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The Main Sources of Political Conflicts: Scenarios for their Development and Prevention

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I. Introduction

The growing interest in conflict and conflict situations has two reasons. First, the growth of conflicts in all spheres of social interaction is already a sign of our time. Lack of understanding between people, violence, aggression, rampant terrorism, fear of the future, i.e. the constant complication of the very problem of conflict in real life, make conflicts important and relevant. Secondly, today we find ourselves at a completely new point in evolutionary development, when humanity consciously takes responsibility for its further existence. If earlier people relied on God, on higher powers, on magicians and wizards, on the communist party, today it is more and more obvious that the expression “Help yourself” is becoming the motto of modern life [5 P.3].

II. Causes and Features of Political Conflicts

Today everyone knows that security problems in a narrow and broad sense will remain in the spotlight for a long time. It is quite obvious that conflict is not only a fact of our life, but also a factor that can make significant adjustments to it. Thus, a family conflict, brought to extreme manifestations, can make all its members unhappy. The conflict that led to a war between countries can destroy them; affect the fate of citizens not only of these countries, but of the whole world. But the same conflict, constructively resolved, will open up new opportunities for establishing peace and developing cooperation. The term "conflict" comes from the Latin word “conftictus”, which literally means "clash, serious disagreement, and dispute."As the analysis of special literature shows, the concept of "conflict", despite its wide distribution and relevance, does not have a clear and more or less universal definition [2 P.127)].

In the modern literature on conflicts, there are 112 definitions and significant differences in their wording. So what is "conflict"?

So, a conflict is a manifestation of objective or subjective contradictions, expressed in the confrontation between the parties. Conflict is the most acute way of resolving significant contradictions arising in the process of interaction, which consists in the counteraction of the subjects of the conflict and is usually accompanied by negative emotions. Conflicts are completely different. Among them, there are: inter-individual conflicts, inter-group conflicts and their types, interest groups, groups of an ethno-national character, groups united by a common position, conflicts between associations, intra and inter-institutional conflicts, conflicts between state entities, conflicts between cultures or types of cultures, political, economic , social, military, etc. [4 P.17]. From the mass of conflicts, it is advisable to single out for consideration political conflicts, their sources and the process of their settlement. Sources of political conflicts in the broadest sense can be social, extra-social and combined. Contradictions of an intermediate nature, reflecting the relationship between man and nature, where both sides contribute to the development of the conflict, can act as a specific source of political conflicts. But a much wider range of sources of conflict is contained in its social factors and foundations. These determinants are extremely diverse and can be associated with the specifics of certain spheres of politics (domestic and international), with the nature of the subjects (individual, group, mass), as well as with other aspects. Most often, there are three main reasons underlying political confrontation. First of all, these are various forms and aspects of social relations that determine the discrepancy between the statuses of the subjects of politics, their role assignments and functions, interests and needs in power, as well as the lack of resources, etc. For example, they record discrepancies in statuses between the ruling elite and the counter-elite, various interest groups, certain states, regions, etc.

As a rule, the external tension of such conflicts can be easily extinguished. However, it is possible to eradicate the sources of the conflicting disposition of the parties involved in the political game in various ways

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only through transformations, either changing the very organization of power in society, or reforming the socio-economic (cultural) foundations of the political activity of competing subjects. For example, a number of scientists today propose the concept of smoothing out the contradictions between rich (North) and poor (South) countries based on the assertion of their in surmount ability (the theory of "development islands" and the "golden billion", suggesting the ability to live in abundance only for the population of developed countries, in contrast to others states and regions of the world). The constant modification of such sources of conflict should also be taken into account. For example, in modern conditions one can observe the aggravation of relations between industrial and raw material countries, migration flows and urbanization processes in developing regions. At the same time, “classical” conflicts between national states are leaving the international arena, giving way to various regional, local, civilizational contradictions.

Another important social source of political conflicts is the divergence of people (their groups and associations) regarding values and political ideals, cultural traditions, assessments of certain events, as well as other subjectively significant ideas about political phenomena. Such conflicts most often arise in those countries in which qualitatively different opinions about ways of reforming statehood collide, the foundations of a new political structure of society are being laid and ways are being sought out of the social crisis. For example, in relation to the system of world political relations, the American scientist R. Ingle hart points out that at present, many concepts of the Islamic, Confucian, Buddhist and other models of the world order are based not on the existing and changing balance of forces in the world, but on appeals to their own ideals and values; in fact, they call for a reassessment of the deepest socio-cultural foundations of modern realities and philosophy of politics [3, pp. 64-74]. As the experience of forecasting the geopolitical situation in recent years shows, emerging crises and conflicts do not lend themselves to timely recognition and diagnosis. Examples of this are the numerous “color revolutions” and protest movements that took place in the post-Soviet space and the Middle East, for which the expert political science community was not ready, despite the repeated preconditions and scenarios for organizing such “revolutions”. The wave of "Arab revolutions" in the states of North Africa and protest movements in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Moldova even led to the elimination of the ruling regimes as a result of the use of technologies to manipulate human consciousness. The phenomenon of "color revolutions" first appeared in Serbia at the end of the 90 last century. Then similar events took place in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova and repeated again in Ukraine in 2013. In Belarus, Uzbekistan and Russia there were also attempts to organize protest movements, but they did not develop there due to the stability of state institutions and the lack of sufficient support from the population.

