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ISLAM: VIEW FROM THE KREMLIN

The situation in the Muslim regions of Russia is far from simple. The North Caucasus remains tense, and the situation in the Volga area is distinguished by intra-Islamic conflict. In the autumn of 2013 a terrorist act in Volgograd took the lives of many people. On the eve of the Winter Olympics in Sochi in February 2014 the Russian authorities paid special attention to the state of affairs in the Muslim community of the country, as well as the relations between the Islam umma and the state. It was clearly shown by the statement made by President Putin in Ufa at a meeting with the heads of the spiritual boards of Muslims of Russia on October 22, 2013.

In 2013 the situation in the Muslim community of Russia remained stable. In contrast to the year 2012, which was marked by several terrorist acts in Tatarstan, which gave grounds to talk of turning that republic and the whole Volga area into something similar to the North Caucasus, as well as several manifestations of Muslim radical elements in support of the Syrian opposition, the year was in the main calm and quiet.

According to the data of the 2002 population census, the number of ethnic Muslims in Russia was 14.5 million. By now it exceeds 16 million. Adding to them Muslim migrants from Central Asia and Azerbaijan we may have the figure of 20 million, which is usually mentioned by Muslim spiritual leaders, as well as by Russian political figures, including President Putin.

Sochi Olympiad and Anti-migrant Sentiments

One of the specific features of 2013, the year preceding the Sochi Olympics, was widespread worries over security, which concerned the Kremlin more than sports achievements. The threat of sporting events becoming an object of terrorist attacks has become especially evident after the tragic happening in Boston on April 15, 2013. The authorities have taken unprecedented measures of security. In November 2013 large-scale counter-terrorist exercises took place near Sochi during which special service units and police had to catch 48 “terrorists.” There was no mention of their religious or ethnic origin, but it was supposed that they belonged to Islamic extremists.

Another specific feature of 2013 was the growth of nationalistic sentiments among the Russian population, increased number of ethnic conflicts, and their mass and violent character. The most vivid examples were the unrest in the town of Pugachev, Saratov region, where local residents demanded the expulsion of all Chechens from the district, as well as the October events in the Moscow suburb of Biryulevo, where several thousand Muscovites took part in anti-migrant pogroms.

Outwardly, these events have nothing to do with Islam. Islamophobia as such was not evident during these interethnic clashes. Nevertheless, migration, both internal from the North Caucasus and external from Central Asia, is always present in public consciousness because it is connected with its religious origin. Besides, migrants

become more “Islamized,” as it were, and emphasize ever more frequently their religious identity. This can be seen and felt during religious festivities, such as Ramadan-bairam and Kurban-bairam, when more than 100,000 Muslims gather at the Moscow cathedral mosque. Describing the situation in the capital of Russia during Kurban-bairam, one journalist wrote that “Moscow switched over to the state of siege.”¹

There are five mosques for more than one million Muslims in Moscow. The Mayor of Moscow Sergei Sobyenin elected in September 2013 maintains that this number is quite enough, inasmuch as most Moscow Muslims are migrants, who call for building more mosques in the city. A shortage of mosques exists in other Russian regions, including in the Urals and northern regions, as well as in Siberia. This problem will exacerbate in connection with the growing number of migrants. However, non-Muslim residents come out against the construction of new mosques. In September 2012, there was a demonstration of local residents in the Moscow district of Mitino, in which more than a thousand people took part.

There were no prerequisites for any improvements in the situation in the most troublesome Muslim region of the country – the North Caucasus in 2013. Radical sentiments continued to spread among Muslims, especially among young people. And the Kremlin seems to take the tension developing in the North Caucasus, including the actual civil war going on in the Republic of Dagestan and the existence of the Islamic opposition, for a normal situation, something habitual, which does not undermine its authority in the eyes of society.

By the end of 2013 this instability seemed more threatening, inasmuch as its smoldering sparks could turn into a strong outburst of terrorist acts on the eve and during the Olympic Games. In this context the October explosion on the bus in Volgograd was taken in society and

among the powers that be for a sort of preparation for terrorist acts in Sochi.

Today, the situation in the Russian Muslim community does not exist in isolation from the developments in the Middle East, where the Arab spring events are still far from completion. Radical Islamism, despite several setbacks, still retains a high energy potential in politics and military matters. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of Russian Muslims are fighting in the ranks of the Syrian opposition. Alexander Bortnikov, the head of the Federal Security Service of Russia, named the figure 200.² According to other sources, their number is between 800 and 2,000.³ The high mufti of Syria Ahmad Badreddin Hassun said that about 3,300 fighters from CIS countries, including Russia, take part in battles on the side of the Syrian opposition.⁴ Many of them return to Russia where they will look for the opportunity to apply their unspent energy. And it could not be excluded that they would try to do it on the eve or during the Olympic Games.

The Ufa Theses of President Putin

The threats to the Olympic Games, the growing tension in interethnic relations, Islamization of migration, and the flaming “Arab spring” – all this seemed to prompt President Putin to make a speech about Islam and the Muslim community of Russia at a meeting with the heads of the leading spiritual boards of Muslims in Ufa on October 22, 2013. The meeting was timed to the 225th anniversary of the creation of the 2nd Orenburg Mohammedan Assembly set up by a decree of Empress Catherine the Great in Ufa in 1788. It was the first state institution for organizing and governing the life of the Muslim community.

In May 2013 Vladimir Putin said that this anniversary should be given a status of state importance, inasmuch as it dealt with relations

between Islam and the state.⁵ This shows the desire of the authorities to form their attitude to Islam not only as a religion, but also as a “way of life,” culture and ideology, and also determine its place in the life of the Russian state.

Having acknowledged in his Ufa speech that Islam has made “an invaluable contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of our society,” Vladimir Putin mentioned a number of concrete problems facing the Muslim community. Among them – “socialization of Islam,” which is regarded by the President as “the development of the traditional Muslim way of life, thinking and views in accordance with the present-day social reality, in contrast to the ideology of radicals...”⁶ However, this definition needs specification, which should be made by Muslim clerics. Are they capable to do this being divided as they are, in Putin’s just words, by “internal discussions and arguments about supremacy.”

Putin’s appeal to Muslim leaders to make their contribution to “the social adaptation of people who come to Russia to live and work,” and who are also Muslims, was of a general character. His call shows that the Kremlin has at last noticed the Islamization of migration to Russia from Central Asia and will try to influence migrants with the help of Russian Muslim society. But the question of how to do this remains open.

The presidential “address” was enthusiastically received by the Muslim clergy present at the meeting and analysts close to them. Indicative in this respect was an article entitled “Putin’s Speech, a New Milestone in the History of Relations Between Islam and the Russian State,” published in the site “Islam.ru.”⁷ The article noted the “unprecedented stake on education and rebirth of intellectualism in Russian Islam,” on the need to create a national theological school of Islam, and mainly, on “the socialization of the Islamic community.”⁸

The authorities realize full well the complex nature of the processes going on in the Muslim community and are afraid of the growth of radical sentiments among Muslims. It can be said that they “fear Islam” which becomes the ideology of protest in the entire Muslim world, including in Russia. Islam has no division into the sacral and the profane, which is inherent in Christianity. Politicized since its inception in the 7th century, it remains an efficient form of protest, especially in countries where the opportunities of the secular opposition are limited.

It is indicative that while criticizing the radicals, Putin noted that the process of politicizing religion “is not always a positive process.” Thereby, he indirectly admitted the legitimate character of this process, just as the fact that political Islam is not necessarily negative. Evidently, this view has emerged under the influence of the “Arab spring” in the course of which Islam has demonstrated its high political potential.

