

The Diplomatic Relations of the Soviet Union during Cold War

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Abstract. This paper focus on the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union during Cold War, and using Prague Spring which is a reform movement devoted to political democratization and market liberalization of Czechoslovakia as a insertion point to reveal the fundamental logic of the Soviet Union's government's foreign policies. With her study, the author's endeavor is to ascertain the deepest reasons that influence the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union after World War II. With the previous research, the author intends to outline the framework of the changing of the USSR's foreign polices due to the country under distinct political leaders. The emphasis of this study lies in use three approaches(Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism) to analyze the Soviet Union's foreign policies. Method of literature review is applied in this research. Detailed information has been acquired by the author about the USSR's diplomatic policies, and the research has recorded valuable information about the diplomatic histories of Soviet Union. From the study, the author came to realize that ideologies of the USSR was changing over time, and it also strongly influenced by the internal affairs. This research paper demonstrates that the diplomatic policies of the USSR was changing from Neo-realism to Neo-liberalism due to the democratization and liberalization of Soviet Union's interiors. Ideologically, the leadership position of socialism was abolished and politically the legal status of the ruling party of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was abolished and the one-party system was replaced with a muti-party system. Economically, he abolished the economic structure with state ownership as the major part of the Soviet Union's economy. This reform movement shows the Neo-liberalism replaced the main position of Neo-realism in ideology of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: Neo-liberalism, Neo-realism, Soviet Union, Cold War.

1. Introduction

Prague Spring is a reform movement that began in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968. Czechoslovakia itself has a relatively developed economy. After World War II, it completed two five-year plans and achieved further economic development. However, since the mid-1950s, a highly centralized economic management system has increasingly hindered the development of productive forces. In 1967, Czechoslovakia's national economy deteriorated, prices rose in the first quarter, wholesale prices of daily necessities rose by 20%, and retail prices rose sharply, causing inflation. Plus, there were many complaints about the decline in foreign trade exports, low labor productivity and poor living standards for workers. The voices of the people for reform have been increasing.

In January 1968, the reformist leader Alexander Dubcek became the first Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. He initiated a series of political liberalization reforms, including abolishing media censorship, initiating freedom of speech and association, and decentralizing power. Facing with these series of political liberalization reforms, the Soviet Union was deeply disturbed, and finally invaded Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968, ending the political reform of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet Union, was formed out of the ashes of the Russia Revolution and the Civil War of Russia was ensued in 1917-1922. The Red Army, backed by the Bolshevik government, defeated the White Army, a large group of weak allies that included monarchs, capitalists, and supporters of other forms of socialist government. During the period known as the Red Terror, the Bolshevik secret police was known as the Cheka campaigned for mass executions of supporters of the tsarist regime and the Russian elites. And a treaty between Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Transcaucasia (now Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. The

newly formed Communist Party, led by Marxist revolutionary Vladimir Lenin, took control of the government. In its heyday, the USSR became 15 socialist republics within the USSR, a federal socialist country that existed from 1922 to 1991 and was governed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which formed by 15 member republics with equal rights in accordance with the principle of voluntary association. It is the first Communist country in the world and one of the superpower during the Cold War period [1].

The Soviet Union had a strong desire to control other countries who belong to communist camp. And as a result, such acts-interfering the internal affairs of other countries-were very common in the diplomatic history of the Soviet Union, especially during Cold War. To find what factors cause the aggressive foreign policy of Soviet Union is the motif of this article. In the following discussion, this article will try to analyze the diplomatic relations of the Soviet Union through the two mainstream international relations theories, Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism so as to clarify the diplomatic logic of the Soviet Union during the cold war and try to reach the deepest reasons of its foreign policies. In this article, the author introduces and analyzes the evolution of the Soviet Union's foreign in chronological order and classifying by the dominating period of main political leaders (Joseph Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev) in order to present the changes in the foreign policies of the Soviet Union (USSR), and show the interdependence between the internal affairs and the diplomacy of the Soviet Union more intuitively.

