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The scientific journal is published since 2011 at the “Publishing House “Science Today”. Translated (eng.) version of the journal is published since 2018. Since its inception, the journal was guided by high scientific and ethical standards and today it is one of the leading political science journals in Russia.

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CONTENTS

HISTORY OF RUSSIA: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSION

Vivchar V. M. Traditional Historiography of Ruthenian Greek Catholicism in the Politically “Booming” Russia of the Early Twentieth Century	5
---	---

Goncharova T. A., Grosheva G. V. Personal Texts of Tomsk Region Villagers of the Last Quarter of the XX – early XXI Century in the Discourse of Ethnic History: General Characteristics and Systematization.....	10
--	----

ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POST-SOVIET REINTEGRATION

Suleymanov A. R., Nikiforov A. Yu., Khadimillin R. R., Suleymanova A. R. Critical Thinking as a Principle of Preventing Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space	20
---	----

Goncharova L. N. Geopolitical Transformation of the Eurasian Region in the Context of Globalization	26
---	----

Dadashova K. K. Political and Diplomatic Processes in the South Caucasus: Prospects for Developing Relations with Russia	32
--	----

HISTORY AND MODERN PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Maistat M. A. Palestinian National Autonomy: Sovereign State or “Geo-Ephemer”?	38
--	----

Aljarwan Mohd Hier Jarwan Iran’s Nuclear Program as an Important Factor in International Politics. Phase one (from 1970 to 2007).....	44
--	----

Idriss Ahmat Regional Integration and its Impact on the Security and Stability of Weak States: on the Example of Chad, Cameroon and Gabon.....	50
--	----

OUR AUTHORS.....	56
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AUTHORS’ GUIDELINES.....	57
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TRADITIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHY OF RUTHENIAN GREEK CATHOLICISM IN THE POLITICALLY “BOOMING” RUSSIA OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the end of the XX – beginning of the XXI centuries, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with the support of the national governments declared its claims to the spiritual unification of modern Ukraine, which made it relevant to study the theological and historical aspects of the Uniat Church. This article will examine changes in the historiography of the problem in the early twentieth century, which will confirm the close connection between the official attention to the Greek Catholicism and the intensity of its historical analysis.

Goals and objectives. The purpose of the scientific article is to analyze the historiography of the Ruthenian Greek Catholicism in the politically «booming» Russia of the early twentieth century on the basis of collected and systematized sources. The following research tasks were set in connection with the purpose of the study:

- to highlight the positions of scientists on the problem of the Uniat Church;*
- to conduct a comprehensive study of the historiography of Ruthenian Greek Catholicism in the politically «booming» Russia of the early twentieth century.*

Method of research. In the process of research, such scientific methods as analysis and synthesis were used.

Research result. A comprehensive analysis of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was conducted in the process of collection and research of historical material.

Conclusions. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation of social cataclysms and the weakening of factors that had previously stimulated the development of traditionalist historiography affected the analysis of the Uniat phenomenon in two ways. The decline in popularity of the Uniat problems and the reduction in the volume of research in the 1880s-90s were accompanied by the appeal of Orthodox-thinking specialists on the problem to the development of its social-conflict aspect. The continuity of problematic historiography in relation to the previous stages was expressed in documenting the Orthodox concept of the

Uniat Church and in using positivist methods with extreme attention to the smallest details of the facts being studied.

Key words: *historiography, traditionalist historiography, the Union, the phenomenon of the Union, the Orthodox concept of the Union.*

In the first decades of this century, at first glance, the previous archeographic work on the publication of archival materials continues, but the volume of the published documents began to noticeably decrease. General courses are now very rare [9], so are literary works on the history of the anti-Uniate polemics [7]. Among the works on this topic, special attention deserves the master's thesis of the graduate and librarian of the Kiev Theological Academy A. S. Krylovsky on the activities of the "senior" fraternal Union "of South-West Russia" [6].

A. S. Krylovsky has analyzed the aspect of the problem that concerns the participation of the leading fraternity in the preparation of the reform of the Rusyn Orthodox Church at the end of the XVI century, synchronous negotiations on the "notorious Union" and the subsequent events of rejection by the Rusyn society of the imposed Church unity [6. P. 75-135]. His work allowed us to look at the Brest Union through the eyes of the brothers, through the "corridor" of their understanding of difficulties and their own tasks facing the "West Russian" Church. In accordance with the positivist methodology that prevailed in Church historical science, the author set his task to collect the maximum possible material from Galician and Russian archives without any aspirations for synthesis.

In the 80-90-ies of the XIX century, more extensive than the theme of brotherhood was scientific and biographical section devoted to the Ruthenian figures of the XV-XVII centuries. But in the early twentieth century, there was a reduction in the number of publications in which the authors paid attention to the representatives of the Ruthenian nobility, hierarchy and the famous Polish Jesuit P. Skarga. So, at that time, a few articles were published on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of Prince K. K. Ostrozhsy [12. P. 355-365]. Their content can be judged by the quote of N. P. Bykov: "in difficult times, the Volyn people trusted in God and their intercessor Prince Konstantin Konstantinovich" [2. P. 36].

At the same time, the research work by P. G. Viktorovsky was published, it deepened the development of various options for the Polonization of the first Rusyn estate, which contributed to the success in the spread of Uniatism.

In the period under review, the development of problematic historiography also narrows the local Church-historical direction. Local-subject publications now reflected social and national history rather than ecclesiastical history.

The weakening of scientists' attention to the Uniat problem in the first decades of the twentieth century was also noticeable in the monographs on Rusyn Church history, which were now compiled less frequently than before, and dealt with the topic of the Brest Union from a distance. The authors of such works

chose either the organizational and legal framework of Rusyn Orthodoxy as their subject [1] or the Church – cultural influence on it of the Uniate rite [5].

In our opinion, the marked tendency of decline in research activity on the study of the Brest Union can be explained by the processes of secularization, politicization and nationalization of public relations characteristic of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, which influenced public opinion and research priorities of historians. These events give rise to a sharp discussion about the nature of the necessary reforms in the higher spiritual school, conservative attempts of which were made in 1905-1917 [8. P. 389-401]. The crisis of the Orthodox Church and spiritual education in conditions when the authorities were in need of stabilization led to the fact that the autocratic anointed for the first time agreed to discuss with the hierarchs the question of restoring the Patriarchate [4. P. 54-65, 216-250].

The official attitude towards Greek Catholicism was closely connected with the Polish question. Concerned at this time with the situation in the center of the Empire, the authorities no longer actively sought to expand the influence of Orthodoxy in the Western region, which previously stimulated the development of Union issues. The Imperial government not without difficulty began to move away from the perception of Orthodoxy as a mandatory sign of Russianness and in some cases stopped using it as a means of Russification of the suburbs. In addition to the previous national segregation, the Imperial idea of the nation as a supra-ethnic and supra-religious unity began to emerge, contrasting "Zoological nationalism" [3. P. 206-208, 214-216].

The revolutionary movement, in particular, made the authorities equalize the rights of the followers of other faiths and the dominant ROC. For example, the law on religious freedom dealt a serious blow to the official Orthodoxy (1905) [4. P. 175-177]. After the coup of June 3, 1907, the government returned to the anti-Polish and anti-Catholic policy, a manifestation of which can be seen in the separation of the Malo-Russian Kholm region from the Privislyansk region (1912-13) and de-Polonization initiated there.

Noted socio-political conditions have reduced the interest of the historians to the Church-historical subjects, in general, and the Union issues in particular, as a result of this situation the traditionalist works specially focused on the phenomenon of Uniatism, and primarily, the struggle of the Ruthenians of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for their religious beliefs and legal rights in the XV-XVII centuries.

For example, P. N. Zhukovich at the turn of the century addressed the issues of the Sejm struggle of the Rusyn nobility against the Union. In this context, he presented the situation of the pan-European "Catholic reaction," which had certain intentions towards Poland and the "schismatic" Moscow tsardom. The historian did not agree with the opinion of Galician historians and O. I. Levitsky about the predominantly internal genesis of Uniatism, pointing out that the Church crisis of Rusyn Orthodoxy in the second half of the XVI century only prepared a convenient ground.

Considering the conflicts of different faiths, he concluded that the failures of the Sejm struggle against the Union in the XVI century and its success in the XVII century were determined by the internal political crises and changes in external priorities of the government [11. P. 527, 730].

In general, P. N. Zhukov's research highlighted in detail the constitutional and political facets of the Union processes within narrow chronological boundaries and also enriched science with new facts supported by handwritten and printed primary sources.

Church scientists in the early twentieth century studied not only legal forms of struggle against Uniatism. For example, F. I. Titov devoted a study to the chief Prosecutor Pobedonostsev, who provided funds for the publication of archival documents collected by him, confirming the important role of the Russian state in the protection of the "Russian" faith and nationality of Western Russia [13].

F. I. Titov developed the conclusions of the Russian historian V. B. Antonovich about the humiliated legal status of the Orthodox Church in Poland and refuted the opinion of the Catholic scholar E. Likovsky that the government did not take any part in the public persecution of the West Russian people [10].

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13. Zhukovich P. N. Sejmovaya bor'ba pravoslavnogo zapadnorusskogo dvorca s cerkovnoj uniej (do 1609 g.) [Sejm struggle of the Orthodox Western Russian nobility with Church Union (prior to 1609)]. SPb.; 1901 (In Russ.).

PERSONAL TEXTS OF TOMSK REGION VILLAGERS OF THE LAST QUARTER OF THE XX – EARLY XXI CENTURY IN THE DISCOURSE OF ETHNIC HISTORY: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SYSTEMATIZATION

On the example of the memories of the Tomsk Oblast villagers, the authors describe the complex of personal texts as a source for the study of the ethnic history of the region. They describe the time when sources were created and where they are stored. A range of published and unpublished memoir narratives has been identified. The authors characterize the content of the texts based on the subjects of ethnic history, the coverage of localities, the time range of events described and other factors. Based on the content and genre differences, three groups of texts are distinguished: autobiographical narratives, family stories and stories of rural settlements.

Key words: *personal texts, memories, ethnic history of the peoples of Siberia, Tomsk villages, Tomsk oblast.*

Ethnic history of the region is the focus of ethnological research in which the study of the ethnic composition of the population, inter-ethnic relations, issues of ethnic identity, linguistic processes, etc. are reviewed. Regional studies approach to the study of ethnic history suggests the possibility of narrowing the spatial extent of the study up to the individual settlements.

