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Hearing on "An Emerging China-Russia Axis? Implications for the United States in an Era of Strategic Competition"

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Introduction

In the last several years, Sino-Russian relations have steadily become closer. They are routinely described as at "the best level in history."[1] This is not to say, however, that Sino-Russian interactions are absent significant strains and tensions. A number of issues challenge the equilibrium of the relationship to a greater or lesser extent. These will be assessed in terms of their relative significance below.

The Weight of History and the Lack of Cultural Symbiosis

China and Russia have a complicated historical legacy. The Soviet Union, through the vehicle of the Comintern, orchestrated the establishment of the Communist Party of China (CCP) in 1921. The CCP victory in 1949 was followed by the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. The premises of this treaty did not last through the decade as the Sino-Soviet relationship declined into a spectacle of acrimony and mutual recriminations. With the ascension of Mikhail Gorbachev to the Soviet leadership in 1985 the two states embarked upon negotiations over the disputed border, while Gorbachev's 1989 trip to Beijing marked the normalization of relations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the presidency of Boris Yeltsin initially resisted establishing cordial ties with China on the grounds that it represented a renegade Communist state. This attitude did not endure for long, and by 2001, China and Russia signed another treaty, the Russian-Chinese Treaty of Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation (reportedly at China's behest).[2] The intensification of relations in the Putin era was further strengthened by Russia's pivot to the East in the wake of the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea.

To a large extent, the longstanding border dispute has been laid to rest, although nationalist voices in China continue to voice complaints about the unequal border treaties that were forced upon a weakened Qing dynasty by a militarily stronger Russia. Despite the current bonhomie that characterizes the relationship, China and Russia lack any significant degree of cultural symbiosis. Here, it is Russia rather than China that

encounters a sort of identity crisis in the context of deepening ties with China. Russian political elites have traditionally looked to Europe, whether as a point of identification or as a self-defining other rather than the East. This attitude has not changed up to the present. There remains considerable resistance even to the seemingly pragmatic notion of increasing economic and trade linkages with Asia. As the Russian public intellectual Sergei Karaganov has noted: Russian elites have had a difficult time finding the "intellectual substantiation for the need to make an economic turn to the East."[3] This attitude is also seen in the 2017 report on Asia published by the Valdai Discussion Club, which noted that despite Russia's increased presence in Asia, "Russia does not intend to renounce its original European roots and will continue to strengthen them."[4]

The Asymmetry of the Sino-Russian Relationship

The Sino-Russian relationship is invariably presented as an expression of interactions between equals. In particular, the Chinese have been concerned to treat Russia with full respect as an equal partner. This practice, however, is not sufficient to obscure the reality that China is the ascendant partner in this relationship. Russia is a declining power, at least in the relative sense, while China is almost universally conceived as a rising power. By means of comparison, the CIA estimate of Chinese GDP (measured in purchasing power parity) is estimated at 23.21 trillion dollars while Russia's GDP is estimated at 4.016 trillion dollars, almost a six fold difference.[5] The rise of China has, moreover, geopolitical implications that place multiple strains on the relations in both the political and the economic spheres (see below). For Russia, great power status, or at least the claim to great power status, is a requisite component of national identity as well as a critical source of regime legitimation. While China for decades publically shunned suggestions of great power aspirations, Xi Jinping has embraced the concept. Xi described China as a great power in his 2013 meeting with US president Barack Obama in which he proclaimed a "new type of great power relations" between the two states. During his keynote speech at the 2017 Belt and Road Forum, Xi identified China as a "great power" or a "strong power" no less than twenty six times.[6] The retreat of the United States in the Trump administration from global leadership has allowed China a greater opportunity to claim that status, especially inasmuch as Xi has emerged as a champion of globalization and free market precepts, a cause that he continuously champions in global fora. In other words, China is emerging as a global power with a global foreign policy agenda. In contrast, Russia, despite its actions in Syria, lacks the capabilities to play a global role. It rather aspires to be a regional hegemon in the Eurasian area.

