

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

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

**RUSSIA
AND
THE MOSLEM WORLD
2016 – 8 (290)**

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

**Moscow
2016**

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**GEOPOLITICAL TRIANGLE OF RELATIONS
AMONG RUSSIA, THE EU AND THE U.S. :
A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE**

The model of relations between Russia, the European Union and the United States is of particular importance today in conditions of increasing global political instability, when the flow of refugees radically transform the well-established system of the European Union, and the international terrorism becomes more realistic. The U.S. seeks to weaken the major political, economic and military position of Russia, consolidating its political influence in the European Union. However, the successful military actions of Russia in Syria, leading to a political settlement of the crisis, have seriously changed the relationship in the geopolitical triangle. This trend raises a number of questions from the expert community, for example: What are the historical patterns, affecting the relations among Russia, the EU and the U.S.? What are the possible options for changing the existing model of

the tripartite relationship that will lead the process of political transformation of the EU? What are the benefits and the dangers that bring the realization of possible scenarios of development of relations in the geopolitical triangle for Russia?

Currently, the existing relations between Russia, the European Union and the United States are characterized by Russian President Vladimir Putin most completely in his statement, that Russia does not seek confrontation with other countries, including the European Union, but is forced to defend its national interests¹. The only way for Russia to maintain its importance in the international arena and to realize modernization lies in its close cooperation with Europe, according to the American geopolitics Brzezinski [Zbigniew Brzezinski 2010: 143]. It should be noted the fact, that the main goal of the U.S. foreign policy – the pursuit of global leadership – is carried out through a “tool” like the European Union.

A retrospective look at the history of political relations between Russia, Europe, and the U.S. in the second half of the 20th – early 21st century, reveals a systematic alternation of periods of detente and tension in the tripartite relationship. The period of relatively friendly relations, marked by mutual cooperation in the geopolitical triangle, was replaced by a wave of alienation later. As soon as the U.S. government notes the drift of positions of the majority of the European countries in the direction of Russia, the next wave of anti-Russian confrontation comes then, clothed in tougher or softer forms. We believe that the current period of “containment” of Russia will change the process of consensus-building and the search for new points of trilateral cooperation in the future. A stable trend toward cooperation with the Soviet Union, the growth of popularity of the communist ideas and communist parties in the Western Europe emerged in the vast majority of the European countries after the war. The U.S. political elite

could not let that happen, because of the fear of a possible loss of the acquired international influence.

The value of relations in the geopolitical triangle of Russia, the European countries and the United States became evident most strongly with the beginning of World War II. The joint struggle of the USSR, the U.S. and some of the European countries against Nazi Germany was laid down in this period, as it seemed, a solid foundation for the most positive and constructive model of the international relations. As quickly as the warming of relations has come, and the alienation wave came with the beginning of the “cold war”, and Churchill's Fulton speech was its formal expression (1946). This period was subdued the logic of bloc confrontation of Soviet and American systems that incorporate the countries of the divided Europe. The model of relations was a clear division into the rival military blocs – NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO).

The transition of the triangular relationship to the model of cooperation can be traced back from the beginning of the restructuring and to the subsequent collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, which lasted, with some modifications, to 2007. During this period, the European Union finally has emerged as full-fledged actor in international relations. It should be noted, that Russia, trying to build a Western-style democratic state in this period, was seen as a “junior partner” which can be easily dictated the terms, in the system of international relations for the political elite of the U.S. and the EU, [Cherdantsev 2012: 42–44].

The reality of the birth transition to a modified concept of “containment” can be observed in the EU and the U.S. policy toward Russia from the moment of Munich speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin (2007). The conflict in South Ossetia (2008), provoking the growth of “color revolutions” in former Soviet republics, an

unsuccessful attempt to “reset” U.S.-Russian relations also laid the foundation for mutual mistrust that most sharply manifested in the Ukrainian crisis. The reunification of Russia and the Crimea in March 2014 was the highest key point in the manifestation of tripartite contradictions that marked the transition of the US and the EU strategy for the course on the open confrontation with the Russian Federation.

At the same time Russia has not turned into a regional power, as the U.S. President Barack Obama said, but its international policy directly determines the future of Europe, which was evident in the successful settlement of the Syrian crisis². The main characteristics of the Russian strategy was in the Syrian crisis, firstly, the intelligent decisions about the beginning of military-political operations in Syria, allowed to change balance of power in the region; secondly, the ability to coordinate the actions of the Syrian and international armed forces with Russian bombardments; Third, the high dynamics of the interaction with the U.S. military and politicians; Fourth, a large-scale information support for the military campaign that determined the unprecedented transparency of Russian operations in the course of the armed conflict³; Fifth, the efficiency of the decision on the transition of the military operation in the final stage⁴. In general, the high efficiency of Russian actions during the Syrian crisis has marked the beginning of the first phase of transition to a search for points of cooperation between Russia, the EU and the U.S.

As for the existing model of relations in the geopolitical triangle, now the European Union is going through one of the most difficult periods in its history. Currently, the EU has become a hostage of a voluntary anti-Russian policy of the U.S. On the one hand, the EU is under pressure from immigration crisis, caused by the ill-considered actions of NATO during the Arab Spring. On the other hand, the EU is a hostage of the irresponsible policy of the Ukrainian government,

acting according to the instructions of the U.S. At the same time, most of the EU member states are not willing to put up with the deterioration of relations with Russia, since economic ties and joint business projects have been jeopardized. In the current situation, the form of the next model of trilateral relations will depend on how Russia and the U.S. will be able to convince most of the European countries in the prospect of its political course.

Future relations of the geopolitical triangle of Russia, the EU and the U.S. can develop on the following main scenarios.

