

**RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

**RUSSIA
AND
THE MOSLEM WORLD
2011 – 8 (230)**

**Science-information bulletin
The Bulletin was founded in 1992**

**Moscow
2011**

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Yuri Bocharov,
political scientist (Israel)
WHO CAN JUDGE?
(On ratings of Russia in the world)

The average estimates of life longevity in Russia make 67 years hence, Newsweek rating should be minimum 35th place and not 75th place. At the same time, life longevity in Iraq (61 years) is fixed by the magazine before Russia on 55th place. Any observer sees in TV only explosions, special operations and kidnappings in Iraq. Why it occurred to be on 79th place in the total account after India (78th place) but before such countries like Vietnam (81st place), South Africa (82nd place) and Syria (83d place)? Evidently, the American Administration needs to demonstrate to the whole world that the USA accomplished with credit its mission and built in Iraq a democratic developing state. This is the essence of this rating.

By the end of 2010, Newsweek published its rating of the best countries. The experts of the magazine analyzed the data of 100 countries by such items as health care, economic growth, education level, politics and quality of life. Finland got the first place and was followed by Switzerland and Sweden. The USA occupied 11th place, Germany – 12th place, France – 16th place, Israel – 22d place. The three last places were occupied by Nigeria, Cameroon, Burkina Faso. Among the states of the post-Soviet space, the leading place was occupied by Estonia (32d place), followed by Latvia (36th place), Ukraine (49th

place), Byelorussia (56th place), Kazakhstan (61st place) and Azerbaijan (69th place). The other former Soviet republics, the present independent states were not included in the rating. The Newsweek rating was cited in many publications and actually all sites. Thus, it formed the image of many countries for the nearest future.

However, this rating causes doubts, mildly speaking, of the readers, who are aware of the situation in the world.

Rating	Country	Education	Health care	Quality life	Economic development	Political situation
1	Finland	1	17	4	8	5
11	USA	26	26	9	2	14
12	Germany	16	7	7	16	12
16	France	14	7	11	18	16
21	Spain	32	3	22	19	27
22	Israel	41	7	25	15	27
23	Italy	34	3	20	44	22
32	Estonia	7	42	42	35	37
36	Latvia	25	52	41	53	38
49	Ukraine	40	75	40	66	50
51	Russia	31	75	50	36	75
52	Turkey	53	42	58	68	64
53	Jordan	44	61	57	40	73
56	Belarus	35	66	35	34	91
61	Kazakhstan	14	82	45	43	81
69	Azerbaijan	83	80	49	31	86
74	Egypt	60	66	61	83	74
79	Iraq	55	73	59	80	97
83	Syria	46	61	56	91	100

Even at a passing glance, the distribution of the rating places causes a lot of questions. It turns out that in Kazakhstan (14th place) the education level is the same as in France but twice worse than in Estonia (7th place), while in Israel it occupies 41st place. According to all other statistical data, which deserve confidence, the level of education in Israel is one of the best in the world. But the authors of the rating try to convince the readers that the level of education in Israel is worse than

in the whole Europe, as well as in Estonia (7th place), in Latvia (25th place), in Russia (31st place), in Belarus (35th place) and in Ukraine (40th place). According to other ratings, the universities in Israel are included in the first hundred of the best universities, where the universities of the mentioned countries are not included. But in the last account Israel occupies “the lowest” place!

The rating in “health care” is also doubtful. It is quite probable that the level of health care in Russia (75th place) is lower than in Germany, Israel and France (7th place); but where it is written that it is worse than in Turkey (42d place), Jordan (61st place), Egypt (66th place) and paradoxically even in Iraq (73d place)?

And what kind of term is “quality life”? According to the rating’s authors, in Russia (50th place) it is worse than in Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan and is slightly better than in Iraq (59th place).

The question is who has calculated the above indexes? As the author recalls his experience in basketball sports, the outcome of the international competition, according to the coach of his team, more often depended on the arbiter; and the players used to say: “the arbiter is the sixth player”. The American magazine Newsweek (one the big three magazines in the USA) was founded in 1933 and in 1961 was bought by F. Gram, the owner of newspaper Washington Post (with the head-quarter in New York and a Russian edition). The magazine is a propaganda device of “American way of life”. It is not worth asking a rhetoric question, whose interests serves the above rating.

The other question is the basis of the data. It is noted that the basis of the publication are the statistical sources of authoritative organizations of the world (WHO, IMF, World Bank, United Nations, USA departments, the CIA world book of facts. But the question is the numerous statistical reports on different items, which contradict each

other and causes great doubt on their authenticity. Therefore one may suspect the political order for the ratings. Let us see the facts relating to all parts of the rating.

Education consists of two sub-items: general literacy and number of school years. It is up to the honesty of the rating authors why exactly these two questions may give a true meaning on the national education level. According to the CIA world book of facts for 2002, the general literacy in Russia (the share of people older than 15 years, who know to read and to write) makes 99.4%. The number of years spent at school is mentioned to be 13.6 years, while in the other CIA report – 14 years.