The history of rural settlements, including ethnic ones, is reflected in various sources. A special place among them is occupied by personal texts (diaries, letters, memoirs, autobiographical materials, products of the individual's creative activity) created by local residents. They've left memories of their homesteads,

of the local community to which they belonged, of the personally observed or experienced local events, capturing their own vision of ethnic history.

It is worth noting the growing research interest in the informative potential of memoir texts and their use in the study of historical processes in recent years. Scientists also focus on the history of the Siberian region: migration processes [25. P. 153-178], history of dispossession [19. P. 81], daily life of the villages during the Great Patriotic War [9. P. 60-65] and other. Personal texts have also been used as a source in Russian ethnological research. As an example we can cite E. F. Fursova's work "Historical and ethnographic materials in the diaries and notes of the Belarusian migrant V. V. Shchastny" (2007) [4. P. 491-494]. However, they have not yet been the subject of special consideration by ethnologists, and their informational and methodological potential has not been fully studied.

At the moment, there is a large diverse database of personal texts that requires analysis and systematization. In fact, we are talking about the accumulation of knowledge about one of the variants of the homestead, the transfer of experience of intercultural (interethnic) interaction, and the ethnic history of the Tomsk Oblast. At the initial stage of work on the topic, the database of published and unpublished memoirs of residents of rural settlements was formed.

The article presents for the first time the characteristics of identified personal texts that are in regional and district libraries, municipal, family and personal archives, as well as posted on the website of the project "Siberians free and involuntary" of the Tomsk Oblast Museum of regional history named after M. B. Shatilov (TOKM). We are talking about sources that have not been introduced into scientific circulation or that are mentioned only in fragments in the research literature.

Without claiming that we've identified all texts (17 published and 4 unpublished), this study aims to show the variety of personal texts containing information on the ethnic history of Tomsk villages. The authors attempted, following the logic of external and internal criticism of the source and without claiming to deeply analyze the sources, to give general characteristics of the collected body of texts along the following parameters: the time and place of creation of the source, its status (published and unpublished), stories of ethnic history, the coverage of settlements, form of presentation (genre features), the time range of the events described and a source of information.

The authors focused on personal texts created in the last quarter of the XX – early XXI centuries. When analyzing memories, one of the important questions is the time of their creation. The memoir text is the creation of the author from the idea to the last point. Despite this, the authors of the memoirs sometimes miss one important point: dating the text. The problem with determining the time when the memories were written (in cases when the author's dating is missing) remains when working with both unpublished and published texts. The year of publication of the work does not directly indicate the time of its creation. Only in some cases such information is available. So, A. A. Selevich [16. P. 338] created his work in 1994, which is

marked at the end of the text and the book was published in 2003. In the early 2000s, E. A. Kirillova [8. P. 112-113], V. S. Spirina [18. P. 167-169], N. V. Popelygyn [15. P. 114-122] wrote their memoirs included in the anthology "How we lived" in 2014. There is a similar problem with Internet resources: when they are posted, only the date of publication of the material is often specified.

If there is no information about the time of creation of the text, it is possible to find it from the author's relatives or identify it by indirect signs contained in the text. So, the relatives managed to find out the exact time when F. A. Yubin's [24. P. 157] memoirs were written: beginning of the 80-s. To establish the time of creation of the family history by A. A. Malinovsky "True story about relatives" [24. P. 24] information was drawn from the personal text itself, which allowed it to be attributed to the period from 1980 to 1990.

It is also worth noting the texts with exact dating indicated by the author himself: N. M. Babul – year 2000, E. R. Kharina – year 1990-1991. Revealed memoirs texts with the established dating can be organized chronologically: F. A. Yubin's memoirs were written in the 1980s, A. A. Selevich, T. D. Sokolova [23] and E. R. Kharina wrote their memoirs in the 1990s, N. M. Babul, R. M. Vinikurova [22. P. 342] E. A. Kirillova, N. V. Popelygyn, V. S. Spirina, and N. S. Sutulova [20. P. 116] wrote their memoirs in the 2000s, V. I. Makukha [10], N. Mikhaylina [13. P. 60] and I. K. Golishchikhina [5. P. 274] wrote their memoirs in the 2010s.

From the corpus of identified memoirs (21 works), reliable information about the time of their creation was obtained only from 13 texts that indicate the trend of increasing the volume of memoir works in recent decades.

Published texts of rural residents, as a rule, were published in small numbers and transferred to local municipal libraries, archives, museums, in some cases reaching libraries of city or regional significance. Sometimes published memoirs are stored only in the personal archives of the author, his relatives or friends. So, many residents of Pervomaisky village and librarians of the local library know the book of memoirs by A. A. Selevich [16. P. 338], but copies of the book are kept only by relatives.

Manuscripts, as a rule, are handed over by the authors or their relatives to the municipal archives or museums. So, the autobiographical essay by N. M. Babul is stored in the municipal archive of the Pervomaisky district [1], memoirs by F. A. Yubin [24. P. 157] are stored in the Pervomaisky district archive. In rare cases, the family (or home) archive becomes the storage location. For many years, the family archive of a resident of Asino T. M. Potroshkova kept the manuscript of her uncle A. A. Malinovsky called "True story about relatives" [11. P. 24]. Unfortunately, to date, the original has been lost and a copy, with the consent of relatives, is in the personal archive of T. A. Goncharova. E. R. Kharina's memoirs [7] are kept in the family archive of the author's son V. I. Kharin, who lives in the village of Teguldet.

Today, the Internet space has become the place for posting both previously unpublished and published memoir narratives. On the website of the TOKM pro-

ject “Siberians voluntary and involuntary” among the many memories we have identified six personal texts containing information on ethnic history, the authors of which are V. I. Makukha, V. K. Mikhaleva [12], A. V. Podsevnykh [14], T. I. Sokolova, N. A. Fokin, V. M. Pereboeva [3], V. Churaeva [2]. The site of the Ural provincial publishing house contains the memoirs of S. H. Sitdikova about Timofeevka settlement in the Teguldet district of the Tomsk oblast (an essay from the book “In memory of the victims of illegal political repressions: memoirs of members of the Novouralsky public organization of pensioners and disabled people” Association of victims of political repressions, 2014) [17].

Of the entire body of identified sources, nine are stored in district and city libraries, one – in the personal library of relatives (A. A. Selevich’s memoirs), one – in the municipal archive (N. M. Babul’s memoirs), one – in the personal archive of a research scientist (memoirs by A. A. Malinovsky), two – in museums (memoirs by E. R. Kharina and F. A. Yubin), seven – on the official websites of various organizations.

Most of the identified personal texts containing information on the ethnic history of Tomsk villages have been published (17 out of 21). Published memoirs are printed texts and electronic publications posted on the official websites of various organizations. The first published texts appeared in the early 2000s: Selevich A. A. “Mariana’s grandchildren: biographical story » (2003) [16. P. 338], Vinokurova R. M. “It was in Russia: the life story of a family of Polish immigrants” (2004) [23], Ignatov G. “The far and the near. Essays. Memories.” (2005) [6. P. 223].

In many cases, the publication of memoirs was carried out at the expense of sponsors. As a rule, the sponsors were natives of the same places as the authors of the memoirs, their countrymen. For example, the memoirs of N. S. Sutulov, a resident of Fedoraevka, were published thanks to a former villager. The publication of memoirs is also supported by public organizations (memories of R. M. Vinokurova was funded by the Society of the Polish Commonwealth). Some memoirs were published in the framework of research projects supported either by state funds (memoirs of E. A. Kirillova, N. V. Popelygin and V. S. Spirina were published at the expense of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation) or private funds (memoirs of V. I. Makukha, A. V. Podsevnykh, T. D. Sokolova, N. A. Fokin and V. M. Pereboeva, V. Churaeva were published at the expense of Vladimir Potanin Charitable Foundation). Some memoir texts were also published at the authors’ expense, which is indirectly evidenced by the absence of any indication of the source of funding or words of gratitude to the sponsor. Most of the identified memories were published with the assistance of sponsors or personal funds.

The study identified four unpublished personal texts: “Memoirs by Yubin Flegont Afanasyevich, veteran of the Great Patriotic War and pedagogical work,” [24. P. 157] Malinovsky A. A. “True story about relatives,” [11. P. 24] Babul

N. M. "Autobiographical essay" [1] and Kharina E. R. [no name] [7]. Among the identified unpublished sources there are 2 handwritten and 2 typewritten texts.

The identified memoir sources are distinguished by the variety of stories described in them that contain certain aspects of ethnic history: the history of villages (G. Ignatov, N. Mikhaylina, N. S. Sutulov, F. A. Yubin), the history of migration and exiles to Siberia (in the memoirs of R. M. Vinokurova, stories of post-reform migrants by V. I. Makukhi, A. A. Malinovsky, A. A. Selevich, V. Churaeva, F. A. Yubin, of special settlers by V. A. Vereteno [21. P. 352], S. H. Sitdikova, E. R. Harina, of deported people by E. A. Kirilova, V. K. Mikhailova, V. S. Spirina). The memoirs contain stories about the places of exit, names of the first settlers, their arrival and arrangement at new places (V. A. Vereteno, A. V. Podsevnykh, N. A. Fokin and V. M. Pereboyeva, V. Churaeva, F. A. Yubin).

The memoirs contain rich ethnographic material (N. M. Babul, T. D. Sokolova) and describe such factors (markers) of ethnic identity as the place of exit, language, and religion (N. M. Babul, N. S. Sutulov). Indigenous peoples and other non-ethnic environment are mentioned in everyday scenes (I. K. Goleshikhin, G. I. Ignatov), when describing the population of settlements, in sketches of economic life, traditions, housing and inter-ethnic relations (I. K. Goleshchikhin, G. I. Ignatov, N. V. Popelygin, T. D. Sokolova). Personal texts allow you to study the ethnic history of rural settlements directly at the level of the villages themselves, individual groups (exiles, old-timers, post-reform migrants, special settlers, deportees), families and specific people, in the latter case revealing the features of ethnic identity.

