Analysis of the Causes of the Split of the Commonwealth of Independent States

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Abstract. In recent years, the influence of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS) international organization has declined, and the role of its internal summits has become less and less. In fact, there is a gradual division within the CIS. This paper deduces the reasons for the CIS' division by studying and analyzing the problems of race, religion, political ideas, and economic problems caused by external influences. Russia cannot lead regional development, and there are many contradictions between countries. Through this article, you can understand the historical problems of Russia and Ukraine and the reasons for the problem of economic stagnation that existed during the Soviet period.

Keywords: History, Religion, Politics, Economy, Society.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

Now the Russian-Ukrainian war is raging. Since the first decade of the 21th century, Russian-Ukrainian relations have deteriorated sharply. From the events in Crimea in 2014 to Russia's division of two eastern provinces, i.e., Donetsk and Luhansk, in 2022, Russia has continued to disintegrate Ukraine. As CIS countries, they not only did not receive the mediation of the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS), but intensified and became the center of contradictions. In recent years, relations among the CIS countries had deteriorated dramatically, and it was necessary to understand the reasons behind them, an international organization that had gradually been forgotten by history.

In 1991, the Eastern Europe experienced drastic changes and the Soviet Union collapsed. The independent former republics except the three Baltic countries and Georgia established the Commonwealth of Independent States, referred to as the CIS. The main organs of the CIS are the CIS Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, the Transnational Parliamentary Assembly, the Coordination and Consultative Committee, etc. The CIS Summit is the highest consultative body of the CIS and refers to the meetings of the CIS Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government, respectively, or a joint meeting of both [1]. The CIS headquarters is located in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, and the working language is Russian.

1.2. Research content

This article focuses on the problem of low identity within the CIS, from politics to religion, as well as economic problems caused by various influences within Russia, as well as the problem of nationalism. Then, some suggestions will be given to solve the internal problems in the CIS.

2. Low identity: politics, military, religion

Studying the reasons of the separation of the CIS can shed light on the long-standing contradictions that existed between Russia and Ukraine after the division of Kievan Rus in the 11th century, as well as the religious, military, and conceptual conflicts between Russia and surrounding countries after the perish of the Eastern Roman Empire. In addition, there are the internal and external economic problems and financial crises faced by Russia during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the first few years, the CIS also had a large influence, and the relations between the member states were relatively close, and even had their own currency (1993). However, since 2000, the CIS has rarely appeared in the news, the real role of the CIS summit has become less and less, and relations among member States have gradually broken up for the following reasons [1].

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, due to Gorbachev's erroneous policy of political reform, many member states had an independent tendency and gradually distanced themselves from Russia's local dominance, and after the 8.19 incident. The August 19 incident, also known as the "Soviet coup" and "August coup", refers to a coup d'état that took place in the Soviet Union from August 19 to August 21, 1991. The cause was that the conservatives in the central government of the Soviet Union, led by Gennady Ivanovich Yanaev, wanted to abolish Soviet President Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev and his reforms and save the Soviet Union, which was about to collapse and collapse. The leaders of the coup were hardline members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and conservatives such as Marshal Dmitry Mofeevich Yazov, Minister of Defense of the USSR, and KGB leader Vladimir Alexandrovich Kryuchkov. They recognized that Gorbachev's reform program was too excessive and that the New Union Pact, which he was conferring, was too decentralized to the republics, while Russian President Boris Nikolaevich Yeltsin refused to obey the orders of the Emergency Committee and called for a political strike to protest the actions of Gennady Yanaev and others. Ukraine's independence tendency intensified, firmly rejecting an alliance with a centrally managed nature [2]. Ukraine is the second largest member of the former Soviet Union, the most important agricultural and industrial base of the Soviet Union, with a population of 53 million. Its GDP accounted for 25% of the Soviet Union, grain production 22%, pig iron 50%, and coal mine production 33% [2]. Ukraine had a significant influence on the entire Soviet Union, but in 1991, 31 million Ukrainians voted for independence [2]. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had military contradictions with Ukraine. Ukraine advocates the creation of its own independent army, but Russia insists on unifying the armed forces of the former Soviet Union. On January 31, 1992, Ukraine adopted a resolution to establish an independent armed force of 300,000 people, so the question of the ownership of the former Soviet troops stationed in Ukraine caused the tendency of armed conflict between the two countries to intensify [3]. Russia and Ukraine had serious territorial problems on the Crimean Peninsula, and in the 15th-18th centuries, Crimea was under the rule of the Turkish Khanate, and at that time relations between Russia and Turkey were very bad, and in 1783, Russia forcibly annexed the peninsula from defeated Turkey, and Crimea has always had problems of territorial and ethnic conflicts [3].

