, which include antiglobalism, traditional multiculturalism, protection of traditional values, and moderate conservatism. In my view, this picture will satisfy Muslims. Russian Muslims can and must make their contribution to the development of Eurasian civilization and the formation of new identity.

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

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**INTERACTION OF THE STATE AND MUSLIM
RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS IN SOCIAL
AND POLITICAL REALITY FACING CHALLENGES
TO RUSSIA'S IDENTITY**

Looking into the essence of turning points in human history one can notice that it demonstrates more and more precedents of dramatic struggle for collective entities and social relations connected with them. Quite a few of them reach a degree when, using the language of Plato, “all are at war with all in social life and in private life, and each is at war with himself.”

A serious struggle is unfolding in the globalized world for the resource of religious convictions, which seem to have left the international political scene, and for the use of theological arguments in political discussions. Cases of turning to religiousness in the West show not so much its return as its use for legitimation of political power. In the view of some experts, theology is reviving as the initial point for radical politics. Experts also describe new constellations in ideology and politics of post-secular society. Globalization compels the national state, which is losing many of its characteristic features, to open the door to cooperation with religious associations. Globalization poses powerful challenges to many societies organized as states, which create bifurcational processes for entire countries and nations. Being a new “megatrend” touching on all spheres of society’s life, and also the identity of groups and individuals, globalization finds itself in opposition to the desire to preserve the

identity of all – people, religions, states and civilizations. Religion reacts to this by more actively playing the role of a subject of politics, and in the epoch of globalization and the crisis of state institutions, religion and the church succeed in articulating more convincingly moral impulses and solidarity intuition.

Religion possessing a political function is able to influence the formation of worldviews of people, including persons adopting political decisions and through this to change political behavior and political culture.

Influencing the elaboration and adoption of political decisions religion realizes its political subjectness. Experts also point to its ability to influence state (political) ideology. Thus, entering the structure of a political system and eliminating the traditional forms of political solidarities religion plays a practical role in the political process. Although supreme religious figures – Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the head of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation sheikh mufti Ravil Gainutdin emphasize their non-involvement in public politics, there has been a conservative-traditionalist turn in Russian politics, which coincided with the political discourse of Eurasian conservatism and the readiness of the Russian Orthodox Church to be not only an element of tradition in the life of modern Russia, but also the active ideological center producing conservative ideology and even political decisions, and with the Eurasian initiatives of the Spiritual Board of Muslims bearing an obvious political context. All this evidently characterize the new state of interaction of the state, ruling elites and religious organizations, and participation of religious associations in creating social and political reality in the country.

Spectacular changes have taken place among the subjects of the building of the nation. Many parties have moved away from the

“frontline” of nation-building. As to the intelligentsia, it has split into two and formed two elite fragments. The first – functional – is oriented to “intellectual backing of practical actions undertaken by the political elites, to predicting the consequences of this action, its legitimation (or deligitimation), etc.,” and the second – reflective, whose representatives are not oriented to direct practical action with a definite result, but is free to experiment in the entire cultural area.

There is no hope that Russian business will be able to generate moral values on which the political nation could be based. First, the oligarchic structures are now separated from their people, and secondly, they have been warned against participation in domestic political activity, especially at the federal level, so strictly that it would take much time before they could recover from those “preventive measures.”

Certain experts attach a place of importance to the Russian Orthodox Church, this social actor with a very high rating of trust among participants in Russian nation-building.

The Russian Orthodox Church regards itself a mouthpiece of the aspirations of millions of Russian and an influential organization with political positions in society, and it claims greater intensity of close ties with the sacral and national realm. The ideological surrounding of Ravil Gainutdin is also ready to claim the role of an equal subject of the formation of national-state identity.

We should be ready to refer religious organizations and different confessions to the second – after the state – element in the institutional hierarchy of the political system of society.

Today, when the correlation of modernization and tradition has changed and the victory of innovation over tradition is not considered an important feature of modernization, on the contrary, it became clear that it needs support on tradition, inasmuch as traditional symbols and

forms of leadership can become a vitally important part of the value system on which modernization is based, the principles of “non-catching-up” modernization and development on the basis of their own identity, their own culture and traditions and customs formulated by non-western countries do not seem archaic, as it has always been presented by liberal interpretation.

It is believed that most modern crises have become possible when the “epoch of ideals was replaced by the epoch of interests,” with the coming of the neoliberal project of globalization implemented, primarily by the United States under the guise of multicultural declarations. Samuel Huntington, who proclaimed America becoming the world and the world becoming America, connected the result of the choice of identity by Americans themselves not only with the destiny of their nation, but with the destiny of the entire world. This is an open hint on the potential of influence of the world hegemon moving (or completely destroying in case of opposition) other cultural nuclei of national identity of state and civilizational communities, unwelcome from the point of view of philosophical concepts and political interests of the United States.

The aggressive promotion of values of one culture in line with the dominant political orientations and to the detriment of values of another culture, neglect by some states of the interests of other states violate the balance of cultural and civilizational diversity as the very foundation of the existence of states and nations in the world community.

The policy of identity, which should allow, apart from states, religious organizations and associations as a subject of state nationalities policy to take part in it, is an answer to the specific global challenge to national identity, which presupposes the presence of strategy and the value foundation of the development of a country.

The problem of the preservation and strengthening of one's identity is a crucial one for Muslim countries. This is shown, among other things, by the fact that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hasan Rouhani began his speech at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (September 17, 2013) with the words: "Our world is full of fear and hopes: fear of war and hostile regional and international relations, fear of deadly clashes between religious, tribal and national identities." Speaking of fear which society comes across, the President of Iran meant threats to many states which are weaker than the West.

