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\* Translation of the title is given in the author’s version.

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## MODERN RUSSIA: IDEOLOGY, POLITICS, CULTURE AND RELIGION

IGOR DOBAYEV. ISLAMIC STUDIES OF THE SOUTH OF  
RUSSIA (TO THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE  
SOVIET AND RUSSIAN SCIENTIST YURI A. ZHDANOV) //  
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Russia.*

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*The article is dedicated to the memory of Yuri A. Zhdanov*

*Abstract.* The article dwells upon the role of a prominent Soviet / Russian scientist and politician Yuri A. Zhdanov in the formation and development of fundamental and applied Islamic studies in the South of Russia. The author makes reference to the names of Russian and Soviet scientists who made a significant contribution to this scientific direction, the names of those researchers who continued Islamic studies in Russia and its Southern region in the post-Soviet period. Readers' attention is focused on conflict-generating characteristics associated with the

ideological doctrine and political practice of the carriers of the provisions of the so-called "Pure Islam." In conclusion, it is said that in order to counter radical Islamists more effectively, it is necessary to step up efforts in the field of fundamental and applied Islamic studies, which requires help and support of the state.

On August 20, 2019, Yuri A. Zhdanov, an outstanding domestic thinker, scientist, and politician, would have turned 100 years old. In his youth, he headed the Department of Science of the Central Committee of the CPSU, later he headed the Rostov State University (RSU) for more than 30 years, and for the last decades he headed the North Caucasus Scientific Center of the Higher School (NCSC of HS). He made a huge contribution to the development of domestic science and education. Thanks to him, not only the RSU has become an authoritative center for fundamental and applied research, but in other subjects of the South of Russia there has been an increase in high-quality scientific and educational potential.

Yu.A. Zhdanov also planned to create a solid oriental school on the basis of the RSU, which could compete with the best educational and scientific institutions of Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Within the framework of such a direction, according to Yuri A. Zhdanov, Islamic studies should have developed too. Not without reason, on the desktop of Yuri A. Zhdanov, one could constantly see the monograph of the famous Swiss Islamic scholar Adam Metz "The Moslem Renaissance," excerpts from which Yuri A. Zhdanov often used to quote. However, in the Soviet period it was not possible to implement this plan for a number of reasons, although the relevance of this sphere has never given raise to doubt, if only because of the geopolitical position of the South of Russia.

As it is known, Russian Islamic studies have a long history and have accumulated a solid reserve of knowledge, which is recognized by the world scientific community. A great

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contribution to the study of Islam was made by pre-revolutionary Russian Islamic scholars, orientalists and philosophers: V.V. Bartold, V.A. Zhukovsky, E. Krymsky, N.A. Mednikov, V.R. Rozen, G.S. Sablukov, V. Slaviev, C.E. Tornau, A.E. Schmidt and others. During the Soviet period, fundamental and applied research was continued, first of all, by the Moscow and Leningrad Islamic study centers, among the outstanding scientists of this period one should name E.A. Belyaev, A.E. Bertels, O.G. Bolshakov, L.K. Klimovich, I.Yu. Krachkovsky, L.V. Negrya, N.A. Smirnov, I.P. Petrushevsky, M.B. Piotrovsky, L.V. Prozorov, R.I. Sultanov, E.A. Frolova and others. In the late Soviet and post-Soviet period these problems were studied by A.V. Vasiliev, L.S. Vasiliev, A.A. Ignatenko, G.M. Kerimov, N.S. Kirabaev, S.A. Kirillina, R.G. Landa, A.V. Malashenko, L.I. Medvedko, D.V. Mikulsky, G.V. Miloslavsky, V.V. Naumkin, L.R. Syukiyainen, A.Yu. Umnov, R.M. Sharipova and many others.

Interesting publications on contemporary political issues of Islam, including those in the North Caucasus, belong to representatives of a number of humanitarian institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences: V.O. Bobrovnikov, N.M. Emelyanova, A.V. Kudryavtsev, D.V. Makarov, D.B. Malysheva, K.I. Polyakov, S.M. Chervonnaya, A.A. Yarlykapov and others. These scholars, who previously studied mainly the problems of Moslem countries abroad, were among the first in our country in the post-Soviet period to study the state and development of Islam, primarily its politicized forms, in the North Caucasus region.

At the regional (North Caucasian) level, a serious contribution to understanding the problems of Islam was made by M.A. Abdullaev, A.V. Avksentiev, M.V. Vagabov, M.B. Muzhukhiev, M.N. Osmanov, R.A. Khanakhu. R. Shikhsaidov and others. However, Islamic scholars of the region, who are, in the main, representatives of Dagestan, up to the mid 90's of the twentieth century, mainly focused on the study of the pre-Islamic heritage, or medieval Islam, or considered Islam in the context of cultural issues.

Only in the last two decades there have appeared studies by scholars in the region that are directly related to the problems in modern Islam in the North Caucasus and their impact on the socio-political process. Among them, one should name, first of all, Z.M. Abdulagatov, V.Kh. Akaev, Z.S. Arukhova, E.F. Kisriev, E.V. Kratov, S.A. Lyausheva, G.A. Murklinskaya, K.M. Khanbabayev.

In the same period, in the North Caucasus region, thanks to the personal efforts of specific scientists, informal scientific structures for the study of Islam were created. In particular, this refers to the Center for Islamic Studies at the Daghestan State University, the originators of which were the Minister for Ethnic Affairs of the Republic of Daghestan, a prominent oriental scholar Z.S. Arukhov and an influential Islamic scholar in the region, professor of the DSU M.V. Vagabov, as well as to the Regional Center for Ethnopolitical Studies at the DSC, RAS. The scientists of these centers, in collaboration with the former Committee on Religious Affairs of the Republic of Daghestan, prepared and published numerous monographs and collections of scientific articles, held scientific conferences, seminars, and "round tables" on the problem.

In other subjects of the Southern Federal District, including the North Caucasus republics, successes in theoretical and applied Islamic studies are much more modest than in Daghestan. Nevertheless, there are, albeit a few, scholars of Islam. First of all, we are talking about scientists from Chechnya, Karachayevo-Circassia, Adygea and the Astrakhan region.

In a positive sense, the Rostov Region, where Islamic studies have been actively carried out over the past twenty years, stood out against the general South Russian background in the post-Soviet period. An important milestone was the year 1999, when, on the basis of the Institute for Advanced Studies of Rostov State University, with the active support of Yu.A. Zhdanov, the Center for Systematic Regional Studies and Forecasting (now the Center for Regional Studies) was created. The head of it until the early death in February 2018 was the authoritative Caucasian expert



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V.V. Chernous. Since 2001, the Center began to publish collections of scientific articles, monographs, and study guides under the heading "South Russian Review." Over the years of its activity, the Center has released 98 publications, 10 of which relate directly to Islamic issues. There were held several scientific conferences, seminars, and "round tables" on this subject.

In 2000, the author of this article passed PhD (Political Science) defense at the dissertation council of the North Caucasian Academy of Public Administration. The topic of the thesis was "Islamic radicalism in international politics (based on materials from the Near East, Middle East, and North Caucasus)." The leading organization was the Caucasus Institute at the Higher School of the NCSC, whose director was the authoritative Rostov scientist N.S. Avdulov. It was at this period that my personal acquaintance with Yu.A. Zhdanov took place. Yuri Andreevich, having read the materials of the thesis, was keenly interested in the areas of further research on the subject. In 2003, a doctoral thesis was defended at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the RSU (now the Institute of Sociology and Regional Studies of the Southern Federal University) for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the subject "Islamic Radicalism: Essence, Ideology, Political Practice." Yuri Andreevich took an active part in the meeting of the council, as well as in the discussion of the work presented, appreciating its relevance and quality.

Gradually, under my leadership, a layer of young Islamic scholars has formed up. Over the past years, the following scientists defended dissertations for the degree of PhD in political and sociological sciences: S.E. Berezhnoy ("Islamic fundamentalism in the North Caucasus"), H.T. Kurbanov ("Religious and political extremism in the North-East Caucasus: ideology and practice"), R.F. Pateev ("Political aspects of Moslem education in Russia: history and present time"), E.F. Sharafutdinova ("Ethnoconfessional factor in the Chechen conflict: political analysis"), A.V. Sukhov ("Islamic movements in Central Asia and the North-East Caucasus: a comparative political analysis"), O.V. Ryabtsev

("The network principle of the activities of closed organizations in the context of threats to the national and regional security of Russia (by the example of the Crimean Tatar national movement), N.E. Romanchenko ("Terrorist Islamist religious and political organizations in the North Caucasus: an institutional and political approach"), R.G. Hajibekov ("Internal factors of influence on the processes of politicization and radicalization of Islam in the Russian Federation"), N.A. Anisimova ("Network structures of terrorists in the North Caucasus: reasons for the formation and strategies of countermeasures"), A.Yu. Kruglova ("Destructive Islamist and Turkic-Islamic networks in the South of Russia: formation, interaction, activities and methods of counteraction"). Currently they work in government and management bodies, in scientific and educational institutions, in law enforcement agencies. R.F. Pateev, for example, is today heading the Center for Islamic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, successfully working on his doctoral dissertation.

However, despite certain advances in Islamic studies in Southern Russia, in Rostov-on-Don in particular, disadvantages are obvious. So, until now in the region there are practically no official structures of Islamic studies within the framework of higher educational and scientific institutions that would have direct state funding. Individual scientists or their teams deal with these issues, as a rule, on their own initiative. All attempts to overcome this gap, including those within the framework of regional scientific centers of the Russian Academy of Sciences, still remain unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the situation associated with the so-called "Islamic factor" in the South of Russia, is far from ideal.

The overwhelming majority of the population of the North Caucasian republics profess Islam of the Sunni direction of Hanafite and Shafiite interpretations. Most of the believing Tatars, Kabardins, Adyghe, Circassians, Abazins, Balkars, Karachais, Nogais, Ossetians, Turkmens, Crimean Tatars, Sunni Azerbaijanis adhere to the Hanafi madhhab. Representatives of most indigenous peoples of Dagestan (except Nogais), Chechens and Ingushs, mainly follow

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the Shafi's madhhab. The Moslems living in other regions of the South of Russia are, as a rule, Sunni Hanafites.

The number of followers of Shiite Islam in the North Caucasus is insignificant, and is represented by a small part of Lezghins and Dargins, as well as a large part of Azerbaijanis. They live mainly in the territory of Southern Daghestan.

In the North Caucasus there are also adherents of the non-Mosque Islam, represented by various Sufi orders (tariqahs). It is especially widespread among Daghestanis, Chechens and Ingush people, among whom brotherhoods of the orders of Naqshbandiyya and Kadiriyya (and Shaziliya in Daghestan) are also very influential. Kadiryts are often called Zikrists.

In modern conditions in the South of Russia there are functioning 11 Spiritual Administrations of Moslems (SAM). Moslem organizations of the region are coordinated by three centers: the Coordination Center for Moslems of the North Caucasus (CCMNC), as well as the Central Spiritual Administration of Moslems of Russia (CSAM, Ufa, Supreme Mufti T. Tajuddin) and the Spiritual Administration of Moslems of the European part of Russia (SAMER, Moscow, Mufti R. Gainutdin, he also heads the "Council of Muftis of Russia").

At the same time, with the rapid growth of Islamic identity of the North Caucasian peoples, religious illiteracy of the population remains. The traditional Moslem spiritual authorities (SAM) do not adequately control the situation. Extremist religious movements (the so-called Islamists) have serious ideological, organizational, and sometimes financial support from a number of Arab and other Islamic states. The introduction by Islamists of the values of the so-called "Pure Islam" leads to changing of the ethnic identity of local Moslems from North Caucasian (South Russian) to Arab (Arabian). This circumstance leads to fierce conflict between traditional Moslems and their "Arabized" opponents. At the same time, the regional spiritual administrations have many unresolved problems, which fact is still connected with the lack of a full-fledged state policy, which is still in the process of formation.

Despite the increase in the number of Islamic educational institutions in the North Caucasus, the quality of the educational process is still not up to par, which is still one of the reasons for young Moslems to leave the country in order to study in foreign educational centers. So, according to estimates, during the 1990s more than 4 thousand young people received Islamic education abroad. A certain part of them was indoctrinated in a radical way. Their subsequent activity after returning to their homeland, as a rule, came into conflict with the traditional Islamic trends in the North Caucasus.

Today in Russia, in general, more than 2 thousand imams have been educated abroad. About 3 thousand shakirds (students) are currently continuing their studies abroad, less than ten percent of them have official assignments of muftiyats. This indicates that the state does not sufficiently control the process of sending young people abroad to receive a Moslem education, with all the ensuing consequences.

Along with the revival and significant political activation of traditional Islam, especially the so-called "Official Islam" represented by the SAMs and the structures controlled by them, a previously little-known trend in Islam, the so-called "Wahhabism" ("pure Islam," Salafism), which is a radical religious and political movement in Sunni Islam is gradually trying to establish itself in the North Caucasus. In Russia, Islamism, including its radical forms, began to spread with the beginning of the revival processes in the late 80s - early 90s of the 20th century, with the active influence from abroad. The largest material and ideological external "sponsor" of the spread of radical Islamism in the Russian Federation was Saudi Arabia, as well as some other states of the Middle East. It was the expansion of the Saudi version of Islam (Wahhabism) that became the prologue to the strengthening of social conflict and then the political radicalism of Islamic groups in many republics of the North Caucasus. The followers of the Wahhabis sought to seize power by force, replace the existing legislation with Sharia norms and build an Islamic caliphate in a

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number of territories of the Caucasus and the Volga region. The ideological and political position of the pseudo-Wahhabis, as well as strong foreign influence generated internal conflict in the Moslem communities of the North Caucasus.

The actions of the representatives of radical Islam are associated with the escalation of the armed conflict in Chechnya, open armed uprisings and terrorist acts in many other North Caucasian republics, as well as beyond their borders. Currently, although the measures taken by the state have led to a decrease in the potential and degradation of the terrorist "jamaats," nevertheless, the issue has not yet been settled up. Radical Islamists have formed a network, most often there exist "sleeping" terrorist cells, with the goal of committing a few, and sometimes even one terrorist attack. The network principle of building such groups allows them to act quite conspiratorially, which complicates their detection and neutralization.

The official statistics of specific political practices of similar groups of radical Islamists abroad seem relevant. For example, the U.S. National Anti-Terrorism Center (NCTC) in May 2009 published a report providing statistics on terrorist attacks in the world in 2008. According to the report, in 2008 there were 11,800 terrorist attacks, while in 2007 - 14,500, in 2006 - 14,000, in 2005 - 11,000, and in 2004, according to the U.S. State Department, which did not take into account terrorist attacks in Iraq, - 3192. The largest number of terrorist attacks in 2008, amounting to 4600 (40%), were committed in the countries of the Near and Middle East, although in Iraq for 2 years in a row, in 2007-2008, their number was decreasing. At the same time, in the countries of South Asia (Pakistan, India) and in Afghanistan their number doubled. Terrorist acts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan accounted for 55% of the total number of terrorist attacks in the world. 140% increase in terrorist activity in Africa was recorded in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Western hemisphere in the indicated period there was recorded a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks by 25%, and by 30% in the

countries of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean. In 2008, the number of cases of kidnapping by terrorists increased significantly. So, in Pakistan it increased by 340%, in Afghanistan – by 100%, in India – by 30%, in other countries of South Asia – by 45% [1, p. 198].

As for the official statistics on terrorist manifestations in the Russian Federation and in its North Caucasus region, according to them, the peak occurred in 2005. Then, 251 terrorist attacks were recorded in the Russian Federation, more than 90% of them against law enforcement officials and executive authorities in the Southern Federal District. Over the next two years, the official statistics, showed a steady decline in the number of terrorist acts. So, in 2006, 112 terrorist attacks were recorded, of which again at least 90% were attributed to the south of Russia. In subsequent years, official statistics indicated a further decline in terrorist activity. Such dynamics gave rise to some experts to argue that a turning point had come, and in the future, terrorist activity would be reduced to zero [2, p. eleven].

However, it should be emphasized that in connection with the amendments to the criminal law as of 2006, the concept of a terrorist act has narrowed significantly. In order to qualify a crime as a terrorist act, it is imperative that the goal were to influence decision-making by authorities or international organizations. Therefore, strange as it sounds, terrorist acts in our country since that period have become a rather rare crime. So, in 2007 there were only 48 terrorist attacks, that is, five times less than in the “dashing” 2005, and more than half as much as in 2006. In 2008, only 2 terrorist attacks were recorded in the Russian Federation (one – in Dagestan and one in North Ossetia-Alania) [1, p. 193–195].

Nevertheless, in 2009 we again witnessed a kind of “return to 2005,” although in digital terms, for the reasons noted above, the number of terrorist attacks looks rather modest. So, for example, in 2009 in the Russian Federation, only 6 terrorist attacks were recorded (two and two in Dagestan and Chechnya, one in Ingushetia and one in the Tver region), in 2010 there were already 23 attacks (11 in Dagestan, 3 in the Stavropol Territory, 2 and 2 –

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in Moscow and Ingushetia, one each – St. Petersburg, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Krasnodar Territory and Orel).

However, if we look at the statistics submitted by the law enforcement system of the Southern Federal District at that time, we can say that the situation in the district in 2009 was characterized by a sharp increase in terrorist activity of illegal armed groups: 641 attacks were made on the lives of law enforcement officials and military personnel (491 in 2008, an increase of 30%). In 2009 alone, in the Southern Federal District there were killed: 251 law enforcement officers and military men, as well as 32 civilians (in 2008, 210 security officers and 12 civilians, respectively), 727 law enforcement officials and 85 civilians were injured (in 2008, 484 security officers and 68 civilian). In 2010, 23 criminal cases were initiated under article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorism), but the records include 273 explosions and 492 shooting attacks, 14 suicide bombers blew themselves up. As a result, 410 people died, and more than a thousand were injured [1, p. 196].

Thus, the sabotage -terrorist activity of radical Islamists in the 2000s continued to be a significant factor in the destabilization of political processes in the Russian South, and not only there. The practice of re-qualifying terrorist attacks as other articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation did not reduce the intensity of terrorism, but only camouflaged the real situation, disorienting the authorities and administrations, as well as those who were actually fighting the terrorists.

However, by the end of the second decade of the 21 century the situation began to change for the better everywhere. So, the French Jane's Center for the Study of Terrorism (JTIC) of the international expert company IHS Markit published a report that said about reduction in the number of terrorist acts in the world by one third. "During 2018, JTIC recorded 15 321 terrorist attacks carried out by non-governmental armed groups. As a result of these attacks 13 thousand 483 people who were not military personnel were killed. The number of attacks is significantly lower

(by 33.2%) than the number of attacks recorded in 2017. "This is the lowest figure since 2011," said the head of the center, Matthew Henman. The number of victims of terrorist attacks has also decreased: in 2018, 25% fewer people died than in 2017. The number of attacks made by the ISIS has also decreased. Afghanistan remains the "most dangerous country in the world," only last year 4180 people died there because of terrorism. JTIC analysts attribute such findings to the international fight against terrorism at the global level. In total, according to the analytical center, in 2018 terrorist groups operated in 90 countries of the world, in 2017 - in 116 countries [3].

The situation in the Russian Federation has also changed for the better, which is due, first of all, to the fact that the Russian security agencies and law enforcement bodies have noticeably intensified their activities in recent years. So, the Secretary of the Security Council of Russia Nikolai Patrushev said that in 2018 in Russia 9 crimes of a terrorist nature and only one terrorist attack were committed, and in the world there is a downward tendency in terrorist activity. Patrushev associates such indicators with the effective work of special services and law enforcement bodies in our country. In total, in 2017, according to him, 36 crimes of a terrorist nature were prevented, including 20 terrorist attacks. The Secretary of the Security Council also noted that if in 2014 the number of terrorist attacks in the world reached almost 16 thousand, in recent years the mark has dropped to about 10 thousand. In the Middle East, terrorist activity decreased by 2 times, in South Asia - by a third. The largest scale of terrorist activity was recorded in Afghanistan. Against this background, the situation in Russia looks stable: over 5 years, the activity of terrorism has decreased by more than 20 times [4].

The fact that the situation in the Russian Federation in the field of countering terrorism remains difficult, but controlled by law enforcement agencies, was confirmed by the director of the FSB of Russia, A.V. Bortnikov. At a joint meeting of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee and the Federal Operational



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Headquarters on December 11, 2018, he said that as a result of the implementation of a set of measures in 2018, the number of terrorist crimes committed was significantly reduced, and the number of terrorist attacks decreased. Thus, in the course of counter-terrorist operations and individual covert military measures 65 militants were neutralized, including 10 leaders of bandit groups; 36 leaders, 236 bandits and 589 accomplices were detained. The activities of 37 terrorist cells that planned to organize terrorist attacks in the republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, the Chechen Republic and the Stavropol Territory were stopped. A number of measures have been taken to increase the effectiveness of preventive work. The coordinated activities of all counterterrorism entities made it possible to prevent terrorist manifestations during the election of the President of the Russian Federation and the 2018 World Cup. According to him, control over migration flows has been strengthened in order to prevent terrorists from using them. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Border Service of the FSB of Russia have closed the entry for more than 10 thousand people suspected of involvement in terrorist and extremist activities, and also prevented the departure of more than 60 Russian and foreign citizens in the zones of armed conflict in the Middle East. The activity of more than 64 thousand Internet resources disseminating unlawful information, of which over 47 thousand contained materials related to the activities of international terrorist organizations (ITO) was put under restraint. The Committee has developed organizational measures to counter the financing of terrorism and combat arms trafficking, taking into account recent changes in the operational environment. The criminal liability for facilitating terrorist activities, as well as for knowingly false reporting of a terrorist attack, has been strengthened, the propaganda of terrorism has been criminalized [5].

