

AN INQUIRY INTO CHINA'S ALIGNMENT WITH RUSSIA

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Since China and Russia have moved their comprehensive strategic partnership forward towards an unprecedented height, people have wondered what the motives are behind the two huge land powers to crave this end. Historically, China and the former Soviet Union had forged the formal alliance throughout the 1950s due to the common security concerns, the shared ideologies and the strategic interests of the day. Yet, they also split into the arch rivals for nearly two decades until the early 1980s. Realist scholars believe that China and the former USSR and now Russia are doomed to compete with each other in light of their geographical vicinity and the lack of mutual trust resulted from the pursuit of greatness and historical memories. However, since the collapse of the USSR, China and Russia have developed their overall ties steadily and substantially. To well grasp the *raison d'être* of Sino-Russian strategic partnership, it is necessary to analyze the rationales behind the current relations between Beijing and Moscow stemming from their consensus, or «the shared views» that the future world order will be founded on multilateralism rather than unilateralism, in which China and Russia must be appropriately placed alongside the United States and other major players.

Key words: China, Russia, strategic partnership, security concern, multilateralism, unilateralism, Shanghai spirit.

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When the former Soviet Union was dissolved unexpectedly in 1992, China and Russia turned to each other without any hesitation. Although they never claim alliance *de jure* in public, Beijing and Moscow have fostered a *de facto* strategic partnership covering all the essential features of alliance. If we take Stephen Walt's definition of alliance it is clear that China and Russia have perceived the United States and its core allies (NATO and Japan) as «the significant external threat that aim to impair their common essential interests» [14, pp. 1-2]. It is true that the United States and its allies perceive Russia and China as the «strategic competitors and the potential threats». U.S. reiterates that Russia, along with China, «challenge[s] American power, influence and interests, attempting to erode its current security and prosperity».¹

During his official visit to Moscow last April Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi acting as the special envoy of President Xi met with President Putin and his Russian colleague Sergey Lavrov. They reiterated that China and Russia as close neighbors and reemerging powers successfully forged the comprehensive strategic partnership². It allowed them to make concerted efforts on the Korean Peninsula to promote regional peace and stability. Also at the sensitive moment when Britain and its allies expelled Russian diplomats «to show their solidarity», China preserved its partnership with Russia, which was very symbolic. In UN Security Council China together with Bolivia, Peru and some African states insisted that the «Russian spy poisoning row» should be settled by both Russia and Britain according to international law and established practices³.

The term «coordination» in strategic coordination is literally a flexible mechanism of syntax, known as *conjuncts or conjoins* that links together two or more elements. In diplomatic history there were some similar practices among great powers like *entente* that refers to a type of treaty or military alliance where the signatories promise to consult or to cooperate with each other in case of a crisis or military action [4, p. 181]. China and Russia have worked out their relationship towards a real partnership of strategic coordination. China admits that since the establishment of bilateral relations they are at historical height. Presidents Xi and Putin share personal friendship and common view on strategic issues and vow to further maintain steady coordination in playing a greater role in international affairs. For instance, during his latest state visit to China on June 8 President Putin was awarded the Friendship Medal. This is the first time for Chinese president to present the Medal to a foreign dignitary. Russian president was praised as «a leader of major country with global influence, and as an old and good friend of the Chinese people. Putin has made outstanding contribution to the advancement of the Sino-Russian friendship». In 2017 Putin honored Xi with the Order of St. Andrew the

¹ Samuelsohn D., Crowley M. Trump: U.S. can't guard its interests abroad if it doesn't 'protect prosperity at home' // *POLITICO*, 18.12.2017. URL: <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/12/18/trump-foreign-policy-security-302242> (дата обращения: 03.06.2018).

² President Vladimir Putin of Russia meets with Wang Yi // Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, 05.04.2018. URL: www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/activities_663312 (дата обращения: 12.06.2018).

³ Wang Li. US-led airstrikes in Syria violate international law // *CGTN*, 14.04.2018. URL: https://news.cgtn.com/news/3441544e346b7a6333566d54/share_p.html (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

Apostle in recognition of Xi's merits in developing the all-encompassing partnership and strategic cooperation between the two great powers⁴.