His statement well corresponds to the discourse of President Putin of the Russian Federation, who two days later, at the 10th conference of the international club "Valdai" (September 19, 2013), also confirmed the importance to all countries of a search for new strategic approaches to the preservation of their identity, especially in view of numerous attempts to return to the unipolar model of the world, which undermines national sovereignty. Vladimir Putin said: "Such unipolar world does not need sovereign states, but it needs vassals."

Quite a few Euro-Atlantic states in their denial of ethical values and traditional identity – national, cultural, religious and gender, and values cherished by Christianity and other world religions – have come close to the boundary beyond which inevitably comes the loss of human dignity and profound demographic and moral crisis. Russia should avoid all this because in its model of a state-civilization it has always been striving to use flexible approaches to national and religious specifics of its population. As President Putin emphasized, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions are an inalienable part of the identity and historical heritage of the country and modern life of its citizens.

The combination of the Muslim component with other confessional identifications of Russia is quite natural, in our view. Our country is inhabited by the biggest number of Muslims among all European countries. President Putin has been the first to officially recognize that Russia is also a Muslim country. Speaking at a meeting of the Chechen parliament in December 2005, he stated that Russia had always been the most loyal and consistent defender of Islam. And he repeated this thesis at a gala meeting in Ufa in October 2013 devoted to the 225th anniversary of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia. He said that “Islam is a bright element of the Russian cultural code.” This position is reflected in the domestic and foreign policy of the country and can be seen in its bilateral relations with Muslim states, as well as its participation in the affairs of the Islamic Cooperation Organization where Russia has the status of observer.

It can be said that community of Russia and the Muslim world has been prompted not only by their cultural affinity, but also by the challenges from the West. In our view, the similar features in their reaction to the challenges of the western world will make it possible to come closer to understanding the specific features of the national identity of Muslim countries and Russia, which have today similar or identical positions on many aspects of their national and political identification.

Russia has always been able to understand and value the wisdom of the East and pragmatism of the West. It is actively searching partners for closer cooperation in the non-Western world on the basis of spiritual constants and adherence to traditional standards and values inherent in it from the past. Among them are responsibility of the individual to society and the state (along with his rights), and religious ideals (in contrast to aggressive secularism in Europe). It was not accidental that timely problems of responsible self-consciousness of followers

of Abrahamic religions in the present epoch, as well as the place and role of Russian Muslims in social reality of Russia and the Eurasian area being formed were included in the agenda of the 10th International Muslim forum “Mission of religion and responsibility of its followers before the challenges of our time” (December 10–12, 2014, Moscow).

As it was said by Ravil Gainutdin, Chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation and Head of the Council of muftis of Russia, the identity of peoples and the historical Eurasian area correspond to the realities of Eurasian civilization, aspirations of Russian Muslims and the interests of the entire civil society. Further on he said that inasmuch as Eurasian integration is understood not only as an economic project, but also as a traditionalist one, it is possible – in the spirit of the early Eurasians – to talk of “the exodus to the East.”

The Islamic leader of Russia advocates protection of traditional values, ethical standards and spiritual principles contained in canons of world religions; productive cultural exchange between people of different religions; harmonious combination of the way of life of modern man with religious practice, which is contained in the tradition of moderate Islam as “the medial path.”

The Russian Muslims are part of the uniform Muslim ummah and at the same time citizens of the Russian Federation. Speaking of this, the leader of Russian Muslims mentions their historic mission as the active defender of general Russian and Eurasian traditional values. In this he sees healthy conservatism inherent in Russian Muslims.

Conservative motivations of Muslim clergymen combined with value, traditionalist and socio-political prospects of Eurasian integration are represented in a broader form in a number of public texts. In our view, they are addressed to the ruling elites as a symbolic sign of the

readiness of the actors of Russian Muslims to the construction, jointly with the state, of Eurasian integration.

Damir Mukhetdinov, deputy chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation, in his article about Russian Muslims written specially for the opening of the International Muslim Forum called for adhering to moderate conservatism, inasmuch as it gives a wide scope to Muslims for activity in public life, enabling them to remain members of democratic society and take part in all election processes. Besides, moderate conservatism is a unique combination of sound European democratism, technical progress, education, and moral conservatism with the equal rights of the four leading confessions and small cultures.

Analysts assert that Russia's confrontation with western countries is not of a chance character. It shows, above all, that North Atlantic civilization is unwilling to recognize our country as an equal partner. For example, certain leaders of the Crimean Muslims have noticed that at the crucial moment of the history of the Crimean Tatar people connected with the Crimean plebiscite on joining Russia, they met with opposition from representatives of various sects, radical pseudo-Islamic movements, people with conflicting views and behavior in the Crimea, who were critical of and suspicious toward Russia. But most leaders of Muslim religious organizations, imams, representatives of Muslim public organizations and the mass media whom we approached maintain that the Crimea joining the Russian Federation strengthens the positions of the country's Muslim ummah. Returning to the subject of the International Muslim forum, we should mention the readiness of Russian and Eurasian Muslims for effective interaction with authorities of Russia. Authoritative Muslim (Sunna and Sh'ite) theologians, Eurasian scholars of Islam, high muftis of a number of European countries, who have not supported various sanctions adopted

by the United States and the European Union against Russia in 2014 due to its position on the Crimea, assessed numerous local and regional conflicts, and civil confrontations with the use of force as one of the major challenges of our epoch and a threat to mankind.

Within the framework of panel discussions at the forum and jointly with representatives of the Christian Orthodox, Judaist, Catholic and Protestant clergy, as well as Russian politicians and scholars, they discussed and reached agreement on a whole number of important positions. For instance, one of the summary documents of the forum admits that the existing challenges place humanity before serious trials, and to overcome them the countries of the historical Eurasian area should preserve their national, cultural and religious identity and strengthen the traditional system of values and institutions of national cohesion and solidarity.

