

# Political Analysis

## A Quantitative Analysis of Geopolitical Pluralism in the Post-Soviet Space<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*Twenty-five years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR) which led to the disruption of the regional check-and-balance system aimed at resolving national issues and political and socioeconomic contradictions. It also resulted in a number of armed conflicts, including those in the Chechen Republic, Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Tajikistan, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and later in the east of Ukraine.*

*Immediately following the collapse of the USSR, key international actors paid special attention to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region while trying to secure their own interests. This led to the further stratification of the CIS region. A "geopolitical pluralism" started to form there, marked by the fragmentation of nation-state sovereignty over the territory.*

*The concept and policy of "geopolitical pluralism" as developed by Zbigniew Brzezinski meets the interests of the United States by making the CIS region more manageable while at the same time making it more difficult for Russia to implement its own strategic tasks there. The key goal of Russia is the creation of an integrated economic and political union able to take a rightful place in the world. Only the development of deep and comprehensive integration with the CIS states can ensure the competitiveness of Russia's position in the world as well as the positions of its partners in the former Soviet space.*

*The purpose of this article is to assess the level of geopolitical pluralism in the CIS space taking account of the membership of the CIS countries in international organizations and their voting on United Nations General Assembly resolutions. The study is based on the interconnection of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis of international relations and world politics.*

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<sup>1</sup> The editorial board received the article in June 2017.

*During the quarter century following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a regional system of international relations has formed in its place. Despite the fact that the CIS is a kind of linking element which unites most of the former Soviet republics, a certain competition between the new states has become the characteristic feature of political relations in the region.*

*The policy of the West (primarily the United States) became a branched and diversified strategy aimed at the phased development, transformation and fragmentation of the region. The diversity of foreign policy priorities among the CIS states and the presence of many actors in the region makes mutual understanding and good-neighbourliness between these countries difficult to achieve. To the contrary, this diversity seriously complicates and slows the development of deep and comprehensive integration, making it more unstable and ineffective.*

**Key words:** the CIS; Russia; the United States; foreign policy; geopolitical pluralism; multivector policy; Eurasian space; international organizations; voting; applied analysis

For citation: Kurylev K., Degtrev D., Smolik N., Stanis D. (2018) A Quantitative Analysis of Geopolitical Pluralism in the Post-Soviet Space. *International Organisations Research Journal*, vol. 13, no 1, pp. 134–156. (In Russian and English). DOI: 10.17323/1996-7845-2018-01-08

On the geopolitical map of Eurasia, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) occupies a special place: it finds itself on the junction of civilizations and forms a bridge between Europe, Asia and the Middle East. It is a unique cross-border space where the values of many peoples of the world have become diffused over centuries. It is an arena of interaction (both of attraction and repulsion) for different civilizations and cultures; it is a place of ongoing conflict of value orientations. The geopolitical, cultural, civilizational and social characteristics of this territory will certainly affect general trends of world order in the 21st century. For Russia – the core of the post-Soviet space – these characteristics naturally assume a certain existential significance [Kurylev, Savicheva, 2013, p. 5].

Over the past quarter century, very complex and dynamic processes characterized by parallel phenomena have unfolded in the CIS region. On the one hand, centripetal tendencies have conditioned the development of integration in the Commonwealth space. On the other, these tendencies are also centrifugal and have encouraged the development of disintegrative processes [Kurylev, 2010, p. 22]. Almost immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union the CIS region was scrutinized by key international actors seeking to secure their own interests there. Without question, this led to the beginning of a process of stratification in the CIS region. There has formed a geopolitical pluralism characterized by the fragmentation of nation-state sovereignty.

In 1994 Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed the concept of “geopolitical pluralism.” In his book, *The Premature Partnership*, he wrote that “the main goal of a realistic and long-term big strategy should be the affirmation of geopolitical pluralism within the former Soviet Union. ... The assertion of geopolitical pluralism would prevent the temptation to re-build the empire, with its pernicious consequences for the prospects of democracy in Russia. In *not being an empire, Russia stands a chance of becoming, like France and Britain or earlier post-Ottoman Turkey, a normal state*” [Brzezinski, 1994, p. 58].

Such a policy makes it difficult for Russia to assert its own national interests in the CIS region. A.N. Bykov wrote that “the United States is trying to prevent any restoration of unity of the CIS states with Russia by any means” [Bykov, 2012, p. 9]. Russia’s key goal within the CIS is to create an economically integrated and politically unified group of states that would be competitive on the global stage. However, the events in Ukraine in 2013–2014 convincingly illustrate a desire to accomplish a key geostrategic, political and economic, as well as military task – the elimination of Russia as a strengthened and independent player in the new world order [Kurylev, 2014, p. 452].

The tables and statistical data presented in this article are based on the Foreign Policy of the CIS Countries database, available at the PFUR Expert Portal on International Relations,<sup>2</sup> developed over the course of a number of years.

There is no doubt that the most important feature of the modern world is the dynamic change in economic, political and social systems. In this context, the basic trend reflecting qualitative changes in the process of development is that of integration. Participation in various integration processes is undoubtedly relevant for Russia given its role both in global affairs and in the post-Soviet space. Effective integration policy will definitely help to create a favourable external environment – an essential factor for sustainable domestic political development [Pivovar, Gushchin, 2013, pp. 11–12].

The foreign policy stance of any country is determined by its membership in various international organizations, which necessitates a unified foreign policy course on a number of issues.

At present, CIS countries are members of the following international organizations (Tables 1 and 2).

*Table 1. Membership in International Organizations (Defense, Security, Politics)<sup>3</sup>*

Organization Country	CSTO	SCO	CICA	GUAM	OSCE	CE	NATO	EU	NAM
Republic of Azerbaijan	FM	DP	M	M	M	M	PC	ENP	M
Republic of Armenia	M	DP			M	M	PC	ENP	O
Republic of Belarus	M	O	O		M	PP	PC	ENP	M
Republic of Kazakhstan	M	M	M		M	PP	PC	PCA	O
Kyrgyz Republic	M	M	M		M	PP	PC		O
Republic of Moldova				M	M	M	PC	AA	
Russian Federation	M	M	M		M	M	PC	PCA	

<sup>2</sup> PFUR Expert Portal on International Relations. Available at: <http://ir.rudn.ru/>

<sup>3</sup> CSTO – the Collective Security Treaty Organization; SCO – the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; NATO – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; OSCE – the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; CE – the Council of Europe; CICA – the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia; GUAM – the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development; EU – the European Union; NAM – the Non-Aligned Movement. M – member; FM – former member; ENP – member of the European Neighborhood Policy programme; O – observer; DP – dialogue partner; PP – partnership programmes being implemented; AA – Association Agreement signed; PC – partner country; PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed.

