

The Right of Peoples to Reunification: Scientific and Practical Aspects of the Problem

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Abstract. The article contains the materials of a scientific discussion held in April 2022 by the National Communications Development Research Institution. The authors discuss the following issues: the concept of a “split people”; the right to reunification in the context of equality and the right of peoples to self-determination; historical precedents of the reunification of peoples; legal, social, economic, political and other grounds and mechanisms of reunification; the right to reunification and the problem of territorial integrity of the state; the role of external actors in unification processes; the conflict of national and state identities.

Keywords: people, the right of peoples to reunification, the right of peoples to self-determination, separatism, South Ossetia, unification of Germany, New Eastern policy, nostalgia, ethnic identity, the principle of equality

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Introduction

The right of peoples to reunification is a category that is not enshrined in the international law in terms of precisely the “right of the people to reunification”, in contrast to the “right of peoples to self-determination” (1; 2; 7; 9; 12; 14). Nevertheless, we have observed and continue to observe the implemented practices of reunification and the growth of such initiatives in the current international conditions. This phenomenon is much in need of scientific understanding. At the same time, a number of scientific and practical problems arise, the study of which is necessary in the current conditions of social and political changes. The National Research Institute for the Development of Communications has begun a series of scientific discussions on the problems of reunification of peoples, the arguments and mechanisms for reunification, the operationalization of the people’s right to reunification and the possibility of its introduction into the international legal discourse. This article publishes the research and the materials of the first scientific discussion.

Materials and methods

The materials of the authors’ research were taken from archival sources, published documents, eyewitness accounts describing the experience of the reunification of peoples, interviews, statistical data, data from opinion polls, normative legal acts of the international and national levels.

The variety of sources taken determines the use of various methods of research. Structural-diachronic analysis, content analysis, event analysis, historical retrospective method, comparative analysis, methods of auxiliary historical and sociological disciplines were the main research methods. The basic methodology for studying the issue of peoples’ rights to reunification includes the methodology of conflict theory, the methodology of sociocultural theory, and the methodology of anthropology.

Results

To the issue of reunification of the people in the context of the principle of equality and the right of peoples to self-determination (N.Yu.Ilyin)

In the title of the declared topic of scientific discussion, the word “peoples” are used in the plural form, which, in our opinion, implies two directions for scientific discussion in the context of setting the problem:

the right of one nation to the liberation from foreign domination and to unite the territories in which they live into one state (for example, the unification of the Italian people in the 19th century);

the right of individual nation within a multinational state to reunite with another part of it living outside the borders of this state, for example, the situation with the Ossetian people and the current agenda for a referendum in South Ossetia. This process is more complex both from a political and international legal point of view.

The emergence and development of the principle of equality and the right of peoples to self-determination primarily has a material basis for the first approach.

The right of peoples to reunification can be considered as a view from a certain angle on the principle of nationality¹, which was established in the scientific discourse of European states in the XIX century and represents the justification of the political idea «one nation – one state» (justified by P.Mancini, E.Renan, A.D.Gradovsky, etc.). By itself, this idea was caused by the need to build a state on a national basis, and the principle of nationality was formulated as an abstract dogma about the expediency of building a mono-national state under any circumstances.

In a practical way, this principle was applied, for example, during the liberation and unification of fragmented Italy (what was called the Risorgimento and ended with the annexation of Rome to the Italian Kingdom in 1870). In the works of Italian researchers of that period (Valsecchi, Romagnosi), the ideas of nationalism of the Italian people were developed and then – the connection of this national idea with the principle of legitimacy. It is interesting that the nation in Romagnosi's works was considered as a population to which a certain geographical and spiritual unity was given by nature. This principle was also used during the unification of Germany in 1871: the creation of the state of the German Empire around the Kingdom of Prussia from several dozen independent states with a German population.

In its development, the principle of nationality was formulated as the principle of self-determination of nations, put forward by national liberation movements, objectively directed against the imperialist multinational state, to which it opposes the demand for the creation of national states (23:323) and in modern international law it was supplemented by a provision on the equality of peoples.

The forms of implementation of this principle for the first time were established in the 1970 Declaration on the Principles of International Law. In addition to the formation of an independent state or annexation of an existing state, the establishment of a different political status was recognized as one of the forms. Thus, even then, the right to self-determination, recognized by all peoples, was no longer limited exclusively to the right to separation.