The first scenario is the preservation of the European Union under the U.S. control. Preserving and strengthening of the close cooperation of the EU countries with the U.S. will be one of the most negative scenarios for cooperation between Russia and the EU, although one of the most likely. It should be noted that Russia's relations with the European Union are going through hard times right now. A significant part of areas of mutual cooperation were frozen in 2014 as a result of the unilateral Western sanctions. In the current situation, the European Union is ready to go for those bilateral contacts that meet its key interests and do not cause irritation of the U.S. at the same time. If this situation persists, the sanctions standoff will continue to cause mutual damage, but the leadership of the EU countries will continue to try to ignore the negative effects of the anti-Russian sanctions on European economies for the sake of the idea of transatlantic solidarity.

The fact may be another sign of growing solidarity of some EU countries with the US that in June 2015, European politicians appreciated positively the next appeal of the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to arrange defense spending in accordance with the 2% of the GDP of the country for the first time in many years⁵.

Washington plans are realized to allocate \$ 3.4 billion for the strengthening of the military presence in Europe in 2017⁶.

Perhaps the U.S. will be able to convince the leadership of the EU core countries, frightened by the growth of imaginary external threats, to increase military spending, that will help strengthen NATO and the growth of the U.S. influence in Europe.

The U.S. is currently considering Russia as the main military-political rival on the world stage, which is reflected in the steady attempts to destabilize the situation along the Russian western borders with increasing frequency. One consequence of this fact is the desire of the U.S. to encircle Russia missile defense system, and it will continue forcing of Euro missile defense elements by placing the system near Russian borders – in the Baltic States, Ukraine and Turkey.

One of the most effective ways of holding European countries in the mainstream of American policy is the activation of NATO, which can still serve the purpose of maintaining the bloc discipline and the unity of the EU and the U.S. although considerably has lost its influence from the times of the “cold war.” European Command of the U.S. Armed Forces issued an updated military-political strategy, one of the main priorities of which is called “deterrence of aggression” of the Russian Federation⁷. Thus, the U.S. is trying to change the European country fully from the internal contradictions in the idea of a possible "Russian aggression" against the EU to re-make to obey. The crisis of refugees is extremely frightened Europe and the U.S. is looking for new myths to shake up Europe and to make EU citizens believe the United States. Most of these myths are old, deep-rooted fears in the minds of Europeans, which in practice proved to be very effective, so they are updated again to be used in the information war against Russia.

Most EU economic initiatives will continue to be bundled with political demands, which most fully expressed in the “Five new

principles of relations with Russia”, agreed by the heads of EU foreign ministers⁸. Such political demands for Russia are: the “return” of the Crimea to Ukraine; “Democratization” of the current Russian political regime; settlement of the conflict in the Donbass region in favor of the Ukrainian side; Russia's assistance to strengthen relations between the EU and the countries of the EAEC; Russia adoption of European conditions in the energy sector. The creation of The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), under the auspices of the United States significantly undermines the existing economic influence of Russia in the EU [Shavshukov, Romaniuk 2015: 107–108]. The development of TTIP also adversely affects the prospects of Russian-European economic projects.

Minimization of economic cooperation, the deepening of the existing and creation of new points of conflict between the EU and Russia is likely to happen as a result of this scenario. The implementation of this scenario will be linked to a possible choice regarding passive foreign policy and economic strategy of the Russian Federation in relation to the European Union.

The second scenario is the collapse of the European Union. The urgent migration crisis, followed the debt crisis of the eurozone, has already led to a sharp decrease of solidarity within the EU. Migrants are once again experiencing the strength of the European Union: the illegal entry into the EU in breach of national laws and the Schengen rules, the violation of the Dublin criteria, etc. Leaders of the EU countries went on about the migrants and expressed readiness to change the existing immigration rules in almost all these matters. Society and the public authorities are not ready completely to the integration of migrants in most European countries. Continued hesitant policy of the European authorities seriously undermines the effectiveness of the existing European legal system, and the very idea of European integration.

The Great Britain constant attempts to get out of the EU also. that does not add optimism about the single future of the EU. However, the desire to solve a temporary problem though British contributed to a compromise at the February summit of the European Council (2016), during which all the requirements of the UK have been formally satisfied. Reaching agreement with the UK does not guarantee positive and lasting results on the issues of membership of other countries in the EU. The UK has always had a special status of the formal and informal structure of the EU: the right not to adopt the Euro, not participate in the euro area financial projects. The UK is also not a part of the Schengen zone and not involved in the security of individual projects, including visa and migration policy, the fight against terrorism⁹. At the same time the United Kingdom plays a significant role in shaping the foreign policy of the EU and the single European security policy. It is possible that other EU countries will qualify for such status, being under the threat of aggravation of migration or the financial crisis, which actually lead to the disintegration of the European Union.

Today the political situation in Germany is becoming more difficult against the backdrop of the migration crisis. Some EU countries, and the German public impose liability on the activities of German Chancellor Angela Merkel for the failures of the political course¹⁰. However, the fall of the Chancellor's rating and possible failure in the upcoming election are not determined by the impact and effectiveness of the Russian “propaganda” as trying to present some Western politicians and experts, and the negative activity of the German and European media, the growing discontent of the German society. Strengthening of euro-scepticism and change of the current German leadership will be one of the symbols of the failure of the existing EU policies, not only in the issue of migration, but also the foundations of European integration.

Cancellation of the Schengen agreement could serve as a beginning of a process of gradual disintegration of the EU: the six European countries have already introduced border controls with the neighboring EU countries in recent months¹¹. It should be noted the high symbolism, and the value of the Schengen zone, associated with the idea and the image of the united Greater Europe. And the probable dismantling of the system, even without a formal cancellation, will be the major demotivating factor for continued membership in the EU. It becomes obvious, that not only the Schengen agreement, but also the EU itself does not escape the collapse in this situation.