16 localities in the Tomsk Oblast are mentioned in the memoirs. The village of Labovick, Pervomaisky district, is lucky as it is mentioned more than any other locality, three authors devoted their memories to it: N. M. Babul, A. A. Selevich and F. A. Yubin. E. R. Kharina and S. H. Sitdikova mention in their personal texts the settlement of Timofeevka, Teguldet district. Village Borkovka (Chesnoki), Asinovskiy district, is described in the book of A. A. Malinovsky, village Morkovka, Tomsk region, – in the memoirs of R. M. Vinokurova, villages Zakharkovo and Markovo, Pervomaisky district, – in the texts of N. V. Polygyna and V. A. Vereteno. N. Mikhaylin writes in his book about the village Vorono-Pashnya, Asinovskiy district, G. I. Ignatov – about the villages Tsyganovo and Berlinka, Zyryansky district, N. S. Sutulov – about the village Fedoraevka, Shegarskiy district, V. Churaeva – about the village Kudrovo, Tomsk district. You can read about the village Trekhustye – Caldga, Kolpashevo district, in a memoir text of the A. V. Podsevnykh, about Pristan village, Kargasoks district, – in the text by I. K. Goleshchikhina, the village of Molchanovo, Molchanovskiy district, – in the text by T. D. Sokolova, about work settlement Razdolye, Alexandrovskiy district, – in the text by E. A. Kirillova, and about the village Novouspenka, Kozhevnikovskiy district, – in the text by V. I. Makuha.

Among the mentioned settlements there are villages of old-timers, post-reform villages and special settlements. Some of these villages have already disappeared from the map of the Tomsk oblast, like Borokovka (Chesnoki), Lomovitsk, Zakharkovo, etc., which gives additional value to the memories about them.

The identified personal texts represent various forms of the memoir genre. Sometimes the authors of memoirs, using professional terminology, independently determine the genre of their work in the title or the text itself. A. A. Selevich called his creation a “biographical story” and E. R. Kharina left a “poem” about herself. Of course, their ideas ignore the generally accepted classification of artistic genres, but it is impossible not to note the desire of authors to enter their work in the context of literary heritage.

Thematically the identified text can be divided into the (auto) biographical narratives, family history and the history of the villages. Although it is difficult to draw a clear line between them: there is often the family history behind the history of the village, and memories of the village are filled with information about individual families and autobiographical stories.

There are texts in which the main content and (or) genre features are already reflected in the title. Thus, N. M. Babul called her memoirs “Autobiographical essay.” There are family stories with such titles as “True story about relatives” (A. A. Malinovsky), “About the Fokin family” (N. A. Fokin, V. M. Pereboyeva). Sometimes the authors emphasize the ethnicity of their ancestors in the titles of works: “It was in Russia: the history of the life of a family of Polish immigrants” (R. M. Vinokurova), “The Fate of the Belarusian Yaroshevichy and Popko families in the Tomsk region” (V. Churaeva) or their social status: “My ancestors were free Siberians.” The titles sometimes contain a reference to the region or locality: “Narym were” (I. K. Goleshikhin), “the Road home: a book about the native village in verse and prose” (N. Mikhailina).

Of course, the title does not always reflect its content and genre specifics. Moreover, sometimes authors do not name their texts at all (F. A. Yubin, E. R. Kharina).

The creative approach of the authors to their creation is amazing. Personal texts are supplemented with photos from family albums, poems, copies of archival documents, and even information from scientific papers (V. Churaeva). In addition, there is a reference to research texts. Thus, G. Ignatov’s memoirs are preceded by a small scientific passage about the date of the foundation of the village of Tsyganovo. And only then does the author go on to the memories that have been preserved in his family [6. P. 5].

When writing memoir texts, the authors use various techniques like a letter to a brother or friend (A. A. Malinovsky). In the work of A. A. Selevich there are elements of artistic fiction, as evidenced by numerous dialogues, in which the author could not be a participant [16. P. 6-8, 16, 31-35].

Memories are written not only on behalf of the author, the voices of other people also “sound.” Alexey Fadeev, a participant in the Great Patriotic War, who

went through repression and rehabilitation, described how “enemies of the people” were found in those years in his book: “In 1934, to the village of Tsygano-vo...” [6. P. 21]. The book by V. A. Vereteno is entirely built on the author’s own memories and the memories of his fellow villagers, whom he also did not deprive of the author’s speech [21. P. 352].

Among the identified personal texts, two have a poetic form (A. A. Malinovsky, E. R. Harina). Here are some small excerpts.

So, a family history of A. A. Malinovsky talks about the creation of the post-reform village Chesnoki (Borokovka) by the new settlers: “*here in the forests of remote Siberia/as in Ukraine/the settlers the Kovalchuk/and the Ratnuki founded a village. The village was called/Chesnoki* [11. P. 4]. In her “poem,” as the author called it, E. R. Kharina writes about the eviction to Siberia: “*The year thirty three came,/when we were disheveled:/first they seized everything,/then we were exiled*” [7].

The analyzed works vary considerably in volume: from small notes of several paragraphs (A. V. Podsevnykh, S. H. Sitdikova, V. Churaeva and others) to impressive books of 200-300 pages or more (V. A. Vereteno, R. M. Vinokurova, I. K. Goleschchikhin, G. I. Ignatov, A. A. Selevich and others).

The chronology of the memoirs considered in the article is often determined by the content of the text and genre features of the memoir. Memories of a village usually begin with a story about its foundation. For example, F. A. Yubin’s memoirs cover the period from the founding of the village of Lomovitsk in the early twentieth century and almost to its disappearance (mid-1970s). A. A. Selevich begins his story also, from the foundation of Lomovitsk bringing it to the end of the Great Patriotic War. Family stories often begin with the relocation (voluntary or involuntary) of ancestors to Siberia and provide a reference to the post-reform period, the period of dekulakization or deportation. In the identified (auto) biographical narratives, the narrative begins in the 1930s.

The authors of the memoir texts focused on almost the entire twentieth century and describe the most significant historical events of the last century: the dispossession and the Great Patriotic War.

Taking into account that some narratives cover a period about which the authors could hardly have their own memories, the question inevitably arises about the sources of information they use. Often, the authors give appropriate explanations in their texts.

As an example, we can cite preserved family traditions. Here we should highlight the memories of G. I. Ignatov, who writes: “our family has preserved the stories of Ignatov’s great-grandfather Yelisey Naumovich (1840-1927), which were then retold by my grandfather Philip Yeliseevich Ignatov (1867-1940) [6. P. 5]. F. A. Yubin’s memoirs are based on the stories of local residents (“Many words are taken from the Belarusian language, from the stories of old residents.” [24. P. 13]) Thus, F. A. Yubin noted that he relied on the memories of “elderly people” and the stories of his grandmother Yubina Raisa [24. P. 1]. Another author, A. A. Selevich

explained the origin of the information as follows: “I will write about what I remember from the stories of my many relatives, friends, and fellow countrymen” [16. P. 3]. The authors do not question the objectivity of the information they provide and according to their opinion, they are telling the “true story.”

In general, the identified set of personal texts of residents of the villages of the Tomsk oblast in the last quarter of the XX – early XXI century (17 published and 4 unpublished texts) has a great informative potential in terms of studying the ethnic history of the region, covers a wide chronological period (almost the entire XX century) and territorial (16 localities) framework.

The introduction of these sources into scientific circulation is promising for further research in the field of ethnic history of the Tomsk region and Siberia as a whole.

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ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POST-SOVIET REINTEGRATION

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CRITICAL THINKING AS A PRINCIPLE OF PREVENTING NATIONALISM IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

Programs aimed at interstate cooperation in the fight against nationalism and extremism have already been proposed and successfully implemented in the CIS format. But in addition, there is a social order in the society to strengthen the role of expert and expert-analytical structures that occupy an intermediate position in the communication between the state and society and have a special potential for the resolution of topical problems. This article reveals the principle of critical thinking in the socio-expert prevention of extremism in the post-Soviet space.

Key words: *politology, national relations, nationalism, post-Soviet space, critical thinking, harmonization, cultural diversity, integration.*

Prevention is usually understood as actions aimed at preventing and avoiding socially dangerous phenomena. In relation to the specific subject of preventive activity, there is a need to clarify the concept. Prevention of nationalism cov-

ers a whole system of actions from intra-group conversations to the creation of high-informative measures and security programs that reduce the destructive activities and actions. Prevention of nationalism can be conventionally represented by three levels, which are differentiated depending on the subject which implements it, its goals, methods and principles of work.

At the legal level, it is necessary to identify and eliminate the causes of nationalist activities, as well as the factors and conditions that contribute to their implementation. The main method is coercion. The subjects of preventive activities at the legal level are the state law enforcement agencies.

At the social level, it is necessary to determine the circle of individuals and organizations that may be potentially related to nationalism, and preventive work is carried out with them. The method used at the social level is persuasion. Specialized organizations and structures (social and psychological services, information departments, etc.) use social persuasion to explain at an accessible level the causes and negative consequences of nationalist offenses and crimes, they also provide psychological assistance if necessary.

At the socio-cultural (socio-educational) level, stable principles and attitudes are created that prevent the manifestation of nationalistic behavior and contribute to the harmonization of relations in the society. The uniqueness of this level can be represented not by the unilateral influence of the subject of preventive activity on the object (another subject of public relations), but in the form of a dialogue. At the same time, the quality of the dialogue process affects the formation of trust and tolerant relations in the society.

The social and expert level should be highlighted specially. It permits resolution of serious problems related to the prevention of nationalism through the competent expert and expert-analytical services.

Social expert prevention is an element of general preventive work that is carried out along with other types of preventive activities aimed at the formation of critical attitude to any manifestations of destructive behavior in a multicultural environment.

Social expert prevention of nationalism in the CIS format should be aimed at forming tolerant attitudes necessary for a comprehensive understanding and analysis of life situations facing individuals and peoples of the post-Soviet countries [15. P. 170-177].

During the XX century, the interaction among peoples in the territory of modern Eurasia was carried out in all forms, whether it was trade or inter-ethnic marriages. But if most people of the older generation still consider citizens of the CIS countries as compatriots (in the worst case, as former ones), who have common historical roots and similar cultural codes with Russia, the young people consider them exclusively as foreigners and representatives of an alien and unfamiliar cultural environment. The situation may get even worse with each successive generation, as historical and cultural codes will be forgotten, due to general impact of globalization.

Social expert prevention should synthesize all the accumulated historical experience of peaceful coexistence of peoples and modern preventive technologies that allow fixing tolerant attitudes on the mass and individual levels.