The content of the principle of equality and the right of peoples to self-determination provides for several related rights and obligations. For example, I.P.Blishchenko and V.F.Shavrov in the work «Theory and practice of international law of the USA» in 1985 revealed the principle of equality and self-determination of peoples as follows:

1 In the XIX century, "nationality" was understood as peoples distinguished by a pronounced cultural and historical identity, and "nation" meant the whole set of citizens of the state.

a) the right of peoples to freely dispose of their destiny, i.e. in the conditions of complete freedom to determine their internal and external political status without outside interference and to carry out their political, economic, social and cultural development at their discretion; б) the right of peoples to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources; в) the obligation of all states to promote, through joint and independent actions, the implementation of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter; г) the obligation of all states to refrain from any action that deprives peoples of their right to self-determination, freedom and independence; д) the opportunity for colonial peoples to use all means available in the struggle for independence; е) the obligation of all States to contribute to the elimination of colonialism, with due respect for the freely expressed will of the peoples concerned (7:36).

For all the formal simplicity of interpreting the content of this principle, the complexity from a legal point of view is the uncertainty of the concept of “people”, which makes it possible in each specific case of the realization of the right to self-determination to take into account the will of the people as well as not to take into account the opinion of the population. Moreover, this may be the position not only of individual states, but also of UN bodies. Thus, the International Court of Justice of the United Nations in its advisory opinion on Western Sahara in 1975 noted that «the application of the right to self-determination can be carried out only in conditions of the free expression of the will of the people concerned»². At the same time, the Uruguayan lawyer E.J. de Arechaga in his work «Modern International Law» in 1983 cites examples when the UN General Assembly did not comply with the requirements for consultation with the population of the relevant territories. In the dispute over the territorial affiliation of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands, the UN General Assembly demanded that Great Britain and Argentina hold negotiations on sovereignty and the transfer of territory and refused to take into account the results of the opinion polls of the population of this territory. And on the issue of belonging of the state of Goa to India, the reunification with the lost territory was regarded by the UN General Assembly as a way to ensure the self-determination of the people and put an end to the colonial status without consulting the population. India then noted that in the case of Goa, it would be absurd to ask Indians living in this territory whether they wish to remain Indians, and the UN General Assembly agreed with that approach. (1:164).

The situation with the interpretation of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples has been somewhat streamlined and limited in connection with the adoption of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975). In addition to the right to self-determination, one more principle has found its consolidation in the abovementioned Final Act – the principle of territorial integrity. The document also gave the interpretation of this principle:

the states “thereunder will refrain from any action inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, against the territorial integrity, political independence or unity

2 International Court of Justice (ICJ) Reports, 1975, p. 32.

of any participating State and, in particular, from any such action, constituting the use of force or the threat of force. The participating States will likewise refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation, or other direct or indirect measures of the use of force in violating international law, or the object of acquisition by means of such measures or the threat of their implementation. No occupation or acquisition of this kind shall be recognized as lawful"³.

Thus, this principle, although it does not contain obligations in relation to peoples exercising the right to self-determination, creates certain obstacles in the implementation of the process of reunification of the people and the secession necessary for this process – the secession of part of the territory from the state. Such a process is lawful only without outside interference, even the representatives of the same people who are the citizens of another state. If the process takes place without secession, then the reunification of the people may not cause great difficulties (Germany, Israel).

Reunion or takeover? The historical foundations of the unification of Germany in 1990 (E.A.Kuzmenko)

The familiar name «Germany» is not so obvious if we are talking about the political situation after the Second World War. If until 1949 “Germany” meant the occupied territories of the former Reich that were not part of the victorious countries, then with the advent of the West Germany (FRG) and the East Germany (GDR), the concept of Germany as one ethno-cultural space, not to mention political, seemed to be leveled. However, it is not so: the idea of a «unified Germany» and nostalgia for it never disappeared, the only question was which of the two German states would become the core of the new Germany. The ethnonym Germans, which appeared as a designation of a political community after the first unification of Germany in 1871, did not disappear anywhere either.

Throughout forty years after the Second World War, the policy of the FRG in one way or another took into account the interests of strengthening the positions of West Germany in German-German relations. Today we would like to consider the historical foundations of this strengthening for the further spread of its influence in the West and the East.

Firstly, the Basic Law of the West Germany had already provided for the levers of a possible reunification, which seemed to be a foregone conclusion, albeit it was postponed for an indefinite period.