At the same time, stressed A.V. Bortnikov, terrorist threats associated with the activities of international terrorist organizations remain. The leaders of ITO do not abandon their intentions to form conspiratorial cells in the territory of the Russian

Federation and to realize their criminal intentions with their help. This is facilitated by the propaganda of the ideology of terrorism, mainly carried out via telecommunication channels and aimed mainly at young people, including minors. The largest number of manifestations of terrorism, as before, is recorded in the North Caucasus Federal District. At the same time, ITO are making attempts to spread terrorist activity to other regions of the country, including such methods as attracting migrants from Central Asian countries as perpetrators of terrorist crimes [5].

In order to increase the effectiveness of countering these threats in 2019, the Director of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation demanded to develop and implement a set of measures to improve the organization and coordination of the activities of all counterterrorism entities. In his opinion, it is required to ensure the use on a regular basis of the results of monitoring political, socio-economic and other processes in order to timely identify terrorist threats and have a real impact on the situation. It is also necessary to step up efforts to further reduce terrorist activity and prevent its spread in the territory of the Russian Federation, to protect the information space from the ideology of terrorism. More systematic organization of interagency cooperation should be given to counteracting the spread of radical views among migrants and to prevent the penetration of supporters of international terrorist organizations into the territory of Russia through migration channels. The vulnerability of potential targets of terrorist attacks and places of mass stay of people should be reduced. Along with strict observance of the requirements for anti-terrorist protection of facilities, it is necessary to increase the level of professional training and personal responsibility of specialists involved in its provision. On a planned basis, it is necessary to continue carrying out measures to neutralize terrorist threats in the territory of the North Caucasus Federal District and reduce the level of radicalization of its residents, including by intensifying the work of the executive

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authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the field of terrorism prevention [5].

Seemingly, almost all of the above provisions are built in line with the so-called “narrow” approach to blocking terrorism, which consists in improving anti-terrorism legislation, strengthening special services and law enforcement agencies, countering the financing of terrorism and increasing the effectiveness of ideological propaganda and awareness-raising among the population.

However, it should be noted that terrorism is not just a normal criminal act, but, and this is very important, it is a special, very dangerous socio-political phenomenon. It is determined by numerous external and internal conflict-generating factors and the internal ones are more dangerous. Among them, the traditionally noted key ones are: political, socio-economic, demographic-migration and ethno-confessional. Moreover, these groups of factors are feeding each other. Localizing some of them, but missing others, it is difficult to count on success. At different times, these or other of them come to the fore or fall to secondary positions. At present, among the most dangerous internal conflict-generating factors, experts single out socio-economic ones, among them the ongoing on unbelievable scale property stratification and desocialisation of state policy.

As the well-known Russian political scientist V. Krasheninnikova writes, “It is for this reason that the power rating in 2018 went down without the efforts of external enemies, only by the decisions of the Russian authorities. With the onset of 2019, objective circumstances for the growth of protest were added, again, by the decisions of the Russian government. The introduction of new taxes - an increase in VAT by 2%, a tax on self-employed 4% (6%) and an increase in prices: utilities by 4.1%, gasoline, parking, other levies, up to the possible “sausage tax,” plus growth of prices due to weakening of the ruble exchange rate, all this means that Russians will feel a new burden on their wallet in the coming months. And all this in addition to raising the retirement age and deceived expectations for a change in the course

after the presidential election” [6]. The same author emphasizes that “justice and the social welfare state are the most important requests of citizens today. According to opinion polls, two-thirds of Russians speak nostalgically about the Soviet era. And this nostalgia is not for one’s own youth, as the propagandists want to suggest, and not for the 19 kopecks-ice-cream. People want appropriate free education and healthcare, equality before the law, and fair distribution of income. The December report-study of a number of experts “The autumn shift in the sentiments of Russians: a transient episode or a new trend?” also notes a sharp increase in intangible needs, such as freedom, respect, fair elections” [6].

Thus, with regard to the problem of reliable blocking of terrorism, it seems that both “broad” and “narrow” approaches should be used in solving this problem, plus further fundamental and applied research on Islamic and Islamist issues in the South of Russia is necessary. For this, state support is indispensable. All of the above, of course, requires improving the quality of Islamic studies in our country, what Yuri Andreevich Zhdanov warned about at his time.

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## PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASSUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

2019.04.001. MADINA ALIGADZHIEVA. CLAN AND ETHNIC BLURRING OF THE POLITICAL ELITE OF DAGHESTAN // "Vlast," Moscow, 2019, Vol. 27, № 1, P. 24–28.

*Keywords: Daghestan, political elite, clans, erosion, research.*

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The clan structure of government existing in many regions of the country, according to the researcher, deprives the national elite of the possibility of creative activity in the interests of the state. Numerous attempts to eradicate it in Daghestan were unsuccessful: it kept reviving again. Great hopes in this area were pinned on Ramzan Abdulatipov, from whom, given his lack of commitment to any clans, they expected the erosion of ethnic clanship in the Republic of Daghestan.

The studies conducted by the author in 2013 showed that the clan principle prevails over all other criteria for joining the political elite. So, to the question of the poll conducted in 2013 in the Republic of Daghestan: "What are the main principles of joining the political elite characteristic of the Republic of Daghestan?" the largest number of respondents noted the clan principle (76.9%), 19.2% indicated family and kinship, and only 15.5% chose the

answer “through their own efforts. “ A similar poll was carried out in 2015. To the question: “To whom, in your opinion, does the current power in the republic really belong?,” the following answers were received: to the first leader of the republic – 18.60%, various clans – 15.80%, the corrupt part apparatus – 14.10%, financially secure people, entrepreneurs, businessmen – 7.90%, mafia groups, criminal structures – 3.30%, political parties, social movements – 2.20%.

A comparative analysis of two sociological studies conducted by the author in 2013 and 2015 (with the rise of Ramzan Abdulatipov to power and in the previous period) shows that the situation in the republic has stabilized. However, there is no reason to talk about the complete erosion of the clan system. If at the first sociological study “Expectations of Dagestanis” to the question: “Who owns the power in the republic?,” people chose the answer to the “clan structure,” now they choose the answer to the “head of the region.”

The study of 2017 (end of the rule of Ramzan Abdulatipov) proves the gradual erosion of clanship in the republic. To the question: “To whom, in your opinion, does the current power in the republic really belong?” – the following answers were received: “to the head of the republic” – 13.6%; “The corrupt part of the apparatus” – 7.3%; “Mafia groups, criminal structures” – 5.1%; “Various clans” – 4.2%; “Political parties, social movements” – 1,%; “Other” – 1%. Thus, the author notes that the significance of the clan principle in percentage terms from 2015 to 2017 decreased from 15.8% to 4.2%.

This study revealed the role of leadership and personalistic components in the evolution of the elite layer, in which respondents identified the head of the republic Ramzan Abdulatipov. Nevertheless, the main criteria for joining the political elite in the Republic of Dagestan remain such factors as wealth, connections, the desire to rule, and clanship. According to the results of the study of 2017, to the question: “On the opinion of the residents of Dagestan, what primarily motivates the leaders of

the republic in their activities"? the following answers were received: "Desire to become rich" - 21%; "Desire to get power" - 11.6%; "Achieve privileges and honors" - 3.3%; "Desire to make a career" - 4.6%; "Desire to honestly serve the people" - 0.8%; "Other" - 0.8%. The results of the polls confirm that the main and principle goal of power holders is the desire to enrich themselves at the expense of the state, pursuing personal interests.

According to the author, the most common type of corruption in the republic is endogenous corruption, in which budgetary organizations and officials participate. This is a carefully developed system of laundering budget money, which over the past two decades has gained incredible proportions. Against the background of a generally low standard of living, corrupt groups accumulate enormous wealth. Contacts related to budgetary relations between the center and the republic are based on "kickbacks" of the shadow economy, which are beneficial for a narrow layer in the ruling elites. The system of "kickbacks", which flourished in the 1990s and continues to exist today, has become the norm, and it can be found in almost all areas of activity of the republican leadership. To the question: "If you think that the efficiency of the republican leaders is not high enough, then indicate the reasons for this," the answers were received: "corruption of officials" - 26.5%; "incompetence of managers" - 18.6%; "isolation of the authorities from the people" - 15.2%; "defiance of the laws" - 11.8%; "low executive discipline" - 11.8%; "low wages" - 1.1%.

It is the corruption of officials, the incompetence of leaders, and clans that are the main factors that impede the quality of elitogenesis in Daghستان, which determines the effectiveness of the political elite, its professional competence, and leadership positions. Personnel replacements and high-profile arrests that took place in the republic with the arrival of Ramzan Abdulatipov gave a positive momentum - the corruption business has staggered. Despite the fact that Ramzan Abdulatipov is less involved in clans in the republic, nevertheless, his family-kinship relations and ties enable many old

officials remain in their posts or move to similar ones, and therefore the talk about large-scale updating of the political elite is out of question, the author of the article emphasizes.

The main mechanisms for the formation of a regional elite structure are interaction with federal, political, economic, religious, ethnocratic, intellectual, anti-elite groups, which are characterized by family relationships and ties, wealth, money, personal loyalty to the authorities, nationalism, and political economic interests. The basis of everything is the problem of the elite's struggle for self-preservation. And in the absence of effective channels for updating the political elite, one can observe the isolation of the elite within itself. Therefore, the Daghestan people have many times advocated the appointment of a person from the center who would not depend on clans and family relations to the post of the head of the republic. Daghestanis positively accepted the appointment of the new head of the republic Vladimir Vasiliev – the first Russian in this post. The main challenge for Vladimir Vasiliev was the interaction with local clans and the struggle their erosion. The newly appointed president pays special attention to the fight against corruption, “which is becoming systemic,” the protection of social and labor rights of citizens, the observance of the rule of law in the field of housing and communal services and the fuel and energy complex, the fight against violations in the field of land legislation and construction, the strict registration of all crimes and priority consideration of citizens' appeals. Vladimir Vasiliev's personnel clean-ups give young people and professionals a chance to work in the interests of the state and its citizens.

Before Vladimir Vasiliev came to power, each new appointee began his activities with the inclusion of relatives and friends in the team. The issue of updating the elite was limited and almost frozen at all levels, because the circulation of elites took place along the lines of blood, kinship, or national identities. Formation of the leadership, the political elite, and the distribution of posts in the region was carried out according to such a system. With the arrival of Vladimir Vasiliev, in the Republic of Daghestan there



began the stage of erosion of the foundations of the ethnic and clan structure; the process of updating the political elite is ongoing. This is a turning point in the history of Daghestan, when any professional can participate in the socio-political life of the Republic, the government is as open as possible for the people and ready to meet its needs.

Particular attention is paid to high-quality elitogenesis in Daghestan, the effectiveness of the political elite and professional competence.

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2019.04.002. VERONIKA TSIBENKO. TURKISH RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF BASHKORTOSTAN IN THE CONTEXT OF ETHNO-POLITICAL PROCESSES // *“Islamovedenie,” Makhachkala, 2019. Vol. 10, № 1. P. 27–40.*

*Keywords: Muslimactivecore, imamtypology, spiritual administration, Muslim community (Ummah), religious education.*

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*Abstract.* The article analyses the Turkish religious influence on the development of Bashkir Islam at the turn of the 20–21 centuries.

Veronika Tsibenko considers the Islamic revival in Bashkortostan in the context of the ethnopolitical situation. Bashkortostan is a national republic with three predominant ethnic groups – Russians, Bashkirs and Tatars. The ethnopolitical system of Bashkortostan is distinguished by regulation by the authorities

of ethnosocial stratification. At the same time, within the framework of development of the Bashkir national project (ethnic nationalism), it is maintained highness of mobilization of Bashkir identity. Until the 2000s, religion (Islam) wasn't a factor of serious transformation of ethnopolitical processes for several reasons. First, the highness of secularization and interruption of the religious tradition in Bashkortostan enacted significantly, which was due to accelerated urbanization and industrial development of the region during the Soviet era. Secondly, Islam in Bashkortostan, unlike neighboring Tatarstan, failed to become a part of national identity, instrumentally maintaining ethnicity. Both Bashkirs and Tatars belong to so-called ethnic Muslims, that does not allow religious identity in the republic to become a fundamental marker of ethnic differences. In case of accumulation, this led to the fact that the politization of religious identity on a nationwide scale did not occur. On the contrary, the authorities officially emphasized their secular character and equal distance from all confessions.

The reluctance of the authorities to bet on religious identity concerned the historically contingent slight rootedness of Islam among the Bashkirs in comparison with the Tatars and the established practice of religious clergy development among the Tatars. Whereas since the 18th century it was Ufa, where "Ufa Mohammedan Spiritual Lawful Assembly" , renamed in 1846 to "Magometan Orenburg Spiritual Assembly" (now Central Muslim Spiritual Board of Russia, CMSB) was located, which was chosen as the center for Islam institutionalization in Russia, the Bashkirs got the perception of Islamic institutions as a strictly Tatar phenomena. This perception persisted until the mid-2000s. On the rebound of rejection of "Tatar Islam" in 1917, it was established the Bashkir Muslim Spiritual Authority which existed until 1936 and resumed its activities in 1992 in the form of the independent Regional Muslim Spiritual Boards of the Republic of Bashkortostan (RMSB RB), which broke away from CMSB of Russia. Although creation of its own Spiritual Board was supported by Bashkir national organizations for the purpose of "Bashkirizing" Islam,

and rivalry with CMSB of Russia continues to the present day, this is not about the influence of religious factor on the ethnic sphere, but, on the contrary, about the invasion of ethnic national factor in the religious sphere. In this regard experts note that the Bashkir Muslim Spiritual Board in both 1917 and 1992 was considered as one of the institutions of nationhood of sovereign Bashkortostan. Against the background of general growth of religion in the country, multiple increase in the number of Islamic institutions in Bashkortostan itself and the prevalence of “popular” Islam as a synthesis with archaic beliefs in rural areas, with a large lagging in the mid-2000s, the appeal to Islam of the city Bashkortostan, including members of national movements, begins. Prior to this, ethnicity of the city Bashkirs overwhelmed religiousness, and ethnoreligious consciousness and behavior were not related to the “ethnocultural Renaissance.” Right in the 2000s the process of re-Islamisation of urban youth and national intellectuals (humanitarian professions), previously oriented more towards the glorification of the pre-Islamic past of Bashkirs, as well as their ancient religion (Tengriism), began to gain momentum. At the same time, the number of so-called mosqueless or unofficial Muslims who did not recognize the authority of official Muslim institutions – CMSB of Russia and RMSB RB – began to increase. This was caused both by mutual discrediting of these organizations during the turf war and by the discontent of Islamized urban youth with the level of imams’ training, most of whom were elderly people without religious education, including former “Soviet-workers.”

In rivalry with pro-Salafi and pro-Sufi jamaats, official structures lose due to lack of educated youth and financial support. At the same time, in parallel, there was developing the process of integration of members of pro-Salafi jamaats into the official Islam structures in Bashkortostan. The functioning of Muslim religious organizations (MRO) classified as Salafi is also recorded in the MSA RB. The phenomenon of “young Muslims” – Bashkirs, which arose in Bashkortostan in the 2000s, usually adjacent to various pro-Salafi jamaats, is considered by scientists

from two sides: as politicization and nationalization of Islam, merging of religious extremism on the basis of Islam with nationalism of regional “passionaries,” on the one hand, and as mass withdrawal of Bashkirs from national movements to Islamic ones because of systemic crisis of the Bashkir national movement on the other hand. Researches note that in the second half of the 2000s there was the process of active youth loss from the ethnonational movement to jamaats.

Nevertheless, in the 2010s the idea of “Bashkir Islam” spread. It was made an attempt to replace the traditional Bashkir congresses (kurultai) with an Islamic council of Bashkirs (shura). However, it failed - soon the Bashkirs were replaced by the Tatars in the leadership of this Islamic structure.

According to the researcher, the Turkish religious influence on ethnopolitical processes in Bashkortostan are possible to be considered as a serious factor only since the 2000s. Although in the 1990s, there were established contacts of Muslim organizations and ordinary Muslims of Bashkortostan with the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and it was introduced the practice of sending members of the Muslim clergy to that country for religious training. The religious focus on Turkey then was due to lack of its own capacity to satisfy the demand for Islamic education and the doctrinal proximity of Turkish Islam (Hanafite Madhab), which contributed to its perception as traditional and moderate. That is why CMSB aimed to send clerics for training to Turkey.

In the 1990s, a network of Turkish lycées of the religious and political movement Hizmet Fethullah Gulen began to develop in Bashkortostan, spreading among the pupils the ideas of the Nurjular community and the Turkish preacher himself. However, the degree of influence that Nurjular and Gulen's jamaat could have on the ethnopolitical situation in Bashkortostan has not been determined yet. The same can be attributed to Suleimanjilar (Suleimanites), a Turkish jamaat which activities are recorded by researchers on the territory of Bashkortostan. The activities of Suleimanjilar, like Nurjular, belong to the educational sphere and

are confidential. Members of this jamaat pay great attention to higher education and extension of their influence in mosques (including through preachy literature). At the same time, not always Turkish religious influence is successful. In that regard, it's appropriate to note the Bashkir Youth Association (BYA), which was in contact with the Turkish "Idealist" movement (better known as the Grey Wolves) since the 1990s. Although the latter adhere to the so-called Turkic-Islamic ideal, the BYA has always distanced itself from religion. Thus, the "Idealists" did not have a meaningful religious impact on this structure, although perhaps notably under the influence of the ideas of the Turkic-Islamic synthesis the Bashkir youth from the BYA began to leave for religious movements in the 2000s.

The pro-Sufi jamaat of Erenkoy which followers are known also as topbashevtsi (by the name of their religious mentor and the founder of jamaat in Turkey Othman Nuri Topbash) is the most interesting in terms of influence on mobilization of ethnicity in the republic. Precisely because the activities of the leader of the jamaat Erenkoy in Bashkortostan, director of the publishing house "SAD" Ayrat Habibullin at the turn of decades of the 21 century, Muslim literature began to be published in Bashkir in thousands of editions. A distinctive feature of the jamaat was collaboration with national movements and pro-Salafi groups. Jamaat Erenkoy did not maintain contacts with official Muslim structures - CMSB of Russia and RMSB RB. At the same time, another of the pro-Sufi jamaats, the Haqqanis, formed in Bashkortostan in the 2010s and associated with the Turkish neo-Sufi brotherhood (tariqah) of the Haqqaniyah, unlike the jamaat of Erenkoy, started violent confrontation with the Salafis.

The Haqqani jamaat demonstrates a simplification of traditional ceremonialism and commitment to esoteric practices, but its main activities in Bashkortostan are related to the classic Sufism veneration of holy places. The Haqqani jamaat was widely practiced in the southern and eastern regions of the Republic, and among its

followers there were many representatives of the Bashkir intellectuals, opposition political set, media and national organizations.

On the example of the jamaats of Haqqani and Topbashev in Bashkortostan, it is possible to trace the request of the Bashkir national movement for Sufism. It is the lost Sufi tradition which is perceived as true popular, Bashkir. It is Turkish regional Sufism and Islam in general which are perceived as close to the Bashkir and capable of reviving the lost Bashkir religious Islamic tradition. However, it is necessary to take into account the discontinuity of religious tradition in Turkey itself, which had survived a period of radical restructuring and secularization of society in the 20th century, which were accompanied by the elimination of Sufi brotherhood and a total ban on their activity. These processes entailed transformation of traditional Sufi brotherhoods in Turkey in neo-Sufi or pro-Sufi jamaats as the phenomenon of modern society. In this regard, the perception of Turkish jamaats with Naqshbandian roots ("Nurjular," jamaat of Gulen, "Suleimanjilar," Erenkoy and Haqqani jamaat) as actual traditional Sufism is built on the ignorance of Turkish historical realities and modern features of religious life in Turkey.

Veronika Tsibenko considers it necessary to note the request of the Bashkir national intellectuals for the use of the archaic layer of popular religiousness, manifested in the synthesis of Islam with pre-Islamic beliefs, i.e. "mobilization of archaism" or "postmodern antiquity." It contributes to ethno-national mobilization and helps to fight against religious general Islamic project in which the Bashkirs, as part of the ummah, lose their entity. The Bashkir National Movement seeks to subordinate religious projects to ethno-national ones. Simultaneously, there is a process of combining "orthodox" Islam with Sufism and a compromise between Salafism and Sufism on an ethno-national basis, when Sufis, together with Salafists, seek after those stories that will be relevant to the Bashkirs.

Meanwhile updating of the problematic historical stories of the Bashkirs and strengthening of the Bashkir ethno-nationalism are in the interests of the Turkish jamaats, crossing over the Bashkir

Muslims to Turkish Islam and Turkey as the center of the Turkic and Islamic world. In general, traditionally large politicization of the Naqshbandian branch of Sufism, staginess of rituals of some jamaats, attracting the national intellectuals, and high mobilization potential are important for ethnopolitical processes in the Republic. In the context of the revival of the interrupted Sufi tradition, it is Turkey that is becoming the main center of religious influence for the Bashkirs, and Turkish Islam begins to adapt to the Bashkir environment, weakening, displacing and replacing the muftiats – CMSB of Russia and RMSB RB – with alternative informal structures. The researcher suggests that, although the national project now subordinates to religious one, power balance might change at the next stage, and then Turkish religious projects would subordinate to national ones. In such a case, there will be a possibility of replacing the Bashkir ethno-national project with a general Turkish project with an apparent Islamic component.

