

## **Realization of the Principles of Political and Territorial Structure on Different Levels of the Political Map**

(Translated from Russian by P. Petrun, I. Okunev)

Current studies of the principles of political and territorial structure most often consider the way those principles manifest themselves on the level of a state, while this is only one of the forms of realization of principles of political and territorial structure. To draw a comprehensive scheme of their reflection on different levels of the world political map, let us first define the main features of those principles within a state structure, and then translate them into other levels.

Two types of political and territorial structure are usually distinguished: unitary and federative. Let us look at two most typical approaches to their definitions at a state level, i.e. approaches to defining unitary and federative states. Both are based on the principle of the regions' status<sup>1</sup>.

The first approach<sup>2</sup> is that a unitary state<sup>3</sup> is a state, in which all sub-national entities are administrative-territorial units; while a federative state<sup>4</sup> consists of autonomies. This approach can be easily refuted by the fact that there are many unitary states that consist of autonomies: Azerbaijan (Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic), Greece (Mount Athos), Georgia (Abkhazia, Ajaria), Indonesia (Aceh, Yogyakarta), China (5 autonomous regions: Guangxi Zhuang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia Hui, Xinjiang Uyghur, Tibet), Laos (Saysomboun),

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<sup>1</sup> All statuses of regions can be reduced to two: administrative-territorial units and autonomy. An administrative-territorial unit is a region without any political rights; and autonomy is, in contrast, one with those rights.

<sup>2</sup> Because of the recommended size of this report we are unable to provide the extended list of references to a great number of available publications on Political Studies. In this paper are mentioned only the best-recognized profound works from which we have borrowed definitions of the main classifiable groups. These definitions are rather conventional and basically do not differ from the ones suggested in other published works.

<sup>3</sup> "The state structure characterized by centralized governance of administrative-territorial divisions and by the absence of isolated (independent) state units". [Politology: a course book (in Rus.) / Melville A.Y. [et al.]; Moscow: Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) under RF MFA, TK Velby, Prospect, 2005. –p. 594].

"This is a unified state which consists of administrative-territorial divisions that do not possess political independence." [Politology: a course book (in Rus.) / ed. Achkasov V.A., Goutorov V.A. – Moscow: Urait-Izdat, 2005 – p.682].

"This is a unified state consisting not of states or state units, but mainly of administrative-territorial divisions (while its composition may include also particular autonomous state units)." [Chirkin V.E. Constitutional Law in Other Counties: a course book (in Rus.) – 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. – Moscow: Yourist, 2003. - p. 173].

<sup>4</sup> "A form of state structure which federal units (republics, states, provinces, etc.) have certain political and legal independence. Alongside there appear federal - common – bodies of government, citizenship, currency, etc. " [Politology: a course book (in Rus.) / Melville A.Y. [et al.]; Moscow: Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) under RF MFA, TK Velby, Prospect, 2005. –p. 596].

"This is a united state consisting of several state units, each possessing its own competence and its own system of legislative, executive and juridical bodies." [ Achkasov, p. 683].

Moldova (Găgăuzia), Nicaragua (RAAN - Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte, RAAS - Región Autónoma del Atlántico Sur), New Zealand (Tokelau), Portugal (Azores, Madeira), São Tomé and Príncipe (Príncipe), St. Kitts and Nevis (Nevis), Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region), Trinidad and Tobago (Tobago), Uzbekistan (Karakalpakstan), Ukraine (Autonomous Republic of Crimea), Philippines (Muslim Mindanao), Finland (Åland Islands). As you see, there are too many examples to see them as exceptions.

The second approach is that a federative state is a state, all sub-national entities of which are autonomies; and a unitary state can consist either of administrative-territorial units or of administrative-territorial units and one or more autonomies. This approach solves the problem but has two groups of states whose status is contradictory.

First, there are unitary states that consist of autonomies only. This is a new type of unitary states that emerged in the 1990's. This type includes such countries as Italy, Spain, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

Second, there are federations that consist also of administrative-territorial units, for example: District of Columbia in the United States, Brazilian Federal District in Brazil, six Union Territories in India, etc.

Therefore, as we see, these approaches to defining forms of political and territorial structure by regions' statuses do not provide enough grounds for precise definitions. This paper presents a new approach to defining the forms of political and territorial structure. It differs from the above-mentioned established approaches in two aspects.

