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**ATTACK ON PARIS AND THE FUTURE
RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA
AND THE WEST**

The terrorist attack on the French capital in the evening, November 13, 2015 may mark the beginning of a new stage in relations between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic area, that deteriorated almost to a state of the Cold War in connection with the relationships in and around Ukraine. However “may” is not “should”.

The factor of Russia's non-integration into the Euro-Atlantic system acquired so great importance in 2013, that many of the experts and politicians started talking about the demolition of the European security system for 2014–2015 already. The system has evolved around two institutions mainly – NATO and the EU. Russia has been integrated into it only indirectly, that caused great concern on the part of its political circles and society. These concerns were converted to unpredictable actions from the standpoint of the West, sometimes, and led to leave the territorial status quo, even twice, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Georgia – 2008, Ukraine – 2014).

2014–2015 years were characterized by the fact, that the European institutions have failed to respond adequately to denoted calls. Russia and the West began to play by the rules of the worst of the bipolar confrontation, supporting those forces in a third country, that declared commitment to the West or Russia, the result of which appeared to be a civil war in Ukraine. The two sides are not ready to accept their own responsibility for the development of the crisis – the West is seeking to reset all that was before the Crimean referendum, and Russia will not give the Crimea under any conditions already. The leaders of Russia and the West though avoided the definition of the crisis as a new Cold War, but the logic of their actions inevitably led both sides to the opposition, comparable with the period of the 1970s–1980s.

The crisis over Ukraine is far from complete, but the priorities have changed on the scale of the international agenda: the fight against terrorism came to the fore after the start of the Russian operations in Syria and heinous terrorist attacks in Paris. Evolution of the situation up to 13 November can draw the following benefits:

- The information war waged by the three parties – Ukraine, Russia, and the West – is so unbridled, often disgusting and false, that it leads to a significant reformatting of mass consciousness. The international community now has to think about the development of a certain “code of conduct” while covering conflict situations;

- Russia should not be excluded from the debate on the future of the former Soviet republics; Russia, Europe and the US should cooperate rather than compete in the region;

- It is clear that Euro-Atlantic security system (which appeared as a result of the end of the first version of the Cold War, and in which Russia has not been fully integrated) can not exist more on the former basics – both institutionally and in substance, as currently there is

a trend of movement to a confrontational model (both from the West and Russia), to the paradigm of mutual deterrence. This is a direct challenge both for the main actors (Russia and the Euro-Atlantic), and their partners that are not ready to approve either the Russian or western position;

– The crisis has shown that the international institutions created to ensure safety, as well as continuous dialogue under any circumstances, do not work. NATO-Russia Council should be attributed to them in the first place, as well as the OSCE, which remains the only organization trying to do something, but not functioning in full.

Russia's position on the Syrian settlement is a continuation of its policy in Ukraine, i.e. Russia attempts to get out of “the Ukrainian trap” through “the Syrian door.” The operation of Russia’s Air Force in Syria gives the Kremlin an opportunity to demonstrate its power without losing face, releasing gradually from “the Ukrainian trap”.

Noteworthy is the fact, that the beginning of the Syrian operation coincided with serious agreements in the framework of the Minsk-2, with the agreement of the militias of LPR and DPR to postpone the election to February 2016 with a rather stable cease-fire regime in the south-east of Ukraine.

The course of events in the Middle East does not mean the inevitable reconciliation of Russia and the West because of availability of the common enemy (ISIS) and the fight against them, their goals are still different. Geopolitical interests of Russia are linked with a return to the region as a key player, which gives additional opportunities to participate in the postwar settlement; political – with the support of the Assad regime and the Syrian state, economic – to prevent disruption of the Russian Federation plans to create a southern export route bypassing Ukrainian transit. The forces of Syrian opposition and

militants of ISIS have captured almost all the deposits of hydrocarbons in Syria, from which the pipes are routed to plants in the west of the country where control is performed by SAR Government. It is important for the West, especially the United States in the economic sense. Dumping oil brings down the price of oil and gas, entering the world markets, and the Russian economy suffers from this primarily, as it is on the oil needle.

There is a chance that the terrible terrorist attacks of ISIS on Paris could lead to the unification of the forces in the fight against the Islamic State. However, some experts expressed the opinion immediately after the tragedy, that it is impossible to unite the efforts of Russia and the United States, despite the change in the agenda of the G20 in Antalya. Noteworthy is the fact, that US President Barack Obama began to speak of the positive role of Russia at the Vienna talks on Syria, he has also changed the rhetoric in general at various international venues. Calls for the lifting of sanctions against the Russian Federation and about the need for joint action against ISIS can be heard in Europe more and more often. Much will depend on the alliance between Russia and France. French President does not want to rely on the support of NATO, as it will be met with hostility by Moscow, but he tries to activate the item 42.7 of the Lisbon EU treaty, providing aid and assistance to the State – the victim of aggression or assault, but not military action.

It is worth mentioning, that the tragic history of the downed Russian bombers in the skies over Syria was included in the “shuttle” diplomacy of President François Hollande to create an International Coalition. Russia has increased its military activity after the death of the SU-24, shot down by a Turkish F-16 fighter. As a result, according to the Russian Defense Ministry: 11 oil refineries, 23 oil pumping complex, 1080 tank trucks with oil were destroyed in 2 months, and

ISIS revenues of illegally produced oil has been reduced by 50%. Anti-aircraft missile system S-400 has appeared on the Russian base at Latakia.

The North Atlantic Council, (created at the request of the Turkish side immediately after the tragic incident with Russian bombers), has not activated not only art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, that implied collective action for the protection of one of its members in case of an attack on it, but even art. 4, perceived emergency consultations. The North Atlantic Council drew away from the situation, in fact, offering to solve the Turkish-Russian differences on the level of bilateral relations and a number of NATO member states even require condemnation of Turkey.

The Russian side is trying to achieve recognition of the international community, that it is a victim in a confrontation with Turkey, and to expand its position in the Middle East as much as possible.

There is one point of coincidence of interests of Russia and the international coalition under the leadership of the United States (where 65 countries are included). Anyone thinks that it is necessary to apply the ground troops for an effective fight against ISIS, but no one wants to use its own military units, bearing in mind the deplorable experience of Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, coordination with forces loyal to Damascus will be carried out through Moscow and Russia's role will increase if these troops are integrated in the international coalition.

It is difficult to assume, that Russia and the West will come to the level of the relationship in the nearest years that they had until 2014, in spite of the partially shared interests in the fight against international terrorism. Their interests are too different, their confidence is too high, and there is an opposition to each other in some

cases, their value gap (influencing the internal political development of Russia and the Euro-Atlantic countries) is too large.

The Ukrainian crisis, which has not ended yet, and which has already caused the phenomenon of fatigue in the West and in Russia, does not allow forgetting completely about the contradictions that emerged in 2014–2015.

Ukraine is under the control of the West to some extent, and the latter is clearly not satisfied with the behavior of Kiev within the framework of the Minsk agreements and financial and economic issues. European capitals are clearly annoyed by corruption and low professional level of Ukrainian elite, as well as the inefficiency of the reforms. The irritation is also caused by mutual accusations of Russia and Ukraine in violation of the peace agreements. However, Russia's agreement on restructuring of the debt of Ukraine as well as postponement of elections in LPR and DPR under its pressure, knock out trump cards from the hands of Kiev's politicians.

Paris is not satisfied with the policy of Kiev in particular. At the same time President François Hollande's diplomacy on the formation of the anti-terrorist coalition with the participation of Russia allows to make assumptions about the emergence of a new “Entente”. It should be remembered that deterrence can not be continued infinitely long (Russia and the West exist in this paradigm already) and detente will be completed, which is inevitable, because the civilized world is confronted with a new ultra-hazardous, threat, and resistance is possible only by combining efforts. But willingness to detente is the result of a compromise, when the parties do not just recognize the need for change, but they are ready for action, taking into account each other's interests.