In the words of Ramazan Abdulatipov, President of the Republic of Daghestan, although religion is separated from the state constitutionally, the state itself is not separated from believers.⁹ If one agrees with such approach, it becomes evident that Islam is a “political factor” and, consequently, different political views can be expressed through it, and it can be used for mobilization for any opposition and even the most radical actions. It is characteristic, above all, of the North Caucasus. However, Islam is used as a political instrument on other territories inhabited by Muslims, particularly, in southern regions of Russia, in the Volga area, in the Urals and in the country’s North. In 2013, a working group of the Institute of National Strategy, which is close to the Kremlin, compiled an alarmist report entitled “Map of Ethno-religious Threats. The North Caucasus and Volga Area.” It deals, among other things, with disintegration and “destabilization of the

ethnic periphery,” and of Wahhabism as “integrated anti-Russian ideology and practice.”¹⁰

Islamic Tradition and Islamism

The problem of isolation of Muslim regions, primarily the North Caucasus, and its socio-cultural drift from the “Russian continent,” have been mentioned time and time again, including by this author.¹¹

Caucasian residents, en masse, are alien to separatist sentiments, they hope to solve the local social, cultural and political problems on the basis of local traditions – the rules of adat and the Sharia, and come out for legalization of Islamic legislation. Return to tradition is a reaction to the systemic crisis going on in the region for several years already, whose consequences are the ineffective federal legislation, the extremely high level of corruption, and the arbitrary behavior of the authorities. Representatives of the clergy and public, and political leaders loyal to the federal authorities, as well as persons from among the Islamic opposition, fundamentalists, Wahhabis and Salafists – all appeal to traditions.

Loyalty to power is characteristic of the bearers of traditional Islam, which has entrenched itself in the North Caucasus and the Volga area a long time ago and merged with local ethno-cultural traditions, including those of a heathen character. The spreading of “new” non-traditional Islam has been a consequence of the penetration of religious ideas from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Muslim Europe in the former Soviet area. “New” Islam has found a favorable social and religious ground in Russia. Traditional Islam is less dynamic, more conservative, and is centered on the preservation of ethnic – Caucasian and Tatar-Bashkir – traditions. It loses to its rival on the field of theology, which was also admitted, if indirectly, in the above-mentioned speech by the Russian President. Traditional Islam is unable to answer

modern challenges. In the eyes of the younger generation it looks less attractive and weaker than non-traditional Islam.

Adherents to both trends of Islam compete with each other. At the same time, despite confrontation, they have certain common points, and this is precisely the foundation of an “Islamic-Islamic dialogue,” which could contribute to an improvement of the religious climate in the Muslim community and lower the level of tension in it.

Given all distinctions and differences of views of traditionalists and their opponents, it appears that the main aim of both is the total observance by society of all Islamic standards of the way of life and, consequently, the construction of a state-political system answering this task. The main distinction boils down to the view held by the Salafists that full-fledged observance of the standards of true Islam is impossible in Russia, hence, it is necessary to secede and form a state of their own (imarat), whereas the traditionalists are convinced of the possibility “to live by Islam” in Russia, forming an “Islamic area” within the framework of the Russian Federation.

The Russian authorities simplify the situation, laying emphasis on its political component. Moscow is fighting separatism, however, while doing it, Moscow gives no answer as to how to live in a secular state by religious standards. The Kremlin ignores the problem of “civilizational” non-separatist drift of the North Caucasus away from Russia. The Russian authorities do not notice that the vector of Russian (civic and socio-cultural) identity does not coincide with, and sometimes even oppose, the vector of religious identity. President Putin did not mention this fact in his speech.

Many regional politicians, scholars, imams and theologians try ever more frequently to move away from the dichotomy of traditional – non-traditional Islam, maintaining that it is incorrect, even dangerous and splitting society. However, at the federal level this approach to

Islam is predominant, which was shown by the speech of the Russian President in Ufa. It is easier for the Kremlin to divide Islam into “its own” and “alien.” It seems to us that soon such dual interpretation of Islam will be discarded, and the sooner the better. It should be replaced with something more complex. Evidently, another formula will be based on the thesis of the “unity of Islam in its multiformity.” It is interesting to see what trend in Islam will predominate in the Russian Muslim community. Secondly, what form of Islam the state will have to deal with. Will it be “modern Islam” capable to answer the challenges of the 21st century? And what relations will it have with the secular authorities?

Notes

- ¹ Alexander Kerchinsky. Kurban-bairam: Moscow Has Switched over to the State of Siege. Utro.ru. October 15, 2013. <http://www.utro.ru/articles/2013/10/15/1150233.shtml>
- ² The head of the FSS; About 200 Russian fighters take part in battles in Syria under the banner of “al Qaeda.” <http://www.newsru.com/russia/06jun2013/200boevikov.html>
- ³ More than two thousand Russian citizens are fighting in Syria on the side of the opposition. jvatnews.ru/novosti/v-sirii-na-storone-oppozicii/
- ⁴ “Medina,” November 2013. No 11, p. 12.
- ⁵ I’d like to note that the term “Islamic-state relations” does not seem to be correct to this author. However, it is frequently used in publications and at various conferences by representatives of the Muslim clergy, as well as by Muslim scholars. From this follows that relations between the state and Islam, as they see them, are a reality and consequently an object of analysis and study.
- ⁶ Here and further on V. Putin is cited by the verbatim record on the site of the President of Russia: <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/19474>
- ⁷ Yuri Mikhailov. Putin’s Speech – Milestone in the History of Relations of the RF with Islam. <http://www.islamnews.ru/news-142456.html>
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Veniamin Popov. Islam Demands Greater Attention. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, November 11, 2013. http://www.ng.ru/faith/2013-11-11/3_kartblansh.html

¹⁰ Map of Ethno-religious Threats. The North Caucasus and Volga Area. NG-Politika. June 4, 2013. http://www.ng.ru/ng.polkitics/2013-06-04/9_map.html

¹¹ See: Aleksei Malashenko. The North Caucasus: foreign subject of the Russian Federation. Moscow Carnegie Center. November 2011. <http://carnegie.ru/2011/11/18/severny-kavkaz-zarubezhny-sub'ekt-rossiiskoi-federatsii/f13n>

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MUSLIM CLERGY IN THE REPUBLIC OF BASHKORTOSTAN: STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

This article is based on the material obtained by the author in the period between 2005 and 2011 within the framework of the study of the Islamic development factor of the polyconfessional society of the Southern Urals, which was carried out in the Republic of Bashkortostan.

There are data about the social categories of the population which join the present-day Muslim clergy of the republic, about their training level, specific features and conditions of their professional activity, as well as public views and social values.

The Muslim clergy is the most active part of the Muslim umma. The Muslim leaders represent the interests of believers, and all people considered traditionally Muslim before the state. They influence the socio-ethical views and convictions of parishioners, their understanding of the basic values of Islam, and play the key role in the interaction of the Muslim umma and the state and other confessions. They also participate in the work of harmonizing the sphere of interethnic

relations and preventing religious strife and propagation of radical ideologies.

The socio-political changes of the past two decades could not but tell on the position of the clergy and the growth of their influence in society. At present they represent a socio-professional group possessing intellectual resources and having a great influence on believers, their position and social processes in the country.

The Republic of Bashkortostan has been chosen as an object of investigation because it is one of the major regions of Islam in Russia. The Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia was set up in Ufa by a decree of Empress Catherine the Great in 1789 as the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly. According to the results of a population census, ethnic Muslims comprise a majority of the republic's population. These are not migrants but the indigenous population. It should be noted that the Muslim umma of Bashkortostan is poly-ethnic, inasmuch as it consists of representatives of more than 130 nationalities. The most numerous groups are Bashkir (1,221,302, or 29.7% of the total population) and Tatar (990,735, or 24.1% of the total population). According to information of the Council on state and inter-confessional relations under the President of Bashkortostan, 67 percent of all believers are Muslims, 22 percent are Orthodox Christians, and about 11 percent – other confessions. (I)

Among the main methods of investigation were those of field ethnography and surveillance (polling and interviewing) of the clergy. The number of respondents was about 500 men from 17 towns and 47 districts of the republic.

