

Sagalova Alexandra Lvovna

Multi-functionality Principle in the Activities of the Regional International Organizations

Sagalova Alexandra Lvovna — North-West Institute of Management,
a branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy
and Public Administration (Saint-Petersburg)
Associate Professor of the Chair of International Processes
of the Eurasian Region, PhD in History
sagalovaal@yandex.ru

ABSTRACT

The article deals with multi-functionality being the main principle of the regional organizations inherited from the League of Nations. The author claims the return to multi-functionality to be the growing trend in the activity of the contemporary regional organizations.

KEY WORDS

regional organizations, integration, collective security, multi-functionality, League of Nations

The modern world is impossible to imagine without multi-functional and specialized international organizations operating in all regions. One can hardly doubt that providing regional security, integration, and implementation of various forms of collaboration is the competence of interstate associations that started to rapidly emerge in different parts of the world after World War II. Besides, a regional international organization, that nowadays has become a typical element of the world politics, as recently as the first third of the XX century was perceived by the contemporaries with some mistrust and even hostility. They saw in it a continuation of the Entente and the Triple Alliance that were guilty of setting off World War I and an obvious counterbalance to the League of Nations. The existence of regional associations was acceptable by most of the experts only under the aegis of Geneva. "Covenants on mutual assistance that were signed without participation of the League and were not right with its system created to maintain peace and counteract war, will be incompatible with Article XX of the Statute that forbids the members of the League to conclude any

and all agreements inappropriate to the Statute. [Such agreements] will deteriorate into military alliances, for which will stand the military force but not the law", — said A. Henderson, one of the most outstanding representatives of the League of Nations, the Nobel Peace Prize winner [3, p. 156]. In liberal idealism that was dominating in the theory of international relationship of the first half of the XX century, regionalism was traditionally considered an antithesis to the concept of collective security [1, p. 21] and the "idea of the League of Nations" as such.

"The Idea of the League of Nations" is a body of theses on a global international organization, which activities are based on a combination of functions in the sphere of security and integration. According to the idea of idealistic theorists (L. S. Woolf, H. N. Brailsford, N. Angel), the second one was supposed to contribute to the first one as for the states concerned with search and realization of common interests (of economic character, first of all), resolving the differences by using force is not of advantage. It was assumed that the creation of the community of interdependent states and, consequently, exclusion of ag-

gression from international practice would enable the humanity to move to the next stage of cooperation, i.e. formation of a political union or federation. To put it tentatively, the formula “integration + collective security = global federation” first denoted “the legacy of the League of Nations” that went over to the UN and to a number of regional organizations. Being the basis for future political alliance, multi-functionality was to become the startup capital for new unions.

During World War II traditional views on multilateral institutions changed radically — first, in social thinking, and then in political practice one could observe the transition from universality (i.e. geographical omnitude) of international organization to regionalism. The notion of membership criteria appeared in the concept of international organization, and it was Streit C., an American journalist, the author of a well-known book “Union Now” (1939), who introduced it widely. Streit believed that only the union of states with similar political regimes can successfully maintain peace. As an alternative to Geneva, he suggested that the federation of 15 democratic states of Europe, America and British Commonwealth should be created. On the eve of World War II there was a dramatic rise of federalism with an obvious regional character in European social and political thinking. “Europe should become a federation, otherwise it will die”, this thought expressed in 1939 by C. Attlee, a British politician, was a quintessence of sentiment overriding the Old World at the end of the 1930s [2, p. 13].

Moving to regionalism was caused by defragmentation of the system of international relationship as a result of strengthening of the fascist regimes and then by decolonization and by the emerging confrontation of the blocks. A region as well as a regional organization began to play a totally new role in the world politics: Chapter VIII of the UN Charter granted regional associations the opportunities equal to the universal ones so that they could participate in the formation of inter-