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**DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY
IN NON-MUSLIM POLITIES: THE ROLE
OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS [4]**

Achieving the internal harmony of the Russian nation is in the focus of the modern ideology of the national development in Russia today. A nation is constructed as a meaningful collection of individuals united by historical, linguistic, religious and cultural ties, and spiritual and moral reference points, the desire for the integration of values and national identity. In the literature, a multilevel political phenomenon and a theoretical construct of “national identity” is understood as “the identity of the national and state community and the collective consciousness of its citizens as members of such a community” [5].

Reflection on the challenges and the bifurcation of the identity in various communities can also develop on the way of alternatives selection, or move either in the direction of a sharp increase (revival) in the significance of ideas about the ethnic, religious, civilization and other identity models, which account for the most notable and noticeable hits of the era of global economic, political, cultural and religious integration and unification, or towards the actualization of the national civil identification, under which “personal communication is replaced by indirect and real community – blood, territorial, religious, psychological – on imaginary” [6]. It is no coincidence that modern scholars interpret the crisis periods of breaking social ties (which lead to an erosion of collective identity in its importance for the national community dimensions) as the category of the call to the development of the national community [7].

The issue of preserving and strengthening their identity is extremely important for the Muslim polities. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani talked about the fears encountered by the modern society, at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (September 17, 2013, New York) [8]. Iranian politician did not limit himself by the realities of the Islamic world for generalizations in his speech. He talked about the threats to many who are inferior to the West in their capabilities.

This statement of the Iranian leader at the UN agrees with the discourse of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the X International Conference club “Valdai” (September 19, 2013, Novgorod region.), confirming the relevance of the search for new strategic approaches to the preservation of identity, especially considering the attempts of the West to return to the unipolar unified model of the world, eroding national sovereignty. Vladimir Putin associates emerging challenges with foreign policy and moral aspects of the events occurring in the world space. He appeals to the important religious constants that were not peculiar to the political discourse of the Russian president a few years ago [9].

As is evident from the statement of Vladimir Putin the Russian president at the meeting of the international discussion club “Valdai” many Euro-Atlantic countries are close to the threshold, which is inevitably followed: the loss of human dignity, a deep demographic and moral crisis (through the negation of moral principles and any traditional identities – national, cultural, religious), and rejection of the values postulated by Christianity and other world religions. Russia can avoid all this, because it is always sought to follow the flexible approaches, taking into account national and religious specifics of the country's population in its model of the state-civilization. Peculiarities of the Russian state system originate from the model of the state-civilization exactly, according to President Putin. He emphasizes in his

speech at the Valdai that Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religious denominations are integral parts of the identity and historical heritage of the country in the modern life of Russians.

The compound of the Muslim component together with other faith-based identifications the Russia is not a far-fetched argument in the presidential discourse: the largest number of Muslims among the countries of Europe live on the territory of the Russian state. Russian officials constantly speak about the spiritual, cultural and civilization affinity with the Muslim world, for which it is “an integral part” [10]. President Vladimir Putin was the first to recognize officially that Russia is a Muslim country also. In December 2005, he said that the country has always been the most reliable and consistent defender of Islam, speaking at a meeting of the Parliament of the Chechen Republic. Islam was mentioned as “a bright element of Russian cultural code” in Putin's speech at the solemn meeting in Ufa, dedicated to the 225th anniversary of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia in October 2013 [11]. This is reflected in the domestic and foreign policy, affects its bilateral relations with Muslim countries, as well as its participation in the affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, where the Russian Federation has been granted observer status in 2005 at the request of President Vladimir Putin.

Inclusion of the religious factor in the recent political forecasting model revision of the foundations of national identity as a result of the crisis, is increasingly unacceptable in postsecular era [12]. A significant rethinking of the growing political role of religious actors becomes political consequences of such a shift in the identity space [13].

The steady growth of recognition of “the acceptability of the presence of the new forms of the religious factor in society,” in the public opinion of Russians (these forms do not replace the form of

a purely secular society organization at the same time), is another important trend recorded by specialists of the Institute of Sociology of RAS recently by the results of nationwide research “Russian society in the context of new realities”, held in November 2014 [14].

Conservative-traditionalist reversal of the Russian society strongly promotes intensification of intellectual and religious reflection. Representatives of the traditional Russian confessions used additional opportunities to present the results of their own spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual searches in the public space.

Meanwhile, many have already retreated from the “front line” of creating a nation: the parties which are only simulacra of genuine, value-rational party affiliation [15], as well as the intellectuals, which formed two elite fragment due to their heterogeneity (by A. Salminen). The first – functional – was oriented “to the intellectual support of practical action, taken by political elites to the prediction of the consequences of the action, its legitimacy (or deligitimatsiyu) and so on. “And the second – reflective – which representatives are not focused on immediate practical action with a certain result and experimenting freely throughout the space culture” [16].

One should not expect that the domestic business will be able to generate moral values, for the formation of a political nation. Firstly, the “oligarchic structures currently do not live with their people”, and secondly, these structures have been “subjected to extremely powerful impact against the political activity, especially coming out to the federal level” [17] that they will not soon recover.

Svyatoslav Kaspe talks about a very special position of the Russian Orthodox the church, which makes it the second after the state, demanded participant of nation-building, assigning the church – this social actor, residing on the highest place in the ranking trust in public

institutions – a high place among the participants of the Russian nation-building [18].

Undoubtedly, today the Russian Orthodox Church, which occupies a leading position among Russian institutionalized religions are included more and more in the political process as a subject of political goal-setting, expresses its position in the public sphere much more clearer and more significant in comparison with others. Traditional Islam in Russia is not rigidly institutionalized hierarchical structure, also expresses its concern in recent years, which manifests itself in a very acute form due to the problem of finding ways to save their own ethnic or religious identity and traditional social institutions. Voices of the leaders of the Muslim community are increasingly heard in unison with the position of the Orthodox hierarchs.

Key abstracts of presentations primarily of the heads of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) Patriarch Kirill at the plenary sessions of the 23d International Christmas Educational Readings “Prince Vladimir. Civilizational choice of Russia” (January 21, 2015, Moscow), and of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation, Ravil Gaynutdin at the 10th International Islamic Forum (December 10–12, 2014, Moscow), demonstrated the absolute compatibility of the positions of the two major Abrahamic traditions in Russia on many key issues which have been announced in the conferences programs.

According to Patriarch Kirill, today Russia faces ideological dilemma: to renounce its spiritual sovereignty, abandon its own national and cultural identity in exchange for the lifting of sanctions imposed on it and save further opportunities to consume material goods, or to remain faithful to the ideals and values of Russia. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church does not see any other possible

alternative but to preserve the “blessed spiritual unity of our peoples,” not to succumb to “the temptation to deviate from this path” [19].

Mufti Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin, revealing the nature of the fundamental challenge, talking about its special danger not only for Russia but also for the majority of nations and countries disappointed with the idea of globalization, which prevents the harmonious coexistence of cultures and traditions in a politically unipolar world. The leader of Russian Muslims consider it necessary to carry out “ideological and physical (in the case of a real threat to the security of the individual, the family, Motherland) opposition to” ultra-liberalism, which is now attacking the traditional values of Russians [20].