Beginning from the 1990s, Islam has become stronger among the Turkic population of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Old mosques have been returned to people, and new mosques built. Madrasahs have been opened, and the number of young people studying theology has been

growing. Everyday life, feasts and rites are regulated by the canons of Islam, besides, many believers go on hajj every year. Both parishioners and clerics take an active part in the revival process of Islam at the all-Russia and republican level.

The formation of the modern Muslim clergy was conditioned by the changes in the sphere of mutual relations between the state and believers at the end of the 20th century, namely, by the adoption of the Law of the U.S.S.R. "On Freedom of conscience and religious organizations" of October 1, 1990, which defined the new legal status of religions organizations and the clergy. In the Republic of Bashkortostan the main sources of its formation were specially trained imams with a secondary or higher religious education; well-respected persons in rural districts elected by their fellow-villagers as community heads, who were former chairmen of village councils, collective farms, school masters, retired army officers; self-taught persons with certain religious experience; migrants from Central Asian republics. (II) The clergy of the republic, just as in neighboring districts of the Urals and the Volga area, has been formed as a social group without any special world outlook and behavioral stereotypes. In the main, this process was going on along turning unofficial and uneducated rural mullahs into officially registered clergy. (III)

An analysis of the composition of the imam body made in 1997 showed that the clergy consisted of more than half of elderly people without special education who studied the canons of Islam by themselves. Only three percent of imams had a higher religious education. And only one-fifth was represented by men between 26 and 40 years of age who had studied at madrasah and had a secular education from a secondary special to higher education. It was they who were most active and promising in reviving Islam in the republic. (IV)

The formation of the modern body of Muslim priests was negatively influenced by the absence of prospects for young graduates from Muslim educational institutions. Many young men wished to receive religious education abroad, but this was not so easy in Soviet time. In the 1990s young men with a good religious education often left the post of imam due to the absence of a constant source of income. The duties of imam were often performed by old men and unemployed people supervising administration and celebration of rites quite frequently.

At present there are professional people among the Muslim clergy, who have received an Islamic education and have the qualification of imam. They are members of religious organizations and enjoy recognition and respect on the part of other priests and believers. As we have already mentioned, these people include respected residents of rural districts without special qualification and status, but with enough practical knowledge and skill to perform the main functions of the clergy, due to the absence or shortage of sufficiently trained people.

After numerous organizational changes in Russian muftiates (boards of mufti) at the end of the 20th century, the institutionalization of Muslim confession of Bashkortostan was completed by the beginning of the 2000s. By 2012 the Muslim religious organizations of the republic were united in three officially acting spiritual centers situated in Ufa: the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia, Regional Spiritual Board of Muslims of Bashkortostan, as part of the Central Board, and Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Forty-six percent of parishes are subordinated to the Central Board, 54 percent of parishes are under the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan. There are also a certain number of autonomous communities. However, groupings of radical

and extremist nature opposing the traditional Islamic centers emerge ever more often.

There are 1,068 Muslim organizations functioning in the republic, 610 of them are registered, 458 operate without registration. In 2011 there were 679 functioning mosques in special buildings, and 217 mosques housed in ordinary buildings. These included former cinema theaters, clubs, shops, gyms, etc. given over to believers by the state, and also some real estate donated to them by private persons. Forty-six mosques were built and commissioned in Bashkortostan in 2010.

Mosques are built on the money from various sources: charitable donations – 40.4 percent; by sponsor-enterprise – 17.9 percent; 15.7 percent were built at the expense of the local community, 15 percent – local administration, 3.9 percent – the local budget; 1.4 percent – the federal budget. Ten percent of imams have parishes with a number of parishioners up to 10 people; 40.4 percent of imams have parishes of from 10 to 50 parishioners; 16 percent of imams have parishes with from 50 to 100 parishioners, 17 percent of imams have parishes of from 100 to 500 parishioners; 13.3 percent of imams have parishes numbering more than 500 people.

Urban Muslim parishes are several times bigger than rural ones, however, the number of rural parishes and mosques is greater than that of urban. According to observations of Muslim priests, 45.2 percent of believers attend mosques daily, on Friday and religious feasts – 51.6 percent. Republican parishes consist of an equal number of men and women, but there are individual parishes where there are more men, or more women. The average age of men-parishioners is up to 40 (15 percent); up to 50 years (27.4 percent); up to 60 years (34.5 percent); over 60 (10.6 percent).

By January 1, 2012, there were the following Muslim educational institutions functioning in the Republic of Bashkortostan: the Islamic University and “Nur al-Islam” madrasah under the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims; “Galiya” madrasah, M. Sultanova madrasah, and “Nur al-Iman” under the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan. These institutions train religious figures who are well aware of the age-old traditions of the Ural – Volga Muslims and can organize work in localities within the framework of Islam of the Hanafite mazkhab traditional for Bashkirs and Tatars. The problem of Muslim education and shortage of professional priests and imams has not been solved, although society’s requirements for them are quite high. The republic needs the clergy with a high intellectual and cultural potential and the possibility of its realization. The Muslim clergy of Bashkortostan realize full well that they need additional education both religious and secular.

Among the specific features of the present development period of Muslim religious organizations in the Republic of Bashkortostan mention should be made of the tendency toward reorganization of the administrative structure in connection with the requirement of the Muslim clergy for the single leader and spiritual board, the growth in the number of Muslim religious organizations and their clerical members, and incomplete formation processes of a system of Muslim education.

The basic documents of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims and the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan single out a number of categories of Muslim priests who have definite rights and duties. Appointment of imams should be endorsed by the mufti. Among special requirements presented to imam-khatybs (heads of mosques) and imam-muhtasibs (heads of district Muslim communities) is profound knowledge of Islam. In their work they

should be guided by the norms of the Sharia, the existing legislation of the Russian Federation, rules of spiritual boards, local religious organizations, and orders of muftis. The rights and liabilities of the clergy are determined in accordance with the rules and duty regulations. (III)

The demographic data show that most spiritual figures are of Bashkir origin, and, as a rule, have been born in peasant or worker families. About thirty percent continue the family traditions to serve Islam. One of the reasons for their turning to religion is religious traditions of their families or influence of devout Muslims from among relatives, friends and acquaintances. Representatives of the Muslim clergy are usually married and have three or more children. As to their nationality, most of those polled were Tatars. At the same time, the spiritual boards of Bashkortostan are not mononational, about thirty percent of those working there do not belong to the titular nationality: at the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims Tatars form a majority of employees, and at the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Bashkortostan most employees are Bashkirs.

The average age of Muslim clergymen is 52. Gradually, their age bracket is from 40 to 60, but a quarter of all imams is now people under 40. In our day there are more young men who have graduated from various religious educational institutions and then have been appointed to the post of imam by spiritual boards in place of self-taught old or middle-aged men. In view of the gradual juvenation of the clergy, there are now more persons who combine two types of activity – spiritual and secular. About thirty percent of imams are engaged in both of them. There are many former agricultural and industrial workers among clergymen, however, in recent years the growing tendency has been observed of former teachers and students, military officers and employees of law-enforcement agencies becoming Muslim

priests. According to the polls carried out in 2005, there were 13.8 percent former Communist party workers, 6.4 percent former educational workers, 12.8 percent former office employees, 27.1 percent industrial workers, 29.3 percent former agricultural workers, and 2.1 percent former students among clergymen. In 2011 these indices were as follows: 14.7 percent of clergymen were persons who held important secular posts; 4.1 percent were Communist party workers; six percent – educational workers; 23.3 percent – industrial workers; 23.3 percent – agricultural workers; 13.8 percent – office employees; 1.7 percent – army officers; 6.4 percent – students. (IV)

The educational level of the clergymen polled was not very high, which could be explained by an objective reason, namely, the abolition of the system of traditional Muslim education in the years of state atheism. Most imams have only the basic knowledge of Arabic, and there were only 4.8 percent of respondents in the 36–45 years age bracket with fluent Arabic and a good theological background. On the whole, a stable trend of a rising educational level of the Muslim clergy can be observed in the Republic of Bashkortostan, which is a definite result of state support of Islamic education in the country and the implementation of concrete measures to improve the system of work of religious educational institutions themselves.