The Basic Law of Germany, adopted as the Constitution of Trizonia in 1949 and which is in force up to present day, had already reflected the strategic long-term ambitions of the western part of Germany.

Articles 23 and 24 of the Basic Law are of fundamental importance. Article 23 reveals the full scope of the post-1949 changes in this situation. The text of the article adopted in 1949 said:

³ Final Act of CSC:6. Available from: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/c/39505_1.pdf.

This Basic Law is currently applicable to the territories of Baden, Bavaria, Bremen, Greater Berlin, Hamburg, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Schleswig-Holstein, Württemberg-Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern. In the other parts of Germany it shall enter into force after their accession...

Thus, the scope of the Basic Law was determined, as well as the likelihood of its expansion at the expense of "the other parts". Article 24 states:

The Federation may, in order to ensure peace, enter into a system of mutual collective security; at the same time, it will agree to limit its sovereign rights in order to establish and ensure a peaceful and lasting order in Europe and in relations between the peoples of the whole world,

– so the connection of Germany's future with European institutions is obvious.

The increasingly deepening European integration becomes an important basis for future unification.

Before 1949, Germany was the object, not the subject, of politics. But after the first Berlin crisis, the situation began to change, primarily in relations with the Western European states.

In 1951, Germany had already participated in the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. The supreme governing body of the ECSC in Luxembourg became the first supranational body in Europe to which the FRG ceded its sovereign rights (at first for 50 years). With the entry into force of the ECSC treaty, the German heavy industry left after the Second World War, which was the possible basis for German rearmament, was placed under international control. In this way, Germany's neighbors were able to no longer perceive it as a threat, which was a significant achievement in 100 years.

Treaties on the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community followed in 1957. A significant part of German economic power was under international control, and at the same time a vast economic space opened to all the participants. While the 1951 ECSC treaty was still designed for 50 years, the so-called 1957 Rome Treaties were supposed to be "for an unlimited period".

The FRG insisted on an additional protocol to the Rome Treaties and made a protocol statement at the time of signing that intra-German trade and, no less important, the status of community citizens for all Germans correspond to the definition in Article 116, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law, that is, to Germans residing in the GDR as well (Unless otherwise provided by law, a German within the meaning of this Basic Law is anyone who has German citizenship or, as a refugee or exiled person of German nationality, his spouse or descendant, takes refuge in the territory of Germany within the borders that existed up to December 31, 1937).

The exchange of goods between the two German states was equated with the trade within the community. Not the other German state, but the people living in it and the elements of their economy became a part of the EEC in this special way. If the citizens of the GDR were in the territory of the community, then they were to be treated as German

citizens. They enjoyed all the rights of citizens of the community, they could also issue a federal passport for themselves as an identification document and apply, for example, to foreign missions of Germany for help. Such was the practical policy towards Germany as a whole, that had already been understood as a single zone, despite the political borders.

The third aspect that prepared the unification was Willy Brandt's "New Ostpolitik", successfully implemented in the 1970s.

The "New Ostpolitik" draws on the political principle of "change through rapprochement" set forth by Egon Bahr, Federal Minister for Special Assignments under Brandt from 1972 to 1974, for the FRG's relations with the GDR and the countries of Eastern Europe.

If the policy of mutual understanding in the 1960s was largely characterized by a lack of mobility and understanding on the part of both the Western and the Eastern blocs, then at the end of the decade, some international political events favored the resumption of diplomatic negotiations. These favorable factors include, first of all, the fact that the Soviet Union was able to stabilize its own bloc of states after the "Prague Spring" in 1968, the escalation of Sino-Soviet contradictions due to the deployment of Soviet troops to the border with China, as well as the need of the USSR for Western technologies and importing the corresponding technologies to modernize their own economy.

What was special about this political concept was that it focused not only on a specific consensus in the short or medium term, but also on the long-term convergence of the social systems of the East and the West. The political instrument of this policy has become a focus on common interests, therefore, in particular, global peacemaking (reduction of nuclear danger), general humanitarian assistance and the possibility of mutual acceptance of the territorial and power/political status quo.

The New Ostpolitik was initially viewed with skepticism, especially by the CDU/CSU, which saw the policy as contradictory to the connections and integration with the West promoted by Adenauer. Later, all the parties represented in the German Bundestag considered the concluded agreements and the Ostpolitik to be a constructive paradigm of relations.

