

Politology

Islamic Extremism in 1990s

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ABSTRACT. The break-down of the USSR in 1991 enlarged the geography of the international terrorism. Islamic radical groups and organizations posed great threat to the world peace and stability. In 1996 the Taliban took state power in Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda engaged in the war against the USA. At present, the “Islamic State” is challenging the civilized world. The international community has to fight Islamic extremism on several fronts and Georgia will need to employ precise, faultless policy in its struggle against this global danger. © 2016 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: terrorism, conflict, confrontation, extremism, fight, war

Terrorism has a very old history; essentially, it started to take shape in 1950-60s. In the wake of WW II, the Soviet Union supported various Communist, revolutionary, radical and subversive groups in different parts of the world. Members of those groups were trained at special centers of the USSR. In that respect, Moscow had particular influence in the countries of the Arab World, in the West. They viewed Palestine Liberation Organization as the biggest terrorist organization, which functioned thanks to the strong back-up of the Kremlin.

On their part, Western countries were also engaged in similar activities. For instance, during the age of “cold war”, the USA significantly contributed to the training of a number of terrorist groups, which used to fight against pro-Soviet regimes that were geared up for hostile actions against Washington. During the “cold war” period, international terrorism served as an instrument of struggle between the two

opposed camps. By the end of 1980s, almost 500 terrorist organizations functioned world over [1:1]. As a rule, the most influential groups among them maintained certain links with either Soviet or Western special services. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many extremist groups were left without their patron and they were induced to operate independently.

Disappearance of the USSR from the world map was conducive to the creation of a global vacuum, which expanded the geography of terrorist organizations. Number of former Communist countries and ex-Soviet Republics enlarged the areal of their activities. At the same time, in 1990s, omnipresent globalization and information revolution contributed to the intensification of international terrorism. They developed close connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, which is supported by drug business and arms trade, prosti-

tution, trafficking, laundering and transferring of dirty money, etc. In some countries, such organizations got hold of state administration, as Taliban did in Afghanistan in 1996.

Concurrently, due to the fact that the terrorists became equipped with state-of-art weaponry and technology, quantity of victims of international terrorism has reached an incredible number.

Terrorism Runs Global

In 1990s, terrorist acts of greater or smaller magnitude took place in various regions and countries world over. Listing and describing all of them looks like an impossible job. We can only take note of the fact that in 1990-1999, almost 6 thousand (!) terrorist acts were committed world over; thousands of people fell victim to the said manifestations of vandalism.

Islamic radical organizations demonstrated especial fanaticism. In 1991, Islamists won in the parliamentary elections of Algiers. That event posed a challenge of different kind to the civil governments of the Arab World. The point is that after coming to power by means of democratic elections, Algerian Islamists were planning to introduce so-called “Laws of Sharia” in Algiers and build there a theocratic state. It turned out that they intended to use democratic elections with the aim of creating a non –democratic political regime. What is way out of the impasse, if the majority of country’s population makes an undemocratic choice democratically? In the face of that dilemma, the top brass of Algiers canceled the election results, banned the Islamic Rescue Front and took the control in their hands. As a result, Muslim radicals waged an actual war against the authorities, which lasted for 11 years and took life of about 150 thousand people [1:2].

In March of 1992, Islamic Jihad blew up the Embassy of Israel in Buenos-Aires. 29 persons were killed and 242 people were injured. According to the information of Israeli and Western special services, Hezbollah and Iran masterminded the terrorist act, although the latter flatly denied it. In February of the

same year, Israel eliminated Abas al-Musavi, one of the leaders of Hezbollah [2:180].

Most notorious and truly global event of that time was the terrorist act against the *World Trade Center* in New York. On February 26, 1993, a powerful explosion occurred in front of famous *twin* skyscrapers. As it turned out later, the felons detonated 600 kg of explosives, counting on the chance that one of the skyscrapers would collapse first, then – the second one. In a way, that attack was a kind of rehearsal of the colossal terrorist act of September 11, 2001 [2:181].

