

NATIONAL SECURITY AND SEPARATIST POTENTIAL OF THE DECENTRALIZATION PROCESS NOWADAYS IN UKRAINE

The article substantiates the importance of studying a number of factors that are decisively capable of influencing the preservation of the territorial integrity of our country. Nowadays Ukrainian society in the current stage of its own independent state development has faced a huge impact of the partial state territory annexation, which requires thorough understanding of what led to these events and the identification of effective and preventing means of this kind of phenomena.

The article supports the need to reassess priorities in the course of the decentralization strategy implementation, taking into account the minimization of possible potential threats of separatism in the specific regions of our country. The author draws the attention to the conditions that can form and strengthen the separatist potential in the course of administrative reform and modernization of the territorial administration system.

In addition, the article deals with the issues of overcoming contradictions in the existing system of administration aimed at reducing incentives for the separatist potential accumulation in the process of reformation which should build and broaden the system of local self-government in modern Ukrainian society. The author pays attention to the possible threats to the realization of the separatist potential for Ukrainian national security and territorial integrity.

The article sets forth a number of factors that can stimulate separatist tendencies in the course of the national strategy implementation of the public administration system decentralization. The author emphasizes the need to overcome the excessive politicization of the territorial administration bodies activities, and the necessity to use wider legal mechanisms in problem solving of interaction between central and local governments.

The attention is focused on the need to implement measures which can contribute to balancing the levels of economic development of the regions and to minimizing external influence on this process. In addition, the importance of developing means of institutional control over the activities of territorial units by state bodies is substantiated.

Keywords: national security, decentralization, regional separatism, political process, separatist potential, local government, territorial authorities, territorial communities, political parties.

Problem Definition. Nowadays modern Ukrainian society has a number of challenges related to ensuring stable conditions for its own development. These challenges are primarily reflected in the threats to the territorial integrity of the modern Ukrainian state. Unfortunately, today, part of the Ukrainian territory is occupied and that poses serious threats to the national state security and significantly affects the smooth development of all social life areas.

Specifically these circumstances highlight the need to study various external and internal factors that can affect the territorial integrity of our state, which is an essential aspect of ensuring the national security of Ukraine in general. In this regard, the issue of public administration system reformation, which implies significant decentralization, is becoming increasingly important.

Recent Research and Publications Analysis. It is worth noting that in the modern scientific literature huge attention is paid to implementation measures aimed at decentralizing the system of public administration in our country. Among such studies there are publications of A.Baimuratov, M.Bryzitsky, V.Burega, G.Wozniak, M.Kruglashov, M.Rysinyuk. A significant amount of the materials which are related to the process of reforming the Ukrainian public administration system are posted on the main informational portal "Decentralization".

In addition, a number of publications written by Ukrainian scholars are devoted to the analysis of the causes and identification of favorable conditions for the manifestations of separatism in modern Ukraine and its threats to national security. They include the researches made by M.Besarab, M.Okladna, O.Sharan, H.Yuskiv. Separately, it should be noted that there are analytical materials published by the National Institute for Strategic Studies on potential threats to national security from possible manifestations of regional separatism in Ukraine [8].

At the same time, there is an obvious need to rethink and study deeper some specific areas of the decentralization process, taking into account possible negative reactions of society to the excessive politicization of local government. This article aims to draw attention of the scientific community to a number of factors which can form the separatist potential of the current decentralization strategy and public administration restructuring in Ukraine.

The purpose of this article is to identify the factors of possible threats to the territorial integrity of our state in the course of public administration decentralization implementation. Achieving this goal involves solving the problem of identifying measures to improve national security by reducing the separatist potential of the means aimed at public administration system decentralization.

Results and Discussion. Ukrainian society embarked on the path of the entire public administration system reformation and now seeks to obtain effective mechanisms for solving the problems which accompany the process of building a democratic political system, market economy and cultural and spiritual life.

According to the Government Portal of the Executive Bodies of Ukraine, the goal of decentralization reform is “to form effective local self-government and territorial organization of authority to form and maintain a full living environment for citizens, to provide high-quality and affordable public services, to establish institutions of direct democracy, to reconcile interests of state and territorial communities» [9].

We can already see some achievements on this path, which confirm that the chosen way of reforming the public administration system in our country is absolutely correct. As A.Kruglashov and V.Burega note in their study "In general, decentralization in the first stage of its implementation contributed to the fact that citizens now have more opportunities to influence the changes in their community" [5, p.71].

In particular, today we have already managed to consolidate at the constitutional level the democratic foundations for the formation of all public administration institutions using electoral mechanisms adopted by the most developed countries of the world. In addition, the political system of modern Ukrainian society is based on the principle of power separation, the main part in this system belongs to collectivist political institutions.

At the same time, a significant part of state building and civil society development issues are in the process of improvement and overcoming the existing contradictions. Thus, the current situation in society requires, among other things, refining the system of territorial governance, improving the interaction efficiency of the constituent parts of central and territorial government institutions system.

