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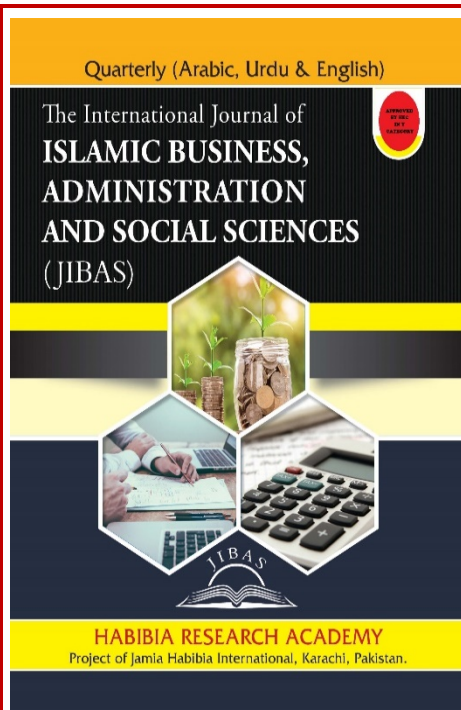
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TOPIC:

SINO - RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP: EMERGING CHALLENGES TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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**SINO - RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP: EMERGING CHALLENGES
TO UNITED STATES OF***Lubna Kumari,**M. Umair Rafique,***ABSTRACT:**

This research paper explains the growing strong ties and cooperation between China and Russia. By analyzing the relative positions of the two states in the international system, this research attempts to solve this conundrum. This paper attempts to find out how China and Russia jointly challenge the United States of America. China is hesitant to challenge the hegemonic order put in place by the United States because it can expand and prosper by free-riding on it. Russia is not happy with the current situation and is determined to change it to stop its decline and keep its great power position. The study is carried out through the secondary sources available online and it reveals that Currently China is an economically strong nation state and China's cooperation with Russia is giving a tough time to the United States. At the same time, Russia's international position has been weakened by Vladimir Putin's deliberate war in Ukraine, which has also damaged the well-crafted image of great-power strength that Putin has spent two decades cultivating. But America may not necessarily benefit from Russia's decline in relative strength. This study attempts to determine whether the foundations of the alliance between the two countries are defensive and role-playing against the United States.

KEYWORDS: *Cold War, BRICS, SCO, Ukraine Crises.*

INTRODUCTION:

The alliance between Russia and China has broadened and has matured since the Cold War ended specifically since the last decade. The experts in the U.S. argue that the Sino-Russian cooperation compromises and hinders the U.S. interests. Hence, they refer to this relationship as an “axis of convenience” as it holds no importance for the United States. It is said that there are “drivers” and “brakes”, which are like tools for cooperation between China and Russia and the driving forces exceed the chances that could easily limit the close ties (Io & Hill, 2013).

US policies and behavior are major variables, that are uncertain and that have impacts on the Russia-China relationship. If we focus on what can be done to improve the US position in terms of the international balance of power then that will be to strengthen the US's economic, diplomatic, and military capabilities. Global politics are often compared to a love triangle. Since the Second World War, China, Russia, and the United States have frequently switched allies. The Sino-Soviet pact broke down after Josef Stalin passed away, and Mikhail Gorbachev united China before Richard Nixon visited China in 1972. It was made possible to observe the existing alliance between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea. It is evident that the country that did not obtain support in any of these cases has always seemed to pay the price for failing, politically and militarily (Kaczmarek, 2018).

However, at present time, everything is entirely different. But Russia is paying the price for America's betrayal. China is in charge of every facet of the collaboration between the two nations. This is due to the fact that its economy is growing and is six times larger at purchasing power parity. On the other hand, Russia's growth slows down. What a clever

strategy for Putin to downplay the impact of the West and emphasize Russia's influence; it now appears that his nation will have difficulty escaping this trap. As we know, Russia is turning into a Chinese tributary; they are not an equal partner.