A possible variant of destruction a single EU framework could be the collapse of association, for several enclaves or blocks of individual countries. Southeastern part of Europe is the most possible area where the EU decay can begin: Greece, Balkans, and the crisis of the European idea there might lead to a resumption of the remaining old conflicts and interstate conflicts.

Also some Central European countries are increasingly opposed to the policy of Germany and the EU, and require a solution of the problem of refugees as soon as possible. Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary have already threatened to become a major critic of the single European project from its main apologists. The combination of shaky political situation in the “Eastern Partnership” countries with rising discontent in Central Europe can re-create a new version of the competition for Middle Europe between Russia, the countries of Western Europe and the U.S.

The result of this scenario can lead to a significant strengthening of Russia's position in the European countries, especially in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The collapse of the European Union will significantly weaken the U.S. position, but NATO for some time will be the only tool to promote the U.S. policy in the EU. In general, this

scenario will be an opportunity for Russia to build a more positive and constructive relationship with each individual European country that is not burdened by bloc discipline.

The third scenario is the output of the EU from the U.S. influence. The EU leadership understand (on the background of worsening of various kinds of crises and conflicts) that such a situation should be guided by its own national interests, not the interests of the U.S. Understanding arises that further NATO expansion will inevitably lead to the emergence of new and deepening existing dividing lines in Europe, the increasing fragmentation of European security space, further complicate relations between Russia and the EU. Thus, the expansion of NATO (for example, the entry of Ukraine and Serbia in the Alliance) will have a negative impact both on the stability of the European Union as a whole, and on the nature of the bilateral cooperation between Russia and the EU.

At the same time it is clear that NATO forces will not be able either to stop the flow of refugees, or contribute to the settlement of the Ukrainian conflict, because they were created for an open military confrontation with the Soviet Union and never were efficient in reflecting this type of threat. Perhaps NATO forces will be able to reduce the number of migrant stream that will soothe the European public, but it is impossible to solve the problem of an influx of refugees in this way. Hence, the European Union countries will strengthen the unified armed forces of the European Union in terms of inefficiency of NATO. As a consequence, the creation of a military-political bloc is possible, that is not similar to NATO in its structure.

Political control system of the European Union is not too adapted to quick and decisive measures to counter internal and external threats, which complicates the implementation of this scenario. The area of opportunities for independent policy is significantly reduced, because

the EU takes a long time to agree on all the national interests, and there is a strong pro-US lobby within supranational bodies. The situation is also complicated by the fact that the EU includes the United Kingdom, which is one of the major US strategic allies on the continent, and therefore strictly follows the American foreign policy. Also, the uneven pace of economic development of European countries calls into question the ability of the EU to the single and unidirectional political action.

It should be noted in this scenario, first of all, that the relationship between Europe and Russia will have to build on the background of the existing mutual suspicion – mistrust between the government leaders, political elite and society as a whole. The EU countries are likely to lift economic sanctions, but for some time they keep personal restrictions against Russian politicians whom they consider responsible for the events in the Crimea and Donbas. It should be noted that this scenario is consistent with the basic interests of Russia as a whole, since this model of relations will allow solving problems with the EU without excessive involvement of the US, basing solely on political and economic rationality.

The fourth scenario is the active cooperation of the EU with Russia. This scenario is the best for the future of Russian-European cooperation, although it is still relatively distant in time. A series of terrorist attacks against Russia, the growth of the terrorist threat in Europe can seriously affect the improvement of relations and cooperation in combating international terrorism in the medium term. For example, if the Russian-French relations were built in line with the overall logic of the sanctions war between Russia and the West and challenge the standards of conduct established in the international arena after a period of “cold war”, then the countries became allies in the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS¹²) after the terrorist attack in Paris

in November 2015. The obvious success of Russia in the war against terrorism in Syria not only strengthened the Russian positions in European countries considerably, but had a positive impact on the joint political and military cooperation with the United States. It is also possible that some EU countries may be interested in Russian experience in the integration of migrants.

Recent statements of European politicians of different levels also indicate that the anti-Russian sanctions seriously harm their country, and they are ready to act for the abolition of them, but are connected Europe-wide solidarity¹³. At the same time, Germany, Britain and the Baltic countries advocate for the extension of anti-Russian sanctions experiencing strong influence of the U.S. and intimidated by myths about the growth of the “Russian threat” of the European security. However, if the U.S. prolongs sanctions against Russia, the EU has never made decisions almost completely unanimous on the matter¹⁴. Estimates of total damage in Europe from imposing its own sanctions regime and the Russian response measures are close to 100 billion euro¹⁵. Even Poland, traditionally pro-American and anti-Russian, is not in favor of automatic renewal of economic restrictions in recent years.

Saving of the sanctions regime is directly depended on the U.S. political line, but the benefits of cooperation with Russia and the growth of economic damage may soon outweigh the political differences for the EU. This will happen not only because of sympathy for Russian policy, but will be dictated by the national interests of states – members of the EU, in particular economic interests. States, such as Germany and Italy, will seek ways for closer economic cooperation with Russia in the interests of national business elites, against the general positions of the EU and the U.S.

It should be noted that Russia can not use the tools of direct political or economic pressure when the EU countries are subject to anti-Russian information influence. Tested information policy and the promotion of a positive image of the Russian state through the foreign media are able to persuade the European public towards Russia.

One of the most important arguments in cooperation between Russia and the EU is the energy sector. In any case, the current geopolitical and economic turbulence proves once again that Russia remains the most profitable and reliable partner in the supply of energy for Europe. That is why Hungary and some countries of South-Eastern Europe are interested in supporting the policy of Russia. Possibilities of the countries of the EU are significantly limited by their membership in such alliance as NATO to conduct an independent foreign policy, but they are not deprived of their autonomy completely. The question is about the readiness of each individual European country to implement this right, based on its own national interests.