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2019.04.003. NODAR KARIMOV, VYACHESLAV DANILOV. THE PROBLEM OF ISLAM RADICALIZATION IN KAZAKHSTAN // Condensed from “Religious Policy, Radicalism and Evolution of Islam in Kazakhstan in the Beginning of the Twenty First Century: Theoretical Aspects” by Nodar Karimov, Vostok, Moscow, 2017, № 3, P. 152-161, and “Modern Religious Situation in Kazakhstan as a Threat to the National Security of Russia,” by Vyacheslav Danilov, Vestnik Omskoy Pravoslavnoy Duhovnoy Seminarii , Omsk, 2018. № 2 (5). P. 202-209.

*Keywords: Kazakhstan, Russia, Islam, religious extremism, radicalisation of Islam, religious policy.*

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Nodar Karimov examines the evolution of Islam in Kazakhstan and analyzes the reasons for its radicalization at the present stage in the article "Religious policy, radicalism and evolution of Islam in Kazakhstan in the beginning of the twenty first century: theoretical aspect." He notes that the problem of religious extremism has its specificity in any region of the world, including Kazakhstan, as the country is in search of the optimal model of religious policy yet, moving through trial and error. The author draws attention to the alarming trend of gradual intellectual and ideological weakening of the forces, representing traditional Islam in confrontation with radical trends. This is explained by the lack of effective development strategies and the lack of explanation of the political component of Islam by the official spiritual institutions of Kazakhstan today, but their focus exclusively on the everyday aspects of religion. Experts correlate the influence that Salafists have in Kazakhstan today and the general popularity of their ideas among the people with the insufficient work of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (the DUMK). Religious revival in the country, especially among young people, coincided with a low level of religious education of the clergy, which creates an explosive situation in an ideological vacuum.

The presence of an open confrontation between the official clergy, standing on the positions of the Hanafi madhab, and Salafis was revealed by the analysis of the DUMK websites. This situation is a challenge to the rule of law. There are attempts of some groups to use disagreements for the sake of inducing the state to the power solution of a problem for emergence of open confrontation among believers. Thus, the radicals get opportunities to justify



their illegal actions. On the whole, the current situation in the field of religious relations in Kazakhstan has a number of stable signs of community deprivation, according to Fathali M. Moghaddam, i.e. the suppression of certain social groups, which can become a high probability catalyst for religious extremism.

The experience of many religious communities in the world shows that religious tradition should be a powerful and effective tool for the integration of local communities into the state system of trade and economic relations of the 21st century. The leaders of informal Islamic structures of Kazakhstan can be divided into conformists and radicals, and if the first are ready to cooperate with official structures, then the radicals are opponents of the secular state, social, ethno-cultural foundations of society.

Vyacheslav Danilov examines the current religious situation in Kazakhstan from the point of view of the spread of Islamic extremism in the Russian border areas (the Omsk region). The author notes that there is a serious increase in the activities of Islamic organizations in Kazakhstan, which can be classified as extremist, and can destabilize the situation in neighboring Russia. Radical Islam in the conditions of religious pluralism penetrates the territory of Kazakhstan from the Central Asian States. Democratic liberties with freedom of religion led to the fact that no legislative steps were taken against the potential extremist threat due to the position of the country's leadership, which denied the appearance of extremist organizations with the participation of local residents on the territory of Kazakhstan. This position was based on the erroneous opinion that Islamic extremism is an exclusively imported phenomenon and it has no chance to settle down on the Kazakh land, because the necessary social base for the spread of ideas of radical Islam was absent. But the further development of the religious situation in Kazakhstan only confirmed the fallacy of this point of view. In February 1999 a series of terrorist attacks took place in Tashkent under the leadership of the extremist Islamic organization Hizb ut-Tahrir.

It seemed that this situation did not apply directly to Kazakhstan, but the perpetrators of the attacks were subsequently detained on its territory and extradited to Uzbekistan. The authorities of Kazakhstan were forced to respond to the events, and a number of laws on combating terrorism were adopted. Particular attention was paid to the south of Kazakhstan, where Islamic organizations that propagated the ideas of radical Islam and penetrated into the region from the territory of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were already operating by the beginning of the 21st century. Attempts by state structures to influence the religious situation in this region have not been successful. As a consequence, the ideology of Islamic extremism began to migrate very successfully from the South to the West of Kazakhstan.

The authorities of the Republic belatedly assessed the danger of radical Islam and adopted a number of laws supporting the traditional religions of Kazakhstan – Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity, recognizing their historical role in the development of culture and spiritual life of the country. But traditional Islam was not able to resist radical Islam, brought from abroad.

Today, the Salafi jamaats, which have become numerous in the South and West of Kazakhstan, are the main “shock” force for the spread of radical Islam. Neighboring countries with Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan – help their fellow believers with missionaries and literature. Recently, there has been a process of “migration” of radical Islam to Northern Kazakhstan. Today, the number of unregistered communities and mosques in the Duma exceeds the number registered twice in Kazakhstan. A significant number of such communities and mosques are located today in Northern Kazakhstan, i.e. in the territory directly bordering the Omsk region in Russia. It is possible to predict with a certain degree of certainty the further spread of the ideas of radical Islam throughout the Republic of Kazakhstan with access to the borders of the Russian Federation. The transparency of the borders between Russia and Kazakhstan, family ties of residents of border regions, the presence of Muslim

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communities in the Omsk region, focused on immigrants from Kazakhstan, lead to the fact that the border regions, including the Omsk region, are affected in the first place.

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ASOMIDDIN HUDAYBERDIEV. UZBEKISTAN: PROBLEMS OF YOUTH PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION (SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS) // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

*Keywords: information security, globalization, informatization, information society.*

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*Abstract.* Under current conditions, the problems of information threats have been updated in the context of globalization of information processes, the rapid development and domination of information technologies, which allow politicians to exploit the information space, as well as the process of interaction between mass communications and their audience.

Problems related to the process of informatization in the context of globalization and its impact on the population world view, especially its young part, are studied by many scholars, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, teachers and researchers from other fields, as well as many foreign and Uzbek scientists performing research in this direction

As we know, the nowadays development of a global information-oriented society all over the world is intense, and more and more countries contribute to this process. At the same

time, the Republic of Uzbekistan, on the basis of a long-term development strategy at a high level, develops information systems and accomplishes a purpose of ranking among the most developed countries with high scientific and intellectual potential of the population. Sensitization of society and technological development require of young people to have deep knowledge and new abilities, a broad world view and specific thinking that guarantee adaptation to changes and allow them to take rightful place in society.

Acceleration of informatization processes in a number of countries points at the incomplete readiness of a human himself, especially a young one, to use effectively the means and methods of obtaining, processing, learning and applying of a large amount of information. The Internet has an impact on the consciousness of the young, who always read news with interest, get various referral information from the Internet. Intruders, knowing that the young are interested in the Internet, use it masterfully.

The globalization processes currently taking place on the world level have created unprecedented opportunities for the development of all mankind, especially the young part. First of all, today we are witnessing new heights in science and technology, modern information and communication technologies, which open borders between different countries and contribute a lot to the development of cooperation and integration. But we should not forget that such achievements are used as ideological weapons simultaneously for the implementation of projects of certain political forces with great power and financial capabilities.

Today, perception of the reality of such attempts, their negative long-term consequences and the prevention of such dangers primarily for young people has primary importance (Karimov 2009:5-6). We cannot be indifferent to the fact that in the modern globalized world there are elements that negatively affect consciousness of the young. Various ideological threats, information attacks arising in a single information space, can seriously damage the consciousness of the young generation. Now

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one of the main goals is to focus on protecting the younger generation from these aggressive threats. Indeed, globalization is a general process of the world scale, arising as a consciousness of man, as a result of his thinking, and if it's permissible, another test for the mankind.

Today, some of the world's powerful states are trying to dominate the process of globalization implementing their national interests. It is a form of interest, aspect, sphere, direction, variety (Rasulov 2008:8-9). In this regard, special attention is paid to the development of a culture of information consumption among students and young people. Under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on March 19, 2019 there was held a meeting on issues of closer attention to young people: wide involvement of them in culture, art, sports, introduction of skills of competent use of information technologies, promotion of reading. At the meeting, the head of Uzbekistan launched 5 important initiatives to establish work in social, spiritual and educational spheres on the basis of the new system:

- raising interest of young people to music, painting, literature, theatre and other types of art, formation of talents.
- creation of necessary conditions for physical development of young people, manifestation of their abilities in sports.
- organization of efficient use of computer technologies and the Internet among young people.
- organization of systematic work to increase the spirituality of young people, wide promotion of reading.
- the problem of women 's employment.

At the moment, more than 800 cultural centers and 312 schools of music and art in Uzbekistan have 130 thousand boys and girls, most of whom are provided with work books, music score, but the provision of musical instruments, furniture and equipment is not sufficient yet. About 30% of Uzbekistan's population is made up of young men and women between the ages of 14 and 30. All conditions for their education and professional training have been created. The better the young

people are morally developed, the stronger their immunity to various foreign illusions will be.

The second half of the 20th century is a period of information systems and telecommunication technologies development, which have penetrated almost all spheres of life and human activity, as well as the era of globalization of the information space. Article 4 of the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Informatization clearly defines the state policy in the field of informatization, which is aimed at the development and improvement of information resources, information technologies and information systems for the establishment of a national information system, taking into account modern world principles for its improvement. The main public policy in the field of informatization is:

- exercise of the constitutional right of everyone for free getting and dissemination of information and providing free access to information resources;

- creation of a single information space of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the basis of information systems of public authorities, network and territorial information systems, as well as information systems of entities and persons;

- international information networks and Internet access to the World Wide Web;

- formation of state information resources, creation and development of information systems, providing their compatibility and interaction;

- management of modern information technology aids;

- information technology development;

- promotion of the information resources, services and information technology market;

- stimulation the production development of software products;

- support and stimulation of entrepreneurship, creation of favorable conditions for attracting investments;

- training and development of personnel, stimulation of scientific research (Adolat 2008:50).

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Furthermore, in recent years, information resources have been actively used as a space for achieving interstate, geopolitical goals. Therefore, especially in the conditions of an open information system, the importance of problems solution connected with information, information and psychological bodily security, society and state increases. As Islam Karimov noted: "Our people sincerely, naively and surely look at what is said in the press, on television, on the radio. Information and analysis centers, which work against us externally, also try to take advantage of this" (Karimov 2008:46).

As a result of information and communication technologies development, various ideological threats have emerged in the world, which can have a negative impact on the spirituality of all mankind, including the Uzbek people. Along with positive aspects, globalization has contributed to a number of serious challenges and threats. Depending on the origin and ways to overcome them, global problems can be divided into three groups:

The first group is the problems that people associate with the nature of an organized society, that is, the complex of different interests of the countries of the region (for example, the problems of East-West, South-North, developed and developing countries), in other words, those that generate conflicts in international social processes and relations.

The second group includes problems that characterize the relationships that arise in the human system and society to which it belongs.

The third one includes problems caused by relations within the "society-nature" system (Zhuraev 2008:397-398).

Under globalization, security changes qualitatively. Due to the fact that the front of fighting takes place everywhere, simple defense is not enough now. Information easily passes through any protective barriers and is absorbed by public consciousness. Thus, "information security" is a protection of the information space that serves a person, citizen, state. To understand it correctly and fully, it's necessary to know what "information space" is. Information

about something can be complete or brief, impartial or biased, positive or negative, interesting or boring, relevant or outdated, useful or useless, etc. And the ability to distinguish real information from false information requires deep knowledge and experience.

It should be emphasized that in recent years, within the framework of threats that trespass against Uzbekistan's national security, the risks of information threats become more visible. These threats are based on the political interests of some states and forces, and the widespread opening its borders to the world promotes influence of some negative effects of globalization.

Uzbekistan's information security can be both internal and external. Internal security is divided into individual, public and state security. There are many areas of information security: political, economic, cultural, ecological, legal, technical, social, etc. Uzbekistan's external information security consists of global, continental and regional security. This includes the influence of political, economic, information and other external structures on our country. Information policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of foreign relations should consist of two main parts: firstly, information assurance for its foreign policy; secondly, international cooperation in the field of information security.

In its turn, an information attack is an effect focused on a person, an organization, a state, and its main purpose is to form political and social groups that will promote violation of the normal way of life of a person, an organization and a state. In fact, this is a phenomenon of social and psychological aspect.

According to experts in the 21st century, a number of countries and organizations, engaged in such information attacks, endanger other countries, make illegal transactions, for example, transfer of large amounts of money from one country to another to finance various organizations which activities are aimed at information and psychological effect on society, i.e., waging of information and psychological war.

It's necessary to avoid ideological vacuum in the consciousness of the young generation, to be deeply aware of the



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essence and original cause of political, economic and cultural processes taking place in the world, to educate young people properly on authoritative information about the events around them, and ultimately, in accordance with their world view and civic position. For the forgoing reasons, Uzbekistan is making large-scale efforts to educate the younger generation in the spirit of patriotism, with pro-active attitude and who seek for acquiring of knowledge.

For creation and regulation of a legal mechanism of receiving and dissemination of information and the information and communication sphere in our country there were adopted 11 laws, 3 Decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 40 resolutions, more than 600 secondary legislation and also a number of national programs were developed.

In the context of globalization, security changes qualitatively. Due to the fact that the front of fighting takes place everywhere, simple defense is not enough now. Information easily passes through any protective barriers and is absorbed by public consciousness. Thus, "information security" is a protection of the information space that serves a person, citizen, state.

It's impossible to stop globalization, it can be used only to benefit or inflict damages to states, societies and individuals. It is therefore necessary to consider ways of effective and beneficial use of information technologies. Today, information security consists not only in security support of computer networks and infrastructure, but also in protection of the single information space.

In conclusion it may be said that Uzbekistan has experience in protecting the spirituality and consciousness of young people from any harmful information threats. A deep understanding the implication and original cause of the political processes currently taking place at the height of the information war, obtaining reliable information about what is happening around, explaining to the inhabitants and, above all, to young people that any information attacks are based on color revolutions with demonstrations and riots, is becoming an important factor in countering information threats. The role and power of the media must also be taken into account.

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AZIZ NIYAZI. FOUNDER OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF CENTRAL ASIA. TO 150-ANNIVERSARY OF ACADEMICIAN V.V. BARTOLD // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

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*Keywords: academician V.V. Bartold, historical geography, Russian and Soviet Middle Eastern studies, theory of desiccation of Central Asia, the Aral Sea, the Caspian Sea, Amu-Darya, Central Asia, Turkestan, irrigation.*

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*Abstract.* The article analyses the main historical and geographical works of academician V.V. Bartold of Central Asia, which are generally considered as a single comprehensive study

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of the centuries-long interaction of society and nature in the region and partially adjacent land areas.

November 3, 2019 marks the 150 anniversary of the birth of the outstanding Russian and Soviet orientalist Vasily V. Bartold (1869-1930). The excellent knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Turkic languages, history and culture of the Muslim world, its population served as the basis for numerous fundamental researches of the scientist in various fields of Oriental studies. He traveled extensively the East, took part in scientific expeditions, archaeological excavations, collected manuscripts and legends, which enriched laborious desk job. In the scientific circulation he introduced a large number of previously unused sources, and the known ones were carefully revised in order to distinguish the actual facts from fiction and unfounded interpretations. In 1963, Vasily V. Bartold's rich scientific heritage began to be published in 9 volumes. How numerous it is, it can be judged by the names: Volume I (1963). "Turkistan in the age of Mongolian Invasion"; Volume II, (1963) "General Works on the History of Central Asia. Works on the History of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe"; Volume III (1965) "Works on Historical Geography"; Volume IV (1966) "Works on Archaeology, Numismatics, Epigraphy, and Ethnography"; Volume V (1968) "Works on the History and Philology of Turkic and Mongolian Peoples"; Volume VI (1966) "Works on the History of Islam and the Arab Caliphate"; Volume VII (1971) "Works on the historical geography and history of Iran"; Volume VIII (1973) "Works on the source study"; IX volume (1977) "Works on History of Middle Eastern Studies."

During the years of scientific workflows, thanks to the extraordinary erudition, brilliant talent and rare efficiency of Vasily V. Bartold published more than 400 scientific works. The collected edition in 9 volumes included about 300 works - monographs, articles, reviews, notes, as well as more than 200 articles written by the author for the "Encyclopedia of Islam." The multifaceted creative thinking of the scientist has been

translated into the fields of the history of Islam, Central Asia, Iran, the Arab Caliphate, oriental studies and archival affairs, as well as the fields of philology, cultural studies, archaeology and ethnography, and source studies. He worked extensively at the study of oriental manuscripts, mostly Arab authors who wrote about ancient Slavs.

Particularly, Vasily V. Bartold was interested in historical geography - is relatively new discipline in Russian science of the time. Within its framework, he prepared monographs "Information on the Aral Sea and the Lowers of Amu-Darya from the earliest times to the 17th century" (1902), "Towards the History of Irrigation of Turkistan" (1915), "Historical and Geographical Survey of Iran" (1903), as well as numerous articles for the "Encyclopedia of Islam." Historical and geographical methodology has been applied by the author in many archaeological articles. In order to verify geographical data, physical and cultural landscapes of past epochs, the scientist resorted to the mass of written historical monuments and various documents of Arab, Iranian and local authors, as well as Greek, Chinese and Russian sources. These were literary works, historical chronicles, notes of geographers, travellers, merchants, economic orders, shariah rules, waqf documents, etc.

In 2002, the book "V.V. Bartold. Works on Historical Geography" was published in the series "Classics of Domestic Oriental Studies." It collects the main monographs, articles, reviews and notes of the author dedicated to the historical geography of Central Asia. In general, these publications are a single comprehensive study of the centuries-long interaction of society and nature in the region and partially adjacent land areas. Held at the junction of related sciences - geography, history, linguistics, archaeology, toponymy, onomastics, ethnography, anthropology and others, it is a fundamental work on the historical geography of Central Asia.

In his studies of the region, Vasily V. Bartold was far ahead of Western European Middle Eastern Studies, which later had to

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rely on them to a large extent. The Russian academician showed that already at that time it was not efficient to engage in historical and geographical study of Central Asia without reliance on Russian oriental literature. Even earlier, ignoring the knowledge of Russian researchers left notable gaps in foreign science about the East. In the introduction to the German edition of the monograph "Information about the Aral Sea and the lowers of Amu-Darya from the earliest times to the 17th century," the scientist noted: "Individual Arabic maps were used by Europeans in the Middle Ages; Individual works by Arab geographers appeared in the 17th century in Latin translation; although the detailed and trustworthy reports of the Arabs about the Caspian and Aral Seas, about Oaks (Amu-Darya, A.N.) and Yaxart (Syr-Darya, A.N.) didn't influence European science. Everything that Western Europe could learn from the Arabs 800 years ago, it learned only in the 18th century from the Russians. Correcting previous views on Oaks, Yaxart and the Caspian Sea belongs to the first achievements of Russian research borrowed by Western European science."

The research article of V.V. Bartold on the Aral Sea and the lowers of Amu-Darya was published in 1902 in Tashkent in the light of the comprehensive study of the Aral Sea undertaken by the Turkistan Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. In 1910 the book was published in German in Leiden and drew so much attention of foreign specialists. Using a solid number of written sources, the author was able to present the reader a living picture of the centuries-long interaction of civilizations, movement of peoples and tribes, rises and falls of empires, states, cultural areas and cities in relation to the natural and climatic conditions of the region. Moreover, the scientist conclusively proved the fact that the waters of Amu-Darya fell into the Caspian Sea through the Lake Sarykamysh and the ancient corridor of Uzboy in the medieval period. Thereby he cut down the opinion of geologists and geographers, as well as the famous Dutch orientalist Michael Jan de Gue, that this could not be. As it is shown in the work, the river, its arms and waterways in the

delta often changed their directions, were absorbed by sands and reappeared, often under people's influence who built irrigation systems, or, on the contrary, destroyed dams in order to defeat enemy.

Academician Vasily V. Bartold believed that Amu-Darya could flow into the Caspian Sea between the 13th and 16th centuries. Henceforth thorough archaeological and geographical studies in the lowers of the river and the districts of Sarykamysh and Uzboy, carried out by the Khwarazm Expedition in the 1950s, made their adjustments. It was learned that water runoff of Amu Darya waters into the Caspian Sea was less and more short-run (several decades in the late 14th – early 15th centuries) than Vasily V. Bartold supposed, but in general the fact was confirmed by modern methods and means of science. Thus, conclusions of the scientist, based on the analysis of written sources, in the most important thing withstood the test of time. He proved that historical science can be as strong tool in geography study as natural sciences, and sometimes win, as it happened in his dispute with geologists and geographers (Vasily V. Bartold called them naturalists) on the Amudarian question.

Another historical and geographical monograph of academician Bartold "To the History of Irrigation of Turkistan" was prepared by him at request of the General department of land organization and agriculture of the Russian Empire. In the introduction to it the researcher wrote: "As is known Russian conquerors found a centuries-long agricultural heritage in the province based on artificial irrigation, which could not but arouse interest both among orientalists and archeologists and among people of practical business. In this area, maybe more alive than in others, there was a close connection between studying the past of the region and working for its future; during discussions of irrigation projects, there were repeatedly raised questions concerning the cultural past of the same areas; nevertheless, the works of Russian orientalists and archeologists about the historical past of Turkistan and monuments of this past had an extremely

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limited number of readers and, with few exceptions, did not become well-known specialists in physical geography and hydraulic engineering. Even outstanding representatives of geographical science made assumptions that did not correspond to precisely established historical data, there were raised questions that were in fact already resolved by historical science; there were even cases when the authors of works on hydraulic engineering reproached Russian orientalists for indifference to historical monuments, but in fact detailed research about them was already available in Russian.

Consequently, Vasily V. Bartold prepared a fundamental work, which summarized all the available information on irrigation issues of Central Asia in ancient times and Middle Ages. It is also impossible for modern researchers to do without it, ones who study economic life of Central Asian peoples, the history of ancient and medieval irrigation in the region.