The Muslim clergy considers their material position as average, and housing conditions as satisfactory. Modern Muslim communities are unable to maintain their spiritual tutors at a proper level, which is shown by the fact that quite a few young madrasah graduates do not work in their profession due to economic reasons. One of the optimal forms of gaining a constant source of income for young imams is an additional secular profession or trade. According to the results of the poll carried out in 2011, 1.7 percent of Muslim clergymen have a primary secular education; 35.7 percent – secondary education;

30.4 percent – secondary special education; 4.3 percent – incomplete higher education, and 21.6 percent – higher education. Secondary and secondary special education was mainly in technical specialties, and several men received legal, medical, pedagogical, culinary, and music specialties. (V)

The Muslim clergy consider their main task, apart from fulfilling all orders of Islam, to carry on enlightenment and charity activity. The absolute majority of the imams polled render assistance to young people in getting secular and religious education, finding jobs, helping large and poor families and orphans; they also take part in fighting negative social phenomena, teaching religious subjects, or collecting financial means to build necessary public and religious premises, etc.

The urban and rural clergy have different material and social status. Rural imams are traditionally connected with the village and practically do not differ from the basic mass of rural inhabitants by their social origin and material status.

The expensive hajj can be performed mainly by urban imams. In general, urban Muslim parishes are several times more numerous than their rural counterparts. Besides, the economic welfare of the clergy depends on the number of parishioners. Most rural clergymen carry on their work at the place of their birth. And there are more imams who have studied and learned the canons of Islam independently. There are many men among young imams in towns and cities, who have received a secondary and even higher religious education. It should be noted that there is no connection between the level of religious education and the prestige of a priest among his village believers. Besides, rural Islam is more immune to radical ideologies – most Wahhabi and “Khizb ut-Tahrir” cells are in towns and cities of the republic.

The activity of the Muslim clergy of Bashkortostan has a weak influence on public and political life of the republic. Most imams never

write in the mass media or speak in public at secular meetings. However, the interest of clerics in the development of the political situation in the country and all over the world is quite high: 42.8 percent of imams constantly follow it, and 20.8 percent show interest sporadically. Representatives of the higher echelons of the clergy lead the most active public life due to their social position and personal initiative. They appear in the mass media and take part in various conferences and meetings with representatives of state power bodies.

All problems of their parish most clergymen try to resolve independently, or through the Spiritual Board. Clergymen do not cooperate with scientific and scholarly public, despite the fact that quite a few people call for the need for such cooperation.

One of the key events in the latest history of Islam in Russia, which had broad repercussions in public and religious circles, has been a split of the Muslim umma into a multitude of independent muftiates. Most imams of Bashkortostan assess this split as a negative phenomenon, detrimental to the development of the Russian umma, and believe that it would be better to set up a uniform spiritual board of Muslims in the country. True, part of rural imams does not know anything about the split or does not recognize it. (VI)

Public views of the Muslim clergy of Bashkortostan, by the results of various polls and interviews, show that there are traditionalists, modernists, conservatives, etc. among them. So-called *old man's Islam* also exists in the republic, which is confined to observing the necessary rites at birth, marriage and death ceremonies. Most imams in the Republic of Bashkortostan adhere to intermediate position between conservative traditionalism and modernism and avoid extremes. The ideological component of this group is attitude to Islam as a sum total of habitual ethnic-confessional traditions which do not

always coincide with its classical canons. In the past decade radically-minded imams came to the fore, which were able to unite young believers, but did not have enough authority among parishioners of the older generation.

In connection with the radical change of the political system the official Muslim clergy is loyal to power. Imams maintain that the state should maximally support the Muslim community. A greater part of the religious figures of Bashkortostan note that the Law “on freedom of conscience and religious associations” is not fully observed at the federal and republican level. The policy of state power bodies of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Bashkortostan toward Muslims is regarded as tolerant, and any discrimination of Islam on the part of state power on the territory of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Bashkortostan does not exist at all.

The Muslim clergy of Bashkortostan demonstrate a high level of tolerance toward representatives of other religions in the spheres of business and personal contacts and readiness to cooperate with them. Judging by the social position and feelings of clergymen, the question of the status of traditional confessions in the republic should not exacerbate in the future. Imams recognize the activation of radical currents and are ready to explain to the population the difference between the teaching of Islam and its radical interpretation. Representatives of the clergy connect the growth of extremism in Russia with social problems (29.1 percent), general alarming situation in the world (28.3 percent), and enemy schemes (25.1 percent). According to the data of the poll conducted in 2005, 18.8 percent of imams observed the radicalization of religious views among young people; 30.2 percent of imams did not come across this phenomenon; 30.7 percent of imams understood this as the desire of young people to learn the foundations of Islam better. Thus, more than 60 percent of

imam did not admit the growing radicalization of religious views among young people. In 2011, 35.2 percent of imams noted the growth of radical religious views of young people, most of them were urban imams; 35.2 percent have not noticed anything in this respect.

The modern Muslim clergy is distinguished by striving for such values as high culture, broad knowledge and the desire to serve people.

Thus, the body of Muslim clergy in the Republic of Bashkortostan is not too big and not closely united. It is only individual leaders who have socio-political prestige and influence. In order to reach higher competitiveness and recognition of the elitist role of the Bashkir clergy, the republican imams who have graduated from Muslim educational institutions should constantly raise the level of their religious and secular education and learn and master more ideological trends. Taking into account the long period of the absence of religious education during many years, the improvement of the educational level of Muslim clergy will take quite a few years, although some positive trends in this respect are noticeable already now, as against the end of the 20th century. At present more than half of all imams in Bashkortostan have a higher or secondary education.

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**PARTICIPATION OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES
IN SUPPLYING THE U.S. TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN
(Conclusion)**

Air Corridor through Central Asia

In addition to land communication lines the United States has obtained the opening of an air supply channel through Central Asia, necessary mainly for transporting manpower and important and valuable cargoes. The importance of this channel has grown after the United States has begun to use new transport aircraft C-5M Super Galaxy with the operation range of 5,000 nautical miles without refueling with a complete load of 122,000 pounds¹, which enabled them to make transpolar flights to Afghanistan.

In July 2009 Washington signed an agreement with Russia on air transit of troops and armaments, and in 2010 similar agreement was signed with Kazakhstan. Parallel with this, agreements have been reached with the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on the use of “Manas” and “Navoi” airports.

The agreement allowing U.S. military and transport planes to use the international “Manas” airport in Bishkek was endorsed by Kyrgyz parliament in December 2001. In summer 2009 the republican leadership headed by K. Bakiyev ignored the position of its partners in the CSTO and SCO and prolonged the mandate of the U.S. air base up to July 2014. The object was renamed – Center of Transit Transportation, and the lease rent was raised to \$60 million a year.

The center plays an important role in servicing the military campaign in Afghanistan. As reported by its press service in September

2012, 4,700 refuelling flights were made from the “Manas” airport annually, and up to 1,500 men and officers were transported in both directions. The center is the nearest of the three U.S. bases capable to make refueling operations in the air space of Afghanistan.² From there infil-exfil operations and evacuation of cargoes and personnel, as well as special operations in the region are made. More than a thousand of American servicemen are permanently deployed on the base (the 376th air expeditionary wing), with about 300 employees of western contractual bodies, and up to 700 Kyrgyz people servicing this U.S. military object.³

In September 2012, during a meeting with President V. Putin of the Russian Federation, President A. Atambayev of Kyrgyzstan mentioned the intention to turn “Manas” airport into a civilian object after 2014. The U.S. Department of State understood this as a pretext for a prolonged bargain in the future. The U.S. foreign-policy office emphasized that it would do everything in its power to retain the base in Central Asia. According to R. Blake, assistant of the Secretary of State on South and Central Asia, it will be necessary to continue military support of military operation in Afghanistan after 2014.⁴

The closing down of the Center in Manas in June 2014 would violate the plans prepared by the American-Kyrgyz agreement earlier. Transportation operations of the United States with a view to withdrawing the basic western groupings from Afghanistan should also rotate the remaining units there. At present the “Manas” base will handle great quantity of secret cargoes.