On September 3, 1971, a quadripartite agreement on Berlin was concluded. Thus, for the first time since 1945, the GDR and the Soviet Union guaranteed the unhindered transit of the West German citizens by road, rail and water to Berlin, as well as the existing links between the FRG and Berlin.

Then a number of other Eastern treaties followed. At the end of 1972, the Basic Treaty was adopted, which revised the relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR. At the end of 1973, the German-Czechoslovak Treaty (Prague Treaty) was signed, which invalidated the 1938 Munich Agreement on the Sudetenland.

Thus, the "New Ostpolitik" launched the mechanisms of political dialogue between the two German states and predetermined the initiator of the future reunification in 1990.

The year of 1989 brought the issue of German unification to the fore and showed how wary the expectations of this unification were on the part of the EU member states. Now we turn to the fourth aspect of unification, which is not so obvious – currency

relations and the position of other states. There was no certainty that German unification would not be a problem for European states, including EU members. Up to this point, France, Italy, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany, with about 60 million inhabitants each, formed an equal group of the four leading member states. However, united Germany with its 80 million inhabitants would become the fourth largest country in terms of territory and the second largest population, if Russia was taken into account, the state in Europe with the most powerful economy and the most stable currency. The concern about the potential establishment of German hegemony could not be dismissed. Not only was Great Britain apprehensive about German unification, but France was also vacillating in the face of Germany's dominant economic power, not least in the strength of the Deutsche Mark. In this case, the independence of the German Federal Bank played an important role, whose actions in the money market could affect the economies of other states in the event of insufficient political restraint. Therefore, France made a monetary union a condition for its consent to German unification. In any case, on April 18, 1990, the Federal Chancellor Kohl and the French President Mitterrand jointly informed the European Council of their desire to begin preparations for the creation of the economic and monetary union (which was to enter into force in 1993), envisaged by the Single European Act, as well as for the convening of a government conference on political union. After that, the European Council unequivocally supported German unification on April 28, 1990.

As a result, the Deutsche Mark was integrated into a common currency and thus brought under control in the same way that other elements of the German potential, which were perceived as a threat, were brought under control in the period after the establishment of the ECSC. Thus, the introduction of the euro has become inseparable from the agreement of EU members to German unity.

The final factor in the unification was the position of the USSR. Much depended on what position the great power, the Soviet Union, would take. Unfortunately for the USSR and fortunately for Germany, the leaders had an idealized idea of the need for unification. The leadership of the USSR, headed by M.S. Gorbachev, agreed not to interfere with the free expression of the will of the Germans, thereby granting the go-ahead to the dismantling of the political structure of the GDR and its incorporation into the FRG. Further negotiations on the "2+4" format (GDR, FRG, Great Britain, the USA, the USSR, France) ended with the signing of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany in Moscow on September 12, 1990. In the treaty, the German side recognized "the final nature of the borders of the united Germany", refused from "the production, possession and disposal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons", and pledged to reduce the German armed forces. For their part, the victorious powers announced the termination of "their rights and responsibilities in relation to Berlin and Germany as a whole" and that "united Germany acquires full sovereignty over its internal and external affairs." On October 3, 1990, the agreement on the unification of the GDR and the FRG came into force.

Political unity raised the question of commemorative unity: what to do and how to deal with a fairly long history of separation, how to interpret and reflect it in public

memory. The category of absorption is even more applicable in this case: the history of the GDR is interpreted mainly in terms of its inferiority and inhumanity, with an emphasis on negative aspects (which cannot be hushed up, but cannot be taken out of context), an attempt was made to level the identity of the GDR, which gave rise to the so-called “Ostalgie” – faced with the paradigm of the abolition of their past, they began to react more sharply to the shortcomings of the new system, to express their rejection of this abolition. The studies of the museum culture of Germany give evidences of the division of people in everyday communication into “ossies” and “wessies” (with a slight disdain for each other), memories of influential contemporaries (for example, Günther Grass), a surge of interest in films, comics, TV shows in style and on the theme of everyday life in the East Germany. For example, Ossiladen, a mail-order store, had around 40,000 regular customers in 2008. According to a survey by the “Stern” magazine, in 2009 57% of the Ossi regretted to some extent that nothing was left of the daily life of the GDR. Accordingly, the unity of cultural and historical memory and the equivalence of identity in the united Germany is being achieved much longer than political institutions.