national legal system¹. Thus, after 1945, the worldwide agenda split into global and regional ones: corresponding international organizations were to divide “the legacy of the League of Nations”. The UN, at first thought, seemed a more obvious successor to Geneva. In this new global organization one could find both the structure and the areas of activity of its historic predecessor. However, regional organizations that emerged in Europe (Organization for European Economic Cooperation, NATO, and the Council of Europe) in 1948–1950 bore the same traces of “the legacy of the League of Nations”. Unlike the UN, at the beginning all these associations tried to present the formula “integration + collective security = global federation” — even North Atlantic Treaty Organization was not an exception, which, to the opinion of its architect, the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. E. Bevin, was considered to be an integration association based on Anglo-French military union suggestive of federalist potential. The set of external factors (the cold war, the Soviet Union threat increase amid military weakness of the European states) and intra-regional ones (the lack of trust between Paris and London, the ambition of Great Britain to maintain its leading position in the Western world) led to the situation when no multifunctional organization was formed in the Western Europe. NATO turned into a military alliance guided actually by the USA, OECD having crossed the region boundaries dealt with the development while the Council of Europe addressed the issue of human rights. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that NATO has repeatedly shown disposition to acquire economic and political functions. It explains the appearance of the Economic, Political and Science Committees in the North Atlantic Alliance structure in 1957, and a Committee for the problems of the modern society in 1969. In 1960-ies there were also plans to merge NATO with OECD

¹ The Charter of the United Nations Organization [Internet resource] // United Nations Organization // <http://www.un.org/ru/documents/charter/chapter8.shtml> (as of 26.05.2012).

which was called “the economic wing” of the Alliance. Arab League created in 1945 under the strong influence of the universalistic ideology of pan-Arabism failed to avoid the temptation of federalism combined with multi-functionality.

The second wave of launching IRO In the 1960-ies marked a serious crisis of multi-functionality as a principle of activity and federalism as the goal of the regional institutions. Latin American organizations that appeared in the 1960-ies (Andean Community of Nations, Latin American and Caribbean zones of free trade) did not set themselves any goals in the field of safety and security arrangements. Their goal was economic integration, quite natural for this fastest growing region in the world¹. For the Arab League the formula “integration + security = federation” soon showed its utopianism since the politicized association, torn by internal discrepancies could neither create an effective system of regional security nor take considerable steps towards integration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations looked an exception against this backdrop. Its charter documents stated as priority the aims of accelerating economic growth, social progress, cultural development along with the protection of regional peace and stability². As a matter of fact, up to the end of the Cold War ASEAN members paid little attention to economic cooperation and focused trying to save themselves from involvement into superpower confrontation or interregional clashes.

The Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that appeared in 1963, did not deny multi-functionality principle,

¹ Andean Subregional Integration Agreement “Cartagena Agreement” [Internet resource] // Comunidad Andina//http://www.comunidadandina.org/ingles/normativa/ande_trie1.htm (as of 26.05.2012). Montevideo Treaty — 1960 [Internet resource]// UOL// http://www2.uol.com.br/acta-soft/actamercosul/espanhol/tratado_de_montevideo_de_1960.htm (as of 26.05.2012).

² ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) [Internet resource] // ASEAN // <http://www.asean.org/news/item/the-asean-declaration-bangkok-declaration> (as of 18.06.2013).

however, it was not declared outright. The organization founders saw it as a means of retaining just emerged sovereignties, rather than an instrument for an inevitable turn of cooperation into a political union³. The Arab League, ASEAN and OAU presented examples of the “false multi-functionality” claiming intention to combine in their activities security and integration (or economic cooperation) while de-facto giving preference to one activity over the others.

The League of Nations legacy began to look a historical anachronism in the 1980s when a wave of “new regionalism” struck the world. The distinctive feature of the “new IRO” was a low degree of bureaucratization, a narrow, sub-regional geography and a specialization focused on economic and social issues. Their agenda quite often missed the issues of military and political cooperation. Provision of security and, further still, collective defense naturally ceased to be the reason for the start of new regional unions. The integration had a strong lead as a core aim. Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf created in 1981 became a pioneer among the new IRO. Among its primary aims were to achieve coordination, integration and inter-connection between member states in all fields in order to establish unity between them. It was also to deepen and strengthen relations, links and cooperation between their peoples in various fields⁴. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Southern Common Market (Mercosur), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (OBSEC), Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Visegrád Group that appeared in the second half of the 1980-s — beginning of the 1990-s set the goals solely in the socio-economic field.

