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THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS AND ITS APPEARANCE IN THE NEAR EAST

The research aims to analyze the Russian-Chechen wars, terrorist attacks in Russia during these wars. Moreover, the Russian government's policy on terrorist attacks, as well as the participation of Caucasian fighting for ISIS and Russia's way of war in Syria are examined in this article.

Methods. To achieve comprehensive results, the method of comparative analysis was used to identify the Russian government's policy on terrorist attacks and Russian-Chechen relations. Content analysis used to clarify forms of relations between Russia and Chechen Republic and possible impact of the rise of religious extremism on peace or clash, along with the application of sociological theories.

The scientific novelty of the article is that the history of Islam in the Russian Federation, the radicalization of Islam after the two Russo-Chechen wars and terrorist attacks in the country were studied using literature and sources in different languages.

The research concludes that Khattab invasion to Dagestan, the start of the Second Russian-Chechen War, the terror attacks on Washington and New York, and, most notably, terrorist attack in Beslan, North Ossetia-Alania that 330 were killed, other bloody terrorist attacks opened a new chapter in the history of Islam in the Northern Caucasus. In the second Russian-Chechen war, the struggle in the region began to get a secret character and the separation increased the number of suicide attacks. The phobia against Islam and Muslims began to grow in society. The government's actions and oppressions against the separatists have led to even more radicalization of Muslims. The separatist movement, which began in the Northern Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, spread to other republics of the Federation. The separatist movement crossed into neighboring countries and gained international character leaving the regional framework behind.

Key words: *Islam, Northern Caucasus, terrorist attack, ISIS, Chechen fighters.*

Introduction. The Caucasus region is lying in an advantageous geographical position between the Black and Caspian seas in the region where Europe and Asia converge. North Caucasus is one of the multinational, multilingual, multi-confessional regions of the Russian Federation. The Caucasus region attracts not only its diverse and colorful nature but also a diverse population.

Islam is one of the main religions in the Northern Caucasus region. Islam is spread in two distinct territories – the Volga region, the Ural, the Western Siberia, and the North Caucasus in Russia Federation. Islam sects of the Northern Caucasus can be divided into two parts: North-West (Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia) and central (Karachay-Cherkessia, Adigey, Kabardino-Balkar, and North Ossetia-Alania republics). Hanafi, a more

moderate madhab of Islam has spread in the central republics and a more severe form of Islam madhab Shafi'i has spread in the north-western countries [1, p. 228–229].

Purpose and objectives. The main goal of the article is to show all those reasons for escalation of religious extremism in the Northern Caucasus and its appearance in the Near East. Additionally, consequences of the collapse of the Soviet regime which lead to religious renaissance in the Northern Caucasus are investigated in this article.

Methodology and research methods. The methodology of the research involves using the qualitative methods including content analysis, discourse analysis, analysis of existing rules, documents, recommendations, research papers, experience and also critique of experts are used.

Moreover, a strong empirical background and descriptive method of study are used in this research.

The scientific novelty of the article is studying the history of Islam in the Russian Federation, the radicalization of Islam after the first Russo-Chechen war, and terrorist attacks in the country. The author has tried to clarify the main reasons for Caucasian fighters' involvement in the war in the Middle East and also Russia's fight against terrorism in this region. The author examined this problem using literature and sources in different languages.

Review of the recent publications. All literature and sources used in this article are important to reflect the problem as a research object. Involvement of all of them in a comprehensive study, systematization of information from different sources allowed creating a complete picture of the problem and conducting accurate research. In this regard, Dobaev's "The radicalization of Islam in modern Russia" monograph is devoted to the influence of internal and external factors on the politicization and radicalization of Islam in Russia. Federation in the post-Soviet period, as well as topical issues of improving countering religious and political extremism and terrorism in the Russian Federation [1].

The history of Islam in the Northern Caucasus, its revivalism during late soviet and early post-soviet era, the Russian-Chechen war, and territorial-ideological fixation of Islamic extremism are investigated in E. Souleimanov and S. Horák's article "Islam, Islamist Extremism in the Caucasus and Central Asia: A Critical Assessment" [2].