It seems improbable that China and Russia will defend each other in the circumstances of Ukraine or Taiwan because they are not technically aligned by treaty and are therefore under no obligation to do so. They now refer to each other as strategic partners and have grown closer in recent years. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin met just days before Russia attacked Ukraine and that their cooperation had "no limitations." They also promised to expand their collaboration in several ways. Given that they have met more than 40 times since 2012, Xi and Putin are thought to have a tight personal bond. President Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin of Russia agreed to establish a strategic partnership of energy cooperation in May 2014 as they signed the China-Russia Joint Statement on a New Stage of Complete Strategic Alliance of Organization.

In recent years, American officials have referred to China and Russia as the country's great-power rivals. According to Susan A. Thornton of Yale Law School, a partnership between China and Russia is unnatural. "The unification of China and Russia is favored by the worsening ties with the United States."

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand the unbalanced triangles among countries.
- To examine the challenges that America is facing in the Sino-Russia relationship.
- To evaluate the Russia's interest in China.
- To examine why America feels threatened by their collaboration.

Theoretical Framework

Power Transition theory

A sizable amount of IR research focuses on analyzing changes in the international system's power dynamics and their implications for international politics. When it comes to The power Transition theory in international relations, it explores shifts in global power dynamics and their impact on international politics. According to this theory, a stable world order is achieved when power is concentrated in the hands of a dominant hegemon. This hegemon establishes a hierarchical structure with its institutions and standards to maintain peace and stability. However, as the hegemon's authority declines and power becomes more evenly distributed, conflict becomes more likely, especially when rising states challenge the existing order. Despite the persuasive nature of PT theory, some scholars argue that emerging nations have little incentive to disrupt the current system. Additionally, real power transitions are more complex than the PT model suggests, with other major powers like Russia also influencing global events. Historical examples, such as Austria-Hungary's decline leading to World War I and Germany's attempts to compete with rising powers like Russia and the US, illustrate the multifaceted nature of power transitions. Declining powers not only have the potential to spark conflict but also to shape the trajectory of power shifts by contesting aspects of the current system and diverting attention from rising powers. For instance, Russia's opposition to elements of the US-led order allows China to focus on its peaceful rise without facing undue scrutiny.

METHODOLOGY

The research is a qualitative one which is going to be based on secondary data.

Research Design

The research is a qualitative one which is going to be based on secondary data. It will follow a content analysis-based approach with the data available through various research done by scholars in the field previously analyzed and conclusions will be drawn. As we seek to understand “The Unbalanced Triangle: What China-Russia Relation means to the United States, I’ll be looking at the data available in the field by previous researchers. Different journal articles published books and current newspapers will be referred to collect the data.

Analysis Technique

Secondary data is used to analyze the China and Russia relationship and how will it be challenging for the USA. Scholars and researchers who have worked in the field used to study and draw a conclusive decision to the questions sought after at the beginning of the research paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The communist union was founded in 1922 and the Soviet government established following the October Revolution left history in December 1991. It was replaced by the Russian Federation, which was determined to become a part of Western civilization. The ability of the two largest socialist nations, China, and the Soviet Union, to peacefully transition to a new type of China-Russia ties was put to the test. Naturally, the Chinese side had its assessment of Boris Yeltsin's contribution to the collapse of the USSR at the time. The Soviet Communist Party's loss of power and the collapse of the Soviet Union put great pressure on China's reform and opening. Concerns over the trajectory of China-Russian ties were stoked by this, in addition to Yeltsin's unilaterally pro-Western policies (guan, 2022).

The relationship between China and Russia has been strained by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, their extensive contiguous border, and ideological differences rooted in communism. Despite outward statements of cooperation, there remains a palpable tension between the two nations, with officials on both sides harboring deep-seated mistrust. Many analysts suggest that Russia's incursion into Ukraine in 2022 could serve as a pivotal moment in their relationship, with far-reaching implications for global geopolitics (Maizland, 2022).

The interests of the two major powers coincide for the time being. While Russia requires China's support to undertake its challenge, China utilizes Russia to counter the elements of US hegemony it finds objectionable. The structural dynamics that today support the relationship may, however, work against it in the future should Russia's challenge begin to destabilize the system and endanger China's peaceful ascent, leading to rifts between the two nations. Donald Trump, US president has pledged to push for improved relations with Russia and a harsher stance toward China. These policies, however, are unlikely to harm the China-Russia cooperation given its strong structural roots and may even strengthen it (Latkin and Xiang 2015).

