

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

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

**RUSSIA
AND
THE MOSLEM WORLD
2013 – 4 (250)**

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

**Moscow
2013**

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Information in Social Sciences
of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS)

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**FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION**

Russian foreign policy in the past two decades has not ceded the country's positions in the world and did not succumb to the dangerous temptation to compensate in any way the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. Russia has reached and maintained the minimally acceptable level of relations with most of its foreign partners and close neighbors. Ideology has been removed from Russian foreign policy and its place was taken by the problems of economic relations. The country's foreign policy has become more "national" than it was in Soviet times, it is now taking into account the interests of big Russian companies, definite categories of citizens, and society as a whole.

At the same time its pragmatism remains "naked," as it were. It is not rooted in the social values officially proclaimed, and not shared by the country's elite. As a result, instead of being an embodiment of enlightened national egoism, the foreign policy of the Russian Federation often looks as an example of the narrow-minded group opportunism. National interest is too often replaced by concrete interests of individual monopolists who believe that what is good for them should be good for Russia. The process of adopting decisions is

not transparent. This essentially limits the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy.

Genuinely national interest requires the maximally broad use of external resources for the country's modernization. In practice it means the establishment and maintenance of stably peaceful and partnership relations with the countries where the main external resources, technologies and experience are concentrated, which could be used in the interests of Russian modernization. These are, mainly, the countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and also a number of other leading countries of the BRICS group.

In order to get full access to this potential it is necessary to find an acceptable balance between economic interests, political realities and requirements for ensuring national security. Economic integration with the CIS countries, gradual but resolute departure from "residual" confrontation with the U.S.A. and demilitarization of relations with it, close economic and humanitarian cooperation with the European Union, all-round and balanced partnership with China, and normalization of relations with Japan could be the main factors and components of success.

Strategic independence of the Russian Federation in the international arena is the most important principle of its foreign policy. Naturally, not a single country in the modern world, including the United States and China, is fully independent from others. But we mean independence in the adoption of decisions. Russia is not part of any alliances headed by other states and so far does not participate in political-economic associations headed at a supranational level. The competence of the Commission of the Customs Union is limited and the competence of other economic associations with the participation of the Russian Federation, including the projected Eurasian Union,

should also be limited. It is precisely the strategic independence of Russia that is the essence of the “great power” concept, as it is now understood conformably to the Russian Federation.

Geopolitically speaking, the Russian Federation is not so much a Eurasian as a Euro-Pacific country. This definition emphasizes the European roots of Russia, and at the same time is the crucial geopolitical and geo-economic fact showing that it has broad access to the Pacific connecting it with East Asia, America and Australia. In contrast to Euro-Asian/Eurasian terminology, Euro-Pacific definition emphasizes the country’s cultural self-determination and points to its direct outlet to the most dynamic region of the world. As to its being the impetus to Russia’s development, the Pacific in the 21st century is about the same as the Baltic region was at the beginning of the 18th century.

The present foreign policy of the Russian Federation is directed primarily to its own country, and only after that to the rest of the world. Its main aim is to help transform Russia and only then, and on that basis, to help improve the surrounding world. The problems of the world order and world management are important for the Russian Federation conformably to its concrete interests, namely, to overcome the country’s backwardness.

Regional Directions of Russia’s Foreign Policy Integration nucleus of the CIS

Integration with individual CIS countries is not a means to overcome Russia’s backwardness. Nevertheless, due to integration more favorable conditions are created for solving this task. Among these conditions is the formation of a more capacious market of commodities, services and workforce. Within the framework of the Customs Union and the uniform economic area of Russia, Kazakhstan

and Belarus the more appropriate forms of regulation conformably to the modern economic conditions are used.

It should be taken into account that the integration processes going on between the Russian Federation and the CIS countries are in no way similar to the restoration of the “Greater Russia.” Russia’s partners in the CIS adhere to the principles of strengthening and consolidating their state independence, and their national interests do not always coincide with Russian interests. Any pressure brought to bear on Ukraine in order to make it join integration should be excluded. Otherwise, Ukraine will work for disintegration. The Central Asian countries, if they do not correspond to the criteria of membership, should not be accepted to the nucleus of integration either.

If Russia wishes to become a regional leader it should use “soft force” and practice “enlightened egoism.” Russia needs regional leadership, indeed, for building an effective integration model for interaction with its close neighbors and ensuring its own security. Both these factors are absolutely necessary for solving the main task – the country’s modernization.

Euro-Atlantism

The OECD countries, primarily members of the European Union, are the main external resource of the Russian Federation for overcoming its backwardness. Most of them are NATO members or part to bilateral alliances with the United States. Drawing closer to Europe strategically, along with unstable relations with the United States, is unreal. In order to use the European resource for modernization to the full it is necessary to change the character of relations with the United States fundamentally. In other words, there should be a gradual demilitarization of the Russian–American (Russian–NATO) relations and the formation of a security community

in the Euro-Atlantic area. Such community is a must for the formation of the common economic area of the European Union and the RF/EAU.

Among the priorities of Russia's policy toward the European Union for the present six-year presidential period are:

- Conclusion of a new agreement on the RF – EU partnership;
- Creation of a free-trade zone with the EU;
- Creation of joint scientific-production complexes with European companies; exchange of assets;
- Further liberalization of visa regime with EU countries right up to complete abolition of visas;
- Active border cooperation;
- Greater role of St. Petersburg as the European metropolis of the Russian Federation and one of the centers of the Baltic region;
- Development of Arkhangelsk as the “capital of the Russian Arctic region”.

The main task of Russia's policy toward NATO is the formation of a security community in the Euro-Atlantic region with the participation of the Russian Federation. The following priorities can be singled out in this sphere for the years 2012 through 2018:

- Transformation of the Russian–American (Russian–Western) relations in the sphere of strategic cooperation. An agreement on an anti-missile defense system in Europe between the U.S.A./NATO and Russia, with due account of Russia's interests in security and on the basis of mutual trust;
- Strengthening of mutual confidence by further arms control. Agreements with the U.S.A. on non-strategic systems of arms;
- The use of the RF – NATO relations for modernizing the system of the external security of Russia and reaching compatibility in carrying on collective operations;
- Further process of Russian-Polish historical reconciliation;

– Development of similar processes with the Baltic neighbors of the RF – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia;

– Settlement of the Dniester conflict within the framework of security partnership of the RF and the EU.

The “Northern façade” of the Russian Federation – the Arctic – is the geopolitical continuation of the Euro-Atlantic area. It is necessary to solve the following tasks along this direction within the 2012–2018 period:

– To legitimize the leading role of the Arctic countries in solving problems pertaining to the Arctic as a whole. To affirm the principle and practice of exclusively peaceful solution of all disputed questions in the region;

– To reach an international agreement favorable for Russia on the problem of the continental shelf in the Arctic;

– To develop international shipping along the Northern Sea Route and build the necessary infrastructure in the Far North of the Russian Federation.

Asia and the Pacific

In the early 21st century East Asia became the most dynamic region of the world, and the center of world trade shifted to the Pacific. It has also become the center of the world strategic relations. Russia should take into account not only this change in world economic geography, but also the possibility of using it for its own economic development and the strengthening of its security. The fate of Eastern Russia, Siberia and the Pacific coast in the Russian Far East is one of the most crucial problems of the integrity of the Russian Federation, its self-identification and the position and role in the world. This problem could be solved by way of double economic integration – Eastern Russia in the unified area of the Russian Federation, and the latter in

the Asia-Pacific region (APR). The development of good-neighborly relations and all-round cooperation with China will be of paramount importance.

The main priority of Russia's policy in the Asia-Pacific region is the development of the eastern regions of the Russian Federation – the Pacific Coast and Siberia. We mean the following directions:

- Attraction to the Far East and Siberia of investments, technologies, specialists and workforce for creating a modern transport infrastructure and modern industries. The development of fuel-and-energy production, mining industry and logistics as the material base of Russian policy in the region;

- Gradual expansion of the “niche” of the Russian Federation in the Asia-Pacific region: from energy resources (oil, gas, coal, electric energy) and transit capabilities (TransSib railway, Northern Sea Route, air routes over Siberia) to the creation of space launching sites (in the Amur basin) and educational centers;

- Broad economic cooperation at the regional level: not only with North-East China, but also with Taiwan, South Korea, western states of the U.S.A. – from Alaska to California, western provinces of Canada, and territories in Australia and New Zealand;

- Implementation of “double integration”: the East of Russia – in the common economic area of the country, and the Russian Federation – in the Asia-Pacific region.

The more partners Russia will have in the Asia-Pacific region the better positions of Russia will be on the banks of the Amur and the Ussuri rivers, the Bering Strait and La Peruse Strait.

Reliable security of the Russian Federation is a most important condition for the development of the eastern regions of the country. For this purpose Russia should strengthen its political relations with all major players, participate actively in multilateral diplomacy in the

region, and also improve its military potential, including in its eastern part.

The growing contradictions between the United States and China force the latter to look for closer ties with Russia, including in the military-political sphere, for the first time in the past sixty years. China would like to secure political support of Moscow in its possible confrontation with Washington. With a view to strengthening its military-technical potential China will be interested in broad access to the latest Russian technologies and development in the military sphere, including naval, air, nuclear and space arms, and anti-missile-defense systems. China will need access to Russian natural resources, especially fuel and energy. In exchange China will be ready to grant credits to Russia, investments, technologies obtained in the West, as well as workforce for the development of Siberia and the Far East. A Russian-Chinese condominium will be established in Central Asia. The leading role in this possible Chinese-Russian alliance will most probably be played by China. Such scenario of Russia losing its sovereignty and becoming an appendage to China is extremely dangerous for Russia, and it may well turn into reality if Russia's relations with the West exacerbate.

Central and South Asia

The territory of Central Asia alone will not form the integration nucleus of the CIS. Nevertheless, the new states of the region situated relatively close to the borders of the Russian Federation, having various natural and labor resources, which were included for quite a long time in the zone of Russian cultural influence, are of interest as an "integration reserve" and at the same time a buffer against undesirable currents from the South. Some of them are members of the EuroAsEC,

and all of them, except Turkmenistan, are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The main task for ensuring security in the Central Asian direction is to reduce radically drug trafficking coming to Russia from Afghanistan via the territory of Central Asia.

One of the most crucial tasks facing the Russian Federation is contribution to stability in Central Asia itself.

Quite soon the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan and the exacerbation of internal Afghan conflict connected with it can become a major destabilizing factor in the entire region and even beyond its borders. In Afghanistan itself Russia, in cooperation with neighboring countries, should strive for the elimination of the exceptionally negative influence of the developments in Afghanistan on the situation in the region, and all the more so, beyond its boundaries. But the internal political and other structure of Afghanistan is the affair of the Afghan people themselves.

In order to oppose these challenges and threats Russia needs to transform the Collective Security Treaty Organization from a military alliance into a regional alliance of security for Central Asia. At the same time it is in the interests of Russia to continue to strengthen the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a mechanism of regional interaction with the PRC in multilateral format, as a common Asian platform and an instrument for maintenance of geopolitical stability on the Asian continent. In the future the international aspects of Afghan settlement could become a subject for discussions and solutions within the SCO framework or special forums under its auspices.

Outside the boundaries of the former U.S.S.R. the principal strategic partner of the Russian Federation in Asia is India. The main task along this line is to elevate the traditionally friendly relations to the status of real strategic partnership. For this purpose it will be necessary

to radically broaden economic cooperation by raising mutual attraction of each other's business.

The Middle East and North Africa

The high level of internal and external conflicts in this region poses definite risks to Russia. There is the danger of instability moving closer to the Muslim countries close to the Russian borders, and also to certain regions of the Russian Federation, primarily the North Caucasus. Another danger comes from drawing Russia into political conflicts around certain countries, primarily Iran, and as a result, a sharp exacerbation of relations with the United States, and some western and Arab countries.