2. Literature Review

This section introduces the definitions of Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism, and discusses the theoretical viewpoints of these two theories, meanwhile introduce and analyze the significant diplomatic events in USSR's diplomatic history by using these two theories.

2.1 Neo-realism

Neo-realism or structural realism is a theory of international relations that emphasizes the role of power politics in international relations, views competition and conflict as enduring characteristics, and views the possibilities of cooperation as limited. The anarchy of the international system means that the states cannot be certain of the intentions and security of other states, which encourages the state to engage in power politics. To apply the Neo-realism to practice of the international relations of the Soviet Union, invade Czechoslovakia is a suitable example which can emphasize Neo-realism was popular in the diplomatic policies of the Soviet Union.

2.2 Neo-liberalism

In the study of international relations, Neo-liberalism refers to a school that holds that a state is primarily concerned with, or should be concerned with, its absolute interests to other states. To apply this theory to practice of the international relations of the Soviet Union, one example is: the USSR used to give China technical and economic supports in 1950s-1960s.

3. The changing of Soviet Union's diplomatic policies after World War II

At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union's diplomacy was low-profile. The reason was simple: diplomacy was often determined by the needs of internal affairs. After the war, the Soviet Union obliged to get recovery from heavy war damages, and the structure of its armed forces was relatively concise, with primary task to restore the economy. In this period, the Soviet Union basically respected the Yalta system and did not intervene much in domestic affairs of another countries which did not belong to the socialist camp. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union provided a large amount of economic and technical assistance to countries belonging to the socialist camp. On the one hand, these assistance was to compete with the Marshall Plan of the United States which basically belong to Neo-realism

philosophy, but it also had some figures of Neo-liberalism. This section recommend the general line of foreign affairs in chronological order and categorizing these periods by various politicians.

3.1. The Soviet Union's diplomatic policies in Khrushchev's period

After Stalin passed away, Khrushchev became the first Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and during his administration, there were two main factors that had a great impact on the Soviet Union's diplomacy. One was the criticism of Stalin's cult of personality, and the other was the restoration of economic power. In this period, the Soviet Union eliminated some mistakes in its foreign policy with the socialist countries, for example, easing the contradictions with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Also, the Soviet Union and Western countries put forward a foreign policy of peaceful coexistence. Even in the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviet Union first showed weakness in front of the United States.

3.2 The Soviet Union's diplomatic policies in Brezhnev's period

In the Brezhnev period, the Soviet Union reinterpreted Khrushchev's thought of peaceful coexistence as a "means of class conflict" in its foreign policies, and expanded the national interests of the Soviet Union indefinitely, not concerning whether the expansion is legitimate or not. The Soviet Union's foreign policy has become more radical and aggressive due to the Soviet Union's economy has been developed and its military strength has been greatly improved in this period. On the other side of the globe, western countries were facing an economic crisis, and the Soviet Union has the upper hand in the struggle with the United States. The Prague Spring happened in this background. In the relations with the socialist countries, Brezhnev's policy was even tougher. The Soviet Union strictly controlled the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, invaded Czechoslovakia, and moved from confrontation to break with China. During this period, the hegemonism of the Soviet Union was completely formed and reached its peak[2].

3.3 The Soviet Union's diplomatic policies in Gorbachev's period

After Gorbachev came to power, the internal affairs of the Soviet Union gradually moved toward democracy, and its foreign policy also moved from realism to liberalism. During his era, relations between the Soviet Union and the United States gradually shifted from confrontation to cooperation. The Soviet Union abandoned its alliances with the Eastern European countries, cut diplomatic ties with those Eastern European socialist countries centered on the Soviet Union, and began switching to more egalitarian relationships[3].

