What is Islamic Radicalism?

Today we have forgotten and few people may remember how and when that so called "Arab Spring" began. It blossomed with shades of blood-red, from the deaths of the hundreds trampled on city squares, rent by destiny itself. That spring began on December 17, 2010, when Mohammed Bouazizi, who sold vegetables on a small cart, in the lost town of Sidi Bouzid, in the depths of Tunisia; driven by desperation and unbearable humiliation, set himself ablaze. The Spring erupted in January/February of 2011, when in stormy waves, one after another, demonstrations were held in Tahrir Square, the "Day of Rage" in Jordan, in Syria, followed in Iraq, in Bahrain in Pearl Square, in Libya and in Yemen. What spring was it? Back then, in the heat of the times, everyone in one voice called the events an explosion of the Twitter generation, the general of youth against social injustice, the gap in living standards between the ruling elite and the general populous and against the monstrous corruption and unemployment. This torrent suddenly spurted out, all but in defiance of the force of inertia, but rather under the pressure of the general dynamics backed by the powerful wave, forces of the traditional conservative Islam. Political lay parties at this crucial time were taking up with personal rivalries for leadership and power.

The triumph of Islamic parties mainly achieved in Egypt by the "Muslim Brotherhood", and "Al-Nahda" in Tunisia, was short-lived: their leadership had no experience in managing government agencies. Although they knew but did not want to admit that their time had passed, and young people, who accounted for more than half of the society were galloping ahead to inevitably oppose their falling back to the Middle Ages, scholasticism in dogma, in shackles of rusty tradition.

Then came a period of new violent explosions and demonstrations, and all the Arab East became one constantly erupting volcano. The strength of its eruption greatly multiplied as a result of the increased inflammatory actions of Western countries, operating on the favourite motto of "divide and rule". But this practice was not forgotten in the Arab world and we are convinced that many of today's troubles and problems grew out of the period when its territory was mercilessly ripped apart, torn between rival great powers in a battle for the resource-rich land in the region.

Most importantly, the "Arab Spring" repeatedly reinforced response to the events taking place not long before in the gulf, after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, instead of the Sunnis who had ruled for decades, the power in Baghdad, with the help of the US forces, was given to representatives of the Shiite majority. Thus the fragile balance of power, which was formed in the Gulf over many years, was broken. The United States in just a few weeks uprooted one of the most complex political landscapes in the world. It was like a shift of tectonic plates resulted in the movement of the whole territory of the Middle East that is already seismic hazard in the literal and in the political senses.

An especially dramatic role in the "Arab spring" fell to Syria, a key country in the region where key problems converged, nicking nerves because of its strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean and near the Persian Gulf.

Development in the Syrian crisis contrary to consideration of the West predicting a quick fall of the regime and the success of the opposition, has taken a different turn. It is unlikely that the United States' plan was to directly assist in the reincarnation of gangs of militants for the Syrian opposition in congruent with the terrible ISIL mutant, heavily armed militant groups that captured a part of the territory of Syria, Iraq, then proclaiming the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate, the structure, which has no analogues so far in the Middle East. The leaders of the IS stated...
the main purpose as the traditional establishment of a just Islamic state and the struggle against the United States, other Western countries and "sold out" Arab monarchies. Now the IS militants, brutally murdering infidels, and all those who come in their way, are expanding their area of operations to North Africa. This terrorist structure did not just appear on Arab soil on its own; it was grown like an embryo in a test tube, with the expectation that it would turn into an obedient robot, executing goals of its sponsors, the United States and some Arab monarchies. But everything turned out differently. Today, the danger posed by the ISIL qualifies, including that from high tribunes of international organizations, as a threat to the peace. How can this threat be combated? And what are the causes and roots of the rise of Islamic radicalism?

Some scientists suggest in this regard reverting to the "prophecy" of the famous historian, Samuel Huntington that the twenty-first century will be the century of clashing civilizations. However, R. Kipling wrote about this earlier:"West and East cannot be joined."