Social expert prevention allows solving the problem at the primary stage, when at the time of appearance of external conditions for potential nationalist activity (monitoring of content, social networks, media, protest moods and their motives); at the secondary stage, which is understood as the work with the most vulnerable social groups with a low legal culture and social responsibility that are at risk; and at the third stage, through the analysis and expert presentation of the reasons leading to the manifestation of nationalism and through the development of methodological tools for the further preventive work. The social expert prevention of extremism is based on the principle of critical thinking. The development of independent and critical thinking is a special measure to prevent the ideology of nationalism, because it allows a person to develop the ability to comprehend and objectively perceive information, to highlight important and unimportant points in the context, to determine its reliability and use it for further analysis (if necessary).

If we touch on the problem of nationalism, independent and critical thinking allows us to answer the primary question: "What is the main motive that triggers the commitment of nationalist acts?"

The study of nationalist crimes and behavior of nationalists taken from open sources allows us to identify several groups of motives of their behavior.

1. Financial motives. For some people, nationalist activity is an opportunity to earn money and improve their financial condition.

2. Ideological and fanatical motives. In contrast to financial motives, these motives are more stable and are based on the intersection of their own ideals with the ideological structures of the nationalist organization with which they identify themselves.

3. The motives of justice are defined through the prism of understanding the imperfection of the world and are represented by the nationalists' attempts to achieve justice independently, through their organization. At the same time, the perception of justice is subjective, often idealized and far from reality.

4. The desire for power and domination as a motive. Nationalism is used to confirm one's own importance and strengthen one's own power and authority.

5. The motive of being non-standard and express protest. Nationalism is considered by its supporters as an opportunity for non-standard behavior and demonstration of violent protests.

6. The motive of solidarity. A motif that is common for groups of friends and among family members and serves as a tool for bringing people together ("I do it because my relative or friend does it").

7. The motive of the activity. The ideology of nationalism has an appeal to those who, due to their limitations or unwillingness (inability), do not see other ways of influencing the world around them, phenomena and processes.

8. At the same time, it is necessary to focus on the individual personal motives that trigger commitment of extremist-nationalist crimes, among them: obsession with self-importance (insignificance) in public relations, which, as a rule, manifests itself in a defensive-aggressive behavior model; low self-esteem, leading to loss of connection with reality and splitting of the individual; excessive need to join the collective (group), i.e. the manifestation of group identification; perception of injustice and personal failures that contribute to the destruction of human consciousness and behavior; social isolation, a sense of alienation and, as a result, the blurring (loss) of life goals and guidelines.

Personal predisposition to the drivers of destructive behavior, as a rule, is typical for young people and for individuals who find themselves in a new multicultural environment (for example, migrants). But it is not mandatory, i.e. it cannot be considered as a constant unit [16. P. 48-53].

Therefore, as a part of social and expert prevention of nationalism in the CIS it is very important to have an ability to objectively perceive and analyze information, separating the important from the unimportant, to distinguish objective and subjective-political context of particular importance, to critically analyze news, especially news aimed at causing emotionally negative attitude and alienate culture, values and people.

It is essential for critical thinking to objectively assess processes in the post-Soviet space taking into account the general historical and geographical factors valuable for maintaining peace and harmony in the world.

The uniqueness of critical thinking is that it allows you to find key points and individual shortcomings in the object under study, focusing on the constructive message: the willingness to correct errors or inaccuracies; the search for compromises; flexibility and readiness for dialogue.

Foreign researchers Lindsay D., Hull K. S., Thompson R. F. determine the conditions that prevent the development of critical thinking.

All of them are emotionally contrived. Let's examine them in more detail.

1. Critical means aggressive, impolite, rude. This stereotype is formed, as a rule, in childhood, when the attitude to criticism as disrespectful behavior is formed.

2. If you criticize, then be prepared for retribution. In this connection, there is a certain fear of criticism and its demonstration.

3. To criticize means to give up comfort and change the attitude to other people.

We should, of course, strive for an objective and comprehensive understanding of our past, but given the inevitable subjective component of historical science, we should focus on what unites and mutually enriches peoples, and not on the dark pages of history. The cross-cultural interaction between Russia and the CIS countries should not be declared, but shown in their collective noble deeds and their own attractive appearance. There is no better way to prove the cultural

affinity of countries than fruitful cultural and moral creativity in accordance with the moral precepts of our ancestors. The deeper Russia and the CIS countries get into the essence of cultural proximity, the more open and loyal they become to the highest achievements of other cultures.

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GEOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EURASIAN REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

A complex geopolitical situation has developed in Eurasia in the post-Soviet era suggesting different scenarios for the development of the international situation in the region. This is the reason for many discussions about the content and prospects of the modern Eurasian space

Key words: Europe, Asia, Eurasian space, geopolitics, geo-economics, globalization, centrifugal processes.

Eurasia as a socio-cultural community combines European and Asian features and consists of a number of special ethno-cultural territories that have developed as a result of its historical development. These are Central Asia, the Caucasus, Crimea, Transnistria, Central Asia, Ukraine, Belaya (White) Rus, the Kaliningrad Russian exclave, and the Baltic States. In this sub region, the new states are reconsidering their history and national identity. The old traditional paradigm of national security, oriented towards the imperial vertical and citizenship, is being transformed under the influence of globalization and restructuring of Eurasia. In this situation, there is a need for social integration as an answer to the challenges of the new reality.

After the collapse of the USSR, centrifugal processes with different geopolitical vectors appeared in the Eurasian space [11. P. 11-18]. In particular, almost every former Soviet republic started to create its own development and security strategy. Moreover, the former autonomies of Georgia declared secession from Georgia and the proclaimed their own states.

In addition, various integration structures have been formed, uniting various states. These are the CIS, the Union of Belarus and Russia, GUUAM (Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova), the Central Asian Union, etc [6. P. 50-59].

Having declared their sovereignty, the states faced a number of complex problems. First of all, it is necessary to work out an optimal development and security strategy. At the same time, the interests of the Eurasian states in many positions are divergent. Not to mention the fact that all of them, including Russia had to overcome post-imperial complexes.

With the collapse of the USSR as the “organizing state” of the Eurasian regional space, integration forces weakened, and there was an imbalance of relations in the system “regional center – regional periphery.” In addition, various external forces rushed to Eurasia. Competition developed between them for the possession of natural resources that Eurasia possesses. At the same time, a number of actors intended to use such opportunity to expand their religious influence on the countries and peoples of Eurasia in order to strengthen their geopolitical status [2. P. 16-21].

Thus, the political process in the southern and western peripheries of Eurasia acquired a high degree of intensity and a special character, creating a general situation of instability [7. P. 40-45]. Centrifugal tendencies began to increase in the peripheral contact zones.

As a result, the restructuring process becomes spontaneous in the periphery. As a result, there are a number of open armed ethnic conflicts. It is especially evident in the contact zones in the southern (Central Asia and the Caucasus) and south-western trans-border periphery (Transnistria) of Eurasia [5. P. 41-52]. It is a reflection of specifics of the political processes in the peripheral contact zones during the regional crises, when the previous system ceases to operate effectively.

In the geo-social space of the peripheral contact zones, there is an intersection/interface of systems that differ in their essential characteristics: geographical, cultural, ideological, social, and political. All cultural systems enter into interaction and interpenetration in the territories of such a zone. It should be borne in mind that contact zones in the Eurasian region are formed in the process of historical social development of Eurasia with cultural and political processes in neighboring regions.

The policy of the regionally forming imperial center could result in the relative assimilation of the culture of the peripheral territories in different ways. It can be motivated not only by internal integration problems, but also by the wish to ensure the security of the state. In other words, the peripheral contact zone in its culture and psychology reflects the process of interfacing among the neighboring states and peoples and all that is associated with it. Thus, the peripheral contact zone has an important communication and information function, provides movement of regional and global systems through interaction, and at the same time provides the necessary stability of their internal disequilibrium.

The balance of interests in the contact zones of Eurasia during the bipolar period contributed to the stability of the international security system [3. P. 73-87]. The collapse of the bipolar system is one of the reasons for the destabilization of the post-Soviet space.

Geopolitically, there are intra-Eurasian contact zones. They are located in the modern border of Russia. For example, these are the territories of the southern Russian Urals, the Northern Caspian Sea, the Belgorod-Voronezh region, Stavropol-Kuban, Rostov-on-Don-Donbass-Luhansk. In historical terms, they record-

ed the stages of spatial and cultural development of Russia. Given the borderline nature, the population of the periphery can focus on different centers of power or states, using their support or contradictions to their advantage.

The emergence of conflicts throughout the periphery of Eurasia was the result of the collapse of the system of regulation of the Eurasian space, its transition from a mono- state (the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union) to a multi- state, international one [12. P. 126]. Initially, there was a growing opposition to the former center not only as a bearer of power – an administrative and state institution, but also as a bearer of certain imperial values. In a number of cases, the latter were directly identified with the carriers of Russian ethno-culture. For example, this could be observed especially in the Baltic States and Moldova. As an alternative, the periphery made a bid to leave the USSR and create sovereign states. But in real life, in the political process of sovereignization, ethno-cultural guidelines began to come out more and more in the first place, replacing the former supranational ones, which were presented as totalitarian and suppressing the national culture of peoples.

Indeed, there is a position that ethno-national identification in the Soviet Union was “very significantly replaced by the Soviet identification,” and the concept of the existence of a “new historical community – “the Soviet people” and “friendship between peoples” was only the result of a myth created by official ideologists. At the same time, there is no denying that for a certain time there was a certain consensus in inter-ethnic relations and a culture of tolerant inter-ethnic communication [10. P. 5-18]. It was carried out by both administrative and cultural and educational measures. And if we ignore the inevitable rhetoric and pathos of political ideology, we, first of all, see the important result. It is also necessary to take into account that for a number of ethnic groups (absolute and relative “minorities”), dual ethnic or supra-ethnic identification contributed to their self –assertion or survival in contrast to the claims of the titular ethnic groups for historical or cultural superiority. The USSR central government consistently pursued a policy of balance between ethnic elites, supporting minority elites in the Union Republics in one way or another. In addition, the Russian-cultural component increased in a number of ethnic regions of the USSR, which also played a certain role in terms of the local balance of cultural relationships.