Organization Country	CSTO	SCO	CICA	GUAM	OSCE	CE	NATO	EU	NAM
Republic of Tajikistan	M	M	M		M	PP	PC		O
Turkmenistan					M	PP	PC		M
Republic of Uzbekistan	FM	M	M	FM	M	PP	PC		M
Ukraine			O	M	M	M	PC	AA	FM

Source: PFUR Expert Portal on International Relations. Available at: <http://ir.rudn.ru><sup>4</sup>

Table 2. Membership in International Organizations (Economy, Religion, Culture)<sup>5</sup>

Sphere Organization Country	Economy									Religion, Culture		
	EAEU	EDB	EBRD	ADB	AIIB	IDB	WTO	ECO	BSEC	OIC	TC	OIF
Republic of Azerbaijan			M	M	M	M	O	M	M	M	M	
Republic of Armenia	M	M	M	M			M		M			M
Republic of Belarus	M	M	M				O					
Republic of Kazakhstan	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		M	M	
Kyrgyz Republic	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M		M	M	
Republic of Moldova			M				M		M			M
Russian Federation	M	M	M		M		M		M	O		
Republic of Tajikistan		M	M	M	M	M	M	M		M		
Turkmenistan			M	M		M		M		M		
Republic of Uzbekistan			M	M	M	M	O	M		M		
Ukraine			M				M		M			O

Source: PFUR Expert Portal on International Relations. Available at: <http://ir.rudn.ru><sup>6</sup>

Analysis of the data presented in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 demonstrates that a regional sub-system of international relations has been formed on the territory of the former USSR.

<sup>4</sup> All data is valid as of 1 January 2017.

<sup>5</sup> EAEU – the Eurasian Economic Union; EDB – the Eurasian Development Bank; EBRD – the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development; ADB – the Asian Development Bank; AIIB – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; IDB – the Islamic Development Bank; WTO – the World Trade Organization; ECO – the Economic Cooperation Organization; BSEC – the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; OIC – the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; TC – the Turkic Council (the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States); OIF – the International Organisation of La Francophonie. M – member; FM – former member; ENP – member of the European Neighborhood Policy programme; O – observer; DP – dialogue partner; PP – partnership programmes being implemented; AA – Association Agreement signed; PC – partner country; PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed.

<sup>6</sup> All data is valid as of 1 January 2017.

This is indicated by a number of initiatives of the states in the region aimed at creating multilateral institutions within the framework of military-political and economic integration. Among them are the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) [Kurylev, Naryshkin, Ozinkovskaya, Rakhimov, 2016, pp. 75–86]. To this list of “Russia-oriented” organizations, a number of “anti-Russia” ones should also be added, such as the *Organization for Democracy and Economic Development* (GUAM) [Pivovar, Gushchin, 2013, pp. 12–13]. An important initiative in the field of strengthening security and cooperation was the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) initiated in 1992 by the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N. A. Nazarbayev.

As can be seen from Table 1.1, the membership of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan in the CSTO, and of Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova in the GUAM is mutually exclusive. Turkmenistan adheres to the ideology of nonalignment. As for Uzbekistan, during the presidency of I. A. Karimov it aimed at developing relations in the field of defense and security on a bilateral basis, and if possible, to maneuver. This explains its withdrawal from the Collective Security Treaty (CST) in 1999, its ascension to the CSTO in 2006 and its withdrawal in 2012. In other words, when it comes to ensuring regional security in the Eurasian space, two opposite paradigms have emerged: “with Moscow” and “without Moscow.”

It is interesting to analyze the data on the participation of CIS countries in international organizations in the field of religion and culture.

Table 1.2 shows that Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have joined the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Islamic Development Bank, while Russia has become an observer in this organization. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also members of the Turkic Council (the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States). Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan did not join the Council, although at the fourth summit of the Council in Bodrum in 2014 it was announced that Turkmenistan would join this structure.

Armenia (2008) and Moldova (1996) became full members of the International Organisation of La Francophonie, while Ukraine (2008) became an observer. The main criterion for joining this organization is not the proportion of the population of a given state that speaks French but rather that state’s established cultural ties with France. As for Armenia, the important factors that played in its favour were the existence of a large Armenian expat community in France, as well as a number of historical factors – ties between the two countries go back to the period of the Crusades when close contacts between the Franks and the Cilician Armenian state were formed.

Special attention should be paid to the development of ties between CIS countries and regional economic organizations. As can be seen from Table 1.2, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the most active in terms of developing regional economic integration. They symmetrically participate in the same regional integration associations: the EAEU, EDB, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Islamic De-

velopment Bank (IDB) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). This testifies to their coordinated actions and close foreign policy ties. No less active is Tajikistan, which participates in all of these organizations except the EAEU.

It is interesting to examine the participation of Armenia and Azerbaijan in various forms of regional economic integration. When examining these states, attention is usually paid to their mutual response, that is, to the fact that a foreign policy initiative by one of them leads to a symmetrical foreign policy response by the other. The question to consider is whether this also occurs in relation to regional economic integration. Armenia is a member of the EAEU, EDB, EBRD, ADB and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), while Azerbaijan is a member of the EBRD, ADB, AIIB, IDB, ECO and BSEC. They are thus members of the same three organizations. When it comes to Eurasian projects (EAEU, EDB) Azerbaijan does not participate.

Widely represented in regional organizations is Turkmenistan, which is the only former Soviet republic to declare neutrality as enshrined in the United Nations General Assembly resolution. It participates in the EBRD, ADB, IDB and ECO.

The least active participant in regional economic integration are the three states in the western part of the CIS (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine).

The Republic of Belarus is represented in the following three structures: EAEU, EDB and EBRD. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participate in the EBRD and BSEC.