In 2001 Kissinger wrote that «Russia's long border with China, only sparsely populated along the Russian side, is inherently porous and has been so throughout recorded history. Neither country will entrust the security of these borders to the continued goodwill of the other, whatever its current irritation with an allegedly hegemonic United States» [5, p. 117]. He also expressed his concerns over the relentless American bullying of both China and Russia, which would drive them to a deeper strategic partnership. Primarily due to this, after the Soviet Union was dissolved, China and Russia agreed to establish good-neighbor relationship that has grown into a «constructive partnership» in 1994 and then in 1996 further moved to a «strategic consultative and cooperative partnership». With peaceful settlement of the border issues in 2004 the comprehensive strategic partnership between Beijing and Moscow has been developing consistently and steadily [1, p. 410].

In 2001 Shanghai Cooperation Organization was created as a permanent intergovernmental international organization with China and Russia alongside the four central Asian states. Since then, the SCO has already expanded into eight full member states (India and Pakistan joined the organization in 2017), four observer states (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia), and six dialogue partners—Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey. More significant is that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization developed the «Shanghai Spirit» which is the ideational bedrock of the organization featuring mutual trust, benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity and pursuit of common development. In effect, the SCO stands in sharp contrast to the Cold-War-era confrontational mentality that can be seen as the obsolete power politics⁵. China and Russia play coherent roles in expansion and coordinated progress of the SCO. As Xing Guangcheng, a Chinese expert on Russian affairs, said: «The two powers have continually acted as the backbone of the SCO to make it increasingly active and dynamic»⁶.

The rationale behind Sino-Russian strategic partnership

In 1979-1980 the relationship between China and Soviet Union deteriorated to a degree of conflict. In 1979 China launched a war against Vietnam, because it invaded Cambodia. Beijing had repeatedly warned Hanoi not to «play with fire» in the region. Then, in a response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the turn of 1980, China suspended the Sino-Soviet talks previously scheduled early that year. However, these tensions abated soon after Chinese leadership decided to cooperate with Moscow as it

⁴ Wang Xinyan. First Friendship Medal to best friend and confidant // *CGTN*, 09.06.2018. URL: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514f3341444d78457a6333566d54/share.html> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

⁵ The Shanghai cooperation Organization. URL: http://eng.sectsc.org/about_sco/. Also see The Shanghai Spirit as the spiritual bedrock of the SCO // *People's Liberation Army Daily*, 02.01.2013.

⁶ Le Tian. Sino-Russian relations within the SCO framework // *CGTN*, 08.06.2018. URL: https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774d3063544f77457a6333566d54/share_p.html (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

showed distinct interest in reaching out to its «eastern foe». This initial signal was finalized in 1982 when then Secretary General Brezhnev stated in Tashkent that «We have never supported in any form and do not support the so-called «concept of two Chinas». There has never been ... nor is there any threat to People's Republic of China from the Soviet Union»⁷. China reacted sincerely but cautiously since the leaders in Beijing had already stated the growing domestic needs for Sino-Soviet normalization.

Politically Deng Xiaoping and his reform-minded followers had made all efforts to push forward the desired «modernization programs». In order to achieve that end China looked to all its neighbors, among them was the Soviet Union with a giant military power and much stronger economy than China. Moscow was able to offer China all the possible aid and help with modernization of heavy industry and especially military. Since Deng started to pursue a foreign policy of neutrality rather than leaning on any one superpower during the new era of reforms and openness, it was understandable that China decided to move forward towards the Soviet Union mainly due to security needs and economic concerns, though the shared ideology had remained⁸.

Yet the year of 1992 witnessed the unexpected dissolution of the Soviet Union and its tightly-controlled East bloc. New Russia inherited the huge parts of the former Soviet empire geographically extended across Northern Asia and much of Eastern Europe along with the volatile trans-Caucasus, which for centuries served as a bridge or barrier. From the very start Russia aimed at getting the large share of the Soviet's natural resources and preserving its power over the existing regions. The eastward enlargement of NATO made Russia frustrated to find allies or strategic partners in the West. As a result Iran became its most natural and also most vital partner. Apart from Iran, Russia quickly forged strategic partnership with China in the 1990s which was followed by the creation of the SCO as mentioned previously. NATO's bombing campaign against Belgrade showed Russia and China the urgency to promote the strategic alignment with each other which was finalized in 2014 as the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination⁹.