Economic Disparities

The asymmetry in Sino-Russian political relations is paralleled in economic interactions between the two states. China is Russia's largest trading partner, but Russian only ranks as China's tenth trading partner.[7] There is a corresponding imbalance in the commodity composition of good traded between the two states. Table 1 indicates the top ten Chinese imports to and exports from Russia in 2016. China largely exports finished goods to Russia while Russia overwhelming exports raw materials to China. Over half (59%) of

Russian exports to China consist of fuels, while in total raw materials comprised 92.6 percent of Russian exports. In contrast, China's largest category of exports to China consisted of machinery and electrical products (35.3%), a figure that contrasts sharply with the 1.7 percent of machinery and electrical products that China imported from Russia. Estimates of the extent of Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) in Russia are highly imprecise and vary widely. According to statistics from the Russian Central Bank, Chinese FDI in Russia comprised 645 million dollars in 2015 and 350 million dollars in 2016. These figures pale in comparison to estimates that total Chinese FDI was over 170 billion dollars in 2016. Russian Central Bank statistics present an even lower level of Russia FDI in China: 11 million dollars for 2015 and 6 million dollars for 2016.[8]

Although Russian leaders like to speak of the complementarity of the Russian and Chinese economies, Table 1 indicates an uncomfortable reality. Russia is in danger of becoming a raw materials appendage of China in the manner of an underdeveloped country. The loosening of previous prohibitions on Chinese involvement in foreign investment and the purchase of high technology items predominantly in the military sector has accentuated this situation. As the data for Chinese-Russian trade implies, China is primarily interested in developing economic ties with Russia in the energy sector. The Eastern Siberia Pacific Oil (ESPO) pipeline began operations with a spur to China in 2011, followed by a second link that opened in January 2018. A gas pipeline link, the Power of Siberia, is scheduled for completion in December 2019. A memo of understanding signed in 2017 provides for a Power of Siberia 2 although negotiations are ongoing. Chinese investment has also been critical in maintaining the operations of certain key Kremlin supported projects that have been targeted for sanctions. This includes the purchase of 9.9 percent of shares in the Yamal liquefied national gas (LNG) project and the purchase of ten percent of the share of Sibur, a petrochemical complex.

The Chinese targeting of large-scale energy projects for investment also indicates the co-mingling of political and economic motivations. The Chinese have been especially concerned to provide funding for individuals with close ties to President Putin. Both the Yamal LNG project and the Sibur petrochemical complex are co-owned by Gennady Timchenko, a close friend of Putin who was one of the first people to be placed on the US sanctions list.[9] The Chinese doling out of special deals to Putin's cronies may be in the interests of individual Russians but it is not necessarily in the interest of the Russian state. As oligarchs and members of the siloviki have come to rely on Chinese loans to finance projects, the Kremlin risks the loss of decision-making authority over the final destination of pipeline routes and energy supplies. On the one hand, the construction of pipeline routes to China represents a diversification of Russian energy supplies. But on the other hand, it bears the risk of further embedding Russian in a dependency relationship with China.

China's Silk Road Initiative: A Challenge to Russia

In the fall of 2013, Xi Jinping proposed in a speech at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan that China and the states of Central Asia cooperate to establish trade and economic linkages through a modern version of the Silk Road to promote regional

cooperation. Eventually this initiative morphed into a megaproject that includes a maritime component and a near global scope. Variously known as the Silk Road, One Belt One Road (OBOR), and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Chinese leadership has now settled on BRI for its English usage nomenclature. In its land variant the endeavor focuses on the construction of large scale infrastructure projects to be financed through China's Silk Road Fund and the Chinese sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Chinese plans for this initiative met with considerable consternation and unease in Moscow, where it was interpreted as a threat to Russia's goal of maintaining a sphere of influence in Central Asia. The Kremlin initially chose to ignore BRI and also turned down the invitation to join the AIIB. Eventually, however, it seems that the Russian leadership realized it had little choice but to endorse the project and sought instead to recoup the best deal possible under the circumstances. At the 2015 meeting of Putin and Xi, the two states agreed to link BRI with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the regional economic integration project promoted by Russia. The Sino-Russian Joint Declaration on Cooperation between the EAEU and BRI signed during Xi's visit to Moscow, pledged to make efforts to coordinate the two initiatives, as well as envisioning BRI participation in ventures located in Russia.[10] In 2017 the Eurasian Economic Commission prepared a list of 39 priority projects to support this linkage and in May 2018 the EAEU and China signed a further agreement on trade and economic cooperation. None of these projects have to date been initiated: one signature project, the Moscow-Kazan high speed railway, has been under negotiation for several years and seems unlikely to be completed amidst questions as to its ultimate feasibility. The Russian leadership has also pressed for the adjustment of proposed BRI transit corridors to transverse through Russia rather than Central Asia with no current signs of success.

