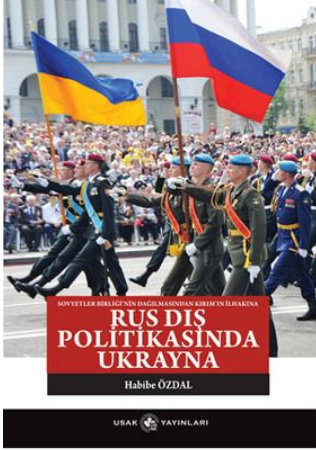


## KİTAP İNCELEMESİ – 3

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### FROM SEPARATION of SOVIET UNION to ANNEXION of CRIMEA UKRAINE on the FOREIGN POLICY of RUSSIA

Yazar:

Habibe ÖZDAL

**Sovyetler Birliği'nin Dağılmasından  
Kırım'ın İlhakına Rus Dış Politikasında  
Ukrayna**

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The post-Cold War international system has evolved into a space where the former Soviet geographical power struggle is experiencing, evolving from bipolarity to unipolarity. The idea of Eurasianism, which was accepted as the successor of the Soviets, against the enlargement strategies of institutions such as NATO and the EU, became very strong especially during the Putin period. Having a key prefix in the development of this idea Ukraine has become the most important economic power after Russia in the region, natural resources, being an important actor of the Slavic Union thought, being on the power grid and being the most important buffer zone against Europe makes the country indispensable for Russia. Many Russian politicians further emphasize the importance of the country's view that a Union without Ukrainian would be Asian, if it included Ukraine, it would be European. Relations between Russia and Ukraine have not fallen from the agenda of the international public since November of 2013. As Ukraine has given up its signing of the East Partnership Agreement with the European Union, the protests that mass-supporting the

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idea of integration with the West have turned into a nationwide crime with increasing violence and size. In a short period of time, the annexation of the Crimea affiliated with Ukraine to Russia has further enlarged the problem and confronted western countries with Russia. Russia's foreign policy in Ukraine has been very important for the understanding of the process because of the power to direct bilateral relations. At this point, the Ukrainian book on Russian foreign policy, from the fall of the Soviets to the annexation of the Crimea, by Habibe Özdal, the Doctoral Instructor, dealt with the relations between Russia and Ukraine in detail from 1991 to 2015.

Özdal completed her undergraduate studies at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, her master's degree at London Metropolitan University and her doctorate at Ankara University International Relations Department. She is currently a Doctoral Instructor at the Department of International Relations at Okan University. The author, who made a book about her doctoral thesis, interviewed academicians who worked on Russian foreign policy and Ukrainian-Russian relations at Moscow State University thanks to her knowledge of Russian during the writing process. In the book, two historical foreign policy actors, the common historical background of the relations of Ukraine and Russia were discussed, and the interaction of the internal and external elements with each other following the collapse of the Soviets was discussed.

The book consists of three chapters separated by chronological order, with the exception of the introduction and conclusion sections. In the first chapter on Ukraine in the Yeltsin Period Russian Foreign Policy, the relations between Russia and Ukraine during 1991-1999, the transfer of nuclear weapons in Ukraine to Russia, the future of the Black Sea Fleet, the Russian presence in Crimea, and the Ukrainian energy debt were investigated. Apart from that, the role of Ukraine in the establishment and integration process of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has been explained. According to Özdal, the foreign policy that followed during the 1990s was shaped accordingly because the first years of the Yeltsin Period passed mostly on economic problems. In order to obtain foreign aid for reasons such as inflation and increase in foreign debts, production and reduction of gold reserves, it was claimed that by 1993 Russia had been dependent on the IMF, the World Bank and the G7 countries and followed a foreign policy, and in the post-1993 period it adopted the Near East Doctrine as a concrete step in transition from Atlanticism to Eurasia. At the same time, Özdal who emphasized the importance of examining the international developments in Russia's foreign policy making and its policy towards Ukraine, has examined NATO enlargement and the disintegration of Yugoslavia in this context. On the basis of the approach to NATO enlargement during the Yeltsin period, the author made a comment that a new security structure was established in Europe, despite the weakening Russia after the Cold War. This finding is crucial in the sense that Russia is the basis for its approach to NATO and other Western countries. In the second chapter titled Transformation in the Putin Period, the transformation that