China and Russia cooperate with each other for the following reasons. First, the United States and its allies like NATO and Japan have regarded Moscow and Beijing as the strategic competitors if not immediate menace. Second, China and Russia have endorsed the leading role of the United Nations in foreign affairs. The U.S. has consistently ignored the U.N. resolution by unilateral launch of wars against Iraq, Libya and Syria. In that context, China and Russia have the consensus to promote multilateralism rather than any single hegemony in the world. Since China has encountered the challenges from the United States and its ally on the East China Sea, the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, Beijing has been anxious to find a strong partner on its rear. Moscow and Putin in particular serve much the role as expected [8].

⁷ *Pravda*, 25.03.1982. P. 2.

⁸ *China Daily*, 27.03.1982. P. 6.

⁹ Wang Yi. On Sino-Russian Strategic Relationship // *China Daily*, 05.04.2018.

If we look into the immense resources and capacities of the two land powers, it is unwise for any ruling power(s) to ignore the legitimate claims of China and Russia in world politics. As permanent members of the UN Security Council and established nuclear powers, China and Russia are aware of the growing complex and unpredictable international milieu that requires them to work together to endorse the role of the United Nations and a polycentric world order rather than unilateral hegemony. As Joseph Nye Jr. put it in 2002: «Consider their respective nuclear forces, the proximity to each other in geopolitics and their shared belief in the role of the United Nations, Russia alongside China can choose to cooperate or to cause problems for the United States, if not acting as a global challenger» [10, p. 28]. It is often said that only the unlikely prospect of relentless American ignorance and arrogance would drive China and Russia to a comprehensive partnership. In the post-Cold War era, it is U.S. ascendancy and its behavior that have resulted in the «Russo-Chinese strategic partnership».

Another pressing issue affecting the two powers' core interest is the uncertainty on the Korean Peninsula. As China and Russia are proximate to the Peninsula and the members of the Six-Party Talks, the peace and tranquility in the region are closely related to the security concerns of China and Russia accordingly. From the very start, China has warned that Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) would impair its nuclear deterrence that is seen as essential to any great nuclear power [11, pp. 140-141]. In a joint statement in 2017 Beijing and Moscow denounced the deployment of THAAD in South Korea as it posed to change the balance of power in East Asia. Strategically and politically as well the THAAD system can be well acting in what China and Russia have seen as a United States' subplot ostensibly to establish a regional anti-missile system which aims to enhance its own capabilities against China's vital interest and to undermine the overall strategic equilibrium in the region¹⁰ [15].

Given this, China and Russia have proposed together a balanced and feasible approach to the peaceful settlement of North Korean nuclear issue. It includes that Beijing and Moscow welcome the scheduled summits between the DPRK and the ROK in April, as well as between the leaders of the DPRK and the United States planned in June as opportunities to bring the nuclear issue back to the dialogue track. It is the well-articulated goal set by the previous U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the DPRK¹¹.

Regarding how to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula through political settlement, first, China and Russia have insisted upon the general direction of the denuclearization which is defined as the master key to solving all the problems related to the Korean Peninsula as well as the general path leading to the long-lasting peace and stability of the region. Second, both Beijing and Moscow have adhered to the «dual-track approach», namely, the realization of the denuclearization of North Korea and the

¹⁰ Tiezzi S. South Korea eyes THAAD, China urges caution // *Diplomat*, 30.01.2016. URL: <https://thedi diplomat.com/2016/01/south-korea-eyes-thaad-china-urges-caution/> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

¹¹ UN Security Council Resolution 2397, 22.12.2017. URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_2397 (дата обращения: 30.05.2018).

establishment of a peace mechanism on the Peninsula¹². China has reiterated that the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is closely related to the long-term security threats faced by all parties, especially by the DPRK. Morgenthau once warned that «nothing is so fatal to a nation as an extreme of self-partiality, and the total want of consideration of what others will naturally hope or fear» [9, p. 587]. As in advancing the process of the denuclearization, it seems reasonable to resolve the legitimate security concerns of the DPRK first.