In March 2012, after a visit of the head of the Pentagon L. Panetta to Bishkek, “The New York Times” reported that Kyrgyz officials unofficially gave their U.S. counterparts to understand that they were ready to discuss the conditions of further cooperation on “Manas.”⁵ The words about turning the airport into a civilian object

have given a certain hope to the United States military department to retain the base when U.S. servicemen are replaced by the personnel of private paramilitary and transport companies. Washington's desire to grab the chance and preserve "Manas" as a base is shown by the fact that already in 2012 the U.S. trade and development agency announced competition among American companies to compile a business-plan to develop the "Manas" airport into a commercial transport hub, although on the whole the United States is rather skeptical concerning this idea.⁶

The White House has several trump cards in its negotiations with Bishkek. The airbase remains a big source of currency for both the republic's treasury, and the local elites. The aggregate expenditures on using the transportation center greatly surpass the fixed lease rent (\$60 million), in 2009 amounted to \$108 million, in 2010 – \$131.5 million, and in 2011 – 150.6 million.⁷ In 2009 this sum included expenses for modernization of the infrastructure of the airport (\$30.6 million), for contracts with local contractors (\$24.7 million), and for payment for airport auxiliary services (\$23 million). Fuel was bought on a separate payment article (\$230 million).⁸ Transfer of part of military hardware and equipment from Afghanistan to Central Asian countries can serve as an additional material incentive. Besides, it is expected that in the course of negotiating the future of "Manas" the United States will use the power of all network structures, scientific development and production centers, the mass media, and the agents of influence created in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

In case of failure in Kyrgyzstan the Pentagon may try to transfer the air base from Manas to another country of the region, although Washington excludes such scenario at an official level. The Uzbek airport "Navoi" is regarded a convenient place for redeploying the object. It has been used for transportation of American cargoes to

Afghanistan for several years already on commercial flights with the mediation of South Korea.

In 2008 the Korean Airlines and the Transport Command of the U.S. armed forces carried out marketing research on the prospects of the use of “Navoi” for Afghan transit, after which the Korean corporation signed a contract with Uzbekistan for a thorough modernization of the airport. The agreement presupposed increase of the store infrastructure capacity up to 300 tons of cargoes a day by the end of 2009, and the capacity of fuel reservoirs up to 1.42 million gallons.⁹ The company has received a credit from Seoul amounting to \$200 million, and another \$83.4 million were earmarked by Uzbekistan.¹⁰ Parallel with this, in November 2008 the head of the Transport Command of the U.S. armed forces General D. McNabb visited Tashkent, where he had talks with the Uzbek leadership concerning the inclusion of the “Navoi” airport in the supply system of the American troops in Afghanistan. This object will be a transshipment point for the United States situated some 400 kilometers from the border of Afghanistan in a safe district, which has convenient access to important motor roads and railway lines and can be used for landing any types of aircraft. Uzbekistan planned to channel through “Navoi” NATO cargo flows, and contribute to increasing its capacity and the development of the adjacent free economic zone where supplies for western troops could be purchased.

It was officially announced about the transshipment of cargoes through “Navoi” in May 2009. Details of the contract have not been made public, however, as follows from the “Uzbek dossier” of WikiLeaks, the agreement allowed transit of non-lethal cargoes only, and prohibited the presence of U.S. servicemen or military aircraft in Navoi. Direct air communication with Afghanistan was also banned.¹¹ Cargoes had to be brought to Navoi by the “Uzbekistan Airlines” or

“Korean Airlines, after which they had to be reloaded on to land transport and taken to Afghanistan by Uzbek government corporations (Uzbekiston Temir Yullari (railways) and Urta Osiyo Trans (truck transportation)).¹²

The scheme offered by Tashkent, as can be seen from the same sources, did not suit the American command, which announced its intention in June 2009 to arrange only two cargo flights a month, which is too little for a reconstructed airport fit for servicing up to twenty cargo flights daily.¹³

Nevertheless, American diplomats did not abandon their attempts to reach agreement with Uzbekistan on opening the Navoi airport for direct cargo flights to Afghanistan. This would be more convenient for the Pentagon, inasmuch as it would allow the United States to ship to Afghanistan more cargoes and military personnel without transshipment or reloading, overlap the functions of “Manas,” and besides, it opens the prospects of flying U.S. military transport planes to Uzbekistan. In February 2010, on the eve of President I. Karimov’s visit to Seoul, the influential South Korean newspaper “JoongAng Ilbo” reported about the intention of President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea, according to an unofficial request of the United States, to ask the President of Uzbekistan, with whom he had friendly relations, for permission to use “Navoi” as an air corridor between Central Asia and Afghanistan. The alternative air bridge was necessary for the Pentagon in case of worsening relations with Kyrgyzstan which was under a strong influence of Russia.¹⁴

In return the United States, which planned to withdraw the main part of its military contingent from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, promised to give the Uzbek hub many transport orders. The latter circumstance is quite timely for “Navoi,” which handled about 50,000 tons of cargoes in 2011, according to official data, and expected

to increase the figure to 60,000 tons in 2012, which was only half of the planned capacity of the terminal (110,000 tons).¹⁵ It is not excluded that the commercial potential of the air transport hub opened under political pressure from above, was initially overrated.

It is supposed in the Uzbek expert circles that President I. Karimov makes a pause in his talks with the United States on the future of “Navoi” at the moment, waiting for solution of the situation around “Manas.” According to this view, the possible loss of the U.S. positions in Kyrgyzstan will enable Uzbekistan to bargain for more advantageous conditions in redeploying the American air base to “Navoi.” A favorable conclusion about the possibility to deploy troops, hardware and equipment was made by American military engineers in 2002. The new concept of Uzbekistan’s foreign policy adopted in 2012, which bans the deployment of foreign military objects on the territory of the republic, will create no obstacle in an authoritarian state for taking the principal decision by the head of state on the opening of a U.S. base.

However, this scenario will hardly be possible due to the fear of the Uzbek leadership concerning the possible strengthening of the western positions in the republic, as well as the previous negative experience connected with Washington’s reaction to the events in Andizhan in 2005, when the United States was expelled from the “Karshi Khanabad” air base.

Prospects and Significance of Northern Transit

In the conditions of still existing distrust toward Islamabad the United States will withdraw part of its troops from Afghanistan via Central Asian communication lines. According to the calculations of the Central Command, in 2013–2014 about 29,000 units of transport and

24,000 containers with American property should be withdrawn from Afghanistan (for comparison's sake, the total volume of cargoes of all ISAF countries planned for withdrawal is estimated at 70,000 units of transport and 120,000 containers).¹⁶ By 2013, the U.S. Command was supposed to curtail the armed grouping from 66,000 to 32,000 men and officers.¹⁷

After 2014 the Pentagon plans to leave a limited contingent of troops numbering 13,600 servicemen in Afghanistan (the figure was given in the U.S. Senate in March 2013).¹⁸ The final decision on the subject should be taken by President Obama on agreement with Kabul.