Expressing the common opinion of the Forum delegates concerning the danger of the fundamental challenge of the “value and civilizational nature,” the leader of Russian Muslims Ravil Gainutdin confirmed his view by the thesis of the need to wage ideological struggle with ultraliberalism which attacks traditional values.

Similar views were expressed by the chairman of the Committee on education of the State Duma of the Russian Federation V. Nikonov, head of the “Russian World” foundation, who pointed to the common moral ideals drawing Russia, Russians and the Islamic world closer together, and who are supporters of cultural diversity and opponents of managing people from one center, which regards itself to be the chosen subject to dictate its will to all mankind. V. Nikonov highly assessed the fact that not a single Islamic state joined the sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States and the European Union.

The forum was attended by more than 500 participants from 20 countries of the world (Europe, Southeast Asia and China). In the

opinion of Academician E. Primakov, former prime minister of Russia and diplomat under whose patronage the “Russia – Islamic World” group was set up in 2006, the forum was a major event and the subjects it discussed were quite important for the world community.

On the initiative of sheikh Muhammad Yusuf the forum set up the permanent working body for preparation of the International Muslim forum as a permanently functioning platform for discussion and legally independent organization. The inaugural meeting of the forum, on the proposal of its Iranian participants will take place in Qatar in 2015. (Qatar is the venue of the headquarters of the World Union of Muslim scholars). And the next, 11th meeting will be held in Istanbul also in 2015.

A new international platform for discussions with headquarters in Moscow, for which the head of the Spiritual Board of Russian Muslims Ravil Gainutdin hopes, will make it possible for the Russian authorities to tackle such important task as rendering assistance to the “geopolitical alliance along the Moscow – Ankara – Tehran axis,” which may be formed with the participation of all sound-minded forces, those which will be able to use benefits for most Eurasian peoples from “turning Russia toward the East.”

It should be said that with due account of a special position of religious identity in the Russian hierarchy of identities, all post-Soviet regimes tried, to a certain degree, to use the ideological resource of religion.

The concept of “national identity” as a category of political practice and discourse becomes a useful instrument for Islamic leaders as agents of symbolic power. In the process of Russian national construction the political elites are often forced to turn to resource possibilities of religious institutions.

The proceedings of the 10th International Muslim forum demonstrated to its participants and observers a tangible impetus to stop and ponder over the close connection of national identity with the viability of the state and its “ability to answer the new challenges of history.” Unfortunately, the nation begins to reflect upon these things when it is faced with a threat to its future, or when, as it was emphasized by the Russian religious and political philosopher N. Berdiayev, when catastrophes and turning points become especially acute, and also when certain moments of world history dispose to historical and philosophical reflection concerning the present.

In the view of representatives of the Islamic intellectual and religious circles, the Muslim world and Russia, as its organic part are living today through such dramatic turning moment, when the problem of searching for ways to preserve one’s own national, cultural and religious identity and traditional social institutions takes an extremely acute form.

Russian Muslims present their answer to global challenges, which has nothing to do with radical Islamism, whose extremist forms are for all see. Less noticeable manifestations of this moderately conservative answer in the form of intellectual polemic and thoughts and feelings are all the more valuable.

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STRATEGIC COURSE OF DUSHANBE

Tajikistan is facing the threat of political and social instability, which is associated with a number of external and internal factors. Tension on the Tajik-Afghan border has increased dramatically. Conditions are created for the spread of radical Islam in the country because of the extreme poverty and lack of jobs. Increased attention of the United States to Tajikistan is an alarming factor, as it tends to use internal instability of individual countries for solving its own foreign policy objectives, as events in different parts of the world have shown in recent years.

Rapprochement with Moscow becomes the strategic direction of Dushanbe under these conditions, which is reflected in the strengthening of military-technical cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan, both on bilateral basis and within the framework of the CSTO, as well as the interest of the republic's leadership in integration within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEC).

President Emomali Rakhmon said in the autumn of 2014 that Tajikistan analyzed the economic base and the legal instruments of the Eurasian Economic Union and did not exclude accession to the Union¹. A special expert group under the President, which included representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic, as well as the Eurasian Economic Commission, is currently engaged in a comprehensive study of the implications of accession to EAES².

It should be noted that Tajikistan was part of the EEC, the EAEC is its legal successor, and, accordingly, has the experience of integration and communication in the post-Soviet area. More than 50 trade and

economic agreements have been signed during the existence of the Eurasian Economic Community with the participation of Tajikistan, and many of them have not lost their relevance so far. However, the membership of the republic in the EAEC, which implies a higher level of integration, is complicated by several factors. First, Tajikistan, just as Kyrgyzstan, is a WTO member, and this requires more work on the harmonization of its legislation with that of other EAEC member-states. Secondly, they are worried that the introduction of a single tariff regulation on the border with China will prevent the influx of cheap Chinese goods. According to official Chinese statistics, the Celestial Empire has become the main trade partner of Tajikistan, edging out Russia to second place. (Tajik Statistics assigns first place in the trade turnover of the republic to the Russian Federation, which indicates significant volumes of “shadow” imports from China that are not taken into account by the Tajik customs authorities). Thirdly, to date, contradictions on border issues between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have not been resolved prior to their entering the EAEC de facto.

It comes to border clashes that undermine relations between Bishkek and Dushanbe. In addition, the incomplete process of demarcation of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border complicates the situation in the common customs area of the EAEC. According to experts, significant funds (requested by Bishkek for resettlement of their customs borders) might be saved as a result of the creation of a single customs area of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, if Tajikistan joined the Customs Union and the EAEC concurrently with Kyrgyzstan (its accession to the Union is scheduled for May of this year).