The explosion caused great commotion throughout entire United States. Besides being a horrible terrorist act, it proved to be a kind of a cultural-psychological shock for Americans. The point is that American citizens, bordered by two oceans and “weak” neighbor countries, used to live far away from Eurasia and other “troublesome” continents, during 300 years they felt fully protected from external dangers. Such psychological attitude somewhat wobbled during the “cold war” period, when the Soviet Union, strategic adversary of the United States, owned the nuclear weapon, which could destroy American cities. But still, Americans viewed nuclear threat as a vague danger. Moreover, as an aftermath of Soviet Union’s breakup, that global threat almost disappeared. But alas! Terrorists attack the towers of World Trade Center, sanctum sanctorum of New York! 6 innocent persons were killed and over thousand people were injured! It was an unbelievable experience for America. American police and special services quickly identified the suspects. Their identity perplexed American public. It turned out that the culprit was a terrorist group of Arabic origin, headed by a certain Ramzi Yusuf. He had undergone a special training at the camp of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Khalid Sheikh Muhammad of Kuwait was one of the members of the group; later, he became the main personage of the terrorist act of September 11, 2011 [2:182].

Investigation established that initial target of the

terrorists were UNO headquarters but the safety system of the United Nations proved to be foolproof; consequently, the perpetrators changed their plans. In the wake of that terrorist act, it was rumored that Iraqi special services masterminded it. It was expected that this suspicion would be confirmed, when American troops entered Baghdad in 2003 and took control of Saddam Hussein's palaces. At Saddam's chancellery, they did not find any document, confirming Iraqi dictator's link with the terrorist act of 1993.

On July 18, 1994, in Buenos Aires, terrorists blew up the building that housed Jewish organization AMIA. As a result, 85 persons died and over 300 people were injured. According to the investigation, Islamic radical organization Hezbollah was involved in the terrorist act. On October 19 of the same year, 22 persons died, when a suicide killer and militant of Hamas blew himself up in Tel-Aviv. These events are the component parts of the vicious circle of perennial confrontation between Arabs and Jews, where each party claims righteousness of its cause. As a rule, Israel responded by organized violence (on their part, Arabs assert that they are responding to the Israel's aggression). Naturally, Israel's response caused tangible damage and sacrifice [2:182].

Bloody showdowns between Arabs and Israelites continued in the following years as well. The terrorist acts of 1996 caused most numerous casualties; 60 citizens of Israel fell victim to those acts of violence. We have no exact information on the number of casualties brought about by the Israeli raids.

Al-Qaeda Breaks through

As for the leaders of Islamic international terrorism, for a time being, they were unknown for the public at large. After the 1993 terrorist act in New York, printed press started to publish information on Al-Qaeda. However, Osama bin-Laden's name was perceived as a vague sound. Only experts were aware that bin-Laden was a representative of a well-known and rich family of Saudi Arabia. The family gained immense capital thanks to the construction business; how-

ever, in 1980s, Osama left the family business and took a new road. In 1979, he departed to Afghanistan to fight against Soviet troops. According to Michael Shore, former CIA employee, at that time, they had information regarding Osama, although they did not contact him directly. After the Soviet troops left Afghanistan, bin-Laden found a new enemy: he engaged in the war against the USA. He moved to Sudan and established terrorist bases there. In 1994, he was deprived the citizenship of Saudi Arabia and in 1996, due to the pressure on the part of the USA, he was evicted from Sudan as well. He returned to Afghanistan and commenced to build up the global network of his organization Al-Qaeda. By that time, he had about 3 thousand trained warriors under his control. He masterminded terrorist acts against American troops in Yemen (1992), Somalia (1993), Saudi Arabia (1996). Osama had close contacts with other Islamic terrorist groups, namely, Egyptian jihad [2:192-193].

Bin-Laden's warriors were engaged in fights in Somalia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Yemen. According to various data, in 1993, he was in Bosnia, in 1995 – in Albania. As of 1995, Osama bin-Laden's representative in the North Caucasus, field commander Hattab actively participated in the Chechen armed conflict. Only in 2002, Russian special service managed to eliminate him [2:193].

Osama bin-Laden reached the heights of "stardom" of terrorism thanks to two simultaneous tremendous explosions in 1998, in Nairobi, Kenya and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

On August 7, in 1998, explosion of mined truck in Nairobi killed 212 persons and injured 4 thousand; while in Dar es Salaam, 11 persons died and 85 people were injured. 12 Americans were among the people killed in the terrorist act in Nairobi.

Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the terrorist acts from the very beginning. By those big-scale explosions, bin-Laden, in his own way, marked the 7th anniversary of deploying American troops in his native Saudi Arabia (it happened during the war against Iraq). Although the fact that most of the people, who

perished in the explosions, were Africans and so-called *brother Muslims*, didn't bother him.

Washington reacted to the explosions immediately: missile blows were dealt on the terrorist camps in Afghanistan as well on pharmaceutical plants in Sudan, where, according to the data of American intelligence, they were producing biological weapons. Apparently, Al-Qaeda suffered comprehensive losses due to that attack, since it acutely overreacted to it. After the explosion, Osama was put on the list of ten most dangerous terrorists; while as the aftermath of September 11, 2001 terrorist act, during 10 consequent years, he was viewed as the greatest enemy of the USA. Eventually, 8 terrorists (including bin-Laden) out of a 21-men list of the authors and participants, involved in the explosions of embassies, were eliminated [2:194].

Taliban Takes over Afghanistan

In 1996, after heavy and ruthless fights, the Taliban overran the Capital of Afghanistan ("Talibe" in Arabic means "student"). In the greater part of the country, they established an extremely radical Islamic regime. In the history of the 20th century it is not infrequent, when a terrorist organization gets hold of power in the country. Among them were "red Khmers", who organized genocide in Cambodia, in 1970. According to present-day criteria, German Nazis and Russian Bolshevik party were terrorist organizations. However, Afghanistan is an issue in its own right: phenomenon of the Taliban is still a topical problem and Georgian servicemen are actively involved in the international campaign against them.

In general, Taliban is the product of total destabilization of Afghanistan, which was caused by the Soviet intervention in 1980s. When the defeated Soviet troops left the country in 1989, the rebels threw off the pro-Soviet regime and in downtown Kabul they brutally killed Mohammad Najibullah, its leader (1992). Reign of total chaos and outrage set in the country. Most of political powers and armed groups agreed on division of power; they set up provisional

government and gave to Afghanistan the name of Islamic State. Neighboring Islamic countries unfolded their struggle to build up regional influence, which increased polarization of exhausted Afghanistan. Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia proved to be most zealous among those countries. For instance, Pakistan viewed Afghanistan as insurance of its own safety, in the context of building its "strategic depth". Thanks to the support of Pakistan's effective special services (Inter-Services Intelligence, ISI), financial and military aid, in Kandahar they organized an armed group of the Taliban, headed by Mullah Omar. By 1994, a number of Afghan Provinces were under the control of the Taliban, who were establishing laws of Sharia and strict religious norms in those parts of the country. From the very start, the Taliban relied on Pashtun tribes, who make up majority of Afghan population [3:18]. In 1995, Taliban undertook an assault against Kabul but coalition forces, headed by the Minister of Defense Ahmad Shah Massoud, defeated them. The Taliban retreated, rallied their force thanks to Pakistani help and on 27 September 27, 1996, they attacked Kabul, won back the city and declared Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate. Ahmad Shah Massoud and his military units moved to the northern regions of the country.

According to the intelligence data of Western countries, Pakistani military contingent and its special task forces participated in winning back of Kabul. In successive years, Pakistan's army units assisted Taliban in controlling various regions of Afghanistan. Pervez Musharraf, Head of the General Staff of Pakistani army and the country's future President, personally controlled the Afghan operations. That was the time, when cooperation with Al-Qaeda gained strength and its entire network was established in Afghanistan. According to the British Intelligence, ISI was intensely involved in setting up of the camps for training of terrorists of Al-Qaeda [2: 195-196]. The Taliban created an actual hell on the territories of Afghanistan that were under their control. Nothing remained of those towns and settle-

ments, which the Taliban took by assault. For instance, only 100 persons were left alive out of 1500 residents of Mazari Sharif. They completely destroyed Istalif, a town with 45 thousand population and its residents, who stayed alive, became refugees. The same happened in the town of Bamiyan, where the Taliban exterminated lots of children and women. They treated extremely cruelly the representatives of other tribes: Taliban didn't spare Tajiks, Uzbeks and Khazars. They fell victim of ruthless ethnic genocide on the part of the Taliban [2:196].