Although the Kremlin has opted to portray BRI as beneficial to Russia and the linkage of the EAEU and BRI as a relationship between equals, the fact is that BRI exposes Russian vulnerability in the post-Soviet region, and most especially in Central Asia. The fact is that Russia cannot compete with China economically in the post-Soviet space. Table 2 provides comparative data on the extent of Russian and Chinese trade with the former Soviet republics (with the exception of the Baltic states). Chinese imports from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan exceeded Russian imports in 2016 while Chinese exports surpassed those of Russia in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Chinese total trade volumes were greater than those of Russia in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which is to say all of the Central Asian Republics. It is also the case that Chinese economic activity in the entire post-Soviet region has increased significantly in the post-Soviet era. Chinese exports to Georgia are close to those of Russia, as in the case with Azerbaijani imports to China. China, moreover, has a sizable trade in both imports from and exports to Ukraine. These numbers, moreover, forecast the increasing economic penetration of China into the Eurasian region over the longer term.

There is no doubt that China envisions the BRI as a means of expanding China's economic reach in Central Asia. It was similarly no coincidence that Xi Jinping selected Kazakhstan as the locale to announce the initiative. The Kremlin is well aware of China's burgeoning economic presence in Central Asia and equally aware that there is little that it

can do about it. In response, the Russian leadership has constructed two somewhat contradictory narratives, both of which reflect the realization that Russia is unable to compete with China in the economic sphere. On the one hand, the Russian leadership posits a division of labor between Russia and China. In this context, Russia portrays itself as the dominant security provider in the region while China pursues its economic interests. These activities are depicted as complimentary rather than competitive, both contributing to the maintenance of stability in the region. On the other hand, Russia has introduced the concept of the Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership (variously known as the Eurasian Partnership, or Greater Eurasia). This is a vague and inchoate concept that envisions a loosely integrated structure of regional multilateral organizations. Although couched in the language of cooperation and mutual benefit, the Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership seeks to position Russia as a dominant presence in the Eurasian region. Marcin Kaczmarski and Witold Rodkiewicz consider that the Greater Eurasian project is intended to "conceal and legitimize the growing asymmetry in Russian-Chinese relations."[11] This view is shared by many Chinese commentators who perceive it as "mainly an EAEU centered geopolitical mechanism aimed at balancing the rise of China."[12] This also appears to be the tacit interpretation of the Chinese leadership. Although the the 2016 Sino-Russia Joint Statement referred to the Comprehensive Eurasian Partnership (ou ya quanmian huoban guanxi), current Sino-Russian documents refer to the more circumscribed Eurasian Economic Partnership Agreement (ou ya jingji guanxi xieding).[13]

Tensions in Siberia and the Russian Far East

Tensions regarding the presence of China as a dominant neighbor are especially present along the Sino-Russian border in the Russian Far East. During the Soviet era residents of the region were isolated from their Asian neighbors and enjoyed a high degree of subsidization provided by the state. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the provision of subsidies has collapsed and the population has been deserting the region. The demographic imbalance between Russia and China, combined with the underdeveloped state of much of the Russian Far East, accentuate the fears of a potential massive immigration of Chinese into the region. At the present time approximately 6.3 million people live in the Russian Far East facing a population of about 110 million people across the border in the three provinces (Heilongjiang, Liaoning, and Jilin) in Manchuria.[14] Putin recognized the gravity of this situation in 2000 when he noted "if we do not make real efforts to develop the Far East in the near future, the Russian population will mainly be speaking Japanese, Chinese and Korean in a few decades."[15] Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev expressed a similar sentiment in 2012 when he warned that the Russian Far East could become a raw materials appendage to China as a result of China's "excessive expansion."[16]