Except for monographs devoted to multiple survey of Amu-Darya, the Aral Sea and the problems of irrigation of Turkistan, the collection of works of academician Bartold on physical geography included 111 articles from the "Encyclopedia of Islam," the most important reviews, articles and notes on actual problems of Russian development of Central Asia. All of them have continued importance for those who are interested in history, economic and spiritual culture, nature of this region.

It is important that the research of Vasily V. Bartold proved the failure of the popular in his time theory of gradual desiccation of Central Asia. Its supporters argued that the region has been drying up for thousands of years, shallowing of rivers and lakes, the reduction of fertile land cannot be prevented. Disappearance of once cultural beds and caravan routes, abandoned once prosperous cities, mass displacement of tribes and peoples are the result of the progressive degradation of the natural and climatic conditions of the region. It was not wars and political processes that caused devastation of land, but on the contrary, degradation of the natural environment was their origin. Desiccation cannot be stopped and,

therefore, the accession of the Central Asian territories to Russia, investment of huge resources in their economic and cultural development is a pointless and futureless matter.

Academician Vasily V. Bartold, on the basis of many Arabic sources argued the contrary and concluded that the relation between cultivable lands and desert in Persia and Central Asia 1000 years ago was about the same as by the beginning of the 20th century.

Inaccuracy of the theory of desiccation was confirmed by the contemporary Vasily V. Bartold, the authoritative researcher of Central Asia academician Leo S. Berg. On the basis of convincing physical and geographical data, he proved that in the historical era the climate of Turkistan did not undergo any significant changes. The scientist noted that the water economy of Turkistan is regulated by nature so that there is no permanent chronic shortage of water there, and falling water in one place is replenished by surplus in another. Both academicians, based on different directions of science, concluded that degradation of cultural territories, disappearance of ancient cities and trade routes are primarily explained by river diversion, their tributaries and sleeves, (so-called river peregrination), taking water for irrigation, destructive wars, which destroyed dams and irrigation channels, a large part of the population was killed or stole into slavery.

How significantly nomad raids and local devastating wars affected the change of waterways is seen as exemplified by the Amu-Darya. The destruction of Khorezm 's irrigation system during the Mongolian invasion led to the fact that some of Amu-Darya 's water began to flow back into Sarykamysh, its water level rose to 50 m above sea level, but not enough to form a runoff on Uzboy into the Caspian Sea. Then the water level in the lake gradually decreased. At the end of the 14th century, after the defeat of Khorezm by Timur, there was a new breakthrough of Amu-Darya, as a result of which water in Sarykamysh reached the highest level in historical time – not less than 53–54 m above sea level. Water began to overflow into Uzboy. Respectively, it could



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reach the Caspian Sea, as evidenced by the written sources on which Vasily V. Bartold relied.

The works of Vasily V. Bartold are not only a retrospect, they are projected on modernity, convince of frequency of trends in relations between society and nature. His research shows that powerful states could create and preserve extensive and efficient irrigation systems. Summarizing the extensive material he studied, he wrote, "Association of the state was achieved by extremely violent means; however, the periods when this goal was achieved were the best time in the life of the country. In the sphere of irrigation, only at such times extensive works could be carried out, important for the population of the whole area using the water of a river or a main canal; during the periods of revolts, each sultan or beg naturally cared only for the prosperity of his "capital" and his small area, sometimes forcibly relocating the inhabitants of neighboring areas there; the dams they erected could only lead to a general irrigation system disorder. Such periods always made the population ruefully consider powerful rulers. Despite the mass bashing held under Timur or Abdullah Bukhara (in the second half of the 16th century), Turkistan still remembers these rulers as benefactors of the people, who everywhere tried to restore the well-being of the areas in decline." The analogy with the Soviet and post-Soviet experience of the Central Asian republics suggests itself.

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7. Partly the study of the lowers Amu-Darya was related to the failed grand project to direct the river into the Caspian Sea with the aim of creating a continuous waterway from the borders of Afghanistan to the European part of Russia.
8. Modern studies have shown that during the Neolithic water from Sarykamysh Lake, where Amu Darya was falling, through Uzboy was flowing into the Caspian Sea; at the turn of the III and II millennia BCE there was a breakthrough of Amu-Darya waters to the north into the Aral Sea. The supply of water to Sarykamysh decreased, by the middle of the first millennium BC Uzboy finally dried up, and soon the water of Amu-Darya stopped reaching Sarykamysh. The reason for this was largely the creation of an extensive irrigation system that changed the water regime of the delta.  
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## ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

AL'ESBILI FAIZAH SALEKH MOHAMMED. RUSSIAN – YEMENI RELATIONS AT THE PRESENT STAGE // The article was written for the bulletin “Russia and the Moslem World.”

*Keywords:* Russian-Yemeni relations, Russian policy in the Middle East, mutual cooperation.

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*Abstract.* There is an analysis of Russian-Yemeni relations and stages of their development.

### **Introduction**

Russia and Yemen maintain cordial and friendly relations which total more than a century. Russia always supported both the Yemen Arab Republic (The republic which was in the northern part of Yemen), and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen) and continue to maintain close ties after their association.

Relations between Russia and Yemen have considerably improved recently, Yemen was in the forefront of the countries which established diplomatic relations with Russia after the collapse of the USSR. These bilateral ties gained unprecedented growth and development within the last seven years that is a unique example of relations.

## **The history of Russian-Yemeni relations**

The first treaty of friendship and trade between Moscow and Sana was signed in 1928, and diplomatic relations were established in 1955. The Soviet Union actively supported both the Yemen Arab Republic, and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen and provided them non-repayable aid.

The president of the Arab Republic Yemen (and then the Republic of Yemen) Ali Abdullah Saleh, visited Moscow 5 times during the period from 1981 to 2009. The relations between two countries are based on the large legal basis presented by treaties of friendship and cooperation with the Yemen People's Democratic Republic (1979), the Yemen Arab Republic (1984) and other bilateral documents.

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May, 1990 as a result of the voluntary union between the Arab Republic Yemen (The republic which was in the northern part of Yemen after the Yemen revolution of 1962) and the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen). In December, 1991 the Republic of Yemen officially announced recognition of Russia as a legitimate successor of the former Soviet Union, including recognition of all signed international treaties and conventions.

In December, 1991 during the official visit of the president Ali Abdullah Saleh to Moscow there were signed: Declaration of principles of friendship and cooperation between Russia and Yemen; Agreement on cooperation between the governments of two countries in the sphere of science, culture, education, sport and tourism; Agreement between the governments of two countries on mutual encouragement and investment protection. Both countries conduct an active dialogue in the political sphere, Moscow was visited also by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of Defense of Yemen. In May, 2004 it was declared closer cooperation on fight against terrorism, especially within the UN and the Counter-terrorism Committee of the UN Security Council.

## Russia's position on war in Yemen

Information center "Sputnik" held press-conference<sup>1</sup>, devoted to resolution of the Yemen crisis and need of additional efforts to put civilians out of misery. Professor of department of oriental studies of Moscow institute of international relations.

N. Surkov<sup>2</sup> said that Russia strives for the political solution of crisis because the military option and language of force are useless or useful only within international interventions. N. Surkov said the following: "One of the most important obstacles on the way to political settlement is the three year civil war in Yemen which is beyond control in addition to external intervention and disagreements between two main countries of the alliance, that is Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and these distinctions emerged from time to time."

According to N.Surkov the best solution for removal of these obstacles is the use of wide-ranging strategy, including the approval of Saudi Arabia of the proposals made by the UAE, transition of power in the south to local authorities, but only if the foreign parties agree among themselves. According to the professor the Saudi-Iranian conflict which is one of the main reasons for political instability in Yemen must be terminated. He also emphasized the need to stop the support of the USA of "The Saudi military campaign" against Yemen.

Answering the question of a role which Russia could play in war with Yemen, the expert said: "The role of Russia in Yemen has to be limited by the framework of the Security Council as well as in the aggregate when using veto power of Moscow against the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab\\_world/201803211030949941%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A5%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86/](https://arabic.sputniknews.com/arab_world/201803211030949941%D8%AE%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%8A%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A5%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86/)

<sup>2</sup> ib

British project supported by the USA and France to resume the arms embargo to Yemen, condemning inability of Iran to prevent delivery of its weapon to Houthis, and Russia can do its part in mediation in the crisis and also in assistance and humanitarian aid which will alleviate suffering of Yemeni population.<sup>1</sup>

### **Cooperation of Russia and Yemen**

Military and technical cooperation. In recent years Yemen has become a permanent customer of different kinds of armaments, having spent for it since 1998 2 billion dollars, 1 billion dollars of which was spent for purchasing of Russian weapon.<sup>2</sup>

Russia delivered to Yemen M29, Mi17, B2 and other military hardware, military contracts for delivery of fighter aircrafts and helicopters are being concluded. A few years ago, the president of Yemen received the helicopter Mi 171 VIP. The Russian ammunition factories are ready to prepare upgrading programs and repair of weapon for the Yemen army and also to provide a long run of spare parts and equipment. In March, 2007 telephone conversation between the President of Russia V.V. Putin and then-President of the Republic of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh during which the last one requested urgent deliveries of military hardware to Yemen at preferential prices in view of continuing combat activity near Saad took place.<sup>3</sup> In the memorandum issued on April 3, 2013 just before the meeting of the Russian Prime Minister D.A. Medvedev with the president of Yemen Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi it is said that Yemen is interested in procurement of the Russian air defense facilities and light weapons. It is said also that Sana is interested in acquisition of the armored personnel carriers PTR80A, anti-aircraft weapons and development of BTR60 BP armored vehicles and

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<sup>1</sup> ib

<sup>2</sup> [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9\\_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA_%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9)

<sup>3</sup> ib

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BDRM2 for the Yemen army, modernization of combat helicopters, transport helicopters, maintenance of the Mig29 fighters and reparations of air freighters Il76 and AN26 by Russian experts. In the memorandum it is also said that Yemen is a traditional importer of the Russian defense production. However the volume of military and technical cooperation is quite modest. The cost of all Russian military export to Yemen during the years of cooperation with it was 9 billion dollars.

Trade and economic cooperation. Economic and trade relations with Yemen develop since 1956. The total extent of obligations of the USSR fulfilled in 1960s and 1970s was generally about 6% of the external economic help received by the Yemen Arab Republic. Cooperation with the People's Democratic Republic Yemen (the southern Yemen) began in 1969. With the help of the Soviet Union a large number of industrial and social facilities in the country was constructed. The share of the Soviet Union in foreign loans received by the Southern Yemen for economic development made more than 50%.

In February, 1991 Russia and the Republic of Yemen signed the trade agreement on creation of joint governmental committee on economic, trade and scientific and technical cooperation and also the Protocol on trade mission in Sana. In 1996 it was signed the protocol on cooperation between the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Yemen and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russia. Nowadays in full pelt there are implemented the agreements of the memorandum concerning trade development, economic and technical cooperation signed on December 11, 2002 in Moscow. In December, 2007 the Russian-Yemen business forum took place in Sana. The trade value between two countries in 2007 reached 178.9 million dollars and doubled against 2006. So far export of Yemen to Russia is not vast and is at the level of 1 million dollars. Traditional Russian exports for Yemen are grain (59.7%), machines and equipment, including transport and military goods (28.2%) and also instrumentations, household appliances and medical facilities (10.8%). In Yemen

there are offices of such Russian companies as Technopromexport, Rosoboronexport, Tekhnostroyexport, Zdravexport.

Many contracts are at the finishing stage and under commissioning, for example, hydroelectric power station Hasva in Aden. In the Zdravexport company more than 260 doctors work. Recently there is a tendency towards replacement of Russian doctors by experts from the CIS countries.

In November, 1997 the meeting of the Paris Club for discussion of the matter on the external debt refunding of Yemen and signing of the document on concessional debt settlement of Yemen to the Russian Federation for Sana. As a result of the meeting it was signed the agreement between Russia and Yemen on debt relief. In December, 1999 about 80% of the debt of Yemen in the amount of 6.4 billion dollars were written off.

Humanitarian cooperation. In the Soviet Union (and then and in contemporary Russia) for all years of bilateral cooperation about 50,000 Yemeni academically trained experts in various areas were prepared. In 1999 the cooperation agreement between ITAR TASS and the Yemen press agency "Saba" was signed. In August, 2003 in Moscow the constituent conference of the Russian-Yemen Association of Friendship took place. The number of the Russian experts working in Yemen through the governmental organizations is 281 people, and the total number of the Russian community hovers around one thousand people (figures are shown during the pre-war conflict in Yemen).

In 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation provided the Yemen party with of seventy maintenance allowances for studying in universities. After graduation there were most of all employed experts in technical and medical disciplines. Nowadays 305 Yemeni students and candidates study in higher educational institutes of Russia. The Institute of Oriental Studies of RAS in the territory of Yemen carries out digs on historical archaeological objects of the country.

From the beginning of 2011 the Republic of Yemen, as well as some other Arab countries, is in internal decline which



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snowballed into the real civil war which subsequently led to reduction of volume of cooperation between two countries.

### **Russian policy in the Middle East**

The global best practices, over the past few decades Russia remains the largest, the most credible and devoted country in the relations with developing countries in the Arab East. The head of the Russian Council on International Affairs Fedor Lukyanov said that "Syria has remained the region of the Russian success," having reminded that even the most optimistic experts did not expect three years ago that Russia would avow itself as "the superpower with the greatest influence "in the Middle East region," bundling hardness and flexibility among usage of military power and diplomatic skill and a political ploy, with clear strategic goal which consists in maintenance of the seat of power in Damascus."<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Yemen was at the forefront of the countries which established relations with Post-Soviet Russia and these bilateral relations developed over the last few years, forming a unique model what the president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi repeatedly declared during his official visits in Moscow. The position of Russia on Yemen for many years is aimed at guaranteeing its unity, security, stability and also support of Yemen in military conflicts. Russia concerning military-political crisis in Yemen adheres to a political solution of the conflict and suppression of external intervention from Saudi Arabia and the UAE and also cease of any military escalation in this region.

As for the Russian policy in the Middle East, the latest historical events confirmed that for the last decades Russia is the largest and credible partner in relations with the Arab countries in the East.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2018/12/28>

It is worth referring both ideological and cultural dimension to key determinants of establishment and development of the Russian-Yemen relations. Development of cultural ties between the USSR and Yemen was going in the line of ascent and peaked after the revolution in September, 1962 when monarchical regime in Yemen was overthrown.

Remarkably that liaison between two countries goes down in many spheres. Cooperation with Yemen in trade and economic and investment sphere began since 1956 when hefty dose of objects of industrial and social nature was constructed with the participation of the Soviet Union. Besides, more than 50% of the foreign credits obtained by the Southern Yemen fell on the Soviet share. Now some Russian companies continue to work in the Yemen market, despite the existing problems with provision of security in Yemen.

In the humanitarian sphere special attention is paid to preparation of the Yemen domestic labour in Russia.

As for legal aspect, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Republic of Yemen officially confirmed validity of all agreements which were signed during the existence of the USSR.

For foreign policy of Russia, the Middle East is traditionally one of the key directions that induces active participation of the country in all processes there. In the Middle East there are involved more players than in any other region of the world and one of these key players is Russia.

A noteworthy detail is that further cooperation between Russia and Yemen is favorable for the reason that Yemen has the major strategic position and controls approaches to the Suez Canal. At the same time Russia is interested in a possibility of use of the Yemen seaports by Russian military ships and merchantmen in fight against pirates off the coast of Somalia.

The growing relations between Russia and Yemen are a strong basis for achievement of common interests between two countries and promotion of economic relations with broad prospects especially as Yemen is a breeding ground for the Russian investments in oil and gas spheres.

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*Abstract:* In the twentieth century the emergence of "triple alliances" with the participation of Iran has become traditional in Asia. Islamic foreign policy has been significantly influenced by Islamization, geopolitization and globalization. The Islamic

component of the “neither West nor East” principle was implemented in Iran’s “third way” policy as an alternative to alliances under the flag of one of the superpowers. For the modern world, the strategic partnership of Iran and Russia in the field of international and national security is important. The cooperation of our countries in Syria is considered by researchers as a factor of consolidating peace and security in the Middle East region.

### **Introduction**

In Asia, there are traditionally distinguished “centers of power,” or states, the relations between which determine the balance of power in a particular region. In the Middle East, such centers of power as Iraq (until 2003), Saudi Arabia and Iran form the strategic triangle Iraq – Iran – Saudi Arabia. In the 1990s, the project of a multipolar world was opposed to the American project of monopolar globalization. This served to increase the popularity of ideas on creating regional unions (Eurasian, Islamic, etc.).

The formation of foreign policy of Iran in the early twenty-first century was going on under the influence of Islamization, geopolitization and globalization. The Islamic component of the “neither West nor East” principle was realized in Iran’s “third way” policy as an alternative to alliances under the flag of one of the superpowers. In the diplomacy of Iran, this was reflected in the search for formats of equal cooperation in solving regional problems.

### **Triangular Alliances with Iran**

According to the observation of Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor V. Yurtayev [6], the shahdom of Iran (until 1979) actively moved onward in the Indian Ocean, up to South Africa and at the global-regional level, was meant to play the role

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of the central player in the strategic triangle ensuring security of the Indian ocean (this triangle, Australia - Iran - South Africa, remained ink on paper). The Shah Iran, together with the leading countries of the region, should ensure the development, security and defense of the countries of the Indian Ocean basin as a "nuclear-free zone" and within the framework of the planned "common market" of the coastal states of Asia, Africa and Oceania. At the same time, Iran in the system of international relations of the bipolar world was considered by the United States as the "gendarme of the Middle East." The Islamic Revolution that won in 1979 did not change Iran's (and the United States') concern for regional stability in order to guarantee oil supplies, but changed the roles of the players. Therefore, the US's desire to have Iran as a hegemon in the Persian Gulf disappeared along with the Shah.

Thus, triangular alliances with the participation of Iran in the 21st century were initiated, as a rule, at the global level, by leaders of the bipolar world, primarily the United States. The researcher notes that traditionally attention was focused on their geopolitical, i.e. conflictive component and orientation. A similar emphasis was observed in other formats of international relations - between two neighboring states (North and South Korea, India - Pakistan, Iran - Iraq, etc.), in regional disputes (in the Middle East, etc.).

During his visit to India in 1998, E. Primakov took the initiative to form the "RIC triangle" (Russia - India - China). The RIC triangle was regarded by Western experts primarily as a counterweight to the U.S. and Western influence, or as a strategic partnership against NATO and radical Islam, which could lead to a new Cold War. The leaders of the RIC group, on the contrary, emphasized the similarities between Russia, China and India, calling for coordination and cooperation in the name of strengthening international peace and security. The key difference between the "Primakov Triangle" consists in its focus on the interaction of participating countries as equal partners.

The victory of the Iranian revolution in February 1979 meant for the United States a collapse of the regional strategic balance. Iran found itself at the epicenter of the U.S. influence. However, after 2001, against the background of the actualization of the problem of international terrorism, the geopolitical coloring of the U.S. foreign policy and the globalization of the foreign policy of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey became increasingly noticeable. The geopolitization of Iran's foreign policy, the main characteristics of which are based on historical tradition and the specificity of its geographical location, manifested itself under pressure from the United States, especially after the creation of a military-political "canopy" over Iran in 2001–2003 (Afghanistan and Iraq). Thus, on the one hand, a new geopolitical triangle has formed in the region of the Near and Middle East with the participation of the United States and the included spaces of Afghanistan and Iraq. On the other hand, a new strategic triangle of "centers of power" emerged, in which Turkey took the place of the defeated Iraq.

The researcher notes that with the collapse of the USSR, the Iranian traditional foreign policy concept of balancing between the two rival forces (in the 19th century between Russia and England, from the middle of the 20th century – the U.S. and the USSR) became unacceptable in the new world order. Firstly, one of the main principles of Iran's foreign policy, "Neither West nor East – Islam" has partially lost its relevance (the East has disappeared). Secondly, with the weakening of Iraq, the traditional for the 20th-century geopolitics triad "Iran – Iraq – Saudi Arabia" has lost its meaning (as a source of problems and threats within the framework of the "balance of power" strategy). Finally, against the backdrop of threats to Iran related to Israeli military statements and the U.S. "military canopy" on Iranian borders, the security problem has acquired a global dimension. Not surprisingly, Tehran began to consider regional risks in a broad strategic context. Facing the United States and in the situation of international isolation, the religious leadership of Iran

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has embarked on a solution to the security problem by including the country in a large regional association whose member status would provide protection from external pressure. At the same time, it was supposed to find a solution for Iran to enter continental cooperation, which was necessary to restore the national economy.

The global orientation and multilayered foreign policy reflected the orientation of Shiite Iran to the role of a regional leader of a new type in the changing world. Iran's foreign policy ambitions fit into the modern interpretation of regional leadership. Such a leader, it seems, should be involved on a parity basis in the projects implemented by the world community on a global scale.

### **Strategic Partnership of Iran and Russia**

Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor of Moscow State Linguistic University L.G. Ivashov [2] focused on the interaction strategy of Moscow and Tehran in the field of international and national security. According to the researcher, strategic interaction involves:

- a coordinated assessment of the global (regional) situation and its development trends;
- the desired model of the world order and the strategy of building the future world order;
- a close or congruent system of dominant life principles and spiritual values;
- a common understanding and recognition of the international security system based on the principles of the UN Charter;
- interaction and mutual assistance in strengthening the statehood and security of each other.