Nowadays in this area there are still many contradictions which do not enable effective governance of the individual territories and of the country as a whole.

The issue of redistribution of powers between central and territorial bodies in particular is extremely sensitive. This aspect is the main content of the steps to decentralize the public administration system in our country.

The current doctrine of management decentralization goes beyond the management of such important areas as education and health. In fact, the issue of transferring a significant part of the powers of the central government to non-state territorial formations, which are local governments in the form of territorial communities and their governing bodies, is on the agenda.

The purpose of such redistribution is to increase the level of involvement of citizens in the direct problems solution at the local level and to optimize the usage of public resources to ensure their own management tasks.

The very fact that the modern Ukrainian state uses a republican form of government automatically presupposes, in solving the most important issues of Ukrainian society, reliance on the general public, which should be able to consolidate all issues of its own progressive development.

Today we can see some progress in improving the financial capacity of local governments, increasing the effectiveness of addressing certain socio-economic and infrastructural issues by them.

In general, we can state that an important achievement of decentralization reform is the growth of opportunities for community members to influence the quality of their own lives through participation in the implementation of the public budget and other channels of coordination of territorial priorities.

At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to some threats and dangers which imply specific steps in this direction. Among them, the most dangerous are the issues of accumulation of a certain regional separatist potential, which is objectively present in the content of the decentralization process and the formation of a local self-government system.

As H.Yuskiv notes, "separatism always arises at the interface between of centripetal and centrifugal tendencies – when there is a contradiction between the desire of the Center to retain power and the desire of the region to defend the existing and to gain new rights" [12, p.121].

This content, in our practice, among other things, is associated with the destruction of the management vertical from the central government to the regions. Today, chairmen and councils of territorial communities do not have subordination to state bodies. They maintain contact with government agencies at the informal level. Practice shows that today government officials can influence the behavior of heads of local governments, mainly through state law enforcement agencies.

At the same time, it should be noted that the current imperfection of the legislative regulation of many aspects of the interaction between central and local governments, often leads to the fact that both local heads and deputies have the opportunity to openly ignore the decisions of central authorities.

The possibility not to follow the decisions of central institutions arouses the desire of leaders of territorial communities to 'autonomize' as much as possible and to isolate themselves from "unnecessary" influence.

There are multiple samples of such behavior. Among these examples, we can see the large-scale confrontation of individual leaders of large and powerful territorial communities with the central and territorial bodies of government. With enormous financial resources and community support, some of them openly pursue 'their own policies' in the areas of economic regulation, health care, culture and education.

The same examples illustrate the significant limitations of central government institutions' ability to influence this kind of behavior. With the possible arrival of activists with open separatist sentiments in the management of the united territorial communities, the threats of large-scale regional conflict are growing many times over.

An important factor in the formation of regional separatism in the context of decentralization is, to a large extent, excessive politicization of local government. It is carried out by involving political institutions both in the process of election procedures in the governing bodies of territorial communities formation, and in the substantive activities of the governing institutions of the united territorial communities.

The current election legislation in the formation of elected bodies of local self-government at the level of cities and oblasts implies the direct participation of Ukrainian political parties in this process. This means that citizens need party affiliation to run in local elections, as lists of candidates for election are formed exclusively by regional political parties (representatives). Thus, the space is artificially ideologized, which in essence should not be of a political nature.

If we take a closer look at the content, tasks and nature of local authorities' self-government, it will become clear that it is exclusively related to an economic direction that has no political meaning. The division of city councils into fractions according to political orientations inevitably leads to unnatural political confrontation in the sphere where it cannot and should not exist.

The focus of elected representatives on single party priority often pushes the interests of local communities into the background. Being in opposition to each other, representatives of party fractions do not defend the interests of their constituents and the territorial community, but mainly party priorities. Thus, the necessary decisions for residents of territorial communities are not made based on party considerations throughout the term of elected deputies.

Ultimately, the existing politicization can be the basis for identifying the centrifugal aspirations that can be realized by the representatives of individual political parties in the regions where their representatives are the majority.

A certain separatist potential lies at the level of consolidation of the most influential leaders of territorial communities. An example of this is the precedent for the formation of the Proposal political party, often referred to as the Mayors' Party. Today we have no reason to discuss activities of such organizations in a certain direction, but we can discuss a certain centrifugal potential, which can be manifested in a fierce political struggle.

Today, the issues of creating municipal bodies to maintain public order and protect city council officials are being discussed quite actively. In some regions of Ukraine, such organizations have been established, registered and started their activities. It is important to understand that the initiative to create them is a response to the inability of state law enforcement agencies to fully address the issue of public order. This means that territorial authorities can break the state monopoly on ensuring legally defined public order.

It is obvious that such manifestations, in addition to a number of positive elements that allow the use of the best experience of local communities, have a certain resource to increase the weight of the regional elite.