Silantyev's article "The Spread of Wahhabism in Modern Russia" describes the history of the spread of radical Islamic groups known as Wahhabis in Russia, their ideology, working methods, and characteristics. The author also evaluates the attempts of the Russian authorities to fight against this group [3].

CrisisGroup's report "The North Caucasus Insurgency and Syria: An Exported Jihad" was used in this article. Violence in Russia's North Caucasus has undergone two decades of deadly conflict but has declined dramatically in the past five years, in part because most of its militants have joined the ranks of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. At the same time protecting its national security during the Sochi Olympics Game Russia government applied an "immigration" policy which also called the "Green corridor". All these issues are discussed in this article [4].

After the collapse of the Soviet regime, the Northern Caucasus witnessed a religious renaissance. In the early 1990s the region experienced a steep increase in the number of Islamic societies and organizations.

Numerous Islamic jamaats (communities) and charitable organizations were established, old mosques were reconstructed, and new ones built. The number of mosques increased from 27 (in 1987) to 1,429 (in 1999). Besides, some 1,700 new jamaats, 178 madrasas, and 15 Islamic colleges were created [2, p. 274].

After the First Russian-Chechen War (1994–1996) and during the short period of peace (1996–1999) between two Russian-Chechen wars, radical Islamist-minded people outside the country's borders continued to arrive at the region. All these conditions provided Jihadism with a major boost and Chechen groups became more radical.

Ibn al-Khattab was the most famous Arabian fighters who struggle in Chechnya during the First Russian-Chechen War. Khattab fought against the Russian army in the war in Afghanistan, and later he joined the war that started in Chechnya and became commander of the Arab Mujahideen. Reducing financial support from the West the Chechens were gradually weaken and felt dependent on the wealthy Wahhabis [5, p. 191].

Despite all efforts of the President of Chechnya Aslan Maskhadov, the Second Chechen War began to turn into a completely radical Islamist struggle [6, p. 3].

In 1999, appointed Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin began military operations in Chechnya to restore political stability in Chechnya. He first took steps to strengthen the central government. After the election, he prepared a special program restoring Russia's great power status and strength it in the international arena, achieving stability throughout the country and boosting the country's economy. At the end of 1999s, he declared, "In the past 200–300 years, Russia is facing a real threat of sliding to the second rank countries" [7, p.132].

From 1999, Russia's law-enforcement agencies have launched a large-scale operation against radical groups. Al-Haramain, Al-Iqas, and Tayba funds were closed. Hizb ut-Tahrir activities banned, and followers were arrested [3, p.169].

After the government's policy, the radicals had begun to carry out terrorist acts. Chechen warriors carried out terrorist attacks in 2000–2004, and most of these terror acts were suicide attacks. 351 people were killed, and 1923 people wounded as the result of the terrorist attacks [8, p. 300–301].

On September 1, 2004, a group of terrorists had taken school No. 1 in Beslan. During the school siege, 1128 people were captured and most of them were children. According to an official investigation report, 334 people were killed [9, p. 1–3].

On June 17, 2006, after Sadullayev's death Doku Umarov launched a new terrorist campaign against the Russian government and civilians. He earned the nickname "Russia's Bin Laden". He officially annulled the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in 2007 and announced the formation of the Caucasus Emirate. He became the emir of this Emirate (military leader).

Under the leadership of D. Umarov, the ongoing resistance movement spread from Chechnya to the eastern part of Dagestan and into smaller western villages inhabited by Muslims, particularly Ingushetia. In 2009 it was announced the end of anti-terrorist operation in Chechnya. Radicals continued to commit terrible terrorist acts across the country.

The most terrible terrorist attack was carried out in Nevsky Express in 2009. On November 27, 2009, a bomb was exploded under a high-speed passenger train traveling between Moscow and Saint Petersburg. As a result of the explosion, 26 people were killed, and hundreds were injured [10].

Terrorist attacks continued in 2010–2011 years and during these years, three atrocious terrorist acts were committed to Moscow. Two bombs were exploded in the Moscow subway on March 29, 2010. The first bomb exploded in the Lubyanka and the second one at Park Kultury subway stations. According to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, two Dagestani women had committed suicide terrorist attacks. During the March events, 40 people were killed and around 130 people were injured [11].

