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IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVES OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE WESTERN AND MUSLIM WORLDS BETWEEN 2001–2003

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The article analyzes the narratives of the conflict between Western and Islamic civilization. The conflict between these two civilizations has a long history. The confrontation between Christianity and Islam began in the 7th century with the expansion of Islam beyond Arabia. The conflict between Islamic civilization on the one hand and Christian civilization on the other continues to this day. Between 2001 and 2003, the conflict between the two civilizations intensified. This conflict between the West and the Islamic world became the starting point for the development of the conflict, which became a partial cause of the Arab Spring and chaos in the Middle East, which led to a long-term destabilization of the region, coup d'état and civil wars. Also, these reasons led to the beginning of the migration crisis in 2015. The study was conducted on the basis of a systematic analysis of historical events. The initial stage of the fight against international Islamic terrorism by the United States of America and its allies is analyzed. The speeches of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein are analyzed. The analysis showed that the US used the crusade against the forces of evil narrative to describe military operations against Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, the US government called the war on terrorism a crusade. In response, Osama bin Laden stated that Allah attacked evil, meaning an attack on the US and the Western world. In his speeches, there is a narrative of the struggle of the Islamic world against the Christian one. The same narrative is found in the speeches of the President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. The study showed that religious narratives are used from the West and the Muslim world. There is a confrontation between two civilizations, on the one hand Christian and Islamic. If we consider this conflict from the point of view of the conflict of civilizations, then we see that it has a thousand-year history. Also, from the rhetoric of the West, the Islamic world is presented as a world of terrorism. From the side of the Islamic world, in their rhetoric, the West is presented as an enemy and an occupier of the Islamic world and individual Muslim countries.

Key words: Middle East, terrorism, Islam, Christianity, clash of civilizations.

Петряєв Олексій. Ідеологічні нарративи конфлікту між західним і мусульманським світом у 2001–2003 роках

У статті аналізується нарративи конфлікту між західною й ісламською цивілізаціями. Конфлікт між цими двома цивілізаціями має давню історію. Конфронтація між християнством та ісламом розпочалася в VII столітті з експансією ісламу за межі Аравії. Конфлікт між ісламською цивілізацією, з одного боку, та християнською, з іншого, триває дотепер. Протягом 2001–2003 років конфлікт між двома цивілізаціями посилювався. Суперечності між Заходом та ісламським світом стали початком для розвитку конфлікту, який частково став причиною Арабської весни та хаосу на Близькому Сході, що призвело до тривалої дестабілізації регіону, державного перевороту та громадянських воєн. Також ці причини призвели до початку міграційної кризи у 2015 році. Дослідження проводилося на основі системного аналізу історичних подій. Проаналізовано початковий етап боротьби Сполучених Штатів Америки та їхніх союзників з міжнародним ісламським тероризмом. Проаналізовано виступи Президента Сполучених Штатів Америки Джорджа Буша, Усами Бен Ладена та Саддама Хусейна. Аналіз показав, що Сполучені Штати Америки використовували нарратив хрестового походу проти сил зла для опису військових операцій проти Афганістану й Іраку. Таким чином, уряд Сполучених Штатів Америки назвав війну з тероризмом хрестовим походом. У відповідь Усама Бен Ладен заявив, що Аллах атакував зло, маючи на увазі атаку на Сполучені Штати Америки і західний світ. У його промовах є розповідь про боротьбу ісламського світу із християнським. Такий самий нарратив можна знайти у промовах президента Іраку Саддама Хусейна. Дослідження показало, що релігійні нарративи використовуються як Заходом, так і мусульманським світом. Відбувається протистояння двох цивілізацій, з одного боку, християнства, а з іншого – ісламу. Якщо розглядати це як конфлікт цивілізацій, то ми бачимо, що він має тисячолітню історію. Окрім того, за риторикою Заходу ісламський світ представлений як світ тероризму. У риторичі ісламського світу Захід представлений як ворог і окупант ісламського світу й окремих мусульманських країн.

Ключові слова: Близький Схід, тероризм, іслам, християнство, зіткнення цивілізацій.

Introduction. The starting point that makes it possible to assess the influence, including negative ones, of orthodox Islam on world European culture, spirituality and social life is that fundamental (in Islam, Christianity, etc.) is a conservative religious movement directed against the dominant one in the modern world secularization. This trend not only responds to the alleged attempts at a critical revision or liberal interpretation of the sacred texts of the Bible or the Koran, and other religious concepts, but also advocates the revival



of the sacred language and culture. The latter, as known, differs significantly from the foundations of the culture of the people of Europe.