Both countries had significant grievances against the United States since 2019. The South China Sea, trade policies, and technology policy were the main concerns for China. The main concern for Russia was the harsh economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and Europe in retaliation for its invasion of Crimea from Ukraine. However, there are several policy areas where China and Russia diverge. Russia did not support China's claims in the South China Sea, and China did not recognize Russia's takeover of Crimea. Nevertheless, relations between China and Russia are at their greatest point since the late 1950s. The two nations have an informal understanding to coordinate diplomatic and economic actions and forge an alliance against the United States, despite the lack of a legal alliance (Trofimov, 2019).

Chinese President Xi Jinping's first trip abroad after taking office in March 2013 was to Moscow while en route to the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) meeting in Durban, South Africa. Xi listed the main priorities of Sino-Russian relations in a speech to MGIMO, the top school of international relations in Russia:

1. Resource exploitation for oil and gas.
2. "Non-interference" in the "internal affairs" of other countries—code for hostility to perceived U.S. world hegemony, "meddling," and democracy promotion—
3. Military cooperation, including missile defense.

This is a stark contrast to Sino-Russian ties during the Cold War when conflicts frequently broke out along the longest land border in the world. Beijing and Moscow had a deep mistrust for one another since the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, which put an end to the heyday of Sino-Soviet collaboration.

Russia, China, and the Central Asian republics held several multilateral negotiations to legally settle the unresolved boundary disputes after the fall of the Soviet Union. The PRC, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan formed the "Shanghai Five," and in April 1996, they signed the Treaty on Deepening Strategic Trust in Border Areas, followed by the Treaty on Reducing Military Forces in Border Regions in April 1997. This organization's name was changed to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001 when Uzbekistan joined (SCO) (Cheng & Cohen, 2013).

In the multilateral Geneva process, both Russia and China are major players. Even though their goals and tactics differ, their interests frequently coincide in numerous contexts. As a result, tight collaboration is seen in several Geneva-based organizations. China and Russia are the cornerstone of an increasingly abrasive "autocratic coalition" in various organizations, like the UN Human Rights Council. China has specifically tried to create a counter-narrative on issues related to international law—democracy and human rights (Smeltz, 2022).

Brief History of Russia-China Relations

Russia-China ties will be a crucial factor in determining how the balance of power in the globe changes in a world that is rapidly changing, where new powers are emerging, and new alliances and partnerships are continually being formed. The relationship between China and Russia appears to be at its peak right now, and there seems to be agreement on many global concerns. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, relations between Russia and China have been volatile. From being ideological allies in the 1950s

to open enmity from 1970 to the conclusion of the Cold War, the two countries have progressed to the status of "strategic partners" (Wishnick, 2017).

Although it is not yet a full-fledged strategic partnership, the Sino-Russian relationship has the potential to become one and fundamentally shift the balance of power not only in Asia but also globally. The Sino-Russian relationship is now much "closer, less confrontational, more equitable, and 3 more multifaceted," with contacts taking place on a variety of levels, including official and non-official, operational and ceremonial, civilian and military. Each department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs consults with its Chinese colleagues on four significant matters each year. Deep political and strategic links exist between the two nations, and their trade ties are expanding, notably in the energy industry.

China is viewed by Russia as a significant economic partner and a market for its energy and raw resources. The greatest trading partner of Russia and the largest Asian investor in that country is China. For Russia, China is a valuable partner in international forums and an important partner in Central Asia thanks to its financial clout (even if it poses a threat). In the hope that China and the US won't reach an agreement to control the globe as a diarchy, Russia is eager to involve China in regional and global blocs that exclude the US. 2013 saw Russian President Xi Jinping make his first trip abroad. Russia and China showed greater collaboration during the visit by signing several agreements on a range of topics, including energy, education, and agriculture (Grigorenko et al., 2016).