The public discourse of important representatives of, the two most numerous branches of the world religions – Christianity and Islam – creates a strong, unifying framework for building the protection of the Russian nation, held together by the union of Russia's traditional religions. It is no coincidence that, both events attracted the attention of the country's highest political elite. President Vladimir Putin and the head of the presidential administration Sergei Ivanov expressed wishes of success to the participants. Undoubtedly, the attention of personalities of the highest federal level, sending their greetings to the organizers of the Christmas Readings [21] and the international meeting of Muslims [22], initially gave the coordinates of political perception to signification of upcoming religious and community forums for the Russian world and Russian Muslims.

We believe that unification of Russia and the Muslim world today, is supported not only their cultural proximity, but also those challenges, made to them simultaneously from the West. Substantial empirical material for analysis was provided by the International Islamic Forum, where “representatives of different confessions demonstrated commonality of approaches to strengthen the

independence of Russia, the interaction of cultures and the formation of the national identity of the state of the country” [23].

The fact of holding such a major religious and public forum in Moscow [24] fits into a complex of the main directions in the field of international cooperation, in accordance with the Strategy of the state national policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025, adopted by Presidential Decree № 1666 of December 19, 2012. According to this document, the priorities in the field of national policy are: “the use of public diplomacy resources ... as a means of establishing a dialogue between civilizations”; increasing cooperation with international organizations in order to prevent various forms of discrimination, including on religious grounds; organization of partnerships aimed at “maintaining initiatives of the civil society institutions in cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional confessions of the country in the field of national policy” [25].

Representatives of States which did not support the sanctions the US regime and the European Union imposed against Russia in 2014 due to its position on the Crimea and Ukraine were among the major Muslim scholars (Sunni and Shiite), reputable scholars of Islam and Grand Mufties from the number of the Eurasian continent, who arrived to the forum (more than 500 participants from 21 countries). Chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Federation State Duma, Vyacheslav Nikonov has paid special attention to this political background, noting in his statement that “none of Islamic State joined the sanctions that Washington imposes on Russia” [26].

The current discussion about the challenges of national identity in Russia, which entered into economic, political and value-civilizational confrontation with Western European states could not but become an important component of the political agenda of the

forum. Analysts attending the event, claimed in their works: “The confrontation between Russia and the West is certainly not random in nature and shows, first of all, that the Euro-Atlantic civilization continues to refuse recognition to our country as an equal partner, regardless of the amount of the assistance provided by our country in different regions of the world” [27].

The return of the multinational and multi-confessional people of the Crimean peninsula under Russian jurisdiction, and in its identification space, including more than 300 thousandth of the Crimean Tatar population, became possible as a result of the referendum in the Republic of Crimea in March 2014. These changes were so rapid that many things have changed radically for the Muslim community of Crimea, which is 11% of the population of the peninsula, and a special role belongs to the Crimean Tatars in it [31].

Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea (SMMC), bringing together the vast majority of Muslim communities in the territory of the new subject, of Russia today (at last count – more than 350) represents the interests of Muslims of the Crimea peninsula [32]. According to the leaders of the Crimean Tatar people, they had to meet resistance from the representatives of various types of sects of radical pseudo-Islamic movements in the Crimea, people with conflicting thinking, at a crucial moment for the adoption of the next fateful decision in their lives associated with the Crimean plebiscite and accessions Russia.

Leaders of Muslim religious organizations, imams, representatives of Muslim non-governmental organizations and mass media think for the most part, that the Crimea joining the Russian Federation will affect the position of the Muslim Ummah of the country as a whole. They find that discursive communications of the Chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia, Ravil Gainutdin and President of the

Republic of Tatarstan, R. Minnikhanov are effective, that took place in the course of their visits to the peninsula. On the eve and after the Crimean referendum, they were included in the most difficult intellectual and political dialogues with their brothers in the faith, history, culture.

Head structure of R. Gaynutdin – especially the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Russian Federation, created in 2014 on the basis of the SAM of European Russia and the Council of Muftis of Russia actively advocate for the collective identity of the national community and, above all, for the spiritual assistants of Muslims as an integral part of the Russian nation, too.

Russian Muslims will be able to feel like an actor of constructing Russian (Eurasian) identity, send their creative potential for the further strengthening of patriotism, citizenship and democracy, fully involved in the context of national and all-Russian culture, reduce possible radical aspirations, injected by external geopolitical rivals of Russia [33]. It should be noted that the persistent attempts to integrate the ideology of moderate conservatism in combining matrices, of Russian and Eurasian identities has become a trend that is characteristic for the regional investigators of Tatarstan (more often called “Muslim republic” by local political elites [34]), actualized scientific reinterpretation of conservative areas that historically do not contradict the Muslim ummah in the Russian Empire [35], as well as for non-Muslim, analysts Neo- Eurasism binding model of collective identity, focused on civilizational matrix, with the tolerance of “their” Russian foreigners and Islam until the establishment of the Orthodox-Islamic Union, or emphasis on Islam as the ideological basis [36].

There are three main points, which can be identified in the analysis of the main theses of R. Gaynutdin and which can be summarized as “healthy conservatism of the future Eurasian identity”

1) protection of traditional values, moral norms and principles of spirituality postulated world religions; 2) production of mutually enriching cultural exchange between people of different religions and ethnic groups; 3) harmonious combination of modern lifestyle with a religious practice (the paradigm of “middle path” provides the opportunity for adherents of moderate Islamic traditions) [37].

The ideologues of moderate conservatism impressed by the fact that President Putin proclaimed the principle of civilizational pluralism, that he is a supporter of multi-polarity, he says about the inadequacy of the universalization of Western values without taking into account the specificity of each cultural ecumene [38]. “Everyone will keep the identity and political subjectivity” [39], opportunities will be open to the activities of the four traditional religions operating in the format of secular society in the created Eurasian association.

Actualized conservative aspirations of Muslim activists of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia are closely linked to significant, traditionalist and socio-political perspectives of Eurasian integration and presented in a number of public symbolic acts in a more extensive form [40].

Strategic Vision Group “Russia – Islamic World” was established in 2006 under the patronage of the former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, and continues to implement a number of important large-scale projects with the participation of public, government and religious leaders. The issues discussed at the forum, were very important for the global community [41], which disavows some critical assessments of some researchers [42] concerning the results of the international activity of the Russian muftiats in modern times.

Assessment of the centuries-old experience of Russia at the forum stated by the Minister of Religious Affairs, of the Turkish

Republic Dr. Mehmet Görmez,, is seen extremely important in today's realities of ideological and civilizational and geopolitical confrontation of Russia with Western European countries. According to the chief mufti of Turkey, this legacy is worthy of studying throughout Europe. According to Mehmet Görmez, Russian lands became the territory where “Islam formed the foundations of law, norms and principles of harmonious coexistence of religions” [43].

Political indifference and anonymity typical of Muslim clergy a few years ago, [44] greatly transformed in recent years. Now Muslim religious actors are eager to participate in the processes of “political and cultural synthesis” and make political meanings within the discursive construction of civilizational identity – Russia and Eurasia. It is believed that this kind of identity «“is given to the involvement of religion, ideology, social practices and cultural style, the rod constituting” sacred hierarchy» [45].

So, we can conclude that the influential religious centers, Muslim leaders of the Turkic world of the CIS and Eurasia, the Arab countries and Iran, Southeast and Central Asia recognize the special role of Islam in Russia [46] today.

Russian muftiats, initiating the creation of a new paradigm within the Islamic and interconfessional dialogue from Moscow, which is formalized with the framework of International Islamic Forum, tend to direct it to the sustainable development of the whole Russian society and Russian nation, strengthening the sovereignty and national identity in Russia, as well as for the benefit of all its partners in the Eurasian space.

A new international Muslim discussion platform will be open to representatives of all religious nominations, civil society and public authorities. This will allow solve such an important problem as the promotion of “emerging geopolitical alliance” Moscow – Ankara –

Tehran «and the fruitful cooperation with the peoples of the Eurasian countries for Russia, undergoing “a turn to the East”» [47].