As to Russia's attitude to the "Arab awakening," we can say that the anti-revolutionary rhetoric of Moscow and its refusal from contacts with new movements in the region and their leaders do not contribute to the strengthening of Moscow's positions. Russian policy in the Libyan and Syrian conflicts shows the absence of a definite strategic line of the Russian Federation. This has already dealt a blow at Moscow's reputation in the Arab world and led to greater tension in its relations with the United States, the EU countries and many states of the world community. Such consequences of Russian policy hamper solution to the main strategic task of Russian foreign policy.

At the same time there are certain possibilities in this sphere. A number of countries, primarily Turkey, as well as Iran, are important trade partners. Relations with Turkey have improved lately, and relations with Iran continue to remain at a "working level." Certain countries of the Gulf region have definite material resources which could be used for modernization in individual regions of the Russian Federation. The situation on the world oil market depends on some Third World countries, for example Saudi Arabia. Finally, Israel with

its multi-vector modernization and high-tech facilities could be a unique partner in the sphere of multi-purpose modernization.

Russia should closely cooperate with Turkey in order to ensure its national security and protect national interests, especially along the Caucasian direction, and also in respect to Iran and Arab countries. As to the Iranian problem, it is necessary to interact with other permanent member-states of the UN Security Council, as well as Germany. And in the Israeli-Palestinian direction Russia should actively work with the United States, the European Union and the United Nations Organization within the framework of the “Middle East quartet.” At the same time Russia should maintain contacts of trust with all other major players in the region, including states, and political and religious movements and organizations.

The Global Role of Russia

Russia should use its advantages for creating global or regional public benefits. These spheres include strategic stability and nuclear security, energy security, international law, and international mediation.

In the sphere of strategic stability and nuclear security the role of the Russian Federation consists of maintaining its leadership, along with the United States, in the efforts to reduce the nuclear threat by curtailing nuclear arsenals, stopping nuclear tests, including other nuclear powers in this process, and preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapon.

In the sphere of energy security the leading role of the Russian Federation consist not only of prospecting and developing new deposits of energy raw materials, and mining and delivering them to the world market, but also of raising the energy-efficiency of the Russian economy, greater safety and reliability of nuclear power plants, and a stable market and political balance between the interests of participants

in the energy markets. A system of energy partnerships between the Russian Federation and a whole number of leading players on this field, primarily the EU and North Asian countries, could be a worthy practical embodiment of efforts in this sphere.

Non-participation in international conflicts, with few exceptions, enables Russia to come out in the role of an honest mediator between conflicting parties, and first and foremost, in conflicts on the territory of the former U.S.S.R., as well as in the situations around the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. Besides, Russian participation may be necessary in the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Successful mediation requires serious diplomatic efforts, but it also contributes to greater international prestige and influence of this country.

Finally, Russia may become one of the leading countries in the international development of the Arctic region at the present stage. We mean not only the formation of an all-round system of international cooperation in the Arctic, but also the protection of the rights and interests of the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region.

*“Povestka dnya novogo presidentstva”, Moscow,
Carnegie Center, Moscow, 2012, pp. 9–16.*

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**NATIONALISM OR RADICAL ISLAM
(Political Realities of Tatarstan)**

At present the Tatar national movement, which was a serious political force in the 1980s – 1990s, has a stronger Islamic component and a weaker nationalistic one. This is true not only of the Republic of Tatarstan, but of the entire Volga area. It is largely connected with the

internal political processes going on in Tatarstan, particularly, after the change of its leadership, which took place on March 25, 2010. The President M. Shaimiyev, who had been at the head of the republic for about twenty years and was nationally oriented, was replaced by R. Minnikhanov, an efficient technical manager who was not too much carried away by nationality problems.

The foreign factor plays a no small role in the changed alignment of forces in the national field. It can be seen in the growing interest in Tatarstan displayed by the Caucasian radical Islamists, and also by representatives of western information-analytical and intelligence bodies.

The latest tendencies show that the separatist potential of the radical part of the Tatar national movement will go down steadily, but the danger of Islamic radicalism will grow. In this connection the processes going on in the republic should be closely observed by both the government bodies and expert community.

At the end of 2010 – beginning of 2011 among the events which took place in Tatarstan were crimes connected with religious extremism, despite the fact that the republic was distinguished by inter-confessional peace for quite some time. On November 25, 2010, three Islamic militants were killed in Chistopol district of the republic, who tried to assassinate an official of the Center combating extremism at the republican Ministry for the Interior.

The extremists were well armed and belonged to a group of radical Islamists of the Wahhabi and “Hizb-ut-Tahrir” trends (the latter organization is banned in Russia).

On January 13, 2011, the head of the Spiritual board of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan, Mufti Gusman Iskhakov announced his “voluntary” retirement. The main reason for retirement was his slow

reaction to the discovery of an armed Islamist underground in the republic.

His resignation was followed by a strained two-month-long election campaign for electing a new mufti. The ideological comrades-in-arms of the killed Islamists and their sympathizers tried to foist a person to their liking to be elected mufti, but failed. On April 13, 2011, the extraordinary congress of Muslims of Tatarstan by the overwhelming majority of votes elected the imam of the Kazan mosque Bulgar Ildus Faizov mufti. He began to expel radical Islamists with extremist views from madrasahs and mosques. This provoked a strong reaction on the Salafite 1 part of the Tatar Islamic community, who accused Mufti Faizov of a “total purge of professional, well-trained and experienced imams.” But these accusations did not have the desired result and did not lead to a split of the *umma*. 2 At the same time these events in the republic have shown that traditional Tatar intellectual “soft Islam” of the Khanafite *mazhab* (of the Imam Abu Khanifa school) loses ground to primitive radical fundamentalist versions of Islam. The attempts of intellectuals (among them the former adviser of Tatarstan’s President on domestic policy Rafael Khakimov) to present as an alternative to Islamism their own version of Islam-*light* (“Euro-Islam”) failed through, inasmuch as they were not understood by the Islamic intelligentsia and rank-and-file Muslim believers.

B.I. Faizov has time and again outlined his views on the aims and tasks facing the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan. First of all, he emphasized the need to organize ideological work and the activity of all Tatar mosques and educational establishments in accordance with the charter and rules of the board. “We work by the Koran and Sunna, in line with Abu Khanifa *mazhab*,” he emphasized at the first press conference after his election as mufti.

He reminded of the need “to reveal and cut short any manifestations of religious extremism, xenophobia or Islamic phobia.” He called on the Muslim mass media to engage in enlightenment activity, including social network, and popularize Tatar religious heritage. He made special emphasis on work among young people and preparation of preachers. The mufti also spoke of the official position of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan and said: “We are in solidarity with the state power of the Russian Federation in its policy to create a tolerant society respecting all confessions on its territory. We shall support a constructive dialogue with the authorities on many subjects.”

B.I. Faizov’s adherence to Khanafite *mazhab*, his activity and uncompromising attitude to many problems, his clear-cut program of transformations, the use of modern methods of propaganda (including the Internet resources), his mobility and openness in contacts with rank-and-file Muslims, journalists and representatives of the expert community gave grounds to believe that the *umma* of Tatarstan was in reliable hands and there would be no “dialogue with the Wahhabites” on which radical Islamists insisted.

On July 19, 2012, an unknown man shot and killed Faizov’s deputy V. Yakupov in the morning. An hour later the car driven by B.I. Faizov exploded, and the blast threw him out of it. In a grave condition he was rushed to hospital and operated there and then. When he was discharged from hospital the President of Russia Vladimir Putin decorated him with the Order of Friendship.

The assassination of V. Yakupov and the attempt on the life of B.I. Faizov were, of course, connected with their professional activity. This view was shared by many experts. The head of the Center of regional studies Rais Suleimanov said that Faizov was one of the best representatives of the traditional trend of Islam and was always against

radical Islamists whose number was on an increase in Tatarstan lately. Another expert on religion, R. Silantyev, held the view that these tragic events marked the beginning of a total war against preachers of traditional Islam. He said that two years ago a “Dagestani situation” was practically created in Tatarstan: a terrorist underground emerged and armed clashes began.

The Islamists waging an armed struggle against the Russian state in the North Caucasus call ever more frequently for spreading “jihad” to the Volga area, particularly to Tatarstan. This trend became especially pronounced recently and coincided with qualitative changes in the Tatar Muslim community. Taking into account the presence in the Republic of Tatarstan of quite a few Salafite young Muslims and the gradual strengthening of fundamentalist influence, the threat of emergence of an Islamist underground in Tatarstan is quite real.

In the spring of 2010, the amir and creator of the “Caucasian emirate” (known as “Imarat Kavkaz”) Doku Umarov 3 stated: “When we liberate the land of the Caucasus on which our Muslim brothers live, we will liberate other lands occupied by Russia, that is, Astrakhan and the Volga area which are trampled upon by the Russian infidels.”

Leaders of the Caucasian jihadists have said similar things more than once. In the middle of 2008 one of the ideologists of Chechen separatism Movladi Udugov said in an interview to a western journal that many Muslims living in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Buryatia, as well as Russians converted to Islam regard Doku Umarov as the legitimate leader of all Muslims in Russia. He added that the leadership of “Imarat Kavkaz” may put concrete battle tasks before them at any time and the Russian authorities were well aware of this.

In November 2010 a special “Idel-Ural” site appeared in the Internet, which included Tatarstan. In one of its publications it was noted that the territory it covers are lands which are not part of “Imarat

Kavkaz” and which are claimed by Muslims waging a sacred liberation struggle against the infidels occupying them. The anonymous authors of this document promise support to all, who raise their voices and, arms in hand, take upon themselves the liberation of these lands from “the worst of creatures” and establishment of Muslim rights and laws on them. These authors call on all Muslims to rally around “Imarat Kavkaz” and its amir, which will become the “center of the Muslim state” after the collapse of Russia. The jihadists regard the whole of Russia (and not only its parts inhabited by Muslims) a land on which a caliphate should be created. And this should be done by force. It is indicative that the “Idel-Ural” site is also registered in the United States.

In March 2011 Doku Umarov again addressed the Muslims of Russia and the Caucasus calling for jihad on all territories of Russia inhabited by Muslims. He said that jihad is the sacred duty of the *umma*. “Kill the enemies of Allah wherever you are with no exception for peaceful population,” he called on them.

On March 10, 2011, the “Idel-Ural” site published an announcement about the beginning of jihad and called on all inhabitants of the region to adopt Islam and submit to the Sharia law. “There should be only one law, the law of Allah on our land. Our aim is to establish this law on the Idel-Ural area. “Brothers and sisters” following the Koran and Sunna were called upon to form independent mobile fighting groups, and those who are not yet ready to “join jihad” should help with their means, information and possibilities, create sites, and collect personal information about officials of the law-enforcement agencies, representatives of the official clergy, etc.

Analyzing the content of the site, experts note that so far its creators devote much more attention to the events in the Middle East and the Caucasus, which are far from Tatarstan and its problems. On

the one hand, this shows that its moderators do not have enough information and knowledge of the real situation in Tatarstan. But on the other, it indicates that the aim of the portal is to draw the Republic of Tatarstan in the common project of creating a global caliphate.

The emotional calls of the leaders of the Caucasian militants for spreading jihad to the Volga area are reflected in many materials of Islamic propagandists. The author of one of such materials writes the following: “For us such peoples as the Tatars and Bashkirs are of special interest inasmuch as they are quite numerous and believe in Islam. Besides, they had their own statehood earlier with the Sharia as the legislative basis. After their colonization by Russia they put up resistance for a long time, including in the form of jihad.”

“As to Tatars, it is possible their active nationalists may turn into mojaheds on the example of Chechnya and other regions of the North Caucasus.” This assertion is based on real facts. Indeed, in recent years certain sections of the Tatar national movement (especially its younger members) joined the radical Islamist groups and this could lead to unity between nationalists and fundamentalists, with the latter playing the major role. On the other hand, the leaders and ideologists of the Tatar Islamic community realize the danger which such processes pose to the Tatar nation and recently they began actively to oppose this turn of events, defending the “Tatar mosque” and the national specific features of “Tatar Islam.”

Noting that Bashkirs, and especially Tatars, live in various parts of Russia, some of Caucasian ideologists of jihad believe that given appropriate conditions and approach, part of them could form the future underground and a human and resource base “in the struggle for Siberia and the Urals.”

