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**The fight against terrorism in the countries of Central Asia. Connections with terrorist
organizations in the Middle East**

Since the very beginning of independence, the Central Asian republics have faced such a problem as ensuring regional and ethno-confessional security. The events connected with the civil war in Tajikistan in 1992-1997 and the invasion to the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1999-2000 of armed groups of militants of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan became the peak of manifestations of threats of terrorism and extremism¹.

The geopolitical situation in Central Asia has caused the influence of political instability and conflict zones such as the Caucasus, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, Afghanistan, the Middle and Middle East on it [3]. The most security in Central Asia is threatened by the situation in Afghanistan, where the Taliban are providing great organizational and material support to the IMU, the radical Tajik opposition and the Uygur separatists². In the last two years, there appeared cells of the Islamic State (banned in Russia).

Tajikistan. The government of Tajikistan over the past 8 years has strengthened the fight against extremist groups. So at the end of 2010 - the beginning of 2011 local security officials carried out a major operation to destroy militants in the Rasht valley.

At the end of July of 2012 in the city of Khorog, the administrative center of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, a special operation was carried out to neutralize the group of Tolib Ayymbekov, who was involved in the murder of the general of the special services, the

¹ <http://www.centrasia.ru/news2.php?st=1296021720>

² Ibid

head of the department of the State Committee for National Security in GBAR Abdullo Nazarov³.

At the end of November of 2014, Tajikistan detained 20 terrorists who were preparing sabotage acts in the north of the country. All criminals were members of the group "Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan"⁴.

During the search, the detainees were found the so-called "shahid belts", explosives, detonators and extremist literature.

According to Ramadan Rahimzoda, the head of the Interior Ministry of the republic, the criminals were trained in special camps in one of the foreign states and planned to blow up a number of strategically important industrial facilities in Tajikistan⁵.

Earlier, on the 12 of November of 2014, law enforcement agencies of the republic had already neutralized a group of 12 extremists. All its participants were members of the terrorist group "Jamoat Ansarullah" and recruited fellow citizens to participate in the jihad in Syria⁶.

In connection with these events in 2014-2015 an even more stringent campaign was launched to combat "religious extremism". In particular, government representatives attended sermons in mosques and where sermons were considered excessively radical, mosques were closed (most often, the rooms were then transferred to different cultural centers) [4]. In total, about 2000 mosques were closed. Only in the region of Abdurahmani Jomi (Khatlon region in the south of Tajikistan), 50 mosques were closed⁷. In all city centers, strict measures were taken to ensure an anti-religious "dress code": administrative clothing was coded, for example, wearing women's scarves, wearing beards by men, etc. In the fall of 2015, a campaign was launched to combat women preachers, as their activities were also found, in principle, to promote the spread of extremism.

In 2015, one of the outrageous facts of extremism was the desertion and withdrawal of the Colonel of the Detachment of Special Purpose Police Gulmurod Halimov to the "Islamic State" in Syria and Iraq. In his video message, the colonel said against the backdrop of palm trees and bearded armed people that he is in Syria, where he will "fight for the rights of Muslims." The colonel promised to return to Tajikistan to establish Sharia law there⁸.

³ Памир возвращается к миру, но в Таджикистане опасаются раскола страны. URL: <http://ria.ru/analytics/20120731/713687993.html>

⁴ <http://mir24.tv/news/incident/11608068>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ <http://islamnews.tj/tajikistan/1070-neoficialnye-mecheti-preobrazovali-v-kulturnye-centry.html>

⁸ <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2660483>

In the fall of 2015, there was a military mutiny led by Deputy Defense Minister Major General Abdukhalim Nazarzoda. During this mutiny, 17 people were killed in two terrorist attacks in Tajikistan. They were military men. Attacks were held in Dushanbe and Vahdat, a former Ordzhonikidzeabad - a city 20 kilometers east of the Tajik capital⁹.

Major-General Abdukhalim Nazarzoda himself was a member of the Islamic Revival Party (IRPT) and former field commander of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). After signing the peace agreement in 1997, he was placed in the ranks of the armed forces of Tajikistan for a 30 percent quota¹⁰.

After the mutiny, the IRPT was banned. True, its leaders themselves claimed that the party's structures were not involved in the mutiny.

Uzbekistan. The policy pursued by the Uzbek authorities in the fight against religious extremism and terrorism is traditionally extremely harsh. However, Uzbek extremist structures (especially the IMU) are the strongest and most aggressive in the region. Thus, according to the British newspaper Financial Times, the terrorist group of the IMU proved that it represents a long-term threat, and is currently interacting with Al-Qaeda and the Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba. In the late 1990s. the IMU grouping numbered only a few hundred Uzbek and Tajik fighters, but now the group has thousands of militants from all Central Asian states, as well as China, Turkey, Azerbaijan¹¹.

It should be noted that the deepest reasons for the growth of extremism in this country lie, among other things, in political, socio-economic and interethnic problems, especially those typical of the most densely populated areas of the Fergana Valley. The Ferghana and Karategin valleys are also convenient areas for the covert activity of terrorist groups¹².

Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan, in connection with a number of events (explosions in Aktobe and Astana, armed clashes in Zhanaozen), the problem of increasing the potential of terrorist activity is also actively discussed. In this state, as in Central Asia in general, the main vehicles of the ideas of terror are Islamist currents and organizations. In this regard, in order to minimize their impact on the consciousness of the inhabitants of the republic, Kazakhstan's leadership has taken a number of measures to strengthen the work aimed at increasing religious education, as well as the spiritual development of Kazakhstan's society. For this purpose, a specialized agency was created in the republic - the Agency for Religious Affairs [1]. For the same purposes, more

⁹ <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2660483>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ В Центральной Азии зреет кризис, а крупные державы интересуется лишь «Большая игра» URL: <http://inozpress.kg/news/view/id/38077>

¹² <http://www.cisnews.org/expert-opinion/2866-terrorizm-i-religioznyy-ekstremizm-strany-centralnoy-azii-byut-trevogu.html>

than 10,000 Internet portals were monitored, as a result of which the court of Astana made decisions on recognizing the products of 51 foreign websites for the propaganda of extremism and terrorism illegal and stopping the distribution on the territory of the country. The measures taken by Kazakhstan to combat these negative manifestations, as well as the policy of tolerant attitude towards all confessions and nationalities conducted by the country's leadership, in general, contribute to the preservation of security in the country¹³.

Terrorist activity in Kazakhstan has a serious international political dimension. A number of experts, for example, the head of the Kyrgyz analytical center "Prudent Solutions" E. Usubaliev, pointing to the thrust of unrest in Kazakhstan's Zhanaozen against the Chinese owner, notes the potential possibility of uniting the Kazakh underground with Uyghur separatists. The expert also believes that the creation of terrorist groups and the spread of the ideology of jihad in the oil-bearing regions of the Caspian and northwest of Kazakhstan could in the future threaten the interests of the PRC in the region¹⁴.

Kyrgyzstan. For the southern part of Kyrgyzstan, the traditional threat is the transfer of extremist groups from neighboring Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. One of the reasons for this is the weakness of law enforcement agencies in this country. In general, we are talking about the life of the Uzbek diaspora, the Kyrgyz themselves are involved in this activity relatively poorly, due to the low level of Islamization. So, in October of 2012, a member of the international terrorist organization "Islamic Movement of Turkestan" Habibullo Suleimenov, a native of the Fergana region, wanted by Uzbek special services was detained in Kyrgyzstan¹⁵.

However, the activities of pseudo-educational groups, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir (which formally do not set the task of armed struggle, but included in the lists of terrorist organizations approved by special services of key countries in the world), gradually began to embrace the Kirghiz.

In recent years, a new trend has emerged. Jihadist groups of Kazakhstan, driven out of this country, also have an impact on Salafi jamaats in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, the appearance in Kyrgyzstan of the group "Jaysh ul Mahdi" in 2009-2010. and the aggravation of the situation

¹³ <http://www.cisnews.org/expert-opinion/2866-terrorizm-i-religioznyy-ekstremizm-strany-centralnoy-azii-byut-trevogu.html>

¹⁴ <http://polit.uz/archives/7745>

¹⁵ <http://www.24kg.org/investigation/139737-v-kyrgyzstane-zaderzhan-chlen-mezhdunarodnoj.html>

in Kazakhstan in the religious sphere in approximately the same period can be regarded as links in one chain¹⁶.

In addition, the alarm of the Kyrgyz authorities is prompted by a quick focus on the specific environment and flexibility in the actions of radical religious groups, to which the terrorist organization Zhaishul Mahdi banned in the country by the Supreme Court decision, based on the principles of jihad against non-believers, is closely adjoined. In Kyrgyzstan, there are cases when members of these organizations imprisoned for a short time managed to turn inmates in their ardent supporters. Against this background, the toothlessness and friability of traditional Islam and its institutions, coupled with perpetual upheavals within the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, only aggravates the problem¹⁷.

One of the latest manifestations of terrorism in the country was an explosion at the gates of the Chinese embassy in Bishkek in the morning of the 30 of August of 2016. It was committed by a suicide bomber who, with a Mitsubishi Delica car, rammed the gates of the diplomatic mission and exploded. As a result, the suicide bomber died, three embassy employees were wounded and hospitalized. All victims are citizens of Kyrgyzstan¹⁸.

The State Committee for National Security of Kyrgyzstan announced in a few days that a terrorist act in the Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan was committed by a member of the Islamic Movement of East Turkistan under the order of Uygur terrorist groups operating in Syria linked to the Jabhat an Nusra group (a terrorist organization banned in Russia). Even his name was mentioned. This is Uighur, who had a passport of a Tajik citizen of the series "M 626881" addressed to Zoir Khalilov, 15.01.1983, b¹⁹.

However, it should be noted that in general, the Kyrgyz authorities have recently intensified their struggle against religious extremism and the influence of various kinds of Salafi trends. This is a fairly positive trend.

Thus, it can be stated that the threat posed by Islamist terrorist groups for the countries of Central Asia is quite high, and to counteract it it is necessary to unite the efforts of Russia and its partners in the SCO and the CSTO [2].

It is necessary to improve the organizational structure of the CSTO to counter terrorist threats [5]. In this regard, it is necessary to further strengthen cooperation between the structures of the SCO and the CSTO, which has been going on for several years.

¹⁶ <http://polit.uz/archives/7745>

¹⁷ <http://centrassia.ru/kirgistan/17-kyrgyzstan-poligon-terroristicheskogo-internacionala.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.newsru.com/world/30aug2016/kyrg.html>

¹⁹ В Киргизии назвали виновника теракта у посольства КНР в Бишкеке. URL: <http://www.interfax.ru/world/526964>

As for the SCO itself, it would be advisable to strengthen the activities of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the organization based in Tashkent, in addition, to consider the creation of special, permanently functioning integrated units in the SCO to combat drug trafficking and extremism [4]. One might think of forming a unified police force, about what their organizational structures might be.

Also, it is desirable that the SCO become one of the centers of international efforts to combat terrorism and extremism. For this, the countries that are members of the organization could coordinate the activities of their power departments with the structures of the UN and other international organizations.

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