The Cooperation Forms and Methods Between Federal and Regional Levels of the Power in Don Region and North Caucasus in the First Half of the 1990’s

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Abstract: The reforms carried out by M.S. Gorbachev and his government in the 1980’s in the Soviet Union promoted self-government of the authorities in their political and economic decision-making at the regional level. This process has contributed to the possibilities for the implementation of national independence. Latter trends, in turn, aroused in response to the growing power of the Federal Government, because federal regulatory bodies suppressed national sovereignty by unifying state administration, rule of law and economic relations. This process was aggravated by confrontation between B.N. Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. Activation of a new cooperation mechanism between federal and regional levels of the power resulted in the shift of ideological emphasis: a free and independent development of each nation within a multinational state in the form of abroad cultural-national autonomy was declared the main goal of Russia’s development. The first half of the 1990’s turned to be a transient phase between the implementation of various forms of relations between the central and regional regulatory bodies. In this regard, the development of Don Region and North Caucasus, as constituent ethnic communities and at the same time part of the same state formation, was closely linked to changes in the political and economic systems. Social and economic problems of Russian national character, alteration in the political tradition that caused the change in the structure of verification and redistribution methods at the turn of 1980-1990’s, weakened the central state power and created the need for the formation of new mechanisms for the relationship with the regions.

Key words: Don Region • North Caucasus • Regulatory bodies • Post-Soviet Russia • The political process • Federal and regional levels of the power • Regions • Ethnic conflicts • Inter-territorial conflicts • "Parade of sovereignties"

INTRODUCTION

The study of cooperation forms and methods between the authorities in the Don Region and the North Caucasus in the first half of the 1990’s was mainly developed in the framework of identifying the features of the historical development of individual nations in the post-Soviet territory [1, pp: 359-380; 2]. Scholars marked burning issues of national minorities of the North Caucasus in the context of ethnic mobility and social naturalization [3, pp: 681-705; 4]. The identification of the reasons that contributed to such a Russian phenomenon, as regionalization, has occupied a special place [5, p.43-66, 6, p.215-255].

The methodological approach of Prof. A.V. Lubskiy, who offered to distinguish several levels when explaining the changes in relations between the federal and regional authorities in the South of Russia, seems to be challenging. The first level or the micro-level refers to an understanding of political processes taking place in the region after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second level, the meso-level, is associated with the interpretation of the features of the historical interaction between Russia and the North Caucasus. The third level, the macro-level, related with the interpretation of these events in the mainstream of civilized approach [7]. In this regard, the formation of the modern Russian political space is seen primarily as a process of successive mutual steps of the
central regulatory bodies and regional authorities of the Don Region and the North Caucasus. Identification of transitional forms in interaction of the federal and regional levels of the power in the first half of the 1990’s can be traced to some extent by the example of the Checheno-Ingushetia, Karachayeo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, Rostov, Krasnodar and Stavropol regions as the territories with the most complicated course of political processes of state development and implementation of national identity.

Expressed by D. Bahry, the process of establishing rules, emphasizing the independence of the regions, began in the South of Russia at a time when Kabardino-Balkaria and North Ossetia declared about the establishment of their own nationhood [8, p.134]. However, this process started earlier [9, 10, p.333-342]. For example, the Declaration of independence of Chechnya, adopted by the public organization name to The Congress of the Chechen People held on November 23-25, 1990, had no legal force, though has become an important factor bringing pressure on the Supreme Council of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in the course of the discussion on status of the Chechen-Ingush Republic [11, p.158, 12]. This pressure resulted in the "Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Chechen-Ingush Republic" adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, chaired by D. Zavgaev [11, p.159]. The influence of the radically minded community shows the weakness of the official regional government, termination of the party and the ideological federal control, as well as the beginning of a new development phase in the mechanisms of relations between the federal and regional levels of the power in Russia.