Plans to use Central Asian routes for withdrawing troops from Afghanistan have been revised and figures reduced. It was partly due to the problem in the functioning of the Uzbek stretch, resumption of the work of the Pakistani channel in early 2013, as well as the Pentagon decision to diversify transit with the inclusion of multimodal centers in Dubai and Jordan. Accordingly, if it was intended to load 70 percent of cargoes at the beginning of 2013,¹⁹ in the middle of that year – already 30 percent,²⁰ and by the beginning of 2013 – less than a quarter (or 7,200 containers and 4,800 units of the rolling stock in 2013–2014).²¹ In reality by the middle of 2013 only four percent of American cargoes from Afghanistan went through Central Asia, which could not but cause disappointment in Uzbekistan.²¹

NATO's agreement with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on using their territories for the withdrawal of the means of transport and military hardware and equipment was reached in June 2012.²² In contrast to the British, the Americans refused from return transit through Tajikistan, about which representatives of the Department of State officially announced in the spring of 2013.

Transportation of main volumes of cargoes from Afghanistan via Central Asia is made by railway transport in the direction of

Uzbekistan – Kazakhstan – Russia, and also through the southern corridor to Kazakhstan’s port of Aktau and further on across the Caspian Sea to the Caucasus. The air bridge from Afghanistan passes through “Manas” in Kyrgyzstan.

In April 2013 the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev, speaking at a conference on Afghanistan in Alma-Ata said that the republic intended to increase the NATO cargo flow through Aktau. The capacities of the port which Kazakhstan would like to turn into a big international transport hub by 2020 were lying idle after sanctions imposed on Iran. In answer to society’s fear caused by the opening in Kazakhstan of a “sea analogue” of Kyrgyz “Manas,” the republican authorities stated that bringing additional containers to Aktau would not presuppose the deployment of foreign military installations there, and the object itself was openly used for organizing supplies to Afghanistan from 2011.²³

At the same time the broader possibilities of Aktau can become a platform for the development of relations between the defense departments of Kazakhstan and the United States, which will potentially increase the volumes of NATO cargoes transported through the Caspian basin and the Caucasus, bypassing the territory of Russia. The latter circumstance will raise the risk of uncontrolled deliveries of American weapons to the Transcaucasus.

It would seem that the United States will not abandon its attempts to organize new intermodal transshipment points in Central Asian countries, which would allow it to combine routes and types of transport. Its NATO allies go along this path, particularly France, which gained the right to use the Shimkent airport in the south of Kazakhstan in early 2013.

Parallel to this, the Pentagon began negotiations on concessions in giving certain types of military property to be withdrawn from

Afghanistan over to Central Asian countries. This would make it possible for the United States to reduce expenses on the transportation of obsolete types of military hardware and equipment, which could later be used for training personnel, repair and servicing, that is, would ensure its long-term presence in the military-technical sphere of the region. In January 2012 the Obama administration lifted the ban on foreign military supplies to Uzbekistan, and in a year's time had secret consultations with representatives of the republic in Washington.

According to information which has leaked to the western press, the Uzbek side has shown interest in a broad range of arms and ammunition, including mine detecting sets, bulletproof vests, night-vision instruments, armored vehicles, helicopters, drones, etc.²⁴ In February 2013 the Department of State officially reported to Congress that the United States would supply Uzbekistan with some of the hardware and equipment mentioned, which cannot be used against the peaceful population, including drones of certain modifications (most probably, light reconnaissance unmanned vehicles). Discussions in the U.S. Congress has shown that there is a powerful group of supporters of turning Uzbekistan into a “full-fledged military ally of the United States, like Saudi Arabia” in the foreign-policy establishment of the United States.²⁵

In February 2013 Washington's initiative was backed by Britain, whose Secretary of State for Defense Philip Hammond confirmed the plans to transfer to Uzbekistan Leyland DAF trucks and Land Rover spare parts to a sum of \$700,000.²⁶

Another result of the functioning of the Northern Distribution Network was a sharp rise of the Pentagon's expenditures on Central Asia. The cargo flow through the Network amounting to 39,000 containers in 2012, average expenses on paying transit taxes and for the services of transport companies were estimated at a sum from

\$685 million to \$billion and more.²⁷ A greater portion of this money was remitted to accounts of government transport operators and to the budgets of Central Asian countries, supporting their high interest in the NDN.

In addition, the Pentagon increased its expenses for purchasing commodities necessary for its troops in Afghanistan sevenfold in 2012, on which Central Asian governments have long insisted. This made it possible for the United States to reduce its transport expenses and partly solve its fuel problem, as well as it increased attractiveness of cooperation for the local elites. From the sum mentioned Turkmenistan received \$820 million (mainly on fuel and lubricants), Kyrgyzstan – \$218 million, Kazakhstan – \$137 million (also on fuel and lubricants), Uzbekistan – \$105.9 million, Tajikistan – \$11.7 million.²⁸ That very year the U.S. Agency on Logistics placed its representatives in the U.S. embassies in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and Astana, and Kyrgyzstan opened a portal of republican enterprises, promoting tenders for supplies of Afghanistan among Kyrgyz companies. In 2013 the trend to increasing purchases in Central Asia continued to develop, on which the Pentagon assigned \$1.3 billion in its budget.²⁹

On the whole, the White House has not only diversified supplies for its grouping in Afghanistan through Northern transit by lowering its dependence on Pakistan, but also created conditions for spreading its military infrastructure in Central Asia and intensifying its military-political contacts with the region. Despite the existing difficulties at least to the end of 2014, Northern transit will be used by the United States for resolving its military and political tasks in the region. Along with the curtailment of cargo transportation, its significance will diminish, according to forecasts. However, it can be expected that further on the United States may come out with an initiative to prolong the operation of the Central Asian transport corridor in a new format,

taking into account the desire to leave military objects in Afghanistan permanently and ensure their supply.

As follows from a report to the U.S. Senate by J. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, in March 2013, the U.S. administration will take into account the fact that the preservation of the military presence in Afghanistan after 2014 without the UN mandate may prompt Russia to curtail cooperation with the NDN.³⁰ Without Moscow's consent, cargo operations will only be possible along the southern stretch of the route passing through Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, if these countries agree to exacerbate their relations with the Kremlin.

Thus, the Russian leadership will have to solve the problem whether it is worthwhile to continue to support Northern transit, which not only facilitates the functioning of the long-term military bases of the United States in Afghanistan, but also plays the role of a catalyst in Washington's military-political cooperation with Central Asia.

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ISLAM AND A SEARCH FOR NEW NATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

Nowadays the North Caucasian republics are in a transitional state as a result of the Russian reforms of the 1990s–2000s. The old Soviet forms and institutions of social organization have been either destroyed or transformed qualitatively, and the new liberal market has not yet reached optimum efficiency, or has not been formed in accordance with the best Western models. Social institutions and organizations of transitional type play a dominant role in this society. At the same time, the qualitatively new social elements often manifest themselves in a distorted form or in combination with old inefficient traditional elements.

The transitional state of North Caucasian societies generates the ideological crisis of socio-cultural identity, that is, a crisis of national identity in interaction with the social crisis and the collapse of the Soviet system of objective forms of social and cultural identity. What are the main manifestations of the ideological crisis?

The ideological crisis of socio-cultural identity means that the new and effective form of national ideology has not replaced the shattered Soviet form of national identity yet, and local society is in dire need for this new ideology.

The main manifestations of transitional identity are as follows: fragmentation of identity (both at the level of national ideology and at the level of personal, individual consciousness), fierce competition of alternative ideologies, when different temporary ideological combinations are formed and destroyed because of their unviable nature, incompatibility and inconsistency.

We first consider fragmentation of socio-cultural identity. Let us dwell on the key methodological concept of “whole identity.” In our opinion, whole identity presupposes, first, completeness of the identity components – demographic, gender, as well as ethnicity, socio-economic, political, legal, spiritual, cultural, historical and geopolitical; secondly, qualitative socio-historical and cultural uniformity of these components; thirdly, harmonious structuring, that is, an effective mutual indirect impact of these components. The fragmented identity is characterized by an incomplete set of its components, as well as the qualitative socio-cultural heterogeneity of components, eventually forming not an integral system, but an inefficient combination of the components.