"Huntington was right, - many researchers said. - Current events is a clash between the Western civilization, completing its cycle and going into the past, and the Eastern one, entering into a new cycle of rebirth." In this historical period, the first quarter of the twenty-first century, the Islamic civilization popped up to the global forefront and has been gaining power. One of manifestations of civilizations confrontation is Islamic radicalism, the contours of which are indicated in the course of the wave of Arab revolutions and materialized in the form of the ISIL as a means of active militant defence of Islamic values.

In modern conditions it is a reaction to the aggressive actions of the West, especially the US, forcing Westernization, their attempts to impose Islamic Ummah, even by military force, procedures, values, tenets, thinking that are unacceptable for peoples of the East and spiritually in many ways contrary to the requirements of the Islamic faith. In fact, the IS is one of the responses of the East to the attempts of Western civilization, or rather its core, the so-called super-society with the leading role of the Anglo-Saxons, to re-colonize the world. In present circumstances, the West is implementing that has now been called a hybrid colonization, which uses a wide arsenal of tools, from the classic method of external aggression to "soft power". The bottom line is that for the world's top elite, which is a maximum "golden five hundred million" (not a "golden billion" as they try to convince the gullible public), the world is subject to colonization needed to maintain exceptionally high living standards and preserve the dollar Empire. The ram mechanism of colonization of the XX - XXI century is globalization, that is, blurring boundaries for the smooth transfer of goods, capital, media manipulation.

Islamic radicalism as a phenomenon, is largely a rejection by the broad Muslim masses of the colonization executed by Anglo-Saxons and the West as a whole, which earlier returns is kept in the genetic memory of peoples and as a consequence, opposition to its current new wave will become more widespread. However, it should be noted that the failure of Arab secular nationalism contributed to the growth of Islamic radicalism. In addition, the process of radicalization in Islam is related to the generally low socio-cultural level of the masses of Muslims, and perhaps most importantly, to maintaining in most Muslim countries of rigidity, archaic and dogmatism prevailing in the modern approach to Islamic teachings, with conservation ceremonies, rituals, traditions which are in stark contrast with the modernity. In XY-XYI centuries the Europe survived the age of Reformation, and this process progressed through a long, brutal fight against regression, stagnation, accompanied by the fanaticism of the Inquisition, killings of priests, burning churches, destroying books and bloody wars. A similar process takes place in the world of Islam. History repeats itself: the struggle for principles of progress is inevitably accompanied by bloodshed. Islam as a set of beliefs and religious practice needs reformation, opening the way to freedom, discussion of issues of religious adaptation to changing conditions of today.

In fact, not Islam is archaic, but how it is interpreted by certain circles and figures in the Islamic world, partly by inertia, but mainly in order to maintain power structures, to subordinate masses of Muslims, and for the benefit of practical material interests. The clash of new trends and archaism is broadening the gap and pushing the masses of believers to extremes.

The fight against Islamic radicalism, and more specifically with the IS through military force only has no chance to success. Even some progress in quenching separate flare-ups, areas of concentration of forces, not to mention the fact that they will inevitably be accompanied with a large loss of lifes and destruction, can only lead to even more fierce, desperate conflict, displacement of militias in other areas, and in addition, pushing Islamic extremist groups to increase their terrorist attacks against the West. As a result, the impact of the IS can be only strengthened, and thus increase the element of the terrorist's unpredictability. Continuation of the policy of the West in the fight against the IS with air strikes and military operations will only increase the scope and scale of conflict, turning it into a permanent war.
In Russia, there is no Islamic radicalism in the forms and to the extent as it exists in the Middle East. This does not mean that there are no separate extremist groups at all. But most of them are connected with centres abroad, many "viruses" of religious extremism brought by students returned after studying in Islamic schools, especially in Saudi Arabia.

In the fight against Islamic radicalism, the history and the experience of Muslims in Russia can be very useful and instructive. The majority of the Muslim community of Russia managed to avoid rigidity in the perception of Islamic postulates, developing their theoretical interpretation and ritual practice according to social progress. This was possible thanks to the fact that throughout the modern history, the Muslims of Russia have not been remaining on the sidelines of the general process of progressive development, have not been remaining isolated from the general population, despite the existence within many communities of resentment of these trends. Muslims have been a natural part of the population and developed together and as an integral part of Russian society. Their environment was undergoing profound social changes that have contributed to the cultural, social and material progress. By the end of the nineteenth century, after several centuries of existence in the organic part of Russian Muslim regions of the Volga region, the Urals, Siberia, and after joining the Caucasus and Crimea, heavy-duty composite of Russian-Muslim relations was cemented.

