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«Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue»

We dedicate this issue of the journal to the analysis of the controversial processes taking place in Afghanistan, the importance of which is high for ensuring peace and stability in the region.

The issue opens with a series of four articles on the history of international relations and foreign policy. Under this heading, the authors presented articles on the interconnections between history and modern processes in Afghanistan that they have identified.

Omar M. Nessar addressed the origin and evolution of the Taliban<sup>1</sup>. Having identified five main stages in the evolution of this movement, the author came to the conclusion: "The main goals and objectives of the Taliban\* have not changed much over 20 years, but the composition of the movement has undergone a transformation, which was reflected in the dynamics of the prohibitive policy." Considering in retrospect the composition of the "moderate" Taliban\*, the author comes to the conclusion that now the movement is more numerous than in the 1990s. According to the author, the current lack of a well-formed and clearly articulated worldview prevents the Taliban\* from defining the image of the enemy.

Olga E. Mitrofanenkova presented the results of a study of the sources of financing of the Taliban\* movement for 20 years from 2001 to 2021. The author draws attention to the fact that although in 2001 the Taliban\* movement was almost completely defeated as a result of the anti-terrorist Operation Enduring Freedom, exactly after 20 years later it was revived. The main role in this was played by the sources of funding, which helped to gain control over the country. This topic has attracted the attention of researchers both in Russia and in other countries. Based on the results of previous studies, the author examined how the sources of funding for the Taliban\* changed from 2001 to 2021, traced which sources of income played the most significant role. As noted in the conclusions,

"it was the drug business that became one of the first sources of funding that helped the Taliban\* begin to restore their strength and influence in Afghanistan after 2001."

Yury P. Laletin also turned to the same 20th period and considered the processes of economic and humanitarian cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2001–2021. The author came to the conclusion that the trade and economic cooperation between the two countries during this period remained at a low level. However, positive processes have also emerged: the problem of Afghanistan's debt has been resolved, a number of joint bodies have been created, and the most favored nation regime has been introduced. But there were also obstacles: "corruption and the unwillingness of Americans to have Russian firms as competitors, which were assigned the role of nothing more than subcontractors."

Vasily S. Khristoforov devoted his article to the problem of the presence of American troops in Afghanistan in the same period. "Can Neither be Left nor Taken Out" is the subtitle of his article. The Americans failed to introduce democratic values, as they formulated their main task. The government, which was supported by American troops, fell even before the end of the withdrawal of the American contingent. The reasons for this, according to the author, were "the peculiarities of the historical, cultural, social and religious development of society, as well as the weakness of the country's political leadership."

The section "International, global and regional processes" in the field of international relations is represented by four articles.

Mikhail M. Slinkin considered the policy in Eurasia "in the context of the US claims to a key role in the world and the desire to independently manage the pieces on the Grand Chessboard." The author drew

attention to the fact that after the hasty withdrawal of their troops from Afghanistan by the Americans, they switched to another "chess game", raising their ally in the person of Ukraine, the leadership and part of the population of which profess the Nazi ideology. The author writes that "the connection between the events in the Near and Middle East and in Europe is obvious, but still requires proof," which is what the article is devoted to.

The Afghan vector of the modern foreign policy of Uzbekistan became the subject of research by Rustam B. Makhmudov. The Uzbek approach is characterized by the author through a combination of the following factors: "support for the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan; development of trade and economic cooperation with Kabul; promotion by Uzbekistan of initiatives for greater participation of the world community in establishing a peaceful life in Afghanistan; integration of this country into the interconnectedness projects of Central and South Asia promoted by Tashkent".

Kazakhstan's policy towards Afghanistan is reviewed by Nuriddin Sultanmuratov. The republic still relies on the CSTO and the SCO, but the Kazakh authorities, as recent events show, seek to maintain contacts with the Taliban\* movement, considering it as a factor in maintaining stability in this country.

Iran's policy in the context of the Afghan crisis after 2021 was reviewed by Jafar Haqpanah. The article presents a historical overview of the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, their ties in the political, cultural, economic and humanitarian spheres. The main levers of Iran's influence on the situation in Afghanistan are shown. The author comes to the conclusion that "the return of the Taliban\* to power in Afghanistan can be seen as a combination of opportunities and, at the same time, threats for the Islamic Republic of Iran. From the point of view of officials in Tehran, the opportunities currently outweigh the threats and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future."

The problems of "changing society" in the context of social structure, social institutions and processes, political sociology studies are presented in four articles.

The article by Valentina V. Komleva is devoted to the study of the communication regime in modern Afghanistan. For the first time in the context of Afghanistan, the methodology for analyzing the controllability of communication regimes is applied and its assessment is given. Based on the results of the pilot study, the features of the communication regime were identified, in particular, the presence of "blind zones" that are not always seen and understood by those who study and manage public communications. The author draws conclusions about the influence of internal and external communication control centers,

about the weak controllability of the communication regime by the Taliban\*, despite the policy of controlling communication channels and information content.

A Tajik perspective on the humanitarian and security situation in Afghanistan after the Taliban\* came to power is presented by Kosimsho Iskandarov. The Taliban\* regime, in accordance with the conclusion of the author, threatens to destroy the centuries-old historical and cultural heritage of Tajiks in this country: "Tajiks under the Taliban\* are removed from power, the policy of the Taliban\* will lead to limiting the scope of the Dari (Tajik) language, which is more for thousands of years it has been the state language, the language of interethnic communication in this country". That is why Emomali Rahmon insisted on the formation of an inclusive government, taking into account the interests of ethnic Tajiks, who make up 46 percent of the population of Afghanistan.

The "women's issue" in Afghanistan after the coming to power of the Mujahedeen, and then the Taliban\*, was considered by Ubayd V. Okimbekov. The author was attracted by the place and position of Afghan women in society, the development of education and the involvement of the female population in the socio-economic and political life of this country. The restrictions imposed by the Taliban\* on women, the author concludes, "are the product of the views of the leaders of the movement themselves, but this is presented as the requirements of religion."

Social challenges to the new Taliban\* government attracted the attention of Ilya A. Zimin. The author comes to the conclusion that the Taliban\* do not have enough internal resources for a comprehensive and deep solution of social problems, so the goal of international humanitarian organizations was to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan. The author believes that "for more than a year, the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan continues to control most of the country and respond in one way or another to the challenges, the collapse of the state has not happened."

Dear readers!

The materials of this issue were prepared as part of the initiative project of our colleague, Omar Mohammad Nessar, senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, director of the Study of Modern Afghanistan Center.

The editorial board of the journal hopes that the materials of the issue will arouse your interest and that you yourself will become one of our authors in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> \*The organization has been recognized a terrorist organization by the Russian Supreme Court. Unified federal list of organizations, including foreign and international organizations, recognized as terrorist in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation (as of June 25, 2023). Available from: <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/npd/terror.htm>. (accessed: 25.06.2023);18+