The outcome of this scenario would be the most productive model of cooperation between Russia with the EU countries. In general, the realization of this scenario is primarily associated with the abolition of the regime of the European political and economic sanctions. Also political guarantees of the EU countries are required to refuse the introduction of such a regime, or its variants against Russia in the future.

It is possible to make the following conclusions, summing up the thinking on the relationship in the geopolitical triangle “Russia – the EU – the U.S.” under the sanctions regime, the migratory crisis and considering options for the EU transformation.

Obviously, it is difficult and it is not necessary to restore the model of the “strategic partnership” (1991–2000) now, under which Russia could not protect its national interests. Therefore, the existing

relations between Russia and the EU will likely not be integrated for some time, and will focus on several of the application fields of cooperation with individual EU countries, that will be able to go beyond the general anti-Russian policy of the EU and the U.S.

Practical aspects are still persisted, and it is impossible to ignore the existing framework of relations between Russia and the EU because of them, regardless of the political situation – this migration (now the problem is much more acute in connection with the refugee problem), energy (at least for a few decades, the dependence inseparable), the fight against international terrorism (the need for a joint effort). It is true, as the national and supranational regulatory framework in Europe is beginning to change actively under the influence of internal problems.

The content of European integration and European security are changed during a succession of military and political crises and conflicts essentially. It is not only in the Ukrainian conflict and other conflict areas where Russia, the EU and the U.S. enter into real or virtual competition. Perhaps the European space is no longer a guaranteed stability zone as a whole, which it was during the second half of 20 – beginning of 21 centuries. On the one hand, the EU will not be able to step back from more fatal political failures and their American strategy in the Middle East, on the other – the accumulated internal imbalance of the European integration project obviously will lead to the dismantling of the integration mode (the Schengen Agreement) and the deepening contradictions between the EU member states.

It may be noted that the most favorable direction for Russian cooperation with the EU, and to some extent with the United States will only be possible with the removal of anti-Russian economic sanctions and the resumption of cooperation, taking into account the interests of

Russia, basing on the scenarios considered. The least favorable, but one of the possible scenarios of relationships is associated with the continuation of the following EU countries in line with the general policy of the U.S. under the supervision of NATO.

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PROBLEM OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES IN THE SOUTH OF RUSSIA

The process of obtaining a sustainable model of church-state relations has not acquired a complete character in the country. Two drafts of the concepts of state-confessional relations in the Russian Federation were rejected in 2001. The controversy surrounding these documents has been gradually subsided, but the fundamental questions remained unresolved.

Perhaps this is associated with the ambiguity of opinions of the scientific community about the methods and mechanisms of relations between the state and religious associations. Considerable attention in the scientific work is focused on the need for joint efforts of the state and religious organizations in overcoming problems of social reality, it is proposed to develop a set of clear criteria to obtain the status of denomination of state-recognized. This status will contain the entire set of responsibilities and privileges for religious communities and will enable them to carry out their activities freely. At the same time there is a position denying the model of church-state relations, which is issued as a policy of consolidation of the state and religious interests¹.

Considering a position on the division of spheres of competence of the secular and religious authorities, while maintaining the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs at the same, we believe that the state should contribute to the activity of religious organizations, to cooperate with them in solving problems, where common interests are aligned and overlapped.

This line of public policy is reflected in the “Ufa theses” of the Russian President: “The new socialization of Islam should be seen as a development of the traditional muslim way of life, thinking, attitudes in accordance with contemporary social reality”².

The Head of State declared the need to recreate the traditional Islamic theological school for the first time in the history of Russia, which was especially important and adhered by the majority of muslim scholars in the world. In fact, this is a historic moment for the Russian muslims, there is a political will of the highest in the country, allowing them to hold a civil position in accordance with their religion.

Religious leaders of the country have expressed the idea of creation of the Russian Academy of Islamic Sciences, with the center in Moscow for a long time. The reason for delaying is not so much the

reluctance of government officials to assist in the allocation of territory under construction, preparation of documents, and so on, as the process of gradual harmonization of positions, opinions regional Islamic structures on the single status of the institution, on its educational nature and science how to develop an Islamic social doctrine. So it comes time of consolidation in the Russian muslim community. “We need to move towards the unification of all regional central religious organizations and local religious organizations under a single Spiritual Administration of muslims of the Russian Federation”, – said R. Gaynutdin, called the reform a priority in 2015³.

Perhaps the process of implementation of the political will is not quick and easy, but the given vector under the power-Islamic dialogue is aimed at preserving Russian spiritual space, strengthening of civil and patriotic feelings on the part of the muslim population, harmonization of inter-religious and church-state relations. The implementation of the religious policy in a given line should solve the problem of politicization of Islam as an attempt to move a portion of the outstanding spiritual and ideological issues in the political plane.

The presence of any one model of church-state relations or the coexistence of different types in the state or in the Federation is determined by the peculiarities of the political situation, the degree of coherence of the religious policy between different levels of government, the historical role of religion in social processes and in the culture of peoples in Russia.

The formation of these types of relationships between the government and religious organizations can be seen in the republics of Chechnya and Dagestan in the North Caucasus, which is dominated by signs of cooperative models and the separation of church-state relations.

The basic models of state-confessional relations in a secular state are: a segregation model (the state considers religion as a negative social phenomenon and seeks to limit the role of religion in public life), a separation model (a separate, independent existence of the state and religious organizations, mutual non-interference of the state and religious associations the activities of each other), a cooperation model (state solves social problems in cooperation with religious associations).

The ability to analyze state-confessional relations in Chechnya and Dagestan and the North Caucasus in general is caused by that many of adats of ethnic groups inhabiting it are very similar. One can speak about the fact that Dagestan “is the model of the North Caucasus”⁴⁷.

So, the basic trends toward a cooperative model in Chechnya are such that clergy is actively involved in the solution of many important social problems; it takes part in the meetings in cooperation with the state and municipal authorities. Government of the republic attracts religious leaders and faith-based organizations to solve public problems, that is, creates the conditions for the involvement of religious communities in building civil society, to overcome religious isolationism.