“It is very important to use Tatar and Bashkir nationalism in our interests and turn it into jihad,” stated the chief ideologist of Doku

Umarov M. Udugov. “For this purpose we need propaganda and information resources in national languages,” he went on. “We should also use acts of sabotage on the enemy territory and draw the most active persons into the ranks of mojaheds. National resistance in any forms and manifestations should be coordinated by the underground center. If we spread jihad in the Volga area, it will partially divert Russian forces from the Caucasus.”

The cited text is an example of methodological instruction about how the struggle against the infidels should be waged. As a rule, these “instructors” show a good knowledge of the local conditions.

Elaborating his views on jihad in the Volga area and the Urals, the author of another work of this kind says that the next stage after preparations will be the beginning of a guerilla war in urban conditions. Among the concrete objects of the attacks of jihadists will be “economically important elements of the infrastructure and definite persons actively fighting the Islamists.

It can be observed already now how the Tatar national movement is changing and its nationalist component is ousted by the Islamist one, and how jihadist propaganda is intensifying in the Internet forums and social networks.

The jihadists of the Caucasus are trying “to warm up” the situation in Tatarstan, presenting more and more materials to the information medium about the need to switch over to armed resistance to the legitimate authorities. At present there are no grounds to believe that Tatar Muslims will obey these calls. However, if such propaganda continues with the same zeal without opposition, it is quite possible that groups of supporters of “jihad to the victorious end,” mainly among young people, will appear in the republic. This, by the way, was well demonstrated by the assassination of a high clergyman

and the attempt on the life of another, of which we have already spoken.

There is no doubt that such situation has been a result of the evolutionary changes in the Tatar national movement, which began to be dominated by radical elements. Their views combine two main ideas: the creation of an independent Tatar state and the extremely negative attitude to the Russian people. For instance, the chairperson of the “Milli Majlis of the Tatar people” (self-proclaimed parliament) F. Bairamova asserts that “the Russian state has been built on the tragedy of the Tatar people, on the Tatar blood, and it exists at the expense of the energy resources pumped out of the bowels of Tatar earth, that Tatars feed the Russian state, etc., etc. She calls for creating an independent Tatar state with a strong national and militant spirit, like the one of Genghiz Khan.

The writer A. Khakim went much further. At the end of 2009 he appealed to the King of Norway Harald V with the request “to consider the possibility of granting my people a place for permanent residence beyond the Arctic Circle, on one of the archipelagos of the Arctic Ocean.” The writer thus hopes “to save” at least five thousand of his fellow-compatriots. They will be growing the best roses of the world in special rosaries which they will build there. A. Khakim explained that he addressed this strange request to the King of Norway because his people had been living in close neighborhood with the Russians who were unable to ensure them prosperity and happiness, but only robbed them of their natural wealth and doomed to slow extinction.

Judging by the words and deeds of the radical Tatar nationalists, they are unable to substantiate rationally their claims and complaints presented to the Russian people and the need to create an independent Tatar state. They have become completely marginalized during the past fifteen years. Their ideas of separation of Tatarstan from Russia do not

reflect the wishes and aspirations of the Tatar people and are not supported either by the republican authorities, or its population, or its intelligentsia. Calls for “independence of Tatarstan” can be explained by both the inadequacy of their authors and the attempt of the outside forces to use “Tatar separatism” for the weakening and dismemberment of Russia.

The adherents and creators of a real policy have another view. One of the ideologists of the national movement and the director of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan, Rafael Khakimov (right up to March 25, 2008, he held the post of adviser to President M. Shaimiyev on matters of domestic policy) said that “Russia is our land, the territory of the Golden Horde, and we Tatars have no reason and do not want to separate from it.” True, he admitted, Moscow pays insufficient attention to the development of federative relations, including financial, economic, scientific and cultural ones.

The former colleague of R. Khakimov, Damir Iskhakov, D. Sc. (Hist.), commenting on the feasibility of Tatarstan’s independence, noted that he prefers the idea of his republic’s development within the framework of the Russian Federation. “We are Muslims,” he said, “we have specific views on many subjects, which are different from those of the Russians. But we want Russia to have many people coexisting with one another, and many cultures, which is the earnest of the country’s prosperity.”

At present the Tatar national movement formed more than twenty years ago is going through a generation change. But instead of being optimistic, one has to admit that quite a few present-day young nationalists, who at first demonstrated broad views on domestic and political issues, have now shifted to the positions of the separatists of the first post-Soviet years. True, they are not numerous. On the whole,

young people in Tatarstan do not express the desire to support separatist ideas and demonstrate loyalty to the Russian state.

The only politically active mouthpiece of the interests of the young generation of radical Tatar nationalists is the Union of Tatar Young People “Azatlyk” headed by Nail Nabiullin. It organizes meetings, pickets and marches, but very few people take part in them. For instance it was possible to gather not more than one hundred of young nationalists for a meeting devoted to the protection of the Tatar language in April 2011.

Young nationalists are coming out for an independent Tatar state, but the number of active young Islamists is greater, comprising about 1,500 men. However, it can be said for certain that national-separatist ideology, although it enjoys support by a small circle of adherents, has lost battle for the hearts and minds of young people to radical Islamists.

The leaders of the older generation of Tatar nationalists agree with this. They admit that the significance of the national factor will diminish and it will turn into the confessional and spiritual factor. Quantitative changes in the Tatar national movement have grown into qualitative ones during the past 1.5–2 years. And it is not accidental that in the mid-1990s interest in Tatarstan on the part of foreign, primarily western, experts grew markedly, and the number of their visits to the republican capital Kazan with a view to studying the religious and socio-political situation also increased.

Mention could be made of a visit to Kazan of experts of the American Council on foreign policy – an influential expert organization of the Republican party of the United States at the end of 2010. Members of the American delegation were interested in the position of Islam in the Volga area and ethnic and confessional relation in Tatarstan. They expressed concern over the global growth of Islamic radicalism and stressed the need for finding ways to combat this

negative phenomenon, which presents a serious threat to both the United States and Russia.

During meetings with Rafael Khakimov, the rector of the Russian Islamic University Rafik Mukhametshin, representatives of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan, and other experts, the guests from America could form an objective idea about the processes going on in the religious sphere of the republic. Practically all experts and clergymen with whom American political analysts met and talked, spoke of the need to fight this phenomenon quite seriously and assessed the situation as quite alarming. Comparing the processes going on in Tatarstan with the situation in other regions of the world, the guests from the United States could not but emphasize that effective recipes for opposing Islamism had not been found.

It was indicative that neither American political figures nor experts on religion showed any interest in the Tatar national movement, being apparently aware that it had no future. Evidently, their open interest in the Islamic problems will be the “direction of the main blow” of the outside forces in the Volga area.

NOTES

1. Salafia – orthodox trend in Islam calling for return to the way of life and faith of the early Muslim community.

2. Muslim community.

3. On June 23, 2010, the United States officially put Doku Umarov on the list of international terrorists, which is aimed at persecuting terrorists and those supporting them and helping commit acts of terror.” On May 26, 2011, the joint Russian-American statement on the results of bilateral negotiations at the summit level announced, among other things, that D. Umarov’s name was included in the American national program of awards for assistance to justice.

The United States offered an award of up to \$5 million for information of his whereabouts. At that time Hillary Clinton recognized the “Kavkaz emirate” a terrorist organization.

4. This organization stated on December 24, 2008, that “Tatarstan was illegitimately and forcibly included in the Russian Federation.” It addressed all states of the world and the United Nations Organization with a request to recognize Tatarstan’s independence. “For about 456 years the Tatars have been under the domination of Russian colonialists,” said the ‘Declaration of Independence of Tatarstan.’ “We have been forcibly baptized, Russified, mercilessly exploited and physically exterminated. This was a purposeful and constant genocide. In the view of nationalists, the precedent of the recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia “gives hope to the Tatar people that Russia might recognize the state sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan.” Naturally, this address to the world community had no political consequences.

5. On the Day of memory of the Defenders of Kazan (October 13, 2009) about two hundred people took part in a public meeting.

6. At this meeting people carried posters with openly chauvinistic slogans, like “Russians, pack your suitcases and go back to Russia!” or “If you don’t like it here in Tatarstan, go to Dagestan!” or “You don’t like us, Tatar nationalists, but we will be replaced by Islamists!” This shows the general trend of the exacerbation of ethno-confessional relations in the republic.

«Moscow», 2012 , No 10, pp. 150–162.

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**ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS EXRREMISM
AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY
IN POST-SOVIET SOCIETY
(On Materials of the North Caucasus)**

Ethnic and religious factors have a strong influence on the political processes in globalized society. This is due to many reasons: weakness of secular projects for overcoming the crisis, activity of traditionalist organizations during the crisis periods, manifestations of the ethnic elites and clergy in defense of morality and the poor and against the destructive phenomena (drug addiction, corruption, absence of spiritual culture, etc.). This influence is widely used by the extremist ethnic and religious organizations in their unlawful activity.

In the conditions of post-Soviet communities of the North Caucasus the ethnic factors are constantly used by monocratic religious elites for the legitimization of their power and increase of the resources of their influence and power. Ethno-political mobilization is a means for the cohesion of community, suppression of the opposition, and the structuring of the socio-political area. Representational surveillance carried out by teachers of Stavropol State University in 2007 showed that among the reasons for politicization of ethnicity were the worsening of the socio-economic situation in Russia (42.3%), growing unemployment (31.1%), errors in nationalities policy (28.4%), the situation in Chechnya (24.5%), bias against certain peoples (24.1%), migration from abroad (23.4%), activity of local political figures (13.4%), the mass media publications and broadcasts provoking

interethnic tension (11.5%), activity of foreign forces (9.3%), and rise of ethnic self-consciousness (7.2%). In other words, in the mass consciousness of the inhabitants of the North Caucasus the reasons for ethnic conflicts are connected with the general Russian factors of an objective character. At the same time, one-third of all respondents agree with explanations of conflict-provoking type, namely, “the interaction of people of different nationalities is often a source of discontent and misunderstanding,” and “the interaction of local inhabitants and migrants is also a source of trouble.” Some people admit that they feel tense when they hear an alien speech around.

Among the ethnic factors provoking conflicts in the political processes going on in the North Caucasus are unresolved territorial disputes in the region and the uneven economic development of Russian territories, which entail unemployment and poverty, mass migration from poorer places to more well-to-do cities and districts, acute feeling of injustice, manifestations of ideological ethno-nationalism, ineffective nationalities policy at the general Russian and regional levels, etc. The ethno-political mobilization of the 1990s formed regional regimes in the republics of the North Caucasus, which have an autonomous structure of political opportunities, resources and strategies of action.

Ramazan Abdulatipov characterizes the place of religion in modern Russian society as follows: “Religion (Russian Orthodox Christian, Islam, and others) is today more than simply religion. It is a form of collective ideology, a means of not only spiritual, but also political mobilization, with which a whole number of social groups are trying to fill their ideological vacuum and take a place in political pluralism, in the social system and political processes going on in the country.”

Complex and contradictory processes of modernization are going on in the course of the revival of religion, and radical movements emerge which not only exert a negative influence on relations between Slav and non-Slav peoples and the political structures representing them, but also strengthen ethno-nationalism of individual groups and provoke interconfessional conflicts. Social inequality, poverty, and modernization which put to trial traditional political systems – these are the basic reasons determining radical and extremist trends supported by the forces which have already exploded Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Egypt and are now acting in Syria.

Religion has the idea of exclusiveness based on doctrinal differences, which should not exclude the possibility of interconfessional dialogues and cooperation. Confessional culture possesses great peace-keeping potential which can be used for achieving social accord. For ethnic groups forming most Muslims, confessional self-identification is part of group self-identification. This is why it is difficult to separate the ethnic and confessional factors of political processes, and therefore the term “ethno-confessional” is used.