The main feature of modern crises and conflicts of an intrastate and regional scale is the wide direct or indirect involvement of interested external actors in international politics seeking to provide military, financial and informational support to one of the parties in their interests, as well as influential international organizations. As the events in Libya and Syria show, this does not allow the country's authorities to consider such a conflict as their internal affair, even if it turns out to be such from an international legal point of view [3, pp. 137-138].

The frequency of conflict and crisis situations in the modern world is due to the high level of conflict potential in domestic and international relations, which is determined by the increased activity of diplomatic, non-governmental organizations and special services that encourage, organize and finance opposition forces in their fight against the current government, moreover organizers of protest movements sometimes involve third countries (as was the case in Libya and Syria), recruiting and training mercenaries and funding their activities. Scenarios of political coups were successfully implemented in Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova, as well as in the states of North Africa, which for a long time destabilized the socio-political situation in these countries. At the same time, the driving force of such "revolutions" is young people under the age of 30, whose share in the total mass of the population is growing.

It is expected that by 2021 it will be 47% in Asia, 57% in the Middle East and North Africa, and 70% in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, in most countries of these regions in the near future, conditions for the successful social integration of youth into social structures are not expected, which will make it a source of future socio-political instability and conflicts [1].

A factor contributing to the success of the "color revolution" is also the weakness of the central government and its inconsistency in solving social and economic problems. Therefore, it is not surprising that "color revolutions" took place in the most prosperous countries of the CIS in terms of observing the norms of democracy: in Ukraine and Georgia, where the media had great freedom of action and in Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev was formally considered almost the most democratic president in the post-Soviet space [6].

III. Scenarios for the Development of Crisis Situations and the Emergence of Conflicts

As for the scenarios for the development of a crisis situation, the phase of its inception usually takes

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place in a latent, implicit form. At this stage, the formation of conditions and the emergence of tendencies of a future conflict take place, which, at first glance, do not look dangerous and do not entail serious consequences.

At the second stage of the development of the crisis, its scale expands, which affects the general situation in the country, forcing the central government to take measures to prevent its escalation by involving law enforcement agencies to stabilize the situation and fight extremists.

At the third stage of the development of the crisis, characterized by an extreme aggravation of the situation, the opposing sides begin an open armed struggle. Illegal armed groups appear, terrorist acts, sabotage and hostage-taking are committed.

The fourth stage of the development of the crisis is characterized by the involvement of the subjects of international politics in the person of human rights and humanitarian organizations, as well as the provision of diplomatic, information, propaganda and economic pressure on the population and leadership of the country where there is a conflict situation. If such pressure does not lead to the desired results, and the confrontation takes the form of a civil war, during which the rebels cannot overthrow the ruling regime (as was the case in Libya and Syria), then the UN Security Council raises the question of armed intervention against of this state for overthrowing the "dictatorial" regime [9, pp. 109–111].