First, available approaches offer as a definition of this or that characteristic its basic feature or set of features, while this reference is not quite justified, since similar features could be owned by different phenomena. For example, one of the features of a federation is that all its subjects have a status of autonomy. However this premise is not sufficient for concluding that all states consisting exclusively of autonomies are federations. The autonomous status of all subjects is a feature of both a federation, and of other groups of states (for example, regional states). However, the critical attribute is of a different nature. In our approach offered hereby each classifiable group is defined by a unique attribute, i.e. by which it differs from all other groups.

Second, our research has been conducted not in the field of the theory of politics, but in the field of comparative political studies (Political Geography), and a new approach was applied. Instead of creating a new paradigm representing this or that classifiable group and then attributing particular cases to it, we integrated and studied data on all group-specific cases that exist or existed on the political map of the world, to be able to derive meaningful attributes of this or that classifiable group.

Our approach is based on the principle of co-relation of levels of the political world map. The key criterion in this approach is the direction of the axis of power formation.

As we know, any state can be divided into regions (sub-national entities) and consists of several levels (vertically).

Therefore, power in a state is on different levels: there is central and regional authority (pic.1).

State

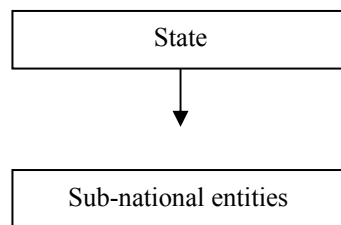
Central authority



Pic.1 Levels of the State and Power Structure

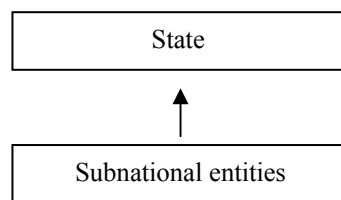
The relationships between the vertical levels of state (between central and regional authority) are determined by the form of political and territorial structure.

In a unitary state a central authority determines administrative and territorial division, that is composition and status of regions (sub-national entities) (Pic.2). In addition, any region can have a different status: both the status of an administrative-territorial unit and of an autonomy. It is also possible that a central authority gives political rights (status of an autonomy) to all the sub-national entities.



Pic.2. Political and Territorial Structure of a Unitary State.

A federative state is opposed to the unitary one. Regions (regional authority) within a federative state form the state (central authority) by delegating part of its authority to the center (Pic.3).



Pic.3. Political and Territorial Structure of a Federative State

Classification by the regions' status can be fulfilled for unitary and federative states.

By the regions' status all unitary states can be divided into: symmetrical, asymmetrical and regional (regionalistic)<sup>1</sup>. Those unitary states that consist of regions that are all administrative-territorial units are symmetrical unitary states (for example, France, Japan); those consisting of not only administrative-territorial units but also of autonomies are asymmetrical unitary states (Ukraine, China); those that have only autonomies are regional unitary states (Italy, Spain).

Federative states can be subdivided in the same way into symmetrical and asymmetrical federative states. Those federative states that consist only of autonomies are called symmetrical (for example, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro); those that consist of autonomies (that form a federation) and administrative-territorial units are called asymmetrical (for example, the United States and India). There are no federative states that consist only of administrative-territorial sub-national units because these units cannot form a state (on a principle of federation).

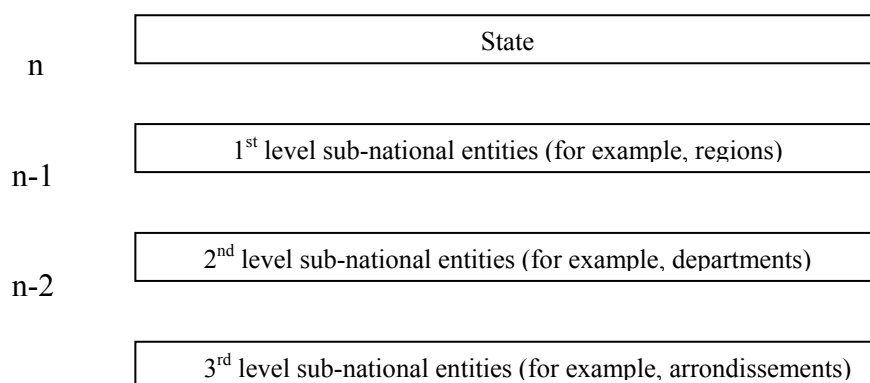
Basic forms of political and territorial structure are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of Forms of Political and Territorial Structure by the Regions' Status

	ATU	Autonomies
Unitary forms of PTS		
Symmetrical unitary state	+	-
Asymmetrical unitary state	+	+
Regional unitary state	-	+
Federative forms of PTS		
Symmetrical federative state	-	+
Asymmetrical federative state	+	+

We have looked at different forms of the political and territorial structures of states. However, our approach based on the principle of co-relations between levels of the political world map offers yet another benefit: it allows to explain and systematize forms of political and territorial structure realized at all levels of the political world map.

