

The Strategic Context of Russo-Chinese Relations*

STEPHEN J. BLANK

The prevailing view in the United States and the West is that there is little reason for undue concern over the recent Russo-Chinese rapprochement. The two states, for all their collaboration, are seen as too weak, overly economically dependent on the United States, and too historically burdened by past discord to form an effective coalition or anti-American bloc. Indeed, formal American policy officially has welcomed this rapprochement. This optimistic view is based on several fundamental premises of American thinking about international affairs in general and the relationship between these two states and Washington in particular. The task of this essay is therefore to raise criticisms of this complacent assessment of Sino-Russian relations and to highlight the erroneous axioms and assumptions behind this thinking.

KEYWORDS: Russia; China; United States; foreign policies; defense policies

* * *

The Prevailing Consensus

According to the prevailing conventional wisdom in both American governmental and academic circles, the United States has little to fear from

Dr. Stephen J. Blank is Professor of Russian National Security Studies at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He has published over 160 articles on Soviet/Russian military and foreign policies, and his most recent book was *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Role in Asia* (Editor, Duke University Press, 1997).

*The views expressed here belong solely to the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

the Russo-Chinese rapprochement. While admittedly both sides often collaborate against the United States and are difficult partners, the United States can still expect some sort of continuing strategic partnership with Russia as well as engagement with China that may eventually lead to such partnership. Therefore, Russian arms and technology transfers to China should not be unduly alarming. Indeed, American officials publicly profess approval of Sino-Russian friendship and nonchalance concerning possible threats to American interests. Testifying before Congress in 1998, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Walter Slocombe stated that

The United States does not fear China, nor do we view China as an adversary. Rather the U.S. seeks to encourage China to step forward as a responsible and competitive great nation—a nation that preserves its unique identity and works to advance its own interests, but is more open on security matters and more respectful of the rule of law; a nation that adheres to international norms in its own affairs, including basic human rights; a nation that plays a constructive international role and respects the corresponding standards, including peaceful resolution of disputes, the control of weapons of mass destruction, and respect the freedom of the seas. And a nation that joins us in rejecting a zero-sum attitude toward security by recognizing the common interests we all share in a stable environment that ensures security and promotes prosperity.¹

Speaking about Russia, Slocombe said that

Given the current state of the Russian military, Russia poses no immediate military threat to its neighbors, nor does it perceive threats from them. It seeks strategic relationships with China, Japan, and Korea and as it pursues its own self-interests, we expect Russia to reach out for more cooperation with its neighbors in the Far East. Far from seeing a threat to U.S. interests in that cooperation, we welcome it, as a step toward Russia being a constructive partner in the region.²

Furthermore, as a sign of this nonchalance over the Russo-Chinese rapprochement, the West (and specifically the United States) has not pursued policies or, at any rate, not consciously pursued strategies and policies that would show concern about or desire to prevent this relationship. Those

¹Statement of the Honorable Walter B. Slocombe, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Before a Hearing of the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific" (May 7, 1998), Northeast Asia Peace and Security Network Special Report, *U.S. Security Interests in the Pacific* (May 11, 1998).

²*Ibid.*

policies would entail eschewing actions that drive Russia and China together, such as NATO enlargement, the dismemberment of the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and the construction of both theater missile defense (TMD) and national missile defense (NMD) in the United States and among its Pacific allies.³ The fact that the Clinton administration has pursued exactly those policies while cutting back on material support for Russia's economic transformation and democratization indicates a fundamental complacency or lack of concern that this relationship can pose serious problems to the United States or Asia.

The following arguments are used to support this outlook of unconcern about Russo-Chinese ties. Despite earlier hopes, the economic relationship between the two countries has not nor is likely in the near future to show great promise. Moreover, since neither Russia nor even the Russian Far East will be a major player in or a gateway to Asia's dynamic economies, Russia will remain a marginal player in Asia. At the same time, Russian fears concerning the implications of a likely Sinification of the Russian Far East (Primorskii Krai) will inhibit cooperation and effective Russian policymaking for Asia in general.⁴ Earlier hopes for the development of flourishing regional economic networks along the Russo-Chinese frontier to take part in Asia's overall dynamism have faltered due to failures in Russian reforms; mafia rule in Primorskii Krai; mutual bureaucratic slowness, suspicion, and obstruction; and demagogic fears that a Sinification of Primorskii Krai through illegal and unrestricted immigration and commercial penetration might overturn Russian rule there.⁵ Moscow's regional failures in the Far East far outweigh China's policy failures and

³Rajan Menon, "The Strategic Convergence Between Russia and China," *Survival* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 117.

⁴Elizabeth Wishnick, "Prospects for the Sino-Russian Partnership: Views from Moscow and the Russian Far East," *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 12, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1998): 418-51; Gilbert Rozman, "The Crisis of the Russian Far East: Who Is to Blame?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 44, no. 5 (September-October 1997): 3-12; Gilbert Rozman, "Troubled Choices for the Russian Far East: Decentralization, Open Regionalism, and Internationalism," *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 11, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1997): 537-69.

⁵*Ibid.* See also the following articles by Gilbert Rozman: "Northeast China: Waiting for Regionalism," *Problems of Post-Communism* 45, no. 4 (July-August 1998): 3-13; "Flawed Regionalism: Reconceptualizing Northeast Asia in the 1990s," *Pacific Review* 11, no. 1 (1998): 1-27.

rule out rapid future progress.⁶ Moreover, the dependence that both sides have on international financial institutions, Western investment, and trade dwarfs their joint prospects—except perhaps in limited areas like oil, gas, and atomic energy. China and Russia need Western capital, technology, and investment support more than they need each other's limited ability to provide for their economic needs.⁷ Meanwhile, since both states openly proclaim that economic reconstruction is their main task and that their foreign policy's primary goal is to create auspicious conditions for such reconstruction, such dependence on the West will continue for a long time. This dependence arguably prevents or at least restrains them from forging an excessively intimate anti-American relationship lest Washington retaliate against them economically.⁸

Politically, too, the United States allegedly has little to fear. Moscow and Beijing proclaim that their increasingly intimate strategic cooperative partnership is not an alliance, will not become one, nor is directed against any third party.⁹ Even though the two states have publicly attacked U.S. policy in their joint commitment to an antihegemonic stance in world politics, matters have essentially stopped there. Certainly, there is no reliable sign of a pledge of future military support for each other in case of conflict (as opposed to unconfirmed reports of an alliance)—although there is a nuclear nonaggression pact that completely contradicts Moscow's oft-proclaimed military doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons in the event of a major threat to its vital interests.¹⁰ Furthermore, not only does China have a longstanding suspicion of alliances going back to its earlier unhappy experience with Moscow from 1949 to 1960, the present "strategic conver-

⁶Ibid.

⁷For example, see the editorial, "Bear and Dragon," *Financial Times*, August 28, 1999, 11 and "Can a Bear Love a Dragon?" *The Economist*, April 26, 1997, 19-21.

⁸Ibid.

⁹John W. Garver, "Sino-Russian Relations," in *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, ed. Samuel S. Kim (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 119.