To sum up, it should be noted that the response to a specific global challenge of Russian national identity (historically developed as a state-civilization) requires a strategy of its own identity and policies. Today it is difficult to conduct a balanced policy without the active participation of religious institutions, representing both Orthodox and Muslim community, considering that majority of the population identify themselves with ethnic Orthodox (89–92%) and Muslims (6.9%), in the amount of 97–98% of the population [48].

Russian Islam offers its variant of solving global threats, which has nothing in common with radical Islam. Manifestations of this moderately conservative response in the form of intellectual debate and mindset of Muslims are much more valuable.

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**XENOPHOBIA AS AN AGENT OF THREAT
TO NATIONAL SECURITY OF STATES
AND POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE BLACK
SEA-CASPIAN REGION***

The realities of the modern world show two divergent major trends. On the one hand, attempts to create a unified world community are being made, integration processes are gaining momentum and on the other hand disintegration and chaos in the world are growing. These

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trends are affecting almost all the regions of the world, including the Black Sea-Caspian region.

The countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region, differ both by size of territories, population and ethnic composition population and cultural identity, where the religious factor is of key importance.

Modern problems of the Black Sea-Caspian region are due both to internal contradictions of social development of its member countries, and geopolitical interests of several countries of the Middle East and the USA. Their natural consequence is actualization of xenophobia that has both protection and manipulative functions in the region.

Scientific literature regards xenophobia as rather a complex and contradictory phenomenon: on the one hand, it appears as socio-psychological protection of an individual and a group in the unpredictable and dangerous world, and on the other hand – as an element of political technologies, designing a particular image of an outsider to achieve specific goals [14].

Xenophobia in the Black Sea-Caspian region has external and internal foci associated with the location of its objects. G. Eiserman rightfully highlighted two basic vectors of the focus of xenophobia: chauvinism addressed against another state, and diasporic phobia aimed against national minorities within the country. According to the German sociologist both chauvinism and diasporic phobia are associated with the need to preserve national dignity, economic development and social security of the indigenous population and directed primarily against outsiders [11].

External xenophobia has most often an impact on the state ideology seeking to assert the statusness, the sovereignty of the state or the people by all means, including violence, e.g., by occupation or bringing under control foreign territories. Internal xenophobia shows

not only in diasporic phobia, but also in migrantophobia, which most often results from socio-economic problems in society. Negative attitudes of the migrants themselves or their descendants to indigenous population can also be attributed to internal xenophobia [5].

The main manifestations of external xenophobia in the Black Sea-Caspian region are Americanophobia, Russophobia and Islamophobia.

The studies of various aspects of modern Americanophobia can be found in the works of V. Bainev, V. Vinnik, Z. Vidovich, O. Shevchenko, et. al. [3]. According to the authors, Americanophobia reflects the current negative attitudes in respect of the political and economic systems of the US, value, ideological and moral attitudes of the American nation, i.e. rejection of the United States as a nation state and of its cultural foundations.

The reason of formation of such stereotypes in public conscience is associated with focusing of the U.S. interests at major world regions [5, 4], including the Black Sea-Caspian region. America pinpoints hostile States and pursues them using a wide range of means: use of military force for overthrowing the legitimate authority and replacing it with a Pro-Western regime (Iraq), economic sanctions for weakening global and regional influence (Russia), political and economic pressure aimed at curtailing the national nuclear program (Iran).

In its pursuit to world domination the U.S. impose upon other States its own rules of the game, trying to remove undesirable states from the political arena, violate the balance of interests. All these actions are, of course, strongly resisted. Trying to make the U.S. a sort of the second Roman Empire, its leaders divide peoples and states into “friends of Rome” and “enemies of Rome” (i.e. Washington. – *O. S.*) using double standards in relation to both.

S. Huntington underlines the discreteness of the principles declared by the policy of the West and their practical implementation. The U.S. is hypocritical, using double standards in its political activity: "...yes, democracy should be promoted, but no, not if it brings Islamic fundamentalists to power; yes, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons is a very proper thing, if Iraq and Iran are in question, but no when it comes to Israel... aggression against the oil-rich Kuwaitis must be given a rebuff, but it is quite another cup of tea if we are talking about aggression against the Bosnians, who, alas, have no oil..." [13, p. 151].

Under the pretext of spreading "democracy" and "human rights" the US reconstruct the political map of the Middle East using military methods. A number of Mid-Eastern states belong to the Black Sea-Caspian region. According to an expert in Islam G. Fuller, spreading democracy is not the focus of the U.S. policy in the Islamic world, it pursues its own objectives: ensuring uninterrupted energy supplies from the region, security of Israel, non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons, combating terrorism, preventing the emergence of any regional hegemon [1, p. 213].

Implementation of such a policy inevitably leads to creation of a new field of political and ideological tension. The challenges the U.S. launched against the rest of the world, lead to emergence of diverse forms of "answers".

The unilateral and aggressive character of the United States policy is encouraging creation of opposition movements, whose ideology is based solely on Americanophobia, actively designing "the enemy image" in the person of the United States. In this connection it will be rightful to regard the today Americanophobia (in particular, at the political level) as a reaction, first of all, to the imperial arrogance of the superpower, interpreting the norms of international law very loosely. The policy of the U.S. hegemony causes natural anxiety of the

major regional powers (Russia, China, India, etc.) and a number of European states, as well as resistance of many third world countries.

In the context of a unipolar world the international security structure is, in fact, a set of alliances and blocks, directly or indirectly controlled by the United States. Relying on its military power and availability of allies, the United States believes that it can use its armed forces for the purposes of coercion practically with impunity and no risk of retaliation from the part of other states [12]. However, American military pressure over other countries, forcible democratization under the Western scenario cause a serious reaction, contributing to the emergence of the new enemies of the U.S. In spite of its potential, the U.S. is still unable to forcibly change special civilizational features of countries and regions, and for this reason the American geopolitical ambitions cause countertendencies. Thus, for example a new center of Eurasian regionalism is forming up in the Black Sea-Caspian region and the main political actors of it are Russia, Turkey and Iran.

Thus, the tendencies of world development, caused mainly by the geopolitical strategy of the United States, result in developing of Americanophobia as a specific method used by states for protection of their national interests.

Along with Americanophobia Russophobia is becoming a fairly stable form of xenophobia in some countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region

Actualization of modern Russophobia and Russophobic discourse is based, first, on the hegemony of the US; second, on the strategies of the commodity problem solution by the global center (the countries of “gold billion”) at the expense of military/non-military capture of resources of the peripheral countries; third, the ongoing process of building national states in the post-Soviet space (Georgia, Ukraine) and the development of their national identity.

Designing “the enemy image”, the Western mass-media rely on various stereotypes associated with Russia. Russia is accused not only of bloody crimes in the past and at present, but also of nurturing sinister plans for the future. The main task of the Western media is to convince the world community in the revival of the Russian Imperial ambitions, its focus on the occupation of foreign territories and possible military threat on its part for the countries of the new united Europe, especially the Baltic States.

The strategic goal of information warfare, actively using Russophobia, are: expulsion of Russia from the global political arena and its inclusion in the list of the so-called rogue states, dehumanization and demonization of the image of Russia in public conscience.

Russophobia is most actively used as a political tool where the US interests collide with the interests of other states. Thus, Georgia, belonging to the Black Sea-Caspian region became, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the arena of struggle between continental and Atlantic forces. The economic and political weakening of Russia in the late 20 has led to the fact that Georgia, in an effort to dissociate itself from the common political, cultural and historical past, has taken a tough anti-Russian stance. Such trend of events was due both to the influence of the US, which took the state under its control, and the development of Georgian nationalism, striving to create its own national state.