Sino-Russia Engagement at Multilateral Forum

China and Russia place a high value on multilateral forums because they see them as a means of establishing and advancing a multipolar world in which they play a significant role as well as a viable alternative to the Western-dominated global discourse. The fear of a world ruled by the US or of being "consigned to a black hole" by a diarchy of China and the US informs much of Russian foreign policy and threat assessments. This prompts Russia to engage in as many forums as it can since it is convinced that dialogue must continue to avoid marginalization.

In contrast, China believes that participating in multilateral forums supports its assertion of a "peaceful rise," which improves its soft power and helps to improve bilateral relations through participation in what appears to be constructive multilateral engagements. Additionally, it believes that taking part in multilateral forums aids in institutionalizing its own burgeoning influence and defending its interests (Unnikrishnan, Nandan, & Purushothaman, 2015).

Russia and China believe they can help each other get entrance to crucial global organizations such as:

- UN Security Council
- BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-and South Africa)
- RIC (Russia-India-China)
- SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and more.

China's Economic and Trade Ties with Russia

Deepening relations between Russia and China and allowing both parties to concentrate on other geopolitical objectives have been made possible by the reduction of economic tensions and reciprocal promises on border conflicts. China and Russia have signed

agreements since 2014 in the fields of commerce, energy, finance, technology, and aerospace while also stepping up their diplomatic and military cooperation. Since 2014, bilateral trade has increased, but the flows are unbalanced. In 2021, China represented a percentage of Russia's trade of 18% while Russia made up 2% of China's commerce. China's trade stake with Russia has progressively climbed from 11% in 2013, mainly at the expense of the European Union (EU).

China receives critical exports from Russia, including metals, energy, and fertilizer (e.g., gold, nickel, titanium, and platinum). China's growing reliance on Russia extends beyond energy resources like crude oil, natural gas, and coal. Amid shortages, Russia could emerge as a key supplier of wheat and fertilizer to China. This shift is evident in China's decision to lift import restrictions on Russian wheat in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Machinery and electronics account for 28.8 billion dollars worth of China's exports to Russia, followed by basic metals (\$5.7 billion), textiles and apparel (\$5.4 billion), and cars, ships, and airplanes (\$5.0 billion). If Russia's access to international markets continues to weaken and if China looks to Russia to resolve global shortages, the war may strengthen bilateral ties. China's access to agricultural products is probably impacted by the unrest in Ukraine (e.g., corn, sunflower oil, and pork). To diversify away from American exports, China had resorted to Ukraine; today, it is looking for new sources. Given its disproportionate purchasing power, China may displace nations looking for scarce resources like oil and food (Megit, 2016).

Energy Ties between China and Russia

Henderson & Mitrova (2016) suggests Russia's enormous energy reserves and the high prices of oil and gas have been a major contributor to the country's recent economic success. China and Russia would make the ideal energy partnership: Because of its huge population and fast economic development, China is one of the world's major importers. In contrast, Russia is one of the biggest energy exporters and contains the largest discovered oil and gas reserves in the world, with over 48 trillion cubic meters, followed by 200 billion tons of coal. Russian oil reserves total 6.5 billion tons as well. This together with the two nations' proximity and long, relatively barrier-free border, provides a variety of transportation choices and strengthens their complementary relationship in the energy sector. Energy from Russia, which would be transported via land, would provide China with a solution to its Malacca Straits problem because there would be no sea-based disruptions to its energy inflows in this scenario.

According to the article, Xi stated that China was ready to cooperate with Russia to establish a stronger energy partnership, advance the development of clean and green energy, and jointly uphold global energy security and the stability of industry supply chains. Alexander Novak, Deputy Minister of Russia claims that this year, China's energy imports from Russia surged in both value and volume by 64%. As the Kremlin works to forge stronger relations with Asia in the face of Western sanctions, Moscow has also grown to become the fourth-largest yuan trade center in the world (Fernandez & Baum, 2022).

Military Cooperation between China and Russia

Concerns about a military alliance between China and Russia were sparked by China's determination to support Russia covertly despite its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Although the two nations have not yet formed an official alliance, they maintain close military connections that revolve around arms sales and joint military exercises. Chinese ambitions to quickly modernize the People's Liberation Army have benefited greatly from Russian weaponry shipments (PLA). Joint military drills have also benefited Beijing and the PLA, in addition to many other advantages. Military ties between Beijing and Moscow, however, have seen some serious setbacks. The frequent theft of Russian technology by China is a major source of resentment, and the focus of the larger bilateral relationship is shifting away from military sales (Korolev, 2019).