¹⁰Open Media Research Institute, *Daily Digest*, May 13, 1995; Xuewu Gu, "China's Policy Toward Russia," *Aussenpolitik* (English edition), 1993, no. 3:293; Xinhua Domestic Service, Beijing in Chinese, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *China* [hereafter *FBIS-CHI*]-94-018 (January 27, 1994): 10-11.

gence" will also probably soon lead again to a parting of ways. China's rising power and Russia's visible decline in Asia make their relationship nothing more than a marriage of convenience that will end in possibly acrimonious divorce once China's challenge to Russia emerges. That challenge will be comprehensive in scope, made up of elements of advancing military power, China's demand for greater global political influence, threats to the Russian Far East, and economic superiority.¹¹ Moreover, prominent military, political, and other figures in Russia who follow foreign and defense affairs worry about rising Chinese power or express deep reservation about maintaining excessively close ties to China.¹²

Therefore, this historically grounded enmity is inevitably expected to reassert itself in the future and break up the present partnership. Even now there are substantial differences between both governments as well as undercurrents of suspicion or condescension toward Russia on Beijing's part. For example, Li Jingjie, deputy director of China's Institute of Eastern Europe, Russia, and the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), writes that

There is reason to suppose that those in Russia who take and implement decisions on matters of foreign policy could not so much as speak about translating into action the country's main foreign policy task, that is provision of favorable international conditions for reform, and above all of peace and stability on the borders, if establishing good-neighborly relations with China had proved impossible. . . . In international affairs the West often looks on Russia as a state "defeated in the Cold War" and denies it equal status. NATO's expansion to the east and attempts by the West to prevent CIS integration go to aggravate the differences and clash of interests between Russia and the West. In the circumstances, it is most important for Russia to have equitable, trust-based partnership relationships and consolidate cooperation with another great power,

¹¹For recent but differing assessments of China's military-economic rise, see Steven Rosefield, "Changing the Guard in the Asia-Pacific," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 6 (November-December 1999): 37-47; Lawrence E. Grinter, ed., *The Dragon Awakes: China's Military Modernization—Trends and Implications* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: USAF Counterproliferation Center, 1999); and Mark A. Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization: Implications for the United States* (Carlisle Barracks, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999); James R. Lilley and David Shambaugh, eds., *China's Military Faces the Future* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999). These are only some of the more recent and provocative of the many studies on China's rising economic and military power.

¹²Barbara Opall-Rome, "Economics, Russian Reluctance Slow PLA Arms Drive," *Defense News*, February 8, 1999, 9.

China, which stands up for its sovereignty and independence. This is undoubtedly important, if Russia is to act as a stabilizer and exert an influence on international affairs.¹³

Although correct, this argument is still not palatable. Moreover, through 1998 there were specific important policy differences between Moscow and Beijing on key issues. Russia supported but China opposed Japan's campaign for a UN Security Council permanent seat. China has done nothing to bring Russia into the four-power Korean peace process. Supporters of this view also observe that while Moscow supported the Japan-U.S. Mutual Security Treaty and through 1998 said nothing about the clearly anti-Chinese aspects of the new guidelines, China consistently—and arguably with good reason—has adopted a more skeptical if not antagonistic view of the alliance that Beijing perceives to be clearly targeted against its ambitions.¹⁴ Indeed, one can argue that Moscow's rapprochement with Beijing was precisely what created sufficient concern in Tokyo.

Therefore, the United States also should not unduly fear Russian efforts to proclaim the Russia-China-India strategic triangle being touted by ex-Premier Yevgeny Primakov.¹⁵ Sino-Indian rivalry is too deep and extensive to be overcome by such transparent means. Therefore, we need not overestimate the likelihood of such a triangle. Regarding the military side of the Sino-Russian relationship, while the transfer of Russian weapons and technology to China is troubling, observers should bear in mind that Russia allegedly does not generally sell state-of-the-art systems, the supplies of weapons are limited, and hard bargaining has occurred which reflects the Russian General Staff's suspicion of China.¹⁶ Moreover, the fact that China buys so much advanced military technology from Russia shows that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) still cannot field technologically sophisticated systems of its own making and therefore China cannot be

¹³Li Jingjie, "The Progress of Chinese-Russian Relations: From Friendship to Strategic Partnership," *Far Eastern Affairs*, May-June 1997, no. 3:40.

¹⁴June Teufel Dreyer, "China's Military Strategy Regarding Japan," in Lilley and Shambaugh, *China's Military Faces the Future*, 322-33, esp. 328-30.

¹⁵*The Monitor*, December 23 and 24, 1998.

¹⁶See note 12 above.

a "peer competitor" to the West.¹⁷ Actually, there exist strains in what Moscow calls "military-technical cooperation," i.e., arms sales, in 1997-98.¹⁸ In any case, the PLA is supposedly so technologically backward that Washington (and by extension U.S. allies) really has little to fear from the PLA as a potential peer competitor.¹⁹ The overwhelming consensus of U.S. writing on China's armed forces agrees that China is not now a peer competitor and will not be one anytime soon, and doubts that China can consummate the revolution in military affairs (RMA) to become such a competitor.²⁰ Especially when Japan's formidable Self-Defense Forces are added to U.S. military power, any fear of China based on substantiated force-on-force models should disappear.²¹

A Critique of the Consensus

Nevertheless, this essay argues that this consensus is unduly complacent and that the current evolution of the Sino-Russian relationship merits much more careful scrutiny. This consensus rests on certain tacit but unproven assumptions that have a powerful influence on U.S. thinking about Sino-Russian relationship. The main argument of this paper is that many of the assumptions underlying the above consensus are either of limited or no application to this relationship or are based on a failure to assess closely its ongoing evolution. Such analysis fails to examine the evidence of that evolution and the dynamic context within which it occurs. The

¹⁷For one example, Kathy Chen, "China's Inability to Keep Subs Running Shows Broader Woes Plaguing Military," *Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 1997, 1, 11.

¹⁸See note 12 above.

¹⁹For a comprehensive review of the literature on Chinese national security and defense policy that makes these arguments and cites much of the literature relevant to this discussion, see Jing-Dong Yuan, "Studying Chinese Security Policy: Toward an Analytical Framework," *Journal of East Asian Affairs* 13, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1999): 131-95, esp. 153-56; and David M. Lampton, *Managing U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-first Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Nixon Center, 1999), 11-19.

²⁰*Ibid.* RMA is the adaptation of contemporary information and telecommunications technology for military purposes.

²¹*Ibid.*

dynamic contexts may be seen as the global relationship among Russia, China, and the United States; the fast-moving developments in East Asian security; and fundamental changes in economics and military affairs due to economic-technological progress. Shorthand terms for the last context would be globalization and the RMA.

First, there is the prevailing U.S. belief that economics plays a large, even dominating, role in shaping the foreign policies of Russia and China. An accompanying notion is that governments resemble homo economicus, the economic man who rationally calculates and follows his self-interest. This reasoning also equates to governments. Allegedly Russia and China are rationally calculating the utility of leaning toward or against America in world affairs. Since economics plays so large a determining factor in their foreign policies, both governments will inevitably (even if admittedly after much equivocating) follow their best (economic) interests and make deals with Washington and its allies.

This emphasis on the shared economics-driven rationality of the two Asian giants also contains the patronizing assumption that not only are nations all alike, but also that the United States knows Russia's and China's needs and interests as well or even better than their own governments do. This idea that Washington knows best only reflects U.S. insularity, complacency, and continuing propensity to intervene with insufficient forethought in their affairs, all characteristics that provoke anger and even collaboration against U.S. "hegemonism."