The author notes that Russia and Iran have experience of such interaction, both at the regional and international levels. The Russian Federation and Iran, primarily the military and special

services, worked jointly and effectively in Afghanistan against the Taliban in the 1990s, supporting A. Massoud, stopped the massacre and stabilized the situation in Tajikistan in 1992–1993, worked together to eliminate terrorism in Chechnya. The results of the interaction of the Russian Federation and Iran in other areas:

- prevention of implementation of the U.S. plan to establish control over Eurasia;
- prevention of the coup d'état attempts in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan;
- blocking of the USA and NATO plan to set up pro-American regimes in the South Caucasus and send troops into the Caspian zone;
- prevention of armed aggression against Iran;
- organization of a joint defense of the Syrian state;
- not allowing the US to establish full control over the Middle East.

Russia and Iran stopped the serial destruction of states in the ME and changed the geopolitical and military-strategic situation in the region. The author shows the geopolitical results of the actions of the grouping of the Russian Aerospace Forces and Iranian Air Forces in Syria:

- change in the geopolitical map of the ME and the balance of forces in the region;
- creation of prerequisites for the restoration of Islamic civilization and its Arab core;
- launching the process of returning refugees and restoring statehood;
- creating conditions for the negotiation process and political settlement of the conflict;
- increasing the geopolitical status and international prestige of Russia;
- the return of the Russian Federation to the ME as a leading player;



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- a change in the balance of power between the West and the East.

This is a positive groundwork for Russian-Iranian strategic cooperation, but more efforts are needed, as the world situation is becoming more complicated.

The researcher gives an expert assessment of the prospects for the development of the modern world. World development trends towards the beginning of the 21st century:

The attempts to build a monopolar world order failed; the world did not accept the dictate of military force, the U.S. economic dominance was shaken, the dollar is no longer the only world reserve currency; the Western system of standards is not perceived as universal values; the world takes on the contours of civilizational multipolarity; the era of civilizations of the Eastern type is coming; the United States has decisive superiority in military power and seeks to use it to maintain global dominance; China has become the first economy in the world and takes control of global strategic communications and global resources. However, Washington is trying to maintain the former monopolar, the U.S.-centric world order, relying on the superiority of military force and the denial of the international legal security system. D. Trump is backed by moderate political forces, ready to recognize the multipolarity of world processes, but to rely on "soft power" operations. But they are no less, and sometimes more dangerous, than direct military aggression, the researcher emphasizes.

Today, the outlines of the world order of the 21st century have become apparent. These are the Eurasian Union - Shanghai Cooperation Organization - a group of BRICS countries. They became a kind of response to the attempts of transnational corporations and shadow structures of world financial capital to monopolize world and regional power. States, most of which are subjugated by transnational corporations, unite in world and local civilizations. And in this process, the world of Islam is represented poorly. According to L. Ivashov, the Russian

Federation and Iran could offer the following on an international and regional scale in the framework of strategic interaction:

- The Council of Civilizations at the UN. Reformat the UN Security Council, where the permanent members of the Security Council will be representatives of world ethnocultural civilizations;

- the geopolitical doctrine of the world of civilizations of the 21st century;

- the strategy of interaction between the Russian Federation and Iran in the construction of a multipolar world order;

- the program for restoring peace and statehood in the ME.

V.V. Karyakin, PhD(Military Sciences), Military University of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation,[3] considers the Russian-Iranian strategic partnership as a factor of international security. Iran and Russia occupy central geopolitical positions on the Eurasian continent, possessing strategically important natural, demographic and economic resources, as well as significant military potential. Iran and Russia have a common sea border passing along the Caspian Sea, which is rich in hydrocarbon resources, which creates good prospects for cooperation in this area. The Russian-Iranian interests extend to the Caucasus, Central Asia and Afghanistan.

In the Central Asian states that emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR, nationalist sentiments grow and the movements of radical Islam raise the head, which poses a threat to regional security. Iran acquired the status of a regional power as a member of the anti-terrorist coalition headed by Russia, which significantly strengthens its position in the Islamic world.

Today, the author notes, Iran has taken the leading position in the ME due to economic growth, which is going on despite the Western sanctions, as well as to the development of nuclear technologies, which made it virtually the tenth member of the world nuclear club. In July 2015, Iran and the E3+3 group of international negotiators (a group of representatives from the UK, France, Russia, Germany, the U.S. and China) signed a historic

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agreement. In exchange for the control of the international community over the development of the Iranian nuclear program, Tehran lifted the sanctions imposed in the framework of the UN Security Council resolutions in 2006–2012. Moscow made a considerable contribution to the negotiation process on Iran's nuclear dossier, which was completed successfully. The countries of the E3+3 understood that the agreement would change the balance of power in the "large" Middle East. At the same time, considering scenarios of the course of events, they were confident that Iran would not abandon its regional strategy to support Shiites in Syria and Iraq. The parties to the negotiation process took into account the fact that the achievement of specific agreements led not only to lifting of sanctions against Iran, but also to a new alignment of forces in the ME. The sanctions of the West against Iran aimed, through playing the "card" of its nuclear program, to exert pressure on issues of human rights, democratization of the regime and refusal to sponsor terrorism.

Russia is initiating the inclusion of Iran in the negotiation process regarding the Syrian settlement. The United States did not oppose this, although engaging in the negotiations such regional rivals as Iran and Turkey would make it difficult to sign an acceptable agreement. But in future, the situation may change dramatically. If today a weighty basis for rapprochement between Moscow and Tehran is the commonality of their views on the Syrian issue and the confrontation with the West, primarily the United States, then tomorrow everything may look different. If Moscow and Tehran fail to achieve their military and political goals in Syria and its strategic value is devaluated, Iran may abandon confrontation with the West to the detriment of relations with Russia. Therefore, Russian-Iranian relations in the long term are difficult to predict, V. Karyakin believes.

Russia, as well as other hydrocarbon exporters, would benefit from maintaining the status quo regarding Iran, the researcher emphasizes. Sanctions would have preserved the potential competitor of Russia represented by Iran in the global

energy market. In particular, in the Caspian region, it would be better to deal with Azerbaijan than with Iran, whose regional power will increase after the lifting of sanctions.

As of the current moment, Russian-Iranian political, economic and military-technical cooperation has received a "second wind." Among the most significant projects, there should be mentioned implementation of the North-South transport corridor, which can become a good complement to the Chinese Silk Road and connect India, Iran and possibly Pakistan with Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Another important project was the construction of a navigation canal that will connect the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf. It is expected that Russia will join this project. The expected project cost is estimated at \$ 7 billion. It is planned to be completed in 2030. Thanks to it, countries with access to the Caspian Sea: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, Iran – will be able to transport oil and natural gas by water. This channel is of strategic importance for Russia, because it creates the shortest exit to the Indian Ocean basin. All countries with access to the closed Caspian Sea also get direct access to the ocean. Thanks to the Iranian navigation canal, Russian warships will be able to sail into the southern seas without the use of Turkish straits.

The connection of the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf is of great geopolitical importance, since a meridional transport corridor will be formed in addition to the new Chinese Silk Road. Construction of the Iranian navigation canal will reduce the cost of transporting goods by more than 20% compared with the transshipment of goods through the Suez Canal. And this project is already being implemented, since Russia and Iran have set up a joint shipping company with the possibility of transporting goods up to 4 million tons per year. The North-South transport corridor, which is a railway line along the western coast of the Caspian Sea, is also under development, which will allow the transit of goods through Azerbaijan, then by road or rail to Iran to the southern Iranian port city of Bender Abbas on the shore of

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Persian Gulf and further by sea to Indian Mumbai. In general, the North-South transport corridor - a route from St. Petersburg to India, the port of Mumbai (Bombay) - will have a length of 7.2 thousand km. It is developed to transport goods from India, Iran and other Persian Gulf countries along the Caspian Sea through Russian territory and further to Northern and Western Europe.

The projects of new transport corridors, the author notes, are important for the implementation of the plans of Iran and Russia to increase trade. Iran is primarily interested in purchasing Russian grain. In the future, it is possible to expand the range of supplies. By rail, one can transport food, as well as industrial goods, oil and oil products.

Prospects for the Russian-Iranian military-technical cooperation (MTC) are determined not only by the internal motivation of the parties to advance their relations to a qualitatively different level. There are a number of global and regional factors pushing Moscow and Tehran towards strong military-political ties and the development of relations in the military-technical cooperation. The two largest powers of the Caspian Sea found themselves under the pressure of similar Western sanctions. According to the researcher, if we want to ensure regional security and stability, we need to solve these issues without involving Western partners. To do this, it is necessary to create regional blocs and resolve conflict situations at the regional level.

Iran offers Russia a new level of military-technical cooperation: joint research and development work, which before that Russia conducted only with China. Tehran is striving not only for the role of a buyer of Russian weapons, but also for an equal partnership with Russia in R&D and arms modernization. Western sanctions have caused sensitive damage to the Iranian economy. With the growth of sanctions in Iran, awareness of the need to create their own defense industry was growing. Since the early 2000s, the Iranian leadership has set the task of increasing the country's scientific and technical potential, devoting part of

its efforts to the field of military development and the development of the defense industry. In recent years, Iran's own developments have appeared in military air and naval equipment, high-tech means of warfare (unmanned aerial vehicles, ballistic missiles). Iran does not refuse to cooperate with foreign partners. It practices procurement of defense products, the independent production of which does not seem feasible in the near future. Such products include long-range air defense and missile defense systems.

In general, the author notes, the issue of Russian-Iranian military cooperation should be considered primarily in the framework of the security policy that the Russian Federation pursues in the Near and Middle East. Iran is not a member of regional collective security systems, it is a supporter of the solution of all problems exclusively by the forces of regional states. The non-aligned status of Iran, its attitude towards the bilateral development of relations with foreign partners create favorable conditions for establishing close arms cooperation between Moscow and Tehran, V. Karyakin emphasizes. The Russian Federation sees Iran as a strategic partner capable of creating favorable conditions for ensuring regional security based on a balance of forces in the Near and Middle East to moderate the geopolitical ambitions of Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

According to the researcher, Russia and Iran complement each other politically very well. Such an alliance is a serious problem for the United States and its allies. At the same time, with regard to Syria, our countries adhere to various strategies. If for Russia the military operation in Syria is part of a global plan to create a multipolar world, where Russia will become one of the leading powers, then Iran's goal is to strengthen Shiite power in the Middle East. In addition, Russia is trying to strengthen the position of its naval base in Syria, which provides access to the Mediterranean Sea.

The strategic goals in Syria between Russia and Iran are different. This is explained by the fact that the number of Shiites

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in the Russian Federation is small (In the Russian Federation there live 15–20 million Moslems, not counting illegal migrants; about 3 million of them are Shiites). But the immediate tactical goals coincide. This is fight against international terrorism.

### **Cooperation between Russia and Iran in Syria**

Doctor of Sciences (History), professor of Moscow State Linguistic University A. Vavilov [1] notes that Russia has repeatedly warned Western politicians about the explosiveness of unlawful forceful outside interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, Libya and Syria with Yemen, not only for regional, but also global stability and security. However, these appeals were not heard in western capitals and Washington. Guided by their narrowly politicized geostrategic interests, the Western powers, led by the United States and some of their regional partners, grossly violated the sovereignty of the Middle Eastern states, undermined and weakened their state and military structures, which turned the region into a hotbed of international terrorism that threatens global peace and security.

Russia and its allies had to take drastic measures to rectify the situation and neutralize the dangerous consequences of foreign interference in the affairs of the Middle East states. Now its main efforts are concentrated on the search for a political settlement of the crisis in Syria, which has brought untold misery and suffering to its people.

Moscow proceeds from the inadmissibility of imposing any recipes on the Syrian people from outside, from unacceptability for the search for solutions to numerous conflicts, the vicious practice of "geopolitical engineering", far from taking into account the aspirations of the suffering civilian population, attempts to change undesirable regimes, including by force.

From the very beginning of the Syrian crisis, Russia has always stood for its exclusively peaceful solution, while respecting the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of this

ancient country. After all, there is no alternative to the political process, based on a mutually respectful, inclusive, without preconditions, inter-Syrian dialogue while ensuring a cessation of hostilities regime, expanding and increasing humanitarian access, and building up the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism. Moscow and Tehran are unanimous in their support for the immediate cessation of terrorist supplies from outside, for the resumption of inclusive intra-Syrian dialogue with the assistance of the UN in accordance with the international legal framework. To render an effective rebuff to the "terrorist international," according to A.Vavilov, it is necessary to unite all the forces of the world community, refusing to politicize the division of militants and oppositionists into "bad" and "good" ones in hope to use the latter to solve their narrowly selfish tasks.

Russia and Iran will consistently advocate strict observance of the UN Charter and the norms of international law, to protect the sovereignty of states and peoples from attempts to impose on them alien recipes of "democratization" and "freedom," A. Vavilov concludes.

### **Problems of strategic stability at the beginning of the 21st century**

According to A. Orlov, director of the UN Research Center, and V. Mizin, a leading researcher at Moscow State University for Foreign Affairs [4], NATO's eastward expansion, the US's unilateral withdrawal from the indefinite ABM Treaty of 1972 and , instead of it, launch of the program creation of regional ABM systems unleashed by the Western alliance (with the title role of Washington) under the slogan of "democratic expansion" of aggression in a number of "hot spots" of the planet, primarily in the Middle East, and the growing arms race, fueled by the U.S. astronomical military budget (\$ 707 billion – 2018) were the result of the pseudo-theoretical postulate that the United States and its allies can do whatever they want in the world, and all other states should take it for granted. Nowadays, strategic stability does not



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boil down solely to the concepts of nuclear confrontation. Today, maintaining strategic stability is, rather, building such a system of world order that can protect individual regions (in this case, Russia and Eurasia), as well as the world as a whole, from major armed conflicts and strategic challenges that threaten the interests of all countries in the event of a political crisis. One of the notable manifestations of the development of American strategy was the concept of the so-called “hybrid wars”. We are talking about using all possible means of influence to achieve geopolitical interests, including “soft power” tools, information sabotage, subversive work, organizing “color revolutions,” information stuffing through the media and the Internet, etc.

According to researchers, the United States, Western Europe, NATO need a new “eastern policy” no less than Russia needs to normalize relations with the West. Detente should be based on a common desire to overcome the current “peak of tension,” which is an unnatural state of international relations in the twenty-first century. However, we have to admit that the “peak of tension” has not been passed so far. The existing system of strategic stability will be undermined by withdrawal of the U.S. from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty). In recent decades, the authors of the article note, additional factors of aggression have appeared, a kind of new “philosophy of war,” which should be taken into account in the modern concept of strategic stability. In addition to new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), these include, first and foremost, cyberthreats, the transfer of the arms race to outer space and economic warfare. Humanity, the authors conclude, is experiencing one of the critical moments of its history today. Without preserving and strengthening strategic stability, which is a combination of military-political factors of security and the norms of responsible, civilized behavior of the leading states of the world, the onward development of our civilization is unthinkable.

Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia S.A. Ryabkov [5] emphasizes that plans for delivering American strikes exist in

relation to all countries that are not included in the list of allies, like-minded states or partners of the United States. The main thing in the "eastern" direction of the U.S. policy is consolidation of the "anti-Iranian front." The task set is the one of a general weakening of Iranian positions in the ME. Various conferences and other events are being started, anti-Iranian formats are being invented. The combination of factors suggests that the situation around Iran is likely to get more complicated, but still there is hope that common sense will win and there will be a chance to avoid new military adventures. Iran has long been living and will live under sanctions. Russia is cooperating with Iran in countering the American policy of dictatorship and effectively interacting with it as one of the guarantor states for Syrian affairs.

### **Conclusion**

In the 1990s, Tehran's triangular diplomacy was actually taking shape. The idea of creating a strategic triangle Iran - China - Russia was expressed in 1997 by the president of Iran A.A. Hashemi Rafsanjani, who solved the problem of the country's exit from international isolation. Assessing Tehran's efforts, observers in 2007 made an assumption about the emerging strategic alliance in the Middle East along the Tehran - Baghdad - Damascus axis. After the coming of Islamic forces to power in Egypt in 2011, scientists began to discuss the prospects for the Egyptian-Iranian-Turkish triangle. In the second decade of the 21st century, following Russia's accession to international efforts to counter the Islamic state (IS) in Syria, experts began to name new possible strategic triangles, including the "Syrian" triangle Iran - Russia - the U.S. In the framework of the strategic "RIC triangle", Russian scientists noted the key role of Russia as a connecting and coordinating link, as a positive unifying center, an arbiter (in relations between India and China) and a trade and economic partner. The format of the strategic triangle found by E.M. Primakov worked not only in the RIC version, but in the mid-

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2010s it became one of the most common formats, around which there is a structuring of a new system of international relations in Asia is going on.

Among the current trends in the foreign policy of Iran at the turn of 20–21 centuries researchers also note the problem of expanding relations with all GCC countries, joining the Central Asian region (Central Asian republics of the former USSR), and searching for ways to solve the Caspian problem (oil, ecology, security). As a result of these efforts, by the mid-1990s, Iran entered into an active dialogue with the countries of South-West Asia, offering various formats of cooperation. Iran formed multilateral problem diplomacy, and atomic diplomacy of Iran became the quintessence of it in the beginning of the 21st century.

Researchers pay special attention to the strategic partnership of Iran and Russia in the field of international security. RF and IRI occupy central geopolitical positions on the Eurasian continent, possessing strategically important natural, demographic and economic resources, as well as a significant military potential. Iran and Russia have a common maritime border passing along the Caspian Sea, rich in hydrocarbon resources, and that creates prospects for cooperation in this area.

Syrian cooperation between Russia and Iran prevents the growth of instability. Damascus appreciates the assistance of the Russian Federation and Iran in the fight against terrorism and the expansionism of external forces. Moscow and Tehran are deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation that has arisen as a result of the rampant terrorists in Syria under the auspices of the outside, and they are ready to actively cooperate with the Government of the SAR, the Syrian Red Crescent Society and the relevant UN structures to assist the population of this country, exhausted by the war.

Russia and Iran will continue to consistently advocate strict observance of the UN Charter and international law, to protect the sovereignty of states and peoples from attempts to impose on them alien recipes of "democratization" and "freedom," the researchers emphasize.

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VLADIMIR KIRICHENKO. PARTICIPATION OF THE HAZARAS OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE SYRIAN CONFLICT // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

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*Keywords: Afghanistan, the Hazara, Iran, Syria.*

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*Abstract.* The article dwells upon the participation of Afghan Hazara in the Syrian conflict. The author examines the reasons of migration of The Hazara to Iran and the reasons of emergence of the Hazara armed formations in Syria. Attention is

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also paid to the problem of discrimination against the Hazara in Afghanistan.

The Hazara make up, according to various estimates, 10-20% of the population of Afghanistan. They are of Mongolian and Turkic origin and originally settled in the Hazarajat region of Central Afghanistan. Mostly the Hazara are Shia imamites or Ismailis. According to historians, the first Hazara in Afghanistan were warriors who were left in the country by Genghisids after the conquest of the country in 1221-1223. "Hezar" in Iranian means "thousand." Thus, we are talking about a military unit, a security garrison, which numbered a thousand soldiers.

Currently, the Hazara are present throughout the country. For centuries, the Hazara of Afghanistan have been marginalized. In the cities, they were usually servants, cleaners, porters, and were subjected to repressions by Pashtun rulers. In the middle of the 19 century, they were subjected to ethnic cleansing, organized by the Pashtun Amir Abdul Rahman. It should be noted that in neighboring Pakistan, the Hazara faced almost no discrimination until the 1990s. For example, General Musa Khan, a Hazara Shiite, was at certain time the commander-in-chief of the Pakistani army and later served as the Governor of Balochistan province. The Hazara, including women, are actively pursuing higher education.

The participation of the Hazara in the "Shia International" (foreign participants practicing the Shia faith, fighting on the side of Bashar al-Assad) became known not long ago. Before that, the activities of the Hazara were concentrated in their countries of residence: Afghanistan and Iran.

In Afghanistan in the 1990s, the Hazara were part of an alliance opposing the Taliban. In 1998, when the Taliban captured Mazar-I-Sharif, the Hazara population was attacked by the Taliban. Thousands of the Hazara men and boys were killed. The massacre was revenge for the Taliban perished during their failed attempt to capture Mazar-I-Sharif in 1997.

The political atmosphere changed after the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001. Since then, the Hazara have sought to actively participate in the political life of the country. The participation of the Hazara in the elections has a significant impact on the result. Thus, the once oppressed the Hazara have become a politically active part of the population of modern Afghanistan. In January 2015, after the lower house of Parliament rejected 10 new Ministerial candidates, some of whom were the Hazara, hundreds of the Hazara took to the streets of Kabul in protest. The authorities were forced to reconsider their decision. As a result, all the candidates were elected after the second round of voting in April 2015.

Representatives of the Hazara community hold several high academic and government positions, including those in the Cabinet of the government of national unity.

Nevertheless, the Hazara often become victims of violence on both ethnic and religious grounds. At the same time, ethnicity remains the dominant dividing line in the Afghan state. The Hazara are a historically marginalized but highly mobile community that sits at the intersection of the country's complex ethnic, political and religious differences.

### **The Hazara in Afghanistan: between the IS and the Taliban**

The Hazara often become victims of terrorist attacks. In July 2016, at least 80 Hazara people were killed and more than 200 wounded in an attack near the city of Deh Mazang. The Islamic State (IS) terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attack. After the attack, one of the commanders of IS, Abu Omar Khosrasani, threatened more attacks on the Hazara minority. He said in an interview with Reuters that “if they (the Hazara - V. K.) do not stop leaving for Syria and not be slaves of Iran, we will definitely continue such attacks.” However, there is

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no evidence of direct recruitment of the Hazara directly in Afghanistan.

In March 2018, a suicide bomber attacked a police checkpoint in the Afghan capital, killing at least 10 people and wounding 18. IS militants claimed responsibility for the attack. It should be noted that the attack took place near the memorial meeting dedicated to the death of Abdul Ali Mazari, the leader of the Hazara community of Afghanistan, who was killed by the Taliban in 1995.