Some efforts to create new mechanisms for cooperation between the public authorities have been taken by the Russian government. In the first place, such form as the consulting on the political processes stabilization in the boundary territory was initiated, as the most accessible form of influence on the regional authorities under the conditions of that time. In this case, separate central government bodies such as ministries, committees and executive offices had certain advances. Thus, a group of experts from the Committee on National Affairs, headed by its Deputy Chairman V.P. Sobolev, was sent on a mission to the North Ossetia and Chechen-Ingush Republic on July 1, 1991. The group’s function was to analyze the specific situation and develop for regional authorities recommendations focused on strengthening the rule of law and stabilizing the situation in the field of international relations [13, fol.4].

Based on the work performed, group experts mentioned the most important misconceptions in the actions of the government of the Chechen-Ingush Republic, namely "... an underestimation of the national movements, inability to timely prevent unpleasant situations" [13, fol.5]. As a result, the experts group suggested to local authorities "to elaborate" the issue of population employment, as "the labor surplus is one of the causes of instability in the Republic" [13, fol.5]. In 1994, the consultations were considered as effective working mechanism in resolving conflicts between social forces, which showed that "all the issues, even the most complicated ones, can be resolved through the dialogue" [14].

A new form of the relations between the Center and the regions was communication between the representatives of Central government and the social and political forces in the region, including those aimed at the separation from the Russian state. The position of the Federal Government ranged from close co-operation to the use of force and depended on the program requirements as well as the spirit of a specific organization to search compromise. Thus, in July, 1991, N.A. Maevskaya, an expert of the State Committee on National Policy, visited Karachaevsk, Cherkessk, Stavropol and Pregradny village, the major centers of regional opposition and public discontent with the politics of the Center in Karachay-Cherkessia Autonomous District.

The main purpose of the visit was collection of information on the vision of the regional situation through meetings with the leaders of registered national public organizations in the region such as "Adyghe Khase", "Jamagat", "Birlik", "Adgyrla", "Confederation of Repressed Peoples" and the representatives of the Upper Kuban Cossack settlement [15, fol. 27]. A similar report was presented by V. Ugrovatov, another Committee expert, who has visited the region in November 1991 [15, fol. 71-76]. As is obvious, communication has involved only those structures of regional state power and its representatives, who were directly responsible for the implementation of the directions from the Federal Government. This was one of the main differences from the previously accepted mechanism of relations between the federal power and the regions caused by the need to compensate the loss of existing ties in ideological control exercised through the party bodies.
The Federal Government opposed search for a compromise in solving emerging problems, including involvement of multilateral commissions and working parties against regionalization trends prevailing in a concerned period in the sentiments of some of the social and political forces of the southern regions. This issue was considered in details in the work of D.D. Gakayev. [11, pp: 121] as exemplified by the political development of the Chechen-Ingush Republic in the early 1990’s. Scholars such as Thomas M. Barrett and T.P. Hlynina associated adverse events in the sphere of international relations and the causes of ethnic conflicts in Russia with the national politics, enforced in the context of the "socialist experiment" [16, pp: 578-601, 17, pp: 270 -271]. It is interesting to find out the cooperation forms that have developed as a result of this process. Thus, the initiative shown by the representatives of Ingushetia resulted in the creation of the special group of North Ossetia and Checheno-Ingushetia to implement the law "On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" [18, art. 572], which was carried out with the support of the federal experts groups. As a result of discussions, on October 1, 1991, the State Committee on National Policy of the Russian Federation has received the record, which has confirmed once again the inability to reach a compromise under current conditions. As an initial point of reference, in order to implement the law "On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples”, the representatives of the Checheno-Ingushetia offered to define a day of June 20, 1933, as the day of "voluntary change in Ordzhonikidze city status on a national basis" and to restore the status of the city, as well as the frontiers of Ossetia with Ingushetia as of the day before the specified date [19, fol.64]. The representatives of North Ossetia suggested considering the time of Soviet power restoration in the North Caucasus and the repression of the Cossacks in 1919-1921 as a starting point to implement the concerned law.