So, the foundations of the unification were: the thoughtfulness of the Basic Law in accordance with the objectives of the subsequent unification, intensive European integration, currency relations between the EU countries, the New Ostpolitik of the FRG, the position of the USSR. The result of the unification of Germany was a radical change in the geopolitical situation in Europe.

The right of peoples to reunification (Ossetian case) (I.B. Sanakoev)

Theoretical aspects of the problem.

The right of peoples to reunification stems from the special social and scientific relevance of the phenomenon of separation of ethnic communities. This phenomenon can be described in terms of differentiation as a category that can more or less adequately reflect all of its applied and theoretical specificities. In this regard, we can distinguish two aspects of such differentiation, such as current and perspective. The current differentiation of social and political life means the formation of different forms and types of identification: political, social and cultural and economic among the divided ethnic groups. Such characteristics testify in general to the bifurcation and fragmentation of the main forms of life of the ethnosociety. The perspective differentiation can conditionally be divided into several stages:

- the first stage is characterized by the predominance of parallel vectors of development, when the process of social evolution of the divided parts of the ethnic group takes place in a parallel mode while maintaining almost identical social and cultural markers;
- at the second stage, parallel vectors of development begin to diverge gradually, inevitably contributing to the formation of different social and cultural characteristics and the distancing of the divided parts of the ethnic group from each other;

- the third stage of perspective differentiation marks the achievement of certain points of no return, after which we can talk about the disappearance of the once united people from the ethnocultural map of the world and the emergence of two or more fraternal, but already different peoples; this stage is characterized by the completion of the process of evolution of a previously united ethnic group; this circumstance becomes almost irreversible;

In theoretical terms, it is necessary to identify the specifics of the mechanisms of functioning of the phenomenon of ethnic separation. These mechanisms include the following:

- vectors of attraction: they are based on the similarities of the divided parts of the ethnos and are updated in the situations of growing national consciousness, discrimination of group rights, exacerbation of interethnic relations, form the ideology of ethnic irredentism in their direction, are able to start the unification process and, in general, work to overcome the situation of separation;

- repulsion vectors: they are based on existing differences and are updated in the situations of sustainable development, interethnic peace, protection of collective rights, successful integration into the state of residence; in their direction, these vectors form the ideology of unionism in ethnic self-consciousness, impede the unification processes and, in general, contribute to the conservation of the situation of separation.

It should be noted that the parallel functioning of the two types of vectors ensures the dynamic balance of the phenomenon of ethnic separation: if they interact in equilibrium, the phenomenon will stabilize within certain limits. With the dominance of the repulsion vector, the separation will evolve in the direction of strengthening differentiation. With the dominance of the vector of attraction, the separation will be overcome through the various mechanisms of political, economic and social and cultural integration.

Specificity of the Ossetian case.

The emergence of the Ossetian reunification project should be attributed to the time of the collapse of the Russian Empire, since before this period the concept of separation did not exist in the Ossetian self-consciousness. Then for the first time the idea of unification arose in the minds of the Ossetian intelligentsia between February and October 1917 and began to become as declarative forms. The National Council, the highest representative body of South Ossetia, began to carry out practical work in this direction. The idea of unification had received its further development in the Soviet period, when in 1925-1926 the question of the unification of Ossetia was raised. During this period, various projects were put forward for the unification of Ossetia, including the unification as part of Georgia. However, the reunification of Ossetia within the Russian Federation did not suit the Bolshevik leadership of the USSR, since it did not want to aggravate relations with Georgia. The unification of Ossetia within the framework of Georgia also met opposition from Georgia:

Certain forces in Georgia opposed this, although there were attempts to bring in a united Ossetia. The reason was that Georgians were not such a numerous ethnic group and Ossetians could pose some danger in terms of pressure on the Georgian ethnic group. Georgia could absorb South Ossetia separately, but not all of Ossetia, not all the Ossetians, because Georgia did not have so many forces and opportunities at that time" (Expert survey materials, 2010. Author's archive).

It is worth pointing out the political benefits of unification that are obvious to South Ossetians, since the problem of separation as such appeared in connection with the crisis in the ethnic and cultural and political development of South Ossetia. According to expert assessments,

South Ossetia has limited opportunities and resources to realize its ethnic and cultural needs. Therefore, the problem of separation arose, and the South Ossetian side became the initiator of posing this problem. In any case, South Ossetia receives obvious benefits in case of solving this problem (Id.).