Although not condoned by the Kremlin, the media as well as some members of the Russian political class continue to propagate highly exaggerated and xenophobic accounts asserting that millions of Chinese migrants are overrunning the Russian Far East. Precise figures of the Chinese presence in Russia are not available, but regional official and academic data estimate the number of Chinese migrants as between four and

five hundred thousand, more than half of whom reside in European Russia, with the largest population in Moscow.[17] Previously, Russia sought to restrict Chinese economic activity in the Russian Far East, notably in the extractive industries, an exclusion that did not apply to the Japanese and Koreans. These prohibitions have largely been lifted but there is still evidence of foot dragging in economic engagement with the Chinese. A 2015 Memorandum on Cooperation between Russia and China was modest in its scope but nonetheless unleashed an intense backlash from those who opposed the construction of Chinese enterprises in the region. This was especially the case with plans to lease land to Chinese operations for farming. As of 2018, moreover, an online petition had gathered 55,000 signatures in support of a ban on land purchases on the shores of Lake Baikal in Siberia, accompanied by claims that China was seeking to turn the region into a Chinese province.[18] Here, the Moscow media has circulated reports that the Chinese businesses in the region consider Lake Baikal a "Chinese" body of water. In this discourse, the Russia elite is routinely depicted as collaborating with Chinese businesses to the detriment of Russia's national interest.[19] At the same time, it is evident that the Chinese have made significant inroads into agricultural production in the Far Eastern and Siberian regions. Statistics estimate that somewhere between 600,000 and 850,000 hectares of land are farmed by Chinese through some form of agricultural venture.[20] In the Jewish Autonomous Region, moreover, Chinese farmers are estimated to be tenants on up to 80 percent of the land.[21]

Russia, China and the International Order

Russia and China continuously reiterate that they share a near consensual position on the international system. This convergence in political identity in fact serves as the foundation for their increasingly close relationship. They share a joint commitment to the Westphalian principles of sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, an adherence to international law, and the role of the United Nations as a forum for discussion and conflict resolution. At the same time, these two states are the biggest political outliers in the international system and as such object to the hegemony of the West, its pretense of universal values, and its activities in the realm of democracy promotion and the fomenting of color revolution type scenarios. Nonetheless, there are some differences, largely in emphasis that separate China and Russia's assessment of the international order, although they can not accurately be portrayed as tensions. Russia is more invested in the concept of multipolarity and the role that states (and on occasion multilateral institutions such as the BRICS or the SCO) assume as regional poles in the administration of the international order. In recent years, however, China has become less enamored of this nomenclatura. Although the multipolar world was once a staple of Sino-Russian discourse, the 2018 Joint Statement between China and Russia only refers in passing to the "formation of a more equitable and rational polycentric world order."[22] In contrast, China's more assertive foreign policy under the leadership of Xi Jinping has led it increasingly to present itself as a competitor to the United States in a world structure characterized by bipolarity. In the Trump era, Xi has also emerged as the leading advocate of globalization and free trade. In reflection of its superior economic states, these issues are of considerable greater concern to China than to Russia.