As a result of such “estimations” Russia occupies the 31st place in the rating. Paradoxically, literacy in Iraq makes 77,2% and the number of school years – 14, but it occupies 55th place, which is better than Azerbaijan (83d place). The rating of Jordan seems to be not less ridiculous (44th place), although literacy makes 90% and school time – 12.8 years. As a result, these marks fix it at the education level of the CIS countries.

Healthcare is marked by life longevity. It makes in Russia 60 years, according to the rating’s authors. Their numbers allegedly are taken from WHO data. But the question is that the WHO statistics possess several items. The item on healthy life longevity in Russia mentions 68 years in 2008, while the CIA report – 66 years. According to the Russian statistical office, the life longevity in Russia in 2009 made 67.9 years. Therefore, taking into account the average data, the average life longevity in Russia was 67 years; thus, Russia should occupy not 75th place but minimum 35Th place. At the same time, in Iraq life longevity is mentioned to be 61 year. And it occupies 55th place, being before Russia. Any person sees in TV nothing more than explosions and kidnappings. But why Iraq occupies 79th place, following India, being before Vietnam (81st place), South Africa

(82d place) and Syria (83d place)? It seems that the USA wanted to demonstrate to the whole world that it fulfilled its mission and built in Iraq a democratic developing country. This is the basis of the rating.

The section on life quality consists of 7 sub-sections based on the reports of UNDP, WHO, World Bank and CIA world book of facts. It is worth considering CIS states, where the level of living is known to the author very well, and the countries with higher rating than in Russia. The first place is occupied by Belarus (35th place), Ukraine (40th place), Latvia (41st place), Estonia (42d place), Kazakhstan (45th place), Azerbaijan (49th place) and Russia (50th place). In the table, the places of the countries are mentioned in the column on quality life (Russia – 50th place).

Quality life	35	40	41	42	45	49	50
Income inequality in family between man and woman (0% – excellent, 100% – very bad) UNDP	27.9	28.3	36.0	35.7	33.9	36.5	37.5
Gender gap: socially, economically and culturally determined gap between men and women (0 – bad, 1 – ideal)	0.714	0.690	0.70	0.74	0.7	0.663	0.699
% of people living on less than \$ 2 per day	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Personal in \$ consumption	2920	1871	6480	6116	3497	2209	5326
Suicide successes per 100 000 people	6.8	9.0	9.1	8.4	12.7	1.9	20.2
Ecology impact on people's health	74.7	73.9	76.9	75.1	69.5	62.7	68.8
Unemployment level	1%	4.8%	14.3%	16.6%	6.3%	6.0%	8.9%

In all CIS countries the percent of the people living on the sum of less than \$ 2 per day is the same – 2%. The same is in Europe – \$ 1.99. The question arises: is it actually so or the authors of the report lacked data? At the same time, in Iraq the same index makes 8.03%, in Turkey – 8.23%, while in China – 36.2%.

The index of suicides for each 100 000 persons differs greatly from the reports presented by other organizations and statistical offices of these countries, although the trend is marked correctly. For instance, according to Russian statistics, the number of suicides varies around 30 people. According to the reports of EU countries, this index varies as follows: the average size – 20 people, France – 18, Germany – 13 and in Spain – 8 persons. At the same time, The CIA indexes mentioned in the rating have been reduced by ten times! For 2009, the Estonian institute for health development declared about reduction of suicides and made public the number of 20 people, while the CIA rating mentioned the number of 9.1 persons or twice less. Probably, exactly such “play” leads Estonia to the list of other countries as the leader among the post-Soviet states. This is an evident falsification of facts for the benefit of political interests: to show that Baltic countries, which have chosen “western way of development”, immediately started to take the lead over other post-Soviet countries.

The level of unemployment in these countries does not correspond completely to the data presented publicly by the state committees of these republics. It is in Belarus – 0.9% (in the report – 1%), in Ukraine – 1.9% (4.8%), in Russia – 8.2% (8.95%), in Latvia – 17.3% (14.3%), in Estonia – 17.5% (16.6%). Thus, the level of unemployment in Russia and Ukraine is set too high and in Latvia and Estonia is put too low. Whom to believe? The more so, as the change of each number in the sub-section of the report sets the country to quite another place in the rating.

**РОССИЯ
И
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР
2011 – 8 (230)**

Научно-информационный бюллетень

Содержит материалы по текущим политическим,
социальным и религиозным вопросам

Гигиеническое заключение

№ 77.99.6.953.П.5008.8.99 от 23.08.1999 г.

Подписано к печати 27/VI-2011 г. Формат 60х84/16

Бум. офсетная № 1. Печать офсетная. Свободная цена

Усл. печ. л. 4,75 Уч.-изд. л. 4,5

Тираж 300 экз. Заказ № 114

**Институт научной информации
по общественным наукам РАН,
Нахимовский проспект, д. 51/21,
Москва, В-418, ГСП-7, 117997**

**Отдел маркетинга и распространения
информационных изданий**

Тел. Факс (499) 120-4514

E-mail: market @INION.ru

E-mail: ani-2000@list.ru

(по вопросам распространения изданий)

Отпечатано в типографии ИНИОН РАН
Нахимовский пр-кт, д. 51/21
Москва В-418, ГСП-7, 117997
042(02)9