Nowadays religion becomes one of the legitimate factors in the public political life of the Chechen Republic. Representatives of public authorities turn to the fundamental values of Islam, thus emphasizing their importance and commitment to them.

An important form of cooperation between public authorities and religious organizations is a social partnership, on the basis of agreements and contracts on cooperation, including provisions on cooperation in the field of family support, care for children, combat alcoholism, drug abuse, assistance to socially vulnerable groups.

The position of the joint solution of many social problems of power of the Chechen Republic and religious organizations was announced by the head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, at the international forum “Islam – religion of peace and creation”⁵.

It is extremely difficult to provide spiritual consolidation of the society and to solve the urgent problem of the state, without dialogue between the authorities and representatives of religious denominations, based on trust, especially in the region with the dominance of Islam, where there is a traditional idea of constant and intense interaction between the social and religious life⁶.

Recognition and support from government authorities, necessity of using the spiritual and moral potential of Islam in the social process will contribute to the effective governing a society, combining religious values, spiritual and ethical values of the Caucasian peoples, and civil and legal norms of the Russian state. And it can lead to ethno-political stabilization in the North Caucasus Federal District entities, as well as facilitate the most efficient solution of the problem of socialization of religious communities and create comfortable conditions for the involvement of religious communities and religious citizens in the construction of the civil society, overcoming the religious isolationism.

But power in the “Chechen” version, as opposed to the “Dagestan” one counteracts granting platforms for dialogue with bearers of radical extremist ideologies that deny the value of local traditional Islam.

The federal law prohibits civil servants to use official positions in the interests of political parties, civil society, including religious associations for propaganda⁷.

The practice of state-confessional relations is often much broader and more diverse than the theoretical positions on the separation of

religion from the state, especially in the Caucasus, where religion is woven into the culture of its peoples. There is a certain contradiction in the legislation, and it seems difficult to separate an official from a citizen in a follower of a particular faith. In this regard, the interpretation of a point of law depends on the personal preferences of officials.

Allowing the use of religion for political gain in the state policy, that is clericalization of the policy, leads to the intervention of the authorities in “religious space” and in the internal affairs of religious communities, in the end.

Speaking of the prevalence of signs of a separation model of church-state relations in the Republic of Dagestan, we certainly do not mean purely distilled liberal standard for this model. The idea is that the available power-religious contacts are not of a systemic nature and are mostly limited to contacts in the sphere of counteraction to extremism.

Experts noted that there is no effective system of relations between religious leaders and the authorities of the republic in Dagestan, and it is not easy to conduct propaganda of the traditional Islam among young people, and many communities are politicized. Wahhabis religious expansion is spreading on the background of these difficulties⁸.

The process of accepting the political and legal decisions regarding Islam in the social space of the republic is not completed finally. The complexity and ambiguity of the religious situation, a variety of problems in the religious sphere is forcing members of the political elite of the region to market fluctuations in the event of ambiguous situations related to the norms of religious regulation and the principle of secularity. The passivity of the state power structures is explained by the fact of absence of the social doctrine of the

relationship between the authorities and confessions on the background of constitutional provisions on the separation of religion from the state.

There is a different understanding of the legislation of the state religious policy in the society and, therefore, there are contradictions in the social space, and the official clergy is forced to play the role of a pressure group for the realization of the interests of the faithful.

Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church believed that the cause of a collision between two models of civilization – a secular (national laws, etc.) and a clerical – is the displacement of religion from public life as a purely private matter of each person.

The domestic religious scholars suggest mechanisms for conflict-free integration of religion, particularly Islam, in modern social system of the Russian Federation.

L. Syukiyaynen highlights the legal culture of Islam, the shariat law as its positive potential from the standpoint of the state⁹.

A similar position is held by E. Suslova, believing that the state stability, the absence of conflicts and the protection of national interests are possible through the respect of individual rights only. Any Russian citizen, professing any faith or not professing any, should feel the state protects his interests and consider Russia as his homeland¹⁰.

An employee of the Center for Geopolitical Analysis and Research, professor of geopolitics at the Graduate School of Management (Paris, France) V. Avyutsky believes that it is possible to find a comprehensive solution for Chechnya and for the entire region of the North Caucasus through the postmodern geopolitics, connecting local situation with global processes. The essence is in the adaptation of Russian traditions to local conditions, not allowing a flagrant denial of the basic principles of the Russian civilization, for example theocratization this or that Russian entity¹¹.

The process of establishing a social partnership in the sphere of church-state relations in the region is gradually becoming more clear contours and is bilateral. Constructive communications of authorities and clergy promote the intra-civilized dialogue, reduce the level of radicalism among youth.

Position of the traditional clergy of the North Caucasus and Russia in their relations with the authorities on the politicization of Islam is reflected very well in the theses of Mufti RD A-HM. Abdullayev, stressing the necessity to find common ground, the point of contact with the secular authorities, working together in the name of high ideals of Islam¹².

The official clergy considers the primary objective is not criticism of the authorities, but the spread of Islamic norms and ideals in a society, devoid of corruption, social injustice, bribery, rudeness, cynicism, immorality, ignorance kills, extremism, terrorism, and so on. Thus, the official clergy uses its political, social and ideological potential for overcoming religious ignorance and the construction of an Islamic society. Religious scholars even notice it, emphasizing the position of fundamentalist religious boards. Activity of the official clergy is focused on the construction of an Islamic society, rather than to changes in the political system¹³.

Islam has been historically important social regulator of public and political life of Dagestan. Therefore, the solution of specific social and political problems is considered by muslims in a religious context.