Coming of pro-American politicians to power in Georgia, and political building of the Georgian nation were accompanied by aggressive Russophobia.

Today, Georgia is consistently implementing the course for euro-integration and accession to NATO membership. A new step is attempted defense cooperation at the regional level including, in addition to Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey, the latter already linked

with the North Atlantic military alliance. Thus, each party has its own advantages in establishment of such a coalition: Georgia – protection against “Russian threat”, Azerbaijan – isolation of Armenia from Russia in case of escalation of the conflict in Nagorny Karabakh, Turkey – consolidation of its influence in the South Caucasus, previously fully owned by Russia.

A number of anti-Russian geopolitical projects are under way in the North Caucasus, among them experts have identified the three most dangerous ones for the national and regional security of Russia: the Western project (especially American), the Arab-Islamist (Wahhabi) project and the Turanian (Turkish) projects [6]. The Western project is the leading one, and the other two, despite their relative autonomy, are actively supported by the US and its allies. As the result, separatism, nationalism, religious fanaticism are constantly heated up in the region, sources of tension arising from overlapping territorial claims hold for long. In the past fifteen years religious and ethnic factor has been in most frequent use.

Stirring up Russophobic sentiments is contributed to by to the protracted political crisis which is currently taking place in Ukraine. Russia is accused of annexation of the Crimea and military and economic assistance to the residents of Donbass of separatist sentiment, i.e, in fact, of the collapse of the state and the attempts to separate from Ukraine its South-Eastern part. In our opinion, Russophobia in Ukraine is partly triggered by both Western and local political establishment and is partly a consequence of the traditional cultural and religious heterogeneity of the country: the Ukrainian-speaking Uniate and Catholic West and the Russian-speaking Orthodox East.

Since the autumn of 2013 the situation with Russophobia in the Black Sea-Caspian region has aggravated significantly in connection

with the Ukrainian crisis, and then a new phase of the anti-terrorist campaign in the Middle East with military involvement of Russia.

In addition to Russophobia, in the Black Sea-Caspian region there had been a rise of Islamophobia that is associated currently with growing activity of the terrorist organization ISIS.

It is important to note that contemporary Islamophobia is acquiring specific features depending on ideological attitudes of the analyst.

A radical view of the Islamic threat is generally associated with liberals, identifying themselves with the so-called Westerners. For them Islam is the embodiment of rebellious archaism, barbarity that has attacked the civilized Western world and its system of values. The development of liberalism is perceived by Westerners as a fight against backwardness, barbarity, i.e. as a fight against “anti-West” [11, p. 21]. The part of the latter until recently has been played by communism, and currently – by Islam.

The conservative position in regard to Islam comes down to the fact that, first, Islam is not regarded as an independent threat to the security of the region but is derived from other threats. Second, Islam is not perceived as an integral religious system but rather as an aggregate of various trends. It is most often divided into two different Islams – traditional Islam and Wahhabism [11, p. 22]. In the framework of the conservative position Islam in general is not regarded as an enemy: “good” Muslims are separated from “bad” ones, so Islamophobic nature of these arguments is, at first sight, quite unobvious. However, clear criteria which could help to distinguish “good” Islam from “bad” Islam have not been formulated clear so far. Any attempt to create such criteria will inevitably affect its fundamentals. The contemporary Islamophobia, in our opinion, is mostly of politically opportunistic nature: it becomes more active in the

rhetoric of politicians, when they turn to the West, appealing to the circles scared by “international terrorism” or “...use the bogeyman of “Islamic threat” to their political interests” [11, p. 25].

Global and regional mass media are playing its part in actualization of Islamophobia. In the press and on television real difficulties regarding relations with the Moslem world began to transform rapidly into a frightening mass media product, with the consequence that the Islamic factor was hyperbolized. This has formed in the public mind the idea of Islamic, not Islamist threat that does exist in fact.

The distinction between these two concepts has been recognized quite recently. Islam, like any other religion, does not in itself carry a threat to the world and society: “...the threat... appears only when Islam ceases to be a religion and starts to be used as a political ideology, which is designed to capture power in certain countries, regions or on a global scale in the name of creation of the future World Caliphate” [10, p. 119]. This is confirmed by the already mentioned activities of ISIS, which includes not only adherents of radical Salafist (Wahhabi), but also traditional Islam and Baathists, advocating, in essence. for development of a secular state [7, p. 50]. However, the activity of the group is destructive, it challenges the prevailing political, economic social and cultural foundations of the region, since it is determined by militant Islamism.

Concluding the consideration of Islamophobia in the Black Sea-Caspian region, I would like to note: the countries belonging there have never been homogenous in religious terms. Moreover, the population of even one country was rarely committed to any single religion. Therefore, the desire of some politicians to create “the enemy image” in the person of the Islamic world as it is, but not the radical Islamist

ideology, contributes to disintegration of the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region, having different religious identities.

Along with external xenophobia aimed at other States and regions, various kinds of internal xenophobia (ethnic, religious, mixed) exist also in the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region .

The appraisal of internal xenophobia is due to a combination of socio-psychological, economic, political and actually social factors prevailing in the society.

Socio-psychological factors underlying xenophobia, are associated primarily with the need of an individual for the group identity and intergroup comparison; the sense of danger from the outside, which is represented not only by natural forces but also by the presence in the world of other communities; with the state of frustration and deprivation, accompanied by emotions of fear, contempt, anger, disgust, envy. In fact, these socio-psychological factors of formation of xenophobia are a set of severe social conditions and negative psychological feelings, expressing a state of fear experienced by the group, before real or potential threats, as well as resentment of a social group over the current situation. Socio-psychological factors of internal xenophobia are derived from economic, political and social conditions that have developed in the society.

The economic factors that generate internal xenophobia, include, primarily, competition for natural resources, which, unfortunately, are of a limited nature, and the desire to possess any material goods. Economic factors in turn are closely linked with political and social ones. The part of the political factor forming internal xenophobia can be assigned to the struggle for political power and certain advantages it provides, for example, the ability to provide group security, status positions or access to material goods.

The social factor in the formation of internal xenophobia is represented by the presence in society of ethnic and social stratification, in the result of which ethnic groups find themselves at different levels of the social ladder owing to its ethnic origin, etc [13].

In our opinion, it is internal xenophobia that becomes the downside of actualization and even exaggeration of the identity problem. Since ethnic and religious identity have the major relevance in some countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region, their growth and amalgamation are inevitably accompanied by manifestation of various kinds of ethno-national and ethno-religious phobias. Turkish-Kurdish relations are an example of sustainable inner ethno-national phobia .

According to researchers, the cause of aggravation of these problems within Turkey is Kurdish ethno-nationalism, progressing partly because of persecution and pressure over the Kurds on the part of the state. Various forms of discrimination and oppression of the Kurds are based on the idea that the Kurds are “outsiders”. The range of the idea of their otherness is rather wide: from views that the Kurds are “the Turks who have lost their own cultural identity” [8, p. 99], to their exclusion from the Turkish nation. Despite the fact that the Kurds are Muslims, the Turkish political and public discourse treats them as an instrument in the hands of external forces wishing to destabilize and divide the country.

Escalation of conflicts in the countries of the Black Sea-Caspian region traditionally depends to a large extent on the religious component. It gave a special poignancy to the many years' conflict between Shia Iran and Sunni Iraq, but even today, Muslim Sunnis living in Iran, according to the UN, are exposed to various forms of discrimination from the overwhelming majority of the population i.e. Shiite Muslims. Although religious confrontation between Sunni and Shiite Muslims is lasting for more than a thousand years, this conflict,

according to experts, is the greatest threat to security in the region. In the context of severe geopolitical struggle for leadership in the Middle East religious xenophobia is an effective tool of political mobilization of social groups. Thus, Iran is an ally of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad who belongs to one of the Shiite sects, while Sunni countries of the Persian Gulf and Turkey support Syrian rebels, many of whom are Sunnis. Therewith, the political confrontation of the countries of the region is veiled by religious motives.