Tajik experts include a significant expansion of the market for the sale of local products in a number of benefits that the country can get from joining the EAEC. In particular, they note that Tajik farmers have considerably increased export of their products to the Russian

market due to the introduction of restrictions on the supply of products of European farmers³.

In the future, they could use this niche for themselves. In addition, the removal of tariff barriers under the EAEC may contribute to the development and competitiveness of these sectors of the Tajik economy, as mining, and livestock and cotton farming. Investments from the EAEC countries in the Tajik economy may increase considerably in this case. In particular, Kazakhstan is interested in investing in the economy of Tajikistan, considering the existence of special economic zones in the country, where there are tax breaks and preferences. Finally, facilitation of labor migration would be particularly important for the republic. However, if accession to the EAEC is still at the stage of preliminary discussions, then military-technical cooperation between Moscow and Dushanbe has already been developing successfully. Russian military assistance is particularly important due to increasing threats from beyond the Tajik-Afghan border. The Tajik authorities are gravely concerned over the deteriorating situation on the Afghan border, which, according to Dushanbe, depends on the withdrawal of the main contingent of the international coalition forces from Afghanistan.

In early February this year, the heads of the law enforcement agencies made a statement about the accumulation of a considerable number of armed groups on the Afghan side of the river Pyanj. The Tajik military registered more than 100 violations of the Tajik-Afghan border in 2014. In December, militants took four Tajik border-guards hostage. Provocative raids of Afghan militants continued this year, despite the fact that Tajikistan improved its border protection last December⁴.

The total length of the Tajik-Afghan border is 1,344 km, this is 60 percent of the former Soviet-Afghan border. Currently, it is guarded

by 16 thousand border-guards, which is almost two times less than in Soviet times. In addition, Tajik border-guards have neither air support, nor modern security systems – technical support protection of the southern borders of the republic has considerably deteriorated after the departure of Russian border-guards in 2005. They believe in Dushanbe that the presence of the Russian 201st division in Tajikistan cannot fully protect the country from the provocative raids of the militants from beyond the Tajik-Afghan order.

It is estimated that it will take \$45 million for improving the Tajik-Afghan border. The CSTO member-states have assumed the obligations to help create a proper infrastructure along the Tajik-Afghan border: to build outposts and checkpoints, as well as the necessary technical facilities⁵. Tajikistan does a lot to strengthen the border by its own forces. Despite the country's economic problems, it has invested heavily in the construction of new border posts and the training of officers.

However, the decisions, taken in Sochi in 2013, have not been fully implemented. The existing situation is not to the liking of official Dushanbe. Certain Tajik experts on security issues express the official view, which boils down to the following: “If Russia and CSTO countries delay the fulfillment of their obligations, then Tajikistan is likely to be forced to seek support from other partners – China, India or the European Union”⁶. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan has once again raised the issue of providing full security assistance on the Tajik-Afghan border at the next summit of the heads of the CSTO member-states in Moscow in December 2014. The Russian President pointed to the other aspect of the Afghan issue: the priority is to establish and expand relations with the Afghan government, which should help normalize the situation as soon as possible in the region⁷.

The CSTO chairmanship was transferred from Russia to Tajikistan at the last summit.

The program of upgrading the armed forces of Tajikistan has been started, similar work is carried on with Kyrgyzstan. According to the Secretary General of the CSTO, “the armed forces should have modern weapons, military equipment and communications of the similar type and interoperability, particularly formations that are part of the Collective Forces of the CSTO.”⁸ The results of the working visit of the Russian Deputy Minister of Defense A. Antonov to Dushanbe last January showed the further development of cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan in the military sphere.

According to official information, the decisions taken by the Presidents of the two countries “have been aimed at increasing the combat capabilities of the armed forces of Tajikistan to counter the terrorist threat from Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the international coalition forces.”⁹ According to a Russian representative, the Defense Ministry of Russia “will do everything possible to make the armed forces of Tajikistan more powerful, skilled and better equipped with modern weapons and hardware.”¹⁰

There are conditions for growing social instability in the country, in addition to external threats, which take the form of radical Islamism in Muslim countries. Its breeding ground is the extreme poverty of the population, which covers up to 35 percent of the country, even according to official data. The lack of jobs is compounded by the return of hundreds of thousands of migrants from Russia as a result of the tightening of the Russian migration legislation. Experts do not exclude the possibility that part of former migrant workers can join extremist groups.

According to the World Bank, remittances of Tajik migrant workers in Russia are comparable to 50 percent of the GDP. Experts

believe that the remittances of Tajik citizens may be reduced from the current U.S. \$4 billion to U.S. \$2 billion as a result of depreciation of the ruble and the tightening of the rules of stay in Russia.¹¹ The anti-crisis plan is designed to reduce the negative effect in the country where priority is given to the creation of 200 thousand jobs. The calculation is made on the Chinese investment in the real economy. However, the feasibility of these plans is questionable as the involvement of Chinese labor is assumed under the terms of Tajik-Chinese agreements.

Increased attention to Tajikistan from Washington is causing concern in these conditions, inasmuch as the intensive actions of Washington are a threat to social and political stability in the area of the former Soviet Union. Two assistants Secretary of State visited Tajikistan at the end of the first week last February. These visits were associated with an attempt to warn the leaders of Tajikistan on “integration errors” and reflected Washington's concern about rapprochement of Dushanbe and Moscow in connection with charting a course toward integration into the format of the Eurasian Economic Union.¹²

The position of the West is reflected in the recommendations of the analysts of the British Center for Eurasian Strategic Investigation (CESI): “President Rahmon need to review the foreign policy and the further economic policy of Tajikistan to maintain stability in the country.” “Its stay in the zone of influence of Russia carries major risks for the political regime in Tajikistan, as well as for the overall security of the country”¹³.