The Hazara are also attacked from the side of the Taliban. In late October – early November 2018, the Malistan and Jagori districts of Ghazni province and the Khaz Uruzgan district of Uruzgan province, where The Hazara live, were attacked by the Taliban. These events resulted in destruction of many houses, schools and buildings and disruption of telecommunications.

After the attack, protests began in Kabul. The discontent of the Hazara who came to the presidential Palace in the capital was caused by the fact that the army and the police were unable to protect the Hazara areas from the Taliban offensive in Ghazni province. A suicide bomber attacked the demonstration, killing 6 people.

### **The Hazara refugees in Iran and the Syrian conflict**

A large Hazara community exists in Iran. They began to arrive there as refugees in the 19th century. Around 1850s Afghan Shiites began to move to Iran for economic reasons. The confessional factor also had no small share. However, the modern history of Afghan immigration to Iran began in 1979. The lack of security, unemployment, and inflation forced Afghans to leave the country. In particular, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to the migration of nearly 3 million Afghans to neighboring Iran. After withdrawal of the Soviet troops in 1989, approximately 1.4 million Afghans (and the Hazara among them) returned home. Later, the civil war in Afghanistan (1989–1993)

led to a new wave of forced migration to Iran. And the migrants were mostly educated middle-class people.

Currently, between 2.5 and 3 million refugees from Afghanistan live in Iran. In 2014, Iran formed the Liwa Fatimiyun unit (Fatima followers Brigade) out of Afghan Hazara refugees. The brigade is named after the youngest daughter of the prophet Muhammad. The organizer of Liwa Fatimiyun, Ali-Reza Tawassoli, was a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war and a confidant of the commander of the Iranian special forces al-Qods, Qasem Suleimani. It is believed that the number of his brigade is from 12 000 to 20 000 people. The recruitment of fighters takes place in Afghan refugee camps in Eastern Iran. It is widely believed that the group is trained and armed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The Fatimiyun Brigade throughout the period of its involvement in the Syrian conflict participated in the fiercest battles. This resulted in high casualties: at least 700 Afghans from the unit were killed in Aleppo and Deraa alone. On February 3, 2016, Syrian government forces broke through the blockade of the Shiite-populated towns of Nubel and az-Zahra (North of Aleppo province). In the forefront of the attack there were Hezbollah and foreign Shia formations, including the Hazara Fatimiyun Brigade.

Subsequently, Liwa Zainabiyun, a Brigade of followers of Zainab, named after Zainab bint Ali, granddaughter of the prophet Muhammad, was detached from the Fatimiyun. Zainabiyun was formed from volunteers of the citizens of Pakistan. Since 2013, they have served in Fatimiyun together with the Afghans, but as the number of Pakistani volunteers increased, it was decided to create a separate formation.

In addition to the Hazara refugees who arrived in Iran, Fatimiyun Brigade consists of the the Hazara who lived in Syria before the political crisis. Most of them settled near The Sayeda Zainab mosque, a famous Shia shrine located south of Damascus. But, once the war began, the Hazara, like many of Syria's Shiites, fell victims to attacks because of their religious affiliation.



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In April 2013, officials in Afghanistan announced that they would look into reports of the Afghan citizens fighting alongside B. Assad. In May 2014, Kabul urged Tehran not to involve the Afghan citizens living in Iran in the fighting in Syria. It was also stated that if there is evidence of direct recruitment of Afghans, Kabul will file a complaint with the UN High Commissioner for refugees.

Nevertheless, Tehran denies using foreign fighters. At the same time, Iranian officials call the Afghans "volunteers." According to observers, Afghan officials have good reasons to object to the participation of Afghan citizens in the Middle East war. This not only makes Afghanistan's close but strained relationship with Iran, a more powerful neighbor and trading partner more complicated, but could also trigger a wave of inter-confessional conflicts within Afghanistan.

### **The problem of the Hazara in interregional relations**

Given the cultural and linguistic ties between Afghanistan and Iran, it is not surprising that Iran has an influence on Afghanistan. Iran aims to be a strong player in the Middle East. Iran's influence on events in Afghanistan includes overt support for the Afghan government; economic and cultural ties with the Afghan population, especially the Shia minority; and covert support, including provision of weapons and training to various insurgents and politicians whom Kabul views as oppositional.

Afghanistan's relations with Iran have not been stable for many years. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran supported the cause of the Afghan resistance and provided financial and military assistance to rebel leaders who promised to support the Iranian model of the Islamic revolution. After the emergence of the Taliban and their brutal treatment of the Shia minority in Afghanistan, Iran has stepped up aid to Taliban opponents. Relations with the Taliban deteriorated further in 1998 after Taliban forces seized the Iranian Consulate in

Mazar-I-Sharif and executed Iranian diplomats. In the early 2000s, relations between the countries were tense. The main problem of bilateral relations is Iran's long-standing claim to share the water resources of the river Helmand, which irrigates the southern agricultural region of Afghanistan, and then its waters flow into Iran. Other concerns are the continued presence of Afghan refugees in Iran and Iran's concerns about the Shia minority in Afghanistan. Since 2005 the government of Hamid Karzai felt significant pressure from the West to abandon close relations with Iran, which, in its turn, tried to establish friendly relations.

Iran continues to provide assistance, including arms supplies and military training to some rebel groups. Since 2007, coalition and Afghan forces have intercepted several Iranian arms shipments. Tehran's relationship with the rebels, while not ideologically sound, is consistent with Iran's short- and medium-term goal of undermining coalition efforts and the international military presence in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's relations with Iran deteriorated in 2007 as a result of the forced repatriation of more than 360,000 illegal Afghans from Iran, as well as the discovery of evidence of Iran providing weapons, technology and training to the Taliban. Nevertheless, Iran has provided Afghanistan with extensive development and cultural assistance, economic support and cooperation in the fight against drugs. In particular, Tehran actively promotes the achievements of Persian culture throughout Afghanistan. Tolo TV Live Online-Afghanistan, a popular private television station that accounts for nearly 90% of the Afghan market, showcases television and film productions made in the neighboring country. Iranian missions in Afghanistan constantly invite Afghan journalists to their events, participate in local exhibitions, distribute free literature translated into Farsi specifically for Iranian-speaking residents of Afghanistan.

The participation of the Afghan Hazara in the Syrian conflict drew the attention of Saudi Arabia, which from the very beginning sought the overthrow of the Assad regime. In addition,

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after the clerical regime came to power in Iran and Tehran became an enemy of the Saudis, the Kingdom became the main ally of the United States in the region. In its turn, Riyadh maintains close ties with Afghan Sunni political and religious leaders. Perhaps the Saudis appreciated the fact that at one time the Afghan government officially sided with the Saudis in their war in Yemen.

Naturally, Saudi Arabia is interested in reducing Iran's influence in the region. The Saudis believe that radical Sunni movements such as the Taliban represent a natural obstacle to the spread of revolutionary Shia doctrine in the region, and thus invest heavily in radical madrassas in Pakistan, where a significant number of Afghan and Pakistani youth receive religious education.

It will also be recalled that Saudi Arabia was among the countries that officially recognized the Taliban regime in 1996.

After taking the official oath (24.09.2014), Ashraf Ghani, the President of Afghanistan, established particularly close relations with Saudi Arabia, seeking the Kingdom's intervention and support in the process of settling relations with the Taliban. Saudi Arabia and several member countries of the cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf have some influence on the leaders of the movement. It is obvious that without pressure from Saudi Arabia, the Taliban will not enter into a peaceful dialogue with the Kabul government.

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The distinctive ethnic and cultural identity of the Hazara and the experience of centuries of persecution have shielded them from radical sectarianism supported by Iran. Unlike the Shiites in Lebanon and Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen, the Hazara have escaped the influence of Shia radicalism. In the 1990s, the Hazara leader Abdul Ali Mazari refused to play the confessional card in Afghan politics. After the assassination of the leader by the Taliban in 1995, his successors followed the path he had chosen.

In the spring of 2019, Iran's top leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei thanked Afghan fighters who fought in the Iranian Fatimiyun Division in Syria. According to the Afghan TV channel Tolo TV Live Online-Afghanistan, meeting with the families of Afghans killed in Syria, the Iranian spiritual leader noted the high morale and endurance of Afghan fighters. In response, the Afghan Foreign Ministry condemned Iran for sending Afghan refugees to war in Syria.

Despite the paucity of information about the situation of the Hazara in Afghanistan and Iran, it is clear that this small nation (there are only about 5 million in both countries) is going through a difficult period of self-awareness. The very fact of their participation in the civil war in Syria shows that fighting for peace and the rights of another people, the Hazara dream of a radical change in their fate. There is a reason to believe that the experience of Syrians defending their right to life according to their laws, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation, will be taken into account in other countries of the Middle East.

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OLGA BIBIKOVA. RESTRUCTURING IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

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*Keywords: Crown Prince Muhammad ibn Salman Al-Saud, Development Strategy, Economic Diversification, Gender Segregation, Sharia.*

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*Abstract.* Saudi Arabia has announced a program of reforms aimed at abandoning oil production as the only source of income

and creating a modern economy. Measures are also being taken to modernize the image of the Kingdom.

In the spring of 2016, Crown Prince Muhammad ibn Salman al-Saud (known in the Western press as MBS) presented to the Saudi public the Strategy "VISION 2030," which included a program of economic diversification, the purpose of which was to abandon oil as an exclusive source of the state income. Oil dependence is expected to be eliminated by 2020, and revenues from alternative industries should be increased 6-fold and reach \$ 267 billion. The program includes 80 economic projects in the areas not related to oil production and refining in the amount of \$ 23.7 billion. It also provides for foundation of a fund worth \$ 2 trillion on the condition that the money will be invested in foreign companies. It is announced that by 2030 the Kingdom should become the owner of 3% of world property. It is also expected to privatize some state-owned companies, in particular, the largest oil Corporation Aramco.

Attention is drawn to the project of construction of a high-tech city called Neom (neo - new and mustakbal - future / Arab /), which should become an analogue of the American Silicon valley. The city of Neom is to appear on the border with Egypt and Jordan near the Gulf of Aqaba. It should use only solar and wind energy and become a technological hub for neighboring countries. In addition, there will also be a luxury resort and an amusement park. The implementation of the project will cost \$ 500 billion.

The projects proposed under the VISION 2030 strategy show that the Kingdom can no longer rely on oil as a source of income. After oil prices plummeted in 2014, Riyadh had to take tough economic measures, including cuts to public officers' salaries, subsidies for gasoline and electricity, and adoption of value-added tax. Moreover, since 2014, the Kingdom has been losing lost 11% of its reserves annually. And the state budget of the Kingdom for 2015 was set with the largest deficit in the

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history of the country. It is obvious that the authors of the Strategy are aware that it is necessary to hurry over the implementation of these ambitious projects until alternative energy does not deprive Saudi Arabia of its traditional revenues. But for the implementation of the declared projects it is required to find significant funds.

As part of the Strategy, 14 agreements between the Kingdom and the Russian Federation were signed in Moscow on October 5, 2017. The list of signed documents includes an agreement on cooperation in the field of health care. Unfortunately, we do not have the text of the agreement at our disposal, but it can be assumed that we are talking about eradication of a number of diseases most common in the Kingdom.

Due to adherence to the tradition of closely related marriages, hereditary diseases are common in the country. There is recorded a high prevalence of type 2 diabetes (T2DM), which poses a certain risk to the country's economy. The world economic forum noted chronic diseases as one of the 6 main global risks for the countries of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Persian Gulf. Moreover, in 2010, Saudi Arabia ranked third (!) in the list of countries with the highest prevalence of diabetes (prevalence 16.8%). Another trouble of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula is cardiovascular diseases, risk factors of which, in addition to diabetes, are obesity, physical inertia. In particular, in the Arabian countries, "obesity among the female population ranges from 29 to 45.7%, which is one of the highest rates worldwide, due to physical inactivity ranging from 45 to 98.7%." In the course of analyzing the state of health of society in the Kingdom, one can't help but wonder what people will carry out the planned changes.

### **Rejection of foreign workers**

In the summer of 2017, the Kingdom introduced a tax on the use of foreign labor. The reason was the budget deficit, as

well as the government's desire to reduce the number of foreigners working in the country, which should encourage unemployed Saudis to take their places. Indeed, foreign workers make up almost a third of the country's population. Most of the workers are from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Attempts to abandon foreign labor have been made before. Today, many foreigners began to leave the Kingdom. The reason is the recession in the economy, the rise in the cost of living. Each foreign worker is required to pay a tax of \$ 27 per month for each member of his family. There are rumors that this amount will be increased, which will logically lead to the departure of family members of foreigners and an overall reduction in the number of foreign labor in the country.

Guest workers work mainly in private campaigns. They are employed in construction, service, women work as paramedics and domestic workers. Foreign businessmen living in the Kingdom note that the Saudis prefer to hire foreigners, despite the fact that there are a sufficient number of local workers.

The government requires that entrepreneurs increase the number of employed compatriots. In response to this, there appeared the practice of fictitious hiring of Saudis, who at a symbolic salary actually stay at home. It turned out that this phenomenon is already quite common and was even called "saudization." It is definitely a problem that requires efforts to re-educate both employers and the Saudis themselves. It is known that Saudi youth prefer only leadership positions...

It is obvious that the scale of deportations of foreign workers (almost 800 thousand foreigners were dismissed in 2017) is not compatible with the planned construction. And while the VISION-30 economic development program considers deportations as part of the country's recovery program, the complete abandonment of foreign labor is virtually impossible. Many Saudis prefer to hire foreigners, for the latter, for fear of losing their residence permit, will work overtime without having the right to complain or demand to pay overtime.



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It is characteristic that Arabs from other countries speak negatively about Saudi employers, considering them cruel and not complying with the terms of the employment contract. In our opinion, the complete abandonment of foreign labor in such large-scale projects is practically impossible. But then the question of the reasonable use of foreign labor must not only be supplemented by a study of the exact needs of the market, but also by a change in the nature of the relationship between employer and employee.

### **Reducing gender segregation**

In 2000, Saudi Arabia ratified the international Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, which entered into force as far back as 1981. It contained a reservation that in the event the principles of the Convention conflict with Sharia law, the Kingdom will continue to adhere to Sharia law.

In September 2017, king Salman allowed women to drive. The lack of this right has already led to protests. Now, the right to drive a car (including a truck) can only be obtained by women with a diploma of higher education. The first to drive were those ladies who had driving licenses obtained in other countries. They also created the social movement Women2drive. But before getting behind the wheel, a woman must get permission from her father or husband. It should be noted that disobedience to the father is severely punished. In summer 2018 it became known that the most active Saudi women called for abolition of the system of "mahrams," i.e., custody of women. Granting Saudi women the right to drive logically suggests that other bans will be lifted, but it is clear that society is not ready for this yet. Women are now also allowed to attend sporting events. Most recently, in 2012, under pressure from the International Olympic Committee, Saudi women were granted the right to represent the country at the Olympic Games. Before that, the Kingdom was the

only country in the world that forbade women to participate in competitions. The first women in the Olympic history of Saudi Arabia were track and field athlete Sarah Attar and judoka Wodjan Shaherkani, who participated in the 2012 Olympics (London).

In its plans to reformat the Kingdom, MBS intends to increase the percentage of female employment from 22% to 30%, which should significantly reduce the presence of foreign female workers in the labor market of the Kingdom. In February 2018, it was announced that Saudi women could serve in the army. This opportunity was given to the women aged 25–35 with a higher education diploma and living in a family with a male guardian. In addition, the Prosecutor General's Office announced a competition for the positions of investigator for women with University education. In February 2019 amid the Kingdom's condemnation over the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the appointment of a woman as Ambassador to the United States was announced. Princess Rima bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdelaziz al-Saud is the daughter of the Kingdom's former Ambassador to Washington.

Thus, all measures to introduce female Saudi citizens to public life are addressed to educated women, representatives of the wealthy segments of the population. According to official data, despite the fact that the percentage of women with higher education is higher than among the male population, the share of Saudi women in the labor market is 17%. In general, the Saudi Kingdom ranks 129th among 134 countries for gender equality.

### **Tourism as a new source of income for the kingdom**

In 2017–2018, an unprecedented number of pilgrims (more than 2 million people) made the Hajj and Umrah (small Hajj) to the Holy cities of Islam – Mecca and Medina. Naturally, such a large quantity of pilgrims was accompanied by an influx of funds that the Moslems left in the Kingdom. In search of sources of

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income, alternative to oil, the authorities decided to open part of the Kingdom for tourism. In this regard, it was decided to use the Islands of Farasan in the Red Sea, Tarut, Karan and al-Arabiya in the Persian Gulf, as well as Sanafir and Tiran for the organization of a tourist zone. The designated tourism zone is located on the Red Sea coast near the Jordanian border opposite Egypt.

In addition, it was decided to restore Saudi antiquities, as well as create new museums (including the Museum of Islam). According to the agreement signed with France, Paris received the exclusive right to carry out cultural projects. It is characteristic, that the idea was first proposed by the Crown Prince in November 2017, and in May 2018 an agreement on cooperation in the field of culture and tourism for a period of 10 years was signed. The idea of opening part of the province of Medina (where the Holy cities of Islam are located) to tourists is also under consideration. We are talking about the city of al-Ula in the North-West of Saudi Arabia, with picturesque canyons located nearby, as well as the archaeological complex Madain-Salih, which in 2008 was included in the UNESCO world heritage list. According to the announced intentions, the authorities of the Kingdom want to restore other antiquities located in the territory of the Kingdom, despite their pagan origin. It is also expected to allow tourists without visas to visit a number of areas of the country. In addition, conditions will be created to increase the flow of pilgrims by 2030: up to 30 million people a year! The latter project looks unrealistic, because it is comparable to the current population of Saudi Arabia.

### **Saudi Arabia is opening itself to the world**

One example of the Kingdom's turn to openness was the rapid chess tournament (rapid and blitz), held in the Kingdom at the end of December 2017. The paradox is that recently, in 2015, the Saudi ulama released a fatwa banning chess, since the game supposedly took time and could lead to hostility between

players. However, the history of chess indicates that it is the Arabs that chess owes its popularity in the world. Many medieval Arab authors wrote about the game invented in the V-VI centuries in India. The Indian name *chaturanga* in the Arab world has turned into a *shatrange*. Chess came to Europe in the 7th century through Sicily and the Iberian Peninsula, ruled at that time by Arabs.

The tournament in Saudi Arabia was dedicated to King Salman. Having received the right to host the tournament from the International Chess Federation, Riyadh set its conditions. Players from Israel, Iran and Qatar wishing to participate were denied. However, among 240 players there were women from 70 countries who were offered a special dress code: dark trousers and sweaters that covered the neck.

In April 2018, a public film screening was held at the King Abdullah Financial Center in Riyadh. It was attended by the cream of the Saudi society on special invitations. This was the first film show over the past 40 years. It was announced that by 2030 two thousand movie theaters would be built in the country. Ahead of criticism from the clergy, the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Kingdom issued a statement stating that all films would be screened for compliance with Sharia law and the moral values of Saudi society. However, the supreme mufti of the Kingdom, Sheikh Abdel Aziz ibn Abdullah al-Sheikh, criticized the plan of the construction of cinemas and the issuance of licenses for organizing concerts, believing that in film screenings and concerts "there is nothing good, they are morally corrupting, they strike a blow at values and give rise to mixing floors. "

Fashion Week, which was attended by fashion designers from 14 countries, was no less criticized. The events held in the Kingdom indicate that the fact that film screenings and fashion shows have already been held several times in neighboring countries has not passed unnoticed for the ruling elite. It is interesting to note that only women attended the show in Riyadh. The men accompanying them were in the next room.

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## Abandon radical tendencies in Islam

As you know, Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the Wahhabi movement in Islam. In the 1980s in response to the Islamic revolution in Iran, the measures that influenced liberal trends in the Moslem world were taken there. It was then that cinemas were closed in the Kingdom, etc. Somewhat earlier, with great difficulty, television broadcasting was organized in the Kingdom. Naturally, the first program (1965) was devoted to reading the Quran. For many years, Wahhabi clerics opposed television, for they consider the depiction of people immoral. You can imagine their current attitude to cinema, fashion shows, women driving and all the innovations that the Crown Prince offers in order to rid the Kingdom of the image of the dense Middle Ages.

Obviously, starting his reforms, MBS understood that Wahhabi Islam would become a brake to implementation of his projects. At the investment forum in Riyadh (10.24.2017), he announced the need to abandon religious radicalism. "We will return to what was before - to moderate Islam, open to the world and all religions ... We will not wait 30 years, but we will immediately strike at extremist ideology," the prince said. MBS was certainly cunning, for Wahhabism has never been moderate. However, the rejection of its radical form is included in the plan to change the image of the country. Moreover, Wahhabism is not limited to the territory of the Kingdom. In 2007, 2 billion were spent on the promotion of this doctrine, and in 2015 even 40 billion. In addition, if the Kingdom fulfills its ambitious plans, then conflict with the sheikhs already opposed to the reforms cannot be avoided.

In his speaking tours abroad, the prince, as an excuse, said that the Kingdom supported Wahhabism "during the Cold War era at the request of the Allies" in order to impede the influence of the Soviet Union in Moslem countries. He keeps repeating that one should abandon radical tendencies and "return to the

religion of moderation and tolerance.” Nevertheless, we must not forget that the MBS’s plans are essentially a challenge to the ash-Sheikh clan, headed by the supreme mufti, who is backed by the descendants of Muhammad al-Wahhab. This clan today occupies an exclusive position in the Kingdom.

