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Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Commission’s deliberations regarding the important relationship between China and Russia.

Since the end of the Cold War, the improved political and economic relationship between Beijing and Moscow has affected a range of international security issues. China and Russia have expanded their bilateral economic and security cooperation. In addition, they have pursued distinct, yet parallel, policies regarding many global and regional issues. Yet, Chinese and Russian approaches to a range of significant subjects are still largely uncoordinated and at times in conflict. Economic exchanges between China and Russia remain minimal compared to those found between most friendly countries, let alone allies. Although stronger Chinese-Russian ties could present greater challenges to other countries (e.g., the establishment of a Moscow-Beijing condominium over Central Asia), several factors make it unlikely that the two countries will form such a bloc.

“Best Ever” Relations

The relationship between the Chinese and Russian governments is perhaps the best it has ever been. The leaders of both countries engage in numerous high-level exchanges, make many mutually supportive statements, and manifest other displays of Russian-Chinese cooperation in what both governments refer to as their developing strategic partnership.

The current benign situation is due less to common values and shared interests than to the fact that Chinese and Russian security concerns are predominately directed elsewhere. Although both countries have experienced a geopolitical resurgence during the past two decades, Chinese and Russian security concerns are not directed at each other but rather focus on different areas and issues, with the notable exceptions of maintaining stability in Central Asia and constraining North Korea’s nuclear activities.

Most Chinese policy makers worry about the rise of separatist movements and Islamist terrorism in western China and about a potential military clash with the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, especially regarding Taiwan and the contested maritime regions of the South China and East China Seas. In contrast, most Russian analysts see terrorism in the North Caucasus, maintaining influence in Europe, and managing security relations with Washington as the main security challenges to their country. Neither Chinese nor Russian military experts perceive a near-term military threat from the other’s country. The Russian government has even provided

sophisticated navy, air, and air defense platforms to the Chinese military, confident that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would only employ these systems, if at all, against other countries. In addition, China and Russia have resolved their longstanding border disputes as well as contained their rivalries in Central Asia, the Korean Peninsula, and other regions.

Recent Improvements

Since the Soviet Union's disintegration in the early 1990s, China and Russia have resolved important sources of their Cold War-era tensions. Through protracted negotiations, the two governments have largely solved their boundary disputes, which had erupted in armed border clashes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The stoking of anti-Chinese sentiment by politicians in the Russian Far East impeded the ability of Russia's first President, Boris Yeltsin, to make substantial progress during the 1990s in demarcating the Russia-China border. These politicians sought to rally local support by accusing Moscow of planning to surrender territory to Beijing. By the mid-2000s, Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, managed to centralize sufficient political power in the Kremlin to ignore these local sentiments. Furthermore, Russia and China have demilitarized their lengthy shared frontier through a series of arms control and disarmament measures.

The Russian-Chinese friendship and cooperation treaty, signed in July 2001, establishes a basis for extensive bilateral security and defense collaboration. Its five core principles include "mutual respect of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence." Article 2 has a mutual non-aggression clause in which Russia and China agree never to employ or threaten the use of military force against each other. The article also extends their earlier nuclear missile non-targeting pledge to include mutual adoption of a "no first use" nuclear weapons posture toward each other. Articles 3-5 affirm that each party will not challenge the others' political-economic orientation or territorial integrity, which in Moscow's case includes reaffirming recognition of Beijing's sovereignty over Taiwan. In Article 7, the parties commit to supporting arms reduction and confidence-building measures along their joint border. Article 8 contains a standard non-aggression clause: "The contracting parties shall not enter into any alliance or be a party to any bloc nor shall they embark on any such action, including the conclusion of such treaty with a third country which compromises the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other contracting party. Neither side of the contracting parties shall allow its territory to be used by a third country to jeopardize the national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other contracting party." Article 9 provides for holding immediate mutual consultations "when a situation arises in which one of the contracting parties deems that peace is being threatened and undermined or its security interests are involved or when it is confronted with the threat of aggression." Article 10 calls for regular meetings "at all levels" to allow both sides to exchange views and "co-ordinate their stand on bilateral ties and on important and urgent international issues of common concern." Article 13 states that they will work to strengthen "the central role of the United Nations as the most authoritative and most universal world organization composed of sovereign states in handling international affairs, particularly in the realm of peace and development." Article 20 states that both governments "shall actively cooperate in cracking down terrorists, splittists [commonly referred to as "separatists" in later declarations] and extremists, and in taking strong measures against criminal