The purpose and objectives of the study. To study the religious narratives of the conflict between Christianity and Islam, from the point of view of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Recent literature review. The topic of the conflict between the Western and Islamic civilization was studied by such scholars as Samuel P. Huntington, Leoni Connah, Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, Raymond Hinnebusch, Gerald R. Webster and etc.

Research methods. The study was conducted on the basis of systematic analysis of historical events and political processes. At the level of general scientific methodologies of cognition, the dialectical principles of cognizing the influence of the Muslim world on the European Christian world, as well as the principles of studying historical data, were used. They made it possible to comprehend the historical processes of religious and social conflicts between Western Christian and Islamic civilizations.

The main research material. Many analysts believe that, September 11, 2001, became a new stage in the history of world politics. Islamic terrorists from the radical Muslim organization al-Qaeda hijacked four civilian aircraft in the United States, two of which attacked the World Trade Center in New York, another crashed into the Pentagon; the fourth crashed in Pennsylvania. The al-Qaeda operation was founded and sponsored by the international Islamic terrorist Osama bin Laden, who was at that time in Afghanistan. Since 1996, this country has been under the control of the Taliban Islamic movement. President Bush called on the people of the United States and the world to put an end to international terrorism, to destroy al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden [1].

On September 18, 2001, US President George W. Bush signed the Joint Resolution, which made it possible to use the US military to destroy the side responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Also, this resolution made it possible to use the US armed forces in Afghanistan [2].

On October 7, the US military, along with the UK, launched Operation Enduring Freedom, which included airstrikes against Taliban and al-Qaeda bases and their further destruction by ground forces on the ground. After that, the war in Afghanistan moved into the phase of the Taliban guerrilla war against the US-led coalition forces [3].

Thus, in our opinion, the era of the global war against terrorism began, which included the destruction of not only terrorist organizations, but also dictatorial regimes, which President George W. Bush called the “axis of evil”. In his State of the Union address in 2002, President Bush announced that the United States and its allies will fight terrorism, terrorist organizations and countries that sponsor international terrorism and threaten civil society around the world. He also named Iraq, Iran, North Korea and the terrorist organizations of Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad and Jaish-e-Muhammad, dangerous to the whole world, which must be destroyed [4].

To understand the cause-and-effect relationships that led to the mass exodus of emigrants from the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa to Europe, we analyzed the most significant, in our opinion, events that have taken place in the world since the beginning of the new millennium. As the starting date, we have chosen, as indicated above, September 11, 2001, the day recorded in history as 9/11 or the “second Pearl Harbor”. On this day, the largest terrorist attack in the United States history took place, which claimed about three thousand lives during the attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center by passenger planes hijacked by Islamic terrorists. These buildings served not only as a symbol of Manhattan in New York, but also as a symbol of the US trade and financial greatness in the world.

On September 14, 2001, US President George W. Bush visited the scene of the tragedy in New York, where he delivered a speech to rescuers and firefighters. Two days later, on September 16, after consulting with a team of US national security officials at Camp David, the president returned to the White House to hold a press conference for journalists. In his speech, he stated that the American people survived the horror after the terrorist attacks on New York, but they were not broken, and the country would be rebuilt.

Note that the content of the speech had a religiously pretentious content, in which such words as: Lords Day, Love and Compassion, Faith, Evil, Evildoers, Crusade were repeatedly used.

Particularly noteworthy is the style of speech, in the form of short, simple sentences that can be understood by any category of listeners, as well as the demeanor of the president with a claim to oratory, which looked more like a Protestant preacher’s speech than an analytical speech by the president of a major world power. And most importantly, in this speech, the word Crusade was spoken for the first time.

The expression Crusade should be seen as a symbol of the unification of Christianity and a call not so much for the persecution of terrorists who profess Islam, but for the war of the Christian civilization against



the Islamic world. In this regard, the military operations of the United States and its allies (Great Britain, Australia, Canada) in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 and in Iraq on March 20, 2003, which are Muslim countries with ancient Islamic traditions, became indicative.

Another important element in the awakening of the subconscious of the religious confrontation between Christianity and Islam was the chosen date for President Bush's speech, which coincided with Sunday. In this speech, President Bush has repeatedly emphasized the fact that September 16 is Lord's Day. In Christianity, the "*Day of the Lord*" is considered the day of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The phrase used by the President of the United States for "Lord's Day" is found in the Bible at Revelation 1:10. "*I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*" [5].

In our opinion, the structure of the speech of US President Bush is clearly filled with religious symbolism, in the form of a correlation between the concepts of "good" and "evil". He stated that "evil" and "villains" had come to destroy the American nation, calling the latter "good people". "*But, the "good people" were not broken, they were "resurrected", or took heart to find and destroy the "evil"*". Thus, the symbol of the rebirth, the resurrection of the nation, is the "Resurrection" as the "Lord's day" when the resurrection of Jesus Christ took place.

