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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 2016. 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.

The purpose of the journal is to promote scientific exchange and cooperation between Russian and foreign political scientists.

The journal is intended for the publication of the results of fundamental and applied scientific research. Thematic focus of the journal is reflected in the following permanent headings: "History and philosophy of politics," "Political institutions, processes and technologies," "Political regionalism and ethno-politics," "Political culture and ideologies," "Political problems of international relations and globalization."

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CONTENTS

POLITICAL PROCESS IN RUSSIA

Zhuravlev O. V., Tushkov A. A. National Maritime Policy of Russia on the Pacific and Indian Ocean Regional Routes	5
Kononov L. A., Chebotarev A. V. Development of Theoretical Positions about the Perspective State Policy of the Russian Federation on Anti-Immigration Extremism	12
Rumyantsev O. G. On Some Political Science Aspects of the 2020 Constitutional Reform in the Russian Federation	19
Nazarov V. P. On the Question of the Evolution of the Concept of National Security	27
Pohozhaev V. I. Some Priorities of the Modern State National Policy of the Russian Federation	34
Yang Chunlei Influence of Confucianism on the Political and Cultural Elite of the Russian Society	41

PROBLEMS OF EURASIAN AND POST-SOVIET COOPERATION

Mikhailenko A. N. How to Disclose Russia's Foreign Policy Potential?	49
Zalysin I. Yu. Features of Modern Terrorism	63
Emirov R. M. On the Prospects of Islam as a System-Forming Factor in the Caucasus	68
Pliev S. M. The Role of Information Warfare on the Example of the 2008 Armed Conflict in South Ossetia	75

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS

Pyzh V. V. Geopolitical Picture of the World on the Eve of the Second World War: Lessons of Victory for the Geopolitics of the XXI Century	82
Nazarov A. D., Nazarova E. A. Phenomenon of Import EXPO: New Approaches in the State Policy of Regulating Exhibition Activities in the PRC	104
Lantsov S. A. Ethnic Terrorism and Ethnic and Political Conflicts of the XIX-XX Centuries: Analysis of Socio-Political and Ideological Factors	114
Rodionova M. E. Specifics of Foreign and Russian Experience in Financing Political Parties	123
Temeryuk A. S. Analysis of the Distribution of Election Results to the Finnish Parliament in the Course of Four Electoral Cycles	132
Zhambaeva U. B. Tibet Buddhism in the Yuan Dynasty Political Context	142

REFLECTIONS ON THE READ

Slizovskiy D. E., Medvedev N. P. Afterword to the Article by O. G. Rumyantsev "On Some Political Science Aspects of the 2020 Constitutional Reform in the Russian Federation"	148
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OUR AUTHORS	156
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AUTHORS' GUIDELINES	158
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FEATURES OF MODERN TERRORISM

The article is devoted to analysis of specifics of modern terrorism. The article reveals the main features of terrorism of the XXI century: religious and extremist orientation, transnational character, network structure of terrorist organizations, a wide arsenal of terrorist means, high intensity, growth of the political potential of terrorism. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the role of modern information technologies in the activities of terrorists.

Key words: *terrorism, the nature of modern terrorism, the terrorist activities of Islamic extremists, terrorism information, organizational basis of terrorism.*

There are different points of view on the specifics of the current phase of terrorism in the teriological literature. Some authors write about the global nature of terrorist actions, the increasing level of their scale and organization. Others point to the strengthening of the position of Islamism among the currents of international terrorism. Many note that terrorists have started using new approaches and technologies.

Based on the analysis of terrorist activities and taking into account existing approaches, we can give the following characteristics of the current stage of terrorism. Its specific features, in our opinion, are:

1. Religious and extremist orientation. In modern conditions, as in the last century, there is a variety of forms of terrorism. However, most often terrorist acts occur on a religious basis, both in pure form (terrorism of religious extremists) and in combination with other types (for example, ethno-religious terrorism, which is widespread, in particular, in the Russian North Caucasus).