Cooperation on military technologies has occasionally been a significant and symbolic aspect of China-Russia relations over the years. Russian military assistance and arms sales have supported the larger diplomatic relationship politically. Arms sales have given the PLA access to military hardware such as modern aircraft, engines, and air defense systems that it had a hard time producing on its own. The continuous theft of Russian technology and know-how by China, however, has strained relations between Moscow and Beijing. Going forward, as China develops and competes with Russia in the global arms sector, arms sales may become a less crucial aspect of the relationship or perhaps a source of friction (Hart et al., 2022).

China's role in Russia-Ukraine war

Kusa (2022), discussed that China's stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict appears to align with its broader foreign policy objectives and its interpretation of the significance and purpose of international alliances. Public pronouncements from China regarding the conflict have typically been concise, emphasizing key points reiterated since the onset of the invasion. China tends to attribute responsibility for events in both Ukraine and Russia to the West, particularly the United States, citing a pattern of neglect toward Russia's security apprehensions as a contributing factor.

It is crucial to have a shared understanding of security in the area and around the globe that takes into consideration the interests and worries of all parties and is independent of the West. Unlike Europe, China wants the crisis in Ukraine to stop as quickly as possible, but because the United States is involved, the war has continued. Besides, the distinction between Taiwan and Ukraine is clear: Taiwan is recognized internationally as an integral part of China, while Ukraine is an independent nation that was subjected to aggression by another state. Therefore, comparing the situations in Taiwan and Ukraine would be inappropriate. China's objection to unilateral Western sanctions on Russia stems from the concern that such actions bolster the United States' geopolitical and economic influence, potentially expanding its dominance.

China's relations with the United States

The bilateral relationship between the United States and China is globally significant and intricate, spanning back to 1949 and characterized by periods of both tension and cooperation. Key issues such as trade, climate change, and Taiwan's status have been focal points of contention and collaboration. A significant milestone occurred in 2000 with the signing of the U.S.-China Relations Act by President Clinton, granting Beijing and Washington permanent normal trading status. This paved the way for China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, fueling a dramatic surge in bilateral trade from \$5

billion in 1980 to \$231 billion by 2004. Remarkably, China surpassed Mexico in 2006 to become the United States' second-largest trading partner, after Canada (Campanella, 2022). In March 2007, China announced an 18% increase in defence spending for the year, exceeding \$45 billion, following a trend of consistent growth in military expenditure averaging 15% annually between 1990 and 2005. This move drew criticism from U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney during his 2007 Asian visit, who questioned the alignment of China's military development with its professed commitment to a "peaceful ascent." China defended its increased expenditures, attributing them to the need to safeguard national security and territorial integrity, emphasizing enhanced soldier training and improved pay. Simultaneously, the interdependency of the U.S. and Chinese economies became more apparent amid a global financial crisis, raising concerns about economic imbalances. China's ascent to the position of the world's second-largest economy, surpassing Japan, highlighted this trend. By the latter half of 2010, China's calculated GDP of \$1.33 trillion narrowly surpassed Japan's \$1.28 trillion for the same period. Forecasts by Jim O'Neill, Goldman Sachs' chief economist, projected that China would overtake the United States as the world's largest economy by 2027. By the beginning of 2011, China reported a total GDP of \$5.88 trillion, compared to Japan's \$5.47 trillion (Brammer, 2022).

President Barack Obama of the United States announced the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a multilateral free trade agreement, had been concluded with eight other countries at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting that same month. Later, Obama makes plans to send 2,500 marines to Australia, drawing rage from Beijing.

The World Trade Organization receives a "request for discussions" from the US, EU, and Japan in March over China's export limitations on rare earth metals. China's quota, according to the United States and its allies, breaches international trade principles and compels multinational companies who use the metals to move their operations there. China condemns the action as "rash and unfair" and promises to stand up for its rights in any trade disputes.