Indeed, similar patterns can be found not only when analyzing a state, but also on other levels of the political map. A state, as we know, consists of first level sub-national entities (they are usually simply called 'regions'), which consist of second level sub-national entities, and they consist of third level sub-national entities, etc. (Pic.4).

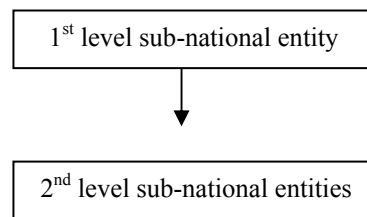


<sup>1</sup> The term 'regional' (sometimes 'regionalistic') is new in our sphere of research, therefore it is not yet well spread.

#### Pic.4 Levels of the World Political Map

On regional levels the same principles are realized as on the state level.

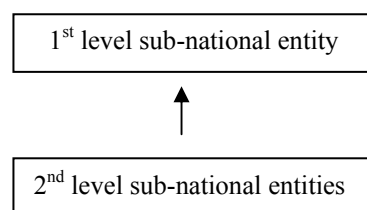
If the first level sub-national entity is divided into second level entities and it determines their rights, then this form of political and territorial structure is called sub-national unitarism (Pic.5). Thus sub-national unitarism is a form of political and territorial structure, in which an upper level entity determines composition and status of those under it.



Pic.5 Political and Territorial Structure of Sub-national Unitarism

A unitary entity can be symmetrical or asymmetrical like unitary states. If there are autonomies among second level sub-national entities, then the first level sub-national entity (which consists of that autonomy) is of an asymmetrical type of unitary political and territorial form. For example, in Serbia the first level sub-national entity consists of the autonomies of Kosovo and Bojvodina; China consists of 9 asymmetrical entities of the first level. Most regions of the world and all regions in Russia are of the symmetrical type of unitary form of political and territorial structure.

If the first level entity is formed by the second level entities, then this form of political and territorial structure is called sub-national federalism. Regional federalism is a form of political and territorial structure, in which all entities of a lower level form the entity above them (Pic.6).



Pic.6 Political and Territorial Structure of Sub-national Federalism

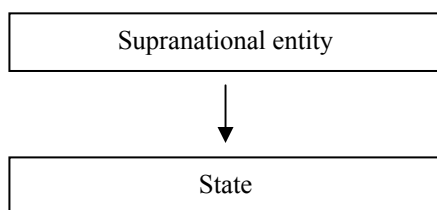
<sup>1</sup> In this outline the examples are names of subnational entities in France.

Among modern regional federations are: with some doubt – the Federation of the Netherlands Antilles in the Netherlands, and without any doubt – the Muslim-Croatian Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A project of federalizing Republic of Dagestan in Russia is currently being discussed.

We have looked at the first level sub-national entities as examples of regional forms of political and territorial structure. However, the same forms of political and territorial structure can be found on lower levels of the political map. Therefore, there is regional unitarism of the second (third, etc) level and, theoretically, there could be sub-national federalism of the second (third, etc) level. There are no examples of second-level (and lower) sub-national federalism on the modern political map of the world, and, therefore, all modern second level (and lower) entities are unitary formations. They can be symmetrical or asymmetrical. The examples of asymmetrical second- and third-level entities can be found in the political and territorial structure of China.

We have been discussing levels of the political map under the state. Over the state there are two levels: supranational entities and a global political entity<sup>1</sup>. The latter has never really existed and most likely will not be researched for a while. However, as under a state, there are the same two ways of forming a global entity: unitary (this includes all the plans for of global conquest of Alexander the Great, Roman Emperors, Napoleon Bonaparte, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, etc) and federative (when this kind of entity is formed by uniting several states and supranational entities). It seems that if this kind of entity ever appears, it would follow the federative path. However, in this research we are not going to look at this level.

Supranational entities are formed in the same two ways: unitary and federative. It would be logical to call supranational unitarism – imperialism<sup>2</sup>, and supranational federalism – globalism. Thus Imperialism (supranational unitarism) is a form of political and territorial structure, in which a supranational entity determines the composition and status of the states inside it (Pic.7).