The role of Muslims in post-Soviet society has grown considerably: in 1988 there were 402 mosques functioning in the U.S.S.R., but by January 1, 2002, there were 3,186 Muslim associations registered, 2,734 mosques and 106 Muslim educational institutions registered in the Russian Federation. The population of the North Caucasus has the highest percentage of believing Muslims among the regions of the Russian Federation (42.9%). Most ethnic groups living there are traditionally Islamic: the Avars, Adygs, Balkars, Dargins, Ingush, Chechens, Cabardians, Karachai, Kumyks, Laktsy, Lezghin, and others. The significance of Islam for these peoples is very great. Dagestan has become the center of the revival of Islam in the North

Caucasus. It can be seen by the growing number of mosques in the republic: in 1988 there were 27 mosques functioning there, in 1992 – 800, in 2001 – 1,585 (including 917 cathedral mosques), and 1.820 mosque communities.

Islam is used in the North Caucasian republics as the nucleus of political ideology, regional identity, ethnic self-consciousness, etc. The revival of Islamic values has become part and parcel of the political culture of many peoples of the North Caucasus, an important element of their psychology and way of life. Whereas Islam in many western countries is associated only with a threat and extremism, our country has a many-century experience of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of peoples of many faiths. As President V. Putin of the Russian Federation has noted, “we must oppose spirituality and tolerance to barbarity and desire to fan up a conflict of civilizations and religions. Russia has always been a country of original national cultures and faiths. Russia has united, and unites, peoples of Europe and Asia, Orthodox Christianity and Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. It is here that the wealth and spiritual strength of Russia are concentrated.”

The confessional factor in the North Caucasus can become a factor dividing the Islamic area, which is coming closer to eastern civilization, and the Orthodox Christian area, which is gradually moving closer to western civilization, along with globalization processes going on in the world. At the same time, this factor could become one of integration of society. It is important to oppose the myth of the global Islamic threat with cooperation of confessions and the struggle against terrorism and extremism. Religions cannot be “good” or “bad” in themselves, but they can be used by political players for destructive purposes.

Sufi trends, which are mystical teachings, have been playing an important role since the first stages of the establishment of Islam in the

North Caucasus. At first, the *nakshband* version of Sufism became widespread in the region. At the time of the Caucasian war a new trend emerged – Sufism of *Kadyr* trend. Its founder was the Chechen Kunta Hajji Kishiyev, whose teaching rejected gazavat and was mainly aimed at establishing peace and fraternity. Imam Shamil declared Kunta-Hajji's teaching contradicting the foundations of Islam both in practice and theory and began to persecute him and his followers.

At the end of the 19th century several trends emerged from the two main Sufi fraternities (tariqats) – *Nakshband* and *Kadyr*, which had specific features in their rituals. Tariqat Islam is not dogmatic and assimilated local customs. This was why, along with the growing importance of trends adhering to “pure Islam,” calls were heard more frequently to refuse from the new elements brought to Islam by Sufism. These differences have sharply worsened the confessional situation and taken the form of clashes between the members of traditionalist fraternities and Islamic radicals called “Wahhabi,” after Muhammad ibn-al-Wahhab (many modern radicals do not agree with the name “Wahhabi” and regard it insulting. In scholarly parlance the term “salafism” is used.

The essence of radicalism lies in the absolutization of dogmas and intolerance toward other teachings. The activity of radical groups does not correspond to the principles of Islam and its spirit, and it is mainly widespread among, and supported by, the poorest sections of the population from which forces are recruited to be used in unlawful political aims. The emergence and development of radicalism is also due to the marginal consciousness of the intelligentsia who is losing ground in the conditions of the offensive of globalist values. The radicals orient Muslims to permanent jihad which is understood as a “sacred war.” But the Arab word “jihad” is translated as “effort which

is not necessarily directed to war against the infidels.” It means the spiritual, intellectual perfection of the individual.

The Salafites proclaim themselves the “defenders of pure Islam,” who have the aim of cleansing it from impermissible innovations – Sufism, the cult of saints, returning to the standards of the time of Prophet Mohammed, and establishing the order of Sharia, hence the name “fundamentalism.” A favorable social basis has been formed for the penetration of Salafism in the North Caucasus: there were many unemployed young men who were not integrated in community life and were victims to the socio-economic crisis, mountain dwellers who migrated to towns having lost their original roots – it was these elements that comprised the majority of adherents of Salafism. With the traditional non-separation of the spiritual sphere from the secular sphere, struggle between religious trends easily turns into political confrontation. The spreading of fundamentalism is observed after the attempts to westernize local life. The conflict of modernization grows into interconfessional confrontation.

Radicalism becomes an ideological utopia, inasmuch as it rejects any socio-cultural experience of non-Muslim societies, and everything coming from or connected with Islam is exaggerated and excluded from any criticism. Fundamentalism is easily transformed into religious fanaticism and extremism, especially when it is politicized. When the aim of a fundamentalist organization is to create a “true Islamic state” and expand Islam beyond the borders of its traditional area, such Islam is called “political,” or “Islamism.”

The activity of foreign Islamic organizations has played a great role in the revival of Islam. From the early 1990s they have been engaged in an active missionary work, distribution of religious literature, help to organize the hajj, and financial assistance to local religious organizations. Along with their contribution to the revival of

Islam, they set themselves political aims connected with the interests of the major Islamic states. Besides, the activity of foreign emissaries is directly connected with the penetration of the radical forms of Islam in the North Caucasus.

After *perestroika* and the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. thousands of young men from the national republics of the North Caucasus have gone to Muslim countries to study at Islamic centers. From Dagestan alone four hundred men went to study at foreign Islamic institutions in 1995. Upon returning many of them began to spread radical ideas, and developed a struggle against traditional Islam with a view to weakening the positions of the local clergy and take their place in society. Some time later, more than two hundred Wahhabi Muslims have arrived to Chechnya from Saudi Arabia.

In the 1990s Dagestan became the Center of “Wahhabism” in the South of Russia. Until the middle of 1999 a number of branches of foreign Islamic organizations, including the international Islamic organization “Salvation” (its headquarters is in Saudi Arabia) worked actively in Dagestan. Apart from it, there were “Saar Foundation,” “Taibat al-Hairia,” (its headquarters is in the United States), “Ibrahim al-Hairia (its headquarters is in Egypt) also worked in the republic. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the Arab Gulf states regarded Dagestan as a springboard for stepping up religious and political influence on the North Caucasus and other Muslim regions of Russia. We mean the destructive activity of the adepts of religious-political Islamism who are striving for forcible seizure of power, replacement of constitutional legislation with the Sharia norms, and the creation of Islamic caliphate.

The ideological and political position of the “Wahhabi” Muslims and also foreign influence have given rise to conflicts in the communities of the North Caucasus. K. Khanbabayev writes that “Wahhabism” in Dagestan has revealed itself as an aggressive and

coercive religious-political trend whose supporters waged an armed struggle with the constitutional system and with rank-and-file believers, who did not share their views and way of life. In 1991–1997 the number of Wahhabi Muslims considerably increased in Dagestan. As K. Khanbabayev noted, there were 2,931 supporters of B. Kebedov, an active Wahhabi leader, in 31 districts, 442 supporters of Ayub Astrakhansky in ten districts, and so on. In eleven districts of Dagestan there were 71.6 percent of the total number of Wahhabi Muslims, or 2,775 men.

The reason for the conflict character of Salafism in the North Caucasus lies, above all, in its aim to abolish all innovations in Islam. The aim of the introduction of unified religious culture contradicts the desire to preserve the achievements of secular civilization and ethnic specificity. This is why Salafism is alien to most Muslims in Dagestan which is inhabited by many peoples adhering to their own traditions and views.

But fundamentalism does not directly leads to radical, extremist actions. Quite often Wahhabi Muslims and their organizations – jamaats – are referred to fundamentalists, opposing traditional Islam to them, which has been the case of Dagestan, Chechnya, and Karachay-Cherkessia. After the clashes between Wahhabi Muslims and traditionalists in Buinak district in 1997, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Dagestan addressed the government of the Republic of Dagestan with a demand to ban legislatively aggressive religious trends, and after the clashes between Wahhabi Muslims with the Federal forces in 1999 the People’s Assembly of the Republic of Dagestan adopted the law “On Banning Wahhabism and Other Extremist Activity on the Terreitory of the Republic of Dagestan.” At the end of September 1999. a special section to fight Wahhabism was organized at the republican Ministry for the Interior.

Wahhabism in Chechnya has not been widespread at first. Wahhabi Muslims suffered defeat in their religious confrontation with the traditional clergy, and by 1996 people simply forgot about them. But some time later ideological differences between the two main trends in Islamic theology – traditionalism and fundamentalism – became more pronounced. Later, between the first and second Chechen wars (1996–1999) the positions of Wahhabi Muslims became stronger, but they were unable to conquer their opponents. Some field commanders (Khattab, A. Barayev, Sh. Basayev, and others) were Wahhabi adherents, others were on the side of Sufi fraternities. Thus dual power emerged for some time.

When bodies of state power in Dagestan began to persecute radically-minded Muslims, their leader B. Kebedov transferred their activity to the territory of Chechnya, where he was supported by adherents of radical Islam. Thanks to them he organized Sharia courts run by Wahhabi Muslims. According to their plans, Chechnya had to become an Islamic state, and secularized Chechen society would be transformed into religious one. This policy reflected the ideological and military-political intervention organized in the North Caucasus by the forces who were striving to wrest the region from Russia.

Such course of events could not have happened if there had been a strong state power and political will in the leadership of our country in the 1990s. As M. Makhkamov notes, “the self-removal of the state from solving the questions connected with the Islamic factor has contributed to the uncontrolled and unhampered interference of Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan in the affairs of the Muslim community in Russia. He asserts that within a short period of time a widely ramified network of Muslim radical organizations have been formed in Russia, among them “Al-Igasa al-Islami” (“International Islamic organization of salvation”) with the

headquarters in Jidda (Saudi Arabia), “Young People’s Organization for building mosques” (the United States), etc.

In 1999 in the South of Russia the activity of armed Wahhabi Muslim groupings, which organized the “Islamic army of the Caucasus” posed a real threat of the country’s disintegration. It was only the resolute state opposition to the separatist activity of religious and political radical groups, which were threatening society and the state, that prevented this turn of events. Most Chechens headed by Mufti A. Kadyrov did not support the ideology and practices of Salafism as an alien system undermining the ethno-cultural identity of the people.

The main vector of terrorist activity in the region is directed, first and foremost, against the officials and employees of the law-enforcement agencies and special services, representatives of state power and management, and the Muslim clergy. This trend is seen especially clearly in the activity of the terrorist groupings of young people, such as “Sharia,” and “Jennet” (Dagestan), “Yarmuk” (Kabardino-Balkaria), and “Caliphate” (Ingushetia). The number of terrorist acts was rapidly growing especially in 2004–2005. The peak of terrorist activity was reached in Nalchik on October 13–14, 2005; at that time many officials and employees of law-enforcement agencies died, and more than one hundred Islamist militants were killed.

Although in the view of many analysts and representatives of law-enforcement agencies, the effectiveness of the struggle against and opposition to terrorism and religious-political extremism became greater and more efficient, the situation remains very tense today. Despite the death of many leaders of separatism and representatives of the international terrorist networks and mass amnesty, the religious extremist underground has not been destroyed. According to the law-enforcement agencies of the Chechen Republic, nine thousand people

were killed in the fight against Wahhabi extremists, including more than sixty administration heads and representatives of the Muslim clergy.

The use of the positive potential of Islam in modern Russia can definitely contribute to the improvement of the ethno-confessional situation. For this purpose it should be absolutely clearly understood and declared that there is no “Islamic terrorism,” but there is “terrorism under cover of Islam,” which is using its attributes. This is terrorism from which all citizens, including Muslims, suffer greatly. In May 2004, the Unified Council of spiritual boards of Muslims of Russia to oppose extremism and terrorism was set up. It issued a number of statements expressing resolute support to and readiness to join the efforts of the Russian state in its fight against extremism and terrorism. The spiritual boards of Muslims and the Council of muftis of Russia resolutely denounce terror and extremism which do moral, psychological and material damage to our society.