The region still assigned the final initiative in defining the territorial boundaries and particularly in taking decision based on the Law of the RSFSR of April 26, 1991, "On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" and the resolution of the IV Congress of People's Deputies "On Formation of the Supreme Council of the North Ossetia SSR to the Fourth Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR", to the political Center [19, fol.65]. Forms of relations with the regions were dictated by current situation reflecting its features to the necessary extent. In this context, setting a transition period of up to two - three years to address territorial issues should be considered as a successful step undertaken by the Federal Government in terms of restoration of cooperation with the regions [19, fol.10]. Thus, on the one hand, this resulted in a certain detente of the political situation in the regions and overcame the rejection of the local residents associated with a fear of becoming citizens of the territories with other historical traditions as a result of strict administrative politics. On the other hand, the central authorities secured certain time for the preparation and implementation of successive reforms in the economy, policy and social relations.

Such a position of some scholars, in the first half of the 1990’s, the federal power in Russia used to make greater efforts when controlling certain regions comparably with others [20, pp. 97-132]. Indeed, the process of forming new consultation mechanisms in the relations between the federal and regional authorities during the settlement of the situation in Karachayevo-Cherkessia in January, 1991, was somewhat different from that occurred in relation to the Chechen and Ingush member states. The Committee on National Affairs received information from the experts, that "... the leaders of certain groupings are trying to realize their nationalist claims referring to the supposedly ongoing consultations and support " [15, fol.4] of the heads of the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR B.N. Yeltsin, R.I. Khasbulatov, R.G. Abdulatipov and I.S. Silaev. In this regard, the Head of the Executive Office on Federal and National Relations proposed to take a number of urgent measures; first, organize the on-site visit of the executives of the Supreme Soviet or the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR. Second, to recommend the Soviet authorities in the Stavropol Region and the Karachayevo-Cherkess Region to organize a meeting of "... the most authoritative and respected people of the territory and the region, conflict-resolution scientists and the representatives of the originated national trends" in order to create a conciliation commission [15 fol.3] for the purpose of developing a proper approach when solving the imminent conflict.

Such a position of D. Bahry, requirements for self-determination, put in-claims by a number of Russian regions in the first third of the 1990’s, to a greater extent were more of a protest demonstration in the face of the Russian political Center, rather than an actual effort aimed at secession from Russia [8, pp.127-146]. Indeed, the vision of the content, methods and tools of regional politics gradually underwent significant changes: striving
for strengthen the state power in regional policy was traced as one of the main tasks of a power. According to the regulation #1374-1 of June 7, 1991, issued by R.I. Khasbulatov, the First Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, a task group was established under the direction of N.L. Gen, the Vice Chairman of the Commission on National-State Structure and International Relations of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, to elaborate proposal for a legislative act "On the political rehabilitation of the Cossacks" [21, fol. 13]. At the same time, within the framework of the regulation "On measures to strengthen rule of law in North Ossetia and Checheno-Ingushetia", adopted by the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on June 3, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR initiated formation of the Commission on the problems of Cossacks in Russia that was established within the frames of the Council of Nationalities. It was intended to introduce the representatives of the Cossacks into established Commission [22, p. 810]. This resulted in the Presidential Decree "On Measures for the Implementation of the Russian Federation Law "On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples" with respect to the Cossacks", adopted on June 15, 1992 [23, art. 1429]. This Decree supported the movement for the revival of the Cossacks, the restoration of economic, cultural, patriotic traditions and forms of local government, avoiding at the same time the possibility to return back to any state privileges and forced imposition of the citizens of the Cossack way of life.

Thus, the formation of transitional forms and methods of cooperation between the federal and regional authorities in the Don Region and the North Caucasus in the first half of the 1990’s occurred in several options: the establishment of conciliation committees at various levels of governance, independent observation and analysis of the regional situation, the cooperation with the specific regional social and political forces and legal and power regulation. Emergence of these forms was caused by the need of mutual adaptation of those involved in political process to the new ideological, social, economic, cultural and historical conditions of the state development. These options advanced simultaneously, coming to the fore alternatively, depending on the actualization of a certain political problem. New methods were also formed in a close relationship with the transformation of existing ties between the regulatory bodies. Changing in the form of interaction depended on the balance of the current socio-political and socio-economic situation exact location in the Don Region and the North Caucasus.

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REFERENCES