Pic.7. Political and Territorial Structure of Imperialism (Supranational Unitarism)

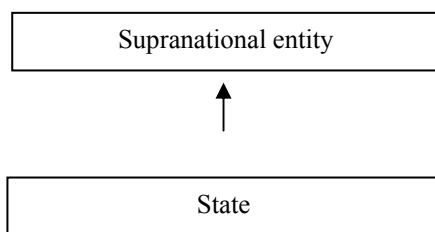
This form of political and territorial structure includes all of the numerous examples of empires and unions from the history. This entity usually has a central authority (metropoly), which determines the composition and status of its colonies. In the modern world only Japan is formally an empire, but in fact there are no imperialistic supranational entities on the modern political map of the world. Thus Globalism

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<sup>1</sup> This should not be confused with international organizations.

<sup>2</sup> This should not be confused with the top and final stage of capitalism

(supranational federalism) is another form of political and territorial structure, in which states form entities of a higher level (Pic. 8).



Pic.8. Political and Territorial Structure of Globalism (Supranational Federalism)

This form of political and territorial structure includes the European Union and could include some projects of supranational entities i.e. the: Russia-Belarus Union, Pan-Arabism, etc. A global supranational entity is formed by sovereign states, which unite and thus form it and its bodies of supranational authority. The states, however, do not lose their sovereignty.

In conclusion, we can draw a general table of political and territorial structure forms Table 2).

Table 2. Realisation of principles of political and territorial structure on different levels of the political world map

Principle of PTS		Unitarism	Federalism
Level of political map			
n+1	Supranational entity	Imperialism (Supranational unitarism)	Globalism (Supranational federalism)
n	State	Unitary state	Federative state
n-1	Sub-national entity	Sub-national unitarism	Sub-national federalism
n-2	2 <sup>nd</sup> level sub-national entity	2 <sup>nd</sup> level sub-national unitarism	2 <sup>nd</sup> level sub-national federalism
n-3	3 <sup>rd</sup> level sub-national entity, etc.	3 <sup>rd</sup> level sub-national unitarism, etc.	3 <sup>rd</sup> level sub-national federalism, etc.

As we can see all forms of political and territorial structure on all levels of the political map can be divided according to two principles of political and territorial structure: federalism and unitarism. Now we can give general definitions to these principles (Pic.9).

Unitarism – a principle of political and territorial structure, in which an entity of a higher level on political map determines composition and status of its entities of a lower level.

Federalism – a principle of political and territorial structure, in which entities of a lower level on political map determine an entity of a higher level.



Pic.9. A General Scheme of Realization of Principles of Political and Territorial Structure

An important peculiarity of the scheme of forms of political and territorial structure is the rule that only federative forms can be above federative forms and only unitary forms – below unitary ones. Therefore, a federation cannot be in a unitary entity of a higher level and no federative subnational entity can be found in unitary entities.

Apart from the question of classification of political and territorial structure forms there is a problem of confederalism. In modern science confederalism<sup>1</sup> is understood as:

1. Decentralized federation, that is a unified state, in which the regions that form central authority keep most of the authority to themselves (the region even often controls armed forces and currency). The examples of confederations in this sense are: Canadian Confederation, Confederation of North American States, Swiss Confederation, Senegambia, Republic of the Seven United Netherlands (future Netherlands), Bolivian-Peru Confederation, Confederate States of America, etc. Among modern states only Serbia and Montenegro can be treated as confederations. There are projects of confederation of the Caucasus, Sudan and other states and regions.
2. Supranational entity (union of states) which unites sovereign states and forms several common bodies of consolidation and control. In this sense confederations include the European Union, Russia-Belarus Union and several projects in the field of Pan-Arabism.

Using the word ‘confederalism’ in either of these senses is not a mistake, however, polyseme often complicates understanding, and confederations of different definitions are often confused (while these two groups are absolutely different: the first one consists of unified states, the second – of unions of sovereign states), and then the classification of political and territorial structure forms fails. Since scientific terms should be monosemantic, the word ‘confederalism’ should have only one meaning, and the other meaning should be given a different term.

<sup>1</sup> “A permanent union of state units that preserve their independence (sovereignty), possess their own bodies of power, unite to coordinate their activities in certain matters of domestic and international policy, and set designated joint bodies.” [Melville, p. 596]. “A form of political structure which is a union of sovereign states.” [Achkasov, p.670].