4.USSR's international relationships during Cold War

The fundamental point of departure of a country's foreign policies are the protection of national interests. Therefore, foreign policy and domestic policy are closely related. Diplomacy can be said to be the maintenance and expansion of the country's political and economic policies, the so-called "domestic diplomacy." A look at the history of changes in the Soviet Union's foreign policy after the war shows that several major foreign policy adjustments were closely related to changes in domestic politics. The foreign policy and behavior of the USSR in a given period can be explained from domestic politics. Compared with international factors, domestic politics at one time had a great influence on changes in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

4.1 The relationship between Soviet Union and the United States and other western countries

After World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States maintained a relatively harmonious relationship. The two countries have signed many treaties and agreements on political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural issues. The US government officially recognized the principle of peaceful coexistence for the first time in relations with the Soviet Union. The two countries declare

that they adhere to the principle of non-use or threat of force based on respect for sovereignty, equality, non-interference in mutual internal affairs and mutual benefit[4].

“The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe inspiring accountability to the future[4].” This is the famous speech: Churchill’s The Sinews of Peace that gave by UK’s former president, Winston Churchill. That was a significant event, indicating the beginning of Cold War. During this period, the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States have always been big contenders, up and down, for world leadership. And the relations between the Soviet Union and Western Union were also shaped by a complex interplay of ideological, political and economic factors, which over the years turned from careful cooperation to often fierce competition for superpowers. The apparent differences in the political systems of the two countries often hampered understanding of key policy issues and led to the brink of war.

4.2 The relationship between Soviet Union and China

The relationship between China and the former Soviet Union was the most important diplomatic relationship that influenced China's political and economic development and global strategy in the 1950s and 1960s. According to the chronological order, the relationship between these two countries can be divided into seven stages: forming an alliance, developing in an all-round way, gradually increasing differences, rapidly deteriorating, openly falling into war, completely breaking up and fierce confrontation. The author believes that the differences and contradictions in ideology, national interests and foreign strategic principles are the three main reasons for the deterioration of the relation between China and the Soviet Union[6].

In 1949, Chairman Mao visited the Soviet Union and signed the Treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance between China and the Soviet Union, formally beginning the alliance between China and the Soviet Union. With China's intervention during the Korean War, the alliance between the two countries was consolidated and strengthened. The "honeymoon period" began between China and the Soviet Union. However, just as the cooperation between China and the Soviet Union became deeper and broader, the relationship between China and the Soviet Union suddenly deteriorated. The rupture of relations between China and the Soviet Union in the 1960s was a major split in the socialist camp, and it also had a tremendous impact on the entire international communist movement[7].

4.3 The relationship between Soviet Union and east European countries

During the cold war, the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries went through a process from full alliance to separation. The reasons are multifaceted and complex. National democracy and internationalism are two representative perspectives to analyze the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries[8]. The Russia-Ukraine war is another interpretation of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, likewise the USSR, Russia similar attribute East Europe as its zone of influence. Among the former USSR nations, Ukraine was the second most powerful nation after Russia. But there is a non-negligible point is: Russia has dominant position in former USSR nations[9]. This crisis also can be seen as one of the “residuals” after the Cold War. And during that the Cold War, the east European countries are the front lines due to the USSR was the less strong side of two “superpowers”[10].

5. Conclusion

After World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States began to stand for two different camps, one is communism camp, another stand for the free world, and at that time, the United States and the Soviet Union were both "superpowers" in the world. In order to compete for world hegemony, the two countries and their allies waged a struggle for decades. During this period, although differences and conflicts were serious, both sides tried their best to avoid the outbreak of a large-scale war (World War III) in the world. Their confrontation was usually carried out through local proxy war, science

and technology and arms race, space race, diplomatic competition and other "cold" ways, that is, "mutual containment and non use of force". Therefore, it was called the "cold war".

This period of time play a significant role in the future global affairs. And back to the former USSR, two different theories appear in this nation, and the dissolution of the USSR shows the Neo-liberalism won the Neo-realism inside the USSR. Furthermore, recently, the sights of the whole world put on the east Europe again due to the Russia-Ukraine Crisis, The relationship between east Europe and Russia become more and more complex.

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