In this regard, it can be argued that in the mass consciousness of the population of South Ossetia, the idea of unification is more popular than in North Ossetia.

The idea of reunification is more popular in the south of Ossetia because: firstly, South Ossetians perceive this situation more acutely, because the people feel defenseless in a situation of rather pronounced aggression from a stronger ethnic group, which seeks to level all ethnic and cultural differences; secondly, the stress potential that has accumulated in the south over several decades has had a negative impact on all aspects of the life of South Ossetian society, including the state of national culture; thirdly, one of the factors in the growth of the popularity of the idea of unification in the south was the high confidence of South Ossetians in Russia and the recognition of its role in ensuring the security of the southern part of the Ossetian ethnic group, and therefore the majority of the population of South Ossetia perceives itself as part of the Russian Federation.

The current state of the Ossetian irredentist project can be assessed as a new wave of actualization of both the idea and the political movement aimed at realizing the ultimate goal of the project – joining Russia and reuniting with North Ossetia. In this regard, it should be pointed out that in North Ossetia, according to the latest opinion polls, the idea of reunification is gradually gaining momentum, and in South Ossetia, the reunification idea and project began to become institutionalized: an irredentist political party «United Ossetia» emerged. In 2014, this party won legislative power in the republic (20 out of 34 possible seats), and in 2017, the leader of United Ossetia, A.Bibilov, won the presidential election and headed the supreme executive power. The actualization of the unifying idea should also explain the recent initiatives of the top political leadership of South Ossetia on the need to hold a referendum on South Ossetia's entry into Russia.

Thus, we can conclude that at the present stage, the Ossetian irredentist case (as a right and aspiration for reunification) is becoming more and more relevant in the context of the growth of national self-consciousness of the divided parts of the single Ossetian people and a rather dynamic external environment.

Discussion

Crimean case (O.A Gabrielyan)

So far we have listened to the history of the Ossetian people, we can give many other examples: the Germans have been waiting for reunification for decades, the Karabakh case is also quite clear and has been widely heard in the last 30 years after the collapse of the USSR. These conflicts have their own special history.

The Crimean case had its own. It was expected and unexpected for the Crimeans. Even the prime minister of Crimea came to work that memorable morning and was surprised that he was not allowed into the building of the Council of Ministers. It was an unexpected decision, simply brilliantly executed. Crimeans overwhelmingly made their choice. I myself participated in the preparation of the referendum and witnessed these historical events as a citizen and as a public figure (10).

This case only testifies that someone has to ensure the right of the people to self-determination, the desire only, obviously, is not enough. The Crimeans' 30-year attraction to Russia was justified. Nobody asked the Crimeans in 1954, when a political decision was made to transfer Crimea to Ukraine.

The reunion was ensured by the «polite people» who ended up here in 2014. Therefore, when discussing the «right» to reunification, we must understand who will ensure this right. As a rule, small peoples try to reunite in one way or another with their historical homeland, but there is no way to ensure such a right. Who should ensure this right? If the homeland is able to ensure this unification, then you are lucky. For example, in Germany «the stars are aligned», the political realities developed in such a way that this unification took place. By the way, it was the echoes of this process that turned into a war in Ukraine decades later. If you think that this reunion did not affect this process in any way, then you are deeply mistaken. I believe that the process of today's crisis began then, but at that time it did not cause concern. But later the dominance of Germany in Europe was determined. In fact, the economic IV Reich was built. And what the III Reich tried to do by force: it sent wagons with «gastarbeiters» from the territory of Ukraine during the Second World War. After the eighties, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this process of economic enslavement is clearly visible today. And the «grateful» Germans are sending weapons to Ukraine for the war against Russia.

And how, in fact, can the problem of reunification be solved? Let's compare the Crimean and the Karabakh cases. Last September, I was invited to Karabakh for the thirtieth anniversary of independence. I saw this situation from the inside, talked to people, analyzed it. I myself am from Baku, but precisely because I am an Armenian, I moved to Yerevan during the Soviet Union. I was clearly given a hint that I was a good guy, but an Armenian... Later I moved to the Crimea. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, I was invited to work. I want to say that these cases are existential: these are not abstract reasoning, but experiences through my own existence in crisis situations. Visiting Artsakh (Karabakh) after the 44-day war, post-war assistance – all this is difficult to experience.