Take the ideological crisis of identity in the North Caucasus, formed during and as a result of the reforms of the 1990s–2000s. After the collapse of socialist ideology, a new and effective national one has not appeared, but the ideological vacuum and amorphousness have emerged, a multicultural environment has come into being, and competition for alternative ideological systems has begun, claiming the role of national ideology.

We see spontaneous self-identification (different for various social groups) at the level of mass consciousness in societies of the North Caucasus. There are hesitation, uncertainty, search for efficient ideology and attempts to use various ideological trends simultaneously with the official ideology propagated by the authorities.

Currently, the intellectual and political elite of the North Caucasus are in search of identity that will consolidate the local communities and ensure their effective integration into modern Russian civilization.

There are three main groups of alternative versions of national ideology in the North Caucasus today:

- 1) Religious (Islamic).
- 2) Ethnic etatism.
- 3) Secular humanistic versions.

First, we turn to Islamic religious version of national socio-cultural identity of the North Caucasus. Islamic ideology, being marginalized in the Soviet period, has transformed during the post-Soviet period and turned into national ideology in the context of reforms and the formation of new states in the North Caucasus. Islam has not yet received the official status of national ideology, but its positions are continually strengthened in this region.

The transformation of Islam into state religion is constrained significantly by the split into two basic trends: traditionalistic Islam and fundamentalist Islam (Salafism and Wahhabism).

Traditional Islam has proved to be the most adaptable to local realities in the period of reforms, has exerted a growing influence on the general public, and gained support of the ruling elites. Traditional Islam offers an ideological program that supports the existing socio-economic and political systems in the North Caucasus. It has inextricably merged with local ethnicity. Thus, Islam is the form of preservation of ethnicity, and at the same time, Islam itself has strong ethnic overtones.

In terms of social orientation, traditional Islam accepts the prevailing socio-economic order and property division in the North Caucasian republics. With regard to political orientation, traditional Islam supports the ruling elites and the current political system. As for the spiritual orientation, traditional Islam claims to be official state ideology in the North Caucasus and dominates in the pedagogical, educational and cultural systems of these societies.

An important constructive element of traditional Islam is its orientation to socio-cultural autonomy and pluralism of local cultures

under its patronage and peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups and religious denominations and currents within traditional Islam. Traditional Islam stands for friendly coexistence between the Russian and local peoples. As for geopolitical plans, traditional Islam preserves the orientation to the integration of the republics of the North Caucasus in Russian civilization, but in the conditions of a much broader social, cultural and political autonomy, as compared with the Soviet period. Thus, traditional Islam appears as a stabilizing, protective ideology.

The institutions of traditional Islam of the North Caucasus support the central authority of Russia and stabilize the internal political situation in the North Caucasian republics. However, traditional Islam has not yet won ideological domination in the North Caucasus. Besides, it has a destabilizing potential along with stabilizing one, claiming the role of national ideology.

Researchers have noted that its attempts to become state ideology lead to the unacceptable “ideologization” of Islam and Islamization of society.

The strengthening of the positions of Islam leads to increased conflicts and tension in North Caucasian societies. "Islam has not become a consolidating factor for believers yet, disagreements have intensified both between the Muslim clergy, and the laity, despite the growing number of mosques, religious organizations, increased number of persons, who follow religious practices, promotion of religious values, and distribution of religious literature and knowledge in society. In addition to a split on the national basis, there is a split of believers into various religious currents, which led to confrontation and bloodshed in some cases.

There are contradictions between the clergy, Islamic political parties and society as a whole. The situation in the region is distinguished by society and the state following the secular order, but

the clergy and Islamic parties supporting the creation of an “Islamic republic.”

Fundamental Islam is the most serious ideological alternative to traditional Islam in the North Caucasus and it exists as a version of Salafism – Wahhabism. Initially, Wahhabism was introduced by Arab religious missionaries in the 1990s and has gained considerable popularity among locals people due to a social crisis and geopolitical instability. Fundamentalists (Salafists, Wahhabis) were the main opponents of the traditionalists in the North Caucasus, whose ideal was return to the realities of the “golden age” of Islam, restoration of the theocratic state in the form of Caliphate – the so-called Caucasus Emirate.

The fundamental difference between Salafism and traditional Islam is in their relation to the local ethno-cultural features, and ethnicity as a specific feature of religious consciousness in general. Traditional Islam is characterized by accentuation of the local ethno-cultural characteristics and their syncretism with Islamic dogmas and ritualism and Salafists advocate return to original Islam, cleansed of ethnocultural specificities; emphasis is laid on ethnic neutrality and universality of Islam without nationality.

In terms of social orientation, Wahhabism seeks to rely onto the egalitarian social ideals of early Islam that attract many supporters among the poor, while traditional Islam protects the existing social polarization of the local community.

In terms of political orientation, Wahhabism seeks to build a clerical state, where political power would be combined with religious one in the person of the Muslim clergy.

In the cultural sphere, Wahhabism is focused on the total domination of Islamic religion and culture over secular culture and over local ethnic culture in all spheres, especially in education, upbringing

and the arts. Wahhabism is hostile to other faiths, including Russian Orthodox Christianity in the North Caucasus. Wahhabism geopolitically is focused on creating a unified Islamic fundamentalist clerical state in the North Caucasus, totally independent from Russia and oriented to the Islamic states of the Middle East.

Is the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism a proper alternative to traditional Islam in the North Caucasus? Obviously not, because it does not offer satisfactory solutions to the pressing socio-economic and political problems, but only increases tension in North Caucasian societies. It is also incompatible practically with the fundamental element of ethnic and cultural identity of the North Caucasian societies, which will always be the most serious obstacle to their integration in a unified Islamic socio-political formation. We should also mention the destructive nature of extremist methods and ways to implement fundamentalist ideals adopted by the Wahhabis and unacceptable for North Caucasian society .

Islam only formally unites the North Caucasus with its ethnic pluralism. There is obvious discrepancy between the increasing role of Islam in the North Caucasus and its weak integration function in North Caucasian society. The role of Islam in public and political life of the republics of the North Caucasus is growing with every passing year. At the same time, we have to admit that Islam has not become a consolidating factor for North Caucasian people, the predominant factor for them is that of ethnic and community identity.

Let us consider secular alternatives to Islam as the dominant national ideology of North Caucasian societies. The local political elites have relied on the politicization of ethnicity and used ideology and ethno-cultural and political identity to strengthen the existing social system and to gain autonomy from the Russian center. This ideological system was called "ethnic etatism." K.Gadzhiev emphasized the

pragmatic political roots of ethnic etatism: “The motives of power and status, politics and ideology largely underpinned aspirations for national self-determination and national independence. Frequently, the idea of the right of nations to self-determination has been used by politicians or representatives of national movements to justify selfish interests.”

Ethnic etatism is characterized by certain ideological disguise of utilitarian political interests of the local ruling elites under the ideas of socio-cultural revival. Ethnic etatism has led not to consolidation of the multi-ethnic republics of the North Caucasus, but to problematic separation and conflicts on the basis of ethnic collisions. The project of the creation of an ethnocratic state involves the identification and then assimilation or elimination of dissenter groups. Cultural identity, fictional or real, becomes a strong political argument to justify the policy of different opportunities.

Ethnic etatism appears to be an option of fragmented identity, serving the interests of the local political and economic elites, ersatz of ideology, in which ethnicity is interpreted tendentiously and transformed into the basis and compensation of all other elements of identity. The idea of ethnic identity and independence is brought up to the absurd and it acts as an unsatisfactory compensation for practical absence of distinct social, economic, political and spiritual orientations in ethnic etatism. Ethnic etatism serves the interests of the ruling clans and protects the prevailing distribution of power and property, as well as social differentiation of society, but in a crisis it does not satisfy anyone, especially the poor. K. Gadzhiev notes the impasse of ethnic etatism: "Nationalism as state-power, especially in multinational countries, is the dead end road with a variety of serious consequences in a modern state. It is absolutely groundless to build a state around one nationality, to lock the state on the mono-ethnic basis in this situation”.