It seems more logical to choose the first definition (i.e. decentralized federation), since, first of all, the Latin translation of ‘confederation’ means ‘super-federation’, and, second, this word is present in the official names of such states as Swiss Confederation, Canadian Confederation.

To define a political and territorial structure form of supranational entities we have chosen the term ‘globalism’ (global form). Therefore, the European Union is a global formation and not a confederative state. Thus, we have come to the conclusion that:

*Confederalism* – a kind of federative form of political and territorial state structure which is characterized by a larger decentralization of authority.

Thus, we have differentiated between the concepts of a form of political and territorial structure and a principle of political and territorial structure. This principle is a universal model of a political and territorial structure, whereas a form is a realization of this model on a specific level of a political map.

Federalization appears to be one of the most effective methods for conflict settlement in Contemporary History. It is possible to make out several mechanisms of this method. The first one is a strong tendency to separation (shown by sub-national entities striving for autonomy) which can be implemented both in the context of the decentralization of a unitary state and in the context of its total federalization. It is the second policy that is being pursued, for example, by present-day Italy and Spain, since they try to prevent probable conflicts in the Basque Provinces, Catalonia, Galicia, Andalusia, and Piedmont, Lombardy, Sardinia and Sicily respectively.

The same mechanism serves as a basis for the international plan of conflict settlement in Sudan, according to which restless Azalea and Darfur are supposed to be granted autonomy under the total federalization of the country. The same scheme was proposed for conflicts settlement in the former Soviet republics, namely Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan.

The second mechanism is the federalization of a state which is about to collapse, that practically very often results in the emergence of numerous conflicts. The examples of such type of federalization put into practice are the Comoro Islands and recent plans for integrity preserving in Iraq, Ethiopia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third mechanism supposes the integration of several conflicting territories into a united federal state. It was that very mechanism that the world community chose as a solution for Cyprus situation. It would be wrong to say that the experience of federalization has always had a positive consequence, however the majority of such failures as, say, in Sudan, Ethiopia or Myanmar were caused not by the inability of federative mechanisms, but by the lack of functioning system of federative relations in these states.

Logically, quite a natural question emerges: whether the strengthening of potential of federalization (as the instrument of conflict settlement) is possible.

It seems that the strengthening of the peacemaking potential of federalism can develop in two directions.

Before stating the first one, we should answer the following question: whether, in fact, the process of federalization can have its limits, and if it can, which characteristic determines the tendency of a state to take a federal form.

The answer to the first question is definitely positive. It is quite obvious, that the federal form of government is not a universal form of political and territorial structure, which can replace the unitary form of state around the world, moreover in some states the introduction of a more sophisticated (than the unitary one) federative model of interaction between the centre and the sub-national entities can only lead to decentralization and destruction of the authorities, which in the end can result in the upraise of new conflicts. So the federalism should serve a way out of some established social and political conditions and should not be implemented everywhere.

Till now federalism has mainly been "prescribed" to some states only in two cases: when a state had got multinational population (providing that the regions of compact settlement and relative originality of peoples formed parts of these states) and when a state was formed by means of uniting historically independent territories

. Nowadays we face the process of breaking the limits of allowable federalization. The key characteristic, which limits the tendency of a state to take a federal form appears to be neither the historical disconnection of its parts nor its multinational population, but its regional asymmetry in its wide sense.

In other words those states which have got the considerable proportion of regional asymmetry can tend to a federal form of state.

The regional asymmetry can be of several types (a federal state is usually a combination of some of them) and the most typical ones are as follow

- Geographical - the regional asymmetry of a state is determined by its geographical situation, for example being an island state (hence there are island federations of the Comoro islands, Micronesia and the Marshall islands).
- Historical – some regions of a state historically developed in different ways, say, either were independent before integration or formed parts of different states (like the USA, Brazil and Germany)
- Ethnic – the ethnic composition of regions is different (Russia, India, Pakistan, former Yugoslavia);
- linguistic – the linguistic composition of regions is different (Belgium, Switzerland, , Canada);
- confessional – the confessional composition of regions is different (Iraq);
- economic – the economic structure of regions is different (former Czechoslovakia);
- social – cultural, political, class discrepancy (such kind of asymmetry is typical for Ukraine, for example, which demonstrates considerable differences of its Right-bank, Central, South and Eastern regions concerning not only their ethnic composition but also political preferences and geopolitical considerations of their population).