Finally, Russia is a member of the EAEU, EDB, EBRD, AIIB and BSEC.

As we can see, the countries participating in regional economic integration together with Russia actively develop other directions for integration. The participation of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the AIIB created by the People's Republic of China is noteworthy. Russia has also supported this initiative. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan together with Turkmenistan also participate in the IDB. On the contrary, Russia never joined either the IDB or the ADB, although all the above listed states are members of the ADB.

Some researchers examining the membership of the CIS states in international organizations believe that it is hardly possible to regard the participation of these states in the capital of the AIIB or Islamic Development Bank as factors influencing the geopolitical choices of countries in the region. However, it is difficult to agree with this view. A vivid example is Beijing's official One Belt One Road initiative, which successfully combines both the geo-economic and geopolitical interests of the Asian power.

In fact, a practical expression of geopolitical pluralism is the competition among various integration projects in the post-Soviet space.

The analysis of the data presented in Tables 1 and 2 convincingly demonstrates that geopolitical pluralism has formed in the CIS region from the point of view of the participation of the Commonwealth states in both military-political and economic integration projects. Countries linked to Russia through integration ties within the framework of the EAEU and EDB do not limit themselves in their choice of partners. And while there is no alternative to Russia in the field of defense and security in the Eurasian region, and those countries (such as the members of GUAM) that do not want to develop their mili-

tary integration with it are oriented toward external actors, the Eurasian space is more heterogeneous in terms of economic integration. Researcher L. S. Kosikova emphasizes that the concept of integration based on an alliance around one core – Russia – does not take into account the objective tendencies towards disintegration. According to Kosikova, if a group of states is ready to integrate with Russia faster than the rest it does not necessarily mean that the remaining countries will also integrate, even at a slower rate [Kosikova, 2010, p. 49]. This is precisely what we are observing.

We now examine the manifestation of geopolitical pluralism through the prism of trade and economic ties of the CIS countries, first through analyses of their foreign trade structure. We have analyzed the trade flows of the Commonwealth countries and indicated the most important directions of export flows from eight CIS states, as well as the most important directions of import flows to eight CIS countries (Table 3).

Table 3. Trade and Economic Relations of the CIS States in 2015<sup>7</sup>

Country	Top Three Export Destinations			Top Three Import Origins		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Republic of Azerbaijan	Italy	Indonesia	Israel	Turkey	Russia	UK
Republic of Armenia	Russia	China	Germany	Russia	China	Iran
Republic of Belarus	Russia	Ukraine	UK	Russia	Germany	China
Republic of Kazakhstan	Italy	China	Netherlands	Russia	China	Germany
Kyrgyz Republic	Switzerland	Kazakhstan	UAE	Russia	China	Kazakhstan
Republic of Moldova	Russia	Romania	Italy	Romania	Russia	Ukraine
Russian Federation	Italy	Netherlands	China	China	Germany	U.S.
Ukraine	Russia	Turkey	Egypt	Russia	China	Germany

Source: International Merchandise Trade Statistics, UN. Available at: <https://comtrade.un.org/>

As can be seen from the Table, when it comes to exports Russia was the key trading partner of Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine; in terms of imports Russia was the key trading partner of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. At the same time, Russia is not in the top three in terms of export in trading with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Members of the European Union (EU) (Great Britain (in 2015), Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Germany) actively interact with the former Soviet republics in trade. For example, Italy is the top export partner for Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and Romania is the second largest for exports and the top for imports for Moldova. As for other countries, one should pay attention to the high ratings of Switzerland (first) as an exports partner for Kyrgyzstan; of Turkey (first) as an imports partner

<sup>7</sup> The data for Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is unavailable.

for Azerbaijan and of Iran (third) as an imports partner for Armenia. As for the trade of the Commonwealth countries among themselves (excluding Russia), only Ukraine occupies second place in the top three of Belarus' partners for exports and third place for Moldova for imports. And Kazakhstan is the second largest partner for exports to Kyrgyzstan and is also its third largest partner for imports.

It should be noted that although we have not received separate data on the exports and imports of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan's key foreign trading partners are Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Korea and Turkey, while Tajikistan's key partners are Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Turkey and Afghanistan [Degterev, Degterev, Nikulin, Oganessian, 2014, pp. 176–184].

Russia's leading position as a trading partner of a number of countries does not necessarily ensure loyalty to Moscow. In the foreign trade of Uzbekistan Russia ranks first, but at the same time Tashkent is not a member of the CSTO. The fact that Russia used to be Ukraine's main trading partner did not prevent the active development of the Ukrainian crisis, which is anti-Russian and even pointedly Russophobic. We should not be deceived by the reverse situation in which Kazakhstan is positioned by some as a permanent ally of Moscow, despite the fact that it is not Moscow's leading trading partner. To the contrary, this is a telling sign that the main partners of the Republic are the EU and China.

Thus, the geographic structure of foreign economic relations is not the only determinant of foreign policy [Bartenev, 2014]. But it confirms the stratification of the CIS space from the point of view of the multivector nature of trade and economic ties between the former Soviet republics and their declining trade volumes with Russia.

Voting on the resolutions of the UN General Assembly is an important indicator of the closeness of the foreign policy positions of different states – this is when the promises of eternal friendship fade into the background and a state's true stance on various issues manifests itself [Degterev, Degterev, Nikulin, Oganessian, 2014, pp. 176–184]. It is hardly a coincidence that since 1985 the U.S. Department of State has been drawing up a report entitled the “UN Voting Practices.”<sup>8</sup>

For the purposes of this analysis, we examine whether CIS members in the UN General Assembly vote in congruence with each other and with the “dominant states” (U.S., China, India, Germany, Great Britain, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, South Africa and Japan). To assess the closeness of foreign policy positions, the average level of concurrence of voting during 47–70 sessions of the UN General Assembly was calculated, as was the number of sessions during which the other country had the highest level of concurrence with the voting results of the country in question. The results of the calculations are presented in Table 4, where the top three countries are shown for each indicator. The CIS countries and the “dominant states” are shown separately.

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<sup>8</sup> Reports of the United States Department of State to the Congress. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/index.htm>.