On January 24, 2011, suicide-bombing attack carried out at Domodedovo airport by Ingush citizen 20 years-old Magomed Evloyev. During the suicide bombing 35 people were killed and 172 people were wounded [12].

The events in the North Caucasus triggered the complicated situation in the federal republics. In 2011, Doku Umarov, the Emir of the Caucasus Emirate announced the formation of the new Idel-Ural region of the Caucasus Emirate. A new region included the Volga and Ural regions. He pledged to establish "Islamic rules" in this region and to cleanse these territories from unbelievers [13].

After Doku Umarov's call terrorist attacks intensified in this region. In July 2012, the Tatar mufti Ilduz Fayzov's car was blown up in Kazan and he survived because of the miracle. One hour before this incident, Valiulla Yakupov was deadly shot. He was a head of the department of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Tatarstan, deputy mufti and an active fighter against radical Islam [14].

Results of the research. As the result of Russian government policy, the Jihadist groups were collapsed

in 2013. After the annihilation of some parts of Caucasus Emirates to make, any "jihad" became more complicated. Salafi leaders of Dagestan could not sustain to strong pressure and persecutions, so they left their countries, especially for Turkey. According to investigations of the International Crisis Group report of 2016, young people who displayed interests to jihad later joined to the groups which activities were concealed. Such young people are encouraged to fight in Syria and Iraq. Under the best circumstances, they would become the Emir of any group and they would sleep in cold, rainy, snowy weather on the mud. The members of secret groups do not immediately accept them to their groups; they keep them in "quarantine" for some time [4, p.6].

Terrorism and separatism that was dominant in the Northern Caucasus last few years have been taking an international character leaving the regional framework behind. All above-mentioned facts prove that all the non-stable processes in the North Caucasus are the real danger not only for Russia, but also to the whole Caucasus region, and for the Middle East. For some reasons, the young people with radical Islamic inclinations from the Northern Caucasus, especially from Dagestan, Chechnya, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria head to the Middle East.

The main argument of Russian intervention in the war in Syria against ISIS is directly connected with the fight of Russian citizens against Syrian government within the illegal armed groups, also their joining to ISIS and perpetrating crimes against humanity. On January 3, 2014, "Iraq Sham Islam State" (ISIS), an armed terrorist group that was founded and proclaimed the establishment of the new Caliphate has become a new disaster for the region. In 2014, the director of Federal Security Service Alexandre Bortnikov informed that about 200 fighters joined jihadists in Syria. According to different sources, about 300-400 fighters fight for "Islamic state" and their return to Russia is possible whenever they want. On September 3, 2014, ISIS adherents threatened Russia with launching new war in the Caucasus and they claimed that they would liberate Caucasus for "the God will" [15].

According to investigations of Soufan Group that provides strategic security intelligence services the big number of fighters who currently join ISIS from the Russian Federation is from Chechnya and Dagestan, besides, they also participated in battles in Afghanistan. V. Putin noted that the number of fighters from Russia and post-Soviet countries who joined ISIS is about 5000-7000. According to Russian officials, 2400 fighters joined the battle in Syria, in 2015.

However, it was noted that their number was 800 in 2014. Thus, we can see the increasing number of people who fight for ISIS in Syria during 2014 and 2015 [16, p. 14].

In his speech at the UN General Assembly the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin in September 2015 stressed that Russian active intervention in the Syrian case was directly connected with the increasing number of the danger of the Russian language-speaking fighters in Syria and Iraq [17].

Russia is in third place among the five countries according to the number of fighters who battle for ISIS. In 2015, Alexandre Bortnikov the director of the Russian Federal Security Bureau mentioned that he ceased the activity of more than 3000 social networks such as “Telegram” and “WhatsApp” because they were the main remedy for terrorists’ connectivity [4, p. 32].

It should be mentioned that those who leave the North Caucasus for Syria and Iraq fight not only for ISIS but also for the radical Islamic group “Jabhat an-Nusra”. Caucasians distinguished with their bellicosity and could hold an important and influential rank between both terrorist groups during a short period. Chechens’ order capacity and ability, and their experience in fighting against Russian Federal forces made them obtain these positions in a short period. For all these reasons Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi preferred Chechen fighters during mobilization to ISIS.