There is also a political ideological gap between Russia and Ukraine. Russia is nominally a semi-presidential republic, but in fact it is essentially a dictatorship. Putin has been in power for 22 years. Before 2020, the Russian constitution stipulated that the president could not be re-elected for more than two terms, but Putin still served the presidency and amended the constitution so that the president could be re-elected indefinitely [1]. The same is true of Belarus, where President Alexander Lukashenko has been re-elected for 28 years since 1994. He prevented Belarus's democratic transition from Eastern European countries in the mid-1990s. Instead, Ukraine has a semi-presidential republic, adopting political principles that favor the separation of powers in favor of the West, and opening up a multi-party system. This has made Ukraine's relations with EU countries closer and closer [1]. Ukraine has applied for membership several times and obtained the status of a candidate country for the European Union in March 2021, while Ukraine, out of fear of the powerful country Russia and the shadow of Soviet rule, applied to join NATO, which has received strong support from the United States and other countries, which is one of the reasons for the intensification of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict [1].

The internal contradictions in the CIS are not limited to the Ukrainian issue. The five Central Asian countries differ from Transcaucasia and other CIS member states in religious beliefs and ideologies. More than 50% of the inhabitants of Russia believe in the Orthodox Church, about 80% of the residents of Belarus believe in the Orthodox Church, 67% of the residents of Ukraine believe in the Orthodox Church, and almost all the residents of the five Central Asian countries believe in Islam,

these two sects have faced severe relations since the Eastern Roman Empire was destroyed by the Ottoman Empire, and Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire have fought a total of 12 wars[1]. Before World War I, Transcaucasia belonged to the Ottoman Empire, and ideological barriers were a formidable obstacle to cooperation within the CIS.

3. Russia's own economic issues

Russia's own economic problems also prevent it from playing a leading role in regional development in the CIS. In 1992, when the Russian economy deteriorated across the board, the then government wanted to use "shock therapy", which is a Conservative economic theory in the West, to forcibly transition to the market economy in a short period of time (forcibly and drastically reduce consumer demand and investment demand in a short period of time, so that the total supply and demand of society can reach an artificial balance), and this practice has absolute drawbacks[4]. At the time of "shock therapy", Russia was in a time of widespread anarchism and political instability, and many companies still occupied a monopoly position, and the adoption of this policy would increase inflation [1]. In 1993, Russia's total economic output fell by another 55% from the original level, the total consumption of all goods fell by about 80%, and the total unemployment rate reached 32%, which also led to the aggravation of social contradictions and the decline of national happiness, which led to domestic turmoil in Russia [5]. It can be seen that the policy of "shock therapy" to stimulate economic recovery and transformation in a short period of time was largely unfeasible for the economic situation in Russia at that time [5]. The main cause of economic problems was due to the long-term arms race with the United States, the economic situation of the Soviet Union member countries was very bad, and the GDP in 1990 was only 771 billion US dollars [1]. Throughout the Cold War, the gap between the economic strength of the Soviet Union and the United States has been very large, and in 1983, the Soviet economy reached a peak of 993.05 billion US dollars, and the US economy reached 3.66 times that of the Soviet Union. At its peak, in 1975, it was only 65 percent of the United States. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's economy, the backbone of the CIS, has been sluggish, and the wrong privatization reforms and shock therapy of the nineties led to a decline of about 63% between 1991 and 1999[1]. Although the Russian economy recovered after 2000, it returned to 1999 levels after the Crimean conflict was imposed by Western sanctions. The other members of the CIS are also in poor shape, and Russia is no longer able to play a leading role in regional development. Compared to German investment in southern Europe, Russia cannot afford to financially assist other CIS countries.