State and religious groups are united in the opinion that it is impossible to predict the optimistic prospects for the development of any society under conditions of low level of the spiritual and moral health. If you do not stop the process of spiritual, cultural decay, then the progress in the economy, technological modernization will recede into the background, and will not be important.

This culture along with spirituality has been and remains the root factor in consolidating all levels of society, regardless of social status and religion. The information environment is often expressed the idea of a low cultural level of the people from the republics of the North Caucasus as one of the causes of ethnic conflicts in the Russian Federation.

Religion, as a part of the general culture of Russian peoples and ethnic groups, contributes the moral, legal development of the personality. Its society demand as a means of internal responsibility education, spirituality, morality and tolerance increases. In Russia, an important position on the solution of these problems belongs to the socially-oriented Islam, while it is in dialogue with the government and other traditional confessions.

Besides the responses to the social problems of modern society, governments need to establish relations with the “moderate Salafis”, that want live peacefully in a secular state, seeking to the unity of the republic muslims.

The state is not interested in the presence of any insoluble contradictions in the muslim community. But the ambitions of certain religious leaders are not conducive to the consolidation of all religious communities in the Republic of Dagestan, despite the fact that the intra-dialogue between the different currents of Islam has never completely been discontinued.

The authorities arrange conferences with the participation of well-known religious leaders where they critically analyze the issues of jihad, as well as the applicability of the term “territory of peace and Islam” to Dagestan and other subjects of the North Caucasus. Although such conferences do not solve all the problems associated with the spread of religious and political extremism, but they make a significant

contribution to raising awareness of young people and reduce the threat to society, achieving social security.

Thus, the Republic of Dagestan today is the Russian region, which could become an example for other actors in adapting muslims to the current reform of the Russian state, in spite of difficult social problems, including those in the spiritual realm. The invaluable experience of power-Islamic dialogue is acquired, in which positions are coordinated, compromises for collaboration are found, including overcoming extremist and radical manifestations in society. The principle of non-intervention of the authorities, and religion in the sphere of their functioning is maintained.

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND PAKISTAN: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Expansion of multi-level contacts between Russia and Pakistan since April 2014 and above all – conclusion of various commercial deals in military and energy fields – have forced a number of political analysts speak about a major breakthrough in bilateral relations. This

statement is true to some extent, taking into account the weak advance in this direction during the past 15 years.

We do not intend to delve into the background of bilateral relations. But it is advisable to mention the major milestones of their extraordinary development over the past 15 years, because such steps have identified the expansion of our bilateral relations to a great extent in the last two years, have become a base for their accelerated growth.

It should be emphasized that Pakistan with a population of nearly 210 million people (but not 192 million, according to Pakistani officials demographers [20. P. 199]¹) occupies an important geopolitical and military-strategic position in the South Asian and Central Asian regions, its considerable nuclear arsenal is about 120 nuclear warheads, according to estimates of the Stimson Center and the Carnegie Foundation in 2015 (India has about 100 warheads, according to information from the same source), as well as means of their delivery [16]. The assumption that Pakistan intends to increase rapidly its nuclear ammunition in the future (expressed by experts of the referred Center) is a lot of doubt, and the basis for them are objective reasons – lack of economic potential of the country and the need to get out of an extremely serious energy crisis, which requires advancing development of nuclear energy, not nuclear capacity building.

In addition, the IMF and the World Bank strictly require to give priority to the solution of energy problems in the development of the national economy, from the Government of Pakistan is really possible only through the construction of new and modernization of existing nuclear power plants now, since the possibility of a significant expansion of energy capacity through thermal power plants and hydropower plants is rather limited due to various reasons. Moreover, these international financial institutions are responsible for providing economic assistance through the overcoming of the energy crisis.

The visit of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to Moscow in February 2003, has not led to a significant expansion of bilateral ties, although agreements and memorandums of understanding on a number of directions – in the area of trade, the fight against drug business and drug trafficking, humanitarian and cultural spheres – were signed. The visit of Prime Minister of the Russian Government Mikhail Fradkov in Pakistan in April 2007 proved to be even less productive. Then a program of exchanges in culture, science and education in 2007–2009, and a few Memorandums of Understanding with the Russian Railways, the Association of “KAMAZ”, and co-production of fertilizers, as well as some others have been signed. Previous agreement on cooperation in the fight against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their abuse was extended for another 10 years.

Some real success in expanding the bilateral cooperation has been achieved since 2009, as part of the annual quadripartite summit (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan), during which the bilateral meetings between the two leaders were held. The leaders of Russia and Pakistan have discussed not only the traditional cooperation, but also the possible participation of the Russian Federation in a number of large-scale international projects in the course of these meetings. There are CASA-1000 (the supply of electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan through Afghanistan to Pakistan) and TAPI (gas supply from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and possibly further – to India) among them.

Returning to the quadripartite summits, it should be noted that the failed fourth in a row Summit in Islamabad in October 2012 (it was canceled due to the cancellation of the visit of the Russian President) virtually put an end to the possibility of holding bilateral meetings at the highest level. As a result, the cooperation between our two countries

has remained at the same relatively low level throughout the year and a half.

However, the Ukrainian crisis (which began in the spring of 2014), the Crimea joining Russia (which once required considerable funds from the Russian budget on its socio-economic development), fighting in the Donbass, and – most importantly – the imposition of severe sanctions against Russia by the Western countries, forced Moscow pay much more attention to Asian countries. This included a significant expansion of multilateral cooperation with them, as well as the military (mainly the sale of arms and military equipment) in the first place. Pakistan was no exception; so has been withdrawn unofficial ban on military-technical cooperation between Russia and Pakistan. It is noteworthy that the Ukrainian crisis has brought some trouble to Pakistan indirectly, because the U.S. cut economic aid to the country to \$ 10 million in March 2014. In general, it was \$ 1.5 billion per year and allocated in accordance with the previous decision of the Kerry-Lugar bill-Berman. Washington has sent these funds to support the economy of Ukraine.