activities of organized crimes, illegal trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and weapons.” The treaty’s initial duration is twenty years, but the text allows for automatic five-year extensions unless either party objects. Unlike the earlier bilateral defense treaty signed between China and the Soviet Union, the 2001 treaty lacks a mutual defense clause in which both parties commit to providing military assistance in case the other is attacked by a third party.

Chinese and Russian leaders share a commitment to a philosophy of state sovereignty (non-interference) and territorial integrity (against separatism). Although Russian and Chinese leaders defend national sovereignty by appealing to international law, their opposition also reflects more pragmatic considerations—a shared desire to shield their human rights and civil liberties practices, and those of their allies, from Western criticism. Chinese and Russian officials refuse to criticize each other’s foreign and domestic policies in public. They also have issued many joint statements calling for a multi-polar world in which no one country (e.g., the United States) dominates. During the past few years, their leaders have commonly blamed American economic mismanagement for precipitating the global recession. They regularly advocate traditional interpretations of national sovereignty that exempt a government’s internal policies from foreign criticism. Beijing and Moscow oppose American democracy promotion efforts, U.S. missile defense programs, and Washington’s alleged plans to militarize outer space. The two countries strive to uphold the authority of the United Nations, where the Chinese and Russian delegations frequently collaborate to dilute resolutions seeking to impose sanctions on Burma, Iran, Zimbabwe, and other governments they consider friendly. In July 2008, they finally demarcated the last pieces of their 4,300-km (2,700 mile) frontier, one of the world’s longest land borders, ending a decades-long dispute.

Chinese and Russian officials have expressed concern about the efforts by the United States and its allies to strengthen their ballistic missile defense (BMD) capabilities. Their professed fear is that these strategic defense systems, in combination with the strong American offensive nuclear capabilities, might enable the United States to obtain nuclear superiority over China and Russia. Both governments have also expressed unease regarding U.S. military programs in the realm of outer space. Russian and Chinese experts claim that the United States is seeking to acquire the means to orchestrate attacks in space against Russian and Chinese reconnaissance satellites and long-range ballistic missiles, whose trajectories pass through the upper atmosphere. In response, the Russian and Chinese governments have proposed various arms control initiatives purportedly aimed at preventing the militarization of space. For example, the Russian and Chinese representatives have unsuccessfully sought for years at the UN Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a treaty on the “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space,” which would seek to prohibit the militarization of outer space. More recently, China and Russia have submitted a joint Space Treaty to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which would impose legal constraints on how the United States could use outer space. They have sought to link progress on other international arms control initiatives to the adoption of these space limitations.

The bilateral defense relationship has evolved in recent years to become more institutionalized and better integrated. As befits two large and powerful neighbors, the senior military leaders of Russia and China now meet frequently in various formats. Their direct encounters include annual meetings of their defense ministers and their armed forces chiefs of staff. Since 1997, they have

also organized yearly “strategic consultations” between their deputy chiefs of the general staff. In March 2008, the Chinese defense minister established a direct telephone line with his Russian counterpart, the first such ministerial hotline ever created by China and another country. In December 2008, the chiefs of the Chinese and Russian general staffs created their own direct link. Senior Russian and Chinese defense officials also typically participate in the regular heads of government meetings between Russia and China, which occur about once a year as bilateral summits. They also confer frequently at sessions of multinational gatherings, such as at meetings of the SCO, which host regular sessions for defense ministers. Contacts are even more common among mid-level military officers, especially those in charge of border security units and military units in neighboring Chinese and Russian territories. Russian and Chinese military experts also engage in regular direct discussions related to their functional expertise such as communications, engineering, and mapping. Substantial academic exchanges also regularly occur. More than 1,000 Chinese students have studied at over 20 Russian military academies since 1996. The two defense communities conduct a number of larger exchanges and engagements. The best known are the major biennial military exercises that they have been holding since 2005, but smaller-scale engagements also frequently occur.