As regional powers, both Russia and China are concerned to act as regional hegemons. In this capacity, Russia displays a greater interest in NATO and NATO expansion than China. Russia in turn attempts to maintain a discrete distance with regard to China's preoccupation with Taiwan, and the disputed islands issue. Some tensions, however, do exist between Russia and China with respect to Russia's bilateral relationships with India and Vietnam. Both states have historically maintained a good relationship with Russia, while bilateral ties with China have been strained if not occasionally conflictual. Sino-Indian relations have generally improved in recent years but the two states remain regional competitors for influence in the Asian Pacific Region. Russia sought to avoid taking sides in the 2017 border dispute between India and China at Doklam. There exists a widespread perception that the Kremlin seeks to maintain a strong relationship with India as a means of mitigating China's growing presence in Asia. Russia, for examples, backs Indian's request for a permanent seat in the Security Council as well as the Nuclear Supplier's Group. Russia was, moreover, the main advocate for India's membership in the SCO, leading Yang Siling, writing in the Chinese government operated *Global Times* in 2017 to ask: "Does Russia support India's accession to the SCO for the sake of common development or for counterbalancing China?"[23] Russia's relationship with Vietnam has also aroused Chinese concerns. Russia is the largest supplier of arms to Vietnam with Vietnam reportedly placing more than one billion dollars worth of orders for military equipment and military services in 2018.[24] More problematically, however, Vietnam and Russia have been involved in joint oil exploration projects in the South China Sea. Vietnam's state owned oil company Petro Vietnam and Russia's Gazprom have agreed jointly to develop gas in the South China Sea. A joint project between Vietnam and Russia oil firm Rosneft is also drilling in an area considered by China to be within its "nine dash line." Both the proposed gas exploration project and the oil exploration venture have come in for sharp criticism from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[25]

China and Russia: Participation in International Organizations

China and Russia both play an active role in the United Nations Security Council as permanent members but their positions, although largely congruent, do not overlap. To begin with, Russia is more likely to employ the veto while China has a longstanding position of abstaining on Security Council votes. Since 2000, Russia has vetoed 21 Security Council draft resolutions. China abstained in 12 of these cases, and cast a positive vote in one (a 2004 resolution involving the removal of peacekeeping troops from Cyprus). In 9 cases, therefore, Russia and China jointly were the sole Security Council permanent members to veto a resolution. China joined Russia in vetoing six Security Council resolutions involving the civil war in Syria that condemned the use of chemical weapons or human rights abuses. Russia and China also jointly vetoed three resolutions that condemned the political situation in Venezuela (February 2019), Zimbabwe (2008) and Myanmar (2007). Notably, however, China selected not to support Russia in the 2009 resolution regarding the situation in Georgia, the 2014 resolution condemning the Russian annexation of Crimea, or the 2015 resolution regarding the case of MH17, the Malaysian airliner that was shot down in Eastern Ukraine.[26]

In the last few years, China has emerged as an active presence in the United Nations drawing upon its economic capabilities and expanding linkages with developing states. China is the third largest contributor to the UN budget and committed over 2500 personnel to UN peacekeeping operations in 2018.[27] Russia in contrast ranks 14th in terms of its contribution to the UN budget and committed 98 personnel serving as UN peacekeepers in 2916.[28] China currently provides the largest number of peacekeeping forces among the permanent members of the Security Council. As the United States has continued to disengage from the international arena, China has increasingly emerged as a key actor in the United Nations. As Richard Gowan, a UN expert at the European Council of Foreign Relations commented: "China is the real playmaker here."[29] China, along with its loyal supporter Russia, has begun to use its new found influence to undermine UN efforts to protect human rights. In this capacity, China has led a successful quest to cut funding for human rights monitoring on a variety of fronts, using financing as its main tool.

China and Russia have overlapping membership in several multilateral structures, among them the BRICS and the SCO. There is a notable difference of emphasis between Russia and China with respect to these organizations. Russia is concerned to make use of both of these institutions as evidence of Russia's great power status in a multipolar world. Most particularly, Russia hopes to use these bodies as a counterweight to the West. Although the premise of the BRICS was created by an analyst at Goldman Sachs in 2001, the Russian government website credits Russia as the initiator of this organization.[30] Russia was also the prime mover in the expansion of the SCO to include India and Pakistan in 2017. China in comparison is considerably less invested in either the BRICS or the SCO. China's major global effort at the moment is focused on the development of BRI. Although a partner in the BRICS Development Bank (now renamed the New Development Bank), China is more concerned with the operation of its BRI associated AIIB. For a few years, moreover, China engaged in an unsuccessful venture to develop the SCO as an economic institution. In this capacity, China put forth perennial requests to create a free trade zone among SCO states, and to establish a SCO development bank. These measures were resolutely opposed by the Kremlin (and also met with wary resistance by the Central Asian members of the SCO), which was fearful of further Chinese economic penetration of Central Asia. China also opposed Russia's desire to expand the SCO's membership, although not openly.[31] Alexander Lukin, moreover, has gone so far as to suggest that "China's disillusion with the economic potential of the SCO was one of the reasons for Beijing's decision to push forward the BRI."[32]

Leveraging Sino-Russian Tensions: A US Option?