4. European and American countries have imposed sanctions on Russia

Under Western sanctions, Russia is in full internal crisis. On March 8, 2022, the Coca-Cola Company and McDonald's announced that they would cease operations in Russia [1]. PepsiCo also announced its withdrawal from Russia, abandoning its largest markets outside the United States and Mexico. British and French financial companies have also withdrawn from Russia. The abrupt cessation of gold trade diplomacy led to a sharp depreciation of the Russian ruble and a serious increase in economic difficulties. On March 11, the ruble reached 120.38 against the dollar [1]. The anti-war ideology of the Russian population intensifies. In fact, before this conflict, Russia was under severe US sanctions. In June 2000, the United States announced that it would no longer implement the 1993 Russian-American Agreement on Highly Enriched Uranium with Russia and freeze all Russian government assets, which amounted to forcing Russia to pay liquidated damages [6]. There are also many sanctions against human rights, mainly for financial and political repression of Russia. In November 2003, the United States announced that it would stop its economic assistance to Russia and invest heavily in supporting the reactionary forces in Russia [6]. In addition, the United States has given Kyrgyzstan a large amount of economic assistance for its economy, democratic reforms, and law protection operations [1]. The United States also used the pretext of promoting "democratic

transformation" to win over the reactionary forces in the Central Asian countries and launched "color revolutions" in an attempt to overthrow the existing regime, but instead brought reform to these countries, it led to chaos in social order [7]. The U.S. pull-in to the CIS region has worsened the situation in the CIS. Russia has also been subjected to no less than 2,700 economic, trade, scientific and technological sanctions, and has languished [1].

5. The rise of Great Slavic nationalism within Russia

The rise of Greater Slavism in Russia is also a major reason for the gradual pro-Western movement of the CIS countries. Russia wants to restore as much as possible the territory of the Soviet Union, so it has installed pro-Russian forces in many former Soviet countries, and these forces are a kind of self-division that Russia has asked for. These forces account for between 1% and 18% of the total population of their countries, such as Donetsk in Ukraine and South Ossetia in Georgia [1]. Ukraine and Georgia have clearly put forward the diplomatic policy of "joining NATO," have lost interest in CIS affairs, and are increasingly engaged in centrifugal forces with CIS [1]. In April 2005, the GUAM Summit (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) also adopted a resolution to strengthen the partnership with NATO [8]. The reason why these countries want to join NATO is nothing more than to fight against separatist forces.

6. Suggestion

If Russia wants to regain leadership in the CIS region, it is first necessary to restore the economy, and the following are recommended measures that can restore the Russian economy. First, strict conditions for granting loans, supervision of the amount of money in circulation, establishment of a veritable central bank [4]. Second, vigorously transform the agricultural sector into one of the important sources of economic growth, implement a series of large-scale state programs in the oil and gas sector and transport infrastructure, such as Putin's Basic Guidelines for Long-Term Social and Economic Development of Russia [9]. Third, stabilize wholesale and retail prices and make economic markets more open in the world, thereby consolidating the exchange rate of national currencies [4]. Fourth, rapidly realize the privatization policy, so as to break the state's monopoly on the ownership of real estate and production equipment, form a new pattern of coexistence and diversified operation of various economic components of the private, individual, collective, joint venture, joint-stock system and state-owned economy, and lay the foundation for a pluralistic market economy [10]. The above is the recommendation given in this article for Russia's economic recovery. After Russia's economy enters a trend of steady development, it will resume its role in leading regional economic development in the CIS, and it will gradually get rid of sanctions imposed by European and American countries. In addition, as the country becomes richer, social contradictions will decrease, the CIS division will gradually disappear, and Great Slavic nationalism will be able to achieve a qualitative unity of regional concepts.

7. Conclusion

This article lists four major reasons for the internal division of the CIS. First, there are differences in the internal political system and religious beliefs of the CIS. Russia and Belarus are dictatorships, while Ukraine is a pro-Western semi-presidential republic. Eastern Europe mainly believes in Orthodox Christianity, while in the Caucasus, due to the influence of the Ottoman Empire, local Islam is more prevalent, so the CIS countries have a religious and ideological estrangement. Second, the impropriety of using shock therapy after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to economic stagnation. Third, due to the sanctions of European and American countries, Russia's economy has further declined, unable to play a leading role in regional development, so that the economic development of the CIS countries has shown a clear competitive situation, and the trade volume within the CIS has been declining, such as the depreciation of the ruble. Fourth, the Great Slavic nationalism in Rus

contradicted many countries, a kind of self-division of the CIS caused by Russia. The downside of this article is that some of these political resolutions are not explained in detail, and it will focus on the various sanctions adopted by Russia in recent years and its own economic recovery policies.

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