Chinese and Russian leaders also have developed shared perspectives and independent offensive capabilities regarding governmental activities in the cyber domain. The two governments have been developing their information warfare capabilities and now possess an extensive variety of offensive and defensive tools in this domain. Furthermore, recent revelations regarding Chinese cyber-espionage activities suggest the extent to which Chinese operatives have penetrated Western information networks. In Russia’s case, cyber attacks against Estonia, Georgia, and other countries illustrate the extensive offensive capabilities available to that country’s forces. Russia’s hybrid August 2008 campaign against Georgia was particularly effective in disabling Georgia’s infrastructure as well as demonstrating a potential capacity to inflict widespread physical damage. Both countries appear to have already conducted extensive surveying of U.S. digital vulnerabilities and to have prepared targeted campaign plans to exploit U.S. network vulnerabilities if necessary. Although these offensive and defensive preparations are being conducted independently, the Chinese and Russian governments are collaborating, along with other Eurasian allies in the SCO, to deny Internet resources to civil liberties groups and other opponents of their regimes.

Central Asia perhaps represents the geographic region where the security interests of China and Russia most overlap. Although China and Russia often compete for Central Asian energy supplies and commercial opportunities, the two governments share a desire to limit potential instability in the region. They especially fear ethnic separatism in their border territories supported by Islamic fundamentalist movements in Central Asia. Russian authorities dread the prospect of continued instability in the northern Caucasus, especially Chechnya and neighboring Dagestan. China’s leaders worry about separatist agitation in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. The shared regional security interests between Beijing and Moscow have meant that the newly independent states of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—have become a generally unifying element in Chinese-Russian relations. Their overlapping security interests in Central Asia have manifested themselves most visibly in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Since its founding in 2001, the SCO has essentially functioned as a Chinese-Russian condominium, providing Beijing and Moscow with a

convenient multilateral framework to manage their interests in Central Asia. At present, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are also full members, while India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan have observer status in the organization. Yet, this harmony between Beijing and Moscow arises primarily because the Chinese leadership considers the region of lower strategic priority than does Moscow, which still considers Central Asia an area of special Russian influence. China's growing interest in securing Central Asian oil and gas could lead Beijing to reconsider its policy of regional deference.

Tensions and Constraints

Despite their improved relationship, China and Russia have not formed a mutual defensive alliance and still tend to pursue distinct, if largely parallel, policies regarding many issues. Personal and economic exchanges between China and Russia remain minimal compared to those found between most large countries in Europe and North America.

The most noteworthy development in their bilateral defense relationship has been the sharp decline of Russian arms sales to China in recent years. The ongoing improvement in the quality and quantity of China's national defense production confronts Russian officials with a difficult choice. Until now, the Russian government has refused to sell its most sophisticated weapons systems—such as long-range ballistic missiles, strategic bombers, or air and missile defense systems—to the PRC for fear that such weapons could disrupt the balance of power in East Asia. The Russian government has also declined to sell China weapons—such as advanced land warfare weapons or tactical air support aircraft—that could assist the PLA in a ground war with Russia. Instead, Russia has transferred advanced weapons mostly for naval warfare and air defense. Moscow's restraint has meant that Russian arms sales to Beijing have been insufficient by themselves to enable China to defeat the more technologically advanced militaries of Taiwan, Japan, or the United States. Now the growing prowess of China's indigenous defense industry has decreased Beijing's interest in purchasing low-quality Soviet-era weapons from Moscow, leaving the PLA interested in only the most advanced Russian weapons. The Russian government has thus far declined to sell such weapons for fear the Chinese might copy their technology and use it to design weapons that Chinese firms could then sell to potential Russian customers at lower prices, in addition to the above concerns regarding Russia's national defense. This transformation has meant that bilateral defense-industrial ties between China and Russia have gone from being the foundation of their new post-Cold War partnership to a major irritant.