The Sino-Russian relationship is routinely described as at an unparalleled highpoint, but this characterization does not wholly conceal their divergences. There is a lack of substantive trust between the two partners. Decades of enmity are difficult to overcome and Russia's increasingly junior status threatens the equilibrium of the relationship. At the same time, it is difficult to envision scenarios in which the United States might leverage areas of tension between Russia and China to its advantage. Current conditions are not auspicious for a reenactment of the Nixon era in which the United States "played

the China card" against the Soviet Union in a triangular geopolitical relationship. A problem here is that it is precisely US policy that has played a critical role in uniting China and Russia in shared enmity to the West. This is a structural outcome of US decisions since the demise of the Cold War as well as the United States' status as the remaining superpower. As neorealist Kenneth Waltz observed in a 2000 article, NATO expansion pushed "Russia toward China rather than drawing Russia toward Europe and America."[33] Similarly, the rise of China has set the conditions—despite China's unceasing rhetoric of harmony—for competition between China and the United States. Under these circumstances, moreover, it is quite possible that attempts to play Russia and China off against each other would backfire leading to a situation of heightened tensions and hostility.

Policy Recommendations

At the present time, the US-Russian relationship is arguably at its lowest point since the Cold War era. US-Chinese interactions are not quite as hostile but there is an omnipresent fear of the "China threat" and the Trump administration's initiation of a trade war with China has further led to the deterioration of the relationship. A wide range of opinions exists among analysts as to how to deal with both China and Russia. In the most recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, for example, Michael Mandelbaum argues for a new containment policy for handling Russia, China, and Iran.[34] Jennifer Lind and William Wohlforth, in contrast, maintain that the United States needs to promote a conservative foreign policy that eschews the forging of new alliances and tones down liberal policies as a means of preserving the liberal international order.[35] My own opinion follows upon the line of Lind and Wohlforth's assessment. In dealing with China and Russia, the United States would be well advised to jettison much of its ideological rhetoric and adopt a policy of pragmatic and prudent diplomacy. This is not to say that the United States should adopt an accomodationist policy that accedes to Russian and Chinese demands. But it is to suggest that there are areas that are amenable to diplomatic negotiation. The substantive foundation of the Sino-Russian relationship rests on a consensual critique of the West, notably the United States. Hence, the task for US policymakers is to consider which issues can potentially be mitigated while at the same time preserving US core interests.

1) The United States should publically announce that it will not invite states that are former republics of the Soviet Union to join NATO. As a practical matter this refers to Georgia and Ukraine. The fact that the United States did not react beyond verbal condemnation to the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and has been reluctant to provide military aid to Ukraine in its conflict with the separatists in Eastern Ukraine suggests that it does not perceive Ukraine as a core interest. The same reasoning applies to the US's lack of a military response to the 2008 Georgian-Russian war. As a practical matter, given their internal problems, not to mention their complex relationship with Russia, NATO membership for these states would impose a heavy burden on NATO operations.

2) The United States should step back from the trade war it has initiated with China. The America First policy of the Trump administration is a violation of the liberal economic principles that the United States has embraced in the post-War era and allows China to assume the moral high ground as the leading advocate of globalization and free trade. Trade talks with China should be conducted with a full appreciation of the interdependence of the US and Chinese economics. The United States' has legitimate concerns regarding issues of intellectual property and technology transfer but US demands should be placed in the context of adherence to WTO standards.