A second powerful assumption is that since the United States is the strongest power around, Russia and China have no choice, given their manifold problems, but to go along with U.S. demands. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has frequently stated that the United States is "the indispensable nation," "kind of the organizing principle of the international system," and that "if we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future."²² Such egotism, self-righteousness, and complacency blind policy-makers to the prospect of potentially successful anti-American challenges

²²Bob Herbert, "War Games," *New York Times*, February 23, 1998, E17.

or alliances abroad. Worse yet, the insistence on U.S. power and righteousness as well as the correctness of American prescriptions for their domestic and foreign policies injects a strong dose of ideological contestation over international politics into the U.S. relationship with Beijing and Moscow and solidifies the relationship between the latter two. As U.S. pressure on both states grows (such as has occurred through the Kosovo conflict and the current debate over NMD), these ideological approaches and the policies associated with them reduce the domestic space that China and Russia have to maneuver at home and, accordingly, lead to a hardening of their respective foreign policies.

Thus advocates of the benign view of Russo-Chinese rapprochement ignore entirely the ideological dimension of both states' policies. In addition to the increasingly overt clashes over specific foreign policy issues, there are also uniquely national but converging analyses of world affairs among Chinese and Russian scholars and policymakers that substantially diverge from and challenge American assessments. This ideological reaction is clearly a response not only to direct American pressure but also more broadly to globalization. Both China and Russia, as their elites well know, are caught up in powerful currents of global economic-political-military trends from which they cannot escape.²³ Indeed, the very fact that both China and Russia are most afraid of internal threats to their relatively weak states makes their dilemma all the more poignant as they confront the challenges of globalization.²⁴ Since most threats, or at least the major ones, are internal, the situations and policies of these two countries reflect the typical security paradigm of Third World states, who must simultaneously enhance the national capacity for governance amidst the "hurricane" of tumultuous and uncontrollable international transformation.²⁵ Like Peter the Great in the metaphor of the nineteenth century Russian historian Vasily Kliuchevsky, they must build their house from the top down with a shortage of quali-

²³Samuel S. Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice," in Kim, *China and the World*, 4-6, 21-23.

²⁴Ibid.; Stephen J. Blank, "Russian Democracy: From the Future to the Past," *Demokratizatsiya* (Democratization) 6, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 550-77.

²⁵Kim, "Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice," 19.

fied builders and materials amidst a raging storm.

Certainly, Russia and China tenaciously defend the primacy of state-centered sovereignty and realism in international affairs against the denigration of traditional notions of sovereignty as well as U.S. liberalism and support for globalization.²⁶ This ideological stance inspires their attacks on U.S. unilateralism and Washington's habit of bypassing China, Russia, and even the United Nations in the resolution of major security issues. For example, Russia's multipolarity strategy, largely formulated by Foreign Minister and then Premier Yevgeny Primakov, duly expresses Russia's need to react to American pressure. By crafting this "strategy" Primakov not only gained domestic support for his policies but also forged a compelling rationale for his policies that attracted support for such key positions as rapprochement with China. He also provided a new and more acceptable basis for imparting an ideological dimension to the rivalry with Washington and a suitable cover for regional engagement in Asia. China follows the same process with its long-established "five principles of peaceful coexistence" and a classically realist and state-oriented doctrine of sovereignty which Beijing defends with extreme tenacity in order to sustain domestic support around a nationalist project.²⁷

Russia's multipolarity strategy is composed of three guiding concepts, as noted in the scheme laid out by R. Craig Nation of the U.S. Army War College: global multipolarity, preservation of Russia's integrity and primacy in the CIS, and regional engagement that cultivates new partners or allies.²⁸ These three concepts frame Russia's multipolarity policy in reaction to the enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic security zone as far as Central Asia.

²⁶Ibid., 21-23; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Institutional Structures and Chinese Foreign Policy," in Kim, *China and the World*, 73-79.

²⁷Ibid. For recent official American views, see Strobe Talbott, "Self-Determination in an Interdependent World," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2000, available at <<http://www.foreignpolicy.com>>; Remarks as Delivered by Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre to the U.S. Army Seminar on "The Future of the U.S. Military Presence in Europe," at the University of Chicago Law School, Chicago, Illinois, August 4, 1999.

²⁸R. Craig Nation, *Beyond the Cold War: Change and Continuity in U.S.-Russian Relations* (Carlisle Barracks, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997), 17-25.

Multipolarity means that no state, including the United States, can act unilaterally. Even Washington must coordinate with other states, and Moscow believes that NATO will gradually decline in significance in the absence of a common enemy. Thus new ad hoc groupings will form to constrain U.S. unilateralist propensities. Therefore, multipolarity in Asia encourages Moscow to seek agreements with any and all Asian states, enter all available security forums, and create mechanisms to consolidate those accords and restrain America's power. These formulas of multilateral or even collective security systems can be used to channel the rise of China within an acceptable framework so that such a large neighbor does not become threatening to Russia. Russia's rapprochement with Japan, noted above, exemplifies the idealized version of how that process should work.

Russia's agreements and accords in Asia—such as Russian membership in the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—are intended to gain a secure and legitimate basis for defending Russia's interests and perspectives regarding all major issues of Asian security and to reduce America's ability to act unilaterally. Because Russia failed to put its house in order as an Asian economic power, Moscow had to solicit China's help for participation in formal Asian security mechanisms like APEC.²⁹ Hence multipolarity and other Primakovian ideas represent attempts to minimize the dangers stemming from Russia's visible marginalization in Asia.

As developed by Primakov and his successor at the Foreign Ministry, Igor Ivanov, this diplomatic initiative searches for leverage by trying to create regional and/or strategic partnerships with states who are willing to some degree to align their goals with Moscow's in different areas of the globe.³⁰ As an article in the Russian Foreign Ministry's journal *International Affairs* stated,

²⁹Stephen J. Blank, "China and the Transcaspian," *Cyber-Caravan* 1, no. 8 (August 1999): 4-5.

³⁰*Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Communist Youth League Truth) (Moscow), September 30, 1998, in FBIS, *Central Eurasia* [hereafter *FBIS-SOV*], September 30, 1998.

For Russia, the transition to a multipolar world will create the possibility of diversifying the directions of foreign policy and of developing constructive strategic relations immediately with some influential partners. This increases the possibility of a maneuver necessary for ensuring the country's security under the conditions of a resource deficit and of the transition period in the development of our country which is attended by difficulties.³¹

Ivanov echoed this sentiment in observing that Russian foreign policy now demanded the skill of seeking compromises, of considering different states' interests, and of seeking allies, "not for life but for a specific given instance."³²

Multipolarity also denies that there are winners and losers in the post-Cold War world. As such, this concept aims to camouflage the extent of Russia's diminishment and to elevate Moscow on par with the level of Washington.³³ America's future decline and the rise of fissures within NATO or among America's Asian allies are taken as long-term givens that Russia must exploit. Actually, multipolarity is a heuristic and rhetorical device for reclaiming the status accruing to Russia under bipolarity (or the semblance thereof) by reducing Washington and upgrading Moscow as a power who can leverage different coalitions in Eurasia. Primakov and

³¹V. Lukov, "Russia's Security Challenges," *International Affairs* (Moscow), 1997, no. 1: 14-15.