Russian officials are similarly reluctant to transfer their best nuclear energy technologies and other knowledge products that could allow lower-cost Chinese manufacturers to displace Russian exports from third-party markets. The rest of their bilateral energy relationship remains equally problematic. The two sides repeatedly announce grandiose oil and natural gas deals that, until recently, have failed to materialize. Russian energy firms try to induce European and Asian customers to bid against one another. Although this approach enhances Russian bargaining leverage, it reinforces Chinese doubts about Russia's reliability as a long-term energy partner. The two governments remain suspicious about each other's activities in Central Asia, where their state-controlled firms compete for oil and gas. Chinese officials have steadfastly refused to endorse Moscow's decision to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, which Russia pried from Georgia during the August 2008 war. At the societal level, ties between

ordinary Chinese and Russians remain minimal despite years of sustained efforts by both governments to promote humanitarian exchanges and the study of the other country's language. Chinese criticize the failure of the Russian government to ensure the safety and respect the rights of Chinese nationals working in Russia. Russians in turn complain about Chinese pollution spilling into Russian territory and worry that large-scale Chinese immigration into the Russian Far East will result in large swaths of eastern Russia becoming de facto parts of China.

After many years of false hopes and frustrated deals, China and Russia have made only modest progress in establishing their long-anticipated energy partnership. Notwithstanding China's efforts at energy supply diversification over the past decade, it was not until 2009 that Russia became China's fourth largest oil supplier, providing 7.8% of China's imports in 2009, up from 6.3% in 2008. This figure is now rising further thanks to the opening of the Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean oil pipeline on January 1, 2011. Still, this low figure is surprising because the two countries would appear to be natural energy partners. Furthermore, negotiations over a direct natural gas pipeline remain stalled due to disagreements over what price China will pay for the gas. Russia has carved out only a small share of China's expanding nuclear energy sector.

Given the geographic proximity between the two nations, the fact that Russia is the world's largest oil producer, and the fact that China is the world's largest energy importer and fastest growing economy, it would seem that Russia and China would have aligned sooner. Russia's oil and natural gas deposits, some of the largest in the world, lie much closer than the more distant energy reserves of the Persian Gulf and Africa. Oil and gas from these regions can only reach the PRC through international waters vulnerable to interdiction by foreign navies and sea pirates, whereas Russian energy can enter Chinese territory directly without having to pass through third-party territories. Some energy-exporting Central Asian countries also enjoy these advantages, though Chinese policy makers act warily in this region given Moscow's traditional dominant regional position, which generally guarantees an important role for Russian companies in the exploitation and especially transportation of Central Asian oil and gas.

Despite these advantages and other mutual incentives to increase bilateral energy cooperation, Chinese-Russian energy cooperation has been surprisingly limited. Technical obstacles, pricing conflicts, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and mutual suspicions have historically kept Chinese purchases of Russian energy at relatively low levels. Frequent delays in shipments on the part of the Russians and attempts to leverage the competing interests of the Chinese, Asian, and European markets off each other have prevented Chinese policy makers from regarding Russia as a reliable long-term supplier. In assessing energy relations between the two countries, it is important to distinguish concrete contracts from mere declarations of intent. Many of the bilateral agreements reached in recent years—often described as memoranda of understanding or framework accords—aim merely to signify interest as well as gain leverage regarding third parties, such as Japan and Europe.

Despite their 2008 boundary agreements, tensions regarding the Russian-Chinese border periodically reappear, such as when the Chinese government first learned that two Russian coast guard ships had sunk a Chinese-owned freighter off its coast on February 15, 2009. Revelations about the incident produced sharp protests in the Chinese media, which ran stories recounting how Czarist Russia had seized the land from a weak China during the 19th century and citing

examples of how contemporary Russians mistreat Chinese nationals. Nationalist politicians in both countries can mobilize people behind extremist platforms using racism and ethnic hatred.

Their trade imbalance is another source of tension. The decline in Russian arms purchased by China in recent years has shifted this balance significantly against Russia. Before 2007, Russia racked up steady surpluses from large deliveries of energy, arms, and other industrial goods. Since then, the terms of trade have shifted markedly in the PRC's favor due to a decline in Chinese purchase of weapons systems and other high-technology items. At present, Russian exports to the PRC consist overwhelmingly of raw materials, especially natural resources like oil and timber. Oil deliveries alone often account for half the value of all Russian exports to China. When prices of these commodities collapsed in 2008, Russia ran a \$13.5 billion trade deficit with China. The resurgence in energy prices in the past year has now returned Russia's surplus, but Moscow policy makers are eager to reduce their dependence on volatile raw material exports by reviving the PRC's purchase of high-value industrial goods and services. China could address this source of tension by purchasing more Russian weapons and high-technology products.