The risks and threats to national security are contained in the ideology of religious extremism, religious fanaticism and intolerance, and violations of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation. Radical and extremist organizations are using social problems for planting and popularizing archaic ideology, theocratic ideas and ethnic separatism in mass consciousness.

The ideological premises of radical and extremist organizations in the North Caucasus express the doctrine of Salafism. It presupposes strict regimentation of all spheres of life by the Sharia norms, the creation of a world theocratic state (caliphate) by wars ad terrorism. The basic structure of Salafism is “jamaat,” a religious community using traditional institutions of rural community and sub-ethnic territorial units. But the organizational centers of radical groupings are far beyond the borders of Russia.

There are reliable and sound conditions in the Russian Federation for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of all peoples and confessions so that a representative of each ethnos could feel his/her unity not on the ethnic basis, but on the basis of the general Russian civic nation. This task cannot be solved by forcible means alone. It is necessary to set up information and ideological opposition to ethno-confessional extremism. In this aspect it would be useful to resort to inter-ethnic dialogue, create Christian-Muslim cultural and research centers to study ways and mechanisms of establishing tolerant relations between peoples and religions. It would be expedient to evolve tangible recommendations, contributing to a more efficient ethno-confessional policy in the country. Among them, organization of bodies at government level which will foster tolerant attitude of citizens to different cultures and religions; elaboration and implementation of a well-substantiated ethno-political concept of the development of the North Caucasus, with due account of its regional, ethno-confessional and ethno-national interests; education, training and retraining of Muslim clergy; elaboration of study aids and writing and publication of books on cultures and religions of the peoples of the North Caucasus; organization of regular TV and radio programs at federal and republican level describing and reflecting spiritual and cultural forms of the poly-ethnic and poly-confessional North Caucasus; disclosure of the entire ethical and humanistic potential of Islam in the course of its study at religious and secular educational institutions; study of common social orientations of Islam and Christianity; participation of the clergy, both Muslim and Christian, in fighting extremism and religious radicalism; regular intra-confessional and inter-confessional dialogue in Russia.

*“Kaspiiskii region: Politika, ekonomika, kultura”,
Astrakhan, 2012, No 2, pp. 88–93.*

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ISLAM IN THE CRIMEA:

FROM TRAGIC PAST

TO CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS

Religion has played a major role in the development of culture of the Crimean peoples. Christianity and Islam are the two traditional religions on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula. The inclusion of the Crimea in the Golden Horde in the first half of the 13th century led to the Islamization of most peoples living there, and for almost seven centuries Islam was the state religion of the Crimean Khanate, which preserved its complete or partial independence for about three centuries.

The inclusion of the Crimea in the Russian Empire did not practically influence the structure of the Muslim clergy. According to the Imperial Manifesto issued by Catherine the Great, the entire system of Muslim religious structure of the Crimea was put under the control of the Russian Empire. In 1788 the Russian Empire set up the Tauric Muslim spiritual board headed by the mufti . The board consisted of five clergymen which received salary from the state. By the end of the 18th century there were about 1,600 mosques functioning in the Crimea and 25 madrasahs, apart from a broad network of Muslim elementary schools. But the imperial authorities pursued a policy of ousting the Crimean Tatar population from their ancestral lands, which was the reason for the mass emigration of Crimean Tatars to Turkey and considerable depopulation of towns and villages, and this, in turn, caused the closing down of many mosques, madrasahs and schools. By 1914 there were only 729 mosques functioning on the peninsula, and the number of the clergy diminished to one-fifth and consisted of

only 942 men. The establishment of Soviet power in the Crimea dealt a heavy blow at the Muslim population on the peninsula. The policy of the Soviet state in the religious sphere during the entire Soviet period of Crimean history was similar to that in the entire Soviet state. It was aimed at closure of the functioning religious organizations, expropriation of their land and buildings, and liquidation of their property. The system of Islamic institutions in the Crimea was abolished already in the first years of Soviet power. In 1921 there were 470 Muslim organizations registered in the Crimea, whereas during the period from 1944 to 1989 there was not a single Muslim religious organization functioning on the peninsula. As a result of Stalin's reprisals practically the entire Muslim clergy was wiped out. In 1944, after the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, Islam ceased to exist in the Crimea.

Islamic identity has always played an important role in the ethnic mobilization of the Crimean Tatars and in the formation of their national self-consciousness and ethnic culture. During the almost 50 year exile in the conditions of totalitarian atheist regime, the Crimean Tatar people succeeded in preserving their religiousness at the level of traditions and everyday customs and habits. At the present stage of the national revival of the Crimean Tatar people and their return from places of deportation to their historical Motherland the problem of their religious revival and the study of the sources of their history and culture inseparable from Islamic traditions are especially timely. The Muslim population in the modern Crimea is represented primarily by Crimean Tatars and some other peoples believing in Islam: Volga Tatars, Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks, Turks, and Caucasian and other peoples, comprising about 11 percent of the population of the peninsula.

After returning to their historical Motherland, the process of the religious revival of the Crimean Tatar people has begun: new mosques have been built, Islamic institutions reinstated, and many people enrolled in religious courses or spiritual schools (madrasahs). In the past two decades Islam has become a real factor of public life in the Crimea. At present the Crimean *umma* numbers about 300,000 Muslims, its overwhelming part being Crimean Tatars. At first, the returnees had no financial, material, religious or personnel resources, thus, there could be no talk of the construction of mosques and revival of Islamic institutions in the Crimea. Naturally, the Crimean Muslims had to turn to Muslim states, primarily Turkey and the Arab East, which readily responded to their appeals for help. The first Muslim communities in the Crimea were registered in 1988, and in 1990 the Kadiate of Muslims of the Crimea was set up under the aegis of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the European part of the U.S.S.R. and Siberia. A year later, on August 31, 1992, the All-Crimean conference of Muslim communities was held in Simferopol, which included the muftiate of Crimean Muslims.

The peak of the activity of Muslim communities in the Crimea was reached in the 1991–1995 period. For example, in 1995 the number of registered religious organizations comprised 52. As a result of active interaction with clerical centers in Muslim countries construction of new mosques and return and restoration of old ones was underway. New Muslim educational institutions were opened.

On November 18, 1995 the Kurultai (congress) of Crimean Muslims was held and the new mufti was elected – Nuri Mustafayev, an active supporter of the participation of the Muslim community in solving political tasks of the national movement of the Crimean Tatars.

The second Kurultai of Crimean Muslims, which took place on December 4, 1999, elected Emirali Ablayev Chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea.

Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea. There is no clear-cut division into spiritual and secular spheres in Islam. The Majlis of the Crimean Tatar people is the representative organ of Crimean Tatars in charge of all questions connected with the restoration in the Crimea of the Tatar national statehood, culture, the language and religion. The Majlis exercises control over the activity of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea.

In accordance with the Charter, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea is a self-governed religious association of Crimean Muslims on the territory of Ukraine.

Council of Spiritual Board of Muslims of Crimea (Shura) consists of members of the muftiate, chairman of the auditing commission of Muslims of the Crimea, chairman of the Majlis of the Crimean Tatar people, and 22 regional imams of the Crimea. It has complete legislative and judicial power.

The **Mufti** is the head of Muslims of the Crimea elected by the Kurultai of Crimean Muslims. He is also the chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea.

Kurultai of Muslims of the Crimea is the highest body of the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of the Crimea. It adopts decisions on the unity of spiritual communities, approves reports of the Muftiate, changes and endorses the Charter of the Spiritual Board, elects the Mufti and his deputies. At present the system of Muslim institutions includes Muslim spiritual educational establishments (madrasahs) and Sunday schools attached to mosques.

Islam is the second numerically biggest confession on the territory of the present-day Crimea, after the Ukrainian Christian Orthodox church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Stable Muslim associations of ten and more people grouped around the imam and his assistants function practically in every populated center of the Crimean Tatar population and perform traditional Muslim rites.

Muslim communities have at their disposal 283 cult buildings, most of them have been built anew. In recent years the active construction of mosques has practically been halted, which could be explained by the higher building cost. In contrast to previous years, the number of new mosques is growing by not more than one or two annually.

Muslim spiritual educational institutions (madrasahs) and their activity officially are under control of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea. Their curriculum includes the foundations of Islamic religion, religious rites, and the rules of reading the Koran. Much attention is given to the problems of religious education. Parallel with studies at these establishments, pupils are to attend lessons at general educational schools, institutes of higher learning, or technical secondary schools.

During the initial stage of repatriation (1990–1995) Crimean Tatars received Islamic education at Islamic universities of Azerbaijan, Russia, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The biggest groups of them went to Turkey to study at universities there.

Later the Spiritual Board deemed the studies abroad ineffective and the Crimean autonomy began to open its own spiritual Muslim educational institutions.

One of the first such institutions in the Crimea was “*Seit-Settar*” madrasah in the city of Simferopol attached to a 19th century mosque

returned to the Muslim community “Seit-Settar.” It has been functioning since 1993 as a Sunday school; among its pupils are about 20 men and women of different age.

The madrasah “*K’alai*” (Azov lyceum of higher Islamic sciences) is one of the leading spiritual Muslim educational establishments of the Crimea. The construction of a complex of buildings of the mosque and lyceum began in 1993. About 110 boys and girls from Crimean Tatar families from 13 to 17 years of age study at this madrasah. Nearly half the teaching staff is Crimean Tatars who have received religious education in Turkey. The other half is Turkish teachers.

The madrasah “*K’urman*” is situated in Krasnogvardeisky district and is a branch of the Azov madrasah. It is a boarding school at which children of 12 to 14 live and study. They also attend an evening general school with a view to getting a full secondary education.

The Simferopol Higher Islamic Madrasah is housed in a building bought by the International Islamic Development Bank and presented to the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea. It started work in 2003. Just as at the Azov madrasah, its curriculum includes both religious and secular subjects. But, regrettably, there are not enough high-quality teachers and instructors. It is also a boarding school where up to twenty boys live and study. They have an opportunity to attend classes at other educational establishments, if they wish. This madrasah has several affiliations near Simferopol in the Crimea.

Khafiz madrasah is situated in the settlement of Davydovka, Simferopol district, and prepares clergymen specializing in reading the Koran and quoting from it. The madrasah started work in 2002 with support from Sheikh Abdallah al-Mubarak as-Subakh of Kuwait. This madrasah is the only khafiz teaching center in Ukraine. There are nineteen boy students who also study at a general school.

In all, there are up to two hundred students studying in five madrasahs of various type in the Crimea.

There are sixty *Sunday schools* functioning at several mosques on the peninsula. Among its teachers are local imams and Turkish missionaries.

Analyzing the composition and work of all these Islamic educational institutions in the Crimea it should be admitted that very few of them are self-sufficient and self-regulated cells within the system of the Muslim religious structure. Unfortunately, the traditional Muslim custom, according to which parishioners donate means for the maintenance of these schools and upkeep of their staff, has not become widespread in the Crimea. Most Crimean Muslim communities rely, as before, on assistance from various religious centers in foreign countries. This was why the revived Crimean *umma* has become so susceptible to the influence of the outside forces and turned into a broad field of activity for foreign Muslim missionaries. Religious preachers arrive mainly from Turkey.

Missionary work is always competitive, because a serious struggle is going on for people's souls, the formation of their outlook and introduction of the religious doctrine adhered to by one or another religious organization. As a result of the work of foreign religious centers there are now several religious trends formed in the Crimean Muslim community of dozens of thousands of people.

The development of ties between the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea and Majlis, on the one hand, and foreign Islamic centers, as well as the Muslim charity organizations functioning in the Crimea, on the other, and also the monopoly control of Majlis over these ties contributed to the growing process of the politicization of Islam on the peninsula. A virtual struggle for Islam in the Crimea has unfolded between Turkish and Arab religious centers. One of the Turkish

scholars of Islam entitled his article about this as “Clash Between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the Crimea.”

It should be noted that the leadership of Majlis and Muftiate of the Crimean Tatars prefers the “Turkish way” of the revival of Islam in the Crimea. This choice can be explained by the fact that the secular system of Turkey makes it possible to subordinate religious matters to ethnic ones. Besides, the Crimean Tatars are closely connected with Turkey by the language, and also a big number of their fellow-compatriots living there now. The monopoly role of Turkey in the restoration process of Islam in the Crimea has time and again been recognized by the Crimean Tatar leaders.

