

INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMIC OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

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## Abstract

In the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, the new independent states of the post-Soviet Eurasia have confronted a most fundamental transformation of the surrounding economic and security environment. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), created to confront this challenge, exhibits an intense dynamic between integration elites and nation states in the CIS. This paper argues that integrative ambitions of the CIS elites are largely driven by the hegemonic aspirations of the Russian Federation to reassert its sphere of influence in the geopolitical space of the former USSR. Russia seeks to consolidate its economic and military power through accelerated measures of economic integration through institutional expansion of the CIS. Russia's reduced economic and military capacity, low levels of integration loyalty among the member states and the increased commitment of the West to the CIS region combined, can significantly undermine the case for the Russia-centered economic integration.

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