However, the first steps in terms of restricting the power of the sheikhs have already been taken: at first, the religious police were forbidden to arrest people, and then it was disbanded and reassigned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

### **Anti-corruption campaign: its goals and results**

In November 2017, an anti-corruption committee was created in the Kingdom for the first time, the heir to the throne became the initiator of its creation, as well as its head. On the night of November 5, 11 princes were arrested (including the richest of them, Walid bin Talal), 4 current ministers, dozens of former heads of various departments and large businessmen. The day before that the head of the National Guard, Prince Mutaib ibn Abdallah, as well the Minister of Economy and Planning and Fleet Commander were removed from their offices. Later, the French agency Boulevard Voltaire reported that 1300 people were arrested within 48 hours. Prince Abdul Aziz ibn Fahd, who put up resistance, was killed on arrest. The ground for the arrests – corruption and embezzlement of state funds – was announced by the king himself on national television. The bank assets of the arrested were frozen. The airport was closed to private flights. The arrested were placed in the Ritz Carlton hotel, previously freed from lodging. The princes were forced to sleep on mattresses on floor for several people in the room.

Earlier, in August 2017, in Saudi Arabia, mass dismissals and even detention of religious figures, imams and theologians began. In September, information appeared about the arrest of three famous theologians – Salman al-Ouda, Avad al-Karni and Ali al-Omari, as well as the author of the book “Moslems and

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Western Civilization” al-Hawali. It is assumed that the prince wanted to reform the Ulema Council in order to reduce its political importance.

These events generated a lot of rumors. The prevailing opinion was that the king acted that way in favor of the new heir to the throne, appointed only in the summer of 2017, trying to concentrate practically all the levers of power in his hands. It became known that all those arrested were charged with economic charges (using one's official position for the purpose of generating income, extorting bribes, money laundering, etc.). In particular, Prince Mutaib ibn Abdallah, the former head of the Ministry of National Guard, was accused of embezzlement, hiring fictitious employees and fraud with state contracts for the purchase of walkie-talkies and bulletproof vests; Prince Turki, the former governor of Riyadh, was accused of stealing in the process of construction of the metro, etc.

Analyzing the prerequisites for the arrests, the French agency Voltaire Boulevard recalled that literally on the eve of the events described, the son-in-law of the American President Jared Kushner paid an unofficial visit to the Kingdom. Kushner spent three days in close contact with the crown prince. Observers believe that the pretext - allegations of corruption and the very fact of such a hasty creation of an anti-corruption committee - is precisely Kushner's idea. Later it became known that Kushner proposed using the employees of PMC Academy (formerly Blackwater) as jailers. Thierry Meyssan, the editor-in-chief of Voltaire Boulevard, in his article “Jared Kushner Rebuilds the Middle East,” directly points to the backstage role of the American president's son-in-law in the events in Saudi Arabia.

We recall also that in the summer of 2017, when the candidacy of Muhammad ibn Salman was discussed by the Oath Council, 31 of the 34 members of the Council voted for him. Naturally, behind each of the members of the Council there are whole clans, whose attitude towards the prince can become a hindrance to the implementation of his ambitious projects.

Obviously, it was on the advice of his American friend that MBS decided, under the pretext of combating corruption, to ease the wallets of his relatives, whose funds he was going to assign to implementation of the planned projects.

Information about the princes' "imprisonment" was minimal. It is known that Prince Mutaib ibn Abdullah, was under arrest for 3 weeks. But it was he who, more than any other prince, had the right to the status of crown prince ... Surprise was caused by the arrest of Prince Valid ibn Talal, since the latter, a well-known liberal, a supporter of the participation of Saudi women in various spheres of the Kingdom's life, repeatedly publicly supported the crown prince in his endeavors. However, as a result, the arrested princes agreed to transfer part of their funds to the treasury. Some sources reported that the means collected amounted to \$ 100 billion. The MBS himself said that most of those suspected of corruption agreed to a pre-trial settlement with the nationalization of part of their fortunes. Later it became known that Prince al-Walid ibn Talal paid \$ 6 billion for his release.

Colin Kal, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East at the Obama administration, assessing the events in Riyadh, said: "It looks like the final step towards consolidating the powers of Muhammad ibn Salman by eliminating possible pretenders." In fact, the arrest of the princes was only a link in a chain of a series of measures taken to prevent coup attempts in the Kingdom. The journalists who had the imprudence to speak out against appointing MBS as the heir to the throne, were also arrested because the plans he announced testified that radical changes awaited the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, observers noted that the situation remained uncertain, primarily for foreign investors, which the Kingdom needs at present. Christian K. Ulrichsen, a Middle East expert at Rice University (Houston), believes that "cleansing some of the world's most recognized businessmen is likely to increase



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the political risk of doing business in Saudi Arabia and lower the confidence of international investors.”

It is also logical to suppose stirring up of the opposition to the new course, primarily within the royal family, as well as among the clergy, dissatisfied with the prince's intentions to modernize the country. The prince was already accused of ill-conceived intervention in the civil war in Yemen, tightening the anti-Iranian position and worsening relations with Qatar.

### **Conclusion**

The population of the Kingdom perceived the reforms in two ways. The fact is that more than 60% of the country's population is young people under 30 years old. The fertility boom that began in the 1960s increased the country's population by more than 6 times. Moreover, as we have already noted, a third of young people are affected by unemployment. Until now, much attention has been paid to the study of religion in the field of education (almost half of the study time). Young people choose theology and culturology, the exact sciences do not attract young Saudis. This indicates stereotypes rooted in Saudi society when foreigners were brought to engineering and other specialties that require special training. Youth perceived the arrests of the princes as a sign of change, while older Saudis fear a loss of stability in the state. Almost half of the population still lives in accordance with Bedouin customs and Wahhabi principles.

The members of the royal family also hold different views. Most members of the royal family live by Western standards. They have long and widely used Western technologies, many have received education in Europe and the USA, regularly travel abroad, and some women from their families set the tone for social events in Europe. There are also dissidents - some princes living in Europe. In particular, Prince Khalid ibn Farhan, who has lived in Germany since 2013, whose father Prince Talal ibn Abdul Aziz As-Saud, known as the “Red Prince” because of his calls to

establish a constitutional monarchy in the Kingdom, said that the current situation in the Kingdom is fraught with a coup d'etat that could turn the Kingdom into a center of global terrorism. According to him, "if Saudi Arabia plunges into chaos, global chaos will arise and it will affect not only the Middle East region, but also Europe." "The prince believes that the reason lies in the loss of "intra-Saudi unity." He also negatively assessed the consequences of anti-corruption actions of Prince Muhammad: "It was a shock for the whole family, for key family members were detained, thereby suffering general humiliation. The royal family today is experiencing undermining their authority in the eyes of their people. This move of the Crown Prince undermines the legitimacy of the government ... It also undermines the attitude of the people towards the ruling family."

There is practically no information about the mood among ordinary Saudis. Observers note that it is now important to maintain stability among the ruling class, leaders of family clans and tribes that form the general mood in the country.

Summing up the analysis of the proposed reforms in the Kingdom, let us turn to the opinion of the Saudi researcher al-Bassam B.A., who described the reforms carried out under the previous Saudi monarchs as "desperate attempts of the regime to save the country from sliding into the abyss of anarchy." Assessing all attempts to reform the state system (until 2012 – O. B.), the author notes that "reforms were undertaken with the aim of promoting the concentration of political power in the hands of the royal family and not by no means increase the participation of the population in making important political decisions ...". Obviously, this conclusion is also relevant today.

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*Abstract.* The author examines the role of the Islamic factor in Libya after the overthrow of its leader Muammar Gaddafi and the coming to power of new forces.

The collapse of state and military structures after the beginning of the "February 17 Revolution" during the internal conflict with the participation of NATO, and then the strife of local armed groups, led to the collapse of the vertical of unified power and the disintegration of the state. Since the summer of 2014, there has been dual power in the country with opposing "poles" of the administration. One is in Tripoli in the West, and the other - in Tobruk in the East, each with its own government, parliament and power block. The population of modern Libya professes Sunni Islam. The peculiarity of the country is that: Sufi brotherhood has long existed in its vast, and mostly desert area with a rare population.

The author notes that Libya combines religious diversity with a different tribal composition of the population: 85% of its inhabitants have tribal roots. There are more than 100 tribes. Muammar Gaddafi (head of Libya in 1969–2011) believed the construction of a single modern state as his main goal. The challenges that stood in this way were largely predetermined by the centuries-old mentality of the tribes with their rebellious nature, rejecting attempts to put them under the control of the center. Muammar Gaddafi relied on two factors in his politics:

official Islam, often associated with the personality of the leader, and tribal Libyan nationalism, based on the concept of "Jamahiriya" (state of the masses). The authorities suppressed any political opposition, the creation of parties or movements under Islamic banners.

Describing the events of 2011, the author notes that Islamist slogans were not at the top of the agenda at the beginning of the events in Libya, but they played the role of a trigger of protests in Benghazi – the capital of the Eastern district. Then spurred by cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in the European media, the crowd attacked the Italian Consulate and was shot by police. Protests escalated into unrest with demands for the resignation of Muammar Gaddafi and quickly seized Eastern Libya. In this case, religious motives merged with regional ones: there were beliefs that the East, which possessed 75% of Libya's oil resources, was disadvantaged in the distribution of oil revenues in the Gaddafi era, unlike Tripolitania. A number of Islamic jihadist militants have contributed to the insurgency against government forces.

The author notes that after the murder of Gaddafi National Transitional Council announced that the country has become to follow the "course of Sharia" and overturned the laws contradicting him. The author points out, that new forces have entered the political arena in the country, including Islamic radicals, who took advantage of the power vacuum created after the breakdown of state structures. In 2013, fourteen commanders of Islamist groups who previously fought in Afghanistan and were imprisoned, took positions in the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, prison chiefs, heads of military councils of cities, etc. The process of legalization and organizational strengthening of various factions of Islamists, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, has unfolded. They were engaged in the creation of groups on the ground, increasing political and other activity in the country, the development of foreign relations. Its political wing, the Justice and Construction Party was created. In March 2012, its registration was completed. The Justice and

Construction Party is financially and administratively independent, and members of the Muslim Brotherhood join on an individual basis. The Justice and construction party is the largest party in terms of its organisation, pragmatic programme and discipline. Its future is linked to its ability to fight against jihadism and contribute to overcoming the current Libyan crisis with dual power. At the same time, many authors urge not to overestimate the importance of the Muslim Brotherhood. Another Islamist party, Hizb al-Watan, was led by the former commander of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Abdul Hakim Belhaj. Also, there was a smaller political party, al-Umma al-Wasat, the head of which was also a former militant, the LIFG's law and religious leader, Sami al-Saadi, also known as Abu Munthir.

The author points out the differences and rivalries between the various tendencies existing among the political parties of Islam, in particular between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists. Earlier, in the era of Gaddafi, the influence of Salafism on the believers of Libya was incomparably greater in comparison with the underground groups of the Muslim Brotherhood. But it remained a very amorphous movement. Of the other radical formations, the author calls the "Saraya Defend Benghazi" (SDB). It was formed in June 2016 through the merger of the three Shura Councils of Benghazi.

Analyzing the conflict between Sufis and Salafis, the author notes that they are separated by questions of doctrine and the ritual and ceremonial side of faith. Salafis regard Sufis as "heretics" because the latter worship their local saints. Salafis oppose the Sufi practice of dhikr, collective feasts with dances and consider them a manifestation of black magic and paganism. Some analysts attribute this opposition to the competition of the two components in the field of Islam for influence among believers, especially young people. It is also obvious, and this is confirmed in the media, that various Salafi movements receive



assistance from abroad, primarily from the rich regimes of oil-producing countries.

The author emphasizes that the events in Libya after the beginning of the "Revolution of February 17" and up to the present day demonstrate external interference in its internal affairs, behind which stood both the West and part of the Arab world. One example is the spread of the influence of the Salafist movement in Libya, which was founded in the early 1990s by the Saudi theologian Sheikh Rabi<sup>c</sup> ibn Hādī al-Madhālī and is headed by him until now. It preaches strict obedience and submission of believers to their lords, a ban on rebellion, participation in any protests against rulers, in free elections, etc. The Sheikh is intolerant of other Salafi movements and Islamic sects. The influence of the trend "al-Madhali" extends to Egypt, Kuwait, UAE, Algeria and especially Libya. Al-Madhali is prominently positioned in cyberspace. It owns radio stations in the cities of al-Marj, Ajdabiya, other radio channels - "Islam," "Peace," "Salafism," a number of electronic portals and websites.

The future of Libya today seems very vague. Despite the long period of negotiations mediated by the UN and other parties, the way out of the crisis, primarily political, reconciliation between the two opposing poles of power in Tripoli and Tobruk with an unstable balance of power is not visible. Citizens of the country continue to die from violence due to clashes between the conflicting parties. In addition to the fact that the conflict between the former winners of Muammar Gaddafi turned into a dual power, inter-tribal relations intensified in the country, disagreements between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania revived, ideas in favor of Berber autonomy strengthened, attacks on Christians began (there were 100 thousand Christians in the era of Gaddafi, now - there are several thousand).

Since February 2011, Libya with uncontrolled borders of 6,000 km has been perceived as a polygon of destructive Islamist forces and a source of threats to neighbors in North and West Africa. They fear that the viruses of international terrorism and

anarchy will spread to them. In 2016, Tunisia built 200 km long barriers to guard along its border with Libya. Algeria is building a similar structure with a length of 900 km. In early 2012, some Tuareg rebels fled to Mali from Libya and, together with local Berbers, participated in a commission to create an independent region called Azawad. This led to a destabilization of the situation – a surge of violence with the participation of local Islamist radicals in Mali and Nigeria. The situation has not stabilized to this day. The situation has not stabilized to this day. Links between the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Belgium, France, Germany, Britain and Tunisia with Libyan militants are visible. Many of them were trained in ISIS camps in Libya.

It seems to the author that political Islam in Libya is a long-term phenomenon, although its ebbs and flows are possible. The Islamist camp in Libya is heterogeneous and non-monolithic. It includes various movements and branches: the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafis of various persuasions, followers of Sufi brotherhoods, jihadists with their connections with foreign like-minded people and with the media support of Arab media and its networks, especially from the Gulf. Adherents of these movements compete with each other, although they claim that Islam is the solution to all problems. This is due not only to their differences in the interpretation of faith, but also to the acute struggle between the coming into life of the third generation of global Jihad, as well as the competition of their leaders around the division of Libyan oil resources.

But, according to the author, it is still not necessary to demonize political Islam and its different branches, because it can give rise to new conflicts and strife. It is necessary to separate those who do not call for armed struggle and do not profess the ideology of terrorism, and to involve them in a free dialogue and exchange of views in order to find common ground and common approaches to solve acute problems.

Over the past eight years, there have been no influential charismatic figures in Libya capable of setting the tone for a

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common agreement in favor of a compromise and implementing it. Local elites are torn by contradictions due to the backwardness of civil society, passivity, fragmentation of the population in conditions of dual power. At the same time, components of the political superstructure borrowed from the West, such as elected institutions, a multi-party system, etc., do not rely on the mature basis of an autochthonous society, where religious and tribal thinking, traditions and norms of the mentioned society are dominant.

*Author of the abstract – Elena Dmitrieva*

THOMAS FLICHY DE LA NEUVILLE. PERSIAN GULF, TOWARDS A COMPLEXIFICATION OF THE GEOPOLITICAL GAMES OF INFLUENCE // *English version of the article was submitted by the author for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

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The current tensions in the Persian Gulf deserve to be interpreted in the light of a recent geopolitical change: the traditional divide separating Saudi Arabia from its Iranian opponent has been scrambled by the apparition of a third force of opportunist neutrals in the region. In a gulf covering an area of 251 000 square kilometres, the power games of the coastal states as those of distant powers are becoming more complex. The situation of the Fifth Fleet could be compared to that of the Portuguese Navy during the mid-seventeenth century, or of the Royal Navy after the Second World War, at a time when the exclusive control of the Persian Gulf, had been replaced by a new balance of naval influences. The salty waters of the Gulf have long been a thermometer of power. The assumption of a closure

of the Strait of Hormuz, which would deprive Western countries from 25% of their daily energy consumption, is however unlikely. This eventuality nevertheless justifies the sale of material or sophisticated vehicles to all states of the region. As US energy dependency declines and US attention sharply turns towards the Pacific, Iran pragmatically assesses the rise of competing regional navies, hoping that more distant actors will one day change the geopolitics of the Gulf to its benefit.

## **THE UNITED STATES AT THE ORIGINS OF A NAVAL RECOMPOSITION**

### **A structuring geopolitical Iran – Saudi Arabia opposition**

In the waters of the Persian Gulf, the main divide separates Saudi Arabia backed by the U.S. and European navies from Iran backed by its Russian and Chinese allies. The first group prevails over the latter because of the presence of the Fifth US fleet, which disposes of two nuclear aircraft carriers in order to monitor the Gulf waters. Saudi Arabia is trying to compensate its lack of naval history and its difficulties to train naval officers, by the purchase of very sophisticated ships. For its part, Iran buys corvettes to China and mines to Russia. The competition between these two powers brings about naval tensions, for example in Bahrain – pivot of the American presence in the Persian Gulf – but where 65% of the population is Shia. For all Gulf powers, the strait of Ormuz is a strategic space: 20% of the world's oil production passes through this point of strangulation. If it was blocked, the price of a barrel of oil could increase by 50% within a few days. The strait is divided into two channels of 3.2 km in order to avoid any risk of collision.

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## **American energy independence at the origins of disengagement**

Until 2010, the geopolitics of energy were based on the following assumptions: oil and gas suppliers had limited reserves that would be insufficient in the future to meet increasing global demand. Importers therefore had to establish close links with their suppliers while securing the maritime communication lines connecting them to their suppliers. These postulates have shattered due to a double evolution: the exploitation of shale gas by hydraulic fracturing and the desire to limit global warming. In the future, oil will not necessarily be the largest source of energy, the majority of its consumers will not be Westerners, as for energy reserves, they will not be indefinitely located in the Middle East. In 2017, the United States rose to world rank for the production of oil (13% of the world total), side by side with Saudi Arabia and Russia but also ranked first worldwide for the production of natural gas (20% of the global total). The U.S. energy dependence rate declined from 30.1% in 2005 to 7.7% in 2017 thanks to a drop in consumption resulting from the 2008 crisis and the increase of oil and natural gas production made possible by the development of hydraulic fracturing techniques. The idea of an american energy independence has brought about the hypothesis of a withdrawal of the United States from the Middle East to the benefit of Asia Pacific. Having become self-sufficient, the United States would no longer have to devote itself to the costly preservation of Middle East. They are also thinking of cheaper means of monitoring this maritime area, for example via the use of robots: in effect a fleet of 12 autonomous mini-submarines would be able to cover the entire Persian Gulf. Faced with economic weakening, the oil monarchies multiply the free zones in order to anticipate the post-oil era.

## **The weakening of US positions in the Gulf**

The Persian Gulf is now an area of lesser strategic importance for the United States. Since 2011, frictions between the United States and its partners have multiplied, a sign of mutual distrust. At the beginning of the Arab Spring, in 2011, Saudi leaders had asked the United States to support Hosni Mubarak. The U.S. administration took the opposite side by supporting the opposition and then asking Mubarak to resign. Later, King Abdullah was frightened by the support given by the United States to the opposition in Bahrain. Iran took advantage of these events to spread the idea that U.S. policy was purely utilitarian in the region and that a leader who was no longer useful to the U.S. could quickly disappear. This alarmed the monarchies of the gulf. During Ahmadinejad's presidency, the United States promised to strengthen ties with the Gulf monarchies, but at the same time their attention shifted away from the region to Asia-Pacific. The Gulf monarchies feared an American-Iranian agreement to their detriment. That is why the King of Arabia refused on May 11, 2015 to attend a summit organized by Barack Obama and other leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council to discuss the nuclear deal with Iran. In the early months of the Trump presidency, Gulf monarchies feared a unilateral US withdrawal from the region. That's why they turned to other safe partners. India and China had already moved closer to them since the 2017 embargo on Qatar. In 2010, China set up the China-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue. For their part, France and Great Britain strengthened their military presence in the region in order to take advantage of the desire of oil monarchies to diversify. For its part, Russia had taken advantage of the quasi-embargo imposed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain on Qatar to get closer to this state. By announcing, on December 26, 2018, that the United States could no longer be the world's gendarmes and that

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American interventions in the 21st century had been disasters, Donald Trump created a shock in the region.

## **THE ADVENT OF MULTILATERALISM IN THE PERSIAN GULF**

### **The pragmatism of the Gulf monarchies**

Among the different Gulf monarchies, two countries are characterized by their pragmatism. The first is the Sultanate of Oman, a country at the interface of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, East Africa and India, which has signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 2009 while maintaining excellent relations with Iran. This allows him to act as a diplomatic intermediary between the two geopolitical opponents. For its part, Qatar, which shares reserves of gas with Iran, has been subject to a virtual embargo since it distanced itself from Saudi Arabia in May 2017. Following the blockade, the emirate completely revised its foreign policy. This state is at the mercy of any potential confrontation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. It is officially protected by the U.S.VIIIth Fleet. This is the reason why Russia remains very discreet. As for China, it signed on 27 September 2017 an agreement aimed at fighting against terrorism in order to buy the services of a partner able to cool down its own secessionist Islamists. Qatar has moved closer to Iran but also to Turkey, which has installed a permanent military base in the country. About 8000 Turks live in Qatar. More than 200 Turkish companies are present in the Emirate. Qatar is discreetly supported by Kuwait which proposed a mediation between the latter and Saudi Arabia in 2017. The embargo set up around Qatar in June 2017 reveals the weaknesses of Arab solidarity and stimulates new alliances that reflect divisions between competing monarchies.

