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Foreign Policies of the CIS States

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The end of the 20th century is marked by the USSR's dissolution. Nevertheless, the USSR was partially replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which was officially established by the signatures of the heads of Byelorussia, Russia and Ukraine in Belavezha Forest in Belorussia in 1991. Many other former USSR countries joined the CIS later and created the space integrated by many other organisations. The most important of them, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), is the second most integrated organisation in the world (after the EU). Another, known as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), was established on the foundation of the Tashkent Treaty in 1992 and it presents other fields of integration focusing on collective defence and security cooperation. The CIS integration presents a general framework for other international organisations and common treaties in the post-Soviet space.

The majority of this book's authors come from the CIS Network University (one of the academic projects of the CIS states). The author collective, led by D. Degterev and K. Kurylev, describes the integration process in the post-Soviet space after the collapse of the USSR in the first part of the book. The authors describe the successful integration process which started among the majority of the post-Soviet countries in the beginning of the 1990s. Several integration projects are summarised at the beginning of the book. They focus on many fields like economic cooperation, trade cooperation, defence and security cooperation, cultural and educational cooperation, or transportation and industrial cooperation. Some CIS states shift several integration steps by using the Soviet unification platform from previous era. Hence, some of them could have quickly switched some ordinary integration steps and directly created the union. The

decision-making process as well as the CIS governing bodies are well described at the beginning of the book, too.

The authors dedicated the rest of the book's chapters to every single CIS country. Every chapter describes one of the CIS members and is divided into four parts. The first one focuses on the default country's geopolitical and historical conditions and the country's foreign policy potential. The second one consists of a description of the country's foreign policy framework and policymaking bodies. The third part consists of the general foreign policy priorities and the approach (including relations with the main foreign partners and its international organisation's membership). The last part focuses on the economic and foreign economic policy of the examined country. The authors do not focus only on the internal CIS relations, they also research the relations of the CIS members with the external great powers like the USA or China. The foreign policymaking process is described in detail for the case of every CIS member. The emphasis is put on the economic and security context of their foreign policy. These relations and a wider foreign policy context of every CIS member together present the general CIS foreign policy framework.

It is necessary to note that some CIS integrating processes and their resulting organisations like the EAEU and the CSTO have created a counterbalance of the EU and NATO in the northern hemisphere. This counterbalance includes the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which is mentioned in the book as well. Some regional problems are mentioned in the book despite the fact that it mostly focuses on the successful integration. However, these complications like the terrorism threat or fear of the international enforcement of competitive actors like NATO led by the USA obviously enforce the common actions and deeper integration. For instance, such cases of the common actions in the field of security and defence cooperation have led to the creation of the Collective Rapid Reaction Force and the Collective Rapid Deployment Force with integrated headquarters in Bishkek in Tajikistan.

The book in general very clearly presents the integration process of the post-Soviet countries in the larger historical, economic and security contexts. The successful integration is described in chronological order of the developed process of the creation of the foreign policies of the CIS members. The end of the book consists of many appendixes including lists of key international agreements and the treaties between the described countries and their partners. Finally, it presents a large summary of the foreign policies and integration process of the CIS states at the end of 20th century and beginning of the 21st century. This book does not use any specific theory of international relations hence this summary could present an independent and valuable source of information for other researchers and scientists.