After the allegory of the nation's rebirth with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Bush calls on the "good" people (Christians) to crusade against the forces of "evil" (Muslims). In particular, he states: "*this is a new kind of evil. We understand, and American people begging to understand. This crusade, this war on terrorism*" [2].

It is hard to say whether this statement was a spontaneous voicing of the subconscious of President Bush about the crusade, or a planned and thoughtful element of the speech following the Camp David consultations, it is not known, but in any case, this slogan was thrown.

It should be noted that almost immediately after this interview, many Americans who profess Islam began to be subjected to street attacks from the Christian population of the United States. Many restaurants and shops owned by people from Afghanistan and other Muslim countries were vandalized and forced to close.

Three weeks after the speech of US President George W. Bush, who declared a "crusade" on international terrorism, on October 7, 2001, the Qatari television channel Al Jazeera broadcast a recording of the speech of the founder and head of the international Islamic terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, referred to in the political world as "terrorist number one", staying at this time in the territory of Afghanistan. This speech coincided with the day of the beginning of the military operation of the United States, Great Britain and their allies against the Taliban, which is in power in Afghanistan.

It is impossible to determine exactly when this recording was made, but in his speech, Bin Laden mentions the 9/11 attacks several times, as evidence that the recording took place between these dates.

The entire video performance of Osama bin Laden is imbued with religious content. "God attacked America, which is now full of fear", concludes Bin Laden. The construction of the relationship of "good" and "evil" is presented in the image of God as a transcendental being and the command of his will, materialized in the punishment of "evil", in the image of the American people for their sins, and as the opposition of Allah and Islam against Western Christian civilization.

Osama bin Laden states that the attacks committed on September 11 are God's revenge for 80 years of oppression, robbery and humiliation of the Islamic world by Western civilization. He also mentions the suffering of the peoples of Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq, and laments the Muslim religious leaders who do not issue fatwas (value judgments), hushing up the events.

For example, in the 1975–1990 during Lebanese civil war, Israeli troops on 16 and 17 September 1982 assisted the Lebanese Phalangists (Christian Arabs) in the massacre of Palestinian Muslims in refugee camps in the Sabra and Shatila areas of Beirut. In Palestine, Israeli forces have repeatedly suppressed Palestinian Muslims, and Iraq was bombed by the United States in 1993, 1996 and 1998.

Thus, a structure was built in which representatives of Western civilization and Christians destroy righteous Muslims.

Osama bin Laden in his speech also uses the concept not of "Arab countries", but "lands of Islam", as if denying the existence of interstate borders, that is, artificial barriers, presenting Islam and the Muslim people as a single whole – the ummah. The lands of Islam are the lands of the core of the Islamic world, which is being attacked by Western and Christian civilizations.

Another, as it seems to us, important position of Osama bin Laden, we should pay attention. In particular, he states that "*when women, children and old people died in the Islamic world, the civilian population of Western Christian civilization was silent and approved of these actions. Now God with his "sword" punishes the Western Christian civilization for their crimes*". Thus, bin Laden, as it were, connects the statement of US President Bush about the "*crusade as a war against terrorism*", that is, the war of Western Christian



civilization against Islamic civilization, dividing the world into believers and infidels, the Christian West and the World of Islam.

Summing up the analysis of the speech by Osama bin Laden on the Al-Jazeera TV channel and the speech of US President Bush Jr. to reporters, we can draw comparative parallels:

- both speeches use religious rhetoric;
- two large civilizations are opposed – the North-Western Christian civilization on the one hand and the South-Eastern Islamic civilization on the other;
- both civilizations have deep historical roots of centuries-old confrontation for almost a thousand years;
- in one rhetoric, Muslims are presented as a world of terrorism, in the opposite rhetoric, the Christian Western world is presented as an enemy and occupier who kills the faithful in the land of Islam;
- for the Western Christian world, September 11 is presented as a terrorist act of the South-East, professing Islam, for Muslims this event is interpreted as punishment of God, Christians, and New York acts as a symbol of modern Western civilization [6].

On November 5, 2006, the Iraqi Supreme Criminal Tribunal found former President Saddam Hussein guilty of killing 148 Shiites and sentenced him to death by hanging. On December 30, 2006, the sentence was carried out. Shortly before this event, Saddam Hussein published two of his letters calling for jihad, duplicating them in a short speech just before the execution.

Saddam Hussein's first letter was published on May 28, 2003, in the pan-Arab newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi (Arab Jerusalem), that is, two months after the start of the invasion of Iraq by Western coalition forces led by the United States and Great Britain. The content of the letter bore signs of religious symbolism and called for the unification of the people of Iraq and the Arab countries in the fight against the occupiers and Zionists [7].