Russia has also supported China's proposal of the «six-party talk» to resolve the denuclearization issue. They have agreed to continue strengthening coordination in this regard and to maintain communication with other stakeholders to jointly promote the hard-won momentum of talks and negotiation with a view to joint preservation of the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula. During his visit to Pyongyang on May 30, Lavrov stated that «The Korean denuclearized issue requires step-by-step actions, consistency and patience. At the final stage of the process, multilateral talks involving all the six parties will become inevitable»¹³. This is obviously a support to China.

The tests of Sino-Russian strategic partnership

There is no doubt that either China or Russia has its own internal issues and external challenges. On the one hand, China is still a developing country due to the huge population in poverty and the lack of high-tech innovation. Russia is a reemerging great power, but it continues to rely on natural resources too much and has been behind in labor productivity. Yet, on the other hand, the two powers have huge potentials which are complementary in terms of strategic deterrence and vast manufacture capabilities. In a geopolitical sense, they are neighboring countries that bestows them a strategic depth to coordinate and support each other, including the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. As the key members of the emerging bloc BRICS «China and Russia have in effect acted to preserve the current rules rather than violating them. For example, they have opposed to the U.S. pursuing unilateralism and trade protectionism which is seen as shaking the global trading system based on the WTO rules and hitting the just-revived world economy»¹⁴.

However, there are three sources of misunderstanding or mutual suspicion on the Russian side. First Russian leadership is not fully confident, because of the memory of the Sino-Soviet relations from alliance in 1949 to near-total confrontation in 1979. For many people in Russia, the current strategic partnership between the two countries seems to be mainly inspired by Beijing desire to avoid a two-front threat in view of

¹² "Adhering to the Dual-Track Approach" in Joint Statement of China and Russia // Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, 05.04.2018. URL: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1548991.shtml (дата обращения: 12.06.2018).

¹³ Lavrov expects visit to Pyongyang to help understand North Korea's position // *Russian Politics & Diplomacy*, 30.05.2018. URL: <http://tass.com/politics/1007179> (дата обращения: 03.06.2018).

¹⁴ Putin to visit China this year // *China Global Television Net*, 05.04.2018. URL: https://news.cgtn.com/news/3459544e326b7a6333566d54/share_p.html (дата обращения: 12.06.2018).

the rising tension in China's maritime territories and the Taiwan Strait. Yet, ironically the close ties between China and Russia have been enhanced primarily by American power since the 1990s¹⁵. Second concern from Russia is what Kissinger said of Russia's long border with China that it was «only sparsely populated along the Russian side» with immigrants pouring into and settling down from the Chinese side. «Due to the asymmetry between the economics and population on the two sides, the Chinese have steadily encroached the Russian lands in the Far East» [7]. In effect, Russia has already lost its primary economic leverage in the region in terms of border trade items and the huge flow of Chinese currency.

The third element affecting the bilateral relationship between China and Russia is more a mentality than a reality. Because China's GDP nearly ten times larger than Russia's now, some Russians, especially ultra-nationalists, see China's growing prowess not only as the potential threat, but also as «abnormal». Historically, Russia or the Soviet Union was much stronger and more prosperous than China, and showed the latter the way to be a modernized power. As one former Soviet-era official said: «We used to manufacture what they needed, and they grew what we wanted» [12, p. 269-270]. But now it seems quite different and even opposite. As Zbigniew Brzezinski once put it, as it stands, with China's growing ambition and influence in the Central Asia, the backyard or the strategic depth of Russia over the past centuries, «Beijing's geopolitical interests would conflict with Russia's pursuit for dominance in the same area» [2, p. 102]. This argument seems to echo the suspicion or fear of China's growing power and influence in the regions at large. As Stephen Walt said recently, China, not Russia, would be the real competitor globally to the United States, if bipolarity eventually returned¹⁶.

This is one side of the story. After his reelection this year Putin is likely to continue to get Russia moving towards becoming a great power by 2024. Although Putin will certainly amend the domestic economic system, in foreign affairs he will continue his course to reposition Russia as a leading power on the international stage. To that end a deepening Sino-Russian strategic partnership is vitally important. First, judging recent discourse of Chinese and Russian leaders and officials describing their bilateral relationship, both sides have reached a consensus that their strategic ties have reached a historic high level.