From our point of view, religion performs the part of a tool in destabilizing the situation in the region. With its help the boundaries between friend and foe worlds are being erected once again, and different political forces use religion for justification of territorial or other claims and use of violent methods.

Taking all the above said into consideration, one may come to certain conclusions. In terms of modern geopolitical transformations associated with the redistribution of zones of influence in the Black Sea-Caspian region, the xenophobia of various etiologies is becoming an effective political technology and is being used by various forces for ensuring influence and lobbying of their interests at both global and regional levels.

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TAJIK-IRANIAN RELATIONS TODAY

In these latter days the desire of Iran to gain a foothold in Central Asia and become an important player in the region, along with Russia, China and the United States is becoming still more evident. The main partner of Tehran today is Tajikistan, and ethnic, cultural and religious closeness of the peoples populating these two countries greatly contributes to the fact. Iran was the first to recognize the independence of Tajikistan having opened its Embassy in Dushanbe in January 1992. It was, in conjunction with Russia, one of the two moderators of the inter-Tajik reconciliation in the 1990s, at the time of a civil war in the Republic. Today the relations between the two countries are regulated by more than 100 documents on cooperation.

More than 180 Iranian enterprises operate in the Republic in sphere of energy, transport, road construction, agriculture, manufacture of building materials¹. The greatest interest of Iranian business lies in such sectors as energy and transport. Iran invested \$ 80 million in the construction of Sangtuda HPP-2, which was launched at full capacity jointly by the President of the R.T. Emomali Rahmon and the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the time of the official visit of the latter to Dushanbe in September 2014². According to the President of the Tajikistan, the power plant was a “gift of the Iranian people to the brotherly Tajik people”. He said that the HPP, construction of which began in 2006, significantly improved the energy supply of the Republic.

Under the agreement, revenues from the HPP during 12.5 years after its commissioning were to go to Iran (after being put in full operation Sangtuda HPP-2 is capable of producing up to 1 billion kW/h of electric power). However, in October 2014 due to debts of the Tajik

side, this period was extended to 14.5 years. After that, the hydroelectric plant is to pass to the ownership of Tajikistan³.

Both countries border Afghanistan, which in economic terms represents an important transit region between the countries of Central Asia, Iran, China and Pakistan. Dushanbe and Tehran state their intentions to intensify economic cooperation with Afghanistan both on bilateral basis and in the format of Iran-Afghanistan-Tajikistan. The Tajik leadership considers, that trade and economic cooperation with Afghanistan has large untapped reserves. Currently on the border between the two States five bridges connect the two countries, markets for cross-border trade are functioning, there are created joint economic zones used for production of products intended for delivery to Afghanistan.

To date the largest joint project where Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran participate is construction of the railway from China to Iran through the territory of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the length of the road is supposed to be 1972 km. The Tajik section from the Lower Panj river to the border with Kyrgyzstan accounts for 296 kilometers.⁴ The initiative to merge the railways of the five countries belongs to Iran, which allocated to Tajikistan a grant of \$1 million for economic assessment of construction of the Tajik section of the road. Its initial cost was estimated as \$3.2 billion.

However, during 4 years, the parties could not agree on common standards of railway lines, since the rail gauge in Iran and China does not match the rail gauge in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. According to the Ministry of Transport of the RT, “the main issue was the condition of roads in these countries, for each of them adheres to its own rules and standards. The goal is to reach a consensus and adopt common standards, for example, for rail gauge, which vary significantly, and it makes merging the rail tracks impossible”.⁵

In late 2014 there was some progress in the case. According to the results of the meeting of representatives of five member States held in December, there was signed the first document – “Protocol on merging of the railways of the five countries” recording the decision to take as a basis the standards for railroad tracks, adopted in China and Iran. However, for implementation this project it is still necessary to solve the question who will finance the construction of the Afghan section of the railway. Thus, final implementation of the project is delayed until the solution is found.

However, in economic terms, Iran is not able to provide a serious competition to the influence of China in Central Asia, including Tajikistan. The Republic's economy is under tremendous influence of the Celestial Empire, which is already trying to influence its political life and security sphere. This permits to suggest that development of relations with Iran is also important for Dushanbe from the point of view of weakening economic dependence on Beijing.

According to the expert on Central Asia A. Knyazev, “for Tajikistan cooperation with Iran is still an attempt, though not a very successful one, to have some sort of alternative”⁶ (to relations with China – *E.I.*). He believes that “at present Iran is in great need of any outlets to the outside world in the context of long-term sanctions. Linguistic and ethnic affinity of Tajikistan makes this country the main bearing point for Iran to spread its influence, primarily cultural, and attempts of economic interaction in the region as a whole”. Moreover, as some experts underline, it is so far “impossible to compare investments that the Iranians are doing in the Arab world with their investments in Central Asia”.⁷

Bordering on Afghanistan – a country with a high level of terrorist threat, Iran and Tajikistan are practically doomed to mutual cooperation in the field of security. As far back as in 2006 a trilateral

commission with Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan was set up. At that time President M. Ahmadinejad said that the problems of security of these three countries are closely linked with each other. Emomali Rakhmon keeps to the same point of view. According to him, expansion and strengthening of friendly relations between the two countries in future could ensure peace and stability in the region, including Afghanistan.⁸

According to the results of the already mentioned visit of the President of Iran Hassan Rouhani to Tajikistan in 2014, the parties signed nine new documents, including the Agreement between the government of Tajikistan and the government of Iran on cooperation in the field of law enforcement and security strengthening, as well as the Memorandum of understanding between the governments of the two countries on cooperation in preventing and combating production, trafficking and use of drugs and psychotropic substances.

The growth of the external terrorist threat, which is typical for the current situation in the countries of Central Asia and associated with the increasing activity of extremist groups in neighboring Afghanistan, may acquire, according to some experts, a special character for Tajikistan. Thus, according to political scientist A. Gulmatshoev, “the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan may become a starting point in the process of unification of the Tajiks from Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan on linguistic and cultural basis. Under pressure from the Taliban and the Pashtun tribes the Afghan Tajiks do not see their future as part of a United Afghanistan in its current borders, and their leaders will try to unite the scattered forces of the former Northern Alliance”.⁹

The spring of the current year has brought a new aggravation of the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border. According to the statement of the MFA of Russia, “a source of particular concern is a large-scale attack of militants of terrorist organizations in Kunduz, a province

bordering Tajikistan, in the course of which administrative management objects in a number of counties were attacked”¹⁰. Experts did not rule out the fact that the militants could break through the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

In addition, the situation in some districts of the Republic remains tense. The particular concern of the Tajik authorities is that radical Islam commands support among residents in the South of Tajikistan. During the meeting with members of the Security Council held on April 27 the President of Tatarstan ordered, in case of necessity, to attract reservists to ensure the safety of the Tajik-Afghan border. However, as it was noted by observers, in the conditions of mass abroad migration of the male population of Tajikistan, in the case of possible attack from the Afghan territory and emergence of several hotbeds of tension in the country, the government of Emomali Rakhmon will be unable to call upon the necessary number of reservists to the armed forces.