It should be admitted that the Islamic traditions of the Crimean Tatars differ from those of Turkey. For example, Crimean Muslims prefer to wear European clothes, but not traditional Islamic clothes, they put up monuments to their deceased, etc., which is not accepted by orthodox Islam.

The leadership of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea and Majlis, while preferring the Turkish religious school, maintains at the same time broad relations with Arab Islamic centers. Thus, along with considerable Turkish influence on Crimean Muslims, there is growing control over their spiritual life on the part of various non-governmental Islamic organizations closely connected through different independent Islamic foundations with the special services of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

The activity of foreign religious centers in the Crimea has created grounds for the emergence of an original socio-cultural choice by the Muslim *umma* of the Crimea of the most acceptable system of religious values for solving the fundamental task of the revival of the Islamic heritage. The essence of this choice facing Crimean Muslims is the

need for the recognition by the Crimean *umma* of one of the political models of its mutual connections with the world of globalized Islam.

Today the Muslim *umma* of the Crimea is divided into several religious currents. Usually, there are four or five basic Muslim trend in the Crimea: Salafite, Khabashite, “Khizb-ut-Tahrir,” and others, which act as autonomous Muslim communities.

International activity of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea boils down to maintaining close relations with religious organizations of Turkey. The Mufti of Crimean Muslims E. Ablayev often visits Turkey where he meets responsible officials of the Ministry for religious affairs and discusses with them construction projects of mosques, as well as educational and publishing activity. In turn, representatives of the Ministry for religious affairs, along with teachers and instructors from Islamic universities, visit the Crimea and take part in the celebrations of Prophet Mohammed’s Birth anniversary. They also attend competitions for the best reader of the Koran which are held among Crimean madrasah students. Turkish religious experts, jointly with teachers of theology at Turkish universities, organize seminars for Crimean imams.

Countries of the Arab East render considerable assistance in training Muslim personnel. For instance, they help prepare hafiz (readers of the Koran by heart). The World Organization for the study of the Koran from Saudi Arabia takes part in this work in the city of Simferopol. The Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea is a permanent member of the Eurasian Islamic Council, and also a member of the international organization “World Islamic Appeal.”

The Council of muftis of Ukraine was formed in April 2009 at the State Committee for the affairs of nationalities and religion of Ukraine. Although this committee was abolished a year later, the

Council of muftis continued its work. Among its duties is organization of the annual hajj of Ukrainian Muslims to Mecca.

Muslim mass media include two Muslim religious newspapers in the Crimean Tatar language printed in three thousand copies. Two pages of one of them are in Russian. In 2009 the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea opened its official Internet-site (<http://www.qirimmuftiyat.org.ua/>).

The Muslim community of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea “Alushta” is the founder and sponsor of the All-Crimean socio-political newspaper “Vozrozhdeniye” (“Revival”), which is published in Russian in 15,000 copies. The newspaper contains historical articles about Islam in the Crimea, news of the Muslim world, information about the economy and financial system of the western world, including the United States. The newspaper has an information-educational character, but experts note its propensity to the ideology of the religious-political “Khizb-ut-Tahrir” party.

Social significance of the activity of Muslim religious organizations is one of the positive factors of the work of Muslim communities in the Crimea. Many of them gave pride of place to humanitarian and charity work – help to children, the sick and the poor. Humanitarian actions are timed to important Muslim holidays – Uraza-bairam and Kurban-bairam. Muslim communities also collect donations for sick children, orphans and large families.

Interconfessional relations include legalization and territorial distribution of the leading world religions – Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and also revival of the autochthonous religion of the Karaites. After the seven decades of the atheist rule, the Crimean autonomy had to tackle new problems in the sphere of interconfessional and state-confessional relations.

After 1995 the first signs of the exacerbation of interconfessional relations between the Orthodox Christian communities and the Muslim *umma* have emerged in the Crimea. The growing politicization of the confessional component in Crimean society formed the basis of this exacerbation. Against this backdrop the sphere of conflict between the Orthodox Christian and Muslim communities, as well as between the bodies of state power and Muslim religious organizations emerged.

The reasons for conflicts differed and were mainly connected with economic, political and ethno-cultural aspects.

As to the relations between the Orthodox Christian and Muslim communities, there was a growing discord between the Christian majority and the Muslim minority. At first, the relations between the two confessions were based on mutual tolerance. The Mufti of the Crimean Muslims S. Ibragimov, jointly with the Archbishop of Simferopol and the Crimea Lazar became cochairmen of the Interconfessional Council set up in November 1992, whose main aim was “coordination of an interconfessional dialogue in the Crimea.”

However, some time later conflict-breeding factors began to emerge, the first being preparations for the 2000th anniversary of the Birth of Jesus Christ. The Simferopol and Crimean eparchy organized mass actions connected with putting up of big crosses near populated centers and on main highways, disregarding the religious views of local inhabitants. Putting up crosses and posters with the inscription “Crimea – Cradle of Orthodox Christianity” showed the desire of the Russian Orthodox church to emphasize its exclusive position and dominating influence on the peninsula, which was negatively met by its Muslim population. More and more crosses and posters were installed without consultation with representatives of the Muslim community, which was received by Crimean Tatars as an ostentatious challenge to Muslims.

There have been various incidents connected with the installation of crosses at different places and various manifestations of xenophobia which seriously aggravated the interethnic and interconfessional relations in the Crimea.

Problems of Islamophobia and xenophobia have been a serious matter since the 1990s. Incidents provoked by them have become a frequent phenomenon on the peninsula. The publication of various materials provoking interethnic tension and enmity by the local mass media has largely contributed to the emergence and existence of this factor. Anti-Tatar, anti-Islamic and anti-Semitic publications are quite frequent in the Crimea. The newspaper *Krymskaya Pravda* is a case in point. The Crimean Autonomous Republic has become the leader in xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic manifestations and tendencies in the entire post-Soviet area. These shameful events intolerable for the civilized world of the 21st century sometimes take the form of monstrous acts of vandalism. More than fifty acts of vandalism against ethnic cultural monuments, cemeteries and religious shrines have been committed since 1995. Anti-Islamic and radical Cossack units, pseudo-Russian “patriotic” organizations and fascist thugs have committed a good many crimes aimed at destabilizing the situation in the Crimea by provoking clashes between the Slav and Crimean Tatar people, between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. These provocative actions of the chauvinistic forces have not been rebuffed properly so far, and this can largely be explained by the peaceful nature and tolerance of Islam.

State-confessional relations in the Crimea are distinguished by a considerable increase of the influence of religion on the public life of the Crimea. The mass media, which are an important instrument in the hands of various political forces, have now been using religion for their aims more effectively.

The authority of religion is now an instrument for the legalization of certain ideological and political programs. Politicians are striving to emphasize their adherence to one or another religion and coming out as sponsors of various religious projects, thus receiving an additional moral and mobilizing resource. The greater function of religion in politics makes it not only a resource of power, but also an unofficial source of power. Religious figures themselves become part of the political class (the power elite) on whom the adoption of some or other decisions depends in certain cases. During field work in the Crimea we have found that in some cases, the blessing of Orthodox Christian hierarchs helped people to receive land from local authorities. Religious figures perform rites at official ceremonies at military units, law-enforcement agencies and prisons, educational institutions, bodies of state power, etc. In such cases religion of the majority of people is taken as one's own religion. Orthodox Christianity plays the role of faith by default. The city authorities act quite consciously when they prevent the increase in the number of Muslim religious symbols in public places. One of the most vivid examples of such policy was the decision of the municipal authorities of Simferopol to refuse to grant a plot of land for the construction of a cathedral mosque in one of the city streets.

For more than ten years the Simferopol municipal authorities have refused to comply with the lawful right of Muslims to build their temples in the capital of the autonomy, thus discriminating their fellow-citizens of Muslim faith. This fact caused numerous protest actions organized by the Crimean Muftiate. Representatives of the Slav population answered them with the printing and distribution of leaflets of anti-Tatar and anti-Muslim character.

It should be noted that the confrontation between state power and Muslim communities has emerged contrary to the existing state laws

and legal acts regulating the state-confessional relations and the decree of the President of Ukraine on the relations between the state and religious organizations of March 21, 2002. Paradoxically, it is government officials who aggravate the situation by creating artificial obstacles for Muslim communities to receive plots of land to build mosques. This concerns, primarily, the capital of the autonomy and coastal towns. If the existing state of affairs continues, the situation in the region will be fraught with the danger of a confrontation and conflicts between Muslims and Orthodox Christians

The Crimean authorities should take a firm position and adopt and implement measures to preclude any manifestations of national or religious exclusiveness or intolerance toward people of another nationality or faith. Taking into account the specific features of the Crimea, one of the main tasks facing the local authorities should be the creation of the real climate and principles of peaceful coexistence on the peninsula of the Russian and ethno-national communities.

The policy of state power in the sphere of interethnic and interconfessional relations should lead to the thorough understanding that the peoples living in the Crimea do not pose a threat to one another and their joint existence on the peninsula should always be comfortable for each person, irrespective of his or her nationality or faith. These principles should form the basis of the formation of the Crimean regional community. Otherwise, the aim of xenophobic and anti-Semitic groupings will be achieved, and the Crimea will inevitably fall into the abyss of interethnic and religious conflicts. As we can see, the first steps in this direction have already been made.

* * *

The Crimean Muslims are not only Muslim communities, imams of mosques, madrasah and university students and their teachers, but

also scientists and scholars, men of culture and the art, businessmen, athletes, and simply tens of thousands of decent and law-abiding citizens, and kind-hearted men and women. The Crimean Tatar people have been living through a difficult time after their return from the places of deportation. They need not only assistance from the government of Ukraine, but also tactful attitude of the rank-and-file Crimean citizens who should understand that their neighbors can speak their native language, have their own religion, culture, customs and traditions. The Crimean Tatars connect their future with Ukraine and are striving for stability, interethnic and interconfessional peace and prosperity of numerous peoples living on Crimean soil and the preservation of statehood of Ukraine as a guarantee of their further progress.

It can safely be said today that the Crimean Tatar people returning to their historical Motherland, people with a rich Muslim culture, are an inalienable part of Ukrainian society. Their national movement and religious associations are in search for optimal forms of self-government within the framework of Ukrainian statehood and the republican Constitution. During the twenty years of the independence of Ukraine and the exceptional liberalism of Ukrainian legislation “On freedom of conscience and religious organizations” the Crimean Tatars were able to lay the foundation of their religious revival. With due account of the historical, ethnic and confessional specific features of Muslims, conditions can be created in the Crimean autonomy for realization of spiritual requirements of citizens, the right to embrace religion and perform religious rites, and the preservation of religious originality of the ethnic groups of the population.

The Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Crimea is faced with the task of smoothing down the existing intra-Muslim contradictions through a dialogue with its religious opponents, the absence of which at

present poses a threat to unity not only of the Muslim *umma*, but also to the entire Crimean Tatar people. The problems of the fuller satisfaction of the spiritual requirements of the Crimean Muslims, return of former Muslim religious objects, and construction of new mosques, primarily the long-awaited cathedral mosque in the Crimean capital Simferopol, are of crucial importance. It is necessary that Crimean Muslims make a contribution to the strengthening of the international positions of Ukraine in the context of its Euro-integration desires. Solution to all these problems requires, above all, the formation and endorsement of state strategy of further progress of Muslim revival. Islam, with its peace-loving essence, can play the role of a stability factor in the Crimea, which will raise the international image and status of Ukraine in the eyes of the world community. As to the Crimean Tatar people, Islam will always be the factor of firm unity, spirituality and high culture.