³ Organization of African Unity Charter [Internet resource] // African Union// http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/text/OAU_Charter_1963.pdf (as of 26.05.2012)

⁴ The Charter of the Council for the Arab States of the Gulf [Internet resource] // The Russian legal portal: Pashkov Library // <http://constitutions.ru/archives/2789> (as of 26.05.2012).

Multi-functionality seemed to rapidly disappear from the practice of pragmatic and practical objective-oriented “new IRO”. However, in the beginning of the 21 century we observe a sort of renaissance of the League of Nations legacy. This is not federalism any more, but a combination of integration and security. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the regional organization formed in 2001 mainly to provide security in the region, denied the negative trend of multi-functionality. Its agenda formulated in the SCO Charter (2002) puts side by side “development of multidisciplinary cooperation aimed at the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region; encouragement of the efficient regional cooperation in such spheres as politics, trade and economy, defense, law enforcement... credit and finance, and also other spheres of common interest and coordination of approaches to integration into the global economy”¹.

At the same period “false multi-functionality” begins to turn into the true one — ASEAN performing weak intra-zone interaction for several decades formed a zone of free trade in 2003. It was followed by the Arab League when on 1 January 2005 The Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) was founded by 17 countries including Palestine. OAU was at the turn of the century converted into the African Union due to the efforts of former Libyan leader M. Gaddafi. The Constitutive Act of the new organization stated the member states’ ambitions to promote political, social and economic integration and also their intention to “promote peace, security and stability on the continent”².

Several “new IRO” also demonstrated a trend toward the widening of the agenda by including the issues in the field of regional security in the framework of MERCOSUR, in 2004 “El Protocolo de Olivos” came into

effect whereby the member states were made committed to settle disputes solely by peaceful means³. It is remarkable that in the new millennium MERCOSUR is becoming a core of larger multi-functional organizations. Thus, on the initiative of former Brazil President L.I. Lula da Silva and Venezuelan leader H. Chavez the Union of South American Nations was formed on the basis of gradual convergence of MERCOSUR and Andean Community of Nations which in 2007 was converted into a union (USAN), claiming to form a political association from its birth.

“Sliding into” security issues can also be seen in the agenda of the less politicized “new IRO”, i. e. APEC. It is within its framework that Counter-Terrorism Task Force has been in operation since 2003. Besides, in recent years the organization pays considerable attention to various forms of “soft” security, e. g. in 2004 Energy working group set into motion the Energy Security Initiative, at the same time they approved the “Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency”⁴.

As all these examples show, the last trend in the regional international organizations is the return to the multi-functionality. However, it is too early to state that we are witnessing the renaissance of the “League of Nations legacy” — in a number of cases expanding an agenda indicates just the rise of the hegemonistic ambitions of regional leaders or an intention to solve highly practical issues most efficiently.

³ Protocolo De Olivos para la Solución De Controversias en el MERCOSUR ... [Internet resource] // MERCOSUR// http://www.mercosur.int/innovaportal/file/102/1/protocolo_span_class=liushitolivos_span_es.pdf (as of 26.05.2012)

⁴ Energy Security Initiative [Internet resource] // APEC // <http://www.apec.org/en/Groups/SOM-Steering-Committee-on-Economic-and-Technical-Cooperation/Working-Groups/~media/84D392D575D54814A68A86DAD185133E.ashx> (as of 26.05.2012). Santiago Commitment to Fight Corruption and Ensure Transparency [Internet resource] // APEC // <http://www.apec.org/Home/Groups/SOM-Steering-Committee-on-Economic-and-Technical-Cooperation/Working-Groups/Anti-Corruption-and-Transparency.aspx> (as of 26.05.2012)

¹ The Charter of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation [Internet resource] // Shanghai Cooperation Organization // <http://www.sectsc.org/RU/show.asp?id=86> (as of 26.05.2012).

² Constitutive Act of the African Union [Internet resource] // African Union// http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/ConstitutiveAct_EN.pdf (as of 26.05.2012).

Currently, some multifunctional regional associations (in particular USAN and The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf) came to grips with the transit from military and economic cooperation to the political union formation. The nearest future will probably show what will come out of this “federalist” or rather “proto-federalist” potential.

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