This helped the Muslims in Russia to come to the need of reformation of the Islam and practically mainly implement this, although in different Muslim communities, it was applied in various forms and dimensions.

The leading role in this was played, in a rising number of areas inhabited by the Muslims of Russia, by a pleiad of educated, open-minded, dynamic, smart people who had a keen sense of patriotism and national consciousness. These were Ismail Gasprinskiy, Shihabuddin Marjani, Gabderashid Ibragimov, Zainulla Rasulov, brothers Bubi and Ziyautdin Kamali, Shamsutdin Kultyasi, Gabdlla Apanaev, Musa Yarulla Bigiyev and many others.

They fought for freedom of thought, scientific research, an ideal of a free thinking man and emphasised religious tolerance. Reformers defended "the right and Jihada", i.e. the right to an independent ruling on the basis of the Koran of different religious and legal problems of the Ummah, developed, proposed measures for the simplification of the Muslim cult.

Leading Muslim teachers in Russia reasoned that the resolution of the major problems of Russian Muslims was due to their religious identity. The comprehensive nature of Islam being not only a religion but also a philosophy, ideology, behaviour and the way of life ordained the beginning of any reform in the Muslim society as a religious reform. We had to abandon scholastic dogmatism taqlid - tradition, mindless ritual observance in inadequate conditions of isolation of Muslims and discover the freedom of interpretation of the Koran and the Hadith, thereby giving impetus to a genuine revival of the original purity of Islam.

They gave primary importance to literacy in their educational activities, youth education and development of science. (At the end of the nineteenth century, of 14 million Muslims in Russia, less than 1 million were literate, about 10 thousand knew the Russian language and only 4 thousand could read it.). The main engine of this process of reform was a new method of education, which was developed and offered with enormous prestige by a genius of his time, Crimean scholar Ismail Gasprinskii (died in 1914).

A characteristic feature of Muslim teachers in Russia is that most of them were in favour of reform, and not a revolutionary method of implementation of reforms, without pressure and violence, and the main thing being maintaining a close connection with Russia. They saw the Russian language and culture as a cementing material for the consolidation of the Ummah and its progress, constantly stressing in speeches that "for Muslim people, Russian culture is closer than that of the West."

Muslim teachers, were well-informed about the methods and the heavy consequences of the colonial policy of the West European states for the peoples of the East, the West treated with great caution. Here's how they wrote about it in their works and publications: "To impose Western civilization means to double the misery of a man of the East. As a result, he will neither be eastern nor western, but rather, average with all the weaknesses of one without the positive aspects of the other. Their goal is to steal economically the whole East, to weaken Russia with periodic wars with the Muslims supplied with weapon of "Western friends."

In Russia's long history there were periods of confrontation between nations, but it is much longer - periods of peaceful coexistence, mutual fruitful cooperation and interaction. In the formation of the natural identification, including the modern paradigm of Eurasian, an important role was played by the Muslim nations because of their contribution and organic participation in the political, economic and spiritual life of the Russian state.
"For centuries, Russia was forced to become intimate with the East: blood, beliefs, customs and care were mingled; the same bright days and times of adversity put the same thought into the heart of Russian and Eastern people in Russia, many, many millions, and which, being so linked their lives with Russia, linked at the same time and long-range non-Russian East. By such means, invisibly, Russian thought and affects remote countries, and the age-old solidarity of the life of Russia and the East makes it affordable for Russia cherished thoughts." These profound ideas expressed in the last century by outstanding Russian orientalist, of ... Azerbaijanian descent Mirza Muhammad Ali (Alexandr Kasimovich) are more than ever true and relevant today when both Russia and the countries of the Muslim East are going through a difficult moment in their history.

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