Anti-submarine ship, “Admiral Shaposhnikov”, visited a base of the Pakistani Naval Forces in Karachi for the first time in the history of Russian-Pakistani relations in April 2014. There were held joint military exercises at sea to combat piracy. Later, similar naval exercises were held with the participation of the patrol ship “Yaroslav the Wise” of the Baltic Fleet for developing cooperation in the fight against piracy and drug trafficking in the Arabian Sea. The visit of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu to Pakistan in November 2015 and the signing of a framework agreement on cooperation in the military sphere has become an important event in the development of bilateral relations. Negotiations on the purchase of several attack helicopters Mi-35M has simultaneously conducted, which were successfully concluded with the

signing of the Agreement for the sale of the four attack helicopters of that type.

However, the most important step in the expansion of Russian-Pakistani cooperation was the signing of the Agreement of 16 October 2015 on the construction of a gas pipeline in Pakistan from Karachi to Lahore length of 1,100 kilometers, the bandwidth of 12.4 billion cubic meters of gas per year and an estimated value of \$ 2–2.5 billion.

It should be noted that the signing of this Agreement has occurred a few days before the official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif in the U.S. Perhaps it was a coincidence, but it is possible, that Islamabad sought to emphasize diversification of their economic (and political) relations in the international arena, in particular, their expansion to Russia. Russia has to pay more attention to Asia, including Pakistan in the current difficult political and economic situation inside the country and abroad. Pakistan plays a deep game in the international arena, on its part, balancing between the great powers, not wanting to “put eggs in one basket.” And the most important thing – it seeks to solve the pragmatic task of economic development and modernization of its armed forces through procurement of modern weapons, including expanding ties with Russia (where some types of weapons you can buy cheaper than in the U.S., France, Israel).

It is advisable to speak of a gradual process of expansion of Russian-Pakistani relations at various levels. It was virtually frozen in the past 30 years after the commissioning of the Karachinsky metallurgical plant that was built with the help of the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s. Moscow got rid of outdated and obsolete habit to take into account the views of New Delhi with regard to the development of relations with Pakistan, and in the first place – in the sphere of military-technical cooperation.

The trade turnover between our countries amounted to \$ 400–500 million per year in recent years. It should be noted that trade between Pakistan and India reached \$ 2.7 billion in recent years, according to official figures. The volume of trade between Pakistan and China and the U.S. are as follows: according to official figures, China trade exceeded \$ 10 billion, and with the U.S. reached nearly \$ 5.3 billion in 2014/15 [20. R. 143, 148–149]. Oil-producing Middle East countries are the important trading partners of Pakistan, supplying it energy. These figures reflect only the trade relations and military-economic co-operation (in particular, targeted investments), including the U.S. assistance to Pakistan in the fight against terrorism, it is characterized by certain indicators. It is possible to talk about the lack of attention to Pakistan as a potential and a very important political and economic partners from Moscow over the past decades.

We emphasize once again that the United States will remain the main strategic partner of Pakistan in the international arena in the long run, whatever contradictions may arise between them. Beijing could reach a certain competition to Washington (in economic terms), aiming to implement the project of a new “Silk Road”, a part of which passes through the territory of Pakistan. This refers to the construction of the so-called “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” from the port of Gwadar to Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China, a length of 2.7 thousand kilometers.

Nevertheless, there are some real opportunities to expand our bilateral relations in the short and medium term, as it was discussed at the fourth session of the intergovernmental commission on trade-economic, scientific-technical and cultural cooperation between Russia and Pakistan in Islamabad November 2015. [24].

The gas sector has won one of the first places; it is not only exploring ways to implement the agreement on the construction of a gas

pipeline from Karachi to Lahore, signed in October 2015 [14; 4], but on (“Gazprom”), Russia's offer to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Pakistan². We emphasize that Russia occupies its own niche in Pakistan's energy system, rather than is competing with Qatar, with which in November 2015, Pakistan ratified the Agreement on the supply of liquefied natural gas for 15 years until 2030³.

As for the real possibility of construction of TAPI gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and further – to India, as well as on implementation of CASA-1000 project, involving the delivery of electricity from the former republics of Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistan [13], the main objective obstacle to their implementation is extremely complicated internal political situation in Afghanistan, where a civil war lasts more than one year; where the central government can control only Kabul and its surroundings. It is impossible to carry out the construction and further exploitation of ground power units in such conditions [25].

As for the ceremony of “laying the first stone” of the gas pipeline conducted by the presidents of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India in Ashgabat in mid-December 2015 [16], we should not harbor any illusions about this action. It marked the beginning of construction of the Turkmen section of a length of about 100 kilometers from the gas field Galkinish to the border with Afghanistan. The beginning of the construction of the entire pipeline was not the question, and the cost of its construction has been gradually increased in recent years – from \$ 7.6 billion to 10 billion. [26].

Moreover, Russian companies will evidently be included in a single list with the Western companies by the followers of ISIS, Al-Qaeda or militants movement “Taliban” after the bombing of the objects of terrorism “Islamic state” in Syria by the Russian aviation, if the companies will participate in the construction of gas pipeline TAPI.

The Russian side expressed its readiness to participate in the CASA-1000 project, i.e. to supply the Russian electricity to Pakistan on a hypothetical power lines in winter, when electricity generation drops significantly due to the lack of water in the reservoir at the Nurek hydroelectric power station in Tajikistan and Toktogul hydropower plant in Kyrgyzstan. It is not enough even for their own consumption needs in these republics, not to mention the objective impossibility of exports. For all these reasons, the CASA-1000 the economic value of the project is small. Besides, we can not ignore the extremely negative attitude towards the project from Uzbekistan⁴.

