

THE ROLE OF SECULAR POLICY IN ENSURING SOCIAL STABILITY IN SOCIETY

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Abstract:

This article examines the problem of the sustainable development of the country and the role and influence of the religious factor in it, changes and innovations related to secular policy. The concepts of secularism and religiosity are very important for the sustainable development of an informed society, they are not a rigid theoretical paradigm - they change, undergo transformation and modernization in accordance with the requirements of time, era, and specific socio-political situation.

Keywords: social development, atheism, dogmatic, dialectical, ideology of atheism, secular policy, secularism, Islam, faith.

The granting of greater freedoms and rights to religion, religious beliefs, and the activities of religious organizations every year creates a tendency for a "religious awakening" in society. This also creates various threats to the secular, democratic path of development chosen by our people. The tragic 30 years of our national independence and the dark deeds of religious extremism and terrorism in Tashkent, Bukhara, Andijan, and other regions at the beginning of the two thousandths have become a historical lesson on the path to sustainable development. In these conditions, a deeply thought-out secular policy, maintaining a rational balance between the state and religion, and preventing their contradictory relationship from forming, becomes a reliable guarantee of sustainable interethnic, inter-civil and inter-religious development. The Islamic theocratic state observed in Afghanistan creates a need for a theocratic state. Although political Islam and Islamism are retreating from time to time, they do not lose their potential. This feature is recognized by a number of political analysts[1]. This is because, on the one hand, the Islamic State of Iran and other Islamic platform states are trying to revive the image of Western countries led by the United States, which is ingrained in the public consciousness as "the image of Satan", anti-Western, anti-American, while the Western media, in response, are creating a negative image of Islam as a "terrorist", "destructive", "dangerous" religion through the Western media. They even deny the attempts of Islamic scholars who are impartial, calling for dialogue between the West and the East, cooperation on universal human problems. For example, the impartial broadcasts of the Qatari state satellite television Al-Jazeera, the famous Iranian scholars Abdul Karim Sarzon and Muhammad Khatami in their book "Al-Kitab wa-al Qur'an" (The Book and the Qur'an) make it seem as if they have not heard the eloquent calls of Egyptian scholars Yusuf al-Korawi and

Rashid al-Ghanush and other famous scholars on the need to achieve tolerance between Western and Eastern cultures, and they do not abandon the mirage-like doctrine of the inevitability of the crisis of civilizations put forward by Western scholar Samuel Huntington. In these circumstances, the ability of the young democratic states of Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan, to pursue a policy of secularism on a scientific basis in this critical and sensitive issue will be a reliable guarantee for strengthening social stability and rapid socio-economic development in the future. Also, the concepts of "social stability" and "sustainable development" are important factors in achieving this state - the idea that it is impossible without mutual solidarity, harmony and cooperation between the state, society and religion.

The civil policy pursued in Uzbekistan is a policy of ensuring and guaranteeing human rights and freedoms on a democratic basis. Secular policy is an integral component of this policy. In a word, "The principles of secularism and pluralism are being implemented in practice" [2. - P.45.]. The role and influence of religion in the life of society is a contradictory process. This contradiction is manifested in the mutual opposition of the phenomena of sacralization and secularization, in the struggle for hegemony in the life of society.

For the sustainable development of Uzbekistan in the future, as President Sh. Mirziyoyev expressed it, for social development from "national revival" to "national development", it is necessary to scientifically resolve the phenomena of sacralization and secularization in a political context, to implement tactical policies that are correct, popular, and take into account the changes in the religious factor on a global scale, to abandon old political patterns related to religion, and to use new political technologies. One of such technologies is the intensification of information and communication processes today, and the "information war" between some powerful states, which is characterized by the increasing importance of public relations technologies, and in scientific terms, PR technologies and political management technologies. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines it as follows: "Secularization is a widespread view in Europe during the Renaissance, expressing the process of increasing the influence of secularism in all spheres of social life, in human consciousness and activity" [8. – P. 360.]. In our opinion, secularization is characterized as a process that occurred at a certain stage in the past, while its spatial and temporal characteristics are not taken into account.

Sacralization means deification, giving religious meaning and content to even secular events. The withdrawal of US military forces from neighboring Afghanistan in August 2021 gave strength to the activation of religious radical forces on Afghan soil and the Taliban movement, which is trying to establish an "Islamic emirate". The coming to power in Afghanistan in 2021 of the Taliban movement, which is included in the list of terrorist organizations and movements by the UN and the international community, had a strong impact on the political architecture of Central Asia. Attempts are being made to establish and revive the "fifth column" in the territory of young independent states that are steadily moving along the path of secular democratic development, and international terrorist organizations such as the "Islamic

Movement of Turkestan”, “Islamic Jihad Union”, “Al-Qaeda”, etc. are rushing to strengthen their ideological influence on the young independent states of Central Asia, where the majority of the population is Muslim[3]. In our opinion, the only reliable way, means and factor to ensure harmonious and stable relations between religion and state in our country is to further strengthen and improve constitutionalism and legislation. The adoption by our parliament in July 2021 of the new version of the Constitutional Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” was one of the serious steps in this direction. After all, social stability is not a blessing that falls from the sky, for which the state's religious policy, and therefore secular policy, must be constantly improved. This is clearly demonstrated and confirmed by world experience (Egypt, Turkey, India, Indonesia). We will devote a special place in this study to world experience in improving secular policy.