*Table 4. The Closeness of Positions of the CIS states in Terms of Roll-Call Voting in the UN GA (47–70 sessions) to the Position of Other CIS States and the “Dominant States”<sup>9</sup>*

CIS Country	Among Other CIS Countries		Among Dominant States	
	Top Three by Average Support Level	Top Three by Number of Sessions with Maximum Support Level per Session	Top Three by Average Support Level	Top Three by Number of Sessions with Maximum Support Level per Session
Azerbaijan	<b>Kazakhstan (90.88%)</b> Belarus (89.60%) Kyrgyzstan (86.74%)	Kazakhstan (eight sessions) Kyrgyzstan (eight sessions) Belarus (six sessions)	Indonesia (89.32%) Saudi Arabia (89.11%) Brazil (88.15%)	Brazil and Indonesia (six sessions each) South Africa, Republic of Korea (five sessions each)
Armenia	Belarus (87.76%) Kazakhstan (87.09%) Azerbaijan (85.98%)	<b>Belarus (10 sessions)</b> Tajikistan (five sessions) Kazakhstan (four sessions)	Argentina (88.67%) South Africa (84.85%) Brazil (84.69%)	<b>Argentina (19 sessions)</b> South Africa (four sessions) Australia (three sessions)
Belarus	Azerbaijan (89.60%) Kazakhstan (89.53%) Armenia (87.76%)	Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan (seven sessions each) Ukraine (six sessions)	Indonesia (88.01%) China (87.87%) Brazil (87.77%)	<b>China (10 sessions)</b> Indonesia (seven sessions) South Africa (five sessions)
Georgia (before 2009)	<b>Moldova (90.48%)</b> Ukraine (88.69%) Armenia (81.28%)	<b>Moldova (16 sessions)</b> Ukraine (seven sessions)*	Germany (89.06%) Italy (88.79%) Japan (88.50%)	Italy, Germany, Japan (seven sessions each)
Kazakhstan	<b>Azerbaijan (90.88%)</b> Belarus (89.53%) Kyrgyzstan (87.72%)	Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan (six sessions each) Belarus (five sessions)	Argentina (89.71%) Brazil (88.72%) South Africa (87.22%)	Brazil (eight sessions) Argentina (six sessions) South Africa (five sessions)
Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan (89.22%) Kazakhstan (87.72%) Uzbekistan (87.28%)	Tajikistan (eight sessions) Kazakhstan (seven sessions) Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan (five sessions each)	South Africa (85.41%) Argentina (83.97%) Brazil (82.70%)	<b>South Africa (11 sessions)</b> Brazil (six sessions) Argentina (five sessions)
Moldova	<b>Ukraine (91.47%)</b> <b>Georgia (90.48%)</b> Armenia (82.22%)	<b>Georgia (12 sessions)</b> <b>Ukraine (11 sessions)</b> Armenia (three sessions)	<b>Italy (94.19%)</b> <b>Germany (93.76%)</b> <b>Japan (91.29%)</b>	<b>Italy (14 sessions)</b> <b>Germany (11 sessions)</b> Australia (five sessions)
Russia	Belarus (86.64%) Armenia (84.58%) Kazakhstan (84.34%)	<b>Belarus (10 sessions)</b> Kazakhstan (five sessions) Uzbekistan (three sessions)	Argentina (83.64%) China (81.74%) South Africa (81.24%)	<b>China (14 sessions)</b> Argentina (five sessions) *

<sup>9</sup> Countries with support level of more than 90% or at least 10 sessions with maximum support level per session are indicated in bold type

\* – with the remaining four-five countries there is a maximum match of one session only

Method of calculation: the percentage of concurrence of voting results was calculated as follows: one point was added for each resolution on which the vote concurred (both countries voted “for,” “against,” abstained or did not vote). If one country voted “for” or “against” a resolution and the other abstained or did not participate in the vote, 0.5 points were added. The result was divided by the total number of resolutions adopted by voting during the session in question.

CIS Country	Among Other CIS Countries		Among Dominant States	
	Top Three by Average Support Level	Top Three by Number of Sessions with Maximum Support Level per Session	Top Three by Average Support Level	Top Three by Number of Sessions with Maximum Support Level per Session
Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan (89.21%) Turkmenistan (88.02%) Uzbekistan (87.57%)	<b>Kyrgyzstan (13 sessions)</b> Turkmenistan (six sessions) Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia (four sessions each)	South Africa (83.61%) Argentina (82,71%) Brazil (80.79%)	South Africa (nine sessions) China and Russia (four sessions each)
Turkmenistan	Tajikistan (88.02%) Uzbekistan (85.84%) Kyrgyzstan (84.98%)	<b>Tajikistan (14 sessions)</b> Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (five sessions each)	South Africa (79.73%) Indonesia (78,12%) Argentina (77,90%)	South Africa (nine sessions) Indonesia (six sessions) Argentina (four sessions)
Uzbekistan	Tajikistan (87.57%) Kyrgyzstan (87.28%) Turkmenistan (85.84%)	Tajikistan (eight sessions) Belarus and Kyrgyzstan (six sessions each)	South Africa (80.12%) Argentina (78,12%) Russia (77.13%)	Republic of Korea (six sessions) China and Indonesia (four sessions each)
Ukraine	<b>Moldova (91.47%)</b> Georgia (88.69%) Armenia (83.03%)	<b>Moldova (11 sessions)</b> Belarus (six sessions) Georgia (five sessions)	Republic of Korea (90,95%) Japan (90.21%) Italy (89.56%)	Republic of Korea (seven sessions) Germany (six sessions) Japan (five sessions)

Source: PFUR Expert Portal on International Relations. Available at: <http://ir.rudn.ru/>

So, what information can be drawn from this data? First, Russia is absent in the top three in terms of the average level of support among CIS member states. This applies both to countries that are integrating with Russia (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), its “opponents” (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and “neutral” countries (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan).

A similar result can also be observed in the case of voting ratings within the top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support. Russia is absent in this rating in relation to all CIS countries. Only in the case of Tajikistan is Russia in the top three, and even then it shares third place with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

It is interesting to look at the concurrence of votes separately for EAEU and the CSTO members. Close positions in the top three regarding the average support level are demonstrated by Armenia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. They are in each other’s top three. Another remarkable fact is that for each of these republics Azerbaijan is the third country with which their voting matches – even for Armenia.