³²See note 30 above.

³³"Yeltsin Address to Diplomats," *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'* (International Life), June 1998, no. 6 and *The Russian Weekly*, no. 6 (July 24, 1998), available through <davidjohnson@erols.com>. See also *Vooruzhenie, Politika, Konversiya* (Armament, Politics, and Conversion) (Moscow), February 1, 1997, no. 2, in *FBIS-SOV*, August 23, 1998, for an interview with Ivan Rybkin, then secretary of the Security Council; "Russia's National Interests," *Johnson's Russia List*, August 15, 1997, available through <davidjohnson@erols.com>; Paul Goble, "Can Russian Diplomacy Hold Russia Together," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines*, September 23, 1998; *The Monitor*, March 19 and September 23, 1998; Yevgeny Primakov, "Russia: Reforms and Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* (Moscow), 1998, no. 4:3-6; "Ivan Rybkin on Russia's Global Role," *Johnson's Russia List*, July 8, 1997, available through <davidjohnson@erols.com>; *Izvestiya* (News) (Moscow), January 21, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV*, February 3, 1998; Oleg V. Davydov, "Russia's Foreign Policy in Transition: Prospects and Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region," *Asian Perspective* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 53-69; Mikhail A. Alekseev, "Russia's Cold Peace Consensus: Transcending the Presidential Election," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 1997): 33-51; Ambassador Evgeny V. Afanasiev, "Asia-Pacific Region: A Russian Perspective" (Paper presented at the Annual National Defense University Asia-Pacific Symposium, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 1-2, 1999); Finnish Institute of International Affairs, *Russia Beyond 2000: The Prospects for Russian Developments and Their Implications for Finland* (Helsinki: 1999), 1-2.

Ivanov have explicitly advanced the notion that Russia is a global power whose voice must be heeded across the entire international system despite a lack of the means with which to play this role.³⁴ Many analysts inside Russia also have either advocated or noted that Russia demands a position equal to that of the United States at the "presidium table" of world affairs.³⁵ Thus Sergei Rogov, director of Russia's Institute for the USA and Canada and a prominent advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, argued that to counter NATO's disdain for Russia's interests and status,

The aims of Russian diplomacy should be as follows: First of all, Moscow should seek to preserve the special character of Russian-American relations. Washington should recognize the exceptional status of the Russian Federation in the formation of a new system of international relations, a role different from that which Germany, Japan, China, or any other center of power plays in the global arena.³⁶

Note that even Primakov's 1998 proposal for an Asian strategic triangle sought to make Russia the agent of Sino-Indian reconciliation.³⁷ Moreover, Moscow hopes to create an anti-American bloc in Asia. This bloc would counter trends toward national missile defense and an Asian NATO, solidify an anti-Islamic bloc in Central Asia, and draw closer to India and China than either is to each other. This example of Nation's third principle of regional engagement also has as a goal support for Russia's defense industry.³⁸

Primakov and current President Vladimir Putin see the defense indus-

³⁴Ibid. See also Sergei M. Rogov, "Russia and NATO's Enlargement: The Search for a Compromise at the Helsinki Summit" (Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Va.), CIM 513/May 1997, 10.

³⁵E-mail letter from Darrell Hammer, *Johnson's Russia List*, February 5, 1997; Dmitry Trenin, "Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy: NATO Expansion Can Have Negative Consequences for the West," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Independent News) (Moscow), February 5, 1997, e-mail transmission; J. Michael Waller, "Primakov's Imperial Line," *Perspective* 7, no. 3 (January-February 1997): 2-6; "Primakov, Setting a New, Tougher Foreign Policy," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* [hereafter *CDPP*] 49, no. 2 (February 12, 1997): 4-7.

³⁶Rogov, "Russia and NATO's Enlargement," 10.

³⁷See note 15 above.

³⁸ITAR-TASS, Moscow, in Russian, October 7, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, October 7, 1999; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, in *FBIS-SOV-98-077* (March 18, 1998).

try as the locomotive of a general industrial recovery.³⁹ A Sino-Indian conflict would force Moscow to choose between combatants, sacrificing one of its defense industry's two largest markets and risking the collapse of Russia's plans for industrial and military recovery. Hence regional engagement in Asia is driven by both strategic and more parochial concerns and interests.

Accordingly, multipolarity as foreign policy strategy actually represents an effort to maintain a great-power concert or duopoly with Washington that simultaneously constrains the United States and other potential challengers. As Nation observed:

Russian definitions [of multipolarity] imply a clear preference for cooperative great-power management and collective security options as global security models. They demand a rejection of unipolar or hegemonic alternatives however they might be packaged or phrased. They refuse to accept integration with a Western community that is pledged to perpetuate U.S. leadership or partnership models that relegate Russia to the status of junior partner at best. According to the multipolarity scenario, U.S. preeminence is neither a desired nor a sustainable alternative. One of the key challenges for a new Russian foreign policy must therefore be the search for leverage to block or frustrate U.S. pretensions.⁴⁰

Logically, this also entails ensuring Russia's integrity and securing its role as the undisputed hegemon in the CIS, the second element in this ideological-political program of multipolarity. The several corollaries that flow from Russia's quest for exclusive hegemony in the CIS all negate cooperative solutions in the CIS in favor of unalloyed hegemonic spheres of influence and zero-sum games, all within a context of traditional Realpolitik.⁴¹ However, such derivations also entail ever-closer reliance on Beijing as an indispensable support for Russia's quasi-imperial project. In order to obtain the goals of hegemony and eventual reunification of the CIS (i.e., to preserve and revive the imperial and antidemocratic heritage), Russia must

³⁹*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Electronic version), July 22, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV-98-222* (August 13, 1998); *Izvestiya*, December 24, 1996, in *FBIS-SOV-96-248* (December 26, 1996).

⁴⁰Nation, *Beyond the Cold War*, 18.

⁴¹See Sergei Rogov et al., *Security Concerns of the New Russia*, volume 2 (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analysis, 1995), 34, where this demand is made explicitly; Lena Jonson, "In Search of a Doctrine: Russian Interventionism in Conflicts in Its 'Near Abroad,'" *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 5, no. 3 (Winter 1996): 447.

have amity with China against America. Increasingly, Russia must rely on China for help in the CIS (e.g., by having China sell missiles to Armenia, Russia's staunch ally).⁴² Both China and Russia have now made preservation of the integrity of their states against threats from "Islamism" a major priority and a basis for their cooperation. This policy has only made more overt what was always a key feature of this relationship.⁴³ However, as crises throughout the southern CIS manifest themselves with increasing force amidst a context of intensifying international rivalry for influence in the area, Russia and China will cooperate even more closely in the CIS (and presumably elsewhere) against Washington's efforts to extend American influence in the CIS.

Since the United States seeks the integration of those members of the CIS into the Euro-Atlantic "ecumene," Sino-Russian cooperation to prevent NATO from making further inroads into Central Asia will also intensify.⁴⁴ While China is probably quite happy to leave the burden of quashing insurgencies and unrest throughout Central Asia to Russia as Beijing pursues a blend of repression and development in Xinjiang, Beijing also has signaled its increasing support for suppressing the causes of insurgency throughout the CIS.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the above type of analysis is largely missing from U.S. analyses of this relationship.