However, under certain conditions the growing influence of regional leaders may objectively pose certain threats to the growth of separatist sentiments in certain regions of our state. Thus, such development, in the appropriate situation, may pose a real threat to national security due to the obvious threats to the autonomy of certain territorial formations.

Moreover, the regional separatist potential is caused by certain historical features of the development of specific territories of the modern Ukrainian state, which today have noticeable regional differences in their ethno-cultural dimension. In this regard, M.Bessarab notes that "for the emergence and successful spread of separatist sentiments in any country requires the presence and coincidence of objective historical circumstances, causes and favorable factors" [2, p.315].

Today external propaganda of political forces which are not friendly to Ukraine tries to use these historical features of the development of Ukrainian lands, spreading among Ukrainian citizens the idea of 'one nation', restoring the 'historical unity' of foreign countries with certain regions of Ukraine, returning them to the 'Slavic family'.

This factor is complemented by the perspectives for regions to achieve different levels of economic development. In this regard, G.Wozniak notes that 'under conditions of financial and economic instability (crisis), the goals of state and regional (local) government in the implementation of fiscal policy may have different priorities, which means that the policy of budgetary security equalization is ineffective as a result of strengthening the differentiation of regional development.' [4, p.255].

In addition, O.Kukhlenko, R.Fedoriak, S.Nevmerzhytska in their study note that 'it is important to draw attention to the already existing disparity in the levels of development of the Ukrainian regions, due to both objective geographical and social-economic factors and a number of subjective socio-political factors and global threats' [6, p. 253-257].

It is also impossible to ignore another side of the issue of external influences on the situation in the country in general and in the particular regions. The results of these external influences can already be observed in the East of our country and in the Crimea.

Conclusions. Summarizing all the above, it is worth mentioning that all these factors oblige us to be very careful about governmental reforms in our country as well as about further decentralization progress of public administration.

In order to minimize the risks of growing regional separatist potential in the conditions of decentralization, it is necessary to take steps which will ensure institutional control over the activities of territorial bodies. In particular, the modernization of territorial state bodies should be implemented immediately.

It is extremely important to introduce the institution of prefects as plenipotentiaries of the state in the regions, empowering them to represent national interests in the local communities.

It is essential to develop a step by step mechanism for their interaction with local governments which will enable effective control over local self-government bodies without imposing tasks not relevant to them. To this end, it is also necessary to clearly share legislative power between state and self-governing territorial bodies.

Some researchers of the decentralization process in Ukraine, in this regard, point out that "... external and internal challenges which Ukraine faces, require the formation of a new regional policy that meets modern needs of regional and territorial communities and is based on the best domestic and world theories and practices" [10, p.135].

As a result, all the above mentioned steps will reduce the risks of separatist manifestations and threats to the territorial integrity of our state.

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Іванов М. С. Національна безпека та сепаратистський потенціал процесу децентралізації в сучасній Україні

У статті обґрунтовується важливість дослідження низки чинників, які вирішальним чином здатні впливати на збереження територіальної цілісності нашої країни. Сучасне українське суспільство на сучасному етапі розбудови власної незалежної держави зіштовхнулося з масштабними наслідками анексії частини державної території, що вимагає глибокого осмислення її причин та виявлення ефективних засобів протидії проявам такого роду явищ.

У зв'язку з цим, в статті обґрунтовується необхідність переоцінки пріоритетів в ході реалізації стратегії децентралізації з урахуванням мінімізації можливих потенційних загроз прояву сепаратизму в окремих регіонах нашої країни. При цьому актуалізується увага щодо умов,

які здатні формувати та зміцнювати сепаратистський потенціал в ході адміністративної реформи та модернізації системи територіального управління.

Також, розглядаються питання подолання суперечностей в існуючій системі адміністрування з метою зниження стимулів до накопичення сепаратистського потенціалу в процесі проведення реформи спрямованої на розбудову системи місцевого самоврядування в сучасному українському суспільстві. Приділена увага питанням можливих загроз реалізації сепаратистського потенціалу для національної безпеки та територіальної цілісності сучасної України.

Звертається увага на ряд чинників, які можуть стимулювати сепаратистські тенденції в ході реалізації національної стратегії по децентралізації системи публічного управління. Вказується на необхідність подолання надмірної політизації діяльності органів територіального управління, більш широкого застосування правових механізмів у вирішенні проблем взаємодії центральних та місцевих органів управління.

Висловлюються зауваження щодо необхідності здійснення заходів, які можуть сприяти збалансуванню рівнів економічного розвитку регіонів та мінімізувати зовнішні впливи на цей процес. Крім цього, обґрунтовується важливість вироблення засобів інституційного контролю за діяльністю територіальних одиниць з боку державних органів.

Ключові слова: національна безпека, децентралізація, регіональний сепаратизм, політичний процес, сепаратистський потенціал, місцеве самоврядування, територіальні органи влади, територіальні громади, політичні партії