In the famine-stricken country, the Taliban banned UNO-sponsored special programs, which supplied almost 200 thousand people with foodstuffs. Women became scapegoats of Taliban ideology and policy. By extreme radicalization of Sharia laws, women were forbidden to appear publically without wearing veils (so-called burkas). Public and brutal punishment for breaking Sharia laws became a typical event. Rape and trafficking was a usual occurrence. Girls were forbidden to go to school and attend classes. Practically, the ban concerned schoolboys as well, since most of the teachers were women. Taliban banned movies, entertainment, music, modern clothes, art of painting, cosmetics, TV sets, computers; in short – all things of Western origin (apart from money and weapons). Religious police strictly controlled observance of those rules. The Taliban applied their rules to indigenous population as well as to foreigners. Namely, in 1998, as a response to the murder of Iranian diplomats and journalists, Iran concentrated 250 thousand soldiers at the border of Afghanistan. Thanks to the mediation of Pakistan, the bodies of victims were delivered to Tehran, which forestalled the military intervention.

In 1999 the world witnessed recurrent vandalism of the Taliban: by Mullah Omar's personal order, Taliban blew up the 6th century unique statues of Buddha in the central region of Afghanistan (so-called Buddhas of Bamiyan). As yet, Taliban regime was recognized only by Pakistan, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The Taliban established com-

plete monopoly on trade. Pakistan became their chief economic partner; source of their main income – opium. By 2000, Afghanistan was producing 75% of opium, consumed world over. They grew it on 80 thousand hectares. Greater part of profit from drug business was spent on military needs. Bin-Laden also rendered financial assistance to Taliban. Hereby, main supporters of that regime were: opium, Pakistan and Al-Qaeda [2:198].

Ahmad Shah Massoud put up staunch resistance to the Taliban. For years, that extraordinary person was the one of the chief fighters against the Soviet intervention. In 2001 "Wall Street Journal" characterized him as an Afghan man, who won the "Cold War" [2:198]. On their part, citizens of Afghanistan called him "Lion of Panjshir". In 1996, after he was defeated by the Taliban, together with Dostum, Massoud organized so-called United Islamic Front (Northern Alliance), where the representatives of various ethnic groups fought side by side. Massoud opposed the Taliban's fanaticism; he promoted national consent and peace in Afghanistan. About 400 thousand people, who fled from the Taliban, found shelter in the regions under the control of the United Front.

In 2001, Massoud visited Europe and delivered the speech at the European Parliament. He voiced the information that a colossal terrorist act was to take place against the USA. Agents of Al-Qaeda killed Ahmad Shah Massoud in Afghanistan, on September 9, 2001; 3 days prior to the terrorist act in New York. Today, Massoud is acknowledged as a national hero in Afghanistan. In 2002, he was nominated for a Nobel Prize.

In the wake of the terrorist act in New York, the USA unleashed a military operation against the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Taliban rulers were ousted from Kabul, although they are not defeated completely. Today, Georgians are fighting against these dangerous international terrorists under the aegis of NATO (ISAF).

Analyzing the alternative of NATO's defeat in Afghanistan, in his new book "Strategic Vision"

Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote: “In the absence of an effective and stable government in Kabul, the country would be dominated by rival warlords. Both Pakistan and India would more assertively and openly compete for influence in Afghanistan – with Iran also probably involved. As the result, the possibility of at least indirect war between India and Pakistan would increase. Iran would likely try to exploit the Pakistani-Indian rivalry in seeking advantage for itself... In addition, adjoining central Asian states – given the presence of significant Tadjik, Uzbek, Kirghiz, and Turkmen communities in Afghanistan – could become involved in the regional power play as well... the more likely is that a larger regional conflict could break out... even if a solid Afghan government is in place at the time of currently planned American disengagement – with some semblance of central control – a subsequent failure to sustain US-sponsored international involvement in the region’s stability is likely to reignite the embers of ethnic and religious

passions... Afghanistan then could become a still larger player in the international drug trade, and even perhaps again a haven for international terrorism [4:96-97].