### **The return of Russia in the Middle East**

Russia's geopolitical objectives in the Persian Gulf can be summarized as follows: Thirty years after the Russian withdrawal from the Persian Gulf at the beginning of the first Gulf War, it is appropriate for it to contain Islamist extremists, which are likely to spread in Russia or in its immediate vicinity; to support allied regimes by building sustainable geopolitical partnerships; to minimize the Russian military presence in the region; to increase Russia's shares in the arms, nuclear energy, oil and gas market; and to attract to Russia the investments of the monarchies of the gulf. However, Russian efforts to reconnect with Saudi Arabia have not been successful so far. From a geopolitical point of view, Russia is developing an alternative route to the India-Russia maritime route. This is the International North-South Transport Corridor that connects India to Russia via Iran and Azerbaijan. This rail and road route can be seen on the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf, taking an itinerary formerly used by imperial Russia.

### **The growing presence of China**

At present, China imports 20% of its oil from the Persian Gulf. Its presence in the region is not new but is considerably growing. A new transport corridor has been put in place between China and the Persian Gulf across Pakistan. This 10300 km long international container line connects Gilgit-Batistan with Gwadar. The connection of the continental powers to the Persian Gulf by land recalls some projects of the central powers during the First World War, imagining to connect Hamburg to the Persian Gulf by rail. This line of communication will reduce the distance between China and the Persian Gulf. The port of Gwadar is only 180 nautical miles from Strait of Hormuz.

The geopolitical situation of the Persian Gulf is therefore changing. The American naval thaw enables a game with three



players. On the one hand, the suspicious allies of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. On the other, the Iranian historical opponent. And between the two, the opportunistic neutrals represented by Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. It is in this direction that the ascending Asian powers have instinctively turned, in order to challenge American unilateralism.

## THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

BERDIYAR SAPAROV. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AND VALUES IN THE FORMATION OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

*Keywords: national heritage, values, traditions, customs, ceremonies, rituals, nation, national holiday, Navruz, national identity.*

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*Abstract.* Basic structural elements of national identity in the formation of the national idea, namely - the national heritage and values, are covered in the article on the basis of scientific sources. The influence of such elements of the national heritage structure as traditions, customs, rituals, and values on the national identity is also considered.

National heritage and values - the main components in the system of national ideas - occupy a significant place in the structure of the formation of national identity. The fund of national heritage and values has always been the basis of national consciousness in the formation of the national idea. National heritage and values express democracy and the essence of the structure of national identity formation. That is why the national

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heritage and values in the formation of national consciousness are the main factors in the system of national ideas. Therefore, we can draw scientific and philosophical conclusions through an objective assessment of the importance of national heritage and values in the system of national ideas and identification of its essence and prospects.

There are different interpretations of the national heritage concept in the literature, which is an important element of the realization of national identity. The explanatory dictionary of basic spiritual concepts defines the national heritage as the concept that defines the complex of all physical, material and spiritual values created by the intellect, the ability to act and the work of the ancestors of a certain nation at a stage when historical development has become the past. (Ma''naviyat asosij tushunchalar izoxli lurati. – Toshkand: Fafur Fulom, 2009. P. 308).

The national heritage of each nation includes the material, spiritual and other types of heritage, created by that nation. Some of them have an international character, others - attract attention of a certain nation. National heritage is a cumulative product of mentality, genius, worldview, creative abilities of a nation. Any existence without them cannot rise to the level of national heritage and disappear in a historical period, since the national heritage in the system of national concept serves as an important basis and source of experience in creating the future development of the country.

The structure of the national heritage consists of: 1) national traditions, customs, ceremonies, values; 2) ideology; 3) various rituals; 4) inventions of world significance; 5) the intellectuals of the nation and the literary works they created; 6) state system; 7) national cultural values, historical relics, etc.

Each of the above points was formed by the nation representatives over the centuries, and preserved as a heritage for the next generation. It is believed that all the characteristics of the structure of the national heritage, which occupy an important place in the system of national ideology, will contribute to the

formation and development of national consciousness. Taking into account the great importance of national customs, traditions, rituals, ceremonies and values in the structure of national heritage in the formation and demonstration of national identity, we express our opinion about their essence.

The development of different nationalities and peoples is associated with certain traditions and customs in society. That is, customs and traditions, which are a specific feature that characterizes this nation, are an important factor in the implementation of national consciousness.

National traditions are events of spiritual life. Traditions, customs and holidays are integral parts of spiritual culture, reflecting the social character of the nation, and serving as one of the important unifying factors. National traditions are actions repeated in a certain period, rules of decent behavior, skills adopted by many people. For example, such habits as greeting elders by youth, keeping order in showing the greatest respect to the guests, visiting elders, sick, disabled people or those who faced difficulties on the eve of the holiday, helping neighbors by participating in *khshar* (collective, free help) are considered good and characteristic of Uzbek customs.

National traditions are formed under the influence of the history of each nation and nationality, their way of life and other factors, and they are considered as one of the features that determine their specificity. For example, matchmaking requires a lot of attention and respect. People say that the prophets greeted the son-in-law, and so sons-in-law are shown great respect traditionally. Ceremonies together with national traditions, language and spirit create an important edge of national spirituality and culture.

National traditions were reflected in social and cultural life. National traditions and customs with Uzbek historical features are manifested in traditional and modern forms. The spread of any customs, traditions, and ceremonies should not be carried out at the expense of disregard for other peoples, traditions and

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customs of the nation and nationality; it should serve to strengthen friendship, neighborhood and harmony.

In general, while the values that have gradually formed over the course of human history demonstrate the significance of the existence of society, events and incidents of human life, its material and spiritual values, then customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies express human and national conformity.

A person, assessing certain events, processes or emotions, relying on scientific knowledge, worldview, interests, social experience, can find his self-expression in customs, traditions and ceremonies. Values are manifested in the relation of a particular nation to its past, historical and cultural experiences, lessons, happy events, customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies as a way of life of people, forming the basis of their spirituality.

The ideas of Abu Rayhon Beruni about the nationalities of Central Asia, especially the nations and tribes living in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan in the Middle Ages, about Khorezm, Sogdians and Turkish-speaking peoples are of great importance for the study of the past of the Uzbek people, its traditions, customs and rituals.

Abu Raykhon Beruni's ideas about the nationalities of Central Asia, especially the Nations and tribes that lived on the territory of present-day Uzbekistan in the middle ages - Khorezm, Sogdians and Turkish-speaking peoples, are of great importance for the study of the past of the Uzbek people, its traditions, customs and rituals. Beruni also mentioned several groups of the Turkic peoples in his works: the Turks of Transoxiana (Karakhanids), Northern Turks (Oghuz, Kimaks, Kirghiz, etc.), Eastern Turks and Turks living in the Chu river valley (Hutan, Tibet, Afghanistan). Materials about the life of the Karluks, Pechenegs and other tribes were found in his works. Abu Rayhon Beruni left invaluable historical and cultural wealth about the famous calendar dates and traditions of the ancient Khorezmians, Sogdians, Persians, Romans, Jews, Syrians, Christians, Hindus and others in his book "Monuments of

ancient peoples." Beruni in his works showed the existence of holidays and famous dates of these peoples in each season and month of the year. For example, "farvardin moh" - was the beginning of summer, "tir moh" - the beginning of autumn, "mehr moh" - the beginning of winter, "diniy moh" - the beginning of spring.

Since ancient times, faith in water has been great among the people of Central Asia. Our ancestors believed that water was sacred, was the source of life, and for this reason they worshiped it. They preserved lakes, rivers, springs and streams. Our ancestors respected water as they respected their mothers. Even today, it is considered a sin and a crime to pollute water, spit and throw garbage into it. Therefore, ditches, canals, drains are cleaned collectively and it has an effect; We should treasure water as one of the sacred values preserved for us by our ancestors.

We had spring festivals dedicated to flowers, the most beautiful gift of nature, and they took a special place among the spring rituals and holidays of our country. Such festivals as "Tulip Festival" in Fergana valley, "Nightingale Song" in Bukhara, "Maiden Festival," "Red Flower Festival" in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions were especially popular. It should be noted that the ancient holidays, which have many positive features, have become a structural part of the national heritage, enriched with a new meaning.

Among the holidays that were in ancient times and have survived to the present day, associated with the life of the peasants, their work and harvest, there are such as "melon Festival," "Wheat mother," "Harvest Festival," celebrated by farmers. They deserve special attention. In the spring, bread from the seed grains is baked and distributed among the peasants who were going to sow, and the second part of the grains is used as seed material. Peasants, after eating bread baked at the feast of the "Wheat Mother." Ceremonies such as the "First snow"

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associated with the winter season are also widespread. This holiday has acquired a mass character.

All these national holidays, ceremonies, traditions and ancient customs appeared on the basis of natural needs, dedicated to work, marked the joyful moments of people's lives. In festivals and ceremonies sorrows and mutual grievances are forgotten. Since ancient times, there have been many national holidays, ceremonies, traditions and customs related to livestock, agriculture, seasons, calendar, stars and flowers, and they are an important component of national heritage, helping the Uzbek nation realize its identity.

The spirit of unity, friendship and faith in the future was enshrined in national holidays, traditions and customs. They were of great educational importance in the spiritual and moral enrichment of the nation. It is necessary to study each of them, taking into account the social and natural conditions of that time, the national morality (spirituality) of people, their beliefs and worldview.

Firstly, the ancient holidays and ceremonies of our people were formed on the basis of their connection with living conditions, a certain external environment of society, the degree of economic development, and gradually turned into traditions and acquired a mass character; Secondly, the influence of existing religions on these holidays, rituals, traditions and customs is great; Thirdly, due to the connection between holidays, ceremonies, traditions, customs and people's lives, economy, lifestyle, religious beliefs, they remained in the memory of peoples for a long time and are a significant factor in the formation of people's self-consciousness even now.

Navruz is one of the oldest holidays in Uzbekistan. It is widely celebrated as a national holiday in the years of independence. President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, noted at the celebration of Navruz that it was a holiday of great national importance, which is equally clear and dear to all people in the world with good intentions, regardless of how humanistic

ideas, nationality, language and religion were essentially embodied. For this reason, Navruz during independence has become a favorite holiday for more than 130 peoples and nationalities living in Uzbekistan.

We believe that Navruz has a political, ideological and philosophical meaning, as, firstly, it is connected with the activities of people, with their faith in the values of antiquity and with dreams; Secondly, this holiday draws people's attention to the way of life, the national spirit, embodies magnificent forms of art and serves to enrich the spiritual life of people; Thirdly, it promotes international friendship, religious tolerance, compassion, love for the motherland, and maintaining peace of mind; Fourthly, it helps in the education of young people, the formation of their worldview, national identity.

Another holiday celebrated in autumn was Mehrkhon or Mehrgoh, (in Khorezm - Chiri-Rouge, in Sogdiana - Nim-Sarde). Mehrkhon means "Love for the Soul," and this word has a second meaning - "the sun." Beruni described Mehrkhon as an agricultural festival. He wrote that the sun and the moon are the two eyes of the sky, and Navruz and Mehrkhon are the two eyes of the year. Therefore, if Navruz is celebrated on the day of the spring equinox, then Mehrkhon is celebrated on the day of the autumn equinox. Navruz falls in the early spring, and Mehrkhon is celebrated in autumn with great solemnity. Nature begins to wake up from a long winter sleep in Navruz, and the vegetative period of plants gradually ends in Mehrkhon.

Mehrkhon is a holiday closely associated with the cult of ancient agriculture (faith, the object of worship). Muslim clergy have always been against ancient pagan rituals. For this reason, the celebration of Mehrkhon stopped. Mehrkhon is an integral part of the national heritage of the Uzbeks, and the people of Uzbekistan returned to this holiday in the years of independence.

The preservation of national traditions, customs and rituals for a long period of time and their revival symbolizes now their



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belonging to the national heritage and contributes to the consolidation of society. The nation representatives will be mutually spiritually enriched due to the observance of traditions. The value of customs, traditions and ceremonies will increase, and they will turn into a national heritage. In this aspect, it is necessary to study the mutual connection and the mutual influence of concepts such as customs, traditions and rituals – an important component of the national heritage structure. National values, serving national needs and goals, organize a complex of material and spiritual food and are considered an integral part of the national heritage. Traditions of national heritage, which are typical for a particular nation, also occupy a significant place and are considered as a symbolic, responsible movement aimed at the formation of certain traditions, customs, and ceremonies in the well-known system of national education. Traditions, customs, rituals and values are an important component of the national heritage, the main factor in the formation and driving force of national identity. Taking into account the fact that they occupy a significant place in the system of the national idea, they have become a vital issue. Present and future traditions, national ceremonies have a deep meaning and significance for the historical and cultural life of people.

In 2012, the Center for the Study of Public Opinion in the Republic of Uzbekistan held a sociological issue on the topic of “National Identity.” How well did the population know the customs, traditions and rites of the nation? Most of the respondents who took part in sociological surveys confirmed that they knew customs and traditions (in the survey 2006 – 88.1%, in 2012 – 93.1%), and only 1.7% of the respondents answered that they knew them not well enough.

The results of the above-mentioned sociological studies have shown the need to preserve the national traditions, customs and rituals of the Uzbek people, their further development and transformation into an integral part of the civil and especially youth worldview. In conclusion, it is necessary to take into

account that Uzbekistan began to revive and study the rich historical, national and cultural heritage, national traditions and values in the years of independence, it must be admitted that it will take a lot of time for further research.

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MOHIRA ABDULLAEVA. ANALYSIS OF THE MOST VISITED ISLAMIC WEBSITES IN UZBEKISTAN // *The article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

*Keywords: religion, cyberspace, the Internet, domain "uz", "muslim.uz", "islaminstitut.uz", "islom.uz".*

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*Abstract.* In the age of digital technology, the study of Islamic websites that satisfy religious questions of the population online and in Uzbek is as relevant as ever. The article analyzes the educational activities of Islamic websites of the domain "uz." Sites such as "muslim.uz," islaminstitut.uz, "islom.uz" were selected for the analysis. It was applied the comparative method in the analysis of the educational activities of these sites. At the same time, there were provided such criteria as compliance with the requirements of user ergonomics, as well as optimization of sites according to technical requirements. In the service of this aim, it was used the method of statistical processing of information of the most relevant topics, taking into account the requirements of the Uzbek-speaking audience. As a result, the educational activities of Islamic websites of Uzbekistan were estimated.

## **Introduction**

Since the beginning of the "Internet age," there has been a sharp increase in the streams of information and an increase in the rate of socializing. This reality has led not only to proliferation of exchange of information, but also to an improvement of its quality. The rapid development of information technology has resulted in significant social transformation, particularly in religious processes. One of the

obvious signs of such influence on the multinational Internet audience of Uzbeks is the satisfaction of the population needs solving religious issues online. This can be considered a natural process, although according to some specialist sociologists and religious scholars (Smolina, 2015) the cyberspace of the Internet is the largest market of religion, where traditional and non-traditional religious denominations and movements are represented. The Internet opens a wide path to any religious text, as well as providing unlimited opportunities to discuss and establish contacts on religious issues with believers. With the help of the Internet, religious life has been greatly diversified, thus making an independent space. Today, religious life in virtuality creates certain trends. Any representative of a traditional religion or new religious movement seeks to maintain status in cyberspace, through websites, forums, as well as the creation of virtual groups on social networks. In this direction, there is the content analysis of the most relevant issues of websites registered in the domain "uz" in the category "Religion" below.

### **Critical approach on the subject in literature**

Since the second half of the 1990s, a massive increase in the rate of activity of religions and religious organizations in cyberspace has been monitored. Such processes of the West have been reflected in scientists' researches.

Coordination between religion and the Internet Smolina (Smolina, 2015) studied in two concepts. First, the principle of "Internet and religion" for religious organizations is as a space for dialoging with representatives of their religion; secondly, is as a space containing a database of religion. Talal Nasser Al-Nazhran claims (Al-Nazhran, 1998) that mass media like the Internet changing the nature of personality, way of thinking, religious forms, identity patterns and social activism, and they are not justified. Historical experience has shown that mass

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media change only the audience by the nature of the Internet. In this regard, it should be noted that the main goal of the Internet space is not only to inform about the activities of a social institution, but also, by reference to the function of traditional religions, alliance people using new technologies.

### **Methodology of the research**

The theoretical-methodological basis of the analysis was such methods as ergonomics of the user interface and theoretical development of the web, theoretical analysis, observation, statistical processing of information (comparison, ranking).

### **Analysis and results**

Today, more than 4.2 billion of world population uses the Internet (Stats, 2018). If in 1995 in Uzbekistan the number of Internet users was 500 people, as of today they are 20 million ([mitc.uz/uz/stat/](http://mitc.uz/uz/stat/), 2019). It is necessary to take into account the fact that today 830 million of the users are young people whose average age is from 15 to 24 years. (International Telecommunication Union, 2017). The same ratio can be applied to the number of active users of the population of Uzbekistan.

In recent years, the demand for information consumption and the necessity to meet the intellectual needs of the population of Uzbekistan have led to a sharp increase in the number of Internet users. In relation to this, the number of registered domains “uz” has increased over the past period.

It should be noted that in order to create a national domain “uz,” it was approved the request made in 1995 to the University of Computer Science of Southern California (Newspaper, 2011/05/01). Nowadays, the number of active domains has reached 68,158 ([cctld.uz](http://cctld.uz), 2019), but the number of Islamic domains is less than one hundred. Despite this, their number is regularly increasing. For example, the sites registered among the

first to date are "muslim.uz" (registration date 2003) (U.Alimov et al., 2014), and "islom.uz," "quran.uz" (registration date 2004).

The analysis of Internet sources shows the impact of virtual space on religious worldview. Observations show that if the word "Islam" is entered on the most common search engines, the first lines of the found materials there are such Uzbek sites as "islom.uz," "islaminstitut.uz" and "muslim.uz." Within this framework, these sites were selected for content analysis.

## The results

The research results are given in two following tables:

Table № 1

### Sitemap

The contents		
<b>islom.uz</b>	<b>muslim.uz</b>	<b>islaminstitut.uz</b>
Home page	Home page	Structure
Themes	Departments	Themes
Media	Media	Media
Events	News	News
Books	Articles	Articles
Muamalat	Ramazan	For applicants
Islam	Fatwa	Distant education
Koran		
Hadith		
Page size		
<b>islom.uz</b>	<b>muslim.uz</b>	<b>islaminstitut.uz</b>
69 Kb	261 Kb	266 Kb

Sites satisfy the ergonomic requirements, from above horizontally there are names of sections, there are search systems going in with social networks, and also feedback to the site. Each of these sites has "Home page," "Themes," "Media," "Events" and "Articles." On the portal "islom.uz" there are such unique pages as "Muamalat," "Islam," "Koran" and "Hadith"; therefore,

on the muslim.uz website there are the following nonregular pages: "Ramazan," "Fatwa"; "islaminstitut.uz" has such pages as "Applicants", "Distance education." Also, on the sites there is an opportunity to listen to online radio "islom.uz radio" and "muslim radio," also to watch "muslimTV."

The sites "muslim.uz" and "islaminstitut.uz" provide information in Russian, English and Arabic. Publishing information in foreign languages in its turn builds reach of foreign audiences. By technical parameters, a small "weight" (in MB) of the page gives users quick access to the sites.

In the second table it is given a structure of the page "Themes" of the sites:

Table № 2

### Analysis of the section "Themes"

<b>islom.uz</b>	<b>muslim.uz</b>	<b>islaminstitut.uz</b>
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Departments</b>	<b>Themes</b>
History	Siyрати	History of Islam and
Siyрати	History of Islam	siyрати
Islamic literature	Aqidah Library	Aqidah
Ulemas	Treatment	Fiqh
Opponency	Women's page	Koran and Qur'anic
Ramazan	Extremism and terrorism -	exegesis
Mavlid	a destroyer of progress	Hadith
Hanafism	Hajj and umra	Family
Tazkiya	Collaboration sites	Women
Miracles	Communication service	Childrearing
Analisis	Compatriots abroad	
Vami	Koran	
Verbal	Hadith	
pyrotechnics	Fiqh	
(Classes)	Decency to serve parents	
Faraiz (classes)		
Life of associates		

Counting the number of themes, the websites islom.uz and islaminstitut.uz pay great attention to the history of Islam, theology (aqidah) and information relating to them. The site

“muslim.uz” attracts the reader along with full information about the history of Islam, theology (aqidah) and sciences, attitude to topical questions of social life.

In the national rating “uz” in the category “Religion,” the site “islom.uz” set the pace (www.uz, 2019), thanks to the convenience of interface and using. For example, this site is easy to open, in comparison with other sites its design also attracts. In this regard, there was analyzed the number of visitors for 6 months of 2018. According to the results of the analysis, about 292 thousand visitors acquainted with the information of the site (www.uz, 2019). Although the information of the site is posted in Uzbek, the audience of visitors of the sites is not limited by Uzbekistan, the number of visitors from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan is significantly higher (www.uz, 2019). This shows that among the Uzbek-speaking users of these countries, this site satisfies the need of Islamic issues.

The first half of 2018, the most popular articles of the site “islom.uz” were “Rules of reading namaz” (7,199), “A Prayer for Riches and Abundance” (6,811), “Ramazan (acts of makruh and muboh that interrupt the fasting)” (5,225).

From January 2015 until the beginning of 2018, more than 7 million users addressed the site “islom.uz,” the most visited page of which were: “Ask the people of Zikra” (728,053), “Time of Namaz” (26,052), “Library” (15,239).

### **Conclusion and suggestion**

On the basis of the analysis, it is clear that the number of users of the Internet and Uzbek-language sites on Islamic issues is increasing significantly. In this field, resources like “islom.uz” influence religious life, including religious consciousness. The logical conclusion of the mentioned is that one of the most active factors affecting formation and development of the religious process in cyberspace is information resources, and study of their activity area, as well as pursued goals, takes on great importance.



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