The withdrawal of US counter-terrorism forces and the worsening of US-Iranian relations will have an impact on the peace and stability in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan. Therefore, it is appropriate to look at secular politics in Uzbekistan in this context. It is clear that the conflicting geopolitical interests of the leading countries in Central Asia - China, Russia, the US, Turkey, and Iran - will overshadow the mutual integration observed in the region. We must emphasize, without paying too much attention to the geopolitical aspects of the problem: in order for Uzbekistan, which is recognized as a component of the Islamic world, one of the centers of Islamic culture (ISESCO, 2007), to consistently pursue its secular policy in the future, it is necessary, on the one hand, to consistently continue its friendly relations with the Islamic world, and on the other hand, to consistently continue the path of secular democratic development chosen by our people, ensuring that Uzbekistan will take its rightful place among the developed countries of the world in the future. There are all sufficient factors for this, the population of Uzbekistan makes up almost half of the population of the region. Central Asia, in particular, Uzbekistan, has large reserves of uranium and hydrocarbon resources, precious and non-ferrous metals. Neighboring Kazakhstan is on the list of the world's leading countries in terms of oil reserves, and Turkmenistan is on the list of world leaders in gas reserves. Uzbekistan ranks fourth in the world in gold reserves, tenth in copper reserves, seventh in uranium reserves, fourteenth in the world in natural gas reserves, second in cotton fiber exports, and leading in chemical resources such as tungsten, potassium salt, phosphorite, kaolin, karakul skins, and cocoons[4.– B.240].

In order for secular politics to not remain as dogmatic and one-sided as in the past, it is necessary to form a new, modern attitude towards religion and believers. After all, a religious person is also a citizen of Uzbekistan. The principle of tolerance should be applied more widely in secular politics. This aspect is partially reflected in the new version of the law - from now on, our women can freely wear a headscarf and walk in public places in traditional Uzbek clothes, not European ones. However, secular politics should not be allowed to lead to the politicization of religion, that is, the interference of religion in the secular policy of the state,

the acquisition of the status of political parties and political movements. In this case, the social balance between secularism and religiosity in society will be disrupted - the position of supporters of theocratic statehood (as in the 90s) will be strengthened. As a result, threats to social stability and sustainable development will arise. In this context, the comments and recommendations of one of our leading orientalists and Islamic scholars, the head of the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers, Shoazim Minavvarov, on the issue of the religious education system in Uzbekistan, are of great importance.

According to the scientist, “Success in educating and strengthening the spirit of religious tolerance largely depends on the level of development of the religious education system. This can be seen from the example of the development of religious and spiritual education and its content in the Republic of Uzbekistan” [6. – P. 143.]. This expert scientist and responsible leader makes an excellent political analysis of the mistakes and successes made in the secular policy of Uzbekistan: “In the first years of independence, in the Republic of Uzbekistan, without taking into account real needs, a huge number of mosques and madrasas were opened, in which the basics of religion were taught by “imams” who often did not have deep religious knowledge and general potential, as well as foreign “missionaries” who came across them. In the process of teaching, they mainly used textbooks published in Arab countries, as well as in Turkey and Iran. As a result, by the mid-1990s, in our country, although in small numbers, there appeared intolerant youth groups that interpreted the foundations of Islam from a fundamentalist point of view. They began to put forward slogans of establishing an “Islamic state”, returning to the Middle Ages, and declaring “jihad” against all believers of other religions” [7. – P. 148.].

Based on the experience of other developed countries in terms of religion, this danger was prevented in due time - various “missionaries” were expelled from our country. As this expert scientist rightly and correctly noted, the disruption of the balance between secular and religious education, especially the development of religious education solely on the basis of medieval beliefs, without taking into account the religious-spiritual and national characteristics, inevitably creates favorable conditions for political Islam, and as a result, religious fanaticism, religious extremism and fundamentalism. Unfortunately, “today, various groups distort the relationship between religiosity and secularism, and there are many claims that Islam is a divine doctrine that encompasses both religion and politics (Arabic, “al-Islam din wa dawla”)[8. – P.22].

Today, the transformation of Tashkent Islamic University into the International Islamic Academy, the Imam al-Bukhari Islamic University in Tashkent, and the provision of education based on authentic enlightened Islamic beliefs in more than ten religious education madrasas under the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan will reduce the negative impact of destructive foreign elements in various religious guises on the sustainable development of society.

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