As for the top three according to the number of sessions with the maximum support, here the situation is quite different. Armenia’s voting concurs with that of Belarus at the highest possible level of concurrence over 10 sessions. Belarus is an important trading partner of Armenia, in third place among CIS countries (after Russia and Ukraine) in

terms of mutual trade.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Belarus and Kazakhstan, the average number of sessions with the maximum support is noted. For Belarus it is with Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine; for Kazakhstan it is with Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus.

Kyrgyzstan, a long-standing and consistent participant in various integration projects in the CIS, differs somewhat in its voting. In the framework of the top three on the average level of support, it concurs with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. And if in the case of the first two states this is quite expected, the concurrence with Uzbekistan is less so, given the thorny relationship between the two neighbours who are only just beginning to improve ties. A symmetric situation is observed when it comes to Kyrgyzstan and the top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support.

In terms of average support level Tajikistan stands close to Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the top three. In its top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support, Tajikistan has one of the highest levels of concurrence with Kyrgyzstan out of all the other countries (13 sessions). One of the priorities for the two countries is the development of hydropower, including the sustainable use of water as energy source, the creation of a single energy market, the construction of energy bridges, participation in the implementation of the CASA-1000 project and the export of electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have similar tasks in this area and experience the same barriers to their development.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, there is a desire to develop a common stance and a coordinated approach toward upholding and promoting common interests on issues of hydropower cooperation.

When it comes to the “neutral” states, Azerbaijan’s top three in terms of the average level of support includes Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan often vote in the same way, and they are among each other’s top three along with Kyrgyzstan. Kazakhstan ranks first. For both countries, cooperation in the field of energy is of strategic importance. In this industry, Baku and Astana are important players in the world market. They are interested in ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of oil and oil products to world markets, including through the territory of Azerbaijan. Astana and Baku should work together to reorient the multibillion dollar transit flow between Asia and Europe to Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus corridor [Adilova, Medelbekov, Entevkov, 2017].

In the top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan have an average level of concurrence with the same countries (six and eight sessions). Turkmenistan demonstrates the maximum concurrence with Tajikistan (14 sessions – the most in this rating). Cooperation with Turkmenistan is a priority for Tajikistan. Since it gained independence, Tajikistan has been carrying out its core freight and passenger transportation by rail through the territory of Turkmenistan. There exists an investment project for the construction of the Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Turkmenistan (TAT) railway; the Turkmen side has completed the construction of its

<sup>10</sup> Trade and Economic Relations. Available at: [http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral\\_relations/trade\\_economic/](http://armenia.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations/trade_economic/)

<sup>11</sup> Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Kyrgyz Republic. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan Relations. Available at: [http://www.tajikemb.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=124](http://www.tajikemb.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=124)

section, while the Republic of Tajikistan supports the project and notes its importance [Adilova, Medelbekov, Entevkov, 2017].

The results of Georgia (a member of the CIS until 2009), Moldova and Ukraine are quite predictable. Being members of the GUAM, during the voting they demonstrated close voting positions. Moreover, when it comes to Georgia and Ukraine, the total number of sessions with the maximum support concurred more often with Moldova than with each other and vice versa.

We now examine the voting structure of the CIS members in terms of their relations with the so-called “dominant powers” (members of the G7 and G20). No less interesting are the results of voting of CIS countries in comparison with the “dominant states.”

First, we examine the setup within the top three on the average support level for the EAEU members (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and the CSTO members (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

As can be seen from Table 4, our country is not in the top three among G-20 members with any of the listed countries. And in the TOP-3 by the number of sessions with the maximum support, Russia closes it and takes the third position in the case of Tajikistan only.

As for other noteworthy moments in the voting, the pair Armenia-Argentina is really striking. During 19 sessions out of the 22 considered among the «dominant states» Argentina had the closest position to Armenia. It turns out that in Argentina there is the largest Armenian diaspora in the region, which appeared there in connection with the Armenian genocide in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire. The first wave of refugees was subsequently added to the flow of migrants after the collapse of the USSR. This is an influential and cohesive diaspora, incl. in political terms. It lives compactly in Buenos Aires and Cordoba. The National Armenian Council of Buenos Aires operates in the country, whose representatives visit Nagorno-Karabakh and promote Armenia’s position on this issue. The powerful influence of the diaspora, incl. on foreign policy issues, in fact, forced Azerbaijan in 2010 to open an embassy in Argentina – the first one in South America [Degterev, Vasilyuk, Baum 2018].

A certain surprise is the high level of voting coincidence between Belarus and Indonesia, which occupies positions 1 and 2 in two ratings. Obviously, this is due to the fact that Belarus is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, one of the main initiators of which was Indonesia.

Moreover, EAEU and CSTO members demonstrate a certain resemblance. Within the top three in terms of the average level of support, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan demonstrate a proximity of views with Brazil and South Africa. These are the two countries that take the first and second places in the rating. As for Belarus, it is clear that the positions of China and Brazil are the closest. A similar situation is observed in the top three of the number of sessions with the maximum support. At the same time, Belarus has the maximum number of matches with China (10 sessions), and Kyrgyzstan has the maximum matches with South Africa (11 sessions).

The high level of concurrence between Belarus and China positions in UN can be explained by the fact that relations between the two countries is officially considered

a strategic cooperation [Tozik, 2007, p. 26] and as a result they try to support each other in global politics. In particular, Belarus supported China in connection with the riots in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the summer of 2009. In the economic sphere, China is the fifth largest trading partner of Belarus outside the CIS, and is fourth in terms of the level of imports and eighth in terms of the level of Belarusian exports.

The high level of concurrence between Kyrgyzstan and South Africa in UN may seem strange, especially given the fact that the ambassador of South Africa was accredited in Kyrgyzstan for the first time only in 2007, with residence in Astana (Kazakhstan). The Embassy of Kyrgyzstan is in turn accredited in Saudi Arabia in combination with South Africa. It is also a telling sign that the share of trade between the two countries for the past 20 years has never reached even 0.1% of the total volume of exports [Abdrisaev, 2017]. The high level of concurrence of the positions of the two countries in UN voting can be explained by their policy coordination within the BRICS framework [Yurtaev, 2016], and by their emerging cooperation in the mining sector.