Nor does anyone in the United States seem to take seriously the possibility that anti-Islamism (and anti-American tendencies) might also incline India (a strong supporter of measures against "terrorism") toward more overt cooperation with China and Russia to squelch such insurgency in Central Asia. China undertook limited efforts to promote such cooperation in 1995 but was not successful.⁴⁶ As of yet, India has not decisively

⁴²See note 29 above.

⁴³Xinhua Domestic Service, Beijing in Chinese, August 25, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 26, 1999.

⁴⁴President William J. Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for a New Century" (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1997), 18; President William J. Clinton, "A National Security Strategy for the Next Century" (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 1998), 32-33.

⁴⁵*FBIS-CHI*, August 26, 1999.

⁴⁶Stephen J. Blank, "Central Asia and South Asia in a New World Order," *Asian Defence Journal*, July 1995, 28-31.

committed itself to supporting either Russian or Chinese objectives in Central Asia. Some analysts even suspect that there are emerging bases for cooperation with Washington as part of a broader concern to reduce Washington's preoccupation with China.⁴⁷ However, if the historical pattern of American disinterest in Indian perspectives and interests continues, India may feel obliged to turn to Moscow and Beijing. While tensions remain strong between India and both China and its ally Pakistan, a Sino-Indian strategic dialogue has resumed and both sides have stated their desire to improve bilateral relations. Certainly, rapprochement with Delhi would be a major gain for China's campaign against "hegemonism," as Jiang Zemin has stated publicly.⁴⁸ Russian diplomacy and media exaggerate chances for the kind of partnership Primakov seems to have envisioned, but any major improvement in Sino-Indian relations would be at America's expense. Moreover, India's discomfort at many American policies (e.g., the bypassing of the UN to dismember Serbia and on nuclear testing and non-proliferation issues) could facilitate such a rapprochement with Beijing and Moscow. Again, few analysts seem to have taken such possibilities seriously.

This failure is possibly due to the power of the third major but questionable tacit assumption governing U.S. assessments of the Russo-Chinese relationship, namely that what has been will be. The history of the Russo-Chinese relationship supposedly conclusively shows that the intrinsic hostility between these two states precludes their forming a lasting alliance. A similar logic holds for the Sino-Indian relationship. The disparity between Russia's and China's interests and China's rising yet Russia's declining power all but guarantee an unhappy end to this latest marriage.⁴⁹ However, this comforting reliance on history as a determining factor is an

⁴⁷See C. Raja Mohan, "Fostering Strategic Stability and Promoting Regional Cooperation," in *Engaging India: U.S. Strategic Relations with the World's Largest Democracy*, ed. Gary K. Bertsch, Seema Gahlaut, and Anupam Srivastava (New York: Routledge, 1999), 25-26; Kanti Bajpai, "India-U.S. Foreign Policy Concerns: Cooperation and Conflict," *ibid.*, 197-98; Igor Khripunov and Anupam Srivastava, "Contending with the 'Bear-ish' Arms Market: U.S.-India Strategic Cooperation and Russia," *ibid.*, 245-46.

⁴⁸Mohan, "Fostering Strategic Stability," 38.

⁴⁹Jennifer Anderson, "The Limits of Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership," *Adelphi Papers*, no. 315 (London: 1998).

oddly static concept compared to the corresponding pervasive official belief that the dynamics of globalization inevitably will push these governments toward liberal democracy. If revolutionary change is the law of world affairs, then the past relationships between Russia and China logically have little reliability as a guide to a dynamic present and even more dynamic future.

The prevailing view also completely omits any mention of the Asian or global context within which this relationship has evolved and is still evolving (e.g., the Indian and Central Asian factors). As many commentators point out, Russo-Chinese partnership has changed considerably since 1982, when Leonid Brezhnev made the first overtures.⁵⁰ A mechanical and linear transposition from the past to the future is faulty since this relationship has evolved from intense Cold War rivalry through gradual normalization, to friendship, then to partnership, and is now evolving still further.

Moreover, this evolution cannot be understood outside of the context of each state's evolving policies and self-perception in an Asia and a world that are also undergoing profound upheavals. To the extent that major qualitative change occurs in Asia's security equation (e.g., Korean unification or war, the construction of a U.S.-Japanese TMD, America's renunciation of the ABM Treaty, or further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction), equally likely is that all major relationships, including this one, will undergo comparable transformation. Thus analyses of the Sino-Russian relationship are too static and neglectful of the dynamic context wherein the relationship now occurs.

These assessments also neglect the third aspect of multipolarity as delineated by Nation and discussed above—regional engagement. Moscow seeks to cement partnerships or alliances with key Asian states like India and China to balance American ambitions and to reassert Russia's own independent prerogatives up to the point where a fundamentally competitive relationship with the United States begins. Moscow also seeks to leverage those relationships so that these partners will acquiesce in an acknowledged Russian role as a major player in Asia.

⁵⁰Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications 1945-1990* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).

Toward Alliance?

Lastly, the prevailing consensus relies on obsolete or outdated evidence or on a refusal to examine newly available evidence. While undoubtedly the Sino-Russian bilateral economic relationship has not developed as planned and will not improve anytime soon, nevertheless the overall relationship continues to grow politically and militarily. PRC Premier Zhu Rongji even told his Russian interlocutors that the best way to proceed was to separate political from economic issues, working to improve the economic relationship but also to focus on expanding the political and strategic considerations that drive the two states closer together.⁵¹ Evidently, today, not economics but rather increasingly anti-"hegemonic" (i.e., anti-American) political and military considerations drive this relationship. Moreover, those military-political considerations are intensifying in importance and creating a larger community of interest between Moscow and Beijing.⁵²

Specifically, American intransigence and unilateralism in Iraq, Kosovo, and over the issue of missile defense has vastly strengthened the incentives for both Russia and China to draw closer to each other politically and militarily. Even more importantly, both governments see America as a major source of threats. However, for Russia's armed forces the possibility of another Kosovo-type operation in the CIS directed against Russia or its interests on behalf of aggrieved minorities represents a nightmare scenario. This very scenario is the template supposedly outlined in NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept.⁵³ Indeed, the Russian General Staff saw Kosovo and Bosnia as being the equivalent of Chechnya and Nagorno-Karabakh.⁵⁴ Since both states see the aforementioned common threats to their position and interests as coming mainly from the United States, their threat assess-

⁵¹*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 16, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV-98-197* (July 17, 1998).

⁵²*FBIS-CHI*, July 16, 1999.

⁵³Conversations with Russian General Staff officers and analysts, Moscow and Helsinki, June 1999.