It should also be noted that a number of extremely negative mistakes were made in the national policy of the Soviet state. The main goal of the Center was to maintain the loyalty of the titular elites to themselves at the expense of growing diversity at the personal and group levels. In the end, there was a high internal tension in society. This inevitably led to the release of energy along the line of intergroup relations. Initially, they began as a center-periphery opposition, and then increasingly acquired a valuable ethnic content, updating historical contradictions and reproducing old conflicts, etc. This can be found in the politics of other states as well. It means that mistakes are inevitable. It is important to be as aware of their causes and results as much as possible.

The periphery of the Eurasian space was stabilized during the Soviet period, when there was a strict border regime and a balance of power at the world level. It was facilitated by the corresponding foreign policy of the USSR, aimed at maintaining normal good-neighborly relations with the respective states. For example, despite all the ideological and geopolitical differences with Iran and Turkey, the Soviet Union had quite normal and stable relations with these countries. An increase in the share of the Russian-speaking population in the peripheral zone contributed to the stabilization of it, which became an important element in maintaining the inter-ethnic balance in some peripheral zones, where there were long-standing historical contradictions between different ethnic and religious groups. Of course, along with this, there was a number of negative aspects in administrative policy, which, although its goal was to stabilize the periphery, in fact, did not solve the existing problems, but only preserved them and drove them deeper. For example, the Soviet administration carried out a number of measures to resettle some of the population from the border areas, thereby trying to change the structure of the ethnic composition of the population there.

The periphery of Eurasia has two types of orientation [8. P. 133-140]. One is directed inward, the other is directed outward from the Eurasian space. Orientation can be both economic and ethno-cultural. This applies to both the zone as a whole and its parts. For example, culturally, the Baltic contact area is generally oriented towards the European region. And the South-Western periphery, which coincides mainly with the territory of Moldova, is oriented both outside and inside Eurasia. If we talk about post-Soviet Ukraine, even if it is clearly pro-Western, it is in search of its identity and is trying to resolve the problems of national integration.

Cross-border ethnic ties pose a potential threat to the state integrity. Conflicts on the periphery inevitably become cross-border conflicts. However, it is often difficult to resolve such conflicts without intermediaries and only at the bilateral level. The nature and inherent international participation in conflicts are intertwined by a variety of processes, both material and spiritual: economic, political, legal and moral. Traditional ethnic groups largely live in the past they continue to worry about historical grievances, unrealized opportunities, conflicts, etc.

At the time, the Union center was not able to realistically and fully assess the situation on the periphery, i.e. to develop an appropriate policy. Acting in a stereotypical manner, it used the same methods of force, for example, as in Chechnya, thus aggravating the situation. As a result, the outflow of the Russian-speaking population began. All this automatically led to changes in the ethnic balance of the contact zones. In such situation, a number of ethnic groups proceeding from their historical experience took some preventive steps for their security from spontaneous migration to political and military measures.

In general, the collapse of the USSR into independent states, as well as other similar composite entities, did not automatically lead to the emergence of sta-

ble societies. Despite all the external anti-totalitarian rhetoric, the struggle with the center was really primarily for the redistribution of power between powerful elite groups. As a result, the majority of those who “zealously advocated freedom, independence and “national revival”, “once in power, showed themselves as opponents of the rights and freedoms of representatives of non-titular nations.” Because of this, the contact zone societies still have to go through the stage of coordinating interests and achieving their balance in the new conditions. Moreover, in this process, taking into account inter-regional interaction and the interests of neighboring states, there is inevitably an external factor in the face of the respective states and ethnic groups that are related to a part of the population of the contact zone by cultural affinity.

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POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC PROCESSES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

The author considers the main directions of foreign policy of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in the South Caucasus. Special attention is paid to the strategic partnership between Russia and the three republics. Among the main issues on the agenda between the two countries are the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, energy cooperation and participation in joint projects. The article also discusses attempts to create new formats of cooperation in the South Caucasus.

Key words: *South Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, foreign policy, geopolitics, security.*

Due to its geostrategic position and resource potential of the Caspian sea, the South Caucasus occupies a special place in the world and regional politics. For Western powers, the South Caucasus is important as a reference base with profitable military transport communications on the borders of strategic rivals: Russia and Iran. Moreover, it permits realization of the energy projects bypassing these countries.

Russian interests are of a different nature. For Russia, the South Caucasus is a border region, so Moscow is vitally interested in ensuring a stable situation in this region. The three republics are also interested in this, but the ongoing contradictions and conflicts prevent them from joining efforts to counter destructive external forces and normalize the situation [4. P. 4].

The US interests in the region are connected with the solution of strategic tasks through promoting the activities of American oil companies, in particular by including NATO in the efforts aimed at maintaining stability on the routes of oil and gas pipelines and deterring Russia. The 2008 Caucasus crisis can be considered as a starting point for developing plans to counter Moscow, when trust between Moscow and the West was seriously shaken. The cornerstone of the EU's policy is lesser energy dependence on Russia and the more active involvement of the region's countries in Europe's affairs [8. P. 9-11].

Regarding the diplomacy of the South Caucasus states, the orientation of their foreign policy differ, but, when determining the course in international affairs, they (although in different ways) maintain a balance in relations with Russia and the West.

The Georgian leadership is acting with the aim of joining the European Union and NATO. The country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations are supported by the West, but the legal formalization of the integration process is delayed.

Since the launch of the Eastern partnership program, there has been unsatisfactory progress in the process of democratization of the region's countries, including Georgia. In the European Union, there is an opinion that the rhetoric of Euro-Atlantic integration and the desire to adopt liberal democratic values, which is actively declared by the new democracies, are used as a tool in the traditional balancing between major players. In other words, the goal is to strengthen its position in relations with Moscow [1. P. 119-120].

At the same time, Georgia became the first republic in the South Caucasus to agree on an Individual partnership plan with NATO. Tens of millions of dollars of aid were spent on reorganizing the army; a NATO training center was even opened to train Georgian military personnel who demonstrated their combat capability during the operation in Afghanistan. At the July 2018 NATO summit, Georgia reiterated its desire to become a member of the Alliance, which provoked a negative reaction from Moscow. The Georgian government is confident of future membership, counting on US financial assistance, which was not interrupted by the Trump administration, and the broad support of its own population.

Georgia has developed a fairly stable political system that allowed it to pass through the period of power change that began with the parliamentary elections of 2012 and ended with the presidential elections of 2013 in a democratic way, in accordance with the constitutional norms. Changes in the Constitution that provided for the transition of the Republic from presidential to parliamentary rule played their positive role. A negative component of Georgia's democratic future is the lack of a full-fledged multiparty system, although there are many different parties and political blocs in the country. The prospects for Georgia's integration into the Western military-political and economic space are not obvious [7. P. 77-78].

10 years have passed since the end of the August war, but political tensions in Russian-Georgian relations remain at the same level, despite the restoration of trade and economic relations and transport links. Russian troops are still present in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the Western support of Georgia has not contributed to either the withdrawal of these troops or the annulment of Moscow's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On the contrary, they have become de facto Russian regions, to which hundreds of millions of dollars are allocated. Although a new clash is not expected, the situation remains unstable, and the estrangement between Georgia and Russia will not be overcome in the near future.

Russia's influence in Armenia is higher than in any other country in the South Caucasus. The Russian Federation is one of the most important trade partners of Armenia, and the achievements of cooperation in the economic and humanitarian spheres are significant. Russia plays a key role in ensuring the Republic's energy security. Armenia receives Russian natural gas at preferential rates, and Gazprom Armenia, a 100% subsidiary of Gazprom, has a monopoly on the supply and distribution of this gas on the domestic market.

Taking into account the semi-blockade state of Armenia, the development of the energy sector is an important component of the state's security. Russian capital is present in almost all spheres of the Republic's economy. A number of hydroelectric power stations and thermal power plants, as well as part of the telecommunications, banking and insurance markets are owned by major Russian companies. In addition, Russia provides military and technical support to Yerevan. Russian military bases are located here, and large-scale exercises are being held. Cooperation is carried out both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the CSTO. Thus, the relations between Armenia and Russia are characterized as a strategic partnership [5. P. 94-95].

Armenia is a full member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) aimed at strengthening the positions of the participating countries in the international arena. Along with the economic nature of the project, there are additional opportunities for its promotion based on a gradual convergence of civil society structures. We are talking about the process of formation of the Eurasian trend of public diplomacy in the interests of creating a common information and intellectual environment of the EEU countries. In the Eurasian Economic Union Armenia acts as a partner of the Russian structures for the development of public information. A significant event in the development of bilateral cooperation based on public diplomacy was, in particular, the holding of the seminar "Public diplomacy – for the truth about Russia" in Yerevan in March 2014 [2. P. 44-48].

Regarding the relatively recent socio-political events in Armenia, Moscow's reaction to the non-violent "Velvet revolution" was restrained and cautious. After a short pause in Russian political circles, the resignation of Armenian Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan, who had been in office for almost a week, was called exclusively an internal matter of the Armenian state. The new government confirmed the continuation of its foreign policy, particularly in its relations with Moscow. Before taking the post of Prime Minister, the leader of the protest rallies Nikol Pashinyan met with the Russian Ambassador in Yerevan and assured him that the movement is not directed against Russia.

Indeed, there are no reversals in the country's diplomacy. Ensuring military security remains one of the key issues for Armenia in cooperation with Moscow in view of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the closed borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey. At the same time, the Eurasian vector does not hinder the development of relations with the EU, as evidenced, in particular, by the signing

of the comprehensive and expanded partnership agreement. Given the difficulties Georgia has faced since the beginning of democratic reforms, Yerevan will expand cooperation with the West, taking into account the position of the Russian leadership.

Russia and Azerbaijan have strong traditions of cooperation in various fields. This is largely due to a shared vision of interdependence and the absence of major disagreements. The dynamics given to Russian-Azerbaijani cooperation in 2001, as part of the first official visit of the President of the Russian Federation to Baku after the collapse of the bipolar system, is getting a new acceleration to this day. The high intensity of contacts at the highest level also has a positive impact on inter-agency and inter-parliamentary cooperation. Working relations are maintained between the heads of law enforcement agencies. An important component of bilateral relations is mutual trade, education and science [3. P. 37-41].

A stable political dialogue, close economic partnership, and promising directions in the humanitarian sphere are in the interests of both countries. Putting contradictions on the back burner, Baku and Moscow focus on constructive and joint resolution of problematic issues, which is also facilitated by a high level of trust. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan's diplomacy is quite pragmatic and the country's national interests are of primary importance. Azerbaijan develops energy cooperation with European countries, implements projects that contribute to the diversification of Europe's energy supply, and to some extent seeks to integrate with it.