Ethnic etatism is able to win neither mass consciousness of the peoples of the North Caucasus, nor consciousness of intelligentsia, since its essence is frankly apologetic.

Part of the intelligentsia of the North Caucasus, dissatisfied with Islamic alternatives and ethnic etatism and understanding their limitations, tries to develop an effective national ideology. Ideology, which will be able to provide: firstly, effective socio-cultural identification of the population; secondly, the effective integration of local socio-cultural ethnic groups in the framework of the existing state entities, as well as the integration of North Caucasian societies in Russian civilization.

A number of important steps have already been taken in this direction.

First of all, it is worth noting the formation of a conceptual approach, which separates the levels and forms of identity, and outlines the idea of building a harmonious, constructive, multilevel identity as a positive unity of diversity of identities, relieving them of conflict, but not destroying their variety by building an effective hierarchy.

Secondly, there must be an effective single model based on the principles formulated by A. Shadzhe: "We need to solve the following problems to strengthen Russian national identity. First, the identification of common (uniting) origins for the entire Russian society, which would be close to and accepted by representatives of all Russian ethnic groups and religions..., then a search for a unifying framework of coexistence and interaction of different types of identities, in particular ethnic-cultural, regional, religious and Russian national identities."

Many researchers believe that Russian civil political identity is an integrating core of the whole Russian identity. A new type of model, the so-called ethnonational-and-cultural identity seems to be promising.

Its core would be civil national identity, not denying the diversity of ethnic and cultural identities and other collective identities.

A. Magomedov thinks in the same vein, offering the identity model “we – the Daghestani people.” Its essence is the tripartite identification: “The Daghestani people see themselves as representatives of the Daghestani ethnic group, Dagestanians and at the same time as Russians.” According to Magomedov, the term “people of Daghestan” characterizes the supra-ethnic civil political entity of the Daghestani ethnic groups, integrated in the Russian state, but this supra-ethnic identity does not deny or destroy the ethnic one.

E. Kukva considers the idea of multi-level identity in her own way. “The structure of such identity is expressed at several levels: ethnic, regional, national, etc. According to this concept, these levels coexist, complementing each other. The multilevel structure of identity is capable to “break up” into sublevels, forming new levels horizontally. Relationships are built within the system, between the levels and with other systems.

The concept of multilevel identity has a certain constructive potential. A way out of the ideological crisis of identity of contemporary Russian society, the North Caucasus republics in particular, may be based on a more adequate concept of whole identity.

The weak point of the proposed versions of identity is inadequate study or complete absence of the key element of identity – social orientation. The formation of whole identity based on social orientation could provide an expression of interests and consolidation of different social and ethnic groups, as well as political entities. A social ideal should express the principles of social equality and social justice in a constructive way and the most efficient ethnic, social and political integration that will be the most important result of whole identity, which is possible on this basis.

None of the examined versions claiming the role of national ideologies is satisfactory. This situation is natural for a transitional society in a systemic crisis. Transitional identity is inevitably controversial, pluralistic and fragmented in society.

The ideological crisis is closely associated with the systemic social crisis in North Caucasian society. Widespread poverty and unemployment, alienation of power from the people, disharmony in relations between the Russian center and the republics of the North Caucasus – all this makes identification problematic, both at the level of national ideology and at the level of mass consciousness. The existing forms of identity are discrete and fragmented by nature, this is an ersatz identity.

This form of elemental identification and fragmented identity cannot provide the internal consolidation and integration of the social system and the population of the North Caucasus, and their effective integration in Russian civilization.

The overall situation has reached a dead end: a systemic, socio-cultural, socio-economic, spiritual, political and legal crisis of North Caucasian societies defines and generates a crisis of identity of societies, as well as their national ideology at the macro and micro levels. On the other hand, an effective national ideology is a prerequisite for overcoming the crisis. This seems to be a vicious circle. It can be broken if the local spiritual elite formulates an effective national ideology and a program for extricating society out of the crisis. Until then ideological pluralism will complicate national unity and identity.

What are the conditions and prerequisites for an effective solution to the problem of modern socio-cultural identity of the North Caucasus?

First, it is necessary to understand the nature and origin of the contemporary crisis of identity and the need for new identity.

Secondly, the requirements for the desired form of national ideology should be clarified. The proper version of national ideology should take into account the state of mass consciousness, as well as an efficient implementation of the national interests and functions of the population.

Thirdly, national ideology should be uniform. For today, the competing ideological systems are inherent in compensatory and fragmented identity, in which some of its elements are heterogeneous and inconsistent, or in which one element replaces inefficient functions of another one.

Fourthly, we should define the procedure itself in search of effective national ideology. One of the major points is a constructive dialogue with the government, aimed at determining and establishing the social and ideological consensus on the basis of compromise and integration of interests of all social groups in North Caucasian societies, as well as the North Caucasian republics and the Russian center.

Actually, the process of developing effective national ideology should include the following: a theoretical analysis of the problem, which involves the development of alternative concepts and controversy between them; public discussion of the proposed alternative concepts of the socio-cultural identity of the North Caucasus; the choice of a concept; introduction of the concept adopted in mass consciousness and revision of the policy of the local authorities in accordance with this concept.

There are many internal and external problems, difficulties and contradictions at every stage of tackling these tasks. This applies to both the essence of socio-cultural identity of the North Caucasus, as

well as the technical procedures for theoretical research, public discussion, and adoption and implementation of public consciousness.

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**TAJIKISTAN. INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATION
PROCESSES ON FAMILY AND MARRIAGE
RELATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

The family has a special place in traditions and customs, household rites, and religious worldview of the peoples in Central Asia. The quantitative characteristic of marriages and divorces in the Soviet Tajikistan has shown a positive trend. Only 0.5% of men and 0.8% of women under 50 have never been married. In 1978, per 1,000 population there was 10.2 marriages and only 1.5 divorces. In 1984 – 10.4 marriages against 1.6 divorces. The divorce rate was higher in urban than in rural areas. Experts explain this situation by the fact that the traditional marriage relationships remain more stable in rural Tajikistan.

Transformation processes in the 1990s noticeably influenced the family and marriage relationships in Tajik society. The number of divorces has increased and the tradition of polygamy and early marriage was revived. As seen from the studies of the family situation, a woman with children is often left without a place to live after divorce. Men give "immediate divorce" under the Sharia law by phone or SMS while working abroad.

The Constitution prohibits polygamy, but about 10% of men had more than one wife in 2011, according to preliminary data of the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. Experts relate the growth of polygamy in the country to the deteriorating economic situation of the population, especially women. In the 1990s, the consequences of the civil war (1992–1997) were considered as the cause of this phenomenon, when more than 1,000

people, mostly young men, were killed during the war. Nowadays, labor migration is added to these factors.

Islam allows men limited polygamy, but does not encourage it. Research of polygamy conducted by M. Hegay, a Tajik scientist, has revealed that first wives were often unaware of their husbands' second marriage. All conditions necessary for entry into a second marriage, are rarely fulfilled.

New ideological trends have appeared in modern Tajik society, new images of femininity and masculinity in family relations: civil marriage, the emergence of international families with members of other nationalities, ethnic groups, citizens of other countries, greater activity of women choosing partners, conscious celibacy, etc. If previously it was difficult to marry members of other ethnic groups, now girls of Tajik families can marry foreigners. Facts of violations of women's rights after divorce with foreigners have led to the adoption of amendments to the Family Code, according to which foreigners have the right to marry Tajik citizens after living at least one year in the country. The parties shall be obliged to conclude a marriage contract. And foreign spouse must purchase housing for his partner in the country.

Thus, the crisis and transformations of patriarchal and secular traditions, the development of elements of market relations, have a strong impact on the family and marriage relationships, as follows from the observations of the author, media publications and investigation of the situation in Tajikistan.

*“Lomonosovskiye chteniya. Vostokovedenie,”
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