⁵⁴ITAR-TASS in English, September 16, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, September 17, 1999; *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (Independent Military Review) (Moscow), November 6-12, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV*, November 9, 1998.

ments have drastically converged. NATO's Kosovo operation, the revelation of U.S. willingness to bypass the UN, Western support for enlarging NATO through the Partnership for Peace right up to China's borders with Central Asia, and the U.S. clear determination to proceed with TMD with Japan—all threaten China and Russia's concepts of strategic stability, their military goals vis-à-vis Taiwan, and the ABM Treaty. These moves on the part of the United States have all consolidated and extended shared interests and perspectives on world politics.⁵⁵ That threats from Muslim nationalists in Central Asia and Chechnya coincide with China's ongoing instability in Xinjiang and the threat of Taiwan's secession has also further strengthened the common threat perception shared by the two powers. As this identity of views and policy orientation has taken hold, Russia's political leadership—particularly Yeltsin, Primakov, and now Putin—has consistently ratcheted up the relationship's formal status to the extent where many desire the term "strategic partnership" be inserted into their summit communiqués or that a strategic triangle be created.⁵⁶

Since 1998, Russia's government and armed forces have drawn significantly closer to China. Russia is selling China systems and technologies that hitherto had been off-limits. These include several state-of-the-art systems, exposing the falsehood of the allegations noted above that such sales do not occur. Moscow has agreed to sell Su-30 fighters which qualitatively enhance Chinese aerial capabilities by giving China over the horizon capabilities that maximize the potential of its Russian-made Su-27 fighters.⁵⁷ A joint Russian-Israeli program to sell China an AWACS-type system is moving forward despite American objections to Israel.⁵⁸ There are also reports that Moscow has also agreed to facilitate domestic Chinese production of the Su-30s and that China will buy the forthcoming Su-35

⁵⁵"FBIS Trends: PRC Media on Yeltsin Visit," *FBIS-SOV*, December 23, 1999.

⁵⁶Personal communication with Dr. Sherman Garnett of the Michigan State University and *RIA* (Moscow), in English, September 28, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, September 28, 1999.

⁵⁷*Yazhou zhoukan* (Asia Weekly) (Hong Kong), August 22, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, August 25, 1999; Col. Larry M. Wortzel, *China's Military Potential* (Carlisle Barracks, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1998), 17; *Interfax* (Moscow), August 6, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, August 6, 1999.

⁵⁸*Foreign Report* (Internet version) (London), July 6, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, July 8, 1999.

and Su-37 advanced combat fighters.⁵⁹ All these programs significantly expand Chinese capabilities vis-à-vis Taiwan and other Asian militaries as well as the U.S. Navy and Air Force. Pentagon sources also state that Moscow has agreed to transfer or already transferred missile defense technologies to China that had previously not been available.⁶⁰ The sale of nuclear-capable SS-N-22 Sunburn (Moskit in Russian) anti-ship missiles and the projected sale of the even more advanced SS-N-35 (Yakhont) also represent a clear strategic coordination against the U.S. Navy. These and other policies are part of China's comprehensive conventional, nuclear, and information warfare buildup designed to challenge the United States, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries.⁶¹ Finally, the *South China Morning Post* recently alleged that Russia offered China a military alliance.⁶² Beijing reportedly turned this down but instead secured an agreement on the transfer of advanced technologies from Russia. This report accords with the 1999 statement by then Premier Putin to PRC President Jiang Zemin that Russia highly appreciates cooperation with China in all fields, adding that "the Russian government is of the view that under the present international situation, Russia should establish with China a strategic partnership in all respects and further expand trade and economic cooperation with China."⁶³

Certainly, China is receiving those technologies, and after and due to the Kosovo conflict, arms and technology transfers will increase. In March 1999, Moscow and Beijing also announced that both governments had been collaborating for several months on their own version of NMD against the United States, a fact that also suggests cooperation in developing and transferring weapons and technologies and deploying offensive missiles to de-

⁵⁹ *FBIS-CHI*, August 25, 1999.

⁶⁰ Based on conversations with Pentagon analysts in Washington, D.C., March 1999.

⁶¹ "Revealed: Russian Ship-Killer Poised for Export," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 6, 1997, 10; Grinter, *The Dragon Awakes*; Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*; Lilley and Shambaugh, *China's Military Faces the Future*.

⁶² Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "The Bear-Hug Alliance," *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), September 1, 1999, 15.

⁶³ Xinhua, Beijing in English, September 12, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, September 12, 1999; *Izvestiya*, June 9, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, June 9, 1999; *RIA*, August 25, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, August 25, 1999; *FBIS-SOV*, September 28, 1999.

feat such systems in Asia and beyond.⁶⁴ The fact that both governments have stated that they would renounce all existing arms control treaties if the United States built its NMD system confirms the announcement in March 1999 of their preexisting political coordination on this issue.⁶⁵

Admittedly some in Moscow (and presumably Beijing) maintain suspicions regarding the aims and capacities of the other.⁶⁶ However, in Russia either these critics are not in power or their objections have been largely overcome due to superseding trends and events. For example, the Russian General Staff was reportedly unwilling to part, in many but hardly all cases, with their best platforms and weapons lest China one day turn on Russia.⁶⁷ However, many things have happened, and are even in the public record, to modify that fear to the point where such individuals now enthusiastically champion a deeper Russo-Chinese military connection.⁶⁸ Having seen China's difficulties in assimilating and mastering foreign technologies, such Russians are apparently now persuaded that they have little to fear for the next ten to fifteen years.⁶⁹ At the same time, arms producers have raised urgent demands to sell abroad in order to obtain cash with which to produce weapons for Russia's armed forces. There also exists strong and enduring governmental support for arms sales in order to save the defense and civilian industries, especially during a period of absence of other sources of financing for defense spending. Opportunities for personal enrichment, moreover, have also softened opposition to upgraded arms sales and technology transfer.⁷⁰ Accordingly, the view has grown that China is not now

⁶⁴For a Chinese admission of this fact, see *Ching Pao* (The Mirror), July 1, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 9, 1999.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.; ITAR-TASS World Service, Moscow in Russian, October 27, 1998; *Interfax*, Moscow in Russian, July 20, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, July 20, 1999.

⁶⁷John Pomfret, "Russia and China, Allies Once Again?" *Washington Post* (National Weekly Edition), November 30, 1998, 16.

⁶⁸*FBIS-SOV*, October 27, 1998; *Ching Pao*, July 1, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, July 12, 1999, cited in Kenneth W. Allen and Eric A. McVadon, *China's Foreign Military Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1999), 59-63.

⁶⁹See note 67 above.

⁷⁰Stephen J. Blank, *The Dynamics of Russian Weapon Sales to China* (Carlisle Barracks, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997), 18-19; "Far East: China,"

or will in the foreseeable future be a threat.⁷¹ In any event, Russia's interest lies more in having both direct insight into Chinese defense plans and leverage upon them by providing high-tech systems rather than to be shut out from understanding Chinese military developments.

We can see this change in the Russian military's outlook over last year. In 1999 both navies held joint exercises. Earlier, Russia sold China control and guidance systems from the SS-18 and SS-19 series to China for its nuclear Dongfeng missiles (DF-31 and DF-41) and is upgrading many categories of China's conventional and nuclear submarines, including the Kilos the PLA bought from Russia. In addition, whole factories have been transferred to China and are making parts for the Topol-M (SS-27) mobile ICBM. Russia is also helping develop a new generation of Chinese SSNs and SSBNs, the new 093 and 094 attack and missile submarines. Russia is helping China cover the hulls of these submarines with a layer of anechoic tiles to improve their quieting capabilities and help them elude detection. Comparing favorably with Victor III class SSNs, these submarines will conduct missions related to monitoring the daily activities of U.S. and Japanese warships and should become operational in 2007. There are also reports of Russia selling China parts for its mobile SS-24 and SS-25 TELs (transporter, erector, and launchers for nuclear missiles). Russia has also transferred blocking devices to China which facilitate the combat readiness of PRC missiles.⁷² Richard Speier, Henry Sokolski, and others have also noted that Russia has sold China solid and liquid-propellant missile technology for high-accuracy, mobile, multiple warheads which will have the effect of increasing the accuracy of China's ICBMs.⁷³ There are also re-

CDPP 48, no. 30 (August 21, 1996): 20-22; Michael Hirsh, "The Great Technology Give-away?" *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 5 (September/October 1998): 2-9, noting that the United States has a similar rationale for its sales of sophisticated weapons abroad.