President Trump and Vice Premier Liu He of China signed the agreement, marking a significant breakthrough in the nearly two-year trade conflict between the world's two largest economies. As part of the accord, China has committed to purchasing an additional \$200 billion worth of American goods, encompassing items such as automobiles and agricultural products, over the next two years. In return, certain tariffs imposed by the United States on Chinese imports will be eased. (Campanella, 2022).

During the UN climate summit in Glasgow, the world's top two greenhouse gas emitters, the United States and China, issued a joint statement pledging increased cooperation in the fight against climate change over the next decade. Their agreement includes commitments to expand renewable energy usage, establish legal frameworks, and deploy technologies such as carbon capture. Chinese climate envoy Xie Shenhua emphasized the substantial common ground between the two nations, a sentiment echoed by U.S. and Chinese officials who welcomed the accord.

In reaction to reported human rights violations by the Chinese government in Xinjiang and other regions, the United States declared a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. Similarly, several other nations, including Australia, Canada, and the United

Kingdom, chose not to send officials to the games. Chinese officials criticized the U.S. decision, labelling it as an effort to politicize sports, foster division, and instigate confrontation.

Russia's relationship with the US

Russia formally recognized the United States on October 28, 1803, which led to the commencement of official diplomatic ties in 1809 between the two nations. However, diplomatic relations were severed after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The United States has always pursued a comprehensive and positive alliance with Russia. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the year 1991, the U.S. adopted a bipartisan approach aimed at fostering international cooperation, encouraging trade and investment, and advocating for Russia's integration into European and global organizations. Efforts were also directed towards enhancing bilateral security cooperation to bolster stability. While prioritizing stable dialogue and cooperation with Russia in areas beneficial to U.S. national security interests, the U.S. emphasizes the need for Russia to refrain from interfering in democratic processes, demonstrating responsible behavior on the global stage. The United States' long-term goal is to establish a robust and predictable partnership with Russia (Sutter, 2018).

In response to Russia's ongoing violation of the legitimacy and national sovereignty of Ukraine, including its occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea, the United States has ceased bilateral consultations with the Russian government on most economic issues. The United States is still looking into claims of mistreatment or discrimination against American investors in Russia, and it is putting pressure on that country to enhance its business environment, uphold the law, and be more open. On behalf of the U.S. Commercial Service, the U.S. Embassy Political-Economic Section in Russia continues to support American businesses looking to explore market prospects without flouting sanctions.

Mr. Obama attempted to restart American-Russian relations in the early years of his administration. Even by the end of his tenure in office, Russia had linked up with Mr. Assad, invaded Crimea, and sparked unrest in other regions of Ukraine. It appears that Mr. Trump planned to refocus his strategy with Russia in a far more comprehensive way. His attempts have failed far more abruptly and severely (The Economist, 2017).

The unbalanced Triangle.

The alliance between China and Russia caused great alarm in the United States. It has been a "strategic relationship" between China and Russia since 1996, according to both countries. Since the connection has never been as stable as it appeared to be or as dangerous, even though it is strong now, the future is unknown. Some academics have grave doubts about the China-Russia partnership's strategic nature and are pessimistic about the future of this bilateral relationship, yet it would be risky to draw the conclusion that their strategic alliance is only tactical, impetuous, and unfounded.

While China has a strong chance of becoming a major economic force within the next 5 to 6 years and possibly becoming the yuan the primary reserve currency, the U.S. and European markets are now searching for answers to address their severe structural imbalances. The turmoil in the Eurozone crisis is still lingering, and there are currently no

indications that Washington will alter its strategy of sparking inflation. In the next 20 years, a fundamentally different world may emerge, necessitating a hard readjusting of international relations.

Although China has always shunned formal alliances, over time, Beijing has shown a growing interest in forging close ties with Russia. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin highlighted that their nations' relations have "no restrictions" and that there are "no 'forbidden' fields of partnership" in a historic joint statement published on February 4, 2022, only weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine.