In these circumstances, cooperation in the security sphere, in the format Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran is of particular importance. In February of the current year in Tehran, following the talks of the Minister of internal Affairs of Tajikistan Rahimzoda R. with his Iranian counterpart R. Fazli there was signed an Agreement on cooperation in the security sphere. It provides, in particular, strengthening of cooperation in combating terrorism, extremism, separatism, as well as in strengthening the borders with Afghanistan. Besides, according to the mass media reports, the Ministers discussed the issue of training personnel for law enforcement bodies of Tajikistan.¹¹

In parallel Dushanbe strengthens contacts with the security forces of Afghanistan. According to the head of the Interior Ministry of Tajikistan, the relevant authorities of the RT keep constant contact with the Afghan defense forces and the law enforcement bodies. In

Afghanistan there is to be set up a representative office of the Interior Ministry of Tajikistan designed to coordinate the efforts of Internal Affairs bodies of the two countries in the fight against organized crime, extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking.¹²

However, Russia remains the main partner of Tajikistan in the field of security. The two countries actively cooperate within the frames of the CSTO, the SCO. In the spring of this year, Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu said that Russia will continue to provide military support to Dushanbe and strengthen its base in this country.¹³ In early April Tajikistan hosted a meeting of the Military Committee of the CSTO, which analyzed the challenges and threats to military security in the regions of collective security, and had stated its readiness to confront the possible threat, posed by the grouping “Islamic State” on the Tajik-Afghan border.¹⁴

In future, seemingly, the role of the Tajik-Iranian relations in the geopolitics of the region will be largely determined by the international environment. In particular, in the case of lifting the sanctions against Iran it may become possible to revive the ancient Silk Road from Central Asia to Europe via Iran. In this case, Tajikistan could receive significant dividends as a transit country and implementation of the above-mentioned project of creating the Trans-Asian railway from China to Iran will contribute to this.

In the process of strengthening its international position, Iran will, most probably, seek to expand its influence in Central Asia. However, it is unlikely to ever reach the level of Chinese economic influence in the region. Tehran does not claim any serious competition to the Russian presence in Central Asia. However, for Moscow it may be significant that under certain conditions there is a possibility of creating the routes of energy supplies transit from Central Asia to Europe via Iran alternative to Russian ones.

Today there is the evidence that Tehran is inclined to regard Moscow as its priority partner. It should be noted that the level of cooperation of Iran with Russia and Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan, can seriously increase in case of its joining the SCO. The question is now under discussion.

Notes:

- ¹ <http://scosummit2014.tj/index.php/ru/glavnoe-menyu/arkhiv-novostej/243-tadzhikistan-iran-sotrudnichestvo-na-veka>
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- ¹¹ <http://www.tojnews.org/ru/news/iran-i-tadzhistan-dogovorilis-...>
- ¹² http://kurdistan.ru/2015/18/news-23195_MVD_Tadzhikistana_Usilennyj_rezhim...
- ¹³ <http://www.trend.az/casia/tajikistan/2384475.html>
- ¹⁴ <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26951452.html>

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**MUSLIM THOUGHT AFTER MUSA BIGIYEV:
IN SEARCH OF SYNTHESIS OF THE KORANIC
REVELATION AND MODERN TRENDS¹**

Musa Bigiyev is one of the most brilliant representatives of the Tatar and extraordinary theological thought, outstanding intellectual with innovative thinking, and with his own vision of many problems. Russian Muslim Bigiyev was formed at the intersection of cultures and learned European, Russian, Arabic, Persian and Turkic tradition of education. He is also actively appealed to the materials of contemporary science and philosophy, recognizing the divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Koran. Bigiyev proposed to combine the knowledge of the Koran, hadiths, the best of all legal schools with modern knowledge. At the end of his life, he said: “I had one goal in all that I said and wrote: save the mind and the thought from slavery, give freedom to the mind, give strength to the will.”²

Musa Bigiyev demonstrated by his example that rational knowledge fits well into Islam. Contrary to popular prejudice, Islam is a religion of belief, on the basis of faith and rational knowledge, is the religion of everyday and religious practices, based on a reasonable, rational approach. Since “Islam” literally means “humility before Almighty” and this word is used in the Koran in this sense, it can be argued that Allah takes humility, based on mind, rational thought, actions and faith. The Koran calls us to debate, to a reasonable discussion of the issues of faith (16: 125).³

The Koran warns us against violent and unreasonable act in faith: “If God had willed it, those who on earth would have believed; Certainly, you'll be getting people forcibly converted to the faith?!” (10:99). “There is no compulsion in faith / religion” (2: 256).

The appeal to the mind in matters of faith and of the knowledge permeates the entire text of the Holy Quran. Cognition through mind, according to Scripture, is a natural complement to cognition through the revelation. These two ways of cognition associated with the “book” (kitab) and “wisdom” (Hikma) or “intelligence” in the Koran (see verses 16: 125 and 2: 269; 2: 129.231, 3: 164; 4:54; 62: 2 certainly. Classical Muslim cultures were characterized by the cult of knowledge and mind throughout the world, and it has been long before the rise of modern European rationalism. Sinners, ignored both ways, will repent during the Last Judgment: “If we had listened to if we meant, would not be among the dwellers of Hell!” (67:10). Such attention to the reasonable cognition is confirmed, by hadiths. We find in a hadith that mind was the first creation of Allah, and Allah spoke, looking at his creation: “By my greatness, I did not create anything that was closer to me than you. I withdraw by you, I donee by you, I reward and punish by you.”

The easiest way to understand it goes through philosophy, because philosophy is the essence of rational knowledge, a synthesis of all the sciences and the basis of a holistic worldview.

The great systems of Ibn Sina, Ibn Arabi, al-Ghazali, al-Kirmani and others were created in the Arab-Muslim region in the classical period. These systems include the entire body of knowledge of that time, not only the natural sciences, but also metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, logic, poetics. However, admiring their greatness, you realize that the era of large systems is over.

In modern times, we are observing Muslim thinking crisis. The best case is a paraphrase and commentary on the classics, the worst – the lack of the most philosophical and rational reflection, a splash of irrationalism and radicalism.

The current situation is particularly depressing. How many can you list the major Muslim thinkers of our time?

Yes, Tawfiq Ibrahim deserves the greatest respect in Russia. Undoubtedly, Tariq Ramadan is a prominent figure in the European intellectual space. In Iran, Seyyed Hossein Nasr is developing a specific version of Islamic traditionalism⁴.

But they are all individual thinkers, scattered around the world. Systems developed by contemporary Muslim philosophers, not integral, they are focused on private matters. There is nothing comparable in scale to al-Ghazali system, or to Hegel's system, if we turn to the European region. Muslim thinking requires integrality, because the whole world is a sign of Allah and there is no area that is not needed in understanding.

The fact that Muslim thinkers rarely fall into the textbooks on the philosophy of the 20th century reflects the realities of the umma. Muslims could do much more to declare loudly about themselves in the philosophical field to respond to the call of the Koran to a reasonable faith, help to explain the message of Allah through philosophy, reveal the deep meanings of the Koran for the people of the West.

Yes, there were many examples in the 20th century, when Europeans turned to the sources of Islamic thought, but the classical period. School integral traditionalism may be mentioned (P. Guenon, F. Schuon, T. Burkhardt), Inspired by Sufi philosophy, primarily Ibn Arabi⁵. However, the appeal of these Europeans to Islam was due to a crisis of spirituality in the West, that has resorted to the works

of Muslim intellectuals in search of a new “Eastern” experience. Unfortunately, the Muslim world is not always prone to deep philosophical creativity in modern times.

Seyed Mohammad Khatami, a major political and spiritual leader of Iran, said at the time: “the fact that the golden age of Islamic civilization has passed does not mean that the Koran and Islam also withered.” “We Muslims believe that we must keep faith in the Koran and a genuine Islam and at the same time we have to find new answers to the emerging issues on the basis of our religion today”⁶.