⁷¹See note 67 above.

⁷²Blank, "Russian Arms Sales to China: Issues and Outcomes" (Paper presented at the CAPP-RAND Conference on China's Foreign Arms Suppliers, Oxford, England, June 26-29, 1997); "Top Secret Arms and Nuclear Deals," *Asia Times*, June 30, 1997, from *Johnson's Russia List*, available through <djohnson@erols.com>, July 1, 1997; Bill Gertz, "Russia Sells China High-Tech Artillery," *Washington Times*, July 3, 1997, 1.

⁷³*Strategic Survey, 1996-97* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1997), 170; Richard D. Fisher Jr., "Foreign Arms Acquisition and PLA Modernization" (Unpub-

ports of sales of ballistic and submarine missile technology to China as well.⁷⁴ Additional reports tell of plans to build up to fifty nuclear reactors for China.⁷⁵ More recently, Russia announced plans to intensify and enlarge its program of teaching Indian and Chinese nuclear physicists.⁷⁶

In October 1998, Defense Minister General Igor Sergeev committed Russia to help develop China's high-precision weapons systems and to transfer more production licenses to China. Evidently, Moscow contemplates China's military rise quite calmly and is ready to assist as long as China pays in cold cash.⁷⁷ This means assisting China's comprehensive military buildup in conventional weapons, nuclear weapons and delivery systems, and a massive investment in the tools and technologies of missile defense, information warfare, and space war mainly against the United States or its allies.⁷⁸

China has even greater ambitions, moreover. Russian reports recently observed that China's interest in rapprochement with Russia in the military sphere is generated by PRC developments and interests in up-

lished paper, November 1997), 4-5; Richard D. Fisher Jr., "Appendix: Gallery of Known and Possible Future Foreign Acquisitions by China," in Lilley and Shambaugh, *China's Military Faces the Future*, 127-91; personal communication with Peter Pry of the House National Security Committee staff, March 1998; *Jianchuan zhishi* (Ship Knowledge) (Beijing), 1997, no. 10, in *FBIS-CHI-98-065* (March 9, 1998); Bruce G. Blair, *Global Zero Alert for Nuclear Forces*, PRAC Paper, no. 13 (Project on Rethinking Arms Control, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland at College Park, December 1994), 7; Henry Sokolski, "Space Technology Transfers and Missile Proliferation" (Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, July 15, 1998, Pursuant to Public Law 201, 104th Congress, Appendix III, Unclassified Working Papers), 303-15; Richard H. Speier, "Testimony Before the Subcommittee on International Security Proliferation and Federal Services, Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate" (June 5, 1997).

⁷⁴Eric Arnett, "Conventional Arms Transfers," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 221-22.

⁷⁵Nikolai Novichkov, "Russia and China Tighten Links on Military Projects," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, August 19, 1998, 3.

⁷⁶*FBIS-TAC-97-295* (October 23, 1997); *RIA*, November 26, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV*, November 29, 1998.

⁷⁷ITAR-TASS World Service, Moscow in Russian, October 27, 1998, in *FBIS-SOV*, October 27, 1998.

⁷⁸Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, 89-123; You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 92-98; Kathryn L. Gauthier, "China as Peer Competitor? Trends in Nuclear Weapons, Space, and Information Warfare," in Grinter, *The Dragon Awakes*, 25-34.

grading ICBMs, improving the combat characteristics of its air force and navy, improving its air defense, building an ABM defense, and preparing for manned space flights.⁷⁹ Chinese purchases since 1991 reflect these priorities. China bought several RD-123 engines used for the second stage of the Zenit booster rocket. Upgrading booster rocket capability would allow China to cut its lag behind Russia by three to five years. China's aerospace sector sought to buy the technology of low-thrust, liquid-propellant rocket engines but instead is getting the technology for manufacturing solid-propellant rocket engines. In 1995-96, Chinese engineers unsuccessfully sought to purchase drawings of the R-36 (SS-18 Satan), a MIRVed missile with high-performance characteristics and specifications. Modification of the R-36 MU "Tsiklon" booster rocket is being used to insert heavy cargoes into orbit.

China also seeks high-precision technologies for the adaptation of missile and radar complexes. Reportedly, Russia gave China technology helpful to reducing the signature of cruise missiles and aircraft. Chinese astronauts are also being trained at Russian complexes, and China and Russia are discussing joint work on space missions and orbital stations. Finally, there are unconfirmed reports that China seeks to build an automated command and control system for its nuclear forces based on Russian-developed technology.⁸⁰ The revelation of a joint cooperative response to the U.S. NMD and TMD programs can only accelerate and intensify military cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. Thus in 1999, Russia and China also sent a resolution to the UN General Assembly to block nullification of the ABM Treaty. Moreover, Putin called for regular consultations between Russia's Security Council and China's Central Military Commission.⁸¹

⁷⁹Ibid. See also note 73 above and *Yaderny Kontrol* (Nuclear Control) (Moscow) 40, no. 4 (July-August 1998): 82-86, in *FBIS-SOV*, November 19, 1998; James C. Mulvenon and Richard H. Yang, eds., *The People's Liberation Army in the Information Age: Conference Proceedings* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1999), 132-34; Zalmay M. Khalizad et al., *The United States and a Rising China* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1999), 48-59.

⁸⁰*Yaderny Kontrol* 40, no. 4 (July-August 1998): 82-86, in *FBIS-SOV*, November 19, 1998.

⁸¹*Interfax*, Moscow in English, June 9, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, June 9, 1999.

There can be no doubt at whom most of these weapons and technologies are targeted. China's nuclear and conventional buildup threatens American and allied civilian countervalue targets, displays an interest in nuclear warfighting scenarios, and questions China's commitment to a doctrine of no first use of nuclear weapons.⁸² The Pentagon and American analysts have also identified China's interest in acquiring laser satellite and ASAT capability, equipment that is clearly intended to take out U.S. systems.⁸³ The Clinton administration recently and somewhat ruefully had to admit that China's small but growing ICBM forces are both targeted at and capable of hitting most of America's major cities. As China upgrades its capabilities (e.g., developing a neutron bomb and enhancing capabilities for ICBM strikes on the continental United States), Moscow is wittingly aiding these processes. Moscow clearly knows that the systems it sells China—whether conventional or nuclear—are mainly intended to deter or hold U.S. forces and targets at risk. Furthermore, the complacency with which we have watched the military aspect of this relationship will receive greater shocks in the future since "military-technical cooperation" will grow and undoubtedly encompass China's three-sided comprehensive military modernization noted above.⁸⁴

After the Kosovo operation, there are also some signs of partial success in Moscow's efforts to forge a "strategic triangle" with India and China.⁸⁵ After Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced that Wash-

⁸²Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, 96-97; Alastair Iain Johnston, "China's New 'Old Thinking': The Concept of Limited Deterrence," *International Security* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1995-96): 5-42; Larry M. Wortzel, "Ballistic Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction: The View from Beijing," in *Proceedings from the Conference on Countering the Missile Threat, International Military Strategies* (Washington, D.C.: Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, 1999), 190-203.