*“Islam v SNG”, Moscow – Nizhni Novgorod,
2011, No 415, pp. 54–65.*

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**KYRGYZSTAN IN THE CONTEXT
OF WORLD ECONOMY AND POLITICS**

The geographical position and a rather weak economic potential of Kyrgyzstan determine its dependence on its bigger neighbors. The geographical division of the republic into the North and the South and the absence of the transport infrastructure for the connection of its regions determine the multidirectional vector of the economic and political orientation of various parts of the republic. The North of Kyrgyzstan is closely connected with neighboring Kazakhstan and

China. In the South the role of the main partners of the country is played by neighboring Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Russia, the United States, China, Germany, Britain, Turkey, Switzerland and Japan, as well as the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, and the UN Development Program are the main donors of Kyrgyzstan. The important geopolitical situation of Kyrgyzstan determines the interest of the main “players” in their presence in the republic, but not a single country of today’s world has committed to take upon itself all necessary financial infusions alone so far. Thus, Kyrgyzstan has to maneuver with a view to receiving maximal economic dividends from all “players.”

Kyrgyzstan has fulfilled its allied commitments in all bodies of the post-Soviet area where Russia hold the dominant position – CIS, CSTO, EurAsEC. At present cooperation of Kyrgyzstan with the Russian Federation has been developing virtually in all spheres. The leaders, parliament deputies and public figures of Kyrgyzstan have time and again spoken in favor of creating a confederation of the Kyrgyz Republic with Russia, and entering into the Alliance of Russia and Belarus. It seems that such projects are promising enough and should be discussed in detail at the level of the expert community of the two countries.

Kyrgyzstan’s interest in the United States and its policy toward that country during the years of independence did not go beyond the bounds of commerce. There were no political, economic or any other aspirations. Economic cooperation and American investments camouflaged the real desire to use the United States as a new sponsor and creditor. The United States actively supported the actions of the then President of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akayev and its democratic choice. Evidently, Kyrgyzstan’s entry in the World Trade Organization has been supported by the United States.

Nowadays the economic presence of the United States in Kyrgyzstan is rather negligible and it will hardly increase in the near future. The American University of Central Asia opened with support of the U.S. government and the Institute of Open Society has gradually become an ordinary educational establishment. It is virtually neglected by the governments of the two countries and is not a subject of any negotiations between them.

An important place in the implementation of the plans of the presence of the United States in the Kyrgyz Republic has been given to American, international and other foreign non-governmental organizations. Such organizations as the Peace Corps, the International Republican Institute of the U.S.A., the East European Democratic Center, the “Counterpart Consortium,” the “Eurasia Foundation,” and the “War and Peace Institute” function on the territory of the republic with a view to “developing democracy,” but in actual fact, their officials play the role of “instructors of revolutions.” The National Democratic Institute of the United States has rendered financial, technical and methodological assistance to all opposition parties and organizations of Kyrgyz Republic.

The mutual relations of Kyrgyzstan and the United States largely depend on the Russian-American relations, the activity of the regional international organizations in which the Kyrgyz Republic is participating, and cooperation with international economic and financial organizations, primarily with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are actually under American control. The present government of the Kyrgyz Republic cannot fully withdraw from cooperation with these organizations and this is why the only possible way lies in joint work along with the strict protection of the interests of Kyrgyz society.

This aspect includes the problem of the state debt of Kyrgyzstan, mainly to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The writing-off or restructuring of the debt depends on the position of the donor-countries. It is evident that the absolute size of the debt is not too great. However, in the conditions of the financial-economic crisis the pressure of the debt factor is growing, primarily in the psychological sphere. To solve the problem of debt it is necessary not only to have a dialogue with the United States, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, but also to develop Kyrgyzstan's own economy.

The development of ties with the European Union, which includes twenty-five countries, especially with Germany as the leading partner and donor, is the most advantageous direction of the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan. Today the European Union is the most important trade and investment partner of the Kyrgyz Republic. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union the European Union has begun to render assistance to the newly-formed independent states, including Kyrgyzstan. A special program of technical assistance was created within the framework of which various development projects are implemented in certain CIS countries, including Kyrgyzstan.

The European Union is the biggest donor and trusted partner of Kyrgyzstan, which renders assistance in the sphere of ecology, democratization and human rights, socio-economic and educational reforms, consolidation of security along the republican borders, and also in the struggle against drug production and drug trafficking, as well as in ensuring food security. During the years of partnership with the European Union Kyrgyzstan has received about 200 million Euro for the implementation of various programs and projects. The annual technical assistance of the European Union to Kyrgyzstan amounts to ten million Euro.

There are prospects for the implementation of joint Kyrgyz-European investment projects aimed at the development of promising natural deposits and the creation of transport enterprises, which will be a substantial contribution to the economic and fuel-and-energy progress of the Kyrgyz Republic. Invitation of European investments for the development of the hydropower potential of Kyrgyzstan is also a quite promising business.

Taking into account the major importance of the problem of the shortage of water resources in Central Asia, the Ministry for foreign affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic carries on work in the sphere of exchange of experience and advanced technologies in the rational and effective use of the water resources, which the European Union countries have. The European Union program “WARMAP” for managing water resources and agricultural production in Central Asia helps Kyrgyzstan in this sphere.

Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and China, which began in the post-Soviet period virtually from scratch, has now reached a sufficiently high level. It is characterized by a stable practice of regular mutual visits of high officials and experts of the two countries. For the past years the transport infrastructure connecting the two countries has steadily been developing, and mutual trade turnover is on an increase.

The PRC leaders were seriously worried by the events of the “tulip revolution” of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan, which brought about the change of the country’s leadership and the coming to power of the opposition forces. China has taken a wait-and-see position, having given a diplomatic initiative to the new authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, despite the fact that certain Kyrgyz political figures continued to advocate the revision of the relations with China, above all, the Kyrgyz-Chinese border agreements. The President of the

Kyrgyz Republic A. Bakiyev returned the relations between the two countries to their habitual format. Contacts between various ministries and departments of the two countries were resumed and mutual visits at all levels continued as before. Trade turnover began to grow and reached a record high of \$3.5 billion in 2007. The People's Republic of China does not regard Kyrgyzstan as one of its main economic partners in the region. The priority economic projects for the Kyrgyz Republic, namely, the construction of a railway line connecting Kyrgyzstan with the PRC and Uzbekistan and the export of Kyrgyz electric energy to China have not found due response from the Chinese side. In the opinion of Chinese experts, both projects are disputable from the point of view of their economic and financial effectiveness and costly enough (the necessary money amounts to more than \$2 billion). The Kyrgyz side could not submit convincing proofs of the presence of the needed reserve of capacities for stable export supply of electric energy.

The governments of the two countries are implementing projects on rehabilitation of the motor roads Osh – Sary – Tash – Irkeshtam and Torugart – Naryn – Bishkek. China has resumed its annual grant assistance to Kyrgyzstan for socio-economic development amounting to 50 billion yuan a year. Entrepreneurs of the two countries have stepped up their activity, realizing small and medium-sized projects in various spheres.

India is one of the great powers in the modern world. In the early 1990s a new direction appeared in its foreign-policy strategy, namely, Central Asia. In order to achieve its political goals India is striving for strengthening its economic ties with the countries of the region, which form a huge potential market for sales of its industrial commodities, and also a promising source of fuel-and-energy resources and minerals, above all, non-ferrous and precious metals. The Kyrgyz Republic is known for its deposits of gold, and India is one of the world's biggest

consumers of this precious metal, and it can invest considerable means in the modernization of gold mining. Besides, the Central Asian region is a convenient “corridor” for transporting Indian goods to Russia, the CIS countries and European states.

Evidently, the strengthening and broadening of ties with Central Asian countries will remain a priority direction in India’s foreign policy in the foreseeable future, and its interests will not be confined to the economic sphere only. Strategic and security interests will acquire ever greater importance. The Indian establishment maintains that the American presence in the region is explained above all by the U.S. desire to control the energy resources of Central Asia and the Middle East. India approved the proposal of Kyrgyzstan to hold an international conference on peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. The two sides expressed conviction that peace and stability in Southeast and South Asia are impossible without this.

India is interested in the development of small and medium-sized business in Kyrgyzstan. It displayed the greatest interest in the organization of tourism on Issyk Kul Lake during the hottest season of the year. India also has suggestions on the development of information technologies in the Kyrgyz Republic – the setting up of the Indian-Kyrgyz Center of information technologies in Bishkek, and also the construction of enterprises for processing agricultural products. The closest cooperation exists in the sphere of education. Young boys and girls from India have been studying at Osh University for several years now and the Indian Research Center has been opened where work is being done on programs evolved by Indian scientists. The Kyrgyz side is interested in the speedy solution of questions connected with the implementation of the construction project of a potato-processing plant in Talas region and the creation of a mountain-medical center in Bishkek.

Kyrgyzstan is, perhaps one of the most secular countries of all Central Asian states. However, this is not an obstacle for versatile cooperation of the Kyrgyz Republic with a number of Muslim countries, including theocratic Iran where the majority of the population is Shia Muslims. During the past few years relations between Kyrgyzstan and Iran have reached a new level, especially in the economic sphere. The number of Iranian entrepreneurs working in the Kyrgyz Republic has grown considerably and more than 180 joint Kyrgyz-Iranian ventures and Iranian firms do business on the territory of this Central Asian republic. These joint enterprises produce electric-technical equipment, incubators, lighting tools, ceramics, packing materials for food products, automobile tyres, etc. Electric bulbs made in Kyrgyzstan are regularly supplied to Iran.

Turkey was actually the first Muslim country which recognized the independence of all Central Asian states in 1991. By 2009 Kyrgyzstan has reliably consolidated its relations with Turkey, and now it is one of its important foreign-policy partners, after Russia, China, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as the United States, Japan and the EU countries. On certain problems and in certain spheres Turkey displays greater activity than other states mentioned. For instance, the Turkish leadership shows special interest in the branches of the defense industrial complex, offering its services and participation in the military-industrial sphere. The training of Kyrgyz military officers in Turkey and its assistance in the humanitarian and military technical spheres have now become traditional.

The sphere of military-technological cooperation is of great importance for both countries. On July 10, 2008, a protocol was signed in Ankara between the Ministry of defense of Kyrgyzstan and the General Headquarters of Turkey on granting material and technical aid to the armed forces of the Kyrgyz Republic, which envisaged the

implementation of the agreement between the governments of the two countries on free military-technical assistance to a sum of one million 190 thousand new Turkish lira for 2008 – 2009. These means have been used for purchasing machinery and equipment for the Ministry of defense and the National Guards of Kyrgyzstan, the border guards, and the units of the Ministry for the Interior. In all, Turkey has rendered military-technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan during the past fifteen years to a sum exceeding \$3 million. Officers of the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic are trained at special infantry schools and also at the military medical academy of Turkey. Expenses for the training of the Kyrgyz military personnel are borne by the Turkish side. Turkish military instructors annually train Kyrgyz servicemen in mountain, special and sniper training.

The Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic have consistently been developing cooperation in various spheres. Military-technical contacts are one of them. The Treaty on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic and the additional Treaty on cooperation in the military sphere signed on July 5, 1993, form the basis of Russian-Kyrgyz military cooperation. By now more than thirty bilateral documents pertaining to the military sphere have been signed between the two countries.

Russia and Kyrgyzstan have successfully interacted in the military sphere on a multilateral basis, too, within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. The headquarters of the collective rapid reaction forces of the Central Asian region is situated in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. In October 2003 a Russian airforce base was opened in the town of Kant. It was the first Russian military object deployed beyond its borders since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This base on Kyrgyzstan's territory was set up in

accordance with the decision of the Council of collective security adopted on May 25, 2001. And on September 22, 2003, the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic was signed in Moscow on the status and functioning of the deployed Russia airforce base on Kyrgyzstan's territory.

The heads of the Russian and Kyrgyz foreign ministries take identical positions on practically all major world problems, closely cooperating with the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as in regional organizations – the CIS, EuAsEC, CSTO and SCO.