Vladimir Putin, Russia's second president, created as an effective actor between 2000 and 2008, is considered. According to the author, the Putin era is a period in which a more consistent and holistic foreign policy approach is adopted compared to the Yeltsin era, especially in the economic sense. During Putin's first presidency (2000-2004), it was alleged to modernize the economy and to pursue multilateral foreign policy endeavor, in the period of the second presidency (2004-2008) to strengthen the central authority and to become a major actor in foreign policy. In this context, it was commented that Putin, especially in the second presidency, went to other areas, including Asia Pacific, with a multifaceted foreign policy emphasis, without ignoring relations with the West. The CIS policies that the biggest change took place in Putin's period are also mentioned, Putin supports coordinated foreign policy implementations in financial matters such as customs union in order to strengthen economic integration and free circulation of goods. Focusing on co-operation with the West in general terms of economic progress during the first presidency, Putin emphasized the elements of hard power by recalling Russia's claim that Russia was developing new strategies against NATO and EU enlargement for the second term of its presidency. The author strengthened his allegations of Putin's Russian foreign policy by examining the National Security Concept, Putin's Military Doctrine, the Foreign Policy Concept adopted in 2000, and the Foreign Policy Concept document adopted in 2007. In addition, the author of the Ukrainian-Russian border, which can not be determined during the Yeltsin period, indicates that he has settled in the Putin era. The author pointed out that Ukraine wants to establish closer relations with institutions such as NATO and the EU, along with the ruling change after the Orange Revolution, and Russia is applying restrictive policies at this point. As a concrete example of this, the interpretation that Ukraine has applied punishment over energy dependency with the increase in Russia's gas price after the political crises is very important. In the third chapter titled "Russia-Ukraine Relations Between 2008-2015", Russian foreign policy; The Georgian War, Kosovo's independence, the US resumption policy, the Syrian Civil War, the Ukrainian Crisis were dealt within the context of Dynamics. The author stated that these kinds of events are worth examining on the grounds that Russia's Ukrainian policies are directly influenced by bilateral relations. The author stated that the Eurasian Union Project, which Putin built in 2011 and modeled on the EU, will fail without Ukraine on the economic, geopolitical and political level. In this sense, the level of integration of Ukraine with the West as a determinant of Russian-Ukrainian relations has become a criterion. The main reason for this is that Russia's desire to be an active force in the former Soviet geography was possible through the integration of Ukraine into the Eurasian Union. The book also discusses the reasons for the failure of the Ukrainian Crisis to be the starting point and the fact that Yanukovych did not sign the Association Agreement, apart from the reasons such as Russian pressure, economic fragility in Ukraine, the upcoming Presidential elections in that period were also effective.

The annexation process of Crimea was interpreted as a strategy of self-reliance for Russia to face NATO in Sevastopol. The author has considered the Ukrainian Crisis as a break point for both Russian-Ukrainian relations, as well as for causing a global problem in Western-Russian relations. Similarly, it has been suggested that Russia's sovereignty is to be rejected as far as the exit point of the Ukrainian Crisis is to support European integration in the Ukrainian public. However, neither Russia nor Ukraine could cooperate with Ukraine in any way, nor Ukraine could create a foreign policy area that is most independent of Russia. This finding is very important in the sense of the policies of Ukraine, which has the most independence struggle against Russia. From the whole of the book, it is emphasized that from the dissolution of the Soviet Union until 2015, Ukraine has an important and different place in Russian foreign policy. The study is multifaceted and specific because it explains Russian foreign policy chronologically, with a historical approach, in terms of current conditions and international events. The work is quite rich in terms of resource diversity because foreign resources are used extensively. However, detailed and frequent information is given in the footnotes throughout the book, causing the reader to be distracted. Erroneous use of some words in the text is seen as a problem in terms of form. As a result, the work has contributed literature in the context of the lack of work on this subject and the ability to explain international developments and Russian foreign policy.