Some experts connect the increased attention of Washington to Tajikistan with the parliamentary elections in the country scheduled for March of the current year. The main struggle for deputy mandates was between the ruling People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDP) and the Party of the Islamic Revival Party (IRP).

In previous elections, the PDP won 55 of 63 seats in the lower house of parliament, the Communists, the Party of Economic Development and the IRP got two parliamentary seats each. Three parties – Democratic, Socialist and Social Democratic – have never received enough votes to have at least one deputy mandat.¹⁴

The IRP has taken measures to increase its membership and the number of supporters at the expense of migrant workers from Russia, with whom the party leader M. Kabiri met regularly during this election campaign.¹⁵ The main trump card in the struggle for power of the main rival of the ruling party was the poor economic situation of the country and the plight of its ordinary citizens. The opposition is in solidarity with the government on the issue of possible accession to the Customs Union and the EAEC. According to M. Kabiri, “the gradual joining the Eurasian Union is in line with the aspirations and expectations of the Tajik people, which have a long history, culture and experience of coexisting with all the peoples living in Eurasia.”

Speaking at the second Kazan public forum “Eurasian Integration: Achievements and Challenges” in November 2014, M. Kabiri noted that the people of Tajikistan supported regional integration processes, according to recent polls. The opposition politician stressed the need to enhance cooperation between countries not only in the field of security to prevent the growing influence of Islamic radicalism. It was necessary to take a series of measures of a political, legal and cultural nature.¹⁶

Notes

- ¹ <http://berlek-nkp.com/tadzhikistan/3048-tadzhikistan-rassmatrivaet-...>
- ² http://asialive.info/2015/02/posol_rossii_vstuplenie_v_eaes_prineset_tadzhikistanu_
- ³ <http://berlek-nkp.com/tadzhikistan/3484-cgi-berlek-edinstvo-tadzhikistan-stal-...>
- ⁴ <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1422956700>
- ⁵ <http://berlek-nkp.c/main/1291-tadzhikistanu-neobhodima-dostatochno->

- 6 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1422956700>
7 <http://berlek-nkp.com/tadzhikistan/3627-cgi-berlek-edinstvo-obitogah-sammita...>
8 <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26795002>
9 <http://berlek-nkp.com/tadzhikistan/3868-v-dushanbe-svizitom-nahoditsya-...>
10 <http://rus.ozodi./content/article/26815607>
11 <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26827243.html>
12 <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26839788.html>
13 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1423196820>
14 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1423170360>
15 <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1419600540>
16 <http://www.regnum.ru/news/polit/1871254.html>

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**POLITICAL MODERNIZATION AND ISLAMIC
PARTIES: THORNY PATH TO NON-LIBERAL
DEMOCRACY**

The problem of the compatibility of Islam with the ideas of modern democracy is complex and difficult for comprehension. The views of experts and researchers on the subject are many and varied, sometimes they are poles apart. Two basic approaches can be seen in scientific literature. According to the first, Islamic democracy has already existed, but it differs from western democracy in some respects. The American political analyst F. Zacharia calls it “non-liberal democracy.” At the same time, as has been shown by developments in the past few years, the phenomenon of non-liberal democracy, relating to the modern political processes in the North African and Middle Eastern countries, is manifested in coming to power of the anti-democratic forces as a result of political modernization.

A number of Islamic experts and scholars adhere to another position. In the view of A. Filali-Ansary, the processes of modernization that have engulfed Islamic countries have exerted a strong influence on Islam and contributed to its reformation. The reform of Islam was called upon to purify religious feelings and deepen Muslims' faith.

New, reformed Islam can and must deal with socio-political problem, thus contributing to the political modernization of the entire Islamic society. However, Islam should in no way be the only mechanism for reforming society.

R. Gannushi, a religious and political figure in Tunisia, says that if democracy means a liberal model of state structure predominant in the West, a system in which people freely elect their representatives and leaders, a system in which state power is regularly changed and all human rights and freedoms are observed – such system cannot be called anti-Islamic. R. Gannushi is sure that Muslims can use democratic instruments because they do not contradict Islamic principles.

There is another approach among certain European experts, as well as a number of Islamic political figures, according to which the ideas of democracy and Islam are fully incompatible. In the view of E. Gellner, the incompatibility of Islamic and democratic values lies exclusively in transcendent and political spheres. The essence of the problem is that the basis of religion is faith which is irrational in its essence. As to such phenomenon as the transcendent, it can in no way be subjected to modernization. The values of Islam and democracy are utterly incompatible, the latter being deeply alien to the entire Muslim political tradition. S. Nasr, a well-known Iranian philosopher, holds the view that political modernization has weakened not only traditional Islamic institutions, but also the foundations of the initial Islamic tradition. Modernization has become reformation for Islam and it has

led to secularization and then a downfall of spirituality in the Islamic world. In the opinion of S. Nasr, the pressure, which modernization brings to bear on Islam, is destructive for religion. Thereby the idea is established that restoration of traditional Islam can be the best defense against modernization. The Iranian philosopher maintains that this restoration is only possible at the intellectual level. This is why it is religious tradition, but not modernization, that is the only way of moral and spiritual progress.