It is time to think seriously about the prospects of Muslim philosophy, otherwise we will have to admit that Muslims ignore the call of the Koran to the reasonable faith and holistic outlook. Despite the grandeur of old systems, we can not be satisfied with them fully. The knowledge accumulated by mankind to our time, is significantly different from what was known in the classical era. Obviously Musa Bigiyev was guided by this idea, and we are the successors of the case.

So, what are the key topics and where we should seek common ground between the Koranic revelation and a philosophical thought? Here are a few general questions.

The first is whether the philosophy is possible in Islam? And what is the ratio of Muslim philosophy and non-Muslim / non-religious philosophy? As previously mentioned, the need for philosophy, understood as an integrated science and holistic worldview, derives from the provisions of the Koran on the reasonable knowledge. The Koran teaches a reasonable comprehension of the world. All is true, which is consistent with mind, therefore, goes directly to Allah, because “the truth,” Al-Haqq serves his attribute. I believe Muslims should move in line with this understanding.

The second issue is related to the classical theological issues, planned as far back as the early period of Islamic thought. These include the problem of understanding of Allah, the relations of Allah and the world, the origin of the world, human nature, predetermination. In short, they are metaphysics and anthropology in the broadest sense. We need to find out whether the Koranic revelation allows to understand better contemporary scientific knowledge; and vice versa, whether the current knowledge allows a better understanding of certain aspects of the Koranic revelation (after all, we are always judged on the basis of knowledge of our time, as there are restrictions, and divine knowledge is beyond the time).

The Koran says that the whole world is a self-opening plan of Allah, so the issue is important to the usefulness of the physical, chemical, biological knowledge for the knowledge of Allah – of course, not the particulars, but the large scale of the laws and principles. The Koran also says that the man himself performs the sign of Allah and studying it is also a holy deed. We find confirmation of this in the hadith: “Whoever knows his own soul, the one knows his God.” It seems that modern anthropology and cognitive science can tell a lot about the man and his cognitive mechanisms thinking and mind. Perhaps science is not able to penetrate into the soul of man, in his heart, but should be ignored other bodies of knowledge as unnecessary and unimportant?

The third important philosophical problem concerns the unity and diversity of mankind. It is particularly acute in the modern world. Globalization implies a unified oneness of humanity, but there is a downside to this process: the unification leads to the destruction of cultural and linguistic diversity, excessive expansion of the secular sphere. It seems that such a result is not an accident. It is caused by the very logic of the globalization process, developed in the framework of

classical liberalism. According to this logic, the person is an individual, the pure subject, which means that all of his identities are, secondary and fleeting. Thus, according to the principle of unification, globalization – is philosophically based process, the process of approximation to a common mankind, living on the European model, and not burdened by identities of a higher order.

Muslims must find an alternative to this process. The Koran does not teach unification. He proclaims the unity of humanity in origin, but at the same time it emphasizes predetermination of the real variety: “O people! Verily, We have created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other, and the most revered among you before Allah – the most righteous ” (49:13).

Pluralism positions and cultural diversity of a multi-polar world corresponds to the Koranic revelation to a greater extent: “If Allah had not kept some people by others, the earth, indeed, would be filled with iniquity” (2: 251). The basis for the unity of people is the righteousness and piety, but not wearing a uniform and following the same way of life, because consistency does not exclude shamelessness.

I turn now to the fourth important problem – the problem of religious diversity. There are hot debates among Muslims on this subject. I suppose that the problem should be solved in several planes and the Koranic revelation speaks of it.

According to the Koran, the essence of Islam, that is submission to Allah, is monotheism and good deeds. Human nature is the faithful initially, as indicated by the following hadith Qudsi: “Verily I created all my servants as the faithful.” Moreover, the Koran says that the faithful nature is essentially unchanged (30:30).

Man can cease to follow his nature in accordance with his convictions, and then he ceases to be a monotheist and ceases to do

good deeds. Allah sent prophets to all nations and teachers to prevent this from happening: “We have raised in every nation a messenger” (16:36). “And there is no people whom a warner has not been [granted]” (35:24). Obviously, the number of prophets is not limited to the number of 25 people mentioned in the Koran, because there were more people on earth always, and indeed Allah tells Muhammad (peace be upon him): “We are messengers before thee; We told you about some, and did not tell – about the others, to prevent this from happening” (40:78).

Thus, Muslims have every reason for a pluralistic approach to the fact of religious diversity: each religion should preserve the traces of Islam (ie, monotheism and moral piety), you need only know how to find them, to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, divine and eternal from human and for introduced. Musa Bigiyev was guided by the idea that developed the thesis of the universality of God's mercy and when he devoted his time to the study of religions, like Hinduism and Buddhism⁷.

There is an abundance of materials, which allows us to trace the genesis of every major spiritual tradition, opens up broad prospects or understanding religious diversity and creation of a holistic philosophy on Islamic grounds of religion. Preliminary attempts of this kind are presented in the philosophy of Ibn Ara-bi and Suhrawardi⁸, but modern Muslim thinkers have done practically nothing new in this philosophical direction, unfortunate.

The fifth philosophical problem – the problem of tolerance – is closely linked to the previous one. It has become a key theme of the social philosophy of the second half of the 20th century, along with the freedom and emancipation.

Herbert Marcuse aphoristically formulated the essence of the problem: “Is philosophy possible after Auschwitz?” Indeed, the

unprecedented disasters and tragedies that happened to mankind in the 20th century, made seriously doubt on the sequence and elaboration of philosophical understanding of tolerance and freedom in modern times. The result was emancipatory projects of the Frankfurt School, the New Left, of radical feminism and postmodernism, which were aimed at overcoming prohibitions and deconstruction of power relations in all spheres of life⁹.

Now this has resulted in: blurring the distinction between righteousness and sin, erosion of gender identity, legalization of same-sex marriages, exhibitionism and so on. Muslims must find a philosophical alternative to the insane tolerance of this kind. We should rely on the Koran. The line between righteousness and sin, acceptable and unacceptable, clearly established in Scripture. We can not ignore this fact, no matter how we would justify people. On the other hand, the Koran is against oppression and repressive measures. Only Allah knows who is righteous and who is worthy of condemnation. One of the basic principles of the Hanafī was the imposition of final judgments of righteousness in the court of Allah and it seems to me this is the most correct approach. We can condemn the sin, but not the people. Only God is able to judge people. Muslim philosophy of tolerance should be developed in this direction, and with reliance on the Koranic conception of righteousness.

So, I marked the five themes that are of particular importance to Muslim philosophy. This is a question about the relevance of philosophy in general, classical problems of metaphysics and anthropology, the question of the unity and diversity of humanity, the question of religious diversity, the problem of tolerance and emancipation.

Of course, there are many other urgent problems, but they are secondary compared to the stated problems. Lack of understanding

of these issues would mean ignoring the Koranic call for a reasonable faith that is disregard for God's call to us as human beings. And can there be anything more humiliating than the neglect of the mind – the noblest creations of Allah? Let me remind the hadith: “Allah has not created anything nobler mind, and his wrath falls on those who neglect it.”

What are the motives and thoughts of the supporters of Muslim thinking in these intellectual efforts? Of course, it is striving to achieve prosperity of the Islamic civilization, so that the Muslim Ummah will take its rightful place in the family of nations of the Earth.

At the same time, the religion of Islam was revealed to all mankind, and the message of the Prophet Muhammad, and the scripture – the Koran, passed through him, are addressed to all people, and our aim is to clarify the Koranic truths to all mankind.

Achieving prosperity for all the descendants of our father Adam in the world now and in eternity is a great goal and a great destination predetermined by the Creator! Creator expects obedience, which is based on mind, uniting all human beings, intelligence, facilitating the path of knowledge of the universe, and the faith extending from the heart.

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