In particular, the launch of the TRANS-Anatolian TANAP gas pipeline by-passing Russia in the summer of 2018 became one of the most discussed events in the world's media and was evaluated differently in the expert community. In general, the Azerbaijani-Turkish cooperation is a reaction of Baku and Ankara to the failures of the European pipeline policy. Expanding gas export routes is one of the key directions of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. Therefore, TANAP can be considered as a local pipeline project that is of interest primarily to Azerbaijan and Turkey striving to diversify its sources of hydrocarbons and strengthen its role in gas supply to Europe [9. P. 47-48].

Another negative factor was that Azerbaijan supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, supporting a UN resolution that called the referendum in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol null and void. Azerbaijan is also a member country of the GUAM organization, which was considered by some experts as an anti-Russian regional structure. At the same time, Baku is interested in GUAM as an economic cooperation organization that allows solving trade issues and implementing regional transport projects, and as a political platform for resolving existing conflicts.

Despite some contradictions, the Russian-Azerbaijani partnership is at a high level and will continue to develop. Strengthening security in the Caucasus, increasing trade turnover, increasing counter-investment, and expanding humani-

tarian cooperation will remain among the priorities. At the same time, Azerbaijan's foreign policy will remain multi-vector, which means maintaining intensive friendly relations with other countries of the Muslim world and with Europe.

Consequently, Russia remains one of the strongest players in the South Caucasus, making a significant contribution to maintaining stability in the region. Despite the diplomatic gap, the Georgian vector towards Euro-Atlantic integration, the issue of ensuring territorial integrity and other barriers to the normalization of bilateral relations, trade and economic ties between Georgia and Russia are at a stage of dynamic development. The change of political leadership in Armenia did not affect the traditional policy of maintaining balance. The high level of cooperation between Yerevan and Moscow in the energy and security sectors will be combined with the development of cooperation with Western countries. The focus of Azerbaijani diplomacy will also be on maintaining close relations with Moscow and simultaneously implementing projects with other partners.

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PALESTINIAN NATIONAL AUTONOMY: SOVEREIGN STATE OR “GEO-EPHEMER”?

The article deals with the political status of the National Palestinian Autonomous Territories (the state of Palestine), which has received partial international recognition and continues to fight for its independence. The author considers features of Palestinian statehood in their relation to the concept of “geo-ephemer.”

Key words: *Palestine, National Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Fatah, Hamas, geo-ephemer.*

Currently, the process of intensive development of international relations and strengthening of international cooperation through the processes of globalization continues covering various spheres of life and various supranational bodies and organizations, when states become more and more interdependent and interconnected, limiting their sovereignty in integration communities (“desuverenization”). It runs in parallel with the trend of “sovereignization” in the form of national self-determination within states or in the disputed territories in the form of “self-proclaimed state entities,” making the political map of the world more complicated and less stable.

The fact of international recognition becomes important for the states striving to achieve a full-fledged status, which gives the state the opportunity to establish itself on the world stage and contributes to its further development (its absence indicates a certain “virtual” status). Therefore, the problem of universalization of approaches to the understanding of the essence and necessary features of statehood is quite acute for the international community.

By the beginning of the XXI century, such phenomena appeared on the political map of the world, among them are: the Islamic state (originally based in Iraq and the Levant countries (Afghanistan, Syria and Libya) – ISIL, which does not have official recognition, state institutions in the usual sense, official borders, but has a strong army and ideology. American Senator John McCain publicly called the Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) “a virtual country” [9], and along

with it, the Donetsk People's Republic, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic remained at the "virtual" level.

Other state-like new formations received only partial recognition, among them: the Republic of South Ossetia, the Abkhazian People's Republic and Kosovo.

According to experts, unrecognized states form around them a kind of a zone of socio-economic and political instability that spreads its influence to neighboring countries and regions [7. P. 14].

Previously, there were also various pre-state political-territorial entities, as interstate associations and as some constituent parts of the states.

If in ancient times the state was understood as the highest form of human community (the works of Plato, Aristotle, etc.), then later it became a question of political association with the elevation of the sign of sovereignty (unlimited power) (J. Boden). The subsequent variety of approaches to the essence of the state focused on the presence of a number of features that together determine the status of the "state" (economic, social, political, ideological, legal, etc.): sovereignty, international recognition, legal self-sufficiency, the presence of territory and borders, a political apparatus with the possibility of monopoly law-making, the use of coercion and ensuring internal order and external security, official representation on this territory, the presence of state symbols, etc.

Other researchers went further in defining the essence of new political and cultural entities, using a predominantly socio-synergetic approach. Making a distinction between the usually synonymous terms "country" and "state," Professor V. N. Kalutskov proposed to understand "countries" as unrecognized and "semi-recognized" states as a cultural and geographical formations with no political status (e.g. Basque country in Spain), and "states" as entities recognized by the world community [7. P. 14].

Moreover, in the first case, we are talking about the existence of certain "geo-ephemera" (spatial ephemera), characterized by the presence of dynamic properties: "uncontrolled territory and borders, unsettled legal status and the significance of cultural grounds" and a fairly short life cycle in the issue of sustainability. They derive their origin from the situations of "global or regional socio-cultural upheavals, social and national revolutions, economic, political and military crises [7. P. 16]."

At the same time, Professor V. N. Kalutskov also identifies the following subtypes among "geo-ephemera": "geo-ephemera countries" as "unrecognized states" (in whole or in part) with an uncertain political status and in the process of formation, usually on the basis of breaking political, economic and socio-cultural ties with the former metropolis, as well as "geo-ephemera states" that have international recognition, but do not have full control over their entire territory due to unsettled relations with their former parts (for example, Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) [7. P. 17].

The Palestinian territory is interesting because it has historically been the home of three states: Jordan (formerly Transjordan), Israel and the State of Palestine, of which only the first two have received political status and full international recognition, and the latter continues to work hard to achieve this.

The “Arab Palestinian state” was formed and gradually institutionalized during the long seventy years of the ongoing Arab-Israeli confrontation. The recognition of the Palestinian national autonomy by the UN in 1988-1989 did not lead to the Palestinian Arabs gaining independence and achieving the goals that the Palestinian leadership, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), set for itself, since internal political differences were added to external opposition.

Although in 2012 the “state of Palestine” received the status of a non – member observer in the UN, the question of the actual appearance of a new full-fledged state on the world map remained open and continued to be widely discussed in scientific and practical circles.

This is a “protracted” process of self-determination of the people claiming to be an original ethnic group – a national minority. In addition to the Palestinians, the Kurds, who are divided among the territories of several states (Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq), are fighting hard for the independence in the Middle East region [16. P. 3].

Official international sources contain two forms of realization of the right of peoples to self-determination: external (the right to freely choose their political status and place on the world stage in accordance with the principle of equality and the prohibition of foreign enslavement, exploitation and domination of peoples, taking into account the example of the liberation of peoples from colonial dependence) and internal (the right to realize their social, economic and cultural development without external interference) [5. P. 123-124].

According to Y. G. Barsegov, “besides secession, which is the extreme form of self – determination, minimal forms of self-determination up to a complete fusion in a foreign power are also possible, and any other form of regional or even non-territorial autonomy, including national-cultural autonomy are possible, provided of course that the obligatory main conditions of freedom and voluntariness of the will are observed [3. P. 8]”.

A widespread example of internal self-determination is the creation of autonomy-self-government, that is, “the right to independently decide matters of internal legislation and management [17. P. 28]”.

In addition to the territorial autonomies, there are also non-territorial autonomies where minorities live in different territories and it makes no sense to gather them together (corporate and cultural (national-cultural) autonomies that are associated with autonomous institutions personally) [4. P. 26-28].

Territorial autonomies may be of an administrative nature (the authorities themselves decide executive and administrative functions) or of political nature (the main one is the presence of representative (legislative) authorities) [8. P. 181].

The beginnings of "Palestinian statehood" can be traced back to the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964. The Palestinian National Council (PNC), a legislative (representative) body and Executive Committee (government) headed by Yasser Arafat, which represented the PLO in the international arena and coordinated the work of departments and budget issues, began to operate within the PLO.

The Declaration of independence of Palestine, drafted and adopted on 15 November 1988 at the 19th session of the NTC, became a prototype of the Basic law.

The subsequent signing of a number of agreements in the city of Oslo on 13 September 1993 led to the emergence of the National Palestinian Autonomous Territories (PNA) as a transitional form of official organization of Autonomous power, which, after 5 years, was supposed to expand its independence and achieve greater political independence.

The following public authorities were established: the Palestinian legislative council (Parliament), the post of the President of the PNA, the first elections were held on 20 January 1996, the Palestinian Council of Ministers (government) and the post of Prime Minister (introduced in 2003). Draft Constitution was developed on October 2, 1997 (second edition on May 29, 2002), according to which Palestine is a unitary state with Jerusalem as its capital [14].

The PNA budget is formed primarily through tax revenues and external financing.

The Palestinian Autonomous Territories include 16 provinces: 11 in the West Bank and 5 in the Gaza Strip.

At the same time, a significant part of the territory of the PNA is "controlled" by Israel, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are separated from each other by Israeli territory, there is no own monetary unit, there is a great dependence on external financing and assistance from neighboring Israel, with which close economic relations have been established, there is no army (there are numerous police and paramilitary structures). The total number of Palestinians, including refugees, abroad is 9 million, of which only 3.7 million live in the Palestinian territories. The latest presidential elections were held on January 9, 2005, and the parliamentary elections were held on January 25, 2006, with a term of office of four years, which indicates the illegitimate action of the current authorities. There is no officially valid constitution.

In addition, there are internal political differences between the Central PNA party, the Movement for the national liberation of Palestine (Fatah), and its main opponent, the Islamic resistance movement (Hamas). So, in early January 2019, Maer Salah, one of the leaders of Hamas, said that no reconciliation with Fatah is possible "while Mahmoud Abbas is at the head of this movement, whose mandate expired in 2009 [1]".

All of the above indicates to the signs of "statehood", but with a certain degree of conditionality.

If we return to the typology of “geo-ephemera” by Professor V. N. Kalutskov, the state of Palestine, being in the process of its formation, is still at the stage of “geo-ephemera country” (at the stage of a venture) in its development, since it does not have the necessary political, social or independent economic resources, including financial means. Therefore, the Palestinians could consider a possibility of co-existence with Israel or Jordan (possibly, as an autonomous territory within a state).