It should be noted that Muslims who have lived in West European countries for a long time hold different views on this problem. Thus, for example, representatives of the political elite of European Muslims believe that Islam does not oppose the ideas of liberalism. Moreover, they maintain that Islam should be integrated in the system of liberal values of Western Europe. In their view, modern Islam should be more flexible, which could help it to adapt to the ideas of western democracy. It should be noted that Islamic and democratic values are more compatible in Germany than elsewhere, which is shown by the fact that the first Islamic party representing the interests of its Muslim electorate has been officially registered there. Another group – Muslim Islamists adhering to orthodox views – is less numerous and believes that it is necessary to create a caliphate in Western Europe.

In our view, there are several factors which pose a threat to the development of liberal ideas in the Islamic medium, among them the processes of self-identification, which are taking place among Muslims on the religious basis, as well as the fact that Islam is an important source of political mobilization. The processes of political modernization in the Islamic world has been different and had specific features of one or another country. However, one common feature of political modernization can be singled out, which is characteristic of the

countries of the Islamic world, which have taken the road of democratic development. Political modernization as transfer to democracy has been accompanied in countries of North Africa, the Middle East, as well as modern Russia, with the growing activity of political and religious parties in the early 1990s. Thus, political modernization has become a factor of politicization of religion and contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon of non-liberal democracy. It should be noted that non-liberal democracy has both general and specific features in each country. Among the former we single out real or formally existing democratic institutions, however, their activity contributes to coming to power of fundamentalists. At the same time there is political and ethnoconfessional specificity in each country. For example, a specific feature of non-liberal democracy in Iran lies in the fact that the country is dominated by an authoritarian rule based on theocratic principles which can well be combined with the functioning of democratic institutions (president, parliament). After the 1979 revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of the secular regime of Shah Reza Pehlevi, the Islamic Republic of Iran based on Shariah laws was proclaimed. The central idea of Sharia lies in the strict observance of permissions and bans which should not be violated either by the authorities when adopting laws, or people in their everyday life. The Shariah laws regulate the economic, political, social and private life of a Muslim from the time of his birth to the moment of his death.

On the initiative of the spiritual leader of Muslims Ayatollah Khomeini the political party called “Party of the Islamic Republic” was created in Iran. The Shi’ite clergy formed the core and electorate of the party. Its main aim was the creation of the Islamic Republic. Ten years later, after it had fulfilled its mission, the party ceased its activity. It should be noted that the active formation of a party system has begun after the law on parties has gone into force. Despite the fact that there

are strong political traditions in Iran laid down by Imam Khomeini, moderate democratic reformers emerge on the country's political scene doing painstaking work. As a result, moderate democratic forces come to the fore to replace conservative Islamic parties. M. Khatami was a major Iranian reformer, who supported democratic transformations and was often compared with Mikhail Gorbachev in Russia. M. Khatami maintained that there are different forms of a democratic state. As to democracy, he interpreted it quite broadly saying that it could be a liberal or socialist system, or a system based on religious rules, norms and standards. A state based on Shariah laws can be democratic. M. Khatami was a supporter of precisely this form of Islamic democracy. In his view, in the modern world most democratic states suffer from the vacuum of spirituality. Islam as a wellspring of spirituality has all opportunities to combine democracy with a system of religious values. M. Khatami has twice won the elections and headed the moderate reformist movement which included parties combining liberal ideas and pragmatic elements.

There are conservative parties actively working in modern Iran, which stand for the preservation of the values of the Islamic revolution and state management under the guidance of the Shi'ite clergy. A peculiar feature of the confessional party construction in the Islamic Republic of Iran is that in place of a multiparty system, which existed at the very beginning of the revolutionary transformations in the country, a one-party system came to the fore, which some time later was again replaced with a multiparty system.

A peculiar feature of political modernization in such Middle East countries as Turkey, Syria, Tunisia and Egypt has been manifested as a result of a "western inoculation" of democracy, when part of the Islamic world has taken the road of democratic transformations. As

a result, the role and place of religion in the political sphere have somewhat been limited.

Secular parties have been formed in the political arena of these countries. As to Islamic parties, they have, as a rule, been in opposition to the ruling regime for quite some time.

At the beginning of the 21st century the situation in these countries qualitatively changed. At present the Islamic “Party of Justice and Development” is the ruling one in Turkey. This party has long been striving to rule the roost in the country. Its foundation is formed by the ideas of freedom and democracy. The party regards freedom as a guarantee of the country’s democratization. As to religion, it represents one of the most important social institutions of Turkish society, as its program notes. It should also be mentioned that the party leaders respect the principles of atheism, which allows non-believers to live quite comfortably, and enables citizens adhering to other religious views, to embrace their religious ideology quite freely. From this point of view atheism is regarded as a principle of freedom and social peace. The party program says that the “Party of Justice and Development” does not use sacred religious values and ethnic affiliation in its interests and political aims. At the same time, the party program ends with an appeal to Allah as inspirer and defender of building democratic Turkey.

It should be noted that the specificity of the modern political process in Turkey is distinguished, among other things, by the active confrontation of the ruling democratic Islamic “Party of Justice and Development” and the secular opposition “People’s Republican party.” For a long time military officers the leaders of the latter have been fighting for removing the Islamic Prime Minister R. Erdogan, the founder of the “Party of Justice and Development,” from power. In 2008 they tried to impose a ban on the activity of the ruling religious party by a court decision. In 2012 the leaders of the opposition

“People’s Republican party” again undertook an attempt to remove the Islamic Prime Minister from power, having accused him of treachery and lobbying interests of other countries. However, these attempts have failed. In turn the President of Turkey pursues a course aimed at completely removing the military establishment of the country from the political process. Thus, Turkey continues to remain a “split state” in the 21st century: on the one hand, it presents a secular model of state structure, and on the other, the country has not avoided retreat to traditional Islamic values.