The same personal experience of the situation was in the Crimea. I remember we were brought together by S.V.Aksyonov with a small group of the Crimean Expert Club and he asked: "Guys, who are you with?" Of course, we said that we were for reunification with Russia. And then he said: «Well, then you need to prepare for the referendum, go to the State Council».

For us, for the Crimeans, this is destiny. Before that, I had to be on the Maidan with our anti-Maidan. We saw what happened there. It is no coincidence that such a result was obtained in the referendum in the Crimea. Both Odessa and what has been going on for 8 years in the Donbas region only confirmed our Crimean choice. This was more likely to happen in the Crimea, but we were lucky, and without a single shot we returned to our native harbor. Russia acted as a guarantor of our reunification, it ensured this right.

If you think that the Crimean case is already closed, then this opinion is wrong. Russia finally made a decision on the Crimea. But when Russia demands Ukraine to recognize not only the Donbass and Luhansk republics, but also finally to recognize the Crimea as a part of it, this means that our opponents must agree with this. All these cases are open.

How do I see them closing? The world system is changing and it is not only a matter of world order. The global paradigm, the organization of the entire world order is changing. As a result, the world order will also change, and this will be formalized legally, state and international institutions will change. I draw attention to this because there are many videos on YouTube when economists start reasoning that everything will stop in Russia and we will still feel catastrophic consequences. These experts are completely unaware that the paradigm is changing so fundamentally that it is pointless to argue as they do. Logistic chains will be plundered, but the new ones will emerge. Who said that it would be worse than it was, and the new unprecedented perspectives would not open up?

It seems to me that Russia today has a colossal chance to break out of the quagmire into which it was driven, where they wanted to place the Russian bear and pull out its claws. It did not work out and will never work out, because, in my opinion, and this is not even connected with the personality of V.V. Putin, but with the objective geopolitical processes, where Russia, after all historical cataclysms, is being reborn again. Russia as a civilization is a stronghold that provides the Eurasian geopolitical space with stability.

And what are the perspectives for the reunification of peoples? Returning to the beginning: who will ensure the right to such unification? We have already been seeing these cases, for example, in the Crimea, and now in South Ossetia. As Russia will be restored as a civilizational system, will be self-determining, it will organize the marked space (both its own and around itself). Why do I have such confidence? The world is developing. Huntington was very close to the truth: there is a clash of civilizations. Russia is more than a country. Russia is the Russian world, Russian civilization. Objective parameters testify to this. When the president says: "I am a Russian, a Chechen, a Dagestani," this resonates in everyone in this space.

What is happening in the post-Soviet space testifies, states that none of them took place, because all of them can develop only in alliance with this large political space. This is such a political gravity. Only stability in Russia ensures the existence and development of

these republics. They arose around Russia because security belts are always needed between geopolitical players. Therefore, the question is to build such relations that would give these republics stability and confidence in their future existence.

Objectivity lies in the fact that only in a large macro-region, which Russia is trying to create around itself, small peoples do have a chance to reunite, to ensure their existence in general. It seems to me that we need to be aware of the marked fundamental paradigm shift.

But Russia has a big problem, in my opinion. It lies in the fact that the image of its future has not yet been formed. It should be so interesting and inspiring that the people both inside Russia and outside would be inspired by it and reach out to it. The example of Kazakhstan showed very well that Russia can be a guarantor of stability.

It's all lies about the fact that ideology is not needed. Ideology is a system of values, it always exists, even if it is not declared. It seems to me that we have begun to create this image of the future. After the amendments to the Constitution, it was formulated that we have the priority of traditional values. For us, Victory Banner is sacred. This was also reflected in the Immortal Regiment. Many people in multinational Russia join this movement quite sincerely, voluntarily. This system of values, of course, includes the principle of justice, which has something in common with national unity. Russia has something to build the image of the future from. Summing up, we can say that the task is difficult, but together we can do it.

What is a “people”? How does international law define the theme of belonging to a “people”? (K.L. Sazonova)

There was a well-known Soviet propagandist-ideologist – Comrade Suslov, and he fought, as you know, with «rootless cosmopolitans.» And here is modern international law, fortunately or unfortunately, just the same cosmopolitan to the limit. Including, of course, this is the merit of globalization and global assimilation. There are literally very solitary examples left when it is really possible to clearly say that a person belongs to a certain people ethnographically – for example, the Japanese. Japan even provides legal protection based on ethnicity. There is a known case of the Peruvian dictator Fujimori, who was an ethnic Japanese and then, when he fled from Peru, he was able to receive diplomatic protection in Japan.