Mutual respect and consideration for each other's core interests are the cornerstones of China-Russia relations. This means accepting (or not contesting) China's territorial claims and authoritarian political system, as well as cooperating with China in maintaining regional peace. Without these conditions, the connection would not be as close as it is now. Although the political systems of China and Russia are very different from one another, both show similar tendencies toward authoritarianism. Moscow's endorsement and support of China's core political structure and its efforts to legitimize alternative, non-Western concepts of democracy and human rights allowed for the establishment of closer ties with China while Western nations pressed Beijing on human rights issues (China Power, n.d.). The relationship between Russia and China has improved and flourished since the Cold War ended, particularly in the last ten years. Most eminent American academics agree that Sino-Russian cooperation threatens American interests. Unlike in the past, the connection is no longer regarded as an "axis of convenience" with minimal significance for the United States.

The "drivers" and "brakes" that influence cooperation between Russia and China are now more important than the latter ones. Even if conventional U.S. strategies to avoid coordination may be futile, we shouldn't assume the United States is a fixed factor in these calculations. Instead, the behavior and policy of the United States are two very ambiguous elements that affect relations between China and Russia.

Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping have an unfavorable perception of the United States and its allies, which promotes Sino-Russian cooperation against purported external threats. This stance affects how both leaders perceive global issues and the international order. Weapons sales, defense-related conversations, and coordinated training are a few instances of security cooperation. These activities affect other countries and try to tip the scales of power away from the United States. Now, Sino-Russian relations are being pushed by forces propelling cooperation faster than the brakes can keep up. The U.S.-supported order in both countries' main worry areas—China in Asia along the country's perimeter and Russia in Europe and the Middle East is under threat from an increasingly significant threat because of this strategy.

Along with its military maneuvers and intrusions, Russia has vowed to undermine elections in the United States and Europe as well as the unity of Europe and NATO. Chinese cyberattacks, in contrast, have focused on widespread data and intellectual property theft to boost their country's economic competitiveness and, as a result, give them the power to dominate the global markets for crucial advanced technologies at the expense of American and other foreign companies.

This does not imply that the United States will be compelled to observe as relations between China and Russia deepen. Growing American influence would be possible by utilizing the disparities between the two sides, or the brakes mentioned above. The rise of China at a time when Russia is still hampered by demographic and economic concerns, and the alienation of Russia from the American-led international system at a time when China still depends on it, are two examples of these differences. Meanwhile, due to Russian and Chinese desires to control their respective areas of influence, regional nations may be forced to work closely with the United States in pursuit of a strategic counterweight.

Chinese suspicions that Putin would shift Russian policy closer to American interests could be stoked by potential Trump administration efforts to defuse friction with Moscow. The United States must implement its strategies practically and efficiently. It is important to emphasize that these are long-term policy decisions that call for persistent whole-of-government approaches and are challenging to implement in the face of prominent distractions. These choices include measures to strengthen the United States' position as the world's preeminent power and a plan to appease Russia and/or China; in the middle of these two extremes are measures that combine U.S. strengthening and appeasement. Short-term policy options involve the United States aiming to gain an edge by leaning toward or away from Russia, China, or both, without significantly improving its position (**Franchell, n.d.**).

According to the [National Security Strategy](#) (2022), Although China and Russia "are increasingly aligned," their issues "are, in significant ways, dissimilar." The United States and Europe are not the only places in the globe where these difficulties are felt. The timing and manner of Beijing and Moscow's coordination or cooperation, as well as the implications for the United States and its friends and partners, are all too rarely examined. In America's opinion, Only China can threaten its worldwide hegemony. Nevertheless, despite American efforts to support Ukraine and fortify NATO, Russia is absorbing a large portion of the nation's attention and billions of dollars. Despite Europe's affluence, according to Eric Edelman, a former top Pentagon official, "Europeans cannot defend themselves without us to organize them."

Findings

Today's geopolitics are defined by a developing multipolar great-power rivalry. Russia, China, and the United States compete with one another for global influence. The National Security Strategy in 2017 was the first time Washington openly acknowledged this geostrategic reality, which has existed at least since the early 2010s. Interim National Security Strategic Guidance (INSSG) and the publication of its 2022 National Security Strategy, the Biden administration welcomed great-power competition as the dominant geo-strategic situation and referred to the three-way, great-power interaction as "strategic competition."