At the beginning of the 21st century serious changes took place in the political system of Pakistan. In 2002 President P. Musharraf formed the Pakistan Muslim League. The program of the party had such an important aspect as the development of democratic ideas in Pakistan. Modern Pakistan should have a developed democratic culture and basic democratic values of the world expressed in commitments and policies pursued by the Pakistan Muslim League. The party program notes that transformations in Pakistan are only possible, provided a stable democratic process is going on in the country, which is connected with the activity of democratic institutions in all spheres of national life. The leaders of the league have time and again stated that the broadening and strengthening of democratic values and human rights is the basis of just and pluralistic Pakistan. It was also noted that one of the main obstacles to the country’s development and one of the reasons for poverty and misery is corruption. The Pakistan Muslim League announced priority aim to fight large-scale corruption in the country, for which purpose it was proposed to put the entire system of government organizations and departments under strict control. Education was also proclaimed to be a priority aim in the construction of new society. The party guaranteed free universal elementary education. One of the major tasks was to fight poverty. The party programmatic documents noted that more than fifty

million of Pakistani citizens live in abject poverty. This is why it is necessary to develop the agrarian sector of the economy, the agricultural infrastructure, expand agrarian business, and achieve higher living standards of farmers, agricultural laborers and their families.

The Pakistan Muslim League paid considerable attention to the protection of women's rights, and their participation in state construction. Articles discriminating women were removed from the country's legislation. Programs to protect women and girls from violence have been evolved. Saving the lives of women and children has been proclaimed a task of state importance, all the more so since maternal and infantile mortality is quite high in Pakistan. The Pakistan Muslim League has evolved a program of demographic policy. It notes, among other things, that demographic explosion is the main reason for unemployment, social upheavals, poverty and terrorism. This is why an important course of the new demographic policy is the development of family planning.

The party program for the first time included the premise on the rights of those Pakistanis who are not Muslims. It said that representatives of other religions have similar rights as Pakistani Muslims and have complete freedom of conscience.

In turn, the party recognizes their contribution to the development of the state.

However, the program of the Pakistan Islamic League repeated the main ideas of the "Pakistani People's party" founded in his time by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

After P. Musharraf had to resign, A. Zardari, one of the political leaders of the "Pakistani People's party," became President of Pakistan. This party held an important place on the political scene of the country. The political platform of the "Pakistani People's party" included a system of traditional Islamic values and orientation to the democratic

form of ruling the country. The main aim of the party was the creation of an egalitarian society in which all members should have equal opportunities to rule and have an access to material benefits.

The “Pakistani People’s party” has been organized for industrial, agricultural, and unskilled workers. It was noted that their interests were of priority importance for the party. The party Manifesto (in 2013) determined its main principles: Islam, democracy, social justice and tolerance toward all religions which allow all citizens to enjoy religious freedom. As to the economic sphere, a program has been worked out oriented to the most vulnerable members of society; it was supposed that they could be engaged in entrepreneurship. In the medical sphere programs have been evolved for medical service to the population and family and women support. The party devoted, and continues to do so, much attention to participation of women and young people in politics. It should be noted that there are more than 60 percent of young people up to thirty years of age in Pakistan’s population today.

Thanks to the efforts of the “Pakistani People’s party” a Young people’s parliament has been set up. The party deems it an important task to build a new, multiethnic, multireligious society which would be able to oppose extremist thinking.

A specific feature of the domestic political process in Pakistan is the fact that its political scene is dominated simultaneously by two actively functioning parties – “Pakistan Muslim League” and “Pakistani People’s party.” One party represents the interests of the military, and the other – civil persons. It should be mentioned that the creation and development of nonliberal democracy in Pakistan is conditioned, partly, by similar problems as in Turkey. The inability of Pakistan to develop stable democracy is connected, above all, with the active interference of high-ranking military officers in the domestic political process in the country.

In North Africa and in the Maghreb countries political modernization has exerted major influence on Islam and contributed to secularization of society.

In Tunisia, for example, a result of modernization was departure from religious model of the state and transfer to a democratic one. A democratic Constitution has been adopted in the country, whose premises in no way differed from the laws and rules of a number of European states. In the 1980s a Civil Code was adopted in the country, under which polygamy was officially banned, and women received equal rights with men, including the right to divorce. More than fifty percent of women received an opportunity to study at universities. Women could also serve in the armed forces. As a result of a number of social reforms, the Shariah courts were closed, and secular legal proceedings established.

However, in the 1990s Islamic organizations and parties began to grow in Tunisia, the “An-Nahda” party came out for the creation of an Islamic state. The government banned the activity of the party and its leader R. Gannushi was expelled from the country. It should be noted that in the 1990s the Tunisian leadership succeeded to integrate part of moderate Islamists in the state-political system: it offered well-known figures of the Islamic opposition several posts at the Higher Islamic Council and Socio-economic Council. On the initiative of the President of Tunisia, a “National pact” was signed which emphasized Tunisia’s belonging to Islamic civilization, but along with this, all democratic transformations were endorsed and confirmed, including the Civil Code. A multiparty system headed by the dominating secular party of “Constitutional-democratic Association” whose chairman was the country’s President Zin el-Abidin Ben Ali. It should be noted that Islamic parties were not represented in Tunisian parliament.

At the beginning of the 21st century a wave of Arab revolutions swept Tunisia. President Zin el-Abidin Ben Ali, who had stayed in power 23 years, was overthrown. Political reforms were introduced in the country, political prisoners were released, and the activity of more than one hundred political parties was allowed. After twenty years of exile R. Gannushi, the leader of the party of Islamic fundamentalists “An-Nahda,” returned to the country. In October 2011 elections were held which were won by the “An-Nahda” party, which gained 40 percent of votes and received the right to form a government. The party leaders wanted to form a coalition government and work jointly with secular parties. In the view of “An-Nhada” leaders, the gravest mistake of Ben Ali’s regime had been exclusion of Islam from political life.