The second example is the Jews, who, on an ethnic basis, realized what is called «*alia*», which made it possible to form a significant part of the population of the modern state of Israel.

A third example relevant to international law is indigenous peoples. This is something that international law has really begun to pay attention to, since the indigenous peoples – Indians, Bushmen, Maori, Amamuaka and others – will not be able defend themselves. The only thing they can count on is the protection from those the states to which they have jurisdiction.

Therefore, in fact, everything that we have in relation to ethnicity is connected not so much with blood or cultural and historical community, but with jurisdictional affiliation.

Who you are in terms of blood is absolutely not important. You can be anyone, but the most important thing is what kind of passport you have. Moreover, if you and I think about it and think about «multipatrides» – people who have several citizenships, we will understand how much the problem of belonging to a people has now become more complicated.

The cornerstone of this topic is the question of how to interpret the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines the «right of peoples to self-determination». It is quite obvious that this problem cannot be solved ethnographically. The fact is that ethnographers single out from 5 to 8 thousand peoples, but at the same time there are just over 200 states on our planet. This means that sovereignty is not connected with the people in the ethnographic sense, but with the people in the jurisdictional sense. Thus, the future obviously belongs to multinational and multi-confessional states. First of all, international law warns us against a literal and stereotyped understanding of «the people». It can be stated that today it is primarily a legal binding.

Conclusion

The right of peoples to reunification can be considered from the point of view of the principle of nationality, which was established in the 19th century, and from the point of view of the implementation of the political idea «one nation – one state». Despite the fact that the existence of multinational states in modern conditions hinders the process of reunification of peoples; practices (or attempts) to reunite peoples, argued by their ethnicity or long-term cultural coexistence within a common territorial entity (states, cities, etc.), are observed in the modern world.

Historical examples of reunions show that the reasons for reunification are not always directly related to the common ethnicity of people living in different territories. It is not uncommon for reunification to be driven more by economic and political reasons. Actually, reunification initiatives arose and arise most often in the conditions of crises and the critical existence of the people and are associated, as a rule, with the deprivation of significant cultural, linguistic, spiritual, social, economic, civil, political needs and rights of people. Ethnicity is used as the main argument for reunification, and, in fact, for improving their position.

At the same time, the reaction of the international community to the realization of the right to the reunification of the people is often ambiguous. Thus, the case of Germany demonstrates the initially wary and even negative attitude of the EU countries towards the perspective of reunification of the FRG and the GDR. A strong Germany meant deepening economic and political risks for the countries of the continent. Therefore, guarantees of political and financial stability became a prerequisite for the consent of France and Great Britain to the unification of Germany. The potential reunification of other peoples is also considered by international actors in a geopolitical key.

International law does not define the concepts of «nation» or «people», but actively uses them in imperative and dispositive norms. The principle of equality and the right of

peoples to decide their own destiny give them the right, in conditions of complete freedom, to determine, when and how they wish, their internal and external political status without outside interference and to carry out their own political, economic, social and cultural development at their own discretion. All states shall undertake to respect equality and the right of peoples to decide their own destiny for the development of friendship between peoples and between all states. At the same time, states must respect the principle of the territorial integrity of other states. The right of peoples to self-determination does not contradict the principle of the territorial integrity of states, but streamlines the processes of implementing this principle. The reunification of the people may be a special case of the realization of the people's right to self-determination. The desire of states to preserve their territorial integrity is an important motive for violating their obligations to respect the right of peoples to control their own destiny. This is dictated by the pragmatic interests of states, the absence or insufficient legal regulation of such processes by the norms of international and domestic law, and other factors that require additional research.

The interpretation of the reunification practices from the point of view of international law is very ambiguous. A number of experts believe that the definition of the concept of «people» should be based on the citizenship of a person, and not on his ethnicity (although such precedents existed for individuals, for example, in Japan). In this regard, appealing to a common ethnicity (as the basis for reunification) may not be accepted by other states, and attempts at such reunification may be interpreted as separatism, attempts to violate territorial integrity, etc.

Against this background, it seems very promising to develop the issues of realizing the right of peoples to reunification, which is being conducted by the National Research Institute for the Development of Communications.

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