⁸³Stokes, *China's Strategic Modernization*, 109-23; Gauthier, "China as Peer Competitor?" 25-34.

⁸⁴RIA, Moscow in English, July 23, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, July 23, 1999; Simon Saradzhyan, "Russia Ponders Selling Nuclear Submarines to China," *Defense News*, September 27, 1999, 26; *FBIS-CHI*, July 9, 1999; *FBIS-SOV*, July 8, 1999; *Taiyang Pao* (The Sun) (Hong Kong), June 28, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, June 28, 1999.

⁸⁵*Segodnya* (Today) (Moscow), October 7, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, October 7, 1999; *South China Morning Post*, June 26, 1999, in *FBIS-CHI*, June 26, 1999; Tyler Marshall, "Anti-NATO Axis Could Pose Threats, Experts Say," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1999; ITAR-TASS, Moscow in English, August 5, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, August 5, 1999; *The*

ington might abandon the ABM Treaty in order to pursue TMD as well as NMD in alliance with Japan, Moscow for the first time began attacking the U.S.-Japanese defense guidelines of 1997.⁸⁶ Specifically, Russian media started suggesting that those guidelines might permit Japan to operate in and around Russian territorial waters and Russia proper and called on Japan, just as China has done, to clarify its "real intentions." This action reflects and probably contributed to the halting of Russo-Japanese rapprochement as the intractable issue of the Kurile Islands again rises to prominence.⁸⁷

This new and evolving identity of views consists of both Moscow and Beijing's belief or hope that the world is evolving toward multipolarity (more precisely a great-power dictation through the UN or other venues).⁸⁸ Yet the United States, by refusing to submit to international organizations and by using alliances and coercive diplomacy, is trying to cement and extend its hegemony and put both Moscow and Beijing under constant pressure. After Kosovo, this threat assessment has become the common property of both governments.

NATO enlargement, for example, did not evoke in China the passion it aroused in Moscow. China actually sympathized with the Central Europeans' demands for security.⁸⁹ Whereas Moscow saw enlargement as excluding Russia from Europe, as relying on outmoded blocs rather than collective security under a great-power concert, and as a military threat by an alliance that was essentially an old-fashioned anti-Russian military bloc,

Asian Age (New Delhi), March 10, 1999, in FBIS, *Near East and South Asia* [hereafter *FBIS-NES*], March 10, 1999; *Navbharat Times* (Delhi), April 10, 1999, in *FBIS-NES*, April 13, 1999; *The Times of India* (Internet version) (Mumbai), April 28, 1999, in *FBIS-NES*, April 28, 1999.

⁸⁶ITAR-TASS World Service, Moscow in English, April 27, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, April 27, 1999; *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) (Electronic version) (Moscow), June 4, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, June 16, 1999; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Electronic version), May 29, 1999, in *FBIS-SOV*, June 14, 1999; *The Monitor*, March 12, 1999.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

⁸⁸See Wang Jisi, "The Role of the United States as a Global and Pacific Power: A View from China," *Pacific Review* 10, no. 1 (1997): 1-18; and the sources cited in notes 33 and 34 above.

⁸⁹Czeslaw Tubilewicz, "Comrades No More: Sino-Central European Relations After the Cold War," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 2 (March-April 1999): 9-10.

NATO enlargement had little resonance for China. However, when the Kosovo operation commenced in apparent defiance or evasion of UN mandates, both Russia and China now felt themselves threatened because they both realized three critical things about Kosovo and enlargement.

First, they both saw Kosovo as signifying Washington's unpredictability. The United States might go to war on behalf of secessionist minorities in their own lands such as Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan, and Chechnya. Second, they saw that such war could break out despite the efforts of the UN and that nothing could seemingly obstruct or stand in the way of Washington's determination to assert its prerogatives globally. Third, in a crisis, their own vital interests could be nullified or negated by virtue of U.S. determination to prevail through the use of coercion. Kosovo now presents to both militaries the template of a high-tech conventional attack against which they can only counter with nuclear deterrence. Therefore, China and Russia see the United States as threatening their integrity, vital interests, and self-perception as great powers through Washington's military-political alliances in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere.

The issue of defense against long-range ballistic missile threats has also assumed particular salience for both governments in an increasingly weaponized Asia. Missile tests by North Korea, the nuclearization of India and Pakistan, and Chinese missile programs and saber-rattling vis-à-vis Taiwan have heightened the dangers of missile attacks against rival governments throughout Asia and enhanced the regional dynamics of the bilateral Russo-Chinese relationship. This issue alone could unhinge much of Asia's status quo. An analysis on this issue will show, however, that the entire way Washington has approached ballistic missile defense and related issues is fraught with dangers to the United States and its allies.

Conclusions

The prevailing consensus on the Sino-Russian relationship is too complacent and wedded to static analyses of world affairs and Asian security agendas. Indeed, this view overlooks the fact that recent Asian crises have exposed the inability of Asian security organizations and forums to

deal with regional problems. No single organization resolved the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis or the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. ASEAN cannot forge a consensus on how to respond to the financial crisis, to Chinese threats in the South China Sea islands, and to the fact that Indonesia is on the verge of falling apart. Moreover, if Indonesia does disintegrate, ASEAN will probably be neutered as an effective security organization.⁹⁰ Korea is being dealt with on a largely bilateral U.S.-DPRK agenda. No Asian organization has, moreover, successfully dealt with insurgency in Central Asia, Indo-Pakistani nuclear proliferation, and lower-level conflicts. Russo-Chinese rapprochement takes place against this regionally dynamic and unstable background that includes Russia's decline and China's rise.

However, Moscow will not accept this diagnosis. Thus, Russia continually tries to revise the status quo to enlarge its own role. China, too, is a revisionist power, and both Moscow and Beijing see U.S. policy as blocking their objectives. The common threats and interests that they perceive are increasingly propelling their partnership into a condition that transcends cooperation and approaches coordination, especially as missile defense becomes a salient issue. We see joint Sino-Russian policies in Iraq, the CIS, the UN, Kosovo, and NMD. To pretend that this trend toward greater strategic coordination will simply dissolve before America's superior strength or wisdom, or because in the past China and Russia could not forge an enduring partnership, is to abdicate the requirements of statesmanship. Complacency about Sino-Russian partnership and the easy assumptions that because Russia is basically irrelevant to Asia the United States need not worry about such cooperation and that China lacks the capability to threaten the United States militarily are all misplaced.

Although probably neither Russian nor Chinese objectives envisage attacking the continental United States, the peace and security of Asia from Kazakhstan to Japan still depends on the wisdom, strength, and resolution of the United States. Therefore, complacency must give way to concern

⁹⁰Remarks by James Clad on National Public Radio, "All Things Considered" (November 11, 1999).

given the dynamic trends in technology, economics, military policies, and Asian and international affairs. In the end, however, understanding is not enough. Understanding can only serve as a prelude to what hopefully will be better policy. In the last few years, Asian crises have rocked but not overturned Asia and the world. In a dynamic and uncontrolled context of massive fundamental change along many dimensions, however, how long can we be so complacent as to think that future crises will end without causing lasting damage to the security of Asia and the world?