Second, given that China's trade with Russia has grown rapidly, so has China's foreign direct investment in areas ranging from infrastructure to real estate. As a result, the new cooperative mechanisms put in place by both governments in Beijing and Moscow have been successful in fostering mutual trust and economic cooperation. It is reflected in recent Russian surveys that show China as the nation's friendliest ally¹⁷. Energy cooperation has deepened, as evidenced by the fact that Russia has become China's top

¹⁵ Lukyanov F. Russia-China: Change of Course? // *Russia in Global Affairs*, 22.03.2012. URL: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/Russia-China-Change-of-course-15494> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

¹⁶ Walt S. I Knew the Cold War, It is No Cold War // *Foreign Policy*, 08.03.2018. URL: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/12/i-knew-the-cold-war-this-is-no-cold-war/> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

¹⁷ Haenle P., Gabuev A. Putin's Fourth Term // *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy*, 03.04.2018. URL: <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2018/04/03/putin-s-fourth-term-pub-75976> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

supplier of crude oil and staple cereals. Yet, paradoxically Russia becomes increasingly dependent on China for investment and trade, whereas China has many other economic partners from which to choose. With the downward spiral in U.S.-Russia ties, Russia has largely abandoned the principle of reintegration with the West, a fundamental goal in the early post-Soviet era, in favor of focusing on achieving co-equal political status in an international system dominated by the United States. It is widely held that the ongoing mutual alienation between the U.S. and Russia is sure to push China and Russia closer together. During his recent state visit to China, President Putin stated that «deepening Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination is the priority of Moscow's foreign policy. Due to this, Russia would like to enhance cooperation with China in such areas as economy, trade, investment, energy and infrastructure».¹⁸

Nonetheless, what is the likelihood of a formal China-Russia alliance? Some scholars have argued that any easily negotiable collaborations have already been initiated, leaving no new or large projects for the immediate future. Equally, the power dynamic between the two land powers is becoming increasingly asymmetric, which could cause friction moving forward. Although the rise of China is not necessarily military one, it should not be inferred that Russian politicians are not worried at all. In effect, the two nations have different attitudes toward international security and simply disagree on issues ranging from Ukraine to Syria which suggests the continuation of the supportive but flexible status quo in lieu of a formal military alliance. Only a simultaneous strike on both countries from a third party would change this trend. Aware of this, China and Russia have recently highlighted the necessity of promoting mutual trust and public diplomacy among the two peoples through the joint gala and cultural exchanges programs.

Scholars who are familiar with Bismarck's doctrine hold that Chinese and Russian geopolitical interests are actually compatible with each other. There are several of the factors complicating China and Russia's relationship within the context of the current international relations. Given that the U.S. and its allies have criticized Russia as a «revisionist power» striving to undermine the current world order, Moscow is more concerned is with its own status. Russia values its veto power as a permanent member of U.N. Security Council and will certainly challenge perceived attempts to undermine its prestige. Meanwhile, China works hard to improve its standing within the international system and has benefitted greatly from that approach. Within this context Russia and China will attempt to follow a strategy where they are «never against each other but not necessarily with each other» all the time, so that they can pursue each core interests without endangering their growing ties¹⁹. Due to this, Beijing and other member states are cautious to prevent the SCO from becoming a new version of the Warsaw Pact de-

¹⁸ Xi Jinping Holds Talks with President Vladimir Putin of Russia // *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China*, 08.06.2018. URL: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1568040.shtml (дата обращения: 03.06.2018).

¹⁹ FengYujun, D. Trenin, Ma Bin, A. Gabuev, P. Haenle. Prospect for the Next Era of China-Russia -U.S. Relations / *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy*, 19.03.2018. URL: <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2018/03/19/prospects-for-next-era-of-china-russia-u.s.-relations-event-6835> (дата обращения: 20.06.2018).

signed to counterbalance NATO headed by the United States, although Russia called for more active role in Syria and Iran.

It is fair to say that China and Russia will persistently insist on a substantial reduction perceived or potential threats from the United States to their shared interests. The two giants in the SCO aim to provide the world with a new model of how to curb racial, cultural and other differences and promote peace, stability and prosperity according to the «Shanghai Spirit».²⁰ Putin said at the Qingdao summit, the SCO started off as a low-profile group, with a primary goal of solving border issues between China, Russia, and the former Soviet Union members, since then it has evolved into one of the world's most powerful organizations.