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IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. PHASE ONE (FROM 1970 TO 2007)

The nuclear program implemented by Iran is currently one of the key aspects of the country's foreign policy doctrine, as well as the reason for the most serious foreign policy pressure on Iran from a number of world powers, in particular the United States. However, to date, little attention is paid to the historical and political aspects of the development of the Iranian nuclear program, in particular, its gradual development. The program was launched in the period before the Islamic revolution, by the forces of the monarchical regime of the Pahlavi dynasty. It is important to note that a number of foreign and domestic political factors at that time led to a situation where the demand for Iran's own nuclear program was fully supported by both the secular and monarchical regime of the Pahlavi shahs, and by Ayatollah Khomeini, who replaced it as a result of the Islamic revolution.

Key words: *the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear program, the IAEA, Treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, the Middle East, USA, China, Russia.*

Starting in the 1970s, Iran's nuclear program began to be perceived as a certain problem in international politics, which in turn became an obstacle to the implementation of the country's foreign policy doctrine at that time. The Pahlavi monarchy was a conduit for American interests in the Middle East and therefore was under the US nuclear umbrella. That is why Tehran was one of the first states to join the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, signing it on July 1, 1969 and ratifying it on February 2, 1970. Nevertheless, there are some facts that suggest the possibility of conducting military-applied research in the nuclear field at that time. For example, since 1975, the Tehran Nuclear Research Center (TYANITS) has been conducting research on laser enrichment of uranium and the release of plutonium from irradiated (spent) nuclear fuel [3. P. 74].

In 1958, Iran established relations with the IAEA. On May 15, 1974, it signed an Agreement with the Agency on comprehensive safeguards for the non-nuclear states, parties to the NPT. Under the Safeguards agreement (initial code 3.1), the non-nuclear state undertook to inform the IAEA of nuclear materials that it imported or produced domestically and to report all locations of such materials.

The Agency's inspectors, for their part, conducted independent verification and assessed the completeness and accuracy of the state's statements regarding nuclear materials and their locations. According to code 3.1 of the Agreement, the states were required to inform the IAEA of a new nuclear facility 180 days before the appearance of a nuclear material on it.

At that time, the Agency could not even raise any claims against the American ally, although Tehran set a course for developing a closed nuclear fuel cycle (NFC) as a technical prerequisite for creating nuclear weapons and expressed interest in acquiring a possible plutonium creator in Canada: a heavy-water reactor, the likes of which were actively used in that country [8].

In addition, it was planned that by 1980, the French would build a facility for processing spent nuclear fuel in Isfahan. If this project was implemented, Iran would become a threshold nuclear state capable of releasing plutonium on an industrial scale. Therefore, in October 1976, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR made a presentation to France in connection with its plans to supply Iran with "sensitive" nuclear technology [11. P. 65].

The Islamic revolution of 1979 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war suspended the country's highly ambitious nuclear program. This was also facilitated by the fact that the new Iranian leadership began to pursue a pronounced anti-American foreign policy. Relations with Washington and the West in general have particularly deteriorated after the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran. As a result, cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field was practically terminated. The construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant stopped in 1979. The reason for this was a significant debt of Iran for the previously performed works.

From this period until the beginning of the active phase of the Iranian nuclear crisis, which can be counted from 2002, no serious actions were taken by the IAEA against Tehran. It was believed that Iran was fulfilling its obligations under the agreement with the IAEA on the application of safeguards. This was facilitated by the following circumstance: until the mid – 1980s, the Iranian nuclear program was in deep stagnation, since the country's leadership did not see the need for its implementation. This was due to the economic crisis in Iran, the presence of other priorities and the lack of Western support, which led to the termination of funding for the nuclear program and the mass emigration of Iranian nuclear scientists. So, of the 120 employees of the chemical and physical departments of the University of Tehran, which housed the proposed research Institute of Iran for the study of atomic technologies, only 8 people remained [2].

The Iran-Iraq war convincingly showed Iran the capabilities of such a type of offensive weapons of mass destruction as chemical weapons used by the Iraqis in the course of hostilities. The Iranian leadership was particularly concerned about the military nuclear program implemented by Saddam Hussein's regime, which received a new impetus after the destruction of the Osirak nuclear research reactor in 1981. In particular, Saddam Hussein released from prison and rehabil-

itated prominent specialists in this field, increased the number of people working under the program 15 times and completely classified it [5]. However, all these efforts were not enough to restore the previous level of the nuclear program. In the context of the ongoing war, the sanctions regime and the lack of an experimental base, the project had to be gradually abandoned. Nevertheless, the very implementation of Baghdad's military nuclear program greatly worried Tehran.

In the mid – 1980s, the Iranian leadership began to consider the possibility of restoring its own nuclear program, apparently not excluding the military component. To this end, in 1987, Iran purchased technical documentation and components of two low-power gas centrifuges called P-1, the Iranian name is IR-1, using the black market network organized by the Pakistani scientist Abdul Kadir Khan. Such technologies are used for uranium enrichment and have a dual purpose, since they can be used to develop weapons-grade uranium. The decision to purchase equipment for centrifuge enrichment of uranium, according to the Iranian side, was then made by the leadership of the Atomic energy organization of Iran (OAEI). At the same time, a description of the technical processes for converting uranium from gaseous to metallic form and machining enriched metallic uranium into hemispheres was presented. Tehran has officially stated that it has never requested such technical documentation in any form [4. P. 3]. Nevertheless, this information can be used for military purposes, and unawareness on the part of the IRI top leadership looks strange. In addition, there is a letter from Ayatollah Khomeini, written in 1988, in which he points out to the need for Iran to gain access to the nuclear weapons.

The United States, concerned about the uncertainty of the goals of the Iranian leadership, began to pay special attention to those countries that continued to cooperate with Tehran in the nuclear field. The first to be hit was Argentina, which in the late 1980s not only replaced the core of the Tehran research reactor at TYANITS, which allowed it to be converted to the use of nuclear fuel with a degree of enrichment of about 20%, but also supplied 116 kg of fuel for this reactor [1. P. 120]. As a result of American pressure, in 1992, Argentina refused to continue supplying Iran with nuclear fuel and equipment, as well as training Iranian technical specialists, despite previous agreements.

In 1990, Iran signed an agreement with Spain to complete the work at the Bushehr nuclear power plant and supply nuclear fuel. However, under the influence of the United States, Iran's cooperation with Spain in the nuclear field was soon terminated.

In the mid-1990s, Washington exerted strong pressure on Beijing over the Sino-Iranian agreement concluded in February 1993 to build two small power reactors of 360 MW in Darhovin. As a result, Beijing has also had to abandon the profitable trades and minimize their cooperation with Tehran in the nuclear field. But by this time, Iran had already received technical documentation from China on the conversion of uranium that is the conversion from solid to gaseous form,

the preparatory stage before uranium enrichment, and the production of heavy water. Later, such technologies were mastered, which allowed the construction of a uranium conversion plant in Isfahan and later a heavy water production facility in Arak. China also sold Iran two test units that were already assembled in 1992, a miniature neutron source in 1994 and, in 1995, a zero-power research heavy-water reactor that allows production of up to 100 g of plutonium annually [7].

Under the influence of American economic sanctions and powerful political pressure, Brazil, India and Pakistan were forced to abandon cooperation with Iran in the nuclear field. Only Russia was able to defend its right to such cooperation, although it limited itself to projects that were not classified as “critical” nuclear products in strict accordance with all the requirements of national legislation and the Russian Federation’s international obligations under the NPT. Thus, in the period 1995-2013, Russian specialists completed a nuclear power plant in Bushehr with a water-water power reactor VVER-1000 (VER-1000). Moreover, since December 2007, this facility has been subject to IAEA safeguards.

Until the mid-1990s, the leadership of Tehran tried to narrow the circle of people involved in the nuclear program as much as possible, in order to avoid any information leakage. At the same time, the bid was immediately made to create a closed NFC. As a result, in 1987-1993 all research and development (R&D) on the Iranian nuclear program was conducted only within the framework of the OAEI, without the involvement of technical universities and nuclear research centers [4. P. 3]. On the one hand, this increased the time required to carry out these operations, on the other hand, it allowed Iran to carry out such work quite secretly, gradually establishing its own production of gas centrifuge components.

Of particular interest is the fact that Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of Iran in the period from 1989 to 1997 approved, according to some reports, a secret Directive according to which Iran’s nuclear status serves as a strategic guarantee of preserving the existing power. In order to achieve this status, the following measures were envisaged:

- use of all opportunities to acquire the necessary technology for the production of nuclear weapons;
- sending of Iranian specialists to various states to collect the necessary information;
- creation of secret nuclear centers and enterprises that could not only complement each other, but also carry out work in an autonomous mode [6].

In 1994-1996, in order to implement the senior management directives two containers of Pakistani uranium enrichment equipment were purchased through the Abdul Qadir Khan network for US \$ 3 million, it was enough to load five hundred R-1 gas centrifuges. Apparently, that delivery was crucial for the full development by the Iranian specialists of the production technologies by 1999. By that time, Tehran was forced to expand the number of participants in the Iranian nuclear program at the expense of representatives of technical universities, as well

as to start manufacturing components at the enterprises of the military-industrial complex and conduct large-scale purchases abroad of vacuum equipment, special grades of steel and high-strength aluminum necessary for the production of gas centrifuges.

The success achieved in the late 1990s in the implementation of the uranium enrichment program and the accumulated reserves of necessary materials and components served as the basis for the Iranian leadership, already under President Atami, to deploy the corresponding pilot production at the Natanz nuclear facility, which was immediately created as a well- fortified and disguised as an agricultural enterprise structure with huge underground areas.

In 1996, Iran received full technical documentation from Pakistan for the improved R-2 gas centrifuges, which were two to four times more powerful than the previous generation and were more reliable in operation. According to the statement of the Iranian side, which was not confirmed by the IAEA, no work was carried out to develop the production of R-2 gas centrifuges until 2002. Only in March 2003, OAEI signed a contract with a private company that faced a serious problem of exporting a number of foreign-made components. The IAEA inspection of that company did not reveal any attempts to use centrifuge equipment for uranium enrichment.