Islam is a set of values and a way of life, but not only religion.

The “An-Nahda” has become the first Islamic party of Tunisia, which was able to form a government. The party Rules note that “An-Nahda” is a national Islamic party which is functioning within the framework of a democratic system.

The leaders of the “An-Nahda” proposed to place the Shariah laws in the foundation of Tunisian legislation, which fact caused indignation in the democratic factions of the country’s parliament.

Today the political situation in Tunisia resembles somehow the situation in Turkey. In both countries secular political parties have been in power for a long time, whereas Islamic parties have been in opposition. Islamic parties in Tunisia were not adapted to democratic traditions, but in the light of the latest revolutionary events, they were actively striving for cooperation with secular political parties.

The orthodox Salaphites pose a definite threat to “non-liberal” democratic transformations in the country.

Similar situation has prevailed in Egypt. After the downfall of the secularly-oriented regime of Hosni Mubarak the “Muslim Brothers” have come to power. This movement has been widely supported by the country’s middle class and had a membership of over 700,000. The political leader of the “Muslim Brothers”, M. Mursi, came to power as a result of the countrywide elections. At the 2012 parliamentary elections most votes were gained by the Muslim Brothers (47 percent), one-quarter of the seats was won by the coalition grouping of radical Salaphites, and the rest was divided between independent candidates and Christian Copts. According to the new Constitution, Egypt was proclaimed a democratic state, but its legislation was determined by the Shariah law.

Experience shows that radical Islamic organizations existing and functioning for a long time begin to adopt and gradually use democratic values in their political activity after entering state structures. Such has been the case of “An-Nahda” in Tunisia and the Moslem Brothers in Egypt. It was the first precedent in Egypt’s history when the Muslim Brothers’ leader (M. Mursi) was universally elected president.

A specific feature of the domestic political process in Egypt was that along with moderate religious movements in the country there were actively functioning radical Islamic parties. The country’s parliament has become a scene of bitter clashes and political wrangling between the Muslim Brothers and the radical Salaphite “Nur” party. The latter was actively opposing the creation of a secular democratic state in Egypt, which was supported by the Muslim Brothers. However, this opposition between moderate and radical Islamists has not lasted long. In 2013 the military deposed the lawfully elected President Mursi.

It should be noted that immediately after these developments Egypt has received a sizable financial assistance from the Persian Gulf states to a sum of \$12 billion. But, as time has shown, the military have

spent the money received, the Muslim Brothers have again become outlawed, and the fragile non-liberal democracy in Egypt has been overthrown.

The coming to power of Islamic parties of moderate and radical trends at the beginning of the 21st century has outlined new trends of political modernization in the Islamic world. First, religious parties have undertaken an attempt to create a coalition government which would unite both secular and religious parties. Secondly, a result of political modernization is the alternate domination in the political process of moderate democratic Islamic parties and radical Islamic parties. The third tendency is the active political confrontation of religious and secular parties and the striving of religious parties for absolute domination. Surveillance polls carried out in Middle Eastern countries have shown that a greater part of Muslim public has a positive attitude to participation of religious parties in politics. For instance, in Pakistan 46 percent of Muslims and in Egypt 48 percent of Muslims maintain that Islam plays a great role in their country's political life. The situation is slightly different in Indonesia and Nigeria. In the former 89 percent and in the latter 88 percent of the population believe that Islam has a positive influence on their country's policy. The overwhelming majority of the Muslims polled in Nigeria (82 percent) welcome participation of Islam in their country's policy, and in Indonesia 91 percent maintain that religion plays a positive role in politics.

It should be noted that Turkish Muslims are not so categorical in their assessments: 69 percent consider that religion plays a great role in politics, and 45 percent maintain that Islam has a positive role, whereas 38 percent believe that Islam exerts a negative influence on the political process in Turkey. Only 31 percent hold the view that Islam plays an insignificant role in politics. Twenty-six percent of them regard its role

quite positive and 33 percent speak of its negative influence on Turkey's policy.

Most Muslims have a positive attitude to a democratic form of government regarding it more preferable than all others. This view is the most widespread in Lebanon and Turkey where 81 percent and 76 percent of all Muslims give preference to democratic parties. Support of democratic parties in Pakistan is less pronounced. It is only 42 percent of the Muslims polled in Pakistan prefer democracy, and 15 percent assert that in certain cases a non-democratic government could be more preferable than democratic.

In Russia at the end of the 20th century attempts were undertaken to create religious parties. Political modernization of society and the formation of institutions of democratic civil society in the country, as well as a search for new state ideology have resulted in the revival of traditional religious beliefs in Russia. The above-mentioned processes have contributed to inclusion of confessional motives in the country's political life. It should be noted that transfer from totalitarianism to democracy is often accompanied with a wave of nationalism of different strength. A combination of the ideas of positive or extremist nationalism with the ideas of religious revival in modern Russia has also contributed to the emergence of religious parties. Political Islamic parties have been active in Daghestan, Karachayev-Circassia and Tatarstan. When the activity of religious parties began to threaten the country's security, they have been banned legally, thus the principle of the Soviet state has triumphed, namely, that religion is a private affair of each person.

Such, in the main, is a complex picture of the modernization process in contemporary Islam. How will tendencies of this process develop in the future depends on many factors and circumstances, including the state and functioning of the institutions of democracy and

economies of Islamic states themselves. Political processes in the religious sphere will depend on the general political and socio-economic situation of the modern world.

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