Like most Arabic texts and documents, the letter began with an appeal (Basmala): *“In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”, and passed into Ayat 69, Sura 20 “Ta Ha”:* *“Throw that which is in thy right hand: quickly will it swallow up that which they have faked; what they have faked is but a magician's trick; and the magician thrives not, (no matter) where he goes”*. This Ayat, dedicated to the transformation of the rod (staff) of Musa (Moses) into a snake that devoured the snakes (rods) of Pharaoh's magicians, as a symbol of the victory of God over magicians (paganism), divine over devilish. In fact, this parable served as a key to the semantic content of the entire letter of Saddam Hussein [8].

The letter contains an appeal of the Mujahideen (warriors for religion), the sons of the Arab world and members of the Baath Arab Socialist Party to active resistance: *“From Saddam Hussein to the mujahideen everywhere; to the courageous sons of Arabism; to members of the Arab Socialist Baath Party peace unto you and God's mercy and blessings”*, which bears signs of Islamic fundamentalism and pan-Arabism. In addition to the concept of mujahideen, the concept of “brothers in jihad” is also used.

Religious symbols such as the appeal to Allah and the mention of the Mujahideen and brothers in jihad indicate a connection with Ayat number 69, mentioned at the beginning of the letter. Thus, Saddam Hussein draws a parallel between the prophet Musa (Moses) and his faith in Allah; the belief of the mujahideen, and the sacred jihad against the occupying forces of the West.

In the letter, Saddam Hussein lists the traitors to the Arab and Islamic worlds who betrayed Iraq for their own benefit. These include Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In particular, in 1978, Egypt recognized Israel, thereby betraying the Palestinian Arabs in the eyes of the Arab world; Jordan was an economic and political ally of Iraq during the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War and during the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. After Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War, Jordan changed its foreign policy and in 1994 signed a peace treaty with Israel. As a consequence, in the eyes of Saddam Hussein, Jordan betrayed Iraq for its own benefit. As for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Iraq developed extremely negative relations with them after the Iraq-Kuwait war in the Persian Gulf; and the recognition of Israel by Egypt and Jordan, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with it, is, according to Saddam Hussein, nothing more than their consent to the spread of Zionism in the Middle East.

Thus, all four Arab countries were allies of the Western world in the Middle East, therefore, from the point of view of Sura 20 “Ta Ha”, Saddam Hussein states the fact of their betrayal of Allah and the entire Arab people, and the return of their worship of the “golden calf”. The translation of the conflict into a state of religious clash between the Islamic world, and the world of Western Christianity and Jews, is the main message of Saddam Hussein's political appeal to Arabs and other peoples professing Islam [9].

The second letter, the last one, was written by Saddam Hussein shortly before his execution, in which he addressed a message to the people of Iraq, to the Arab people in general and to Muslims around the world. In it, he uses the Islamic religious address “brother”, equating himself to all peoples professing Islam, as part of the “ummah” (community). In relation to himself, Hussein also applies the epic concepts of “son”



and “leader”: “You have known your brother and leader very well and he never bowed to the despots and, in accordance with the wishes of those who loved him, remained a sword and a banner”.

As in the first letter of 2003, Saddam Hussein glorifies Allah and the Mujahideen participating in the holy war, and also calls on the Iraqi people to jihad (in the context of guerrilla warfare): “*God is Great <...> God is great <...> Long live our nation <...> Long live our great struggling people <...> Long live Iraq, long live Iraq <...> Long live Palestine <...> Long live jihad and the mujahedeen (the insurgency)*”. Finally, Saddam Hussein identifies himself as the commander of the Iraqi mujahideen forces: President and Commander in Chief of the Iraqi Mujahed Armed Forces. It is important to emphasize that Saddam Hussein calls himself not just the president or commander of the Iraqi army, but the commander of the mujahideen army, which underlines the religious nature of the resistance [7].

Saddam Hussein’s short calls at the very moment of his execution coincided with the content of his letters, in which he calls for a general jihad against Western Christianity. Before the scaffold, he read the confession of faith (shahada) and said: “*God is great. The Islamic community (ummah) will win, and Palestine is an Arab territory*”. With the rope around his neck, his last words were: “*Let the Americans and Persians be damned!*”.

Summing up the analysis of the letters of Saddam Hussein, we can conclude that the letters of Saddam Hussein are a call to the beginning of the religiously-armed struggle of Islam against Western Christianity and Israeli Zionism.

Conclusion. The study showed, political rhetoric in the period 2001–2003, that is, the beginning of the war against terrorism, by the United States on the one hand, and the Muslim world on the other hand, is built on religious narratives. The US uses lines from the Bible and allegories of the crusade, while the Islamic world uses the Koran and the concept of jihad, that is, holy war against the infidels.

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