We can add one more concept to this pessimistic forecast: If the Taliban returns to Afghanistan, most probably, Muslim radicals will perk up in the Caucasian region. These circumstances will affect negatively the neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey. We cannot exclude further radicalization in the North Caucasus. All these developments may initiate serious additional threats to Georgia. “Islamic State” or IS, which has lately gained foothold on international arena, adds dramatics to the complicated situation as it is by now. Civilized world has to fight against Islamic extremism on several fronts. At this stage, it is too early to make a realistic prediction of its end result. Undoubtedly, Georgia will need to employ precise, faultless policy in its struggle against this global danger.

პოლიტოლოგია

ისლამური ექსტრემიზმი 1990-იან წლებში

ზ. აბაშიძე

ი. აბაშიძის სახ. „ქართული ენციკლოპედიის“ მთავარი რედაქცია

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

ტერორიზმი მსოფლიო ისტორიაში უძველესი მოვლენაა, მაგრამ საერთაშორისო ფაქტორის სახით იგი უმთავრესად 1950-1960-იანი წლებიდან იწყებს ჩამოყალიბებას. საერთაშორისო ტერორიზმი „ცივილიზაციის“ პერიოდში იყო ორ დაპირისპირებულ ბანაკს შორის ბრძოლის ინსტრუმენტი. 1980-იანი წლების ბოლოს მსოფლიოში მოქმედებდა 500-მდე ტერორისტული

ორგანიზაცია. როგორც წესი, მათგან ყველაზე გავლენიან ჯგუფებს რაღაც კავშირი ჰქონდათ საბჭოთა ან დასავლეთის სპეცსამსახურებთან. მსოფლიოს რუკიდან სსრკ-ის გაუჩინებლობამ შექმნა გლობალური მასშტაბის ვაკუუმი, რამაც გააფართოვა ტერორისტული ორგანიზაციების გეოგრაფია. მათი მოქმედების არეალს დაემატა ბევრი ყოფილი კომუნისტური ქვეყანა და ყოფილი საბჭოთა რესპუბლიკა. გარდა ამისა, 1990-იან წლებში საერთაშორისო ტერორიზმის გაძლიერებას ხელი შეუწყო ყოფლისმომცველმა გლობალიზაციამ და ინფორმაციულმა რევოლუციამ. ჩამოყალიბდა მჭიდრო კავშირი საერთაშორისო ტერორიზმსა და ტრანსნაციონალურ ორგანიზებულ დანაშაულს შორის, რასაც კვებავს ნარკოტიკებით და იარაღით ვაჭრობა, პროსტიტუცია, ტრეფიკინგი, „მაფი“ ფულის მიმოქცევა და სხვ. ამგვარად, 1990-იანი წლებიდან საერთაშორისო ტერორიზმი გადაიქცევა ავტონომიურ ფენომენად, რომელიც სულ უფრო დიდ საფრთხეს უქმნის ცალკეულ ქვეყნებსა და მთლიანად მსოფლიო თანამეგობრობას. ამ წლებში მსოფლიოს სხვადასხვა რეგიონსა და ქვეყანაში განხორციელდა მეტ-ნაკლებად დიდი თუ მცირე მასშტაბის 6 ათასამდე ტერაქტი, რომლებმაც ათასობით ადამიანი იმსხვერპლა. განსაკუთრებით გააქტიურდნენ ისლამური რადიკალური ორგანიზაციები. ზოგიერთ ქვეყანაში ასეთმა ორგანიზაციებმა სახელმწიფო ხელისუფლებაც კი აიღეს ხელში, მაგალითად, 1996 წელს თალიბებმა ავღანეთში. იმავე პერიოდში ხდება ალ-ქაიდას ჩამოყალიბება საერთაშორისო ტერორისტულ ორგანიზაციად. ისლამური ექსტრემიზმი ძალას იკრებს და მოქმედებს მსოფლიოს სხვადასხვა კუთხეში. ისლამური ექსტრემიზმი დღეისათვის უკვე საერთაშორისო თანამეგობრობის ერთ-ერთ ყველაზე დიდ გამოწვევად გვევლინება, რაც რეალურ საფრთხეს უქმნის, კერძოდ, საქართველოს. აუცილებელია ზუსტი, შეუცდომელი პოლიტიკის გატარება აღნიშნული გლობალური საფრთხის წინააღმდეგ ბრძოლაში.

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