Unexpectedly, CIS countries have a high level of concurrence of voting with Indonesia: Azerbaijan has it on the 1–2 place, Turkmenistan has it on the second place, and Uzbekistan has it on 2–3 place at the level of coincidence among G-20 members. All three countries are also members of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Indonesia was one of the founders. In addition, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Indonesia is the country where the largest number of adherents of Islam in the world live. The main goal of Indonesia's foreign policy is to establish its identity as a world power acting as a bridge between European and Islamic civilizations [Efimova, 2016]. In addition, Azerbaijan is the second largest oil supplier to Indonesia after Saudi Arabia.

An interesting case is presented by the “Chinese factor,” especially in the context of China's policy in Central Asia. The data show that despite the growing influence of China in this region, the Central Asian states do not always follow Chinese foreign policy. Of the five countries in the region (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), only Kyrgyzstan is in the top three in terms of its average support level with China, confirming Beijing's very high level of influence. As for the top three in terms of sessions with the maximum support, the situation for China is somewhat better. During four sessions there are matches with Uzbekistan; during three sessions there are matches with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and during two sessions there are matches with Kyrgyzstan.

It is worth paying attention to the fact that in both ratings Kazakhstan concurs in its voting with Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom has been actively involved in the development of its infrastructure since the beginning of Kazakhstan's independence, providing grants for the implementation of such projects as the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan (over \$15 million), a cardiology centre in Astana (\$12 million), the reconstruction of the Osakarovka-Vishnevka road (\$12 million) and the mosque in Petropavlovsk (\$2 million) among others.<sup>12</sup> A striking event during the first visit of N. Nazarbayev to Riyadh in 2016 was a proposal of King Fahd, which surprised not only

<sup>12</sup> Milestones of Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia (2016). Available at: <https://www.zakon.kz/4824861-vekhi-sotrudnichestva-kazakhstana-i.html>

the delegation of Kazakhstan, but also the Saudis themselves. The king, learning about Nazarbayev's intention to perform the Hajj, allowed him to go inside the Kaaba, a Muslim shrine which is only open twice a year for special guests. Let us note that annually about four thousand citizens of Kazakhstan visit the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina to perform the Hajj and the Umrah.

If we look at the states that implement their interests within the "opposing" GUAM framework (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), we see a very interesting situation developing. The position of the official Baku in the top three on the average level of support, and in the top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support concurs with the positions of the EAEU and the CSTO members, but not with the GUAM participants. That is, in both voting ratings Azerbaijan concurs with Brazil and Indonesia. The concurrence with Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Republic of Korea is also high.

Azerbaijan's voting is strikingly different from that of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, countries which demonstrate solidarity as a "bloc." Their pattern of voting in the top three of the average support level and in the top three of the number of sessions with the maximum support is almost identical, only the lines in the ratings occupied by Germany, Italy and Japan change. These three states are included in both top three listings. At the same time, Moldova demonstrates the highest level of concurrence in voting with Italy (14 sessions) and the Federal Republic of Germany (11 sessions). It is significant that the United States is not among those countries with which the countries we are looking at concur in the voting. And while in the case of Germany this similarity of positions is quite obvious from the point of view of Berlin's involvement in Moldavian affairs, the "Italian factor" is due to the fact that one of the largest immigrant communities in Italy is Moldavian. The Moldavians prefer Italy to the rest of the Europe for living and working. According to the official data, more than 200,000 Moldavians live in Italy [Zinder, 2016].

Finally, we analyze the positions of the "neutral" states – Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – in the top three listings. Concurrence of their positions in the top three for the average level of support with South Africa and Brazil is common. In both cases, South Africa occupies the top place. Also in the rating are Saudi Arabia for Turkmenistan and Russia for Uzbekistan. As for the top three in terms of the number of sessions with the maximum support, the positions of the countries are similar here as well (South Africa, Russia and China).

In summary, attention should be paid to Russia's rather modest positions and to the absence of the United States, as well as India, in the "top" listings. It seems that when taking part in voting at the UN General Assembly, CIS countries strive for equidistance from Russia and the United States, sometimes demonstrating opposing approaches to various issues in order to achieve a policy of balance. As for India, the available data demonstrates the limited influence of Delhi on the states of the CIS region.

It is interesting to analyze the voting of CIS countries on issues of special importance to Russia's interests. Such votes are usually telling since they represent a kind of a "moment of truth" in the foreign policy of any state. For the purposes of our analysis, the votes of CIS members (including Georgia, which left the CIS in 2009) are considered.

UN GA Resolution No. 68/182 on the “Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic” of 18 December 2013 condemns the use of chemical weapons, the violation of human rights and of international humanitarian law in Syria and requires all parties to immediately put an end to these violations. The resolution emphasizes that speedy progress in the implementation of the political transition is the best possible way of resolving the situation in Syria by peaceful means.

As follows from Table 5, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine voted for this resolution, while Belarus, Russia and Uzbekistan voted against it. Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan abstained. As can be seen, GUAM members voted as a bloc, unlike the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) and CSTO members. Among its closest partners Russia was fully supported only by Belarus, while all other countries abstained. The U.S. also supported the resolution.

*Table 5. CIS State’ Voting on UN GA Resolution No. 68/182 “The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic” of 18 December 2013<sup>13</sup>*

Y – “yes;” N – “no;” A – “abstained;” NV – “non-voting”	
TOTAL Y: 127, N: 13, A: 47, NV: 6	
Y	Azerbaijan
A	Armenia
N	Belarus
Y	Georgia
A	Kazakhstan
A	Kyrgyzstan
Y	Moldova
N	Russia
A	Tajikistan
A	Turkmenistan
N	Uzbekistan
Y	Ukraine

UN GA Resolution No. 68/262 on the “territorial integrity of Ukraine” of 27 March 2014 was adopted in response to the referendum in the Crimea and urged the countries not to recognize the changes in the status quo of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

According to the vote (Table 6), Armenia, Belarus and Russia were among the 11 members of the UN General Assembly that voted against the resolution. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan abstained, while Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan did not vote. Only Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine voted to adopt the resolution. Again,

<sup>13</sup> UNBISNET. United Nations Biographic Information System. Voting on the Resolution A/RES/68/182. Available at: <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1491C603Q3Q77.19224&menu=search&aspect=power&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=voting&ri=2&source=~%21horizon&index=.VM&term=68%2F182+&x=11&y=1&aspect=power>

we note that the supporters of the alternative integration in the CIS within the GUAM framework unanimously supported this resolution, which meets the interests of one of the participants – Ukraine. Meanwhile, the countries closest to Russia, and participating with it in regional integration projects, did not vote in solidarity. Among its closest partners, Moscow’s interests were unquestionably supported only by Yerevan and Minsk. The U.S. supported this resolution.