At the same time, at present, political activity of religious extremists is characteristic, first of all, for Islamic confessions [10]. This is largely due to the traditionally high degree of politicization of Islam. Muslims have always closely linked political and religious power. For Islam, there has never been a difference between the Muslim community and the state, religion and law, secular and spiritual authority. Islam as a religion originally contained a political component.

Political Islam now goes beyond the area of traditional settlement of Muslim peoples. In particular, its influence is increasingly spreading to Western countries,

where the number of Muslim populations is growing. Many people note that the conflict of values between them and the indigenous peoples of Western Europe and North America has worsened.

Political Islam – Islamism – has a certain degree of radicality. Its supporters analyze political phenomena through the prism of Islamic values and seek to use religious norms and principles in political activities. At present, it is the most widespread form of radical Islamism. It advocates radical, systemic changes and proclaims creation of a theocratic state based on Sharia law as its ultimate goal. It acts as the antithesis of Western democracy and presupposes autocratic means and methods of managing society.

Radical Islamism has become the ideological basis for the terrorism of Islamic religious fanatics. They are ready to make any sacrifice including self-destruction for the sake of higher values. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of suicide bombers in the twenty-first century. Readiness for self-sacrifice increases the effectiveness of religious extremism and makes it difficult to fight it. Suicide bombers are difficult to stop, even with the most extreme measures. J. Baudrillard rightly notes that “the radical difference of the new terrorism is as follows: having all the weapons developed by this system, the terrorists have one more type – their own death, and this becomes fatal” [1].

While noting the growth of Islamist political extremism, we should not equate terrorism with Islam. Experience has shown that Muslims themselves are the main victims of terrorist acts committed by religious fanatics [2].

2. Transnational character. The peculiarity of modern terrorism is its planetary scale. First, the internationalization of terrorism is growing, and it is international terrorist attacks that are responsible for the greatest number of victims and destruction. Secondly, terrorism is increasingly directed against the world system as a whole.

For the first time, the ideas of global reconstruction of the world were developed in the program of the terrorist organization al-Qaeda. In particular, it contains the idea of “the universality of Islam,” which consists in the need to achieve the establishment of Islam throughout the world through Jihad.

The Islamic state (IS) also seeks to establish a Great Islamic Caliphate. At the same time, some of the terrorist leaders are in favor of including not only Muslim, but also non-Muslim countries in its composition. This is a kind of an alternative project of a new world order based on Islamic norms and values. However, it should be recognized that not all terrorist organizations pursue global goals. Some of them even refuse to join the global Jihad.

3. Network structure of terrorist organizations. It involves constant interaction between network nodes, rapid transfer of information across all its links, joint accumulation and distribution of financial, logistical, military and other resources and flows.

This form of organization of armed struggle did not arise in the twenty-first century, but now terrorist organizations are increasingly moving to the network

principle of activity. Elements of a terrorist network are mobile, flexible, and resilient. They are completely autonomous. A group may include several links (political, financial, etc.), which makes it independent of external factors.

The number of people in a cell is usually from three to five persons. The network provides a high degree of anonymity, since each member of the cell is familiar only with their immediate supervisor.

Groups, cells-honeycomb or individual members coordinate their work based on a common ideology and goal; national, religious or other self-identification; responsibility for the success of a common cause; coordination of activities through sites registered in the third countries, etc.

Moreover, a study of the situation with the terrorist underground in Western Europe shows that often terrorist attacks are committed by ordinary people acting independently of Islamist organizations and indoctrinated by jihadist propaganda via the Internet [8].

The network structure of terrorism seriously complicates the fight against it and gives it great advantages in confronting a stronger opponent in the form of state structures. The absence of a rigid hierarchy and command system makes it difficult to defeat networks whose main unifying principle is a common ideology. In it, the main ideological and political guidelines are formulated in such a way that they are a direct guide to action for all elements of the network, and contain strategic and tactical recommendations for their implementation. Another advantage of the network is a higher degree of intra-group solidarity due to the fact that it consists of like-minded people who are fanatically committed to the common cause.