At the same time, other nuclear infrastructure facilities were being created. In particular, the Iranians tried to develop uranium deposits in Yazd province, its reserves in the equivalent of nitrous oxide – uranium oxide amount to about 5 thousand tons with a sufficiently low content of this chemical element in the ore (less than 0.1%). Production of uranium ore was scheduled to begin in Sarande, and the production of uranium concentrate in Ardakan. However, the volume of annual production (about 50 tons of natural uranium) was clearly insufficient to meet Iran's own needs for nuclear energy, which led to the further desire of the Iranian leadership to continue developing the program, regardless of the difficulties that arise on its way, primarily of a foreign policy nature [9. P. 219].

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REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF WEAK STATES: ON THE EXAMPLE OF CHAD, CAMEROON AND GABON

This article analyzes regional integration and its impact on the security and stability of the economic and monetary community of Central African countries. In Central Africa there is a lot of old unresolved issues that significantly complicate the processes of regional integration.

Key words: regional integration, stability, Central Africa, security, Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic, process, problem, ECCAS.

Central African countries are considered the most affected on the continent as a result of deep internal conflicts and crises. The genocidal wars in Rwanda and Burundi, the series of coups and conflict tensions in the Republic of the Congo-Brazzaville, and the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have developed over the years as a part of an international conflict, are irrefutable evidence of the instability problems that Central Africa has faced since the past decade.

Despite the obvious differences between Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic and Chad, the events of recent years may indicate a significant similarity in the causes of conflicts on their territories.

For decades after independence, Gabon and Cameroon were recognized as the most stable countries of the region and that stability was particularly affected by a series of military coups, crises and conflicts.

An important element that distinguishes the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from most of the wars that took place earlier, in the bipolar era, and that for this reason are often referred to as “the classic wars,” is that the intergovernmental aspect is becoming less obvious. Despite the classification of the conflict as an “African war” and the rather covert intervention of some neighboring states, a direct confrontation between Congo and other states never occurred; therefore, the country’s stability was not threatened as a result of an attack by a hostile government. On the contrary, the gradual destabilization of

the Democratic Republic of the Congo was much more related to the endogenous factors. In particular, it was the result of the war among civil groups that opposed the regime and sought to systematically undermine the internal order [2. P. 59].

In this regard, the war between enemy states seems to have been replaced by a conflict of non-government internal groups that opposed the state and its national army, or fought with each other, while at the same time widely directing violence against the civil population. Thus, in these circumstances, the weakness of the state was less obvious because of its inferiority in weapons, but much more in the form of its inability to perform its functions as a guarantor of internal order and security.

In this context, the resurgence of the Central African regionalism may seem to be a reaction to the fact that the state no longer seems to be an adequate player to resolve this problem.

The decision of the state and government heads to resume and intensify their regional activities reflect in these circumstances a certain awareness that, in the current circumstances, the strengthening of security should no longer pass through opposition and confrontation, but through international cooperation. Growing tension in the region including the conflict in the Great Lakes region has highlighted the transnational and regional side of security. Insecurity in any state can easily have harmful consequences at the regional level, it can hinder regional cooperation and development, as the example of ECCAS (the Economic Community of Central African countries) shows. In addition, it can affect and threaten neighboring countries, it does not necessarily require a military response, but require a certain approach that can exceed the potential and can be deployed by a single state.

In previous years, President Bongo has faced a growing number of challenges that threatened the maintenance of internal balance. The country lives through a significant drop in oil production, the continuing deterioration of living conditions and the destruction of the social structure, especially in the cities. There is an acute issue of the method of management by one figure with broad powers often called “monocentric presidency” that demonstrates its vulnerability for a long time and proves the necessity to strengthen the functioning of the Gabonese state and the public sector.

Because of its large oil fields, Gabon has been among the least poor African countries for most of its post-colonial history, its average gross domestic product per capita has been almost four times the average level in sub-Saharan Africa. For this reason, Gabon was often called “African Switzerland” or “Emirate of Central Africa,” oil played a significant role in its social and political life.

After the current economic crisis, the country also has a high unemployment rate. Despite the fact that the state previously represented a large employer, the decline in income, the increasingly static and inefficient nature of the hypertrophied administrative apparatus, but above all, the implementation of the structural adjustment programs developed by the international financial institutions, forced

it to take significant restrictive and oppressive measures. Although in recent years the government has made efforts to implement emergency assistance programs, such as the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, the measures proved to be very limited. Lack of information, poorly designed projects and administrative difficulties are reasons that delayed the take-off of the programs, not to mention the fact that thousands of young people continue to dream of working in the administration.

The economic life in Gabon is, in fact, largely characterized by the activities of immigrants, who occupy a central place in trade, transport and crafts, and in households.

Cameroon has been characterized since independence as a remarkably calm and stable country compared to most other countries around it. This stability may seem surprising given the large ethnic and cultural diversity that makes Cameroon “unquestionably the most ethnically diverse country in Africa [1].”

One of the factors put forward to explain why Cameroon, despite its considerable ethnic diversity, has been able to maintain a certain inter-ethnic balance and avoid serious gaps between the various groups that make it up, is the policy of redistribution originally established by the country’s first President Ahmadou Ahidjo.

According to the Swiss political scientist Jurg Martin Gabriel, this is the way to include minorities and Protestants in the political process and involve them in the distribution of important public posts, as well as in the distribution of national resources, which for a long time were the main advantage of the Cameroonian politics compared to other countries which eventually failed their regime [5].

It is possible to link the long period of stability in Cameroon with the implementation of this regional balanced policy. It must be recognized that the characteristics of Cameroon as a whole were very difficult for neo-patrimonialists, the democratic norms and values introduced in the country since the 1990s were not compatible with their ideas.

After the country’s transition to democracy, the preservation of the previous political system was largely put into question, however, the process of liberalization did not contribute to the emergence of a new system in Cameroon to replace the previous one.

Gero Erdmann observes in general that in Africa and in Cameroon democratization has led to the development of a “hybrid system” that has taken on democratic principles and implemented them, at least in part, for example, in the form of regular organization of elections or respect for multi-partisanship. At the same time, some of the old standards and practices are still preserved, and at the same time they have been modified to be more adapted to the new circumstances [3. P. 87-105].

After its independence in 1960, the Central African Republic partially remained in the French sphere of influence. France, assessing the geostrategic position of its former colony in the heart of the continent, believed it to be essential

to its interests in Africa and has indeed decided, despite the decolonization of the country, to leave some military forces in its territory. However, its influence was not limited to maintaining two military bases, one in Bangui and the other in Buar. Being aware that its position in Africa would depend to a large extent on the maintenance in that state of an order favorable to the French ambitions on the continent, the former colonial power continued to actively monitor the political situation in the country and without hesitation, more or less consistently, interfered in the national affairs of the country.

For the political elite of the CAR this strong intervention of the former colonial power in the internal affairs of the state for many years until the second half of the 90-ies was primarily a means of accessing emergency financial and military support. Thus, the financial contributions made by France were used not only to pay for the often excessively high standard of living of political figures, but also to create a broad client system that would maintain balance within the political class.

Within the framework of a weak and illegitimate system for its own citizens, the Francophile politics at the same time served the incumbent president as a guarantee that he would be supported and sufficiently protected from any attempts to overthrow him or in the event of a political crisis.

The Central African Republic has faced budgetary difficulties and in this connection with wage irregularities during the 1990s, the debt problem has increased significantly in recent years and especially since the beginning of 2016, the state is no longer able to regularly pay its 20,000 public officials. By the end of this year, most of them received only three months' wages. Despite promises made, for example, in negotiations with the trade unions in early November 2016 to pay no later than at the end of the month two months of late wages, the payments took very long time and the total debt already amounts to more than 200 billion CFA francs, or about 350,000 euros. Currently, the most affected areas are management and education, and problem of underpayment also appear more or less regularly in the military sector.

The Central African Republic is a country fairly rich in raw materials, such as wood, copper, but especially diamond and gold. However, insufficient infrastructure, only partial control over the territory, as well as its inability to control forces that independently exploit the available wealth, do not allow the country to fully use most of these resources. For example, the Ministry of mines of the Central African Republic estimates that at least half of the 400,000 to 500,000 carats of diamonds produced in the country annually are worth between US\$ 50 million and US\$ 75 million.

The current security and stability of the country and the risks associated with the difficulties in payment for the armed forces may eventually lead to a vicious circle. In this case, the recovery process after years of crises and instability that rocked the country at the beginning of the 21st century is called into question.

Indeed, the history of the Central African Republic, especially the 1996 riots and their aftermath, has shown that internal military movements and defiance of the armed forces in the form of uprisings, riots or looting may facilitate the departure of donors and foreign investors.

The Central African Republic, a country with diverse and rich natural resources, at the same time receives international and bilateral financial support. Because of the poor management and use of the resources, inefficient administrative structures and rather limited coverage of the public service, most of the population nevertheless lives in extreme poverty and precarious conditions.

The internal situation in Chad has been weakening over the past 15 years. The holding of the first free elections confirming President Idris Deby after several attempts to reconcile with the opposition and establish certain civil liberties could actually indicate a gradual turn in the country's history (1).

As to the question of assessing the current situation, it must be said, first of all, that the opinion of most observers, whether scientific or political, regarding the changes in its state of stability, they seem to be more than divided. The most optimistic predict that after the start of the process of democratization and the holding of the first elections in 2015-2016, as well as the discovery of oil and the creation of the oil industry, the state is moving the country in the right direction.

In their analysis of the impact of oil on the economic, political and social situation in Chad, Géraud Magrin and Geert Van Viret highlighted the example of the Chadian oil project accompanied by the creation of a mechanism of control over the use of unpublished revenues. For the first time in the history of the continent, black gold in Chad contributed to the strengthening of the state capacity and sustainable development. Oil production can allow the country to revive its economy and improve the state's budget position [3. P. 87-105].

However, despite the significant socio-political changes in Central Africa over the past decades, this region remains perhaps the most problematic region in the world. Numerous armed conflicts continue to rage here, resulting in the death of millions of people. The economic situation is very difficult and sometimes chronic. The real scourge of the region is poverty, and a large part of the population of African countries is literally on the verge of physical survival. The current rate of economic growth (with a few exceptions) does not allow us to expect that the gap in the level of development of Africa and the rest of the world will soon be bridged.

NOTES:

(1) African Union, Peace and Security Council. Brief on the security situation in Central African Republic (CAR) and the visit of an AU Mission to the Region.

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