It is self-evident that China and Russia need each other in the world affairs in order to preserve their common security interests and facilitate economic growth. Yet, the test of their high-level strategic partnership is not how to jointly challenge the ruling power's position, but to demonstrate their strong will through the combined military capabilities and diplomatic talents in order to make the adversaries act rationally.

On the one hand, history is replete with instances of shifting alliances among nations, and no state is actually an exception. In the flow of Sino-Soviet relations, both the mutual courtship of the 1950s and the geopolitical rivalry of the 1970s prove to be normal. On the other hand, since Russia's 2018 presidential election and the conclusion of the 19th CPC Congress have injected new dynamics into the relations between the two countries, and particularly propelled by the personal efforts of Xi and Putin, Sino-Russian comprehensive strategic partnership will probably set an example for building a new type of international relations. Putin rightly put it that thanks largely to Xi's personal impetus Sino-Russian relations have in recent years reached an unprecedented height in history and have set an example for developing equality-based and mutually beneficial cooperation between major countries. To achieve the polycentric world order, China and Russia have solidified their strategic ties through a series of strategic dialogues, ranging from energy deals, joint military exercises, and economic and technological cooperation.

In 2017 U.S. National Security Paper defined China and Russia as the strategic rivals. Beijing and Moscow strategic partnership will proceed at a steady but more cautious-like pace—if not given a further «big push» by the United States. As long as Russia struggles for advancing its legitimate national security and its economic recovery, Xi deems that China and Russia will certainly be able to provide driving forces for mutual security, regional stability and global peace and justice. Putin's Russia will have to face two major foreign policy issues in the coming years: how to finalize a peaceful settlement in Syria; and how to resolve the Ukrainian crisis to keep Kiev out of the reach of NATO. Yet, China equally needs Russia's support in realizing trilateral cooperation between Russia, China and Mongolia.

Strategically, China holds that there is no future for Europe without a strong Russia's involvement, Russia equally thinks that China is well on its way to become a global

²⁰ Xi Jinping chairs the small-scale talks of the SCO Qingdao Summit // *China Daily*, 10.06.2018.

power. Indeed, whereas the former Soviet Union rivaled the United States as a military competitor only, now China has emerged as a military and an economic rival at the same time, heralding a profound shift. Given this, Xi has reiterated that it is in China's long-term interest to deepen political and strategic trust in the strategic partnership with Russia. The China-Russia relations, standing at a high level, have benefited the two peoples and served as a model of harmonious coexistence of major powers and neighboring countries in the world today.

How long the two great land powers and neighbors can maintain their strategic partnership is a «big» question still under discussion.

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К ВОПРОСУ О КИТАЙСКОМ ПАРТНЕРСТВЕ С РОССИЕЙ

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Поскольку Китай и Россия вывели своё всеобъемлющее равноправное доверительное партнёрство и стратегическое взаимодействие на беспрецедентную высоту, наблюдатели стали интересоваться, каким образом двум великим державам удалось достичь этой цели. Исторически Китай и бывший Советский Союз на протяжении 1950-х гг. объединял формальный союз, основанный на общих проблемах в сфере безопасности, общих идеологических установках и текущих стратегических интересах. Тем не менее они были непримиримыми соперниками в течение почти двух десятилетий вплоть до 1980-х гг. В связи с этим сторонники реалистской парадигмы международных отношений полагают, что Китай и бывший Советский Союз, а теперь и Россия, обречены на соперничество друг с другом. Причиной называется географическая близость и отсутствие взаимного доверия из-за стремления подкрепить величие своей державы, а также исторической памяти. Однако с момента распада СССР, Китай и Россия последовательно развивают свои связи по конкретным направлениям. Чтобы хорошо понять смысл стратегического партнерства между Китаем и Россией, необходимо проанализировать причины позитивных отношений между Пекином и Москвой. Основной причиной является консенсус или «общий взгляд» на то, что будущий мировой порядок должен быть и будет полицентричным, а не моноцентричным. В этом порядке Китай и Россия должны быть надлежащим образом представлены вместе с Соединёнными Штатами и другими крупными игроками.

Ключевые слова: Китай, Россия, стратегическое партнерство, проблема безопасности, полицентричность, моноцентричность, Шанхайский дух.

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