IV. Prevention of Crises and Conflicts

Management of modern state and international systems is a priori anti-crisis at all stages of their development. This requires politicians at all levels to be able to recognize in a timely manner the approaching crisis phenomena and make adequate management decisions. For top government officials, the most important element of anti-crisis management is diagnostics and preventive sanitation of crisis trends and phenomena. Diagnostics allows you to obtain reliable information about the real goals and capabilities of the opposing sides, which makes it possible to start forming a reflective model of anti-crisis management. At the same time, anti-crisis management is defined as a system of measures and methods for diagnosing, identifying, neutralizing the causes of crisis phenomena and overcoming their consequences. It should cover all stages of the emergence and development of the crisis, including its prevention, prophylaxis and elimination of consequences. The anti-crisis management system must be flexible, respond quickly to emerging challenges and threats, adapt to changes in the socio-political and international situation, and also have the ability to effectively use the geopolitical potential of the state and informal management methods. At the same time, one should take into account the time factor, which has an economic and military-political price, which is especially significant during the period of the emergence and development of crisis trends and phenomena. These features of the anti-crisis management mechanism determine the solution of such tasks as the timely recognition of the symptoms and causes of the approaching crisis, as well as the classification and development of measures to overcome it. The individual characteristics and specifics of each crisis situation require the development of specific methods and measures in diagnostics, rehabilitation and preventive measures for the timely and effective relief of threatening trends. The problem of preventing conflicts and crisis situations is relevant due to the fact that it is much easier to prevent these phenomena than to stop them. At the same time, the goal of preventive activity is the timely recognition of the signs, nature of the conflict and the reasons that give rise to it, as well as the initiators and driving forces at the public, state and international levels. It should be emphasized here that the term "prevention" itself is applied not to crisis and conflict in general, but only to its destructive forms. This is due to the fact that it is impossible to stop the socio-political development of social and international systems and the crisis phenomena inextricably linked with it, taking the form of conflicts, but one should try to prevent their destructive manifestations associated with violence, human casualties and damage to property, public interests and values. Therefore, the content of preventive activity is to determine the measures of influence on the structural elements of the conflict, which include the parties to the conflict, the motives of their behavior, the objects of influence and the methods and means used, before its destructive manifestations arose [3 P.149- 150]. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the sources of its origin and development, preventive activities should be aimed at preventing violence, its uncontrolled escalation and reorienting the course of events towards a peaceful resolution of the problem. In this regard, two types of preventive activities are distinguished: at an early stage to prevent a conflict and after its occurrence to prevent its uncontrolled development. Early warning of conflicts and crisis situations is aimed at preventing the escalation of violence to an armed confrontation between the parties or mass protests by the masses. At the same time, one should take into account the fact that often one of the parties to the conflict most often does not set himself the task of normalizing relations and does not seek to find ways to resolve it with the opposite party on a contractual basis. Examples of conflict and crisis prevention activities include shuttle diplomacy, mediation efforts by public and religious leaders, observer missions, sending peacekeeping forces to crisis areas, conducting military exercises in

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regions adjacent to the conflict zone, and displaying the flag of the naval and air forces. It seems advisable that all these measures must be carried out before the conflict turns into the stage of armed confrontation between the parties. An early warning strategy for crisis situations should use an efficiently operating system for monitoring hotbeds of potential conflicts to map them and identify the dynamics of development. The best period for monitoring the conflict is its latent phase, since in this case there are all possibilities to prevent the development of conflicts in a catastrophic scenario. Humanitarian organizations and foreign agencies operating in conflict areas and not engaged by third parties can provide the most recent and reliable information on the state of the problem, as well as carry out personal contacts and mediation functions that are extremely valuable in successful conflict prevention. This activity can be carried out in cooperation with the media and research organizations. Preventive steps can include missions to identify and investigate factors that indicate an escalating conflict, as well as its possible boundaries and severity of contradictions. The information obtained should be used for discussion in the expert community, the organization of dialogue and negotiations between the parties - participants in a potential conflict [8 P.40]. At the next stages, it is possible to attract international organizations, as well as provide material and technical support to the efforts of mediators and negotiators, as well as send peacekeepers to areas of potential conflicts. All these measures provide the parties with critical time to find ways to peacefully resolve the conflict situation. At the stage of preventing the uncontrolled development of the conflict, the task is to analyze the underlying causes of the situation on the basis of studying the conflicting interests of the parties and the asymmetry of their relations. Large-scale preventive activities include the study of the reasons for the uneven development of regions and the position of ethno-religious communities, the characteristics of their socio-political cultures and the relationship between them, taking into account the identified structural causes of the conflict, which include economic and social inequality of the population of the region and ineffective work of the authorities.

The development of preventive measures may result in programs for the economic development of conflict-prone regions, the development of mechanisms for resolving conflicts, peacekeeping activities, actions to establish intercultural contacts and the creation of organizations for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Additional measures include the promotion of national and confessional harmony and the creation of mechanisms for the peaceful and constructive division of political power both on a national scale and in its individual region [7, p. 97].

V. Conclusion

Thus, conflicts are the main part of the social system. It is necessary to recognize the interconnection and interdependence of the parties, the need to show goodwill for an agreement, the refusal of violence, the combination of conflict with cooperation, the gradual and partial resolution of disputes, etc. Due to the art of management, conflicts from a factor of undermining the system turn into a factor of its stabilization. Namely, the one who knows how to cope with conflicts by recognizing and regulating them takes control of the rhythm of history, and whoever misses such an opportunity gets this rhythm into his opponents. Today, the conflict is perceived as the norm of everyday life; therefore, modern politicians need to learn how to manage conflicts without bringing them to a social explosion.

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