That numerous projects in the energy sector is scheduled to implement and can be implemented in Russia in the near future. Among them is the intention of a number of subsidiaries of “Gazprom” company to conduct exploration of hydrocarbons in the territory of Pakistan, and to further develop their design⁵. The Russian side expressed its willingness to create new and expand existing refineries, as well as plants for re-gasification of liquefied natural gas. The list can be extended the main thing – the proposed energy projects by the Russian side can actually be implemented and help to overcome the energy crisis in Pakistan.

It is necessary to mention another important, but not a new proposal of Moscow in the context of expansion of bilateral cooperation between our countries – the direct participation of Russia in the modernization of Karachinskiy Metallurgical Plant, built with Soviet assistance and put into operation in mid-1980. Sub-Working Group on Karachinskiy Metallurgical Plant has been created directly, and the interests of “Uralsmash” as well as the association “Tyazhpromexport” in conducting relevant modernization work have been fixed. The Pakistani government, for its part, has offered to buy back 26 percent shares in the plant to Russian companies.

The settlement of Pakistani debt of \$ 130 million had a certain importance for the further development of bilateral cooperation, which hindered the development of our relations since the Soviet times, and this problem has not been solved for 17 years. Now, the two sides came to an agreement on this issue by reducing the amount of debt to \$ 100 million. There is every reason to believe that this step, as well as the identification of new areas of bilateral relations, will increase the volume of trade.

Now almost complete agreement has been reached with the Rosselkhoznadzor to lift the existing restrictions on the delivery of a number of Pakistan food products. Pakistan is willing to supply us with various kinds of meat and fish, to increase the export of fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, nuts and other food products. Deliveries of agricultural products from Pakistan are highly relevant as a result of the sharp deterioration of relations with Turkey, which has become the supplier of food to Russia after the imposition of sanctions by Western countries.

Islamabad is willing not dwell on the reached agreements regarding the purchase of four helicopters Mi-35 and carry on further talk of “purchasing another three dozen helicopters,” of this model [12]. In addition, the ability to purchase from the Russian Su-35 is under consideration.

A number of areas of cooperation can be mentioned, most of which can be implemented in the short and medium term. It is a struggle against drug business and piracy activities at sea, the establishment and implementation of direct trade and economic ties with Russian regions and individual cities – Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Udmurtia, Chuvashia, the Mari El Republic, Primorsky Krai, cities of Smolensk, Kostroma, Penza and Chelyabinsk. It is the creation of free trade zones, the supply of Russian civil aircraft “Superjet-100” and the

medium-range MS-21, a joint venture in Pakistan for the production of “Ecobus” buses, enterprises for the production of telecommunications equipment, medical equipment. This joint development in the field of nanotechnology, in the field of education and training, the establishment of direct flights between Moscow and Islamabad, etc.

It is quite possible to establish cooperation in space with the Pakistani organization SUPARCO, which already accumulated some experience, to assist in the construction and modernization of energy facilities. The development of cooperation with the Russian Railways and the union of “KAMAZ” is quite real. Of course, these and other issues can be resolved only with the assistance of relevant experts.

Finally, Russia should not forget about the possibility of bilateral cooperation in the framework of international organizations: the prospects for participation as an observer in the SAARC (South Asian Association for Cooperation). Russia supported the full participation of Pakistan in SCO, and Pakistan welcomed our participation as an observer in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which was also successfully implemented. The U.S., China, Japan, Iran, South Korea, the EU, in addition to the seven countries of South Asia and Afghanistan are part of SAARC as observers and Russia has a real chance to find its niche here.

Speaking about the expansion of bilateral trade and economic, military-technical and humanitarian cooperation, we have not forget, that it should be supported by political contacts and connections to a large extent. Pakistan with its large demographic potential has an important geo-strategic position in the Asian macroregion. The country has access to the southern seas, has nuclear weapons, is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism in the region, has authority and is included in many international organizations. Undoubtedly, the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Pakistan would be extremely important for

the strengthening of bilateral relations. We emphasize that the failed visit of the Russian president in Islamabad on the fourth quadripartite summit (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia and Tajikistan) in October 2012, was not formally abolished, but merely “postponed to a later date”. [7]

Notes

- ¹ There is hope that the census of Pakistan, declared more than one year by the government of the country, will be held in the spring of 2016, after 18-year break after the 1998 census. This will give an answer to many demographic questions, including, above all, the question of the country's population, yet occupies the 6th place in the world on this parameter.
- ² It is headed by the Federal Minister of Finance, public revenues, Economics, Statistics and Privatization, Ishaq Dar on the Pakistani side.
- ³ The total value of the transaction is estimated at \$ 16 billion. As the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Resources of Pakistan Shahid Hakan Abbasi said Pakistan would import 1.5 million tons of LNG from Qatar annually, and the first deliveries were initiated in March 2016.
- ⁴ November 26, 2015, the heads of energy agencies of Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan signed a “definitive agreement for the implementation of the CASA-1000 project”, providing the start of construction of power transmission line in May 2016 and the end of it by 2018. The ability to perform the item of the Agreement, which obliges “the Afghan government to ensure provision of complete security of infrastructure facilities, and created under the project”, raises serious doubts. [8]
- ⁵ According to unconfirmed reports, Pakistan has large reserves of shale gas [21].

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**РОССИЯ
И
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР
2016 – 8 (290)**

Научно-информационный бюллетень

Содержит материалы по текущим политическим,
социальным и религиозным вопросам

Компьютерная верстка Е.Е. Мамаева

Гигиеническое заключение
№ 77.99.6.953.П.5008.8.99 от 23.08.1999 г.
Подписано к печати 20/VIII-2016 г. Формат 60x84/16
Бум. офсетная № 1. Печать офсетная. Свободная цена
Усл. печ. л. 2,25 Уч.-изд. л. 2,5
Тираж 300 экз. Заказ № 110

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**E-mail: ani-2000@list.ru
(по вопросам распространения изданий)**

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