The most famous Chechen fighters of ISIS are Abu Omar al-Shishani and Ahmed Chatayev. Abu Omar al-Shishani came to Syria in 2012 and joined illegal military unions. In 2013, he joined ISIS and became ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s mili-

tary advisor and “war minister” [18]. In 2014 he was entered on the list of dangerous terrorists, and it was announced that the person who arrested him would be awarded 5 million \$. Omar Shishani was killed during the airstrikes of the USA in Shirqat, south of Mosul, Iraq [19].

Another Chechen fighter of ISIS was Ahmet Chatayev. He was charged as battalion commander of Yarmuk in ISIS military camps in 2015. Until his allurements to ISIS, he had terrorist activity inside the Caucasus Emirates. He was also entered to the list of most dangerous terrorist by the U.S in 2015. He was responsible for the terror act in Ataturk Airport, Istanbul. As a result of this terror act, 44 people died, more than 230 people injured. The terror act was realized by three kamikazes [20].

Conclusions. Khattab invasion to Dagestan, the start of the Second Russian-Chechen War, the terror attacks on Washington and New York, and, most notably, terrorist attack in Beslan, North Ossetia-Alania that 330 were killed, other bloody terrorist attacks opened a new chapter in the history of Islam in the Northern Caucasus. In the second Russian-Chechen war, the struggle in the region began to get a secret character and the separation increased the number of suicide attacks. The phobia against Islam and Muslims began to grow in society. The government’s actions and oppressions against the separatists have led to even more radicalization of Muslims. The separatist movement, which began in the Northern Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, spread to other republics of the Federation. The separatist movement crossed into neighboring countries and gained international character leaving the regional framework behind.

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Абдулла Б.Н. ЗРОСТАННЯ РЕЛІГІЙНОГО ЕКСТРЕМІЗМУ НА ПІВНІЧНОМУ КАВКАЗІ ТА ЙОГО ПОЯВА НА БЛИЗЬКОМУ СХОДІ

Дослідження спрямоване на аналіз російсько-чеченських воєн, терактів у Росії під час цих воєн. Окрім того, у статті розглядаються політика уряду Росії щодо терористичних атак, а також участь кавказців у бойових діях за ІГЛ і спосіб ведення війни Росії в Сирії.

Для досягнення всеосяжних результатів метод порівняльного аналізу був використаний для визначення політики уряду Росії щодо терористичних атак і російсько-чеченських відносин. Контент-аналіз використовується для з'ясування форм відносин між Росією і Чеченською Республікою і можливого впливу зростання релігійного екстремізму на світ або зіткнення поряд із застосуванням соціологічних теорій.

Наукова новизна статті полягає у вивченні історії ісламу в Російській Федерації, радикалізації ісламу після першої російсько-чеченської війни і терактів у країні. Автор спробував з'ясувати основні причини залучення кавказьких бойовиків у війну на Близькому Сході, а також боротьбу Росії з тероризмом у цьому регіоні. Автор досліджував цю проблему, використовуючи літературу і джерела на різних мовах.

Зроблено висновок, що вторгнення Хаттаба в Дагестан, початок другої російсько-чеченської війни, терористичні атаки на Вашингтон і Нью-Йорк і передусім терористичні акти у Беслані, Північній Осетії-Аланії, в якому загинуло 330 осіб, інші криваві терористичні напади відкрили нову главу в історії ісламу на Північному Кавказі. Під час другої російсько-чеченської війни боротьба в регіоні стала набувати секретного характеру, а розділення збільшило кількість атак терористів-смертників. У суспільстві стала рости фобія проти ісламу і мусульман. Дії уряду й утиски сепаратистів призвели до ще більшої радикалізації мусульман. Сепаратистський рух, що почався у Північно-Кавказькому регіоні Російської Федерації, поширився на інші республіки Федерації. Сепаратистський рух проник у сусідні країни і набув міжнародного характеру, залишивши позаду регіональні рамки.

Ключові слова: іслам, Північний Кавказ, теракт, ІГЛ, чеченські бойовики.