Mutual investment is another lagging area of cooperation that has attracted the attention of both governments. In 2009, the PRC's direct (non-financial) investment in Russia amounted to only \$413 million, which itself represented a 73.5 percent growth over the previous year. By the end of 2009, China's accumulative non-financial direct investment in Russia was only \$2.02 billion. Most Chinese non-financial capital flows into Russia's textile, timber, and raw materials sector. The parties have drafted, but not yet implemented, a Sino-Russian Investment Cooperation Plan, designed to increase their mutual cooperation in investment and financing. The Russian government is particularly eager to secure Chinese investment to help achieve their goal of modernizing the Russian economy. In addition, Russian officials want Chinese firms to participate in the government's plans to sell Russian state-owned shares in hundreds of large companies. Through this partial privatization, Russian officials hope to receive an influx of cash at a time when surging government spending and weak revenues are pushing the budget into deep deficit. One factor likely limiting Chinese interest is that the privatization process could take five years to implement and the Russian government will still retain majority ownership and therefore control over most of the companies. Despite their mutual concern about American strategic ambitions, the governments of China and Russia have not undertaken any widespread collaboration in this area. For example, they have not pooled their military resources or expertise to overcome U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems by, for instance, undertaking joint research and development programs to create shared anti-BMD technologies. Nor have they coordinated pressure against other countries in Europe or Asia to abstain from deploying U.S. BMD assets, even in Central Asia or Northeast Asia, regions that border Chinese and Russian territories.

In East Asia, China and Russia share a concern regarding the evolving political, military, and economic situation on the Korean peninsula, which borders both countries. In these dimensions, the two governments have thus far pursued largely independent but parallel policies toward both North and South Korea. In terms of influence, Beijing enjoys a more dominant role, while Moscow often struggles to maintain even a supporting position. Their policies towards Japan and Taiwan are also not well integrated. Beijing considers its ties with these countries as among its

most important bilateral relationships, whereas Moscow manages its relations with both states almost as an afterthought.

In the Middle East, the governments of China and Russia have also followed parallel but typically uncoordinated policies. They both want to sell Iran weapons, nuclear energy technologies, and other products. In addition, Beijing and Moscow have defended Tehran at the Security Council while warning against any Iranian ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons. In addition, they both opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq but have shared concerns that an early American military withdrawal from that country could lead to an increase of Islamic militarism throughout the Middle East, which could disrupt China's energy supplies and reinvigorate the Muslim insurgency in southern Russia. Thus far, however, neither country has sought to make issues related to Iran or Iraq major areas for bilateral Sino-Russian cooperation or significant points of confrontation with Washington.

More recently, China and Russia have declined to coordinate their policies regarding Libya or other manifestations of the Arab Awakening despite common fears of contagion, dislike of Western military intervention on humanitarian grounds, and concerns about losing valuable commercial opportunities. Sino-Russian cooperation in the Libyan War has thus far predominately consisted of their government officials' citing each other's opposition to Western interference.

The limits of foreign-policy harmonization between China and Russia are also visible in South Asia, where the two governments have adopted divergent positions on critical issues. For instance, despite the recent improvement in Chinese-Indian relations, Russia's ties with New Delhi still remain much stronger than those between China and India. Persistent border disputes, differences over India's growing security ties with the United States, competition over energy supplies, and other sources of Sino-Indian tensions have consistently impeded realization of the vision of a Moscow-Beijing-New Delhi axis that has periodically arisen over the past decade, especially when Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov visited New Delhi in 1998.