*Table 6. The Results of CIS States’ Voting on UN GA Resolution No. 68/262 “territorial integrity of Ukraine” of 27 March 2014<sup>14</sup>*

Y – “yes;” N – “no;” A – “abstained;” NV – “non-voting”	
TOTAL: Y: 100, N: 11, A: 58, NV: 24	
Y	Azerbaijan
N	Armenia
N	Belarus
Y	Georgia
A	Kazakhstan
NV	Kyrgyzstan
Y	Moldova
N	Russia
NV	Tajikistan
NV	Turkmenistan
A	Uzbekistan
Y	Ukraine

UN GA Resolution No. 71/205 on the “Human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol (Ukraine)” of 19 December 2016 “urges the Russian Federation to ensure the proper and unimpeded access of international human rights monitoring missions and human rights non-governmental organizations to Crimea, recognizing that the international presence in Crimea is of paramount importance in preventing further deterioration of the situation.”

According to Table 7, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine supported the resolution. Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan voted against the resolution. Tajikistan abstained. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan did not vote. In this case, we again see the readiness of GUAM states to support each other in the international arena, with Azerbaijan being the only state that did not vote. Unlike previous examples, the countries developing integration projects within the CIS together with Russia demonstrated great loyalty to Russia’s interests. The U.S. voted for this resolution.

<sup>14</sup> UNBISNET. United Nations Biographic Information System. Voting on the Resolution A/RES/68/262. Available at: <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1U58R32M07420.20139&menu=search&aspect=power&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=voting&ri=&index=.VM&term=A%2FRES%2F68%2F262&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&x=10&y=7&aspect=power&index=.VW&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=.AD&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&oper=AND&index=BIB&term=&matchoptbox=0%7C0&ultype=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=>

*Table 7. Results of CIS State' Voting on UN GA Resolution "Human Rights Situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol (Ukraine)" of 19 December 2016<sup>15</sup>*

Y – "yes;" N – "no;" A – "abstained;" NV – "non-voting"	
TOTAL: Y: 127, N: 13, A: 47,	NV: 6
NV	Azerbaijan
N	Armenia
N	Belarus
Y	Georgia
N	Kazakhstan
NV	Kyrgyzstan
Y	Moldova
N	Russia
A	Tajikistan
NV	Turkmenistan
N	Uzbekistan
Y	Ukraine

Summing up, we note that the processes taking place in the CIS are dynamic, tense and contentious, distinguished by a multitude of divisive lines and multidirectional vectors characterized by intertwined forces and factors as well as unstable and inconsistent trends. The role of CIS states in global affairs has significantly increased, and sometimes events there are at the epicentre of the global agenda. It is no exaggeration to admit that the post-Soviet space is an area of heightened political risk. Not only is there a high conflict potential (given the existence of "local" conflicts encircled by a belt of external conflict zones with centres of instability in the Near and Middle East), but it faces a heightened risk of terrorist threats, threats of uncontrolled proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (including the possibility of these falling into the hands of radical groups), and the problems of migration, drug trafficking and environmental degradation.

The political and economic interests of the states that formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union did not always converge, and at times they were diametrically opposed. Despite the existence of the CIS, competition has been a characteristic feature of the relations between the post-Soviet states. On the territory of the former Soviet Union, a special system of relations has started to develop in which, along with organizations aimed at integration with the participation of Russia, a number of new modules have been formed. The most important reason for their formation is the desire of one country

<sup>15</sup> UNBISNET. United Nations Biographic Information System. Voting on Resolution A/RES/71/205. Available at: <http://unbisnet.un.org:8080/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=14E182SH03350.17955&menu=search&aspect=power&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=voting&ri=&index=.VM&term=71%2F205&matchoptbox=0|0&oper=AND&x=16&y=12&aspect=power&index=.VW&term=&matchoptbox=0|0&oper=AND&index=.AD&term=&matchoptbox=0|0&oper=AND&index=BIB&term=&matchoptbox=0|0&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&uloper=%3D&ullimit=&sort=>

or a group of countries to create a structure within which it can play a key role. These modules include those states that are also members of the CIS.

However, unlike various integration associations with Russia's participation, a number of new regional modules are focused on close cooperation primarily with the U.S., the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU. These may be platforms for launching mechanisms for the integration of members of these organizations into the EU and NATO. From its beginning the CIS was an area of increased interest for the U.S., NATO and the EU which they were eager to include in their spheres of influence. Following the dissolution of the USSR, these extra-regional "players" have been increasingly active [Kurylev, Savicheva, 2013, p. 7]. In 1997, Noam Chomsky wrote that the United States preferred to use international organizations to export its values and interests. Obviously, this format has been chosen by Washington, as well as by Brussels, in order to consolidate its influence in the post-Soviet space [Kurylev, 2009, p. 311].

Undoubtedly, the first step was the emergence in 1997 of the GUAM association (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) [Machavariani, 2014]. Experts link the establishment of this regional international organization to the activities of the United States, which initiated the creation of the GUAM as a way to instill geopolitical pluralism in the post-Soviet space.

Defining U.S. interests in the CIS space, Z. Brzezinski pointed out that: "in the short term, America is interested in strengthening and preserving the existing geopolitical pluralism on the map of Eurasia. This task involves encouraging possible actions and manipulations in order to prevent the emergence of a hostile coalition that would attempt to challenge the leading role of America, not to mention the unlikely possibility that any state would try to do so. In the medium term, the above should gradually give way to an issue where more emphasis is placed on the emergence of more important and strategically compatible partners who, under the leadership of America, could help create a trans-Eurasian security system that unites more countries. Finally, in the long term, all of the above should gradually lead to the formation of a world centre of a truly shared political responsibility" [Brzezinski, 2000, p. 235].