However, it would be wrong to absolutize the network nature of the organizational structure of modern terrorism. Terrorism has not become fully networked; it has a hybrid structure (a combination of hierarchical and networked organizational principles).

4. Wide arsenal of terrorist tools. Among them, information technologies that allow terrorists to conduct “cyber Jihad” should be noted first of all. Terrorists have always paid great attention to information, because they are interested in causing maximum resonance in society by their actions. Therefore, they try to get into the headlines in any way, like to give interviews, etc. [6].

What is the role of modern information technology (MIT) in the terrorist activities? First, extremists use the latest achievements of science and technology in the field of computer and information technologies when committing terrorist acts.

Secondly, the media component of modern terrorism has acquired a fundamentally new meaning as a result of the use of MIT. They allow terrorists to communicate with the entire world. We can blame Internet for turning terrorism into a transnational phenomenon. Now, it can affect not only thousands of users of information networks, but also entire states, quickly transmit information (including in real time), gain informational independence and form a collective identity.

With the help of MIT, terrorists are able to disable (carry out cyber attacks) the control systems of nuclear reactors, air and rail transport, storages of strategic raw materials, distribution of electricity and water, chemical and biological laboratories, etc. Such attacks are not only instrumental, but also in many ways morally and psychologically important, because they are aimed, among other things, at intimidating and demoralizing society and the political elite by threatening to disable the most important life-support systems and socially dangerous objects (“cyberterrorism”).

In addition, MIT are a means of creating an atmosphere of fear in society using information that exaggerates the power of terrorists, reports on the terrible consequences of terrorist acts, including videos of hostage executions, etc. (“information terrorism”) [4. P. 164]. Accordingly, the main goals of information and psychological terrorism are:

1) disorganization of social and political life. Terrorists display films and videos on the Internet designed to show that they are invincible and completely control the situation in society;

2) discrediting political opponents, also by creating an “image of the enemy”: the United States, Israel, their allies, and, ultimately, all the “crusaders.” The “image of the enemy” is constructed using depersonalization, which greatly facilitates aggression, since the “enemy” turns from concrete to abstract: he may be American, European, etc.;

3) propaganda of radical Islamism, recruitment of supporters. Internet resources allow terrorists to propagate their ideas around the world, establish close relations between immigrants and extremist organizations in the Middle East, South Asia, and other parts of the world. Compared to previous years, the time it takes to recruit a terrorist is rapidly decreasing. Its main tool is communication in social networks. According to experts, it is the bright, regularly updated content that is a powerful factor in generating interest in it from radical Muslims. Special attention is paid to young people who dominate terrorist organizations. Therefore, starting from schools, counter-propaganda using the most modern methods is necessary [9];

4) ensuring communication between terrorist cells and coordination of their activities. It is known that many of the extremists who committed terrorist attacks in Europe were regular users of Islamist websites, where, among other things, you can get instructions, either explicitly or implicitly, on how to prepare and carry out terrorist attacks.

The objects of information terrorism are, first, members of terrorist organizations; second, sympathizers; and third, opponents (state authorities, law enforcement agencies, opposition leaders, etc.).

5. High intensity. Modern terrorism is characterized by a special cruelty and great destructive consequences. In the past, hundreds of people were victims of the bloodiest terrorist attacks, now they are numbered in thousands. In 2018, the

damage caused by the actions of terrorists in the world amounted to almost US \$33 billion [3].

6. Growth of the political potential of terrorism.

For a long time, it has been assumed that the political possibilities of terrorism are very limited, that it is used by those whose military potential is insufficient to defeat the enemy in an open clash.

However, despite the serious damage inflicted on al-Qaeda in recent years, the strategic importance of terrorism as a political tool has increased [7]. Due to a number of reasons, the scale of its political tasks has grown significantly in the twenty-first century (seizure and redistribution of power, influence on mass consciousness, etc.). But this topic deserves a separate analysis.

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