In the situation of the world financial-economic crisis the partner-countries have been trying to help one another to maintain vital activity at a high level. Russia granted the Kyrgyz Republic a credit on favorable terms amounting to \$300 million at 0.75% interest on April 30, 2009, for a 40-year term and a seven-year standstill of debt repayment. This money goes to maintaining and developing many spheres of industry in the republic, which experiences many difficulties in the conditions of financial instability. Apart from that, the Russian Federation planned to invest \$1.7 billion in the construction of Kambaratin hydropower plant and grant Kyrgyzstan free financial assistance of \$150 million. In turn, the Kyrgyz Republic took an obligation to close down the American military base “Manas” and transfer 48 percent of the shares of the “Dastan” enterprise to Russia, as well as buildings for opening its cultural center in Bishkek. The Kyrgyz side received the first \$450 million in the spring of 2009. However, in view of the inappropriate use of these means by the Development Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic and failure to fulfill political obligations undertaken by Kyrgyzstan's President K. Bakiyev on closing down the “Manas” base, this project was frozen, and the revolutionary events of 2010 suspended the fulfillment of all agreements.

Within the framework of the present-day realities of Central Asia Kyrgyzstan should closely cooperate with Russia. Kyrgyzstan's neighbors – Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – constantly present territorial claims to the Kyrgyz Republic. Naturally, the latter can oppose the economically and militarily stronger countries which claim certain parts of territory near its borders only in alliance with the Russian Federation.

The structure of the economy and the list of commodities produced by most countries of the region are identical, and this is why integration is objectively replaced with competition. Kazakhstan accounts for 65 percent of the entire regional economy. On the basis of its economic potential it claims the role of the leader in Central Asia.

Mutual relations between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are formed under the influence of some special cultural and historical ties. The linguistic and spiritual closeness of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh peoples is an indisputable fact. The two countries actively cooperate within the framework of such international organizations as the CIS, EuAsEC, CSTO and SCO. In January 2000 Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan signed a treaty on jointly using the waters of the Chu and Talas rivers. Despite the fact that the first President of Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev, overthrown as a result of the political revolution of 2005, fled at first to Kazakhstan, the relations between the two countries did not deteriorate too much. They succeeded in agreeing on a simplified procedure of labor migration from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan, and a joint venture “KazKyrgaz” was set up thanks to which Kyrgyzstan was no longer threatened by Uzbekistan stopping supplies of its gas to the Kyrgyz Republic.

However, the Kyrgyz-Kazakh relations are far from ideal. The Kazakhstan authorities are taking harsher measures with regard to Kyrgyz citizens passing through its territory. For example, the road

from Talas region of Kyrgyzstan stretches through Kazakhstan's territory, and Kyrgyz passengers are subjected to humiliating checking procedures at Kazakhstan's border points. The Kazakh border-guards introduced the new rule, according to which cars with Kyrgyz license plates are banned from driving across Kazakh territory after midnight.

There are several economic projects of Central Asian countries and China, in which the Kyrgyz Republic is also interested. Some time ago Kyrgyzstan asked China to import natural gas from Turkmenistan through Kyrgyz territory, but not through Kazakhstan, and expressed readiness to invest in this project. Kyrgyzstan, like Kazakhstan, has a common border with China and is fully dependent on gas supplies from Uzbekistan, the only source of marketable gas, and wants to diversify its import.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have signed a framework convention on the protection of the environment. This was a result of a many-year work of the Intergovernmental commission on the stable development of the International Foundation for saving the Aral Sea. The convention envisages uniform requirements in the activity aimed at environmental protection for all Central Asian countries. The document pays special attention to scientific-technical cooperation in tackling ecological problems and elaboration of joint actions for preserving biological variety. A plan has been evolved and adopted for extraordinary ecological situation. According to the information of this Foundation, the surface area of the Aral Sea decreased four times during the period between 1960 and 2004. Out of 115.6 cubic kilometers of water of the rivers in the Aral Sea basin, 104.9 cubic kilometers are taken for economic needs. Forty-five thousand square kilometers of the former bottom of the sea have been bared, due to which local inhabitants have lost 600,000 hectares of arable and pasture land.

Relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan at a diplomatic level are distinguished by friendly and mutually advantageous character. After Uzbekistan's suspension of its participation in the Eurasian Economic Community, the two countries remained members of the influential regional organizations – SCO, CIS and CSTO.

One of the most disputed issues existing in Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations is the territorial problem. The border between these two countries stretching for about 1,300 kilometers is now being demarcated. According to available information, there are from 70 to 100 disputable sections, and no agreement has been reached on some of them so far. The intergovernmental commission set up for the purpose is running against many difficulties in its work. The Uzbek side upholds the principle of mapping out the border on the basis of the map of 1924, whereas Kyrgyzstan puts forward a more recent map of 1955 as the basis for negotiations.

There are two Uzbek enclaves on the territory of Kyrgyzstan – Sokh and Shahimardan numbering from 40 to 50 thousand people of Uzbek nationality. In turn, there is a Kyrgyz enclave – the village of Barak – on the territory of Uzbekistan with 589 inhabitants. In this connection the Uzbek leadership has proposed to sign an agreement with its Kyrgyz colleagues on exchanging territories with a view to including the Sokh enclave in the adjacent part of Uzbekistan. In exchange Kyrgyzstan would receive the southern part of Sokh. But the Kyrgyz side rejected the proposal on the ground that in that case it would lose two districts cut off from the main territory of Kyrgyzstan. These enclaves are a powerful instrument in the hands of the Uzbek leaders for bringing pressure to bear on Kyrgyzstan. It is known that a unit of the Uzbek armed forces was deployed in Sokh, although, in accordance with the world practice, it is forbidden to keep military forces in enclaves.

The poor state of the Kyrgyz armed forces and their inability to oppose incursions of armed militants from neighboring countries (Afghanistan included) compel the Uzbek leadership to undertake unilateral measures to defend Uzbekistan's borders. For example, the latter planted mines along its borders with Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the Kyrgyz-Uzbek interethnic equilibrium is rather unstable at the present stage. Taking into account the fact that both these countries are situated in the very center of the Central Asian region, one can say that almost constant tension existing there is threatening the stability of the region as a whole.

The Kyrgyz Republic maintains diplomatic, military-technical, trade and economic, and cultural and humanitarian relations with many countries. In this connection mention could be made of special relations of Kyrgyzstan with Belarus, Ukraine, Japan, and some other countries. But it is precisely the great powers and the states of the Central Asian region that determine the main tendencies and all aspects of the development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

«Mir i politika». Moscow, 2012, No 2, pp. 105–111.

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ISLAMIZATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

(TAJIKISTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, KAZAKHSTAN)

Central Asia, a region with which Russia maintains versatile political, economic, military, cultural and family and kinship relations, has fallen under the growing influence of radical Islam after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. Islamization of Central Asia is the problem not only of military security of Russia, which will become threatened in case of the destabilization of the situation in one or

several countries of the region, but also political stability closely connected with the constantly growing labor migration.

The influence of Islam in Central Asian states has always differed from country to country. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – countries with ancient land cultivation culture, settled population and urban civilization, Islam has always occupied much stronger positions than in post-nomadic societies – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Northern Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan had earlier been included in the Russian Empire and experienced a much stronger influence of Russian culture. The number of Slav people was greater on these territories and the Russian language was more widespread, due to which the level of Russification of the indigenous people was much higher.

In the post-Soviet period the republics of Central Asia positioned themselves as secular states, but remained Islamic by culture and spiritual-religious heritage. As a result, their secular identity began to be ousted very rapidly by Muslim identity. Hundreds of mosques and madrasahs were built and opened on the territory of Central Asia. However, the interests of Islam were not represented in the political system. The local political regimes were afraid of the growing political influence of Islam and prevented in every way possible manifestations of its social activity.

Tajikistan was the only country where Islam became institutionalized and represented in political life. After signing the agreements of 1997 the Islamic Party of Revival of Tajikistan was legalized and entered the republican parliament. The civil war and the integration of the Islamic opposition following it in the political system and even law-enforcement agencies and special services have led to Tajikistan becoming the leader in the Islamization of society in the entire Central Asian region.

There are 27 central and 325 cathedral mosques, and 3,334 mosques for Friday prayers. On average, there is one mosque for two thousand people. Non-indigenous people have left Tajikistan almost completely after the beginning of the civil war. Out of 388,500 Russians living in the republic, not more than 30,000 remained, according to the 1989 population census. As a result, Tajikistan has become one of the most homogeneous countries in the CIS in its ethno-confessional composition. Almost 100 percent of the population are devout Muslims. The absolute majority is Sunna Muslims of Khanafite trend, and about 200,000 are Ismailites residing in Gorny Badakhshan.

The authorities are very cautious with regard to the growing influence of Islam. Their apprehensions increase along with the distribution and popularization of the radical Islamic currents – Wahhabi, “Khizb-ut-Tahrir,” “Jamoati Tablig,” etc. During the past two years more than one hundred active members of “Khizb-ut-Tahrir and “Jamoati Tablig” were arrested and sentenced to various prison terms. Representatives of “Jamoati Tablig,” which emerged in India in the late 1940s, appeared in Tajikistan in 1997 after the end of the civil war. The main aim of this religious organization is to lead all “stray” Muslims to “true” Islam, and ultimately, to turn the entire planet into an Islamic caliphate.

Worried by the growing influence of radical religious currents the authorities had to take a number of stricter measures. In July 2010 the lower house of Tajikistan’s parliament approved the draft bill about parental responsibility. In accordance with it, children cannot be members of religious organizations and have the right to visit mosques only on religious holidays proclaimed as days-off – Ramadan and Kurban-bairam. In August 2010 the President of Tajikistan put forward the initiative to return home all Tajik students studying at foreign religious educational institutions, and about 1,000 such students did

come back. Illegally functioning religious schools are regularly closed down. In 2010 twenty such madrasahs were closed, whereas in May and June 2011 there were 58 schools closed. But nineteen madrasahs and one Islamic university are regularly functioning in the republic on a legal basis.

In contrast to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan has traditionally been less Islamized. The Kyrgyzs were nomads in relatively recent past, especially in the north of the country, in view of which Islam was not widespread among them. The number of the Slav population in the republic was three times as high as in Kyrgyzstan. However, the influence of Islam on Kyrgyz society has markedly grown in recent years. There are more than 1,700 officially functioning mosques, nine Islamic higher educational institutions, about 60 madrasahs, and many different Muslim centers and organizations. In 2010 alone, about 100 new mosques were registered officially. And there are several hundred mosques functioning without registration. Many of them have been built on donations from Muslim, mainly Arab, countries. The number of permanent parishioners is estimated at more than 250,000.

Islamization is also more noticeable in Kazakhstan. In recent years radical Muslim trends have become more widespread in the republic, and the threat of terrorism has become greater. In 2011 several big acts of terror were committed in Kazakhstan. The events in the settlement of Shubarshi, Aktyubinsk region, were the most noticeable. Members of the local Salafite community, in revenge for the arrest of one of their fellow-members in early July 2011, shot and killed two policemen. During the pursuit operation another policeman was killed. The authorities were forced to call units of the special forces of the Ministry for the Interior. Nine of 11 Salafites were apprehended and killed in the house in which they were hiding and firing from for the whole night.

The spreading and popularization of Islam in Kazakhstan can also be seen and felt from outside. Women in traditional Muslim dress are a common sight in urban streets. Not a single public occasion passes now without the presence of imams or mullahs. Observers note growing interest in non-traditional trends of Islam, especially in South and Western Kazakhstan with the predominantly Kazakh population. There are quite a few Salafite and Koranites among the imams of local mosques.

The exacerbation of the socio-political situation in these conditions is inevitable. Along with the growing number of the supporters of radical Muslim movements, their struggle against secular regimes is transferred from the religious-ideological to the military-political sphere.

*“Problema identichnosti: Kross-kulturny dialog”,
Yaroslavl, 2012, pp. 162–168.*

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№ 77.99.6.953.П.5008.8.99 от 23.08.1999 г.
Подписано к печати 18/III-2013 г. Формат 60х84/16
Бум. офсетная № 1. Печать офсетная. Свободная цена
Усл. печ. л. 4,5 Уч.-изд. л. 4,3
Тираж 300 экз. Заказ № 62

**Институт научной информации
по общественным наукам РАН,
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Москва, В-418, ГСП-7, 117997**

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(по вопросам распространения изданий)**

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