So the regional asymmetry as a key characteristic, limiting the tendency of a state to take a federal form (which should be aimed at overcoming this asymmetry) considerably extends the number of states potentially favorable to federalism, and correspondingly strengthen its peacemaking potential.

A change for "light" forms of federalism, which implies the inconsiderable decentralization of the states, having non critical regional asymmetry can be very effective in conflict preventing. Such scenario is

quite possible for the UK, France, the Baltic countries, Ukraine, and China and is being implemented or at least planned in, say, Spain, Italy, Myanmar, Nigeria and Tanzania.

The strengthening of potential of federalization as an instrument for present-day conflict settlement can be realized in some other way, namely by the use of complicated schemes of federalization, being put into effect at all levels of the political map.

Until now the federalism has been regarded mostly as a characteristic peculiar to state only, however if a federal state is a state where its sub-national entities form the central authority by passing some part of their powers to it, that is, the lower level of the political map determines the upper one, it would be quite logical to suppose that the federalism can develop at some other levels of the political map.

Thus, the formation of a federal region, formed by the 2nd level sub-national entities is quite possible (there have been some federalization projects of this type concerning Dagestan as a part of Russia and Muslim-Croatian Federation as a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina). At the same time the formation of a supranational entity, formed by its constituent states and based on the major principles of federalism is possible as well (the structure of European Union and the union of Russia and Byelorussia illustrate this scheme to some extent).

In this case federalism serves a universal principle of political and territorial structure, where the lower level of the political map determines the upper one.

The use of complicated mechanisms of federalization due to passing some federalism principles to some other levels of the political map (except federal) can considerably strengthen the peace making potential of federalism.

The "sub-national entity-federation" model could be used in the countries with considerable regional asymmetry, where the distinction between ethnic communities can hardly be drawn, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Congo, The Philippines, and Thailand e.t.c.

The most universal set of instruments for conflict settlement will probably give chance to use all possible types of supranational formations.

The creation of communities of different centralization levels contributes to the alleviation of conflict situations (it is caused by the creation of permanently functioning coordinative councils, the liberation of visa regime, and the intensification of diffusion of various cultures etc.).

Thus the European Union has substantially lowered the tension in the relationship of European countries. Under the circumstances of the certain crisis of international organizations, that very supranational entity can become a major peacemaking force all over the world.

The creation of some supranational entity providing that equal rights are guaranteed for all its members, can serve the first step on the way of conflict settlement between Abkhazia, Southern Ossetia and Georgia, the Trans-Dniester Region, and Moldova, the northern and southern Cyprus, Taiwan and China.

One more mechanism for present-day conflict settlement is the creation of interregional communities, namely supranational entities, formed by regions of different states.

Such communities without breaking the principles of inviolability and state sovereignty could provide coordination and development of similar regions. The international community could be easily formed by Kurdish autonomy of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Such a formation observing the legal regulations, determined by the mother countries would promote a more intensive integration of “isolated” Kurdish territories, the creation of the united legislative ground, the development of regional economies, and pacification of Kurds nationalist moods.

One more variant of such a community is the creation of the union of Russian speaking regions, which would include the following territories: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, Eastern and western Ukraine, the Trans-Dniester Region, North Kazakhstan and Eurasian regional union, which would consolidate the countries and regions (including Abkhazia and South Ossetia) which follow Russian geopolitical course.

Such a union would promote the settlement of conflicts and realization of people’s interests without breaking the integrity and sovereignty of independent states.

As for the Trans-Dniester Region, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (the sharpest conflict on the post-Soviet territories) the creation of two crossing (if marked on the political map) unions would promote the diplomatic adjustment of problems:

- a) supranational formation of self-governing territories and the former mother country
- b) interregional union of this territory and Russia.

Such a situation would probably provide a temporary balance of forces and interests in conflict zones and would promote the alleviation of the political situation, economic and social integration in the region.

Summing up the above it is necessary to emphasize that a complicated system of international relations and the high level of democracy make political scientists and diplomats elaborate no less sophisticated and more and more asymmetric many-stage schemes of political and territorial structure, which surely should be based on the philosophy of federalism.

It is quite obvious that the federalization is not a panacea for all the conflicts (thus it is powerless in Arab-Israel conflict as well as in that global opposition between the western world and Islamic fundamentalism), however it is one of the most effective methods of conflict settlement, moreover its potential can be strengthened by the extension of application of the federalism and use of complicated schemes of federalization, implemented at all levels of the political map.

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