That is, the West considered itself the winner of the Cold War and therefore, despite Russia's protests, began spreading its influence in the countries of the former Soviet bloc through the expansion of NATO and the EU. The pinnacle of this process was the struggle for the CIS area that the West tried to penetrate in order to finally consolidate the geopolitical preferences that emerged after the collapse of the USSR [Kurylev, 2014, pp. 451–452].

To conclude, we note that the policy of the United States, which pandered to the formation of geopolitical pluralism in the CIS, eventually bore fruit. Our analysis indicates that the geopolitical pluralism in the territory of the former USSR is already a reality. As Y. V. Shishkov points, the reorientation towards the West, as well as Turkey or even China can reach a critical mass after which a return to a condition "under the wing" of Russia will be meaningless" [Shishkov, 2001, p. 453].

There is a process of stratification of the region into countries that see their future together with Russia, those that focus on close interaction with the West led by the United States, those declaring a neutral status and those that drift from one centre

of power to the other depending on the international agenda and domestic situation. The first group includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – countries that have been participating for many years with Russia in different regional integration projects within the EAEU and the CSTO [Tatarintsev, 2007]. The second group includes Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, which have been participating since the 1990s in a process of alternative integration into the CIS within the framework of the GUAM and which have presently signed the Association Agreement with the EU. Apart from them stand Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is typical to put Azerbaijan into the second group because of its membership in the GUAM. However, in practice, its foreign policy is of a rather multi vector nature. Azerbaijan does not want to join NATO or the CSTO and did not sign the Association Agreement with the EU. Nor does it participate in the EAEU or the Non-Aligned Movement. Turkmenistan is the first and the only of the former Soviet republics to have proclaimed a neutral status under the aegis of the UN [Shargunov, 2015]. Uzbekistan proclaimed itself neutral a long while ago (while still being a member of the CSTO), and during years of independence it has carried out a number of foreign policy maneuvers focusing on different centres of power. However, such a division is, of course, conditional. Despite its membership in the CSTO, Tajikistan carries out a policy of “open doors” [Dundich, 2010a]. Armenia’s foreign policy is based on the concept of complementarity. The “diplomacy of the Silk Road” is implemented by Kyrgyzstan [Dundich, 2010b]. Meanwhile, Belarus aspires to a neutral status, being a member of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The current stage of the development of the newly independent states is characterized by their obvious involvement in continental and global processes both as objects of external influence and subjects with significant potential for independent action [Bolgova, 2010, p. 96].

Close ties are always a pledge of mutual understanding and friendship between countries [Kovalenko, Smolik, 2014, pp. 207–214]. However, within the CIS the emerging geopolitical pluralism does not contribute to this principle. It complicates and hinders the development of regional integration, making it unstable and inefficient. Hence, Russia’s main foreign policy goal as a system-forming element in the Eurasian space of creating “good neighbourly relations” in the region and preventing the formation of an anti-Russian buffer zone along its borders has not been yet achieved.

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# Количественный анализ феномена геополитического плюрализма постсоветского пространства<sup>1</sup>

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*За двадцать пять лет, прошедшие с момента распада СССР, разрушились ранее существовавшие в данном регионе системы сдержек и противовесов в разрешении национальных вопросов, политических и социально-экономических противоречий, что стало причиной ряда вооруженных конфликтов, в том числе на территории Нагорного Карабаха, Приднестровья, Таджикистана, Абхазии и Южной Осетии, Украины.*

*Практически сразу после распада СССР к региону СНГ усилилось внимание со стороны ключевых международных акторов. Каждый из них стремился реализовать здесь собственные интересы, что обусловило начало процесса расслоения региона СНГ. В регионе началось формирование геополитического плюрализма, то есть дробления национально-государственных суверенитетов над территорией.*

*Основоположником концепции «геополитического плюрализма» считается З. Бжезинский. Подобная политика, отвечающая интересам США, делает регион СНГ более управляемым, препятствуя России реализовывать собственные стратегические задачи в регионе. Ключевая из них видится нам в создании интегрированного экономического и политического объединения, способного претендовать на достойное место в мировом сообществе. Только через развитие глубокой и всесторонней интеграции со странами СНГ может быть обеспечена конкурентоспособность как самой России в мире, так и наших партнеров из числа бывших советских республик.*

*Целью статьи является оценка параметров глубины геополитического плюрализма, оформившегося к настоящему времени на пространстве СНГ. Изучаемое явление – многослойный и сложный процесс. Руководствуясь профилем и направленностью данного журнала, мы ограничимся анализом членства стран СНГ в международных организациях и голосования по резолюциям Генассамблеи ООН.*

*Исследование основывается на взаимосвязи количественных и качественных методов анализа международных отношений и мировой политики.*

*За прошедшие четверть века с распада СССР на его пространстве сформировалась региональная система международных отношений. Несмотря на наличие такого связующего элемента как СНГ, объединившего большинство бывших советских республик, характерной чертой отношений в регионе между новыми государственными объединениями стало проявление определенной конкуренции.*

*Действия Запада (в первую очередь это касается США) обрели контуры разветвленной многопрофильной стратегии, рассчитанной на поэтапное освоение региона, его трансформацию и фрагментацию. Оформившееся внешнеполитическое многообразие приоритетов стран СНГ и присутствие в регионе интересов множества акторов не способствует взаимопониманию и добрососедству между ними. Оно серьезно осложняет и замедляет процесс развития глубокой и всесторонней интеграции, делает его более неустойчивым и недостаточно эффективным.*

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<sup>1</sup> Статья поступила в редакцию в июне 2017 г.

Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке РФФИ в рамках научного проекта РФФИ-КАОН № 17-27-21002.

Ключевые слова: СНГ; Россия; США; внешняя политика; геополитический плюрализм; многовекторность; евразийское пространство; международные организации; голосование; прикладной анализ

Для цитирования: Курылев К.П., Дегтерев Д.А., Смолик Н.Г., Станис Д.В. Количественный анализ феномена геополитического плюрализма постсоветского пространства // Вестник международных организаций. 2018. Т. 13. № 1. С. 134–156. DOI: 10.17323/1996-7845-2018-01-08

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