3) The United States should downgrade its emphasis on democracy promotion. This does not preclude US efforts to develop civil society abroad (although both China and Russia are very suspicious of foreign funded NGOs). To be sure, democracy promotion has not been a priority of the Trump administration. However, the perception that the United States is intent on regime change in China and Russia is a major factor linking the two states together in a relationship of joint enmity. Both China and Russia view democracy promotion as nothing less than an existential threat. The intensity of this tie could potentially be mitigated by an affirmation on the part of the United States to the precepts of state sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affair of other states.

4) At the present time, the level of rhetorical discourse between the United States and Russia (and to a lesser extent with China) has become more inflammatory than at any point since at the height of the Cold War. Both the 2017 National Security Concept and the 2018 National Defense Strategy refer to Russia and China as "revisionist" powers.[36] As the National Security Strategy points out: "China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to US values and interests." The media in all three states undoubtedly contribute to this phenomenon but it would behoove US policymakers to adopt a more diplomatic tone in communicating with Russia and China.

5) The United States should seek a normalization of relations with Russia and China. The US strategy of seeking to socialize China into the norms and values of the international liberal order—as outlined in a speech delivered by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in 2005—has not been a resounding success.[37] Neither Russia nor China appear poised to adopt liberal international values in the foreseeable future. In the absence of this outcome, the most favorable alternative is to rely on the time honored practices of diplomacy. A first step is to identify areas of common interest: these include nuclear proliferation, arms control, terrorism and climate change. A second step is to select those areas of negotiation in which compromise is a possibility. The latter necessitates, moreover, a clear identification of US national interests.

Endnotes

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Table One

Top Ten Chinese Exports and Imports to Russia in 2016

Top Ten China imports from Russia (Total 32.3 Billion Dollars)		**Top Ten Chinese Exports to Russia (Total 37.3 Billion Dollars)**	
1) Fuels	59.0%	1) Machinery and Electrical	35.3%
2) Wood	14.1%	2) Textiles and Clothing	15.3%
3) Metals	8.8%	3) Hides and Skins	7.9%
4) Animal	4.4%	4) Metals	7.3%
5) Chemicals	3.3%	5) Footwear	5.8%
6) Minerals	3.1%	6) Transportation	5.1%
7) Machinery and Electrical	1.7%	7) Chemicals	4.1%
8) Vegetable	1.3%	8) Plastic or Rubber	4.0%
9) Plastic or Rubber	1.2%	9) Raw Materials	3.0%
10) Stone and Glass	1.0%	10) Vegetables	2.4%

Source: World Bank:

https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/RUS/Product/all-groups

https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Import/Partner/RUS/Product/all-groups

Table 2

Chinese and Russian Imports, Exports and Total Trade From the Post-Soviet States 2016 (US thousands)

	Imports		Exports		Total Trade	
	China	**Russia**	**China**	**Russia**	**China**	**Russia**
Armenia	280,618	378,281	111,083	957,253	391,701	1,335,534
Azerbaijan	412,081	446,282	345,883	1,508,064	757,965	1,954,346
Belarus	435,188	9,406,284	1,090,019	14,050,696	1,525,207	23,456,980
China		38,088,969		28,021,260		66,108,229
Georgia	53,564	256,686	745,243	840,003	798,807	1,096,689
Kazakhstan	4,805,078	3,612,214	8,292,320	9,426,891	13,097,398	13,039,105
Kyrgyzstan	71,234	170,543	5,605,425	1,025,746	5,676,659	1,196,289
Moldova	24,371	248,695	76,626	912,016	100,997	1,160,711
Russia	32,360,147		37,339,600		69,599,747	
Tajikistan	31,255	26,405	1,725,083	661,481	1,756,328	687,887
Turkmenistan	5,563,294	331,174	388,478	570,574	5,951,772	901,748
Ukraine	2,490,794	3,950,745	4,216,952	6,280,283	6,707,746	10,231,028
Uzbekistan	1,607,057	761,041	2,007,463	1,964,967	3,614,520	2,726,008

Sources: World Bank –at
https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/CHN/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Partner/by-country;
https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/RUS/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export

*World Bank Date for Russian and Chinese Imports and Exports are not Equivalent