Both Russia and China engage in a complex interplay of cooperation and competition aimed at limiting American power and influence across political, economic, and security domains. This involves collaborative endeavors in both multilateral and bilateral arenas with countries considered adversaries by the United States, such as North Korea, Iran, and Syria. Additionally, both nations undertake various actions to challenge the regional and global norms and institutions supported by the United States, thereby further complicating the international landscape.

China is far more intertwined with the global economy than Russia because of its significant stake in it. It supports global stability, which fosters progress. Even though China continues to tremendously benefit from several features of the U.S.-led international system, Beijing actively avoids forming an alliance with Moscow because it does not want to be perceived as a hostile revisionist power. As Russian assertiveness challenges China's ever-increasing interest in the economic infiltration of Europe and the Middle East, tensions between the two countries may rise in the future.

This does not imply that the United States will be forced to watch as China and Russia become more of a relationship. Exploiting the contrasts between the two sides—the brakes indicated above—represents promising opportunities for increasing American influence. These contrasts include the ascent of China at a time when Russia is still constrained by demographic and economic issues, and the alienation of Russia from the American-led international order at a time when China still depends on it. Meanwhile, regional countries may be compelled to collaborate closely with the United States in search of a strategic counterweight as a result of Russian and Chinese ambitions to dominate their respective spheres of influence. Chinese suspicions that Putin would shift Russian policy closer to American interests could be stoked by potential Trump administration efforts to defuse friction with Moscow.

Russia and China are seen as the United States' two main, long-term rivals. China and Russia have improved their ties since 2014, expanding their political, military, and economic cooperation. The core of the China-Russian partnership has always been combined might and the perceived threat from the United States. The significance of these two elements became especially apparent between 2012 and 2017 when Russia pursued more cooperation with China in response to an increase in the perceived threat from the United States.

It should come as no surprise that for the past decade or more, the immediate concerns of American partners and allies in Europe have centered on Russia's numerous acts of aggression and intimidation, peaking with Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. What is unexpected, though, is the rise in concern in recent years in Europe over a threat that appears to be more remote in terms of geography: China.

Although this threat to American interests has grown, previous American action has had little impact on Sino-Russian collaboration. Key indicators including weapon sales, energy-related commerce and investment, and collaboration in the UN (and elsewhere) opposing different Western agendas have not been cooled by current policy. The two nations cooperate and compete to impede U.S. dominance and influence in the areas of politics, economics, and security. The United States' opponents, including North Korea, Iran, and Syria, are the focus of joint efforts that also include additional actions to undermine regional and international institutions and standards that the US supports. Because of shifts in the balance of power and the persistence of American practices that suggest aggressive U.S. intentions toward China and Russia, the Sino-Russian relationship will continue to improve.

No one disputes today that the new global order is polycentric by nature. The top organizations in Europe, the United States, and Russia include this element in their studies.

However, nobody can predict how stable and effective the world order of the twenty-first century will be at this time.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Relationships between China and Russia are beneficial because they benefit Chinese interests, which are furthered by ongoing friendly connections and collaboration in the political, military, and economic domains. Beijing and Moscow are being pushed together by significant factors, according to Chinese elites, including economic complementarity between the two countries and a shared desire to oppose what both sets of elites see as a U.S. ideology of militarism, interventionism, and the forcible imposition of American values on other nations.

However, in their eyes, balancing against American hard and soft power is the most important reason for Chinese and Russian unity.

Furthermore, the view in Moscow and Beijing that Washington has become more antagonistic and menacing to the two Eurasian capitals in recent years is what spurs the two countries to work together more closely in the political, military, and economic arenas. Given current broad U.S. policy priorities, particularly those toward Russia, there isn't much the United States can or should do to alter the overall trajectory of Sino-Russian relations. Although the general course of Sino-Russian ties cannot be readily changed, the U.S. government may prepare for the effects of future increased cooperation, particularly given a greater understanding of how the Sino-Russian relationship would develop. The U.S. military must get ready to face increasingly advanced weapon systems in greater quantities in the inventory of both of its main strategic rivals given the possibility of prolonged Chinese-Russian military technology collaboration.

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