The Russian military has begun to cite China's growing military potential as a reason why Russia needs to acquire more warships and retain tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) despite U.S. pressure to negotiate their elimination in the next round of the strategic arms talks. It is difficult to sustain a major conventional military force in the Russian Far East, but TNWs can help compensate for shortages in numbers. The Commander in Chief of the Russian Navy, Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky, has also cited Beijing's interest in the Arctic as a reason to field a larger fleet. (Russian strategists often describe control over the Arctic region as a vital national interest and fundamental for sustaining Russia's great power status in the 21st century). Until recently, Russian analysts were confident about maintaining military superiority over China for at least the next decade, but recent displays of growing Chinese defense capabilities, combined with a more confrontational manifestation of Chinese diplomacy, appear to be causing the same unease in Russia as in other countries.

Future Scenarios

The next few years will most likely see a continuation of this pattern of decent but not excellent relations between China and Russia, in which they loosely cooperate on a few issues but basically ignore each other regarding most others. But alternate China-Russia futures are imaginable. These alternatives naturally fall into two broad categories—ones in which the China-Russia relationship significantly deteriorates, and those in which ties radically improve.

A major worsening of China-Russia ties would actually represent a regression to the mean. The modern Chinese-Russian relationship has most often been characterized by bloody wars, imperial conquests, and mutual denunciations. It has only been during the last 20 years, when Russian power had been decapitated by its lost Soviet empire and China has found itself a rising economic--but still militarily weak--power that the two countries have managed to achieve a harmonious balance in their relationship. According to various metrics, while China now has the world's second largest economy, Russia has the world's second most powerful military, thanks largely to its vast reserves of nuclear weapons. But China could soon surpass Russia in terms of conventional military. Under these conditions, Moscow could well join other countries bordering China in pursuing a containment strategy designed to balance, though not prevent, China's rising power.

One could well imagine heightened China-Russia tensions over border regions. The demographic disparity that exists between the Russian Far East and northern China invariably raises the question of whether Chinese nationals will move northward to exploit the natural riches of underpopulated eastern Russia. Border tensions could increase if poorly managed development, combined with pollution, land seizures, and climate change, drive poor Chinese peasants into Russian territory. Russians no longer worry about a potential military clash with China over border issues, but they still fear that the combination of the declining ethnic Russian population in the Russian Far East, Chinese interest in acquiring greater access to the energy and other natural resources of the region, the growing disparity in the aggregate size of the Chinese and Russian national economies due to China's higher growth rate, and suspected large-scale illegal Chinese immigration into the Russian Far East will result in China's de facto peaceful annexation of large parts of eastern Russia. Although the Russian Federation is the largest country in the world in terms of territory, China has more than nine times as many people as Russia.

Although shared concerns about preserving stability in Central Asia have thus far been a unifying force in the China-Russia relationship, one could conceive of renewed rivalry for local allies and energy resources, especially if NATO withdraws from the region, leaving Moscow and Beijing as the two natural competitors for regional primacy. Should U.S. power in the Pacific falter, China and Russia might also become natural rivals for the allegiance of the weak states of East Asia as they search for a new great power patron, either by aligning with or balancing against China's hegemonic potential in the Asia Pacific region. India has traditionally seen Moscow as a potential balancer against China and its regional ally Pakistan.

Conversely, the China-Russia relationship would improve if the two countries could finally consummate their long-anticipated energy partnership. Given the geographic proximity between the two countries, Russia's role as the world's largest oil producer, and China's role as the largest energy importer and fastest growing economy, it would seem that Russian and China

should be natural energy allies. Despite these advantages and other mutual interests in increasing bilateral energy cooperation, Chinese-Russian energy cooperation has been surprisingly limited. Various technical obstacles, pricing conflicts, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and mutual suspicions have historically kept Chinese purchases of Russian energy at relatively low levels. But during the past two years they have finally opened a direct oil pipeline, and large-scale natural gas deliveries could occur within the next few years provided the parties can agree on a mutually acceptable price.

Finally, more events such as the upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, following the earlier disorders in Iran and Kyrgyzstan, could drive Beijing and Moscow closer as the world's two most powerful authoritarian regimes. The SCO could provide a suitable multilateral mechanism for defending the Eurasian autocracies. Through the SCO, supplemented by their UN Security Council veto, Beijing and Moscow can fight for their cherished principles of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and civil liberty restrictions under the banner of countering the three evil forces of terrorism, extremism, and separatism.

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